

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **LIFELONG LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

DATE: **THURSDAY, 25TH SEPTEMBER 2014**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF OFFICER, EDUCATION AND YOUTH**

SUBJECT: **GOVERNANCE IN SCHOOLS**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To update members on the provision of the mandatory training programme for school governors, and to provide a summary overview of the nomination process for Local Authority governors to schools.

2.00 BACKGROUND

Governor Development programme

2.01 Through the Education Measure 2011, the Wales Government introduced regulations to bring into force mandatory training for school governors. These regulations came into force in September 2013.

2.02 The Welsh Government has prescribed the content of training which governors of schools must receive within a designated time period of their appointment or risk suspension or disqualification from the governing body. It is for the Chair and Clerk to monitor attendance at the mandatory training.

2.03 From September 2013, all governors must attend and receive the prescribed training on 'understanding school performance data' within one year of their election or re-election to a governing body.

2.04 All new governors must attend and receive the prescribed 'induction training' within one year of election.

2.05 All Chairs will be required to attend and receive the prescribed training content for Chairs within six months of election.

2.06 Clerks must attend and receive the prescribed training content within one year of their appointment.

2.07 Governors who had already attended the appropriate training, delivered by or on behalf of the Local Authority after September 2012, are exempt. Headteachers are also exempt.

2.08 Local Authorities (LAs) are responsible for the delivery and monitoring of this training. The LA may deliver the training directly; in collaboration with other Authorities, or delegate this to accredited persons or organisations. In any event, the LA should satisfy itself that the content and delivery of the training is quality assured.

2.09 Since the regulations came into force, attendance by Flintshire Governors at the mandatory training sessions held in the academic year 2013/14 has been as follows:-

Understanding School Performance Data – 335 attendees

Induction – 221 attendees

Role of the Chair – 35 attendees

Role of the Clerk – 39 attendees

2.10 An audit was carried out amongst Governing Bodies in January 2014. Responses identified at that time approximately 170 governors still required induction training and 300 data training within one year of their appointment. Nearly all Chairs and Clerks had received the mandatory training within the required timescale.

2.11 Flintshire LA offered 18 sessions during the academic year 2013/14 to cover the mandatory topics and these were a combination of day, twilight and evening times, A further 8 sessions were cancelled however during the year as they were not financially viable due to low booking numbers.

2.12 Whilst Flintshire does not currently have Welsh speaking trainers all of the mandatory sessions are available in Welsh in the neighbouring Authorities.

2.13 All of the mandatory training events are offered on a collaborative basis with neighbouring authorities. For example, a further 40 mandatory sessions were available in Denbighshire and Wrexham during the academic year 2013/14. Numbers of attendees from FCC at those sessions are not yet available.

2.14 Where training events are full governors can request to be put on a reserve list.

2.15 There are generally low returns of course evaluation sheets by attendees which were as follows for the academic year 2013/14:-

Understanding School Performance Data – 49%

Induction – 36%

Role of the Chair – 2%

Role of the Clerk – 95 %

- 2.16 287 governors out of a possible 630 attendees completed course evaluation forms. 98% found the course to be useful and would recommend the course. Any feedback on venue, timings, content etc are considered when planning future events.
- 2.17 A mandatory training programme to cover the period September 2014 to March 2015 is being rolled out across the North East Authorities. In addition, development work is underway across the six North Wales Authorities and Powys to provide alternative bi-lingual on-line training modules to cover the four mandatory courses.

Nomination of Local Authority Governors

- 2.18 The current County Council policy for the nomination of LA Governor positions which are due for renewal is vested in the local Member in whose division the relevant school is situated. Consultation takes place with the member(s) of any adjoining ward(s) that sends over 20% of the pupils to the school.
- 2.19 Nominations are subsequently ratified by the Chief Education Officer and Executive Member under delegated powers.
- 2.20 There are around 370 LA governors within the Authority's schools. Councillors are usually able to nominate suitable candidates for governor vacancies in a timely manner. However, nominations for 7 schools have been outstanding for more than one year and in one case since 2012. This is despite members receiving monthly reminders seeking nomination and bespoke advice where appropriate.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.01 That the above background information on governor training be noted.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 That a revision to the existing policy on governor vacancy nominations is proposed. The proposal would be that Members, who fail, within a reasonable period of time, to nominate to LA governorships, lose their right to nominate and the governing body is asked to nominate to the vacancy.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 It is to be noted that the training and development budget will be subject to funding reductions from current year in line with authority target.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

- 6.01 None.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 None.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 None.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 None.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 None.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 None.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

- The Government of Maintained Schools (Training Requirements for Governors) (Wales) Regulations 2013
- The Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005

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