

Report to: **Children's Services Scrutiny Committee**  
Date: **8 March 2010**  
By: **Director of Children's Services**  
Title of report: **Scrutiny review of support for school governors – Initial Update**  
Purpose of report: **To report on progress by the department in taking forward the recommendations outlined in the final report by the review board.**

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**RECOMMENDATION: The Committee is recommended to accept the report of the progress made since the review.**

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### **1. Financial Appraisal**

1.1 There are no financial implications for the Council. Any additional expenditure is covered from the Governor Services budget.

### **2. Supporting Information**

2.1 Governor Services have implemented all the recommendations from the report and are satisfied with the impact they have had. Please see **Appendix 1** attached.

### **3 Conclusion and Recommendations**

3.1 The Scrutiny Committee is recommended to accept the report and note the progress 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



**Appendix 1**

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

**Recommendations**

<b>Recommendation</b>		<b>Action and Impact</b>
<b>1</b>	<p>a) <b>School Improvement Partners (SIPs) to ensure that there is governing body representation at all termly SIP meetings with headteachers.</b></p> <p>b) <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.</b></p>	<p>Governor Services Manager attended a meeting of the SIP focus Group on the 9 January 09 to discuss involving governors more in both the headteacher performance management sessions and making more explicit the expectation that governing bodies should be represented at all termly meetings.</p> <p>SIPs confirmed that they send reports to Chairs of Governors who are responsible for their distribution for discussion at governing body meetings.</p> <p>SIPs contact Governor Services who forward minutes, particularly of Schools Requiring Additional Support.</p>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>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.</b></p>	<p>Associate Trainers have been trained to facilitate this session. Now in annual programme.</p> <p>Ten sessions called 'Governing Body Health Check' have been delivered since 1Jan 2009. The 'Health Check' pack has been available for governing bodies to self-administer and governors at area meetings have told us they have used it leading to changes in processes and requests for further development.</p> <p>A new Associate Trainer has been appointed who is providing a GB consultancy service where the GB governing body is observed in action and then feedback on their performance is given. This is new and quite intensive and so far three governing bodies have used the service. It is being added to the 2010 programme.</p>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>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.</b></p>	<p>See separate report on this.</p>

## East Sussex School Improvement Service Governor Services



4	<p>a) <b>The Local Authority to emphasise strongly that all new governors are expected to undertake induction training.</b></p> <p>b) <b>Governor Services to ensure that there are sufficient induction sessions held at an increased number of locations to meet any additional demand.</b></p>	<p>The welcome letter sent out to new governors sets out a requirement for all new governors to attend induction training on offer at venues throughout the county.</p> <p>More induction sessions were added to the programme spread across the county. 15 induction courses have been run since 1 Jan 2009 and each course comprises 3 sessions. This is an increase from 12 in 2008.</p> <p>Of 390 new governors starting since Jan 2009 249 have attended induction. This represents 64% and the national average is 51%.</p>
5	<p>a) <b>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.</b></p> <p>b) <b>Training and support to be strengthened on:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>governor roles and responsibilities;</b></li> <li>• <b>changes affecting schools and governing bodies at both a local and national level;</b></li> <li>• <b>School Improvement Partner reports and Self Evaluation Forms;</b></li> <li>• <b>finance and budgets; and</b></li> <li>• <b>team working.</b></li> </ul>	<p>The training programme is currently divided into three levels called</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductory,</li> <li>• Developing Good Governance,</li> <li>• Promoting Strategic Governance.</li> </ul> <p>In the new training brochure we will make clear that the levels correspond to introductory, core and specialist training. These sentences have been added under the existing headings on the contents page:</p> <p><u>Introductory Courses</u> These sessions are particularly useful for new governors.</p> <p><u>Developing Good Governance</u> These sessions cover the core functions of a governing body and are suitable for governors with some experience who want to develop their understanding and skills.</p> <p><u>Promoting Strategic Governance</u> These courses are for all governors even those relatively new who want to develop specific skills to supplement their ability as a governor.</p> <p>The 'Health Check' session reinforces governor understanding of their roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Governors as Partners (GaP) newsletter will continue to provide updates as will the Area Meeting papers.</p> <p>Any changes in the format or application of the SEF will be passed on to governors during training sessions or chairs consultancy. The</p>

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		<p>'Being Prepared for Ofsted' session now features the revised Leadership and Management and Governance grade descriptors.</p> <p>Introduction to Financial Management Standard in Schools (FMSiS) is now included in the induction programme.</p> <p>Since 1 January 2009, 162 governing bodies have achieved the standard including 4 retakes, 23 are in progress and ten have failed and need to resubmit.</p>
6	<p><b>Governing bodies to undertake sufficient training to ensure that they have a thorough understanding of the headteacher appointment process and succession planning.</b></p>	<p>The session presented to governing bodies who are about to start a headteacher recruitment process has been revised and updated in collaboration with Personnel and Senior Advisers. 32 schools have received this session since 1 January 2009.</p>
7	<p><b>Governor Services to:</b></p> <p><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></p> <p><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></p> <p><b>explore different methods for delivering training and support including: e-learning, using experienced governors and visits to other schools.</b></p>	<p>Work to make more effective use of Governor Manager is ongoing. Targeting individual governors by email is now possible. Electronic reminders of courses are sent to clerks. A flyer for all courses in terms 3 and 4 was sent to clerks to promote attendance.</p> <p>A recent SEN Governors Forum had 4 governors enrolled. After an electronic reminder the number rose to 30.</p> <p>The 'Being Prepared for Ofsted' includes an indepth review of the governor involvement with the SEF and in particular the section on Leadership and Management. Associate Trainers are briefed during our associate trainer development meetings to point out to governors during whole governing body sessions and other sessions the links between the course and the current version of the SEF. The 'Safeguarding Children' and the promoting 'Well Being' course descriptions will include reference to the SEF.</p> <p>'Governors e-learning', a semi-commercial package has been available since September 2009. This has been heavily promoted by clerks, features in the new Service Agreement and to date 84 governors have signed up. A registration link has been added at the foot of training e-mails to governors.</p> <p>Exemplars of good governance will be distributed</p>

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		through the clerks' development sessions with an invitation to governing bodies to make and receive contact. Support and facilitation will be offered by Governor Services
8	<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>	Clerks are asked during clerks briefing sessions to encourage this by suggesting it as an agenda item. The pro-active clerks have responded well to this.
9	<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>	Governor Services support the review and continue to monitor capacity.  Associate trainer availability is flexible and reliable. All sessions have run as planned and we have met all requests for whole governing body training.
10	<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>	When the Ministerial Working Group publishes its findings and the consultation begins Governor Services will liaise with the Lead Member for Children's Services to ensure a local authority response is submitted.  Latest news from NGA is the review will be published and Vernon Coaker, Minister of State for Schools and Learners, told delegates that they are awaiting the outcome of the review which will include mandatory training and updated training materials for governors and clerks.