

Report to: **Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **8 March 2010**

By: **Director of Children’s Services**

Title of report: **Initial update report on Scrutiny Review of Governing Body Clerks**

Purpose of report: **To inform the committee progress by the department in taking forward the recommendations outlined in the final report by the review board.**

RECOMMENDATION: The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report and the draft action plan appendix and support the progress being made.

1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 The Schools Forum agreed to commit expenditure to the development and maintenance of this service.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 Governor Services welcomed the recommendation to establish a centrally run and managed clerking service. This is a logical extension of the development and support work currently being undertaken to improve the quality and consistency of clerking support governing bodies. The scrutiny review of clerking services grew out of the review of local authority support for governing bodies in general which is covered under a separate report.

2.2 The clerking report made four recommendations and the table below lists those recommendations and the actions taken.

| Recommendation | Actions to date |
|--|---|
| <p>1 Governor Services to develop a centrally run clerking service.</p> | <p>This is now happening. A draft action plan leading to implementation of phase one on 19 April 2010 was presented to the Secondary Heads Strategic Group on 3 Feb and the Primary Heads Strategic Group 8 February. This met with broad approval and is attached as Appendix 1 it is still draft and timescales may need to be revised to accommodate personnel issues. Also it still has to be discussed at the Governors’ County Forum on the 30 March 2010.</p> |
| <p>2 A bid to be made to the Schools Forum for £427,000 from the Headroom funding to enable a clerking service to be set up and administered by Governor Services.</p> | <p>The funding bid was approved by the Schools Forum. £6000 was used to pay for the external consultants report. A summary from the recommendations is attached as Appendix 2. £64,000 has been retained in the clerking service budget to meet expenditure to the end of the financial preparing for the introduction of phase one.</p> <p>A budget re-appraisal will be conducted during May after consultation with IT services about IT</p> |

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| | | provision for the clerks. |
| 3 | The pay scales for clerks working in the clerking service to be re-assessed to ensure that the salaries reflect the additional roles and responsibilities that clerks will be undertaking. | We have met with personnel and Workforce Planning and the necessary Managing Change Policy will need to be implemented in relation to this proposal. Further meetings are scheduled for March. |
| 4 | The criteria for measuring the effectiveness of the clerking service to be developed in line with the short, medium and long term measures outlined at paragraph 41 of the scrutiny report. | <p>Criteria for measuring the effectiveness of clerks will be built into the job and person description of the clerks and the Clerking Service Manager during work with Personnel in February and March 2010.</p> <p>The relationship between the chair and the Clerking Service Manager will ensure that any dissatisfactions with the quality of clerking will be addressed quickly.</p> <p>26 Clerks are enrolled on the BTEC Accreditation course. 7 have already achieved the qualification. A further intake of 10 will start the course in the Autumn.</p> <p>We are considering developing an external consultant to be a quality assurance inspector who will observe clerks in operation and provide qualitative feedback to the Clerking Service Manager.</p> |

3 Conclusion and Recommendations

3.1 The committee are asked to note the contents of this report and the draft action plan appendix and support the progress being made.

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Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Peter Davidson, Governor Services Manager Tel: 01323 466889

Local Members: All

Background Documents: None

**Information for School and College Governors (ISCG)
Summary of Recommendations taken from the report**

1. ISCG recommends that an expert professional analysis of the total amount of work involved should be carried out to assess whether further posts will be needed. ISCG recommend that the audit should be done by someone who is not part of the present team, but who is involved in education and has some knowledge of the area (p6)
2. ISCG recommend that Governor Services have discussions with John Moore about how the facility could be adapted for their needs. (p7)
3. For the opening phase of the project, ISCG recommend that the central support team identify a group of clerks and schools who are interested in joining the scheme, around 20 schools and 5/10 clerks as a maximum. (p8)
4. A standard Service Level Agreement (SLA) must be agreed between the clerking service and governing bodies that it is absolutely clear what services are covered, what are excluded and what service levels can be expected. Each central clerk will need to have a formal written contract of employment with Governor Services based on the SLA. (p8)
5. ISCG recommend that all schools, primary, secondary and special, employing a central clerk should be given 130 hours clerking support. (p9)
6. Salaries should be paid in twelve equal monthly instalments based to the maximum hours agreed (130 hours) and the number of schools served. The costs would be drawn from the Governor Services budget. (p10)
7. ISCG recommend that all the members of the team attend all the meetings of those interested in joining the first phase. (p13)
8. ISCG recommend that it should be made clear to schools, governors and clerks that clerks who already have another job within a school cannot continue as clerk to that school if they wish to join the centralised system. (p13)
9. ISCG recommend that benchmarking and evaluation be carried out by an external team in consultation with the central support team. (p13)