

School Governance Scrutiny Inquiry Panel

Summary: This is an agenda pack for a meeting of the School Governance Scrutiny Inquiry Panel taking place on the 15 July 2015. The main items are feedback from a recent governors' conference and the identification of good practice schools. Background papers are included.

Date: Wednesday 15 July 2015 **Time:** 4.00 – 6.00

Venue: Purple Room (1.2.1), Civic Centre, Swansea

Members of the Panel:

Fiona Gordon (Convener) David Cole Cheryl Philpott Hazel Morris Jeff Jones Ceinwen Thomas	Lynda James Anthony Colburn Sarah Joiner (Parent Governor Co-optee) Dave Anderson-Thomas (Parent Governor Co-optee) Professor Catherine Farrell (Panel Co-optee)
<p>Copy of agenda for information to: Alan Thomas - Chair of Audit Committee, Chris Sivers - Corporate Director People, Helen Rees-Morgan - Head of Education Improvement, Kathryn Thomas – School Governors Unit.</p>	

AGENDA

No.	Item
1.	Apologies
2.	Declarations of Interest <i>Please see the explanatory note.</i>
3.	<p>a) Feedback from the Recent Governors Conference <i>Including any good practice examples if available</i></p> <p>b) Good Practice Schools <i>The Panel are looking to identify good practice schools with a view to talking to the relevant head teachers and chairs of governors and observing meetings.</i></p> <p><i>Present for this item will be:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Helen Morgan-Rees, Head of Education Improvement</i> • <i>Kathryn Thomas, School Governors' Unit</i> <p><i>This will also be an opportunity for the officers to comment on the lines of inquiry (attached).</i></p>
4.	Discussion Points for the Next Meeting <i>Panel to identify the topics to be covered – initial discussion.</i>
5.	Timetable of Work <i>Please note meeting dates and venues.</i>

*****Please note members should declare party whipping in the usual manner*****
 Contact: Dave Mckenna, Scrutiny Manager, 01792 636090, dave.mckenna@swansea.gov.uk

Item 2

Declarations of Interest – Explanatory Note

This applies to councillors and statutory co-optees.

Advice from Legal (Janet Hooper) at Panel meeting on 3 October 2013 with regard to Declarations of Interest for Councillors

Councillors Code of Conduct applies to this meeting (any meeting constituted by council and that would include anything agreed as a panel by SPC).

If you are a school governor then you will have a personal interest in the business before the Panel if the Panel are discussing your school you must declare that personal interest.

If you are an LA appointed governor for a school being discussed, you will have an exemption under the Code from having a prejudicial interest so you can stay and take part in the meeting (Code of Conduct exemption for LA Governors), but if you are any other type of governor for a school being discussed the exemption for a prejudicial interest does not apply and you must leave the meeting and not take any part in the meeting.

Item 3

Lines of Inquiry

The panel will specifically be looking at the following questions:

1. **Role:** There seems to be a lack of clarity about the role of school governors. How can this be addressed?
2. **Skills:** If governors are to challenge effectively they need confidence and the right skills. Do they have these skills? How can training and development be improved?
3. **The Right Mix:** Many schools lack different types of governor for example parent governors, or people with business experience. What is the mix that governing bodies should be aiming for? How can the Council help governing bodies fill the gaps?
4. **School culture:** If governors are to be effective then schools must have a culture that supports challenge. The relationship between governors and head teachers is particularly important in this respect. How can we make sure that this culture is right?
5. **Challenge advisors:** The relationship between school governors and challenge advisors is important. Can this be improved?
6. **Information:** To be effective governors need the right information provided in the right way. Is this being provided? How could it be improved?
7. **Recruitment:** A shortage of governors has been identified as a problem. How can the numbers of school governors be increased?

Item 4

Timetable of Work

When / Where	What / Who
Pre Inquiry Working Group 18 February 2015 Guildhall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of support service by School, Governor and Student Services Manager • Input from Cabinet Member for Education • Discuss whether to hold inquiry
Planning the Inquiry 26 May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of key question, lines of inquiry and evidence gathering • Examples of Research into School Governance • Welsh Government Schools Governance Task and Finish Group
Clerks' Forum 24 June	Informal visit by panel members hear views of clerks to governing body.
Meeting 1 9 July, 4pm, Committee Room 6, Guildhall	Governors' Perspective <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeff Bowen (Chair), Swansea Association of Governing Bodies • Dereck Roberts, Swansea Association of Governing Bodies • Jane Morris (Director), Governors Wales (or representative)
Meeting 2 15 July, 4pm, Purple Room, 1.2.1, Civic Centre	Corporate Perspective Feedback from the recent governors' conference, good practice examples, good practice schools. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helen Morgan-Rees, Head of Education Improvement • Kathryn Thomas, School, Governor and Student Services Manager
Meeting 3 30 July, 4pm, Committee Room 6, Guildhall	ESTYN Perspective <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maldwyn Pryse, HMI, Estyn
Meeting 4 8 Sep, 4pm, Committee Room 6, Guildhall	Regional Perspective <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Betsan O'Connor, Managing Director, ERW • Huw Roberts, School Improvement Service (tbc) • Kathryn Thomas, School, Governor and Student Services Manager
Visits to Good Practice Schools	Aim is to observe governing bodies of good practice schools – these to be identified at meeting 2 and 3. Also an opportunity to meet informally with governors
Meeting 5 tbc	Good Practice Schools The aim is to hear from head teachers and chairs of governors at the good practice schools identified at meeting 2 and 3. An opportunity to feedback and discuss finding from observation visits.
Meeting 6 tbc	Cabinet Member Perspective Question and Answer with the Cabinet Member for Education. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Jennifer Raynor
New Governors tbc	Informal Session with governors who have completed their training between one and two years ago to hear about their experiences.
Review of Findings Tbc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Findings from survey of governors • Findings from evidence gathering • Written contributions