

Toolkit for Governing Body Clerks

August 2015

A Toolkit for Governing Body Clerks

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
REFERENCE MATERIAL	4
THE PURPOSE AND ROLES OF GOVERNING BODIES.....	4
THE ROLE OF THE CLERK	5
CONSTITUTION AND ORGANISATION OF GOVERNING BODIES	6
SCHOOL GOVERNANCE CONSTITUTION REGULATIONS	6
MEETINGS	8
TAKING MINUTES	12
MEETINGS CHECKLIST.....	16
OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION.....	19
ANNEX A – JOB DESCRIPTION FOR A LEVEL 2 CLERK	20
MODEL PERSON SPECIFICATION	23
ANNEX B – TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT	25

Introduction

We recognise fully the significant role that Clerks play in helping governing bodies to work efficiently and effectively. Not only that, through their minutes of governing body meetings, they provide crucial evidence of how governing bodies are discharging their responsibilities. This guidance has been produced to help Clerks play their part in the work of our schools, with confidence and enjoyment. It offers advice to the clerk on performing a sometimes challenging role effectively and seeks to clarify the procedures that should be followed. This guidance does not duplicate existing resources, instead it remains the Harrow perspective and identifies a number of additional resources which we hope you will find useful.

School governors form the biggest single group of volunteers in the country. They represent all the groups who stand to gain or lose by the success of a school – parents, staff, the local authority, the foundation or trust, the wider community. Their core purpose is to help schools provide the best possible education for their pupils. To do so they must play a significant role in the leadership and management of schools. The Department for Education (DfE) is increasingly comparing the role of governing bodies to corporate boards with an expectation that governing bodies will have highly skilled members whose focus will be on; holding the headteacher to account, ensuring financial probity and setting a strategic vision for a school. The following is a recent quote from Chris Caroe, Head of the School Governance Unit at the DfE and gives a clear message of current government thinking.

'Ofsted and Ministers' vision for the primary role of GBs is as non-executive boards – akin to the board of charity trustees or company directors, strategic leaders driving the success and effectiveness of their organisation. Their primary role is to set the long term vision and hold executive leaders to account for the school's performance – both educational and financial. This role is now defined in legislation for maintained schools, described in the Governors' Handbook for all schools and academies, and reflected in the criteria inspectors use to judge the effectiveness of governance. Being on the board of an organisation with a multi-million pound turnover is a demanding task, and many GBs may be feeling the pressure. But it's a vital role and expectations are high. Governors may be volunteers, but they can't afford to be amateur. We need more professional standards of governance, with GBs that are skilled and confident to not only ensure schools' compliance, but to also take the lead in shaping schools' long-term goals and strategic priorities and establishing robust arrangements for holding heads to account for progress towards them'.

Chris Caroe – Head of School Governance Unit, DfE

Reference Material

The websites noted below provide essential, easily accessible information on the roles and responsibilities of governing bodies.

Department for Education (DFE)

www.gov.uk

Harrow Council

www.harrow.gov.uk/schoolgovernors

These are essential reference points for school governors and Clerks. Arguably the most useful item on the DFE website is the [Governors Handbook](#).

The other significant documents you will need are :

[The School Governance \(Roles, Procedures and Allowances\)](#)

Governor Recruitment Toolkit produced by Harrow Council, which includes templates to be used when conducting parent or staff governor elections and can be found on the Harrow Council website as given above.

There will be occasions when you may need further advice and assistance in the performance of your role. The most obvious places to seek assistance are: -

- The Chair of Governors
- The Headteacher of the School
- Governor Services (Tel 020 8736 6504)

You should have received a copy of the following documents, for your school, please ensure the Chair of Governors provides you with copies. However, if you do not have a copy of any of these for any reason please contact Governor Services:

- Instrument of Government
- Governing body membership details

The purpose and roles of governing bodies

To put the role of the clerk in context it is important to understand the purpose and role of governing bodies. They are there to help schools provide the best possible education for children, to help maximise every child's life chances.

The three **key roles of governing bodies**, are described as follows:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

[Governors' Handbook](#)

The main strategic responsibilities of governing bodies can be found on Section 1 of the Governors' Handbook.

Guidance on the constitution and procedures can be found on Section 2.

The agendas, minutes and other documentation for governing body meetings are key evidence of the governing body's effectiveness.

The Role of the Clerk

4.1 Appointment of clerk

Governing bodies are required by law to appoint a clerk to the governing body and to all committees. The clerk to the whole governing body may not be a governor, associate member, or the headteacher.

There is ample evidence to indicate that **an effective clerk can greatly enhance the performance of a governing body.**

4.2 Key functions of the clerk are to:

- provide high quality clerking to governing body
- assist the governing body to understand its role, functions and legal duties
- convene meetings of the governing body
- collate and distribute the documentation for the meeting at least seven days in advance of the meeting
- attend governing body meetings and take the minutes
- maintain a register of members of the governing body and report vacancies to the governing body and to Governor Services
- maintain a register of attendance and report this to the governing body
- produce the minutes for approval by the Chair (and headteacher)
- distribute the minutes (this may be via the school)
- keep records of all approved minutes in a Minute Book/File
- respect the confidentiality of the governing body
- perform such other functions as may be determined by the governing body from time to time.

Each individual governing body will decide on the specific tasks and responsibilities for the role of the clerk. An **example of a job description** can be found at **Annex A**. It is described as a Level 2 clerking service i.e. more than simply taking minutes, but not a full 'adviser'. If the tasks listed in the main part of the job description were extended to cover the optional extras, that would be described as a Level 3 clerking service.

4.3 Advice, support and training

Governor Services provides support and advice. Training sessions are offered for governors and clerks. The Harrow School Improvement Partnership runs all training for governors and clerks places can be booked on: cpd.harrowschools.org.uk

Attendance by Clerks at any of the sessions is on a voluntary basis, unless a different arrangement has been agreed with the Chair in relation to payment for the hours of attendance.

4.4 Termly Briefing for Governors and Clerks

A briefing is held each term, free of charge, for Governors and Clerks. This briefing provides an opportunity for discussion and clarification of current LA developments. Details of the sessions are included on: cpd.harrowschools.org.uk

4.5 Relationships

The key to effective clerking is the establishment of a good working relationship between the clerk and both the Chair and the Headteacher. **It is good practice to arrange to meet with the Chair at least once a year** to discuss the style, presentation and content of the minutes to ensure that the needs of the governing body are being met. This opportunity could also be used to discuss any other related issues, such as the use of school equipment and stationery if and when required, payment for telephone calls made, stamps and stationery purchased, and attendance at training events.

4.6 Terms and Conditions of employment

The work undertaken is on an 'as and when required' arrangement between the clerk and the school. **The terms and conditions which apply are set out in Annex B.**

4.7 Claiming payment for duties undertaken

The Clerk and the Chair should be clear about how pay claims will be processed. The Chair or Headteacher should approve and sign a pay claim for work undertaken by the clerk. **Details on how to make a claim are given at Annex C.**

Constitution and organisation of governing bodies

Each governing body comprises of a number of different groups of governors, depending on the model chosen.

It is very important that Clerks notify Governor Services of any changes to the composition of their governing bodies on governorservices@harrow.gov.uk. A central database is maintained.

School governance constitution regulations

These regulations came into force on 1 September 2012, they include several changes to the way individual people are appointed to serve as governors. The regulations allow governing bodies constituted on or after 1 September 2012 to have a minimum

size of seven members. This however, remains subject to the requirement that 'foundation governors' must hold a majority in voluntary aided schools and 'qualifying' foundation schools, which means that it would not be technically feasible for those categories of school to have a governing body this small.

- There is a new formal requirement that the governing body should ensure that collectively its members have the skills needed to discharge their responsibilities effectively.
- The Local Authority makes a nomination and the governing body appoints the Local Authority governor
- A new definition of co-opted governor has been introduced
- For foundation schools a new category called Partnership Governor has been introduced these governors can be appointed by the governing body. The partnership governor place must be included on the Instrument of Government

Composition of the governing body

As mentioned above the composition of the governing body must be no fewer than seven. There is no upper limit we recommend that the governing body consider whether a smaller number of governors would allow business to be conducted more effectively.

The governing body must be made up as follows:

- at least two parent governors
- the headteacher unless the headteacher resigns
- one staff governor
- one local authority governor

The governing body may appoint as many co-opted governors as they consider necessary but the number of co-opted governors who are eligible to be elected or appointed as staff governors, with one staff governor and the headteacher must not exceed one-third of the total membership of the governing body.

Surplus governors

Where a school has more governors in a particular category than is provided for in the instrument of government for the school then the excess must be removed –

- by the resignation of the required number of governors
- by governors ceasing to hold office on the basis of length of service, starting with the governor with the shortest length of service
- by drawing lots, where governors have served for the same length of time

Notification of appointments

The person making an appointment or nominating a person to be appointed to the governing body must give written notice to the clerk of the name and usual place of residence of the person nominated or appointed.

5.1 Committees of the Governing Body and delegation

The principal guidance on committee structure and function is available in [The School Governance \(Roles, Procedures and Allowances\) \(England\) Regulations 2013](#).

To ensure that all responsibilities are addressed it is often appropriate for work to be done by committees, individuals and the headteacher. The governing body must review the establishment, terms of reference, constitution and membership of any

committee annually. In addition the governing body must review the delegation of functions to committees and individuals annually.

5.2 Standing Orders

The DfE recommends that governing bodies record their non-statutory procedures and decisions, including recording delegations, in standing orders.

The London Co-ordinators of Governor Services (LCOGS) have produced a standing orders template which can be accessed on harrow.gov.uk/schoolgovernors

Duty to publish membership information online

5.3 Publication of Governor's Details and the Register of Interests

Governors hold an important public office and their identity should be known to their school and wider communities. In the interests of transparency, a governing body should publish on its website up-to-date details of its governance arrangements in a readily accessible format. This should include:

- the structure and remit of the governing body and any committees, and the full names of the chair of each;
- for each governor who has served at any point over the past 12 months:
- their full names, date of appointment, term of office, date they stepped down (where applicable), who appointed them (in accordance with the governing body's instrument of government),
- relevant business and pecuniary interests (as recorded in the register of interests) including:
- governance roles in other educational institutions;
- any material interests arising from relationships between governors or relationships between governors and school staff (including spouses, partners and close relatives); and
- their attendance record at governing body and committee meetings over the last academic year.

Governing bodies should also publish this information for associate members, making clear whether they have voting rights on any of the committees to which they have been appointed.

Governing bodies should make it clear in their code of conduct that this information will be published on their governors and any associate members. Any governor failing to provide information to enable the governing body to fulfil their responsibilities may be in breach of the code of conduct and as a result be bringing the governing body into disrepute. In such cases the governing body should consider suspending the governor.

Meetings

6.1 Frequency and timing

Governing bodies must meet at least three times per year and may meet up to 2 to 3 times each term. The length of the meetings varies between 2 and 3 hours, depending on the number and complexity of the items scheduled on the agenda for the meeting. In reality it's likely that continuing beyond 2.5 hours may diminish the energy levels of all involved!

Please remember that the Clerk is **NOT** a governor (unless a governor is acting as clerk in an emergency) and should not take part in the discussions / decisions unless invited by the chair. **However** it is advisable to agree with the Chair, how you will intervene re matters of accuracy and legality.

6.2 Agenda

The agenda can be compiled by the clerk, the Chair and/or the Headteacher. The clerk will need to ensure that s/he is aware of the operating practices for each governing body.

An agenda with all the supporting paperwork should be provided to all governors at least seven clear days before the date of the meeting. Chairs can decide to cancel a meeting if this hasn't happened.

The following documentation may form part of the supporting paperwork:

- a copy of the minutes from the previous meeting(s)
- the Headteacher's report
- any reports from the LA to be considered by the Governing Body
- supporting paperwork for specific agenda items

The compilation, processing and distribution of the agenda vary from Governing Body to Governing Body. Governing bodies produce and distribute their own documentation either via the clerk or via the school.

6.3 Confidential items

The governing body decides which items will be confidential and these items should be listed clearly and separately, under Part 2 on the agenda. Anything to do with a named individual (parent, pupil, member of staff or governing body), or that of a financial nature attributed to any individual, or of an issue of security should be discussed under a 'Part 2 – confidential' item of the agenda.

6.4 Personal preparation

It is worthwhile for the Clerk to read all the documents if time is available. In any event, however, it is advisable to sort out in advance the purpose of each of the documents, that is, is the document for decision, discussion, or for information only.

The Clerk will need to discuss with the Chair the amount of time anticipated for this preparatory work and agree an arrangement for payment either of a specific time or the actual time taken depending on the number and complexity of the reports presented each term.

Finally, check the time and location of the meeting and ensure that everything that is needed, including spare stationery, is available before setting out for the meeting.

6.5 LA Items

LA Consultations often contain a specific set of recommendations for governing bodies. These are usually summarised on the front (briefing) page.

Check the deadline dates for any response that may be required. If it is likely that a response reported in the minutes may not be available to the LA by the due deadline date, this should be brought to the attention of the Chair who will decide how best to respond. It may be appropriate for the governing body to agree to pass the response directly to the LA prior to the circulation of the minutes.

Obviously, some of the issues that governing bodies are asked to consider are quite complex, and a little "homework" will make the task of minuting the discussions much easier. LA items are discussed at the Chairs' termly briefing – See 4.4.

6.6 Attendance at the meeting

The clerk should arrive in good time, to ensure, with the chair, that all is ready for a prompt and smooth start to the meeting. When the majority of governors are present and the meeting is due to start **the Clerk should circulate an attendance sheet to record those present at the meeting.** The minutes must record the names of everyone present at the meeting including observers. The clerk will need to note any apologies and record the governing body's acceptance or other comment. The clerk should keep a look out for late arrivals and note their attendance. If governors are unknown to the clerk the late arrivals should be asked to sign the sheet at the end of the meeting. **The Clerk should ensure that the attendance sheet is collected at the end of the meeting.**

6.7 Quorum

The meeting of the governing body may pass resolutions only when 50% (rounded up to a whole number) of the total number of governors in place on the governing body, i.e. vacancies are not taken into account. Associate members do not count towards the quorum.

If a meeting is not quorate, those present can decide to hold a discussion and make recommendations but no action could take place. Decisions would need to be approved at the next quorate meeting.

6.8 Approval of the minutes

When the meeting begins make sure the Chair has the Minute Book/File for approval. If there are changes to the minutes the clerk will need to note these. The clerk should ask the Chair to initial each page and to sign the Minute Book copy.

Any 'Part 2 – confidential' items should also be signed.

6.9 Recording of the minutes

The Regulations require the clerk to ensure that the minutes of the proceedings of the meetings of the governing body are kept in a minute book. If loose-leaf pages are used then the pages must be consecutively numbered and each page initialled as well

as the signature of the Chair or other person signing the minutes. It is probably a good idea to start each school year with a fresh numbering system, i.e. 2013/01-1, 2013/01-2 and so on, so that the minutes can easily be identified. This requirement also applies to committees.

Individual governing bodies may have a different preference for the numbering of minutes, so seek guidance from the Chair.

Make a note of what time the meeting ended.

6.10 Matters arising

If there are any matters arising from the minutes, give each a title and note the item number previously used for ease of reference. Make a short note of the discussion and take down the resolution or decision. Do not hesitate to ask the chair if you are uncertain about the outcome of any item discussed. You may find it helpful to encourage the chair to summarise the key points from each agenda item before moving on.

When the Chair goes on to the next item, remember to use a new heading and to make a short note of the discussion and record any resolutions or decisions. If there is any doubt about how much should be written, discuss it with the Chair or the Headteacher, or seek advice from Governor Services.

6.11 Voting

Only full members of the governing body may vote.

Governors are required to be present at the meetings to vote, proxy voting or voting in advance of a meeting is not permitted. It is important that governors are present to hear and engage in the debate before casting their vote.

Provided advance arrangements have been made and approved by the full governing body and stated in a standing orders template, governing bodies now have the power to make arrangements for their members to be present at full governing body and committee meetings 'virtually', for example by telephone or video conference, and therefore to participate in discussion and decision making remotely.

Associate members on the governing body attend by invitation only. They are not members of the governing body though they can be given limited voting rights on committees at the time of appointment. They cannot be given voting rights if they have not reached the age of 18 at the time of their appointment. Associate members may not vote on any decision concerning admissions, pupil discipline, election or appointment of governors, the budget and financial commitments of the governing body.

The clerk and any attending LA Officer are also not members of the governing body and therefore are not entitled to vote.

Casting Vote. If there is an equal number of votes for and against a proposal, the Chair has a second or casting vote. Only if there is a tie can the casting vote be used. The Chair cannot decide after the vote has been taken to cast two votes if she/he has not voted the first time, i.e. s/he cannot change a vote of 7:6 into one of 7:8 by using his/her two votes.

A governing body can establish its own convention about whether and how the Chair may vote, in its Standing Orders, but this would not be legally binding.

If a meeting is improperly constituted and, for example, takes a decision without the necessary quorum (inquorate), the correct procedure is to re-consider the issue at the next properly constituted meeting and vote on it again. It would need to be put on the agenda in the usual way.

Taking minutes

7.1 Note taking

There is no right or wrong method of taking notes during the course of a governing body meeting but it is **not** necessary to use shorthand. Initially a lot of notes may be taken but in time it will become easier to learn to pick out the important points in a discussion. Record important points and not the most lengthy.

You cannot listen attentively and write at the same time. **You will need to develop the skills of listening for and summarising the key points.** Remember that the governing body should be

- Setting the school's vision and strategic aims, and agreeing plans and policies, making creative use of resources (**being strategic**)

If those things are happening you need to record evidence of that. So for example don't just write 'The governing body discussed the targets'. Note points that indicate the governing body made decisions about targets based on sound evidence. Listen for summaries of discussions and ask for them if necessary. Other governors will probably welcome such summaries too.

Some Clerks tend to write almost continuously and then précis their notes for the final version of the minutes. Others write a handful of key phrases and rely on their memory to supplement these brief notes afterwards. The method used will be a personal choice.

Remember: the final version is not intended to be a verbatim account of the meeting. A record of decisions taken and action to be initiated is the most important aspect of the minutes, together with a brief account of how the decisions came to be made. A person not present at the meeting should be able to read the minutes and understand the issues discussed and decisions made.

For each agenda item record:

- important points
- decisions reached
- action to be taken and by whom

An **action column**, in the right-hand margin, indicating the name or initials of the person responsible for action against each item, is a very useful and easy checklist to monitor action.

Seek assistance to formulate the precise wording of any resolution passed by the Governing Body. You have the right to ask the Chair for the wording required. If necessary, ask for a resolution to be dictated slowly so that you can take it down in full and then read it back to the governing body to double check.

The Clerk has the right to refer to the Chair for guidance, at any time, on any points that have not been clear. At the end of the meeting, or, if more appropriate, during the next few days, clarify with the Chair any remaining issues that are unclear on any of the items that were discussed.

7.2 Order of the agenda

Keep in mind the order of items on the agenda. Some governors have a tendency to move on to a later item and suddenly revert to a previous one. Try to keep the notes on each item together, possibly by using arrows. The final minutes should follow the chronological order of the agenda, unless the governing body agreed to alter the order of items at the beginning of the meeting.

7.3 Some key points to remember

The following broad guidelines are easy to follow and will assist the clerk in deciding what is the right amount of detail to include:

- **Write a summary of the facts**
- **Write in an objective, unemotive style**
- **Use short sentences**
- **Do not attribute comments to individual teachers, pupils or governors except in the case of a nomination, a report being presented or responsibility for further action, etc.**
- **Use a clear layout, consecutively numbering each item separately, following the agenda**
- **Use the past tense, and a formal impersonal tone (Do not use "we" or "they" but e.g. "it was agreed")**
- **Make clear who has to take follow-up action**
- **Make resolutions stand out from the page**
- **Keep your notes until the minutes have been signed**

7.4 Part 2 - Confidential items

A general statement of the issue under discussion only needs to be reported and minuted. Detailed notes of any fuller discussion by the committee / working group / panel should be held by the Chair of that group or by the school for future reference.

It is particularly important that if the matter under discussion is likely to be the subject of a hearing or an appeal, no details should be revealed which might prejudice a later hearing.

Only full members of the governing body and the clerk should be present for the Part 2 items. Any LA Officer who attends the governing body meeting by an agreed arrangement with the governing body will normally be present for Part 2 items of the agenda to provide advice. The governing body may, however, decide on each occasion a Part 2 item appears on the agenda to consider who should attend in

addition to the full members of the governing body. Advice, if required, can be sought from Governor Services in advance of the meeting.

Writing up the Minutes

It is helpful to write up the minutes as soon as possible after the meeting, while things are still fresh in the memory, preferably within a few days. Action cannot be taken on any matters until the minutes have been checked by the Chair and distributed.

Remember that minutes of governing body meetings are a key piece of evidence to show whether the governing body is effective. They should show that the governing body challenges and supports the leadership team. If searching questions are asked about pupil progress and achievement, and the school's performance in general, do make sure they are recorded.

If there are any problems in producing the minutes **within 2 weeks from the date of the meeting** then you should contact the Chair of Governors.

8.1 Structure of the minutes

Use the main headings and sub-headings, underlined for clarity, if necessary. Although a number of regular items may have developed a standardised style of recording, e.g. minutes of the last meeting, the Headteacher's report, there is ample scope for individuality in written style to reflect the differing approaches of Clerks and governing bodies.

Ensure that Part 1 and Part 2 items are clearly separated and appropriate.

8.2 Contents of the minutes

All minutes should contain the following:-

- Title of the Meeting
- Date of the meeting (and time)
- List of those present
- Apologies for absence and acceptance or otherwise
- Order of the agenda items
- Declaration of interest, if any
- Confirmation that the previous minutes have been agreed
- Any amendments to the previous minutes
- Matters Arising
- Body of the Agenda
- Items under 'Any Other Business'
- Date of the next meeting (s)

Place the 'Part 2 – confidential' items (NOT FOR PUBLICATION) on a separate sheet, of a different colour if possible, to aid identification.

8.3 Minute writing skills

Try to use short but complete sentences. Avoid abbreviations such as "Nov 08", for "November 2008". The text will be read by a wide audience, possibly for several years hence, including governors, school staff, parents and the LA.

Avoid naming governors in the minutes, unless this is a specific requirement by the governing body. Better to use general phrases such as "Some governors felt" or "Governors discussed a suggestion to..." etc. There are exceptions, of course, particularly where a governor has requested that his/her objection to a resolution should be minuted or where action is required by a particular individual.

Use phrases like "The Headteacher reported..", "The Chair stated..". Avoid, for example, "Sarah Bloggs informed the governors..". Write "Ms S Bloggs, the LA Officer, informed the governors..." Sometimes the LA needs to consult a set of governing body minutes going back several years. Long after the demise of Sarah Bloggs, it will be consequently easier to establish the identity of the speaker.

Avoid needless repetition.

EXAMPLE:

"The governors agreed that the LA Officers should be invited to inspect the condition of the school with a view to placing the necessary works on the minor repairs budget."

RESOLVED: That the LA Officers be invited to inspect the condition of the school with a view to placing the necessary works on the minor repairs budget.

Do not over-use the word "RESOLVED". Very often it is sufficient to say "The governors agreed to..." or "It was decided that the Chair would..." or "It was noted that ...". If a resolution or course of action is proposed, make sure that a brief background is included to explain how it arose. This is especially important if the resolution is directed towards a particular LA Officer for action.

The amount written may in the end be a matter of personal taste. Try to establish early on with the Chair of Governors whether or not the length of the minutes is about right. Remember that a person who has not been present at the meeting should be able to read the minutes and understand the issues discussed and decisions made. The following is an **EXAMPLE** which does NOT meet the above criteria:

"The governors considered a document on a disciplinary policy for the school which was agreed."

- Was the document noted or adopted as school policy?
- From where/whom did the document originate?
- Was the document relating to pupils or staff?

The matter could be reported as follows:

"The governors considered a document submitted by the Headteacher concerning a proposed disciplinary policy. The report outlined procedures relating to pupil discipline prepared by a working group of staff and governors.

It was RESOLVED that the policy be adopted as the policy for the school."

Finally, when you have finished writing the minutes, having checked for punctuation, spelling, etc, re-read them to see if they make good sense.

What to do next

9.1 The draft minutes

The draft minutes (minutes which have not been approved by the full governing body) should be sent to the Chair of Governors and / or the Headteacher for verification (**with the claim form for payment - see 4.7 and Annex C**). The clerk, the Chair and the Headteacher should agree a procedure and ensure that everyone is aware of how this is carried out.

The Chair of Governors should return the minutes with any required amendments which can then be actioned prior to distribution.

9.2 Distribution of the minutes

Once the draft minutes have been agreed they should be distributed to all governors. Practice will vary from governing body to governing body as to how this will be processed. The clerk may be required to undertake this task or alternatively it may be managed by a member of the school staff. The clerk, the Chair and the Headteacher should agree a procedure and ensure that everyone is aware of how this is carried out.

A copy of the Part 1 minutes only should be provided as a 'Noticeboard' copy for the school. **Please note: 'Part 2 – confidential' items should be produced on a separate sheet of paper** and clearly marked 'Confidential'.

Please ensure that Governor Services receives two copies of the full minutes (including Part 2 items). LA Officers will at this stage action any recommendations and resolutions contained in the minutes.

9.3 Retention of governing body paperwork

All governing body paperwork should be retained for a minimum of 7 years. All paperwork relating to the work of the full governing body / committees / working groups, including all supporting paperwork, should also be retained. Most schools hold this paperwork at the school in a designated governors' area. This is a very sensible arrangement as it ensures that the paperwork is held in a confidential place, it allows easy access for the school, the governing body and Ofsted, and alleviates the need for Clerks to make storage arrangements for the volume of paperwork.

Meetings checklist

Before the meeting	Done
Work with the chair and head to produce the agenda and paperwork for the next meeting	
Read all documentation noting the action required by the governing body. Check response dates in case action is required before the meeting. If so bring this to the attention of the Chair.	
If required 'chase' those who are presenting reports so that all documentation can go out at least 7 days in advance of the meeting	
If required, despatch all paperwork relevant to the meeting, at least 7 days	

in advance. Otherwise, you should have received all such paperwork from the school.	
Research and make notes on any particular items for discussion on governance legislation – if requested by the governing body	
Note and make arrangements for any governors to make attend the meeting either via telephone conferencing or skype	
Collect together all you might need	
Arrange for an electronic version of the Governors' Handbook to be accessible	
Note any apologies for absence	
During the meeting	Done
Record apologies for absence and whether or not the reasons for absence were accepted.	
Record names of everyone present , including observers and remote attendees	
Check that the meeting is quorate , If not, bring this to the attention of the Chair.	
Note any amendments to the minutes that were agreed.	
Ensure that the Chair signs each page of the minutes.	
Make a note of the key points arising from each item discussed. Give each a separate heading and note what was decided, what action is to be taken, by whom and by when.	
If a vote was taken on any item, record the number of votes for and against, and any abstentions.	
Check with the chair if unclear about what to record.	

After the meeting	Done
<p>Write up the minutes as soon as possible after the meeting and not later than two weeks from the date of the meeting.</p> <p>Make sure they cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title of the meeting • Date and time • List of those present • Apologies for absence and acceptance or otherwise • Order of the agenda items • Declaration of interest, if any • Confirmation that the previous meeting's minutes were agreed • Any amendments to the previous minutes • Matters arising • All items on the rest of the agenda • Items raised under 'Any other business' • Date, time and venue of the next meeting. 	
<p>Record any 'part 2 – confidential' items separately, on different coloured paper if appropriate.</p>	
<p>Send your minutes to the chair for verification (with your claim form if appropriate).</p>	
<p>When the minutes are returned to you distribute to all governors (or pass to the school for distribution if this is the agreement).</p>	
<p>Provide a copy of the minutes, excluding confidential items, for the school's noticeboard.</p>	
<p>Send 3 copies of the full governing body minutes to Governor Services.</p>	
Claiming payment	Done
<p>Send your claim to the Chair together with the minutes of the meeting. Make sure that claims for work at different schools are made on separate forms. If you are claiming for more than one meeting at the same school you can do that on one form.</p>	

Other sources of information

Harrow Council Website

www.harrow.gov.uk/schoolgovernors

National Association of Governors

<http://www.nga.org.uk/Home.aspx>

Annex A – Job description for a Level 2 Clerk

1. Introduction

The clerk to the governing body will be accountable to the governing body, working effectively with the chair of governors, and with the headteacher and other governors. The clerk will be responsible for advising the governing body on constitutional matters, duties and powers and will work within the broad current legislative framework. He/she will secure the continuity of governing body business and observe confidentiality requirements.

2. Meetings

The clerk to the governing body will:

- a) work effectively with the chair and headteacher before the governing body meeting to prepare a purposeful agenda which takes account of DfE, LA and church authority issues and is focused on school improvement;
- b) encourage the headteacher and others to produce agenda papers on time;
- c) produce, collate and distribute the agenda and papers so that recipients receive them at least seven clear days, preferably ten days before the meeting;
- d) record the attendance of governors at the meeting and take appropriate action re absences;
- e) advise the governing body on governance legislation and procedural matters where necessary before, during and after the meeting;
- f) take notes of the governing body meetings to prepare minutes, including indicating who is responsible for agreed action;
- g) record all decisions accurately and objectively with timescales for actions;
- h) send drafts to the Chair and headteacher for amendment/approval by the chair;
- i) copy and circulate the approved draft to all governors within the timescale agreed with the governing body;
- j) advise absent governors of the date of the next meeting;
- k) keep a minute book, or file of signed minutes, as an archive record;
- l) liaise with the chair, prior to the next meeting to receive an update on progress of actions agreed previously by the governing body;
- m) following the approval of the minutes at the next meeting forward a copy to the LA, and where agreed, to the appropriate church or foundation authority;
- n) chair that part of the meeting at which the chair is elected.

3. Membership

The clerk will:

- a) maintain a database of names, addresses and category of governing body members and their term of office;
- b) initiate a welcome pack/letter being sent to newly appointed governors including details of terms of office;
- c) maintain copies of current terms of reference and membership of committee and working parties and nominated governors e.g. Literacy;

- d) advise governors and appointing bodies of expiry of the term of office before term expires so elections or appointments can be organised in a timely manner;
- e) inform the governing body, LA and church authority (if appropriate) of any changes to its membership;
- f) maintain governor meeting attendance records and advise the governing body of non attendance of governors;
- g) advise that a register of governing body pecuniary interests is maintained, reviewed annually and lodged within the school;
- h) check with the LA, and, where appropriate, the church authority that a Debarring Service check has been successfully carried out on any governor when it is appropriate to do so.

4. Advice and information

The clerk will:

- a) advise the governing body on procedural issues;
- b) have access to appropriate legal advice, support and guidance;
- c) ensure that new governors are given a copy of the Governors' Handbook and other relevant information
- d) take action on governing body's agreed policy to support new governors
- e) advise on the requisite contents of the school prospectus and annual reports to parents;
- f) ensure that statutory policies are in place, and that a file is kept in the school of policies and other school documents approved by the governing body;
- g) maintain records of governing body correspondence.

5. Professional Development

The clerk will:


- a) attend the Clerks Training Programme delivered by the Harrow School Improvement Partnership
- b) attend termly briefings and participate in professional development opportunities;
- c) keep up-to-date with current educational developments and legislation affecting school governance.

6. Optional Extras

The clerk may be asked to perform as part of their duties any of the following:

'These additional tasks will usually be negotiated at an extra cost.'

- a) clerk some or all statutory and non statutory governing body committees;
- b) assist with the elections of parent, teacher and staff governors;
- c) give advice and support to governors taking on new roles such as chair or chair of a committee;
- d) participate in, and contribute to the training of governors in areas appropriate to the clerking role;
- e) maintain a file of relevant DFE, LA and church authorities documents;
- f) maintain archive materials;
- g) prepare briefing papers for the governing body, as necessary;

- h) help to produce a Governing Body Year Planner, which includes an annual calendar of meetings and cycle of agenda items for meetings of the governing body and its committees.
- 

Model Person Specification

This person specification lists the competencies expected of an experienced/fully-trained clerk. The two right-hand columns provide guidance for the appointment of new Clerks (E = Essential criteria, D = Desirable criteria)

	Sections		E:	D:
1	Skills, knowledge and aptitudes	<p>The clerk should be able to provide evidence of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ good listening skills, oral and literacy skills; ▪ writing agendas and accurate concise minutes; ▪ ICT including keyboarding skills; ▪ organising their time and working to deadlines; ▪ organising meetings; ▪ record keeping, information retrieval and dissemination of governing body data/documentation, to the governing body and relevant partners; ▪ using the internet to access relevant information; ▪ developing and maintaining contacts with outside agencies e.g. departments of the LA, Church Authorities and the DFE; ▪ knowledge of governing body procedures; ▪ knowledge of educational legislation, guidance and legal requirements; ▪ knowledge of the respective roles and responsibilities of the governing body, the headteacher, the LA, Church Authorities and the DFE; ▪ knowledge of Equal Opportunities and Human Rights legislation; ▪ knowledge of Data Protection legislation. 	<p>E9 E9 E9 E9 E9</p>	<p>D9 D9 D9 D9 D9 D9 D9 D9 D9 D9</p>
2	Qualifications and training	<p>The Clerk should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ be able to demonstrate a willingness to attend appropriate training and development; ▪ have already attended or make a commitment to attend a training programme for Clerks. 	<p>E9</p>	<p>D9</p>
3	Experience	<p>Clerks should be able to produce evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ relevant personal and professional development; ▪ working in an environment where experiences included taking initiative and self motivation; ▪ working as a member of a team. 		<p>D9 D9 D9</p>
4	Personal attributes	<p>The clerk should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ be a person of integrity; 	<p>E9</p>	

	Sections		E:	D:
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ be able to maintain confidentiality; ▪ be able to remain impartial; ▪ have a flexible approach to working hours; ▪ be sympathetic to the needs of others; ▪ have an openness to learning and change; ▪ have a positive attitude to personal development and training; ▪ have good interpersonal skills. 	<p>E9</p> <p>E9</p> <p>E9</p> <p>E9</p> <p>E9</p> <p>E9</p> <p>E9</p>	
5	Special requirements	<p>The clerk should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ be able to work at times convenient to the governing body, including evenings; ▪ be able to travel to meetings; ▪ be available to be contacted at mutually agreed times. 	<p>E9</p> <p>E9</p> <p>E9</p>	

Annex B – Terms and conditions of employment

Clerking duties

This work is undertaken on an 'as and when' required arrangement between the clerk and the school. Human Resources (Schools) will advise the Payroll Service of the details on the written instruction from the Chair of Governors or the Headteacher. The written instruction should give the name and address of the individual to be appointed (usually supplied by completion of an application form), the start date for undertaking these duties, the rate of pay agreed by the governing body, and most importantly the school cost code to which the payments are to be charged. EPS will also require the clerk to complete a form providing bank details.

Hours

Hours claimed should normally be for attendance at the meeting (claimed to the nearest half hour), plus half an hour travelling time, and reasonable time for producing the minutes. Time can be claimed for any additional duties as agreed with the governing body.

Sickness

There is no specific entitlement as payment is only for hours worked.

Leave

There is no leave entitlement as payment is only for hours worked.

Claim Form

The clerk completes the claim form as fully as possible, including name of school, type of work, and cost code, and then obtains an approved signature (usually the Chair or Headteacher). Payment is made on a rota system based on the surname of the clerk. If the clerk is employed by Harrow Council in another capacity, payment is usually made at the same time each month, providing the claim form is received in good time. Details of the deadline dates for receipt of the form for processing are given on the reverse of the claim forms.

Salary

The governing body will need to decide the salary to be paid to the Clerk which can vary from Scale 4 to Scale 6 depending on the nature of the duties carried out by the Clerk.

The hourly rates as of 1 January 2015 are:

Grade	Point	Hourly rate
G4	13	£10.40
	14	£10.83
	15	£11.15
	16	£11.48
G5	17	£11.64
	18	£11.95
	19	£12.31
	20	£12.67
G6	21	£13.05
	22	£13.31
	23	£13.58
	24	£13.86

Attendance at governing body meetings after 8.00pm attracts a pay enhancement of one third of the hourly rate.

The total number of hours worked should be shown against the date and hours worked after 8.00pm shown in brackets and noted night rate, e.g.

/ WED / 4 (2) / NIGHT RATE – i.e. 4 hours worked of which 2 worked after 8.00pm

Termination

As the contract issued is on an 'As and When' basis no formal period of notice for termination is required. It is hoped that the governing body will discuss with the clerk its intention to terminate the contract, the reasons for this, and provide a reasonable notice of termination, in writing.