

# WIRRAL COUNCIL

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

26<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2011

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>GOVERNOR SUPPORT SERVICES</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR SHEILA CLARKE</b>
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	No

### **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report is in response to a request from members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September for information on support provided to Wirral school governors by the Local Authority.
- 1.2 There is no specific exempt information.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 2.1 That the report is noted.

### **3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 3.1 The report is a response to a request for information and as such contains no specific recommendations other than the report be noted.

### **4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 Currently Wirral Council maintains 124 schools. All of these maintained schools must have a single Governing Body and they have a wide range of statutory duties under law. These are generally explained in the Governors Guide to the Law 2010.
-

4.2 These duties will vary depending on the type of school and the pupils it serves. For example whether the school is:

- Maintained nursery, infant, junior, primary, secondary or maintained special
- Community, foundation, voluntary aided, voluntary controlled, or independent.

4.3 Governing bodies are corporate bodies and, because of this, individual governors are generally protected from personal liability as a result of the governing body's decisions and actions.

4.4 The governing body must exercise its functions with a view to fulfilling a largely strategic role in the running of the school. It should establish the strategic framework by:

- setting aims and objectives for the school
- adopting policies for achieving those aims and objectives
- setting targets for achieving those aims and objectives.

4.5 The recent publication of *The Importance of Teaching, The Schools White Paper 2010* has given an indication that the current national Coalition government will:

work with the National Governors Association and others to clarify governing body accountabilities and responsibilities to focus more strongly on strategic direction, and encourage schools to appoint trained clerks who can offer expert advice and guidance to support them. We will make it easier for governors to set high expectations and ask challenging questions, by giving governors easier access to data about how their school compares to others, and the National College will offer high-quality training for chairs of governors.

4.6 There are currently over 2000 governors supporting Wirral schools. This makes it one of the biggest volunteer forces on the Wirral. All governors in maintained schools are members of the Wirral Governors' Forum which coordinates representation for Wirral Governors on a range of bodies locally, regionally and nationally. For example, Wirral School's Forum and the Wirral Children's Trust Board. The Chair and Vice-Chair of Wirral Governors' Forum also liaise with senior colleagues in Wirral Council on the strategic development of support for Governors and also with the Governor Support Service.

4.7 To support these volunteers, Wirral Council runs its Governor Support Service and has done for many years. The Governor Support Service is mainly served by three full-time Council employees with a manager and two admin supports. It is overseen by a Strategic Service Manager. There are many other staff and colleagues that provide support directly and indirectly for the Governors of Wirral through training and information or directly to school governing bodies. These include, the Director of Children's Services; Heads of Branch; Strategic Service Managers and Principal Managers; other consultants; and School Improvement Partners. School Improvement

---

Partners have supported governors on the performance management of headteachers and provided reports.

- 4.8 The primary role of the Governor Support Service is to provide a multi faceted level of support to Headteachers, Chairs of Governors, Governors and Clerks relating to all aspects of school governance. This includes the following:
- 4.8.1 They receive daily queries from heads, chairs, clerks, governors and members of the public. In the Autumn of 2010 they monitored the telephone queries for 30 days. There were a total of 285 queries to Governor Support Service which took a total of 25 hours and 13 minutes to deal with.
  - 4.8.2 They have responsibility for overseeing that governing bodies are fully constituted with all vacancies being filled. They monitor the terms of office of all governors notify the need for replacements and record the resignations/disqualifications as appropriate.
  - 4.8.3 At the moment, Governor Support Service requests and receives minutes and agendas from all Governing Bodies. They monitor them, record attendance of governors and pick up on any action points as deemed appropriate. They also receive and monitor the Ofsted reports to determine whether additional governor support is required.
  - 4.8.4 With regard to the primary, secondary and special school review of school reorganisation, they are responsible for ensuring that all aspects of school governance relating to the closures/amalgamations/change of name or status of schools are adhered to. This involves the establishment of the shadow governing body prior to the formation of the new school establishment and the Instrument of Government. The Instrument is produced in liaison with the Borough Solicitor.
  - 4.8.5 They are responsible for the compilation and editing of the termly 'Wirral Governor' Newsletter. The latest version of the newsletter is attached.
  - 4.8.6 They are directly responsible for managing the network of clerks to governing bodies and provide training for clerks. They liaise with schools with regards to the appointment of a new clerk.
  - 4.8.7 They are responsible for the Governor Support Service pages on the Wirral Council website ensuring that it is regularly monitored and updated as appropriate with relevant links to support websites. They also support and monitor the Wirral Governors' Forum web pages.
  - 4.8.8. They organise with the Wirral Governors' Forum and attend the termly Director's Briefing to Chairs of Governors and the Open Governors meeting. As part of this process they send out the termly mailing of LA
-

agenda items, briefing notes, training information and application form to all governors.

4.8.9 They liaise closely with the three political parties re the appointment, reappointment and resignations of LA governors.

4.8.10 They also coordinate Governor training. For example 30 separate training opportunities were offered in the Autumn Term 2010 for Wirral Governors to attend free of charge. They also commission an external verifier for the quality assurance of the training.

4.9 There are some statutory functions that the Local Authority has with regards to the Governing Bodies of schools and these in summary are:

<b>Legislation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<b>Education Act 2002</b>	
Section 22	The local education authority shall:- (to the extent that they are not otherwise require to secure the provision of such information) secure that every governor is provided, free of charge, with such information as they consider appropriate in connection with the discharge of his Function as a governor, and secure that there is available to every governor free of charge, such training as they consider necessary for the effective discharge of those functions.
Section 34	Where proposals for the establishment of a maintained school fail to be implemented under any enactment, the local education authority shall make arrangements providing for the constitution of a temporary governing body for the school.
<b>Education Act 2006</b>	
Section 64	If at any time a maintained school is eligible for intervention then the Local Authority may appoint such number of additional Governors as they think fit.
Section 65	If at any time a maintained school is eligible for intervention then the Local Authority may, with the consent of the Secretary of State, give the Governing Body a notice in writing stating as from a date specified the Governing Body is to be constituted as an Interim Executive Board.

4.10 Governor Support Service is funded by a combination of:

- top-slicing Direct Schools Grant so that all schools make of contribution of between £170 and £290 per year, which totals approximately £30,000;
- Area Based Grant of £18,000;
- Council Core Budget of approximately £55,000.

## **5.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

5.1 It has been agreed that the manager of Governor Support Service will be taking Early Voluntary Retirement at the end of March. A restructure will

---

need to be done. This will include reviewing the funding required to run the Governor Support Service. They are also several posts in Wirral CYPD that are being released from which certain governor training has been delivered.

## **6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

6.1 Not applicable.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

7.1 We are consulting with representatives of Wirral Governors' Forum as to the future strategic direction of Governor Support Services. We are also exploring potential shared service possibilities with our partners in the Learn Together Partnership for governor support services.

## **8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

8.1 As noted above we liaise closely with Wirral Governor's Forum.

## **9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

9.1 We are reviewing the funding, structure and future strategic direction of support services for governors.

## **10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no specific legal implications in this report at present.

## **11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no specific equal opportunities implications in this report.

## **12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 There are no specific carbon reduction implications in this report.

## **13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 There are no specific planning and community safety implications in this report.

**REPORT AUTHOR:** **Stuart Bellerby**  
*Strategic Service Manager (Secondary Education)*  
telephone: (0151) 666 4336  
email: [stuartbellerby@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:stuartbellerby@wirral.gov.uk)

## **APPENDICES**

Attached is the latest Wirral Governor newsletter for reference.

---

**REFERENCE MATERIAL**

None that is not in the public domain.

**SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
None	