

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Education & Children's Services Scrutiny **DATE:** 14th July 2015

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PART I

FOR INFORMATION, CONSIDERATION AND DECISIONS (Non-Key)

TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

1 Purpose of Report

To bring to the attention of Elected Members the difficulties of teacher recruitment and retention in Slough. The purpose is to lay out the challenges and possible solutions, including issues and actions for Members to consider in addressing this growing problem for the town which has the potential to impact negatively on the quality and effectiveness of schools and the education standards achieved by its pupils. Recognising the extent of the recruitment difficulties across various professional groups, the matter warrants broader considerations and joint action.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

That Scrutiny is requested to note the report and determine what support the Council can provide to assist Slough schools in addressing the growing and major problems with teacher recruitment and retention. These difficulties are being experienced by most Slough schools and substantial sums of money are being spent on advertising rather than directly on pupils.

While this is a pressing issue for the Committee to scrutinise, it warrants consideration of it going to Cabinet to address what contribution the Council can make in alleviating the difficulties.

3. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan

The JSNA highlights the educational successes across the town and its relationship with other aspects of life. The JSNA examines outcomes at each life stage from entry into school, through transition to secondary school and work based learning. It gives particular attention to those who are not in education, employment and training (NEET) and those at risk of NEET with consideration to how this group can be supported for their own benefit and that of the community.

3a. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

Given that successful teacher recruitment and retention is a key component of high quality and effective education and contributes substantially in raising the aspirations

and achievements of children and young people, this report relates to the following strategic priorities:

- Economy and Skills

The achievements of children and young people have a direct bearing on their adult lives and prospects in the workplace. The success of these pupils also has a significant bearing on the success and prosperity of the community in which they live.

- Health and Wellbeing

Educational success has a direct relationship with child poverty. Raising educational standards has the potential to break or reduce this cycle of poverty from one generation to the next. Educational success also has the power to improve life chances and promote positive well-being. Research indicates a strong inter-relationship between educational achievement and children's well-being.

Cross Cutting themes:

Civic responsibility – successful young people will be in a stronger position to contribute to and gain from the community in which they live. Promoting success and leadership in young people can lead to residents who can play a dynamic role in implementing the Strategy and being champions in improving Slough for themselves and for the benefit of everyone.

Improving the image of the town – the educational success of young people in Slough is now recognised locally and nationally with Slough having the 7th highest results out of 152 local authorities for pupils gaining 5 or more GCSEs with grades A*-C, including maths and English. Slough's outstanding schools (all Slough secondary schools apart from two out of eleven are good or outstanding, with 7 of them outstanding) are an inducement to come to Slough for its education and for families to stay in Slough to educate their children.

The challenges of teacher recruitment and retention need to be addressed in a timely manner to avoid adverse educational implications for the children and young people of Slough, which will impact negatively across the community.

3b Five Year Plan Outcomes

The proposals for action will help to deliver the following outcome in the Five Year Plan:

- Children and young people in Slough will be healthy, resilient and have positive life chances.

4 Other Implications

(f) Financial

At this stage, there are no direct financial implications for Slough Borough Council associated with the proposed actions. However, there would be implications for the Council if it was willing to support the provision of Key Worker housing.

There are financial implications for Slough schools. They are considering a strategic approach through the pursuit of a joint project. The intention is for this to be funded from some of the centrally retained Dedicated Schools Grant, thus not impacting on Slough Borough Council's core funding.

Given that around 50% of Slough schools are maintained by Slough Borough Council this is clearly a matter which necessitates Council involvement and assistance, particularly as it impacts on children's achievements across the town.

(g) Risk Management

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
Legal	None	
Property	Risk: cost of property deters some teacher applicants. Mitigation: subsidised housing	Consideration of a joined up approach across services in looking at Key Worker housing
Human Rights	None	
Health and Safety	None	
Employment Issues	Risk: too few teachers; schools competing for applicants. Mitigation: no 'poaching' from each other and pursuing a joint approach to attracting applicants and making appointments	By working together it provides a stronger partnership across the Slough community of schools.
Equalities Issues	None	
Community Support	None	
Communications	Risks: Adverse publicity about having schools which are declining due to a lack of teachers. Mitigation: Prompt action in promoting the educational successes of Slough	Linking educational success with 'Proud to be Slough'.
Community Safety	None	
Financial	Risk: considerable money spent on advertising and agency fees rather than directly on pupils. Mitigation: The funding can be made available through the centrally retained Dedicated Schools Grant to set up the project and then self-financing and non-profit making through internal charging to access the services. If a concerted project is successful then it would alleviate the financial	For more money to be available to spend directly on pupils. A self managed internal agency responsive to local staffing needs.

	pressure on advertising	
Timetable for delivery	Risk: if this challenge is not surmounted quickly, schools will suffer in terms of quality and effectiveness. Mitigation: prompt and surefooted action	Galvanising schools to work together for mutual benefit
Project Capacity	Risk: capacity of schools to address this singlehandedly Mitigation: setting up a stand alone project to achieve timely improvements in applications and appointments	Achieving a cheaper way of attracting and appointing applicants to work in Slough schools
Other	None	

Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no significant Human Rights Act implications.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There is no identified need for an Equalities Impact Assessment by the Local Authority.

(e) Workforce

There are no significant Workforce implications for the Local Authority. However, clearly there are implications for the schools and academies. With all proposals for implementation they need to consider the implications for their current workforce and those joining their organisation. These particularly relate to terms and conditions, golden hellos, subsidies, such as subsidised accommodation, salary enhancements, professional development costs with leaving and pay back of some costs, etc.

(f) Property

There are no significant property implications. The only point within this report related to property is that of considering Key Worker housing and any actions taken directly by schools to subsidise accommodation as a means of drawing in applicants.

5 Supporting Information

5.1 **Challenges**

5.1.1. There is a growing problem of teacher recruitment and retention across Slough schools, which is a reflection of what is happening nationally. Clearly, this impacts on the quality and effectiveness of a school and, importantly, on the standards achieved by its pupils. The schools know about their own difficulties. For example, one school spent over £30,000 on advertising without applicants to make appointments. The next step is schools gathering information, data and costs about the magnitude of the difficulties across Slough. This will inform their thinking about how they want to proceed collectively.

5.1.2. Recruitment has been a significant issue over the last five years. It has now reached an important watershed in becoming a large and universal challenge across the Slough community of schools. This has been exacerbated by a rapidly growing school population. Since 2008 an additional 27 forms of entry have been put in place across the primary sector and an additional 15 forms of entry in the secondary phase. Additionally, demand is still increasing across the primary sector for the next couple of years. In the secondary sector, a further 22 forms of entry are required by 2022. This will necessitate a substantial number of additional teachers, while at the same time many other local authorities are rapidly expanding due to the increase in pupil numbers and are in need of additional teachers.

5.2 National challenge

5.2.1. Teacher recruitment and retention is a growing national challenge. There is a significant decrease in the number of applications to be a teacher: 125,000 applications are usually submitted each year for the training of teachers. In the last year, this decreased by around 30,000. Recruitment targets are not being met: the target for maths trainee teachers was missed by 12% last year; with physics the target was missed by 33% and in computer science by 15%. Nationally two thirds of schools are struggling to recruit teachers (National Association of Headteachers' survey) and there is growing concern about the quality of recruits.

5.2.2. The number of teachers leaving the profession is at a 10 year high; 50,000 left the profession last year, with significant numbers expressing concerns about workload, pay and conditions. With fewer teachers, schools have needed to spend more on supply teachers as schools struggle to fill the gaps in their teams. Nationally, the spending on supply teachers has gone up by more than £50 million in the last year. Clearly, this is a drain on schools' budgets. All of this is at a time when a significant increase in teachers is required related to the substantial increase in the child population. 500,000 extra pupils are expected to attend schools over the next five years. (Slough is the third fastest growing local authority in the country, with an increase of 32% since 2010). Consequently, there is a potential shortage of around 30,000 of the required number of qualified entrants to teaching by September 2016, with nearly 160,000 additional qualified teachers needed over the next three years. This produces a perfect storm of falling recruitment and rising demand.

5.2.3. Some of the potential consequences nationally are the move to larger classes, increased dependence on non-qualified teachers, or at least those unqualified in specialist subjects and the possible closure of smaller schools with the amalgamation of provision. Increasingly, the national media is picking up on the growing problems, highlighting a profession which needs to be more attractive to graduates, and prompts to consider workload pressures and teachers' pay.

5.3 Slough Challenges

5.3.1. There is a growing shortage of teachers locally. Across the secondary phase, there is a need for senior and middle leadership, maths, science, English and modern foreign language teachers. Across the primary phase, there is a need for senior and middle leadership, general teachers, special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) and specialist teachers for mainstream SEN resource bases. In the area of special needs, there is a need for teachers who have specialisms in managing challenging behaviour.

5.3.2. The full scale of the problem across Slough has not yet been determined. This is the current focus of attention. The consequences are substantial related to pupils' achievement and schools' Ofsted gradings. In some instances it prevents a school

achieving a 'good' rating from Ofsted if it has significant weaknesses in particular subject areas. For example, one school is seriously compromised through a major shortage of maths and science teachers, while demonstrating significant and durable strengths in English teaching and achievement. Some schools have had to resort to using unqualified staff.

5.3.3. The new academies and free schools in Slough together with the expansion of schools associated with fast growing numbers of pupils necessitates employing more teachers. Future pressures related to new schools through to 2022 leads to the need in the primary phase for around 9 forms of entry (63 plus teachers); the secondary phase will need around 22 additional forms of entry (a minimum of around 160 teachers) and special schools and resource bases will need around 27 extra teachers. This is a total of approximately **250 additional teachers required by 2022**. The need for teachers across the system is for newly qualified teachers through to middle and senior leadership posts, with a pressing need for mathematics and science (particularly physics) teachers.

5.3.4. Various approaches are pursued, each with their own challenges. Newly qualified teachers need a significant level of support and opportunities to promote retention. Supply teachers are in high demand, however they are expensive and often rather 'hit or miss'. Drawing in teachers from abroad is usually a short term solution as these teachers often return to their country of origin after one or two years. These teachers require significant investment at the outset to adjust to the curriculum and education regime of this country and the particular school in which they are working. There is also competition with neighbouring local authorities which have additional salary weightings (Outer and Inner London allowances) placing them in a better position to attract teachers.

5.4 Slough Context

5.4.1. The following challenges and attractions are aspects that Members need to focus on in considering how they can support schools. Certainly, the promotion of Slough's educational successes and the promotion of Slough as a place to live and work are important components in attracting potential applicants. Allied to this is access to housing and properties which are affordable, particularly for new qualified teachers.

5.4.2. Challenges

- Need for Slough to have a more positive image
- Housing costs and access to housing
- More desirable areas around in which to teach
- Less challenging teaching circumstances in some neighbouring authorities
- Ready access to higher salaries in West and Inner London

5.4.3. Attractions

- Close to central London
- Road access to routes in, out and about
- Strong community of schools
- High percentage of good and outstanding secondary schools
- Strong GCSE examination results (7th nationally)
- Stimulating and exciting context through teaching a very diverse school community
- Opportunities for promotion

5.5 What has been tried locally to attract, appoint and retain teachers?

- 5.5.1. Schools, individually, have used a variety of strategies with some limited success. Now is the time for a more joined up approach and action on a grander scale. The strategies have tended to provide short term gains which are more of a patch rather than a longer term sustainable solution.
- 5.5.2. Schools have used advertising locally, nationally and internationally. They have used general and particularly teacher recruitment agencies (often including a finder's fee) with very high costs incurred in excess of 20% of annual salary on appointment. Schools have attended recruitment fairs and specific university employment fairs.
- 5.5.3. Headteachers in some instances have gone abroad to interview teachers, going to countries such as Northern Ireland, Eire, Spain, Poland and Canada. They make use of international recruitment agencies, such as Engage Education, to draw in teachers from abroad. They also use Skype to interview applicants, such as mathematics teachers from China.
- 5.5.4. Schools have developed links with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Headteachers and staff have visited Higher Education Institutions to talk with students and teacher trainees, as well as being a visiting lecturer, promoting the benefits of working as a teacher in Slough. Some schools focus on 'growing your own' teachers from non-teaching staff within the school. In some instances schools offer support, including finance, for those training on the job to be teacher. Recently, links have been started with the Youth Service to draw young people into ancillary teaching support posts. And given the competition between schools, the secondary headteachers have agreed not to compete with each other and use collectively agreed pay scales.
- 5.5.5. Schools have adopted various incentives to draw in teachers. These have included introducing favourable terms and conditions, competitive salaries and incentive payments, including 'golden hello' payments. Support for accommodation has emerged as a valuable incentive, such as finding and providing accommodation, particularly temporary accommodation on starting and some subsidies for accommodation. Alongside this, but less of a draw, is professional support for newly qualified teachers, continuing professional development and opportunities for promotion and 'fast tracking'.

5.6 A Partnership approach

- 5.6.1 Similarly, other services are experiencing difficulties in appointing staff, most especially in Social Care. Anecdotally, recruitment challenges also exist with the Police and in the Health sector. Within education there are also challenges in appointing to key posts, such as educational psychologists.
- 5.6.2. The Interim Director of Children's Services (DCS) has been focused on improving recruitment in Social Care. She has led on the implementation of the workforce strategy and the recent appointment of a lead officer for workforce development. The interim DCS has promoted a joint approach with schools on recruitment and has also drawn in the Local Authority's Human Resources team to be part of the group considering solutions. An event is being organised by the Council at the end of July and possibly in the early autumn to attract prospective employees to the town. Some of the head teachers have expressed an interest in participating in the autumn event.
- 5.6.3. Slough Learning Partnership has already looked at the challenges faced by schools in recruitment and has generated some proposals, the initial one of which was not taken up by schools.

5.7 Emerging proposal:

5.7.1. For the most part, Slough schools have been facing the recruitment and retention difficulties themselves. However, more recently, they have started to come together to address a joint strategic approach. This is oriented towards coming together as headteachers and also linking with other services across the town to approach the difficulties in a grander and more forceful way.

5.7.2. The Slough headteachers have now met twice to share their concerns about recruitment and retention and to consider possible solutions for the short and long term, recognising that this is a growing problem and unlikely to diminish for considerable time.

5.7.3. Individually, schools continue to explore different strategies to attract. However, now the schools intend to come together with a new strategic approach. Many of them are now positive and committed to a collective solution. This has been discussed within the local professional headteacher associations and within Schools Forum. In conjunction with a joint approach, the primary schools may also find it more constructive and beneficial to come together in clusters to address the challenges.

5.7.4. The recruitment difficulties are across most schools and from newly qualified teachers through to middle and senior management. Headteachers have been sharing information and now considering joint action linked to joint financial contributions.

5.7.5 There is substantial concern about spending large sums of money on advertising when this funding should be spent on benefiting pupils.

5.7.6 Project outline:

The headteachers are currently generating a project outline for presenting to Schools Forum for funding support, and for sharing with allied services where significant overlap is likely to be found, prompting joint action.

At this stage there is the important step of establishing the full cost of recruitment across Slough: time, searching, advertising etc, and to look at the possible extent of savings by setting up something internally rather than drawing on expensive external agencies. They have identified three strands of inter-related activity: **research**, **marketing** (including digital marketing) and **agency** tasks. And before they embark on any decision making they have agreed to research the nature and scale of the recruitment challenge, looking at vacancies; subject gaps; individual and collective spend on recruitment (including under-represented groups: diversity in senior school leadership: women; BME); retention issues; agency use and the use of supply teachers.

5.7.7. The Headteachers are planning to set up a Slough bespoke not for profit agency for recruiting teachers, where schools pay a basic sum for accessing the agency and which is a service operating solely for Slough schools. This would necessitate some start up funding. This agency may use a standard cost of about 7% of salary cost for accessing the local agency and for it to function as self financing. Schools could also contribute in kind to the functioning of the agency by doing HEI lectures and visiting recruitment fairs. A proposal has been made about the agency sitting under the umbrella of the Teaching School Alliance or the Slough Learning Partnership. Certainly, it is apparent it needs to be a long term project of three years in the first instance as this is not going to be a challenge which can be quickly solved.

5.8 Strategies currently being considered by schools:

5.8.1. In pursuing the project referred to above the headteachers have identified the following issues as being important in their approach. They have registered the importance of drawing on the strengths of a mutually supportive education and school community. They are keen to share their concerns and talk about ways of working together. They are willing to explore sharing teachers and making greater use of part time teachers. There is the possibility of schools setting up federations to share teachers in key subjects.

5.8.2. The schools are keen to promote the benefits of working in Slough, such as

- successful schools and high achieving children
- making a difference in a needy community: substantial rewards associated with accelerating the progress of Slough pupils
- good prospects for promotion
- support for newly qualified teachers
- continuing professional development

5.8.3. The headteachers are aware they need to make greater use of social media to notify and attract applicants. Developing a site to follow through the social media about what is happening in Slough. They have started to consider developing a joint website in association with websites for individual schools. Other strands of technology include making use of videos to promote the school and linking this with advertisements. This could involve commissioning a professional video (using a local company) or possibly drawing on pupils to develop the website/social media access.

5.8.4. The heads are aware of the importance of promotion, such as promoting the benefits of working in Slough and identifying the unique selling point of a school. They have focused on looking at how to target better and attract different teachers from those who are newly qualified through to senior leaders

5.8.5. They are interested in agreeing a code of ethics on working together, which includes committing to not 'poaching' teachers from one another.

5.8.6 Other options they have identified include providing training over the summer to get new staff up to speed for an easier start in September at the beginning of the new academic year; developing a teaching pool which can be drawn on by schools needing teachers; encouraging current students in Slough schools to go into teaching; encouraging residents across the community to be teachers locally in Slough; investing in training teachers with them paying back a percentage of this training cost if they leave within a short time; extending the strategies around 'grow your own' and looking for strategies to retain good teachers in Slough through them moving on to promoted posts in Slough rather than out of borough.

5.8.7. Clearly the headteachers have generated a large number of strategies, too many to adopt all at once. It now points towards adopting a systematic approach with analysis and evaluation of those strategies which are most successful and the ones which can be adopted across the community of schools to benefit all the schools in needs of teachers.

5.9 Issues to be considered by Elected Members

5.9.1. The Corporate Team and Elected Members are now increasingly aware of the recruitment and retention challenges being experienced by schools, particularly given the expansion in the number of school places over the last seven years.

5.9.2. Proposed actions for consideration by Elected Members at Scrutiny:

- Having scrutinised teacher recruitment, for Members to consider the value of this matter going to Cabinet with recommendations for action
- For the challenges and possible solutions to be brought to the attention of the Well Being Board which can consider the matter in the broader context of all statutory and non-statutory services and provision, including Police, Fire, Health, Social Care, and the private and voluntary sector
- For the Local Authority to consider the re-introduction of Key Worker Housing or subsidised accommodation
- For politicians (Elected Members; Lead Member for Education and Children; Lead Member of the Council; Member of Parliament) to bring to the attention of national government the magnitude of the problem facing Slough and its impact on standards and the success of children: for lobbying to achieve prompt action to alleviate the challenges
- Promoting the attraction of Slough
- Promoting the educational success and high standards of Slough pupils (Slough being 7th nationally for GCSE results, sustained year on year)
- Promoting the good and outstanding schools across Slough
- Promoting a strong and supportive Slough community of schools

Thanks are due to all the Slough headteachers who have contributed to this report.

6 Comments of Other Committees

The matter has not been considered by any other Committees and there are no further plans to do so at this stage.

7 Conclusion

The challenges of teacher recruitment and retention is an important and pressing issue for most schools across Slough. It has significant implications for providing high quality and effective education and has implications for children and young people's educational achievements. There are local solutions needed promptly, yet at the same time a need to raise this matter at a national level as some of the solutions rest at a national rather than local level in having sufficient high quality teachers to apply for posts. The final section of the 'Supporting Comments' gives recommendations about various courses of action to be considered by Members.

8 Background Papers

None.