

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

Date: **7 March 2011**

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

Title of report: **Outcomes from the scrutiny review of Governing Body Clerks**

Purpose of report: **To inform the committee of 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.

1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 The Schools Forum agreed to commit expenditure to the development and maintenance of the Central Clerking Service.

1.2 Budget 2010-2011

Description	Total
Funding available	£494,000
2010/11 budget allocation £436,000	
2009/10 carried forward £58,000	
Forecast spend	£295,784
Variation	(£198,216)

Variation is mainly a result of the Service not being launched until September 2010 and the Clerking Service Manager not commencing until July 2010.

2. Supporting Information

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

2.2. East Sussex Clerking Service Implementation Group (ESCSIG) has met regularly. Progress against milestones reported to Scrutiny Committee on the 7 June 2010 Agenda Item 9 can be found in **Appendix 1**.

Recommendation	Actions to date
1 Governor Services to develop a centrally run clerking service. <i>This recommendation was superseded following consultation with all Chairs of Governors (CoG) and Headteachers. A centrally run support service for CoG and clerks was decided upon.</i>	The Clerking Service has been operating since 1 st September 2010. A Clerking Service Protocol (the Protocol) has been developed to describe the expectations on Headteachers (HT), CoG, clerks and Governor Services to ensure high quality advisory clerking. HT, CoG and clerks were invited to transfer to work to the Protocol from 1 st September 2010. This has been phased for the current financial year.

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>Following the decision against centrally employed clerks, a Clerking Fund was created to provide additional funding for schools towards the cost of their clerk.</p> <p>Chairs are able to apply for funding allocations that will represent a contribution towards the overall cost of a clerk up to a maximum of 120 clerking hours and 10 training and development hours.</p>
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.	<p>A job description and person specification was developed to accurately reflect the requirements of an advisory clerk. These were evaluated at Single Status Grade 7. The post has been developed as a performance related pay scale. Entry to the grade requires a commitment to: undertake or hold a Level 3 Clerk to Governors Accreditation award. An annual appraisal is required to assess performance that translates to a score and subsequent point on the pay scale.</p> <p>Contracts of employment must include a minimum of 10 hours for the clerk to be paid to attend training and development.</p>
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>Benchmarking of the quality of clerking will be set by the introduction of an accreditation linked to the pay scale. Outcomes of clerk appraisals will be monitored by the Clerking Service Manager to ensure any dissatisfaction with the quality of clerking is addressed appropriately. Those not working to the protocol will be targeted by Governor Services for support to encourage transferring to work to the protocol.</p> <p>We are considering the formation of an independent group to investigate and report on the impact of the Service.</p>

3 Conclusion and Recommendations

3.1 The Committee are asked to note the contents of this report and support the progress being made.

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Local Members: All

Background Documents: None

1. Management and operational delivery of the Clerking Service

1.1. Clerking Service Manager (CSM)

The role of CSM was included in Phase Two of the 2010 reorganisation of Children's Services following the shift away from a central 'pool' of clerks and the requirement for the service protocol to be developed. The job description and person specification was evaluated and graded at this time. The post followed a competitive interview process and the Clerking Service Manger was appointed in July 2010.

At this time the wider roles within the Governor Services team were reviewed. The team consisted of Governors Services Manager, CSM, Project Officer, Training Support Officer and a Clerical Assistant.

1.2. Phase 3 - Restructure following Comprehensive Spending Review

CSM remains an integral post within the proposed revised Governor Services structure released in January 2011.

The CSM, supported by the Governor Service Manager, a Project Officer and central support functions will:

- Manage the continued transfer of existing clerks to work to the protocol.
- Monitor and ensure the quality of clerking
- Ensure delivery of training and development opportunities for clerks.
- Ensure clerks complete a Clerk to Governors accreditation.

2. Service Protocol for clerks

Historically, schools in East Sussex have been able to employ clerks at one of two pay grades dependent on the role fulfilled, Single Status 6 for an administrative role and Single Status 7 for those who also fulfil an advisory role and hold a relevant Level 3 qualification in clerking.

Our vision is for all clerks in East Sussex schools to be providing an advisory role and therefore be working at a level equivalent to a Level 3 Clerks to Governing Bodies award.

In support of this vision the Clerking Service Protocol has been developed to ensure clerks are given the best opportunity to be effective by having access to the following:

- Support, guidance and training from the Clerking Service as appropriate.
- A minimum of 120 paid hours each year to fulfil your role where appropriate.
- A minimum of 10 paid hours each year for training and development.
- Access to school facilities required for effective clerking.
- Funding to access a suitable accreditation.
- An annual appraisal process linking accreditation and performance to pay at the Single Status 7 pay grade.

3. Funding for schools

To assist with developing the new service protocol eligible schools will receive a funding allocation equivalent of up to 130 hours of clerk time each year that represents a contribution towards the overall cost of a clerk.

Eligibility will be conditional on demonstrating a joint commitment between the school, the governing body and the clerk on;

- The chair providing support and co-operation.
- The school and governing body providing sufficient paid hours for effective advisory clerking.
- The clerk working towards or achieving a Clerk to Governors accreditation.
- The clerk accessing a minimum of 10 paid hours training/development.
- The clerk maintaining a satisfactory performance review.
- The clerk undertaking ongoing professional development.

4. Clerk appraisal

A clerk appraisal checklist for chairs to use as a performance appraisal tool has been developed. The service is offering one to one support for chairs in implementing the appraisal process if required.

- The checklist takes the form of a matrix of standards and a matching range of possible evidence that will help inform the level at which a clerk is working.
- A Personal Development Plan template has been developed for use in conjunction with the clerk appraisal checklist. The template will be utilised to record any training or development identified in the appraisal process.
- Where clerks are currently employed in the school in another capacity we have produced guidance concerning conflict of interest to support clerks by enabling chairs to recognise any possible areas where a conflict could occur.

5. Clerks Accreditation

The service protocol requires clerks to commit to a relevant accreditation to confirm and demonstrate their abilities match those required of an advisory clerk.

In 2010 Edexcel, the awarding body of the previously available Level 3 BTEC accredited award withdrew the qualification.

There was a requirement to identify a replacement scheme that would provide the benchmark for the performance levels of clerks working to the clerking service protocol that will in turn justify the distribution of the clerking fund to schools.

A number of options were appraised against an identified success criteria and scored appropriately. The costs for implementation and operational delivery for the options were also identified and scored.

It emerged that a new local accredited award, based on the Qualifications and Credit Framework, would provide the most effective short and long term option. This option offers the most flexibility, both in terms of future development, be it qualification status of the award or a higher level clerking award and the ability to utilise the credit system to compare equivalence of qualification already held by clerks.

Following agreement by East Sussex Clerking Service Implementation Group (ESCSIG), a scheme is being developed with the Open College Network South East Region. It is anticipated that, with so many clerks wishing to access the course, there will be a phased approach with an aim to have initial commencement date in April 2011.

6. Support for Chairs

The Service has worked with the East Sussex corporate training team to launch a series of free support sessions for chairs in their role as line-manager of the clerk to governors and for clerks to fully understanding the appraisal process and to help develop the skills required to deliver an advisory role.

7. Proactive Support and Moderation

To support the implementation of the new service protocol and enable schools, governing bodies and clerks to fulfil their obligations the Clerking Service Manager will be visiting schools to provide ongoing support and advice for chairs and clerks.

The Service will utilise a range of indicators to ensure that visits are targeted in an effective and timely manner. The indicators will help identify where more targeted or intensive support may be required for a school, governing body or a clerk to mitigate the risk of a school not performing at the highest level.

Planned indicators include:

- The length of service of:
 - Clerks
 - Chair of Governors
 - Headteacher

Thereby identifying those new to their role and proactively offering guidance at a time when it may be needed most.

- Ofsted inspection outcomes relating to 'the effectiveness of the governing body'.
- Internal knowledge of a school's performance.

8. Financial Appraisal

The Schools Forum has agreed to commit the necessary expenditure for the development of East Sussex Clerking Service (ESCS).

8.1. Clerking Fund

Clerking Fund has been established with set eligibility criteria linked specifically to those working to the Clerking Service Protocol and the clerk's performance.

8.2. Clerk Accreditation

The Service has always intended to fund the cost of clerks to register for an accreditation. The development of a local award as appose to accessing a national qualification will see a reduction in budget requirement as the service moves forward.