



City and County of Swansea

Notice of Meeting

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

Scrutiny Inquiry Panel - School Governance

At: Committee Room 4, Guildhall, Swansea

On: Monday, 25 September 2017

Time: 5.00 pm

Convenor: Councillor Fiona Gordon

Membership:

Councillors: L James, J W Jones, H M Morris, C L Philpott and L J Tyler-Lloyd

Co-opted Members: D Anderson-Thomas

Agenda

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1 Apologies for Absence

2 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interest

www.swansea.gov.uk/disclosuresofinterests

3 School Governance Inquiry Impact Report and follow up on progress

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Invited to discuss progress are:

Cllr Jennifer Raynor (Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning)
Kathryn Thomas (*Head of Learner Support Service*)

Attached are:

1. Impact Report from Cabinet Member
2. Original Cabinet Response
3. Original Scrutiny Inquiry Report (online [link](#))

4 Panel to discuss thoughts on progress and agree feedback

Panel discuss their thoughts on progress and agree the feedback they wish to make to the Cabinet Member and Scrutiny Programme Committee via their letter from the Convener.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Huw Evans'.

Huw Evans

Head of Democratic Services

12 September 2017

Contact: Scrutiny - 01792 637256

Report of the Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE INQUIRY PANEL 25 September 2017

IMPACT REPORT: SCRUTINY INQUIRY INTO SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Purpose	To help the Scrutiny Inquiry Panel to assess the impact of their report into School Governance
Content	This report deals with three questions related to the impact of the inquiry: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What has changed since the report was presented to Cabinet? 2. Have the agreed recommendations been implemented? 3. What has been the impact of the scrutiny inquiry?
The Scrutiny Inquiry Panel are being asked to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the contents of the report • Reach conclusions about the impact of the inquiry
Lead Councillor(s)	Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning
Lead Officer(s)	Nick Williams, Chief Education Officer
Report Author	Kathryn Thomas, Schools and Governor Unit

1. Introduction

1.1 The School Governance Scrutiny Inquiry Panel undertook an in-depth inquiry in 2015/16. The resulting final report is attached at Appendix A. The Cabinet Member response and action plan are attached at Appendix B.

1.2 The reporting timeline of the inquiry is as follows:

Commenced	26 May 15
Agreed by the Scrutiny Programme Committee	11 January 16
Presented to Cabinet	17 March 16
Cabinet Response agreed	16 June 16

1.3 The final stage of the scrutiny inquiry process is the follow up. It is at this point that the original panel reconvenes in order to assess the impact of the work.

1.4 The purpose of this report is to assist the panel as it seeks to answer the following three questions, each of which will be dealt with in detail below:

- What has changed since the report was presented to Cabinet?
- Have the agreed recommendations been implemented?
- What has been the impact of the scrutiny inquiry?

2. What has changed since the report was presented to Cabinet?

2.1 Since the inquiry concluded the following changes have taken place.

The Welsh Government consultation exercise on the Reform of School Governance: Regulatory Framework attracted far more response in the public consultation than anticipated. Therefore, Welsh Government decision making on the reform of school governance has been held up. This has had an impact on two objectives which are outlined in the attached action plan but with specific relevance to:

2.1.1 Undertake a review of information provided to school governors with ERW and Governors Wales with a view to ensuring a shared approach that avoids duplication.

2.1.2 Undertake a campaign to promote the role of governors targeted at private sector employees and partners in the public and third sector.

2.2 The Governor Support Unit has historically experienced difficulty in the limitations of the database to support school governance. Following a review, particularly in light of limited funding, the decision was taken to implement a new database. This was not an easy decision to make as it required a great deal of work and effort to set up the new system and transfer data. The risk was assessed in relation to the potential for loss of data in order to provide a more effective support mechanism for the Governor Unit and governing bodies also. This has proven to be a beneficial decision. Governing bodies will receive more user-friendly versions of documents and records in future.

2.3 This has taken time to undertake and has had an impact upon some aspects of performance delivery particularly:

2.3.1 Develop an online learning log that governors can use to self-manage their training and development. A date has been set for Elected Members to undertake e-learning training on 25 August 2017 and this will equip Elected Members who are governors to adapt to e-learning when it is developed.

2.4 The use of the skills matrix as part of governor self-evaluation is proving to have a positive impact with governing bodies. The Local Authority will continue to raise the profile of using the skill matrix to gradually influence governing bodies to adopt an annual self-evaluation process.

2.5 The revised School Issues forum for Local Authority senior managers and Challenge Advisers to confidentially discuss issues arising in different schools is in the early stages of development. However, there is evidence to indicate that this is proving effective in raising awareness to early warning signs for schools and governing bodies in need of support

2.6 A Team Around the School approach has been devised to support schools in need of support and in situations where this has been implemented support for the governing body has also been put in place.

3. Have the agreed recommendations been implemented?

3.1 In responding to the inquiry an action plan was drawn up showing what steps would be taken to implement all of the scrutiny recommendations agreed by Cabinet (Appendix B).

3.2 The table at Appendix C shows progress against each recommendation and specifically:

- the Cabinet decision in respect of each recommendation
- the action taken / proposed to implement the recommendations
- the responsible officer(s)
- timescales involved

4. What has been the impact of the scrutiny inquiry?

4.1 The inquiry has helped Scrutiny members to clarify understanding of mandatory governor training. The Local Authority offers a range of governor training but only new governor, new chair, new clerk to governor and data training are the mandatory elements of governor training. Governors and clerks can be removed if they fail to attend the mandatory elements of governor training within the required timescale. Governors attending other training is good practice only and no penalty can be imposed for governors who fail to attend the additional training. Governing bodies need to be more proactive in identifying governors to attend additional governor training and raise the expectation of governors who take on specific roles e.g. LAC Governor to attend the specific training provided by the Local Authority.

4.2 The inquiry has provided a useful opportunity to reflect upon support for school governance. It has supported the need for the Governor Support Team to work more closely with ERW Challenge Advisers. This is proving beneficial in helping schools and governing bodies to improve. Challenge Advisers attend all meetings of governing bodies for red and amber schools.

4.3 The Governor Support Unit has always adopted a pro-active response to governor support and training. The Governor Support Officer has always been a member of the ERW and national Governor Support Officers groups where ideas and documents have been shared. Swansea has always paid a significant role in both these groups and has been at the forefront of governor development. This is evidenced by the joint governor conferences with Swansea and NPT for 2015 and 2016. No other hub or local authority has provided this opportunity for governors in the ERW region.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Education

Cabinet – 16 June 2016

RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE SCHOOL GOVERNANCE SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL

Purpose:	To outline a response to the scrutiny recommendations and to present an action plan for agreement.
Policy Framework:	None
Reason for Decision:	To comply with the requirements of the Council Constitution.
Consultation:	Legal Services, Financial Services
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) The response as outlined in the report and related action plan be agreed.
Report Author:	Lindsay Harvey
Finance Officer:	Pini Patel
Legal Officer:	Stephanie Williams
Access to Services Officer:	Sherill Hopkins

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The final inquiry report was agreed by the Scrutiny Programme Committee on 11 January 2016 and presented to Cabinet 17 March 2016

The link to the scrutiny report is provided at **Appendix A**.

1.2 Having considered the contents of the scrutiny report, and specific recommendations made, advice to Cabinet on whether it should agree, or not agree, with each recommendation is detailed in this report.

1.3 Cabinet is also asked to consider, for each of the responses, any relevant policy commitments and any other relevant activity.

2.0 Response to Scrutiny Recommendations

Recommendation 1 For Cabinet

Develop a council wide mechanism for filling the skills gaps identified by governing bodies either through, transfers, swaps or by matching new governors with particular skills and experience

<p>Relevant Policy Commitments:</p> <p>Encourage greater collaboration between schools. (ref: 6.6)</p> <p>Introduce an ambitious, rigorous and supportive school performance framework. (ref: 6.6)</p>
<p>Action already being undertaken:</p> <p>Many Governing Bodies are familiar with the completing skills audit forms to help identify skill gaps or governing bodies. Schools who have completed the Bronze Quality Mark have successfully implemented this self-evaluation process.</p> <p>The new Governors Wales self-evaluation tool – that replaces the Bronze Quality Mark, is now available and is being distributed to Swansea school governing bodies upon request and as needs are identified by Challenge Advisers.</p>
<p>New actions following from the recommendation:</p> <p>The Governor Unit plans to issue the self-evaluation toolkit for schools to help identify gaps.</p>
<p>Cabinet Member Comments: The Council is only responsible for the appointment of local authority governors.</p> <p>The Welsh Government has plans to review the stakeholder model of school governance.</p>
<p>Recommendation is NOT AGREED</p>

<p>Recommendation 2</p>
<p>Produce a mini booklet for governors that provides a simple guide to their role</p>
<p>Relevant Policy Commitments:</p> <p>Encourage greater collaboration between schools. (ref: 6.6)</p> <p>Introduce an ambitious, rigorous and supportive school performance framework. (ref: 6.6)</p>
<p>Action already being undertaken:</p> <p>Education through Regional Working (ERW) has devised a booklet which is already on the ERW website.</p>
<p>New actions following from the recommendation:</p> <p>A copy of the ERW booklet will be put onto the City and County of Swansea website section for Governor Support.</p>
<p>Cabinet Member Comments:</p>
<p>Recommendation is AGREED</p>

Recommendation 3
Undertake a review of information provided to school governors with ERW, Estyn and Governors Wales with a view to ensuring a shared approach that avoids duplication
Relevant Policy Commitments: Encourage greater collaboration between schools. (ref: 6.6) Introduce an ambitious, rigorous and supportive school performance framework. (ref: 6.6)
Action already being undertaken: ERW are already undertaking a review - Swansea has participated in this review Governors Wales are undertaking a review which is a result of the Welsh Government Review of Governors Wales. Swansea has developed a School on a Page evaluation that provides a snapshot of each school.
New actions following from the recommendation:
Cabinet Member Comments: Query Estyn involvement? Estyn do not provide information specifically for governors.
Recommendation is ACTION ALREADY IN PLACE
Recommendation 4
Provide a standard data template to head teachers and encourage them to use it
Relevant Policy Commitments: Encourage greater collaboration between schools. (ref: 6.6) Introduce an ambitious, rigorous and supportive school performance framework. (ref: 6.6)
Action already being undertaken: ERW data packs are already in place. ERW has also drawn up a sample headteacher report which is on the City and County of Swansea website support for governors section and is available to headteachers. Challenge Advisers recommend using this template when meeting with headteachers as considered appropriate. A range of other ERW standardised documents are available on ERW website and there is a link from the City and County of Swansea Support for Governors website to the ERW website.
New actions following from the recommendation:
Cabinet Member Comments: It is for the governing body to ensure that all governors are confident in understanding the way in which data

is presented.
Recommendation is ACTION ALREADY IN PLACE
Recommendation 5
Work with Estyn to provide information about all training opportunities for governors in one place
Relevant Policy Commitments: Encourage greater collaboration between schools. (ref: 6.6) Introduce an ambitious, rigorous and supportive school performance framework. (ref: 6.6)
Action already being undertaken: Information about all governor training for Swansea and the other 5 ERW local authorities is already on ERW website. There is a direct link on the City and County of Swansea support for governors website to the ERW website.
New actions following from the recommendation:
Cabinet Member Comments: Should this be ERW not Estyn?
Recommendation is NOT AGREED
Recommendation 6
Move from civic centre based training provision to a flexible model that combines, whole governing body, cluster school and e-learning
Relevant Policy Commitments: Encourage greater collaboration between schools. (ref: 6.6) Introduce an ambitious, rigorous and supportive school performance framework. (ref: 6.6)
Action already being undertaken: A flexible governor training package is already in place. Governor training has been delivered at various school venues in past years although there is no indication that attendance is any higher when delivered from other venues or at the Civic Centre. Challenge Advisers identify governor training during core visits. Monthly meeting with Head of School Support and Challenge Adviser with responsibility for school governance to identify training for specific schools and clusters.
New actions following from the recommendation:
Cabinet Member Comments:
Recommendation is ACTION ALREADY IN PLACE

Recommendation 7
Develop an on-line learning log that governors can use to self-manage their training and development
Relevant Policy Commitments: Encourage greater collaboration between schools. (ref: 6.6)
Introduce an ambitious, rigorous and supportive school performance framework. (ref: 6.6)
Action already being undertaken: The Governor Support Unit provides an up-to-date list of governors who have attended training at the start of each new academic year.
New actions following from the recommendation: It is hoped to develop an electronic spreadsheet to include a training audit for governors to complete that can be accessed by the Governor Unit.
Cabinet Member Comments: Depends upon funds available to upgrade IT.
Recommendation is AGREED
Recommendation 8
Consider how the mandatory new governor training might help governors to think about the self-management of their training and development
Relevant Policy Commitments: Encourage greater collaboration between schools. (ref: 6.6)
Introduce an ambitious, rigorous and supportive school performance framework. (ref: 6.6)
Action already being undertaken: The Governor Support Unit targets new governors, new chairs of governors and new clerks to governors to ensure they attend mandatory governor training within the specified time period.
Good practice recommendation that all governing bodies include an agenda item on governor training at each governing body meeting.
New actions following from the recommendation: Plans to develop the electronic spreadsheet (see Recommendation 7 above) will support governors to self-manage their training and development.
Copies of the new spreadsheet will be included in Governor Training Packs
Cabinet Member Comments: Any issues not covered above
Recommendation is AGREED

Recommendation 9
Build the involvement of all governors into the Autumn Core Visits
Relevant Policy Commitments: Encourage greater collaboration between schools. (ref: 6.6) Introduce an ambitious, rigorous and supportive school performance framework. (ref: 6.6)
For red and amber schools the Challenge Advisors attend the full governing body meetings and presents/speaks to governors.
New actions following from the recommendation: Plan to deliver governor training sessions to raise awareness about the autumn core visit for governors to improve understanding of the process and their role.
Cabinet Member Comments: The governing body must satisfy themselves that the report is presented to the governing body at the next meeting.
Recommendation is NOT AGREED
Recommendation 10
Undertake a campaign to promote the role of governors targeted at private sector employers and partners in the public and third sector
Relevant Policy Commitments: Encourage greater collaboration between schools. (ref: 6.6) Introduce an ambitious, rigorous and supportive school performance framework. (ref: 6.6)
Action already being undertaken: Welsh Government plan to undertake a campaign to target governors from the private sector and employees from the public sector.
New actions following from the recommendation: City and County of Swansea will dove-tail this campaign and run a local campaign in conjunction with the national campaign.
Cabinet Member Comments:
Recommendation is PARTLY AGREED
Recommendation 11
Write to the chair of governors and head teacher of each school to promote the good practice points included in this report (listed in APPENDIX A)
Relevant Policy Commitments: Encourage greater collaboration between schools. (ref: 6.6) Introduce an ambitious, rigorous and supportive school performance

framework. (ref: 6.6)
Action already being undertaken:
New actions following from the recommendation: Governor Support Unit to send letters to headteachers and chairs identifying good practice identified by Challenge Advisers and Estyn inspection reports. Information to be included in the newsletter also.
Cabinet Member Comments:
Recommendation is AGREED
Recommendation 12
Write to every school governor thanking them for their work on behalf of the Council and highlighting the list of 'what every school governor should expect' (listed at Appendix B)
Relevant Policy Commitments: Encourage greater collaboration between schools. (ref: 6.6) Introduce an ambitious, rigorous and supportive school performance framework. (ref: 6.6)
Action already being undertaken:
New actions following from the recommendation: Letter of thanks to go to governors and headteachers after the Conference Write to clerk of governing bodies to include the letter as item of correspondence on the agenda for next governing body meeting.
Cabinet Member Comments:
Recommendation is AGREED
Recommendation 13
Take additional steps to publicise the good work being done by governors and governing bodies
Relevant Policy Commitments: Encourage greater collaboration between schools. (ref: 6.6) Introduce an ambitious, rigorous and supportive school performance framework. (ref: 6.6)
Action already being undertaken: Swansea has participated in the Governors Wales working group set up to draw up a Governors Self-evaluation toolkit which will replace the Governors Wales Bronze Award scheme.
New actions following from the recommendation: Include information in Governors Newsletter. Include booklet news in newsletter.

Governors newsletter to be issued twice annually.
Cabinet Member Comments:
Recommendation is AGREED
Recommendation 14
Simplify the information on the Council website about school governors which should provide links to the Governors Wales website for all general information
Relevant Policy Commitments:
Encourage greater collaboration between schools. (ref: 6.6)
Introduce an ambitious, rigorous and supportive school performance framework. (ref: 6.6)
Action already being undertaken:
New actions following from the recommendation:
Governors Unit to review Council Website.
Links on the website to be checked
Check link to the ERW website
Cabinet Member Comments:
Recommendation is PARTLY AGREED
Recommendation 15
Remind all schools that whole governing body and cluster school training can be arranged on request
Relevant Policy Commitments:
Encourage greater collaboration between schools. (ref: 6.6)
Introduce an ambitious, rigorous and supportive school performance framework. (ref: 6.6)
Action already being undertaken:
Governor training is already offered at alternative school venues and information is already included in the training programme.
Complaints training recently delivered at St. David's for the Governing bodies and other governors also attended this session.
Individual school Estyn reports checked and package of support for governors put in place when governing body concerns raised.
New actions following from the recommendation:
Cabinet Member Comments:
Recommendation is ACTIONS ALREADY IN PLACE
Recommendation 16
Hold a seminar for LA appointed governors to explore their role in

sharing good practice
Relevant Policy Commitments: Encourage greater collaboration between schools. (ref: 6.6) Introduce an ambitious, rigorous and supportive school performance framework. (ref: 6.6)
Action already being undertaken:
New actions following from the recommendation:
Cabinet Member Comments: The Governor Unit could not offer a Governing Body remit for LA Governors only as the stakeholder model of school governance requires all governors to be treated equally. Offering a seminar for LA governors only would be seen as favouring LA governors over other governors.
Recommendation is NOT AGREED

2.1 An action plan for the agreed recommendations is attached as **Appendix B**.

3.0 Equality and Engagement Implications

3.1 Recommendations in the report will be subject to the standard corporate Equality Impact Assessment screening process and, where appropriate, a full EIA report will be produced for any individual instance, before a final decision on implementation.

4.0 Legal Implications

4.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 Recommendation 7 - it is hoped to develop an electronic spreadsheet to include a training audit for governors to complete that can be accessed by the Governor Unit will be dependent upon identified funding to upgrade the current system.

Background Papers: None.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Original Scrutiny Inquiry Report
<http://www.swansea.gov.uk/article/23059/A-very-challenging-role-How-can-the-Council-ensure-that-school-governors-provide-effective-challenge-for-their-schools-January-2016>

Appendix B – Proposed Cabinet Action Plan

**Scrutiny Inquiry of School Governance Scrutiny Inquiry Panel
Cabinet Action Plan**

Recommendation		Action already being undertaken	New Action Proposed	Timescale	Responsible Officer
1	<p>Long term challenges</p> <p>Develop a Council wide mechanism for filling the skills gaps identified by governing Bodies either through, transfers, swaps or by matching new governors with particular skills and experience</p>		<p>Governing Bodies to undertake a self evaluation process including Governors skills audit in the first instance.</p> <p>The Governor Unit to issue the skills for schools to support them to identify gaps.</p>	<p>July 2017</p> <p>July 2017</p>	<p>K Thomas</p> <p>K Thomas</p>
2	<p>Medium Term Improvements</p> <p>Produce a mini booklet for governors that provides a simple guide to their role Concern about the management of all governors participating annually Suggest two Governors can be invited to the Autumn Core Visit.</p>	<p>ERW has completed a mini booklet that is on the ERW website</p>	<p>To be put onto Swansea website</p> <p>To be included in the newsletter</p>	<p>Sept 2016</p> <p>Dec 2016</p>	<p>K Thomas</p> <p>K Thomas</p>
3	<p>Undertake a review of information provided to school governors with ERW, ESTYN and Governors Wales with a view to ensuring a shared approach that avoids duplication.</p>	<p>ERW are already undertaking a review - Swansea has participated in this review</p> <p>Governors Wales are undertaking a review which is a result of WG Review of Governors Wales.</p> <p>Swansea have developed a School on a Page evaluation</p>		<p>Sept 2016</p> <p>May 2016</p> <p>July 2016</p>	<p>ERW</p> <p>Governors Wales</p> <p>S Pascoe</p>

4	Provide a standard data template to head teachers and encourage them to use it	<p>ERW data packs already in place</p> <p>ERW sample Head teacher report already in place</p> <p>ERW template for Autumn Core Visit already in place.</p> <p>A range of standardised documents are available.</p>			All actions complete
5	Work with Estyn to provide information about all training opportunities for Governors in one place	Information about all training is already on ERW website.			Action complete
6	Move from civic centre based training provision to flexible model that combines, whole governing body, cluster school and e-learning	<p>Flexible governor training package already in place.</p> <p>Challenge Advisers identify governor training during core visits.</p> <p>Monthly meeting with Head of School Support and Challenge Adviser with responsibility for school governance to identify training for specific schools and clusters.</p>			<p>Action complete</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p>
7	Develop an online learning log that governors can use to self-manage their training and development.		Develop an electronic spreadsheet to include a staff audit for governors to complete and can be provided to the Governor Unit.	Dec 2016	K Thomas

8	Consider how the mandatory new Governor training might help governors to think about the self management of their training and development	<p>The Governor Support Unit targets new governors, new chairs of governors and new clerks to governors to ensure they attend mandatory governor training within the specified time period.</p> <p>Good practice recommendation that all governing bodies include an agenda item on governor training at each governing body meeting.</p>	<p>Plans to develop the electronic spreadsheet (see Recommendation 7 above) will support governors to self manage their training and development.</p> <p>Copies of the new spreadsheet will be included in Governor Training Packs</p>	Sept 2016	<p>K Thomas</p> <p>K Phillips</p>
9	Build the involvement of all governors into the Autumn Core Visits	For red and amber schools the Challenge Advisors attends the full governing body meetings and presents/speaks to governors.	Plans to deliver governor training sessions to improve understanding of autumn core visit and the role of governors in this process.	Sept 2016	<p>Action Complete</p> <p>K Phillips</p>
10	Undertake a campaign to promote the role of governors targeted at private sector employees and partners in the public and third sector.	Welsh Government are undertaking a campaign to target Governors from the private sector and employees from the public sector.	CCoS will dove-tail this campaign and run a local campaign in conjunction with the national campaign	Dec 2016	<p>Welsh Government</p> <p>K Phillips</p>
11	Write to Chair of Governors and Head Teacher of each school to promote the good practice points included in this report (Appendix A)		Governor Support Unit to send letters to headteachers, chairs identifying good practice identified by Challenge Advisers and Estyn	Dec 2016	K Phillips

			inspection reports. Information to be included in the newsletter also		
12	Write to every School Governor thanking them for their work on behalf of the Council and highlighting the list of 'what every school Governor should expect ' (Appendix B)		Letter of thanks to go to governors and headteachers after the Conference Write to clerks of governing bodies to ask them to include the letter as item of correspondence on agenda for next governing body meeting. Include Appendix B in newsletter to governors.	Sept 2016	K Phillips
13	Take additional steps to publicise the good work being done by Governors and Governing Bodies.		Include information in Governors Newsletter. Include booklet news in newsletter. Governors newsletter to be issued twice annually. KP (Swansea) influenced the agenda in Wales and participated in Governors Wales self evaluation.	Dec 2016 Dec 2016 June 2017	K Phillips K Phillips Actions completed – K Phillips

13. Cont.	Take additional steps to publicise the good work being done by Governors and Governing Bodies.		Schools that have signed up to Governors Wales self evaluation. Raise awareness to Estyn reports that have highlighted good practice of Governing Bodies, the newsletter and at Clerks Forum meetings.	On going Sept 2016 May 2016	K Phillips K Phillips K Phillips
14	Simplify the information on the Council website about School Governors which should provide links to Governors Wales for all general information.		Governors Unit to review Council Website. Links to be checked Check ERW website	Sept 2016 Sept 2016 Sept 2016	K Phillips K Phillips H. M. Rees
15	Remind all schools that whole Governing Body and Cluster School training can be arranged on request	Information is already included in the training programme. Complaints training being advertised at St. David's for the Governing bodies also. Individual school Estyn reports checked and package of support for governors put in place when governing body concerns raised.		On going April 2016	K Phillips K Phillips K Thomas
16	Hold a seminar for LA appointed Governors to explore their role in sharing good practice	The Governor Unit could not offer a Governing Body remit for LA Governors only.			

Scrutiny Inquiry of School Governance Scrutiny Inquiry Panel Cabinet Action Plan

Recommendation		Action already being undertaken	New Action Proposed	Time scale	Responsible Officer
1	<p>Long term challenges</p> <p>Develop a Council wide mechanism for filling the skills gaps identified by governing Bodies either through, transfers, swaps or by matching new governors with particular skills and experience</p>		<p>Governing Bodies to undertake a self evaluation process including Governors skills audit in the first instance.</p> <p>The Governor Unit to issue the skills for schools to support them to identify gaps.</p>	<p>July 2017</p> <p>July 2017</p>	<p>K Thomas</p> <p>K Thomas</p>
<p>COMPLETED – YES</p> <p>Progress: Governing bodies have been made aware of the Governors Wales self-evaluation tool and advised to undertake a self-evaluation exercise. For governing bodies identified in need of support a representative from the Local Authority has led them through the self-evaluation process.</p> <p>The Local Authority is in the process of reviewing the appointment process for Local Authority governors and a report is being prepared for the Cabinet Member to take to Council. The proposals will require governing bodies to provide a self-evaluation assessment to indicate the skills gaps in order to realign appointment of LA governors with skills identified by each individual governing body.</p>					
2	<p>Medium Term Improvements</p> <p>Produce a mini booklet for governors that provides a simple guide to their role</p> <p>Concern about the management of all governors participating annually</p> <p>Suggest two Governors can be invited to the Autumn Core Visit.</p>	<p>ERW has completed a mini booklet that is on the ERW website</p>	<p>To be put onto Swansea website</p> <p>To be included in the newsletter</p>	<p>Sept 2016</p> <p>Dec 2016</p>	<p>K Thomas</p> <p>K Thomas</p>
<p>COMPLETED – YES</p> <p>Progress: ERW has completed a mini booklet. There is a link on the Swansea Governors website to the ERW link and booklet.</p>					
3	<p>Undertake a review of information</p>	<p>ERW are already undertaking a</p>		<p>Sept</p>	<p>ERW</p>

	provided to school governors with ERW, and Governors Wales with a view to ensuring a shared approach that avoids duplication.	review - Swansea has participated in this review Governors Wales are undertaking a review which is a result of WG Review of Governors Wales. Swansea have developed a School on a Page evaluation		2016 May 2016 July 2016	Governors Wales S Pascoe
<p>COMPLETED – YES Progress: ERW has undertaken a review and Swansea participated in the review. Governor's Wales have also undertaken a review following a consultation by Welsh Government on the Reform of school governance: regulatory framework. The outcome of the consultation is currently delayed due to the high level of response to the consultation. Therefore further work in this area is suspended pending the outcome of the reform.</p>					
4	Provide a standard data template to head teachers and encourage them to use it	ERW data packs already in place ERW sample Head teacher report already in place ERW template for Autumn Core Visit already in place. A range of standardised documents are available.			All actions complete
<p>COMPLETED – YES Progress: ERW already has data packs in place. ERW have provided a sample headteacher report which has been shared with Swansea schools. This is not a compulsory document and headteachers may adopt the report style or use a different version. The ERW template for the Autumn Core Visit is already in place and a range of standardised documents are also available.</p>					
5	Work with ERW to provide	Information about all training is			

	information about all training opportunities for Governors in one place	already on ERW website.			Action complete
<p>COMPLETED – YES Progress: Information about all governor training is on the Swansea website and also the ERW website. Governors from across ERW can access any governor training from any ERW Local Authority for convenience and to suit needs as may be appropriate. All ERW Local Authorities have links to their governor training via ERW website.</p>					
6	Move from civic centre based training provision to flexible model that combines, whole governing body, cluster school and e-learning	<p>Flexible governor training package already in place.</p> <p>Challenge Advisers identify governor training during core visits.</p> <p>Termly meeting with Head of School Support and Challenge Adviser with responsibility for school governance to identify training for specific schools and clusters.</p>			<p>Action complete</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p>
<p>COMPLETED – YES Progress: Flexible package of governor training already in place. Cluster governor training available as may be required. Termly meetings with Challenge Adviser with responsibility for school governance and Head of School Support to identify governing bodies in need of support. Bespoke governor training provided for specific governing bodies targeted for support.</p>					
7	Develop an online learning log that governors can use to self-manage their training and development.		Develop an electronic spreadsheet to include a governor audit for governors to complete and can be provided to the Governor Unit.	March 2018	K Thomas
<p>COMPLETED – WORK IN PROGRESS</p>					

Progress: Some governing bodies have been provided with Hwb email addresses to share information on school governance. Use of the governing body self-evaluation skills matrix supports governing bodies to identify training required to enhance skills and expertise of governors.

The governor database has been revised and is managed on a different system. Much work has been undertaken to migrate data from the previous database. Further work is required to develop an on-line learning log for governors to self-manage training and development.

8	Consider how the mandatory new Governor training might help governors to think about the self management of their training and development	<p>The Governor Support Unit targets new governors, new chairs of governors and new clerks to governors to ensure they attend mandatory governor training within the specified time period.</p> <p>Good practice recommendation that all governing bodies include an agenda item on governor training at each governing body meeting.</p>	<p>Further plans to develop the electronic spreadsheet (see Recommendation 7 above) will support governors to self manage their training and development.</p> <p>Copies of the new spreadsheet will be included in Governor Training Packs</p>	Sept 2016	<p>K Thomas</p> <p>K Phillips</p>
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COMPLETED – YES

Progress: The Governor Support Unit targets new governors, new chairs of governors and new clerks to governors to ensure they attend mandatory governor training within the specified time period.

The Governing Body training analysis has been revised to be more user-friendly and copies will be included in Governor Training packs in future.

Use of the governing body self-evaluation skills matrix supports governing bodies to identify training required to enhance skills and expertise of governors.

Governors can access Hwb to share information with their governing body.

Good practice recommendation that all governing bodies include an agenda item on governor training at each governing body meeting.

9	Build the involvement of all governors into the Autumn Core Visits	For red and amber schools the Challenge Advisors attends the full governing body meetings and presents/speaks to governors.	Plans to deliver governor training sessions to improve understanding of autumn core visit and the role of governors in this process.	Sept 2016	Action Complete K Phillips
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COMPLETED – NO

Progress: It is not considered possible to achieve this objective as the procedure for autumn core visits has been determined by ERW. Challenge Advisers visit schools for a whole day for the autumn core visit and discuss a variety of aspects identified by ERW. One aspect is school governance for which the Chair or another appropriate governor representative is required to attend part of the meeting only. The timeframe for Challenge Advisers to conduct all autumn term core visits will not permit sufficient time to meet with the whole governing body as part of the overall visit.

The Governor Support Unit plans to deliver governor training in the autumn term to improve governor understanding of the autumn term core visit process.

10	Undertake a campaign to promote the role of governors targeted at private sector employees and partners in the public and third sector.	Welsh Government are undertaking a campaign to target Governors from the private sector and employees from the public sector.	CCoS will dove-tail this campaign and run a local campaign in conjunction with the national campaign	Dec 2016	Welsh Government K Phillips
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COMPLETED – NO

Progress: The Governor Support Unit plans to dove-tail a local promotion campaign alongside the Welsh Government campaign to target governors. Welsh Government plans follow on from the Reform of School Governance: Regulatory Framework intended to attract governors with appropriate skills and experience. The outcome of the Reform has been held up due to the high level of responses received on the consultation. The Local Authority does not consider it appropriate to proceed with a local campaign until

further clarification is available from Welsh Government on the future of school governance.

11	Write to Chair of Governors and Head Teacher of each school to promote the good practice points included in this report (Appendix A)		Governor Support Unit to send letters to headteachers, chairs identifying good practice identified by Challenge Advisers and Estyn inspection reports. Information to be included in the newsletter also	Dec 2016	K Phillips
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COMPLETED – YES

Progress: A letter to all Swansea school headteachers and chairs of governors is being issued in September 2017. Details around good practice have been collated throughout the course of the academic year 2016-2017 for dissemination at the start of the new academic year.

12	Write to every School Governor thanking them for their work on behalf of the Council and highlighting the list of 'what every school Governor should expect ' (Appendix B)		Letter of thanks go to governors and headteachers after the Conference. Write to clerks of governing bodies to ask them to include the letter as item of correspondence on agenda for next governing body meeting. Include Appendix B in newsletter to governors.	Sept 2016	K Phillips
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13	Take additional steps to publicise the good work being done by Governors and Governing Bodies.		Include information in Governors Newsletter. Include booklet news in newsletter.	Dec 2016	K Phillips
			Governors newsletter to be issued twice annually.	Dec 2016	K Phillips
			KP (Swansea) influenced the agenda in Wales and participated in Governors Wales self evaluation.	June 2017 On going	Actions completed K Phillips
			Schools that have signed up to Governors Wales self evaluation.	Sept 2016	K Phillips
			Raise awareness to Estyn reports that have highlighted good practice of Governing Bodies, the newsletter and at Clerks Forum meetings.	May 2016	K Phillips
<p>COMPLETED – YES</p> <p>Progress: Governors newsletter issued in the summer term 2017 included the top 10 governing bodies that have been represented most frequently at governor training sessions between September 2016 and April 2017.</p> <p>Good practice shared at Clerk to Governors Forum meetings.</p> <p>Good practice shared with Challenge Advisers in School Issues meeting to disseminate ideas when meeting headteachers and chairs of governors at core visits and particularly for governing bodies targeted for specific support.</p> <p>Further plans to collate details of good practice to disseminate to governing bodies across Swansea. Good practice to be shared with governors at a Governors' Conference in the Spring Term 2018 (dependent upon funding to deliver the conference).</p>					
14	Simplify the information on the Council website about School		Governors Unit to review Council Website.	Sept 2016	K Phillips

	Governors which should provide links to Governors Wales for all general information.		Links to be checked Check ERW website	Sept 2016 Sept 2016	K Phillips H. M. Rees
<p>COMPLETED – YES Progress: Governor Support Unit regularly reviews Governors page on the Council website and ERW website. Links to Governors Wales and ERW are clearly available on the CCoS Governors webpage.</p>					
15	Remind all schools that whole Governing Body and Cluster School training can be arranged on request	Information is already included in the training programme. Complaints training being advertised at St. David's for the Governing bodies also. Individual school Estyn reports checked and package of support for governors put in place when governing body concerns raised.	.	On going April 2016	K Phillips K Phillips K Thomas
<p>COMPLETED – YES Progress: Information is readily available in the governors training guide issued termly. Information included in the Governors Newsletter issued to all governors in the summer term 2017 inviting governors to get in touch to arrange training which can be at a school if required and can be for clusters of governors where appropriate.</p> <p>Bespoke governor training delivered at the following schools since September 2016:</p> <p>Birchgrove Comprehensive School – role of the pupil discipline committee Clydach Primary School – roles and responsibilities Hendrefoilan Primary School – bespoke clerking service which included pre meeting training on a range of topics including self</p>					

review, questioning for challenge and monitoring and evaluating.
 Llanrhidian and North Gower cluster – complaints
 Morrision Comprehensive – roles and responsibilities and role of the chair
 Morrision Primary School – roles and responsibilities, governing body self review
 Pontarddulais Comprehensive School – role of the pupil discipline committee
 PRU management committee – roles and responsibilities
 St Davids – roles and responsibilities, self review, clerking service as above (ongoing)
 Whitestone Primary School – roles and responsibilities and self review
 Ysgol Bryn y Mor – complaints.
 Ysgol Crug Glas – roles and responsibilities and self review. Clerking guidance planned for new academic year.
 Ysgol Gyfun Gwyr - – role of the pupil discipline committee

16	Hold a seminar for LA appointed Governors to explore their role in sharing good practice	The Governor Unit could not offer a Governing Body remit for LA Governors only.			
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COMPLETED – NO

Progress: It is not considered appropriate to target a specific group of governors for governor training in isolation. Bespoke governor training can be provided for Elected Members who are school governors if required.



CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE

**To/
Councillor Jennifer Raynor,
Cabinet Member for Education**

*Please ask for:
Gofynnwch am:*

Scrutiny

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**CC. Alan Thomas, Chair of the Audit
Committee**

*Our Ref
Ein Cyf:*

SG/2016-1/1

*Your Ref
Eich Cyf:*

*Date
Dyddiad:*

8 September 2016

Summary: This is a letter from the Convener of the School Governance Scrutiny Inquiry Panel to the Cabinet Member for Education following the Cabinet Member's response to the Panel's report.

Dear Councillor Raynor,

Re: Your Response to the School Governance Scrutiny Inquiry

The School Governance scrutiny inquiry panel would like to thank you for your response to their Report, "A Very Challenging Role", which was presented to Cabinet on 16th June 2016. However, they were disappointed that only six of their recommendations were agreed, out of sixteen. Given the amount of work which was carried out by panel members, officers and stakeholders who contributed to the inquiry, and our findings, this was disheartening; given the importance of school governors in the context of school improvement and the authority's role in supporting them, this level of commitment to facilitate governors in their role is concerning.

The topic was selected for several reasons: pupil attainment is one of the Council's five priorities, attainment is a measure of schools' performance and schools' performance is the responsibility of governing bodies, increasingly so. On many occasions during Schools Performance scrutiny meetings, the issue of governors, their role and concerns about effectiveness arose, and it was decided, following the Annual Scrutiny Work Planning Conference in May 2014, that this topic would be pursued as it was recognised by many as important. More detail about the context can be found in section 1 of the report. You yourself agreed with this when we met at the start of the inquiry.

Scrutiny / Craffu

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Our work included site visits to schools and schools coming to talk to us, as well as contributions by Estyn, ERW and a recognised expert on school governance from University of South Wales' co-option on to the committee. After nine months of work, from February to November 2015, it was a shame that we were not able to meet to discuss why you found so many objections to our recommendations, and that we were only able to see your response a week prior to it going to Cabinet, by which time the agreement or otherwise had been decided anyway.

Following submission to Cabinet, some members of the inquiry panel met with Kathryn Thomas to discuss the report, to seek to maximise the beneficial outputs from it. At this point it became clear that several points were agreed upon though not now formally part of the follow-up process, and others had been somewhat misunderstood, confirming the fact that a meeting would have been sensible at an earlier point. However, it was positive that we could become clearer about improvements to how the authority supports governors to improve, which was the point of the work.

As such, I would like to note some points discussed.

- Kathryn confirmed that her team now meets with Challenge Advisers so that governor training can be linked with the training offered to schools as part of the regional support, challenge and intervention menu. We were pleased to hear that if Estyn raised a concern about governors in their Leadership question in a particular school's inspection, that this would automatically trigger an offer by the governor support unit to support the school via training.
- The potential of local authority governors to bring something specific to their governing bodies was a point raised by many contributors, including yourself. Whilst our recommendation to hold a seminar for this group was not agreed on the basis that all governors should be treated equally, in our discussion we found out that if the council wanted to hold a session for elected members who were governors, this was possible. We think this would be an excellent idea, and would encourage the Cabinet Member for Education to pursue this.
- Being conscious of diminishing human resources to support governors in their role, many of our suggestions were based on making better use of online resources as sources of information, signposting and guidance for governors. Some of these merely required better organisation of the department's area of the website, flagging up links in a better way, and it was recognised that the website was not sufficiently helpful. We were pleased, therefore, to hear that Kathryn's team was now carrying out a monthly update of the website, and believe that if this continues and links are checked, this will streamline the provision of information for governors seeking it. In particular, the ERW booklet mentioned in your response to recommendation 2, indeed the ERW website, will be linked to our website and flagged up, as well as www.mylocalschool link being highlighted as a valuable source of independent information and advice to governors that

they can ask their schools for a snapshot of data in the format of "school-on-a-page".

- We understand that some of our suggestions around training are not being implemented as they are on hold as a result of Welsh Government's review of the stakeholder model. Some would seem straightforward enough to implement without waiting for this; however, we would hope that once the outcomes of this review are clarified, that the department reviews its training in light of new structures and guidance.
- Kathryn indicated that the School Governor Unit and Challenge Advisers already recommend that governing bodies use a skills audit to help identify what skills are missing from a governing body as a result of completing the self-evaluation form, and following on from this, the Panel recommends strongly encouraging schools to seek out ways of filling these gaps via community and parent governors.
- We found in our inquiry from governors, including headteachers and chairs of 'successful' governing bodies (judged to be so by Estyn inspections and/or challenge advisers) that training was often described as being at the wrong time or place. We also heard from the governor support unit that bespoke training could be put on request. This seemed a clear case of simply ensuring that schools knew this, which is why in our recommendation 15 we say, "remind schools..." As such, Kathryn confirmed that on the training section of the website for governors, there would soon be a statement that if schools required specific training such as complaint, capability etc., this could be offered on site, or on a cluster arrangement to incorporate a comprehensive and partner primary schools.
- Training was a point raised by many governors as an issue. Kathryn reported that it has proven difficult to sufficiently evaluate governor training and that she will look to improve this via a questionnaire with follow-up, asking of the training has helped governors to feel more informed and able to challenge better. It would make sense if this simultaneously linked with some sort of reporting to full governing body, to help to ensure that training is cascaded, for efficiency.

Ultimately, we do not think it is helpful or progressive to respond to our findings by saying that governing bodies *should be doing this already*, which was your response to me and in cabinet when I presented our report, nor that *'it is for the governing body to satisfy themselves that this is happening'*. Indeed, answering our recommendations with "action already in place" is negated by the fact that we found these concerns from governors who told us they were an issue: they may be in place but if governors are not aware of them then we are not getting the message across clearly.

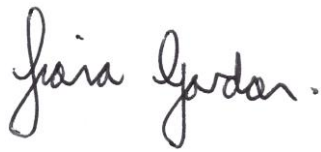
The point of the report was to see how we could better support governors to be independent and improve themselves. We make the point several times that many schools *are* doing this, but we heard concerns and questions from many - and not just 'weak' schools - that things could be better. Our recommendations were attempting to make things better. I do hope that as a

result of the inquiry and subsequent discussions, governors feel better informed and more able to challenge schools to improve, so that provision for children will be of a higher quality.

I would welcome any further comments you may have on the content of this letter however **a formal response is not required.**

Please also note that this letter and any response will be considered as part of the follow up to the inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fiona Gordon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small flourish at the end.

COUNCILLOR FIONA GORDON

Convenor, School Governance Pre Inquiry Scrutiny Working Group

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