

**Report to:** Performance Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 28<sup>th</sup> January 2016

**Lead Member / Officer:** Lead Member for Education/ Head of Education

**Report Author:** Head of Education

**Title:** School Governors and School Governing Bodies

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**1. What is the report about?**

- 1.1 To provide details on the role and responsibilities of school governors and school governing bodies, including the support and training available to them from the Local Authority, GwE and other organisations.

**2. What is the reason for making this report?**

- 2.1 Better outcomes for learners through ensuring that governors and governing bodies fulfil their roles effectively via the provision of consistent support and challenge to schools.

**3. What are the Recommendations?**

- 3.1 That Members consider the additional information provided herein and comment on the support and training provided to Governors to assist them to support and challenge schools.

**4. Report details**

- 4.1 The report provides the following details:

- Governors and Governing Bodies – Roles, Responsibilities and Accountability
- Local Authority Support and Training for Governors
- The Role of other Organisations in the Training of Governors

**4.2 Governors and Governing Bodies – Roles, Responsibilities and Accountability**

The Governors Wales handbook provides full details on 'What Exactly Do Governors Do' ([www.governorswales.org.uk/handbook](http://www.governorswales.org.uk/handbook)). This defines the roles of governors and the governing body and their areas of accountability. Governors Wales is a service provided by Welsh Government for the support and training of governors in Schools. Their website contains extensive information and guidance for all aspects of governance in schools. Denbighshire works closely with Governors Wales and our neighbouring North Wales Authorities to ensure support and training is delivered to a high standard. A summary of these definitions and the role and responsibilities is shown in Appendix 1.

**4.3 Local Authority Support and Training for Governors**

Denbighshire's Education Support department provides a wide range of support and guidance to governors and governing bodies, including arranging their statutory training. These duties include:

- Coordinating and monitoring delivery of governor training throughout the year.

- Working with Governors Wales and other North Wales authorities to develop training, knowledge sharing etc.
- Ensuring adherence to relevant legislation and challenging governing bodies as required.
- Providing the most current guidance.
- Developing governor recruitment campaigns and working towards placing applicants based on their skills, location etc.
- Managing and arranging Denbighshire's Governors Association.
- Monitoring vacancies within governing bodies.
- Reporting on governance arrangements in schools.
- Providing funding for clerking arrangements.

#### 4.3.1 Training Provided

Under The Government of Maintained Schools (Training Requirements for Governors) (Wales) Regulations 2013, all new Governors within their first year of their appointment are required to undertake mandatory training covering **Induction** and **Understanding School Performance Data**. Similarly new clerks for the governing body are mandated to attend the **Role of Clerk** training; new chairs of governors are also mandated to attend training on the **Role of Chair** within 6 months of becoming the new chair. Vice chairs are also encouraged to attend these as well. This training is arranged throughout the year and for 2015/16 recent dates for training were as follows:

- **ROLE OF THE CLERK TO GOVERNORS** - 20th Oct 2015 County Hall , Ruthin  
Facilitated by Governors Wales
- **ROLE OF THE CHAIR TO GOVERNORS** - 3rd November 2015, Ruthin  
Facilitated by Governors Wales (with another session available in Wrexham)
- **UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE DATA** - 6th Nov 2015, Ruthin  
Facilitated by Julian Molloy (other sessions also available in Wrexham and Flintshire)
- **INDUCTION FOR NEW GOVERNORS** - 17th Nov 2015 County Hall, Ruthin  
Facilitated by Governors Wales

These face to face sessions are usually delivered at evening sessions but this training is also available online. The online e-modules have been developed in partnership with the other North Wales Authorities and Powys, and with Governors Wales. They have been designed by Cynnal who were contracted to develop these units on our behalf. Other areas of online training are in development and these will be rolled out in the coming year.

Education Support also arrange other relevant training for governors each year, and for 2015/16 this included training delivered by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), and a planned session with North Wales Police delivering their 'PREVENT' Safeguarding Training and e-Safety training for governors.

- **INFORMATION RIGHTS: DATA PROTECTION & FREEDOM OF INFORMATION**  
10th November 2015, Ruthin and facilitated by the ICO
- **E-SAFETY TRAINING FOR GOVERNORS** – January 29<sup>th</sup> 2016, Ruthin  
Facilitated by Education Support

- **‘PREVENT’ – SAFEGUARDING CONFERENCE** - 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2016 at Connah’s Quay  
Facilitated by North Wales Police

Education Support monitors attendance of governors at the statutory training sessions and completion of the online training to ensure that governing bodies are compliant. This includes challenging, as required, to ensure adherence to the legislative requirements. Any information held by the Authority regarding governance in school is also shared with Estyn during school inspections.

As the legislation requirement only relates to the training of governors in post after 2011, Denbighshire actively encourages training to be viewed as a refresher opportunity for which existing governors should also regularly attend every few years.

#### 4.3.2 **Skills Auditing**

Through Denbighshire’s Governors Association, and with the assistance of Governors Wales, the concept of ‘Skills Auditing’ has been introduced and shared with all governing bodies. This provides a structure which governing bodies can use to assess the skills of their governors to ensure they have all the necessary skill sets required.

If they identify a need through this process then they can fill these gaps by advertising for any vacancies, or co-opting those with the skills required onto the governing body. Education Support also assists in this process through recruitment campaigns and helping identify and placing governors at schools.

#### 4.3.3 **Other Training Provided by the Local Authority**

There are a number of other areas of training which the Local Authority provides, apart from that arranged by Education Support. Annually safeguarding training is delivered to governors so they are aware of the relevant legislation and guidance. The governor responsible for Safeguarding at school must also undertake the enhanced online training annually (provided through Educare). This is the same training which the authority arranges for all Teachers to undertake.

There are many other areas of support provided to Schools by the local authority, such as HR, Legal, Finance etc. Many of these areas are covered by Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with the school, and from time to time training for governors on relevant issues will be arranged as required. Similarly if individual schools are dealing with certain issues, for example recruitment, disciplinary etc., then the Local Authority is available to guide governors through these processes.

#### 4.4 **The Role of other Organisations in the Training of Governors**

**Governors Wales** – Local Authorities work closely with Governors Wales to deliver training and guidance on all aspects of school governance. Their website is freely available to the public and provides an extensive resource for governors to use. They are also available by phone to provide guidance as required on any school specific issues.

**Governor Support Officer (GSO) Group & GwE** – Across North Wales there is a consortia of local authorities who attend the **Governor Support Officers Group**;

which is also attended by Governors Wales and GwE. GwEs role in this process is to improve the effectiveness of governance and management across all schools, and they coordinate with local authorities to bring this about. They also have a challenge role in ensuring that governance arrangements are appropriate and effective, as well as identifying best practice.

#### **4.5 Summary**

Denbighshire and its partners provide the support and training outlined here so that its governors and governing bodies are able to deliver the best outcomes for the schools they serve. The training currently delivered and the new areas of training in development will ensure that they are effective in the roles they fulfil.

#### **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

The services described herein are all in support of the priority of “Improving Education”.

#### **6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

These services are already in place. This report is providing clarification on existing services.

There are costs associated with delivery of face to face training through Governors Wales which is currently £200 per session plus expenses for the facilitator.

#### **7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.**

Not applicable.

#### **8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

Not applicable.

#### **9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

Not applicable.

#### **10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

As these service areas relate to ‘better outcomes for learners through ensuring that governors and governing bodies fulfil their roles effectively via the provision of consistent support and challenge to schools’, ensuring these services are maintained is critical to the effectiveness of school governing bodies and attainment in school.

#### **11. Power to make the Decision**

These services and the training to governors is provided by the Local Authority: The Government of Maintained Schools (Training Requirements for Governors) (Wales) Regulations 2013

Scrutiny’s powers with respect to performance monitoring are detailed in Article 6.3.4(b) of the Council’s Constitution.

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