

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

Date: **9 November 2010**

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

Title of report: **Scrutiny review of services for school governors – final 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.**

RECOMMENDATION: The Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the progress made since the review.

1. Financial Appraisal

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

2. Supporting Information

2.1 The scrutiny review of support for school governors was carried out by Councillor Rosalyn St Pierre (Chairman), Mrs Sarah Maynard, Parent Governor Representative, Councillor Pat Ost and Mr Jeremy Taylor, Director of Education, Diocese of Chichester. The Review Board presented its final report to the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee in November 2008

2.2 Governor Services have implemented all the recommendations from the report and are satisfied with the progress made.

2.3 An updated action plan highlighting the action taken to meet the recommendations from the scrutiny review is attached at **Appendix 1**.

3. Conclusion and Recommendations

3.1 The Scrutiny Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the progress made since the review.

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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

Action plan resulting from the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review of Services for School Governors

Recommendation	Action and Impact
<p>1</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>	<p>Out of a random sample of 50 primary schools 44 schools (88%) had governor attendance at one or more SIP visits in 2009-10.</p> <p>Six schools had not had governor attendance but none of these were schools causing concern.</p> <p>This is an improvement.</p> <p>SIPs previously advised that they send reports to chairs of governors who are responsible for their distribution for discussion at governing body meetings.</p> <p>Governing body minutes are now monitored as part of the Clerking Service to ensure appropriate distribution of SIP reports.</p>
<p>2</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>	<p>Associate Trainers have been trained to facilitate this Health Check session and it is now in the annual programme.</p> <p>Five sessions called 'Governing Body Health Check' have been delivered since March 2010. 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>Associate Trainers have been providing a GB consultancy service where the GB governing body is observed in action and then feedback on their performance is given. This was added to the 2010 programme. Three of these intensive sessions have been delivered since the last update. Response from governing bodies receiving the service has been good.</p>
<p>3</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>	<p>The Clerking Service became operational on 1 Sept 2010.</p> <p>There will be an update report on this at the March 2011 CS Scrutiny Committee.</p>

Recommendation	Action and Impact
<p>4</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>	<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. This is reinforced in our training for clerks.</p> <p>Induction courses are in three sessions. Nine, evening sessions, three daytime sessions and three whole day sessions are in the 2010-11 training brochure. They are provided in various locations across the county.</p> <p>Since March 2010, 446 governors have been appointed or re-appointed.</p> <p>There have been seven induction courses since March 2010 with an average attendance of 20 on each course.</p> <p>In 2009-2010 81% of new governors attended induction. The national average is 51% and the average for our geographical neighbours is 69%.</p> <p>We continue to monitor the take-up of induction sessions and promote the requirement for new governors to attend.</p>
<p>5</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"> • 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; • team working. 	<p>The training programme is currently arranged in three levels called</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory, • Developing Good Governance, • Promoting Strategic Governance. <p>In the training brochure we make clear that the levels correspond to introductory, core and specialist training.</p> <p>A section has been added to the brochure outlining the support available for clerks.</p> <p>The 'Health Check' session reinforces governor understanding of their roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Governors as Partners (GaP) newsletters continue to provide updates as do 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.</p> <p>Introduction to Financial Management Standard in Schools (FMSiS) is now included in the induction programme. Three sessions have run since March 2010 and a total 60 governors have been trained. This is acceptable because we encourage governing bodies to focus financial expertise in one or two governors.</p>

Recommendation		Action and Impact
6	<p>Governing bodies to undertake sufficient training to ensure that they have a thorough understanding of the headteacher appointment process and succession planning.</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. This session continues to be offered to all schools with a headteacher vacancy. Six schools have used this since March.</p>
7	<p>Governor Services to: 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.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>explore different methods for delivering training and support including: e-learning, using experienced governors and visits to other schools.</p>	<p>The technical support for Governor Manager, the database used, has been transferred to the ESCC in-house IT support team. This has enabled more customisation of functionality.</p> <p>Each month an electronic reminder is now sent to all governors advertising training sessions for that month and prompting them to email and register a place.</p> <p>Attendance at sessions has continued to improve.</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 governors continue to enroll. A registration link has been added at the foot of training e-mails to governors.</p> <p>Work is under way to develop a Governor Learning Journey which links pathways through training according to a governor’s interest and level of experience.</p>
8	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Governors are encourage to be autonomous and proactive in their training and a key governor is asked to ensure with the clerk that governor training is reviewed at each meeting.</p>
9	<p>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.</p>	<p>To meet the additional demands of the Clerking Service, a Clerking Service Manager was appointed to the Governor Services team in July 2010.</p> <p>Associate trainers have been recruited to replace colleagues who are no longer available for work.</p>
10	<p>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.</p>	<p>Governor Services continues to provide guidance for governing bodies to establish an optimum size and committee makeup for each governing body.</p> <p>Schools have continued to adopt a revised two committee structure.</p>