

## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### MUNICIPAL YEAR 2014 – 2015

#### EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2014.

#### REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING

Agenda Item No. 7

#### THE GOVERNOR SUPPORT SERVICE IN RCT

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an overview of the Governor Support Service to schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members consider and scrutinise the content of the report.

#### 3. INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC offers all its schools a comprehensive Governor Support Service, by means of a Service Level Agreement. Details of the specific contents of this SLA are attached, as Appendix 1, there are separate agreements within it for the levels of service provided to Primary / Special Schools and for Secondary Schools.
- 3.2 The level of take-up of this SLA is extremely high; all Primary schools now participate in it, with 6 of the Secondary Schools purchasing the full Clerking package. The remaining 11 Secondaries purchase the telephone/e-mail 'helpline' service that is available to them.
- 3.3 The cost of providing the service, including governor training is £364k per year; the income received from schools purchasing the service is £240k, which represents a cost recovery of two-thirds of the total cost.
- 3.4 In addition to our clerking provision we also offer a comprehensive programme of training for governors, with priority given to those sessions which form part of the Welsh Government's mandatory training programme for school governors. The mandatory element of training includes induction training for new governors, data training for new governors and those

reappointed for a new term of office and training for chairpersons. We also provide training for those Secondary schools who appoint their own Clerks to their governing bodies, which is also mandatory. All governors are provided with a copy of the training programme on offer each term; the programme for the Autumn Term 2014 is attached, for information. Over the last two years, a total of 1561 governors have attended the courses on offer.

- 3.5 Governors are informed, by means of an item on each termly agenda of any vacancies that may exist on the governing body and are strongly encouraged to ensure that these vacancies are filled, by asking them to seek nominations for the positions, in particular the Community governor and LEA vacancies. LEA governor vacancies are circulated to all Elected Members of the Council and to Chairs of Governors on a termly basis. Parent governor vacancies are reported to the Governor Support staff as soon as they arise and procedures are immediately put in place to provide all parents at the school with nomination forms to enable them to apply for the positions. A ballot is then conducted if necessary, with all paperwork to facilitate this being provided by this Service. Governor Support Officers also undertake regular checks of our governor database to ensure that any vacancies are identified, in order that they can be reported to the governing bodies as detailed above.

## **Appendix 1**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>GOVERNOR SUPPORT SERVICE</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>PRIMARY SCHOOLS</b></p>
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### 1. Outline of the Service

The provision of a comprehensive advice, support and clerking service, which complies with statutory requirements, for governing bodies of Nursery, Primary and Special schools.

### 2. Key Features of the Service

2.1 Ensuring that the governing body is properly constituted as required by law. Drafting and maintenance, of the governing body's Instrument of Government.

2.2 Organising the election/appointment of all governors.

2.3 Advice on instruments of government, school government regulations and statutory instruments/circulars associated with school governance.

2.4 Advice on eligibility, quoracy and disqualification regulations.

2.5 The monitoring of attendance and terms of office.

2.6 Guidance on the establishment, composition and (statutory) review of committees (including terms of reference for those committees).

2.7 Guidance on constitutional and procedural matters.

2.8 The provision of up-to-date advice to governors on changes to education law and other items of legislation that may impact on the role of the governing body.

2.9 Attendance of a senior officer at one meeting of the full governing body each term

2.10 Preparation / collation and distribution of agendas, reports and associated papers (as appropriate) for termly and special meetings of the full governing body, certain committees and selection panels.

2.11 The production of minutes of meetings attended by a senior officer (decisions to act against LA advice will be appropriately minuted).

2.12 The undertaking of follow up action and correspondence, arising from decisions taken at meetings attended by a senior officer, within agreed timescales.

2.13 Assistance with the preparation of (in consultation with the headteacher) the annual draft budget for consideration by the finance committee/governing body including:

staff costs - including anticipated incremental advances, pay awards when applicable (phasing effects) and on costs.

premises related costs (including utilities and services)

contract services

materials and equipment

expenses and administration costs

income

provision of in year general financial advice and guidance to headteachers and governing bodies

regular presentation of financial reports and dissemination of information to governing bodies/finance committees (non cheque book schools only)

arranging the distribution of financial reports to governing bodies/finance committees (financial reports for chequebook schools to be supplied by the Headteacher).

2.14 Financial support and advice can be provided to all schools. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher in cheque book schools to ensure that the information is provided on request and is accurate.

2.15 Assistance and support with monitoring the budget throughout the financial year including:

regular presentation of financial reports and dissemination of information to governing bodies/finance committees.

arranging the distribution of financial reports to governing bodies/finance committees (*financial reports for chequebook schools to be supplied by the Headteacher*).

Liaison with the Headteacher and provision of support and advice if required, on all aspects of budget formulation, monitoring and forward financial planning.

2.16 The attendance of a senior officer at meetings of certain committees and selection panels of the governing body, plus special meetings called for specific purposes. (Subject to diary commitments and availability of officers).

2.17 Training on the legal aspects of Head / Deputy Headteacher appointments as appropriate.

2.18 Reprographics - this will include the reproduction of headteacher's reports and school development plans only. **Post inspection action plans, policies and any other documentation must be supplied by the school prior to the meeting. Reports will not be produced in colour; if this is required, they will have to be copied at the school and circulated as indicated above.**

### 3. Service Provision

A total of 9 FTE days per financial year support time will be made available to schools. These days are to be allocated as follows:

Termly governing body meeting – preparation and production of reports and agendas, attendance at meeting, and production of minutes and any other 'follow up' work requested – 1 day per term, i.e. 3 days per annum

Finance – one initial visit to the school to discuss budgetary issues with the headteacher, which will include assistance in preparing the initial draft budget, if required, plus one termly committee meeting – 3 days per annum in total

Attendance at certain committee meetings, selection panels, and special meetings of the governing body. To also include visits to schools at the specific request of the headteacher or governing body – ½ day (minimum "cost") per annum per meeting / visit, up to a maximum of 6 meetings/visits (3 full days) per annum.

**The cost of annual subscription to the 'QGP' on-line information service to schools**

### 4. Financial Arrangements

#### 4.1 Allocation of Finance to Governing Bodies

Schools are given an amount through the formula allocation to fund the purchase of this service. For 2014/15 the allocation is shown below:-

Governor Support Service
£1,780 per governing body

#### 4.2 Charging for Services

Charges for 2014/2015 are as follows

Full service as outlined in Sections 2 and 3	Daily charge of £190 per day, for 9 days = £1710, plus £70 QGP subscription – total charge £1780
Additional Meetings/Visits	per meeting/visit (1/2 day charge) = £100

These charges will be affected annually by way of journal transfer (non cheque book schools) or by invoice (cheque book schools).

#### 5. Quality Assurance

All schools will have a designated senior officer as a primary point of contact/service provider

5.2 Cover arrangements ensure that members of the School Organisation, Planning and Governance team are available on all days on which schools are in session. This will enable a service to be provided regardless of the availability of the designated officer.

5.3 Staff in the School Organisation, Planning and Governance team receive continuous professional development to ensure that they are kept up to date with the implications of new education legislation, statutory instruments, circulars, regulations, relevant legal judgements and measures introduced by the Welsh Assembly Government

5.4 Clients will be treated with professionalism, respect and courtesy

5.5 Appropriate levels of confidentiality will be guaranteed

5.6 Telephone calls will be dealt with as soon as possible during office hours.

5.7 Correspondence will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's policy, namely responses will be provided within 15 working days from the date of receipt of the correspondence

5.8 Agendas and supporting papers will be provided to governors 5 clear working days before each meeting, in line with the regulations in force

5.9 Performance delivery will be monitored and evaluated by means of a periodic client survey

5.10 Any complaints regarding the delivery of the service will receive priority attention in terms of investigation and resolution.

## 6. Client Responsibilities

To forward any paperwork, that may be required to be appended to agendas, to the School Organisation, Planning and Governance Unit at least 10 working days before the date of the relevant meeting. This will include headteacher's reports, budget reports (for cheque book schools) and minutes of any governing body / committee meetings not attended by a senior officer (plus copies of any other reports as required, with sufficient quantities already photocopied at the school).

To ensure that, in respect of those governing body / committee meetings not attended by a senior officer:

an agenda is issued for each meeting in line with the legal requirements detailed in 2 overleaf

the quoracy, and attendance eligibility regulations are observed

an attendance sheet is produced, and signed by those present at the meeting, and is retained for any possible inspection, or audit

minutes of the meeting are appropriately recorded, and included on the next agenda for the termly meeting of the full governing body.

To provide, where possible, at least 10 working days notice for meetings of the governing body, committees and selection panels (where possible, these dates will be set termly in advance, or agreed as part of an annual work programme).

## 7. Contact Point

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**GOVERNOR SUPPORT SERVICE  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

1. Outline of the Service

The provision of a clerking, advice and support service to governing bodies of secondary schools.

2. Key Features of the Service

- 2.1 advice to the governing body on constitutional and procedural issues;
- 2.2 guidance on the establishment, composition and (statutory) review of committees (including terms of reference for those committees);
- 2.3 advice on instruments of government, school government regulations and statutory instruments/circulars associated with school governance;
- 2.4 advice on eligibility, quoracy and disqualification regulations;
- 2.5 the provision of up-to-date advice to governors on changes to education law and other items of legislation that may impact on the role of the governing body.
- 2.6 the monitoring of attendance and terms of office;
- 2.7 the attendance of a senior LA officer at one meeting of the full governing body each term;
- 2.8 the production of minutes of meetings attended by LA officers (decisions to act against LA advice will be appropriately minuted);
- 2.9 the undertaking of follow up action and correspondence arising from decisions taken at meetings, to be completed within agreed timescales;
- 2.10 training on the legal aspects of appointing Headteachers/ Deputy Headteacher as appropriate.
- 2.11 Attendance of a senior officer at one meeting of the full governing body each term

Please note –schools that choose not to take up of the governor support service outlined above are required to forward copies of all governing body agendas, all associated reports / papers, and the minutes of meetings of the full governing body and its committees to the Director of Education, on a termly basis.



### 3. Financial Arrangements

3.1 For 2014/2015, the proposed charge for this service (subject to the level of demand) is:

Governor Support Service
£1050.00 per governing body

Payment is effected annually by invoice.

### 4. Helpline Service

4.1 For schools that decide not to avail themselves of the full governor support service outlined in (2) above, a telephone/e-mail 'helpline' service is available, at an annual cost of £350.

This service will include:

advice to the governing body on constitutional and procedural issues;

guidance on the establishment, composition and (statutory) review of committees (including terms of reference for those committees);

advice on instruments of government, school government regulations and statutory instruments/circulars associated with school governance;

advice on eligibility, quoracy and disqualification regulations;

the provision of up-to-date advice to governors on changes to education law and other items of legislation that may impact on the role of the governing body.

training on the legal aspects of appointing Headteachers/Deputy headteachers as appropriate.

4.3 This provides 8 hours (1 day) of assistance. Any assistance required in excess of this will be charged at an hourly rate of £32 per hour (minimum charge 1 hour).

### 5. Quality Assurance

5.1 All schools will have a designated senior officer as a primary point of contact/service provider

5.2 Cover arrangements ensure that members of the School Organisation, Planning and Governance team are available on all days on which schools are in session. This will enable a service to be provided regardless of the availability of the designated officer.

5.3 Staff in the School Organisation, Planning and Governance team receive continuous professional development to ensure that they are kept up to date with the implications of new education legislation, statutory instruments, circulars, regulations, relevant legal judgements and measures introduced by the Welsh Assembly Government

5.4 Clients will be treated with professionalism, respect and courtesy

5.5 Appropriate levels of confidentiality will be guaranteed

5.6 Telephone calls will be dealt with immediately (during office hours)

5.7 Correspondence will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's policy, namely responses will be provided within 15 working days from the date of receipt of the correspondence

5.8 Performance delivery will be monitored and evaluated by means of a periodic client survey

5.9 Any complaints regarding delivery of this service will receive priority attention in terms of investigation and resolution.

## 6. Client Responsibilities

to provide adequate notice for meetings of the full governing body, a minimum of 10 working days (where possible these dates to be set termly in advance);

to forward any paperwork, that may be required to be appended to agendas, to the nominated LA officer 10 working days before the date of the meeting.

## 7. Contact Point

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