

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.
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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

APPENDIX B

**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.			