

Report to: **Cabinet**

Date: **26 January 2009**

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

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

Purpose of Report: **To provide the Cabinet with an opportunity to comment on the report of the Scrutiny Committee review of services for school governors**

Recommendation:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1. note and welcome the report of the Scrutiny Committee; and**
 - 2. advise the County Council that, in considering the report of the Scrutiny Committee, the Council be recommended to welcome the report of the Scrutiny Committee and to agree the response of the Director of Children's Services to the recommendations and their implementation, as set out in the action plan attached as Appendix 1 to this report**
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1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the Scrutiny Committee's proposals. Governor Services is fully financed through subscriptions from schools.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 The Scrutiny Review of Services for School Governors is welcomed by the Department and the action plan attached as Appendix 1 responds to the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee.

2.2 There was a previous scrutiny scoping review of Governors' Recruitment, Retention and Training conducted in Sept 2003.

3. Conclusion and Recommendations

3.1 The report contains valuable insights into how governors view the services they receive from their subscriptions to Governor Services.

3.2 The recommendations are helpful and will result in service improvements.

3.3 Cabinet is recommended to note the report and its recommendations and approve the positive response to the recommendations.

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Director of Children's Services

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Local Members: All – relates to all schools in East Sussex

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Appendix 1: Governor Services Response to the Recommendations

The report of the Scrutiny Review of Services for School Governors

Response to the Recommendations

Recommendation	Response	Time Scale
<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>The importance of the SIP report being shared with governors is highlighted in our Induction Programme, reinforced with our chairs consultancy and features as part of the clerks training programme.</p> <p>SIPS will be encouraged to make sure headteacher accept their responsibilities for engaging governors in the SIP process. In cases where governors are not being invited, SIPS will record an action for the headteacher on the SIP visit report. During Leadership and Management visits the SIP may seek evidence of governor engagement in governing body minutes.</p> <p>SIPs may contact Governor Services who will forward minutes. Governor Services to inform SIP manager that this service is available.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>January 2009</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 session. It will be available in the annual programme to be published in February 2009</p>	<p>Ongoing and February 2009</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>We support the idea of a review. Increasing the professional capabilities of clerks to governing bodies, by whatever route, can only bring benefits.</p>	<p>As required</p>
<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</p>	<p>The welcome letter sent out to new governors says: 'All new governors are expected to attend induction training on offer at venues throughout the county.'</p> <p>When induction training becomes mandatory Governor Services will publicise the fact, provide sufficient</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>April 2009</p>

	<p>increased number of locations to meet any additional demand.</p>	<p>courses and monitor and evaluate take-up.</p> <p>Governor Services will monitor applications for induction training and mount additional sessions if required.</p>	
5	<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; and • team working. 	<p>The training programme is currently divided into three levels called Introductory, Developing Good Governance, and Promoting Strategic Governance. In the new training brochure we will make clear that the levels correspond to introductory, core and specialist training.</p> <p>The Health Check session reinforces this.</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.</p> <p>Introduction to FMSiS is now included in the induction programme.</p> <p>Health Check and the sessions recently introduced on New Models of Governance will support his.</p>	February 2009
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>NCSL/PriceWaterhouseCoopers training session 'Finding developing and keeping great headteachers,' 8 Dec 2008 will be available as a whole governing body training session.</p>	April 2009
7	<p>Governor Services to:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>b) redevelop the training brochure to indicate to governing bodies how</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 is being sent to clerks before the end of term 2 2008.</p> <p>Course descriptions will include a comment about areas of the SEF supported by training sessions.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>February 2009</p>

	<p>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>c) explore different methods for delivering training and support including: e-learning, using experienced governors and visits to other schools.</p>	<p>Associate trainers are developing skills in facilitation based on a session delivered to the team on 27 Nov led by Dr Ian Gilchrist from NCSL on the School Improvement Planning Framework.</p> <p>Governors e-learning, a semi-commercial package will be available to governors from 1 April 2009. Exemplars of good governance will be distributed through the clerks development sessions with and invitation to governing bodies to make and receive contact. Support and facilitation will be offered by Governor Services.</p>	<p>April 2009</p> <p>April 2009</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 will be asked to encourage this by suggesting it as an agenda item. Nominated governors will be flagged on Governor Manager.</p>	<p>Clerks Briefings February 2009</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>Governor Services will support the review.</p> <p>Continue to monitor capacity.</p>	<p>November 09</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>When the Ministerial Working Group publish 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</p>	<p>January 2009 or when the consultation begins.</p>