

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12TH APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	GOVERNORS SUPPORT SHARED SERVICE
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR SHEILA CLARKE
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Support services for governors in schools has been provided by and funded by the Council for a substantial number of years. The cost in 2011/12 for this is approximately £106,000. This report provides information about the outcomes from the Learn Together Partnership (LTP) Directors of Children's Services decision in 2009 to move towards more shared services. The Learn Together Partnership has formally existed since 2004 and is a collaborative of Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helens, Sefton, Warrington and Wirral, Children and Young People's Services. The shared service proposal is based around four local authorities sharing governor support services, Wirral, Warrington, Halton and Cheshire East, with Cheshire East taking the lead on school governor development and support during 2012. This will further support and enhance the corporate priorities of developing joint working to provide an outstanding service which will provide greater value for money via group opportunities for procurement, with no redundancies. The statutory duty placed on the Local Authority to secure training and support to governors will still be fulfilled.

1.2 The report does not contain exempt information.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 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.

2.2 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 1.8 Council employees with a Principal Manager managing the service. It is overseen by a Strategic Service Manager. There are many other staff and colleagues that have

provided 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.

- 2.3 The primary role of the Governor Support Service has been to provide a multi-faceted level of support to Headteachers, Chairs of Governors, governors and clerks relating to all aspects of school governance.
- 2.4 Last year, in line with the "Wirral Future" consultation the Task Force Recommendations which were approved by Cabinet, a review took place of Governor Support Service and the way it was funded and where statutory duties resided.
- 2.5 Therefore, for 2011/12 most of the Governor Support Service delivery and funding was transferred across to the new Wirral school improvement service level agreement with schools, Education Quality (EQ). However as part of the Council contribution to EQ partnership, funding for the staff in Governor Support Service involved remained with the Council for 2011/12.
- 2.6 During 2011/12 the Council participated in the discussions around the possibilities of shared services within the LTP and in particular the possibilities from a shared governor support service with Cheshire East as the nominated lead authority.
- 2.7 Wirral is participating in the other three shared services which are, Primary Assessment; Newly Qualified Teacher authorisation; and Elective Home Education. Wirral CYPD is taking the lead on Primary Assessment.
- 2.8 Relevant staff were kept informed of the discussions and some of the implications.
- 2.9 As much of the governor support service is delivered through EQ, the potential and proposals for a governor support service shared service were taken to the EQ Management Board. This governing board for EQ is made up of Headteacher and governor representatives and Council Officers. In principal the Board approved the development of the shared service.
- 2.10 The proposed shared service outlined was:
 - Local face-to-face training for governors
 - A comprehensive range of e-learning modules tailored to our governors' needs
 - National Governors' Association membership, including hard copy newsletters and regular and informative email updates
 - Locally produced hard copy newsletters twice per year;
 - A comprehensive web-based resource, including rapid response to all governor queries via Ten Governor Support, 24/7, 365 days per year
 - A locally based help-line for non-generic queries, accessible to all governors
 - A managed programme of support and training for clerks.
 - Safer recruitment training

In particular Ten Governor Support, National Governors' Association membership and e-learning modules through Modern Governor would be a significant enhancement for

the service provision for 2012/13 over what is currently offered for not much more additional cost for the schools who bought into EQ.

2.11 To support the shared service delivery, a draft memorandum of understanding has been shared with Wirral legal services.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 It is important that the outstanding training, support, advice and other services that are provided to Wirral governors is maintained and enhanced.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 The option not to join the shared service is being considered.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 Consultation as part of the EQ consultation has taken place with all Chairs of governors at locality events and with the EQ Management Board.

5.2 Staff have been consulted during the process and relevant trade unions have been kept informed of ongoing developments.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 The outcomes of the shared service would enhance service delivery to Wirral's largest group of volunteers, school governors.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 For 2011/12 Wirral Governor Support Service is funded by a combination of:

- Council Core Budget of £60,000
- EQ (schools) contributing £46,000.

7.2 For 2012/13, if the shared service proceeds, the costs would be:

- Council Core Budget of £36,000
- EQ (schools) contributing £81,857.

7.3 This change results in a saving of £24,000 to the Council non-schools budget. From the 1.8 admin support currently providing governor support, it has been reviewed that if the shared service goes ahead, then only 0.5 admin support will be required to be retained by Wirral Council. It is anticipated that the remaining 1.3 posts can be redeployed into posts following a review of CYPD central administration. This means that redundancies would not be required.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The draft memorandum of understanding for the shared service states that the Governors' Support Project Board will provide overall strategic oversight and direction to the governors shared service. This would imply that the Teckal Test is met for a

shared service and as such would not be subject to Wirral Council procurement procedures.

8.2 The transfer of the data base of governor records to Cheshire East is being clarified to ensure that the Data Protection regulations are met.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality? Yes and impact review can be found via the link below:

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/children-young-people>

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Governors can travel to nearest locality training venue or access good quality training and advice from home.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 The information in the report is considered and that approval is given to enter formally into the shared Governor Support Service with Cheshire East, Halton and Warrington.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 Sharing the Governor Support Service with three other Local Authorities across the area will:

- Reduce Governor costs by £24,000 per year.
- Provide Wirral schools an enhanced Governor Support Service to those schools who buy into EQ.

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APPENDICES

None

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Report on Governor Support Services to CYP Overview and Scrutiny	26 January 2011