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**Manchester City Council  
Report for Resolution**

**Report to:** Overview and Scrutiny Human Resources Sub-Group – 25  
January 2011

**Subject:** Human Resources Support to School Governing Bodies

**Report of:** The Director of Children's Services

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**Summary**

The report summarises the arrangements for supporting Headteachers and Governing Bodies with human resources management, specifically in relation to the management of staff disciplinary hearings and job evaluation. The report also describes the organisational and service changes which are tracking the changing relationship between local authorities and schools.

**Recommendations**

The Committee are invited to review the revised arrangements for supporting schools, managing disciplinary casework matters in schools and consider how the service delivery model needs to continue to adapt to the changing relationship with schools. The Committee are also invited to recognise the major achievements in the areas of equal pay and job evaluation which have been accomplished in cooperation with schools, their Headteachers and Governing Bodies.

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**Wards Affected:**

All

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**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

Appendix A (statistical information referred to in Paragraph 7)

## Introduction

1. The responsibility for all matters relating to the employment of staff in schools rests with the school's governing body. The statutory responsibility for employment was delegated to schools, initially in 1989. The remaining duties of the maintaining local authority relate to the application of governing body appointment and dismissal decisions, certain financial responsibilities related to redundancy and pension arrangements and matters relating to the safeguarding of children. In voluntary aided and trust schools the scope is limited to the local authority role as the pensions compensating authority and in academies the local authority has no staffing powers.

## Background

2. Human Resources support and advice to headteachers and governing bodies is offered by a service level agreement (SLA) with the Management Support to Schools Service (MSS). The scope of the Management Support Service is broader than purely HR support and incorporates support with governance issues and offers practical support to schools with the management of critical incidents and emergencies. The Management Support SLA is purchased by the vast majority of community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided and trust schools in Manchester with only three schools electing to source their HR support from private sector providers. Three of the newly established academies have also purchased SLAs from Management Support.
3. The Management Support to Schools Service was set up within Children's Services in 1999 and since then has maintained a very good reputation amongst service users and maintains excellent working relationships with Headteachers. The service received excellent feedback in the October 2010 client satisfaction survey (68% of respondents scored the service at 10 on a ten point scale with 95% scoring 7 and above). The service has had a trading relationship with schools for ten years and during that time it has maintained repeat contracts at over 98% of schools.
4. Between 2006 and 2009 Management Support Service was heavily committed to the implementation of Job Evaluation and Equal Pay strategies (JE/EP) in schools. Although this matter is statutorily a responsibility of the governing bodies and individual school managements, the coordination and delivery of this strategy was managed by the Management Support Service. This activity was not commissioned or financially resourced as a separate programme to support schools. The job evaluation and equal pay workstreams were, therefore, resourced by schools through their SLA contracts and there was some delay in the progress of the routine personnel casework as a consequence of the additional demands on the service.
5. Despite the limited resources of a small team of (now) twelve officers, the job evaluation and equal pay programmes were completed during the 2009/10 academic year. This is a major achievement given that the school workforce amounts to about 50% of the Council's workforce, and that the changes were implemented across 173 different schools, their Headteachers and governing

bodies. The Council did not have the statutory authority to implement the required pay and contract changes without the consent of school governing bodies and, therefore, the required changes were achieved by collaboration and cooperation with schools. Although residual JE/EP activities continue, it is worth noting that the biggest changes to the pay and conditions of employment of school staff in twenty years were achieved without a dispute with the workforce.

6. The main impact of the JE/EP workstreams was on the day to day service that schools had purchased. This service continued, albeit at a reduced level, to resource the JE/EP work streams. Although schools tolerated the reduction in service on a temporary basis it became necessary to redesign the service in 2009 in order to guarantee a minimum level of management support time for each school and to ensure that schools have control of the support they purchase. Management Support became a fully traded service to schools by the beginning of the financial year 2010/11. The Service was extended to include online advisory support via MEWAN (Manchester Education Wide Area Network) and a dedicated "expert" helpline was introduced. The latest customer satisfaction survey includes extremely positive feedback on the service delivery improvements, and the level of recontracting with MSS has been maintained.
7. The HR caseload in schools has been increasing in recent years and by 2009/10 over 550 case issues were managed alongside school headteachers and managers. These cases included disciplinary, capability, attendance management, grievance, bullying and harassment, conciliation, mediation and dispute resolution issues. The cases are identified by Headteachers (and sometimes governors) and are managed collaboratively by a small team of nine management support officers and advisers. Typically, over 60 cases per month are resolved by agreement, resolution of the school governing body or staff resignation. (Please see Appendix A for further statistics regarding case turnover and calls made to the expert helpline and resolution)
8. The involvement of Management Support in disciplinary matters in schools is determined by the school, usually by the Headteacher. The model of service delivery is designed to augment a school's management capacity rather than to replace it. In practice this means that the Headteacher will determine what role the adviser takes on. In a typical staff disciplinary case, the adviser will be asked to carry out an investigation, interview witnesses, prepare a report for the governing body and present the case to the staff dismissal committee on behalf of the headteacher. Management Support also provide a clerk to the dismissal committee to provide procedural advice and to keep a record of the proceedings. As the adviser acts as an agent of the school and reporting to the Headteacher, the school's risk is managed on a continuing basis.
9. Headteachers and Chairs of Governors also deploy advisers to negotiate with trade union officials, solicitors and other representatives on their behalf. The negotiations and liaison continues during the management of a disciplinary case to ensure that the proceedings are carried out safely, appropriately and

in accordance with relevant employment legislation. Advisers also conduct negotiations to deliver mutually agreed contract terminations. The basis of such negotiations are determined in advance by the Headteacher and Governors.

10. Online support and advice on procedures is available to schools purchasing the SLA . This has been available via the management support presence on MEWAN since April 2010. In addition to the online support, an “expert” helpline is staffed by advisers every working day and is available 24 hours a day, 365 days per year in cases of critical incidents and emergencies. The helpline is designed to support Headteachers and Governors with complex HR (including disciplinary) issues intending to provide practical solutions at the first port of call. These new services have been positively evaluated by schools in customer feedback. Data analysis shows that the website has received over 8000 hits since its inception with the policies and procedures bank being particularly valued. The helpline has also been evaluated positively and over 250 calls are handled each week with 80% of issues resolvable at first contact.

## **Recommendations**

11. The market for HR advisory services to schools is developing and maturing as government policy continues to emphasis the management autonomy of all schools. Private sector management consultancies and services are increasing their presence in this sector. Management Support to Schools is, however, well placed to continue offering high quality support to schools with service delivered in a Manchester context and in accordance with Council's broader aims and objectives.
12. The Committee are asked to consider the customer feedback on the new model of service delivery, the effective collaboration with school leaders on major workforce projects, the progress toward a fully traded service to schools and to note the content of the report.

**APPENDIX A**

**Table 1:**  
 MSS case turnover statistics per month:

<b>Cases Allocated</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>Cases Closed</b>
30	April 2010	39
54	May 2010	36
34	June 2010	54
38	July 2010	43
17	August 2010	44
72	September 2010	77
71	October 2010	97
103	November 2010	125
47	December 2010 to date	47

**Table 2:**  
 Helpdesk statistics describing if the matter was resolved (closed) within the initial call, whether the school was provided with a follow up advisory call by the helpdesk expert ,or whether the issue was allocated for case work by a MSS officer.

<b>MONTH</b>	<b>Resolution type</b>	<b>Number</b>
APRIL	Closed	186
	Call back	4
	Case allocation	30
MAY	Closed	237
	Call back	21
	Case allocation	54
JUNE	Closed	242
	Call back	24
	Case allocation	34
JULY	Closed	128
	Call back	28
	Case allocation	38
AUGUST	Closed	29
	Call back	2
	Case allocation	17
SEPTEMBER	Closed	279
	Call back	31
	Case allocation	72
OCTOBER	Closed	224
	Call back	27

	Case allocation	71
NOVEMBER	Closed	301
	Call back	28
	Case allocation	103
DECEMBER to date	Closed	201
	Call back	11
	Case allocation	47