

Report to: **Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services**

Date: **21 November 2008**

By: **Chair of the Review Board**

Title of report: **Scrutiny Review of Services for School Governors**

Purpose of report: **To present the outcomes of the review and propose recommendations relating to Services for School Governors**

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**RECOMMENDATION – that the Committee considers the report of the Review Board and makes recommendations to Cabinet for comment and County Council for approval.**

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### **1. Financial Appraisal**

1.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from the recommendations in the Review Board report.

### **2. Supporting Information**

2.1 The attached report contains the findings and recommendations of the Review Board. Supporting documentation is in the Members' Room.

2.2 The Review Board comprised of Councillor Rosalyn St Pierre (Chairman), Sarah Maynard (parent governor representative), Councillor Pat Ost, and Jeremy Taylor (Denominational representative).

2.3 The Review Board took evidence from officers from CfBT (the Centre for British Teachers), which currently holds the School Improvement Service contract for East Sussex County Council. It also sent out a questionnaire to a random selection of school governors in East Sussex to gather views on the current training available and future training needs. A focus session was also held with seven governors to explore some of the issues raised in the questionnaire.

### **3. Recommendation**

3.1 The Committee is recommended to agree the Review Board's report and submit it to Cabinet on 26 January 2009 for comment and County Council on 10 February 2009 for approval.

**Councillor Rosalyn St Pierre**  
**Chairman of the Review Board**

Contact Officer: Gillian Mauger (01273) 481796

Local Members: All

Background Documents: None

# Scrutiny Review of Services for School Governors

## Report by the Project Board

Councillor Rosalyn St Pierre, Chairman

Mrs Sarah Maynard, Parent Governor  
Representative

Councillor Pat Ost

Mr Jeremy Taylor, Director of Education, Diocese  
of Chichester

November 2008

Children's Service Scrutiny Committee – 21 November 2008

Cabinet – 26 January 2009

Full Council – 10 February 2009

**The report of the Scrutiny Review of Services for School Governors**

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## Recommendations

Recommendation	Page
<p><b>1</b></p> <p>a) School Improvement Partners (SIPs) to ensure that there is governing body representation at all termly SIP meetings with headteachers.</p> <p>b) SIPs to examine governing body minutes on an annual basis so that they can build up a picture of a governing body's awareness of particular issues and how these are being addressed by governors.</p>	9
<p><b>2</b></p> <p>Governing bodies to be encouraged to use the recently developed Governor Services 'health check' document to identify their strengths and weaknesses and to use their findings to develop an annual training programme. Access to an independent moderator should be made available to support them in this process.</p>	10
<p><b>3</b></p> <p>The Children's Services Scrutiny Committee to carry out a future scrutiny review of the roles and responsibilities of governing body clerks and provide a judgement on whether a centralised clerking service in East Sussex would be better and more cost effective.</p>	11
<p><b>4</b></p> <p>a) The Local Authority to emphasise strongly that all new governors are expected to undertake induction training.</p> <p>b) Governor Services to ensure that there are sufficient induction sessions held at an increased number of locations to meet any additional demand.</p>	11
<p><b>5</b></p> <p>a) The governor training programme to be redeveloped to provide three clearly defined levels of training: induction, core functions and specialist/advanced training. This would allow governors to access training most suited to their particular level of need as they progress in their role.</p> <p>b) Training and support to be strengthened on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• governor roles and responsibilities;</li> <li>• changes affecting schools and governing bodies at both a local and national level;</li> <li>• School Improvement Partner reports and Self Evaluation Forms;</li> <li>• finance and budgets; and</li> <li>• team working.</li> </ul>	12
<p><b>6</b></p> <p>Governing bodies to undertake sufficient training to ensure that they have a thorough understanding of the headteacher appointment process and succession planning.</p>	12

7	<p><b>Governor Services to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <b>develop its database so that it can be more proactive in using electronic systems to advertise and promote training courses to all governors contactable by email.</b></li> <li>b) <b>redevelop the training brochure to indicate to governing bodies how particular courses can help strengthen their experience and knowledge in areas highlighted within the Ofsted inspection criteria and the school Self Evaluation Form (SEF).</b></li> <li>c) <b>explore different methods for delivering training and support including: e-learning, using experienced governors and visits to other schools.</b></li> </ul>	13
8	<p><b>Each governing body to be encouraged to appoint a governor who has an overview of the training undertaken by their governors and who can highlight when additional training may be required.</b></p>	14
9	<p><b>The Local Authority to review the Governor Services Team and its associate trainers after one year to assess whether it has sufficient capacity and capability to deliver the enhanced training programme and to ensure it can meet demand for whole governing body training sessions.</b></p>	14
10	<p><b>Inform the central government working party that East Sussex County Council considers that there is no evidence to support the statement that smaller governing bodies are more effective; and would not support a mandatory reduction in the current size of governing bodies.</b></p>	15

## Objectives and scope of the review

2. The primary objective of the review was to:  
*Assess, and make recommendations on, how best the local authority can ensure that all governing bodies have the necessary skills and abilities to fulfil their overall responsibility of helping their school provide the best possible education for the pupils.*
3. To achieve this, the Review Board:
  - considered the effectiveness of the current support, training and development opportunities available to governors; and
  - assessed how best the local authority can support governing bodies in East Sussex in carrying out their responsibilities in the future.
4. During the course of the review the board also considered what mechanism could be used to measure whether a governing body is successfully carrying out its responsibility to help its school provide the best possible education for the pupils. It also examined whether it is possible to establish a direct link between governing bodies assessed as being effective in an Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) report and overall school performance.
5. In advance of national consultation on reducing the size of governing bodies, the Review Board took the opportunity to consider whether small governing bodies are more effective than larger ones and gathered the views of governors on what is an optimum size for a governing body.
6. The review took evidence from a range of witnesses. It received 152 responses (a 29% return rate) to a questionnaire sent to a random selection of school governors in East Sussex to gather views on the current training available and future training needs. A focus session was also held with seven governors to explore some of the issues raised in the questionnaire.
7. The review concentrated solely on the issues of training and support and did not cover recruitment and retention of school governors.

## Background

### *The role of school governors*

8. All community, foundation and voluntary schools in England have a governing body. Governors are volunteers and, with an estimated 350,000 governor places in England, they make up the largest volunteer workforce in the country.<sup>1</sup> There are six types of governors who represent:
  - parents
  - school staff
  - the community
  - the local education authority
  - the church
  - businesses and sponsors
9. There are 193 schools in East Sussex with some 2,500 governors. The size of the governing bodies in East Sussex varies from 9 to 20 members. A breakdown of the different types of governors and the numbers in post in East Sussex can be found at appendix 2.

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<sup>1</sup> DfES, Governing the school of the future, (2004)

10. The Education (School Government) (Terms of Reference) (England) Regulations 2000 outlines the respective roles and responsibilities of both governing bodies and headteachers. The overall responsibility of a governing body is to help the school they lead to provide the best possible education for its pupils. This involves:

- Providing a strategic view - setting the school's vision and strategic aims and agreeing plans and policies;
- Evaluating and monitoring - providing support and challenge to the headteacher in a 'critical friend' role and evaluating and monitoring particular issues, such as performance; and
- Ensuring accountability - ensuring that the school is accountable to the children and parents that it serves, to its local community and to those who fund and maintain it.

11. A key function of a governing body is to appoint the headteacher. Governing bodies at foundation and voluntary aided schools also have additional responsibilities to employ staff and decide the admissions arrangements.

12. The roles and responsibilities of governing bodies have grown significantly over the past 20 years. New responsibilities include:

- a duty to promote the well-being of pupils;
- implementing 'safeguarding children' legislation;
- a duty to promote community cohesion (from September 2008 this is assessed as part of an Ofsted inspection);
- implementing new performance management regulations;
- implementing the Every Child Matters agenda;
- new statutory requirements relating to the new Early Years Foundation Stage framework (from September 2008); and
- a new Financial Management Standard (all schools must meet this by March 2010).

### **Governor Services**

13. East Sussex County Council has a duty to provide support to governing bodies and to offer induction training. The provision of governor training in East Sussex is contracted out to the Centre for British Teachers (CfBT) which currently holds the School Improvement Service contract for East Sussex County Council. The Governor Services Team has four staff: two full time posts and two part time posts.

14. Training is delivered by the Governor Services Team, plus six associate trainers and a range of specialist trainers. These specialist trainers are officers, from either East Sussex School Improvement Service or East Sussex County Council, who provide training in specialist areas such as Health and Safety, finance and child protection. Governor Services offers a range of courses including:

- induction training;
- specific training for chairs;
- clerks training and an accreditation course;
- strategic governance courses such as headteacher performance management and financial management ; and
- specialist courses, such as Special Educational Needs (SEN).

15. Some courses are provided at set locations across the county, which are open to all governors. Others are provided for an individual governing body (or a cluster of them). Examples of recent training that has been provided can be found at appendix 3.

16. Questionnaire responses revealed that governors consider the majority of Governor Services training that they had recently attended to be effective:

- 74% stated that the training had enabled them to be effective in their role;

- 22% stated that it had been informative, but had not had any real impact on their role; and
- 4% felt that the training had not been useful.

17. Governors can also access training and development from national organisations such as the National Governors' Association or GovernorNet. Church schools also have the additional resource of diocesan training. Questionnaire responses revealed that governors consider the majority of training provided by these organisations that they had recently attended to be effective:

- 59% stated that the training had enabled them to be effective in their role;
- 34% stated that it had been informative, but had not had any real impact on their role; and
- 6% stated that the training had not been useful.

### ***Funding***

18. Governor Services is funded by the sale of courses and training packages to governing bodies. Three levels of subscription are available ranging from a basic support package up to a full training programme. Those schools that choose not to subscribe to a package can pay for individual training sessions as and when they are required. Charges depend on the level of package purchased and the size of the governing body. In 2007/08 97% of governing bodies at East Sussex schools subscribed to one of the Governor Services training packages, with charges to the schools ranging from £704 to £1,765.

19. In 2007/08 the income for Governor Services was £209,818. 98% of this was generated from subscriptions to training packages and the remaining 2% was generated through charges to governing bodies attending courses on a 'pay as you go' basis.



## Findings and conclusions

20. The Review Board saw plenty of evidence of the enthusiasm and dedication that governors in East Sussex bring to their role and the contribution they make to both their schools and pupils. They also recognised how demanding, time consuming and frustrating the role of a governor can sometimes be.

21. Governors come from a broad range of educational backgrounds and bring to their role a wide range of skills. This creates diverse governing bodies, well equipped to manage a variety of complex tasks, such financial management, personnel etc. However this diversity poses a significant challenge for those responsible for developing training programmes as it needs to suit a range of individual requirements and abilities. This challenge is further compounded by the fact that governors at primary, secondary and special schools can have particular issues that require different training support.

### **Measuring good governance**

22. Ofsted carries out inspections of schools on a three year cycle and makes a judgement on how well each school performs in five main categories:

- overall effectiveness;
- achievement and standards;
- personal development and well-being;
- the quality of provision; and
- leadership and management.

23. Each of these categories is graded, ranging from 1 (excellent/outstanding) to 4 (unsatisfactory/inadequate). Within each category there are several separate sub grades awarded for particular responsibilities. The Review Board focussed on the 'governance grade' awarded for the 'extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities' (which sits within the 'leadership and management' category) to try to assess how effective governing bodies in East Sussex are.

24. Figure 1 shows that of the 56 schools inspected in East Sussex between April 2007 and March 2008, all but two received a satisfactory or better grade for governance.

**Fig 1. Ofsted inspections in East Sussex between April 2007 and March 2008**

Type of school	Number inspected	Governance graded good or better (grades 1 & 2)		Governance graded satisfactory (grade 3)		Governance graded inadequate (grade 4)	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Primary & Nursery	44	29	66%	13	30%	2	5%
Secondary	7	5	71%	2	29%	0	0
Special	5	2	40%	3	60%	0	0
<b>Total of schools</b>	<b>56*</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4%</b>

\* = 29% of schools within East Sussex

25. However, the nature of an Ofsted inspection, which can take a day to complete in some of the smaller primary schools, means that there is normally not enough time to concentrate on each individual category in depth. Ofsted recognises that there is a link between performance in the three areas of: education standards, leadership & management and teaching & learning. Furthermore, it tends not to give specific attention to governing bodies in schools that are deemed to be performing well in 'leadership and management'. So it is likely that schools which are graded good or outstanding for 'leadership and management' will often receive the same grade for governance.

26. This means that the governance grade from an Ofsted inspection is not sufficient to give a complete picture of the effectiveness of a governing body. What is needed is local knowledge, which is best built up by the Local Authority, the School Improvement Service and Governor Services.

27. Approximately five years ago there were some instances in East Sussex where it came as a complete surprise to a governing body that their school was in danger of failing. Since then a more robust monitoring system has been put in place and the Local Authority now has a clearer understanding of its schools. It is therefore better able to predict which schools and governing bodies need more support and can therefore target them more effectively.

28. One of the ways it does this is through School Improvement Partners (SIPs). These were introduced following the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and are employed by the Local Authority to help schools develop a self-evaluation process and plan for improvement. SIPs are often serving or former headteachers from schools in East Sussex or neighbouring authorities. Typically they carry out five visits to a school during the year to cover five key areas:

- standards and overall effectiveness;
- target setting;
- headteacher performance management;
- school Self Evaluation Form (including leadership and management and school improvement planning); and
- quality of provision for specific areas e.g. SEN.

29. Each of these visits includes a meeting with the headteacher at which a governing body representative is encouraged to attend. Evidence suggests that only around 50% of governing bodies are represented at these meetings at present. These meetings are extremely useful as they highlight any problems or issues at an early stage and help identify action to be taken to make improvements. If governors are not taking part in these discussions there is a risk that the governing body is missing out on important detail about what is going on within their school and their ability to assist with improvements is diminished.

30. The minutes from full governing body meetings provide a useful insight into the main issues that the governing body is concentrating its time on and the extent to which these issues are discussed and understood. For a period Governor Services looked at all governing body minutes, but this was not sustainable due to the volume and a lack of resources. Now the team concentrates on governing body minutes from schools which are graded 3, 4 or 5 by CfBT to help monitor the quality and content of them and to identify any general issues. The Review Board recommends that SIPs also monitor governing body minutes. This would enable SIPs to build up a picture of a governing body's awareness of particular issues and how these are being addressed by governors. This would then help SIPs in their role of identifying and developing improvements within the school.

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## Recommendation 1

- a) School Improvement Partners (SIPs) to ensure that there is governing body representation at all termly SIP meetings with headteachers.**

- b) **SIPs to examine governing body minutes on an annual basis so that they can build up a picture of a governing body's awareness of particular issues and how these are being addressed by governors.**
- 

### ***Identifying training needs***

31. A regular self assessment by governors and governing bodies as to their strengths and weaknesses helps identify current and future training needs. Governor Services has recently developed a 'health check' document which is designed to be used by governing bodies to identify their strengths, weaknesses, effectiveness and areas for improvement. Results from the questionnaire revealed that governors support the use of regular self assessments:

- 109 governors (76%) agreed, or strongly agreed, that all governors would benefit from a personal review to identify their training needs; and
- 135 governors (91%) agreed, or strongly agreed, that governing bodies would benefit from carrying out an annual review to identify its strengths and weaknesses.

32. Another suggestion put forward by a few governors was that an independent adviser or moderator should attend a full governing body meeting once a year to observe proceedings and provide a view on potential improvements. This would allow for external moderation of a governing body and for impartial advice to be provided to help a governing body remain as effective as possible.

33. Evidence from governors who had been involved with schools in special measures suggests that these governing bodies may have:

- lacked the ability to offer challenge to the senior management team;
- not been clear of their powers or how to use them; and
- not been able to identify their own weaknesses.

34. It is not possible to say that having had sufficient training in these areas would have enabled these governing bodies to have prevented their school going into special measures. However, not having these key skills can put a governing body at a great disadvantage in being able to offer support and challenge to their school at a time when it is most needed.

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### **Recommendation 2**

**Governing bodies to be encouraged to use the recently developed Governor Services 'health check' document to identify their strengths and weaknesses and to use their findings to develop an annual training programme. Access to an independent moderator should be made available to support them in this process.**

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### Clerks

35. Governing body clerks can play a key role in helping governors be effective through offering support and advice. Evidence from other local authorities reveals that some governor services provide a centralised clerking service (17 out of the 26 surveyed – 65%). This centralised service could offer such benefits as a common standard of competency, an independence from the school (a possible issue where clerks are school secretaries or PAs to the headteacher) and access to centralised support and equipment. There could also be an opportunity to expand the role of clerks to provide greater support to governors. For example, carrying out background research and more detailed preparation prior to governing body meetings and thereby enabling governors to make better use of their time to concentrate on important issues.

36. The Review Board recognised that a centralised system may also have disadvantages, in that it could be expensive to run or may limit flexibility. As the role of clerks was not specifically within the remit of this review and the Review Board did not have the time available to explore these issues further and therefore concluded that further work was needed in this area.

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### **Recommendation 3**

**The Children's Services Scrutiny Committee to carry out a future scrutiny review of the roles and responsibilities of governing body clerks and provide a judgement on whether a centralised clerking service in East Sussex would be better and more cost effective.**

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#### ***Delivering training***

##### Induction training

37. Many governors recognise how important induction training is to ensure that they gain at the outset a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities to enable them to make a positive impact on their governing body. They strongly support the need for induction training and results from the questionnaire show that 94% (142 governors) feel that induction training should be compulsory. The Review Board, whilst wishing to endorse compulsory induction training, recognised that it could run the risk of dampening enthusiasm and deterring future governors from applying. It therefore recommends that there should be a strong statement of expectation by the Local Authority that all new governors undertake induction training.

38. Currently, induction training is provided either as a one day course or over three half day or evening sessions. The sessions are available three times a year (during the autumn, spring and summer terms) at five different locations across the County. Whilst this gives governors scope to attend training at a time and location that best suits them, evidence from the questionnaire and the focus group suggests that there are still some problems with accessibility. The Review Board concluded that access to induction training should be increased to ensure that all new governors are able to complete it as soon as possible after taking up their role.

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### **Recommendation 4**

- a) The Local Authority to emphasise strongly that all new governors are expected to undertake induction training.**
  - b) Governor Services to ensure that there are sufficient induction sessions held at an increased number of locations to meet any additional demand.**
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#### Ongoing training

39. The questionnaire revealed that 94% of governors (142 governors) were supportive of the need for all governors to undertake ongoing training to enable them to remain effective in their role.

40. Some governors remain in their role for several years (results from the questionnaire reveal that 28% had been a governor for between 5 and 9 years and 16% for over 10 years). Training needs vary for governors over the period of time that they are in post from basic induction training through to specialised training for more demanding roles such as chairs of committees. The training programme needs to be redeveloped to meet the needs of governors as they gain experience to help them develop and expand their skills and knowledge. This could be done by restructuring the programme so that training is provided at a range of levels to suit particular needs and expertise.

41. The type of expertise and ongoing training that governors themselves identified as needing more support in included:

- governors' roles and responsibilities (this was a particular issue for some governing bodies who felt that their headteachers might not be sharing information with them under the pretext that it was not their area of responsibility);
- keeping up to date on changes affecting schools and governing bodies at both a local and national level;
- understanding School Improvement Partner (SIP) reports and Self Evaluation Forms (SEF);
- finance and budgets; and
- encouraging and supporting team work (better team work was recognised as helping support a governing body to counterbalance, say, a potentially dominant chair or an uncommunicative head teacher and thereby ensure that a governing body can better manage these issues).

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### **Recommendation 5**

- a) **The training programme to be redeveloped to provide three clearly defined levels of training: induction, core functions and specialist/advanced training. This would allow governors to access training most suited to their particular level of need as they progress in their role.**
- b) **Training and support to be strengthened on:**
  - **governor roles and responsibilities;**
  - **changes affecting schools and governing bodies at both a local and national level;**
  - **School Improvement Partner reports and Self Evaluation Forms;**
  - **finance and budgets; and**
  - **team working.**

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### Headteacher appointments and succession planning

42. The most important role of a governing body is to appoint a headteacher and it is therefore essential that governing bodies are clear about their roles and responsibilities in making these appointments. Governing bodies are expected to have a thorough understanding of the appointment process and ensure that this is managed in a precise and effective manner that fulfils legal requirements.

43. A large number of headteachers will be reaching retirement age over the next few years. Succession planning within schools is therefore important to ensure that there are a sufficient number of teachers across the County who have the capability of taking on a headteacher post. Governing bodies have an active role to play in ensuring that structures and processes are in place within their schools to help with succession planning.

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### **Recommendation 6**

**Governing bodies to undertake sufficient training to ensure that they have a thorough understanding of the headteacher appointment process and succession planning.**

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### ***Marketing and provision of training***

44. The Review Board supported the current initiative of Governor Services to provide email alerts to clerks and chairs highlighting forthcoming training, but felt that this system could be expanded to all governors contactable by email. There is also scope for a system to be developed to send out automatic prompts to governing bodies about specific training, eg chairs training for newly elected chairs or finance training for newly elected chairs of finance committees.

45. During research into the training programmes provided at other local authorities the Review Board considered how the promotion of courses is undertaken and the guidance given to governors as to which courses would best suit their needs. A particularly good guide was found to be the 'Planning your governors' development' produced by Hampshire County Council. This suggests a range of courses that a new governor should undertake during their first two years in their role. It also highlights and promotes courses that would help a governing body gain experience and knowledge to enable it to achieve the key responsibilities as monitored by Ofsted.

46. Evidence from other local authorities also revealed that there are a range of different tools available to provide training or help support governors. The Review Board recommends that this should be explored further, particularly around:

- e-learning to provide training or support (eg 'key questions governors should ask' check list);
- using experienced governors to support and train colleagues in other governing bodies; and
- visits to other schools and governing bodies to learn from their experience.

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## **Recommendation 7**

### **Governor Services to:**

- a) develop its database so that it can be more proactive in using electronic systems to advertise and promote training courses to all governors contactable by email.**
  - b) redevelop the training brochure to indicate to governing bodies how particular courses can help strengthen their experience and knowledge in areas highlighted within the Ofsted inspection criteria and the school Self Evaluation Form (SEF).**
  - c) explore different methods for delivering training and support including: e-learning, using experienced governors and visits to other schools.**
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## Overview of training within the governing body

47. Historically some governing bodies in East Sussex have appointed a 'link governor' who has had a responsibility for managing the training needs of that governing body and booking training courses on behalf of individual governors. This practice is discouraged by Governor Services as it can take away the individual responsibility of governors to be proactive in accessing training themselves.

48. However, results from the questionnaire show that 116 governors (82%) agreed, or strongly agreed, that "all governing bodies would benefit from having a governor who is responsible for managing the training needs of the governing body, rather than governors themselves being solely responsible for their own individual training needs".

49. The Review Board recognised that all governors need to take some responsibility for their own training and should be encouraged to actively pursue training courses that meet their needs. However, it recognised that there would also be advantages for each governing body to identify a governor who has a responsibility for monitoring the training that has been undertaken by the governors and highlighting areas where individual or whole governing body training might help.

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### **Recommendation 8**

**Each governing body to be encouraged to appoint a governor who has an overview of the training undertaken by their governors and who can highlight when additional training may be required.**

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## Resources to provide training

50. If all governing bodies currently entitled to a whole governing body training session (as part of their training package) took up this entitlement it would be a challenge for Governor Services to organise it within the current resources it has available. The Review Board also had concerns about the size of the associate trainer team, which is currently six. Any reduction in numbers, say due to resignations or sickness, could lay the team open to a risk of being unable to meet current commitments. The Review Board also recognised that the changes it was suggesting to the provision and marketing of governor training could have a further impact on the resources of Governor Services and raise capacity issues.

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### **Recommendation 9**

**The Local Authority to review the Governor Services Team and its associate trainers after one year to assess whether it has sufficient capacity and capability to deliver the enhanced training programme and to ensure it can meet demand for whole governing body training sessions.**

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## ***Size of governing bodies***

51. The Children's Plan (2007) states that, "smaller governing bodies tend to be more effective and highly skilled" [than larger ones]. Whether this is true or not is currently being debated by a central government working party which is likely to carry out national consultation with governors towards the end of 2008 on reducing the size of governing bodies.

52. To assist with this consultation the questionnaire to governors asked for their views on the optimum size of a governing body. The preferred size appears to be 11 to 15 (62 governors, 43% of responses), followed by 6 to 10 (49 governors, 34% of responses). A further 13 governors felt that the size did not matter and 10 stated that the size of the governing body should be dependent on the size of the school.

53. The Review Board considered the Ofsted inspection results from 34 schools inspected between May 2007 and April 2008 and compared the grade received for the governing body with the size of that governing body. The evidence appears to show that there is no correlation between the size of a governing body and the score that the governing body receives during an Ofsted inspection.

54. The Review Board also had concerns that severely reducing the size of governing bodies could result in an increased workload pressures and responsibilities for a smaller number of volunteers. This could have a detrimental effect on the effectiveness of these governors over a prolonged period of time and even deter people from becoming governors as the job could become too onerous.

55. Rather than concentrating on the size of governing body, more importance should be placed on ensuring that a governing body has the correct committee structure in place and that each governor's time is being used effectively to concentrate on strategic issues, such as performance and finance.

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#### **Recommendation 10**

**Inform the central government working party that East Sussex County Council considers that there is no evidence to support the statement that smaller governing bodies are more effective; and would not support a mandatory reduction in the current size of governing bodies.**

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# Appendix 1

## ***Review Board membership and support***

Review Board Members: Councillor Rosalyn St Pierre (Chairman), Sarah Maynard (Parent Governor representative), Councillor Pat Ost and Jeremy Taylor (Denominational representative).

The Project Manager was Gillian Mauer (Scrutiny Lead Officer) with logistics and support provided by Sam White (Scrutiny Support Officer).

## ***Review Board meeting dates***

19<sup>th</sup> May, 17<sup>th</sup> June, 29<sup>th</sup> July, 19<sup>th</sup> August, 9<sup>th</sup> September, 24<sup>th</sup> September, 14<sup>th</sup> October, 29<sup>th</sup> October 2008

## ***Witnesses providing evidence***

**The Board would like to thank all the witnesses who provided evidence in person:**

- Peter Davidson, Governor Services Manager, CfBT
- Martin Kaliszewski, Data & Performance Management Adviser/Contact Adviser, CfBT
- Nina Siddall, Chief Adviser, Primary School Improvement Service, CfBT
- Clive Whitburn, Primary School Improvement Partners Manager, CfBT

**The Review Board would also like to thank the following for their help:**

- The Governor Services Team
- Governor Services at neighbouring authorities who provided details on their services
- Tim Carpenter, East Sussex in Figures Coordinator, ESCC
- Helen Howard, Head of Secondary Learning Effectiveness, Secondary School Improvement Service, CfBT
- Patricia Metham, HMI
- Frances Migniuolo, Local Government Information Unit
- Phil Revell, Chief Executive, National Governors' Association
- Helen Richardson, National Co-ordinators of Governor Services
- Raffaele Sasso, Data Analyst, Ofsted

Governors:

- Joyce Bacon, All Saints CE Junior School, Hastings
- Nicholas Bacon, All Saints CE Junior School, Hastings
- Professor Richard Clymo, Robertsbridge Community College
- Alison Doig, Heathfield Community College and Dallington CE Primary School
- Jill Fisher, Chair of Governors at Chailey Secondary School
- Shirley Lawes, Helenswood School, Hastings
- Chris Miles, Chair of Governors at St Peter and St Paul CE Primary School, Bexhill
- Clifford Smith, Chair of Governors at Christ Church CE Primary School, St Leonards on Sea
- Margaret Southworth, Cuckmere House, Seaford and St Mary's, Horam Federation

## Consultation with Governors

The Review Board was extremely grateful to all the governors who took the time to participate in the questionnaire. The comments received enabled the Review Board to build up a detailed picture of training and support available in East Sussex and have helped formulate several of the recommendations.

## ***Evidence papers***

<b>Item</b>	<b>Date</b>
<i>The Education Act</i>	2002
<i>The School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations</i>	2007
<i>The Children's Plan</i> (specifically items 4.73 and 4.74)	December 2007
<i>Governing the school of the future</i> , Department for Education and Skills	2004
<i>The work of school governors</i> , Ofsted	May 2002
<i>School governance – making it better</i> , Ofsted	2001
<i>Schools, governors and disadvantage</i> , Joseph Rowntree Foundation	June 2007
<i>Recruitment, retention and training of school governors</i> , East Sussex County Council Scrutiny Scoping Review	September 2003
National benchmarking of Governor Services	April 2007 – March 2008
<i>Planning your governors' development</i> , Hampshire County Council	
<i>The role of school governors in appointing a head teacher</i> , Dissertation by Caroline Taylor, Governor Services, CfBT	November 2007
<i>What governing bodies should expect from school leaders and what school leaders should expect from governing bodies</i> , Association of School and College Leaders, National Governors' Association and The Association for all School Leaders	September 2008

Contact officer:

Gillian Mauger (Scrutiny Lead Officer)

Telephone: 01273 481796

E-mail: [gillian.mauger@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:gillian.mauger@eastsussex.gov.uk)

An information pack containing the results from the questionnaire can be obtained by contacting the Scrutiny Lead Officer

## Appendix 2 – Governors in East Sussex

**Fig 2: Outline of governors in East Sussex at March 2008**

Type of governor	Positions	Positions filled	Vacancies	Vacancies as % of positions
<b>Parent</b> <i>Elected positions. Governors should represent the views of parents generally, but can make up their own minds about how to vote on specific issues</i>	880	780	100	(11%)
<b>Staff (including Head teacher)</b> <i>Staff positions are elected. They should represent the views of staff generally, but can make up their own minds about how to vote on specific issues</i> <i>Head teachers can choose if they wish to be a governor</i>	612	564	48	(8%)
<b>Community</b> <i>Appointed by the governing body. These governors cannot be people who work at the school</i>	507	406	101	(20%)
<b>LEA</b> <i>Appointed by the local authority that maintains the school</i>	465	415	50	(11%)
<b>Foundation</b> <i>Only in voluntary schools. They are normally appointed by either the Diocese or the local church</i>	378	326	52	(14%)
<b>Sponsor</b> <i>Appointed by the governing body. They include people who give substantial assistance to the school</i>	15	4	11	(73%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,857</b>	<b>2,495<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>362</b>	<b>(13%)</b>

<sup>2</sup> The total number of individual governors is 2,433. This is due to the fact that some governors hold more than one post

## Appendix 3 - Training delivered by Governor Services

**Fig 3: A 'snapshot' of courses provided by Governor Services during term 4 (25 February to April 2008)**

Course Title	Total Attending	Evaluations Returned	Overall the course was:		
			Very useful	Useful	Not useful
Taking Effective Governing Body Minutes	14	14	10	4	
Recruitment & Selection	12	12	9	3	
Learning Platforms	12	10	6	3	1
Induction for New Governors	8	0			
Induction for New Governors	18	18	14	4	
Safeguarding Children	12	0			
Induction for New Governors	8	0			
Induction for New Governors	15	14	13	1	
RAISEonline	11	7	6	1	
Recruitment & Selection	20	14*	11	2	
Exclusion Practice & Procedures	21	21*	9	11	
Induction for New Governors	8	0			
Induction for New Governors	14	13	11	2	
RAISEonline	15	0			
Health & Safety	10	9	7	2	
Extended Schools	14	13	6	7	
Induction for New Governors	22	13	10	3	
Learning Platforms	17	14	5	9	
Induction for New Governors	22	9	6	3	
Learning Platforms	18	17	10	7	
Induction for New Governors	18	16*	7	8	
<b>Total attendees</b>	<b>309</b>				
<b>Percentage of evaluations returned</b>		<b>69%</b>			
<b>Percentage of each overall rating</b>			<b>65%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>

\* = 1 evaluation from each of these courses did not give an overall rating for the course

**Fig 4: Summary of type of governor training delivered in 2007/08**

Type of training/course/ conference	Total courses	Total attendances*	Evaluations received	
Centre based governor training	116	1875	very useful - 68%	useful - 31%
Whole governing body courses	101	990	very useful - 80%	useful - 20%
Governing body cluster training	2	40		
Annual Governors' 2007 Conference	-	68	outstanding - 44%	good - 56%

\* = some governors attended more than one training session.