

## **Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council**

### **Directorate of Education Policy for the Appointment of LA Governors Academic Year 2020 /2021**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

A Panel for the Appointment of Local Authority (LA) Governors has been established to consider all matters relating to the appointment and removal of LA governors. In making appointments the Panel should note that LA governors cannot be mandated by the LA to take any particular line. They may represent the LA view but in all cases the interests of the school are paramount and all governors must abide by the governing body's rules and code of conduct.

#### **2.0 Membership and terms of reference of the Advisory Panel for the Appointment of LA Governors**

The Panel for the Appointment of LA Governors will comprise of:

- 3 Majority group members (including the Executive Member for Education who will Chair the Panel),
- 3 members from the minority group.

The business arrangements for the meeting will be convened in line with the usual arrangements for Council business and include full secretariat support.

LA governor Panel meetings will be held every half term and arranged in accordance with other Council meetings with dates placed in diaries during the agenda setting process for Council business.

A representative of:

- the Blaenau Gwent School Governors' Association (BSGA), as determined by the Management Committee of that Association, will be invited to attend the Panel in an advisory capacity (i.e. without voting rights)
- a representative of the commissioned EAS Governor support service will attend to provide advice in relation to the governance arrangements including performance

information in relation to attendance, training etc. relevant to any individual application.

- a member of the Education Directorates Departmental Management Team will attend to offer school improvement advice on the school's circumstances and other information as required

In the event of any of the six members of the Panel or the BSGA representative being unable to attend, named substitutes will be eligible to take their place to ensure that all these groups are adequately represented when the Panel meets.

The quorum from the Panel meeting will be **2** which must include one representative **from both the majority and minority groups.**

The Panel for the Appointment of LA Governors will be responsible for appointing LA Governors. Full Council will **endorse** the recommendation of the Panel regarding the appointment of LA governors in line with the approved criteria contained within this policy. However, full Council have to agree the recommendation of the Panel to remove individuals. As such, the date of appointment of any LA governor will be from the date of the Panel.

Should the Council not endorse any recommendations of the Panel regarding any LA governor appointments Council will refer them back to the Panel in the first instance stating appropriate reasons for doing so. In the event of a dispute the matter will be referred to the Councils Monitoring officer for guidance as to how best to proceed.

The Council has an obligation to fill vacancies within 6 months of their notification. In the event of failure by the Panel to make an appointment, or no applications being received. Where this occurs the Executive Member will ask full Council at their next meeting to nominate an LA governor for the school(s) in question.

### **3.0 Criteria for the appointment of LA governors**

The Panel shall apply the following criteria when considering appointments. In applying these criteria, the Panel should consider the appointment of local members wherever

possible and also the experience, skills, expertise and potential contribution to the school of all applicants. Factors for consideration include: -

- Experience as an effective school governor measured in terms of regular attendance and the contribution made during their term(s) of office.
- Willingness to share their individual skills and expertise within the context of the governing body.
- A genuine desire to help improve standards of education within the school in partnership with the Headteacher and the rest of the governing body.
- A knowledge of and an interest in the community in which the school is situated.
- A knowledge of modern education issues.
- A commitment to regular attendance at full governing body meetings as well as meetings of any committees of the governing body to which they are elected.
- A commitment to attend governor training courses organised by the Local Authority/EAS to update their skills and knowledge to enhance their ability and effectiveness as a governor, including the completion of mandatory training within specified timeframes.
- Where a school has developed their school improvement plan and identified a shortage of skills amongst the governing body the panel will give primary consideration to this criterion when recommending individuals to vacancies.

The Governor Support Officer will ensure that the panel is appropriately appraised of this information. To assist the Panel in making their decision applicants will be required to submit an application form outlining their skills and experience that they can bring to the role.

#### **4.0 Criteria for the removal of LA Governors**

In exceptional circumstances, the Panel can recommend that full Council remove LA governors as the appointing authority but this power must be used reasonably as it may be open to challenge. Any queries relating to the removal of LA governors should be referred to the Governor Support Unit of the EAS in the first instance.

Disqualification or the suspension of LA governors, or indeed any governors, is dealt with in Schedule 6 of The Education (School Government) (Wales) Regulations 1999 and is outside the remit of this Panel. However, whilst outside their remit of the Panel the Governor Support Unit will report any such disqualifications or suspensions in respect of LA Governors to the next Panel meeting. Similarly, should suspensions be lifted these will also be reported to the LA Governor Panel.

In the case of any such removals or disqualifications the LA governors concerned will be contacted by the Governor Support Unit and informed accordingly.

### **5.0 Declaration of Interests**

In accordance with Council policy and good practice, members of the Advisory Panel should not preside over:

- where there is an interest in the application being considered.

Should any member(s) of the Panel need to withdraw during the consideration of any appointment(s) the party or organisation that they represent may choose to nominate a substitute providing they are not a governor at the school with a vacancy.

### **6.0 Operational Procedures**

The Governor Support Unit will notify the relevant schools Governing Body the term before of any governor vacancy which is scheduled to end in the next term. This will enable LA governors who wish to reapply to do so in ample time of their term of office ending.

In preparation for each Panel Meeting Governor Support will provide a report of current and future vacancies for the term ahead that will be circulated with the papers for each Panel Meeting.

To improve the recruitment of LA governors this report will be placed on the agenda for Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee as well as full Council so that all members are cognisant of the level of LA governor vacancies and able to support timely recruitment.

Individuals wishing to apply or reapply for a LA governor vacancy will need to apply on the application form (Appendix 1). The application form contains guidance on how to complete the form. All applications will be redacted by the secretariat prior to circulation to Panel members to ensure compliance with GDPR. Anyone who has not completed an application form should not be appointed or re-appointed as an LA governor.

Governors should be chosen on the basis of the contribution which they can bring to a school in terms of their skills and experience. The application form is the fairest method of ensuring that the Council does everything in its power to comply with this requirement when making LA governor appointments.

Should the Governing Body of the School wish the Panel to take into consideration any views expressed by the governing body of the school concerned this should be done in writing to the clerk to the LA Governor Appointment Panel. However, the decision of the LA Governor Panel will be final on all matters relating to LA governor appointments.

The Advisory Panel will meet on a half termly basis and should vacancies increase between panels consideration will be given to calling a special meeting of the panel. This way, vacancies will be considered soon after they become known and it will avoid the situation where schools are without their full complement of LA governors for long periods of time therefore increasing the burden on the remaining members of the governing body.

If the LA, for whatever reason, fails to make an appointment of an LA governor at a particular school within six months of being notified, and Council fail to appoint an LA governor to the vacancy the nominee of the governing body will automatically be appointed.

The agenda, redacted application forms and LA term of office report will only be circulated to Panel Members.

Minutes of Panel meetings will continue to be reported to full Council as a Part I item, notwithstanding the fact that the application forms themselves would remain exempt from public inspection.

Only Panel Members are entitled to attend meetings of the Panel. The only exception is where substitutes are required. There is no entitlement for other Members of the Council to attend meetings of the Panel where they have not been asked to do so.

Once the Panel has met to consider its recommendations on all the current LA governor vacancies these recommendations will be reported to the next scheduled full Council meeting. Similarly, the Governor Support Unit will also contact the Headteacher, Chair and Clerk to the Governing Body with details of appointees.

In the case of LA governors who are not reappointed they will also be contacted by the Governor Support Unit and informed accordingly.

Any queries relating to the procedure for the appointment or removal of LA governors should be referred to the Governor Support Unit in the EAS

## **7.0 Advertisements for LA Governors**

Details of LA Governor vacancies including the names of schools with vacancies will be:

- Included in the papers for Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee and full Council
- Placed on the agenda for Blaenau Gwent School Governors' Association (BSGA) management committee,
- Council website
- Social Media
- Promoted through the Managing Directors message to draw these vacancies to the attention of their staff living in the Blaenau Gwent locality.
- Email to school Headteacher to seek expressions of interest in the post

## **8.0 DBS Arrangements**

Currently there is no legal requirement for school governors to be subject to police clearance prior to them taking up their appointments. However, the Safeguarding in Education Policy has an explicit requirement for all governors to undertake a DBS check upon appointment. This information is monitored on a termly basis.

**Policy approval:**

The Policy is subject to approval by Executive on \_\_\_\_\_