

**TORFAEN COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL  
EDUCATION SERVICE**

**TORFAEN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL GOVERNORS**

**Summary of the meeting held on Tuesday, 20 October 2009 at 6.30 p.m. at  
County Hall, Cwmbran**

**Present:** Mr G. Barnett (Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw), Chairman  
Cllr P. Seabourne (Blenheim Rd)  
Messrs A. Tait (Hollybush/Pontnewydd), S. Smith (Llantarnam)  
M. Johnston (Fairwater), T.N. Jones (West Mon/Kemys Fawr), A.  
Peploe (Griffithstown/Kemys Fawr), M. Davies (Pontnewynydd), M.  
Osborne (New Inn), R. Marchant (Abersychan)  
Mesdames M. Smith (Two Locks), M. Samuel (Cwmffrwdoer), Y.  
Balakrishnan and Rev P. Pearson (Ysgol Bryn Onnen), E. Wilks  
(Brookfield),

**Also present:** Cllr M. Barnett, Executive Member for Children & Young People  
M. Provis, Chief Education Officer  
D. Joseph, Head of Resources (Education)  
G. Hern, Education Human Resources  
Miss A. Jenkins, Clerk to the Association

**Apologies:** Cllr B. Whitcombe (Hillside P) Messrs P. Squire (Henllys), G. Caron  
(Llanyrafon), D. Weaver (Garnteg), J. Phillips (Greenmeadow), G.  
White (Ysgol Gymraeg Cwmbran) D. Phillips (Llantarnam Primary)  
Mesdames E. Clark (Victoria), Y. Jones (St Davids), A. Parry  
(Pontymoile), P. Whitcombe (Hillside Nursery)

**1. Welcome**

1.1 The Chairman welcomed those governors attending their first meeting and introduced officers.

**2. Budget**

2.1 DJ provided an early information revenue budget update for 2010/11. It will be a difficult year with Torfaen's Indicative RSG settlement showing an uplift of 1.6%. Current figures show a standstill budget which will mean a funding gap of £1.7m for education, split between schools and central budgets. Each budget will be addressed as a separate issue.

- 2.2 There will be a number of changes to the grants available with funding no longer automatically allocated to specific areas. Compact funding is being reviewed and could be re-allocated to specific areas. Budgets in the next three to four years will be even more difficult and early planning will be needed when the 2010/11 budget is balanced.
- 2.3 The LEA is concerned at the level of surplus budgets in schools, especially in primary. Finance officers are working with schools to review budgets where surplus is in excess of 5% and also where schools will be facing difficulties.
- 2.4 Governors had concerns over future projects, such as post 16, given funding difficulties. MP explained a more radical system would be needed to deliver education services and this would have an impact on schools. Torfaen has been requested by WAG to prepare a 5 case business model for post 16 education and this will be a major piece of work. MP does not expect any further progress on this until September.
- 2.5 Cllr B stressed the importance of making members aware of the pressures on schools and the need for funding in education.
- 2.6 DJ will provide a further update at the next meeting.

### **3. Minutes and matters arising**

- 3.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2009 were confirmed subject to minute 7.1 being amended to show two senior managers post unfilled not one.
- 3.2 Cllr B has been informed that the majority of AS students had chosen to remain with Coleg Gwent for their chosen course and attend Cross Keys Campus.

### **4. CEO items**

#### **4.1 Partnership Agreements**

- 4.1.1 The draft document, which defines the relationship between schools and the LEA, has been discussed with primary and secondary heads and the revised document will be circulated to heads for discussion with governing bodies prior to being presented to members. It should be seen as a strategic document only.

#### **4.2 Transformation update**

4.2.1 WAG has invited Torfaen to join a Heads of the Valley Curriculum Group which will involve exciting work with schools, FE and HE.

#### 4.3 Reporting School Performance

4.3.1 The LEA is developing a new system of reporting school performance and success to Scrutiny Committee. Reports on individual schools will be prepared in consultation with the headteacher and governing body. There will be a multi-team approach to school support involving officers from all areas not only School Improvement Officers.

#### 4.4 Conference update

4.4.1 Governors were reminded of the 'Safeguarding Children' session for governors which will be held as part of the Torfaen Conference on the evening of Monday, 9 November 2009. This is an important area of responsibility for governing bodies.

4.4.2 Cllr B informed governors that members and officers would no longer be attending residential courses and conferences.

#### 4.5 Technology-rich Learning update

4.5.1 The Plaza at Abersychan school has now been officially opened and attracted high profile guests and media coverage. A promotional dvd has been made for future use. Abersychan will be used as a training model. Torfaen has been asked by WAG to research technology-rich learning and WAG has offered to provide funding to enable Abersychan to open outside school hours to enable visitors to view the facilities.

4.5.2 Funding has been obtained to hold an IT conference in Torfaen.

### **5. Vetting and Barring Scheme**

5.1 GH briefed governors on the requirements and implications of the new VBS which is a partnership between the Independent Safeguarding Authority and the Criminal Records Bureau.

5.2 Eventually all governors will need to be registered with the ISA. From October 2009 anyone barred from working with children cannot be a school governor.

5.3 From July 2010 schools will no longer be able to put a written risk assessment in place for new appointments while waiting for a CRB check. It will be illegal for any appointment to commence without an ISA registration. Unlike CRB

checks, an ISA registration will be a once only process and will be transferable between employments.

- 5.4 GH advised that any person working in a school, in whatever capacity, should be asked to complete some form of application form. Staff should not be able to proceed from voluntary to temp to permanent appointments without proper procedures being in place. The fact that a person has been known to the school for a considerable time is not a sufficient safeguard.
- 5.5 GH offered to attend governing body meetings, or cluster meetings, to discuss this issue in detail. A briefing note has been sent to headteachers and workshops for staff will be held, which governors will be welcome to attend.

## **6. Governors Wales**

- 6.1 Governors Wales has responded to WAG proposals to amend School Staffing Regulations. This would mean where schools amalgamate, governing bodies would have discretion to decide if the head and deputy posts are advertised nationally. The majority response from Governors Wales was in favour of the proposal.
- 6.2 A report on the role of school governors has been published and recommends compulsory training for chairs of governors and compulsory induction training. The Education Minister has indicated she is prepared to consider these proposals.

## **7. Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

- 7.1 The scrutiny committee now includes Regeneration.
- 7.2 Education issues discussed at the recent meeting included:  
Crownbridge regeneration  
School balances  
Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw remodelling  
Area covered by Heads of the Valley funding could be extended to include additional areas of Pontypool  
Proposals for a new Welsh Medium Primary School at Griffithstown.
- 7.3 Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meetings are available on the Torfaen website.

## **8. Referrals**

- 8.1 There were no referrals to this meeting.

**9. Date of next meeting**

- 9.1 The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 19 January 2010 at 6.30 p.m. at County Hall.

**Anne Jenkins**  
**Clerk to the Association**  
**2 November 2009**