



Governance Advisory Panel (GAP)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose

The purpose of the **Governance Advisory Panel (GAP)** is to:

1. support the setting of school improvement priorities by contributing a governor / trustee perspective
2. allow school governors / trustees to raise issues of interest or concern
3. suggest items for the termly briefings
4. advise the School Governance Team on all aspects of the traded offer to schools to include the training programme, the annual conference, the Clerking Service
5. support the local authority's communication with school governors / trustees
6. agree governor / trustee representation on local authority groups, e.g. the Cambridgeshire School Improvement Board
7. provide feedback on LA documents, plans or policies where a governor / trustee perspective is sought
8. give a governor / trustee perspective on DfE consultations affecting schools

Membership

The aim will be to recruit an inclusive group. As a largely 'virtual' group there can be flexibility over size and where it meets. The list below is an example of what the group might look like, all potentially different people although in practice 'twin hatting' may be necessary:

- Nursery x 1
- Primary (maintained x 1 and academy x 1)
- Secondary (academy x 2)
- Special x 1
- A governor (any phase/type) from each of the five districts (Hunts, South Cambs, Fenland, East Cambs, City) x 5
- Cambs National Leaders of Governance x 2
- Teacher Union Representative (preferably a current/former governor)
- Church School Representative (preferably a current/former governor)
- The Service Director – Learning may co-opt additional members as needs arise e.g. those with specific expertise

Those interested will be asked to complete a short form setting out why they would like to be part of the Panel, and what they would hope to contribute. The Service Director – Learning will approve Panel members, and will be advised by the Manager of Governor Services and a current member of the group.

How will the group operate?

- The group will operate largely as a virtual group with a dedicated Knowledge Hub Forum, which will be used to conduct business between meetings and be the repository for all papers.
- It will meet face-to-face twice a year, with the council's video conferencing facilities making it possible for members to participate without having to travel to Cambridge:
 - First half of the autumn term: special focus = discussion of school improvement priorities from a governor perspective
 - First half of the summer term: special focus = review of the last year's activity, planning for the year ahead
 - A sub-group will meet in the first half of the spring term to advise on the traded offer
- The agenda for the two full meetings will cover the full range of the group's purpose.
- The meetings will be from 4.30 pm – 6.30 pm.
- The term of office will be for four years.
- If a member of the Panel fails to attend meetings / engage with 'virtual' business for a period of three terms, they may be asked to leave the panel.
- Travel expenses will be provided at the standard council rate for attendance at meetings.
- The group will be managed by the School Governance Team and chaired by the Service Director – Learning. Notes of the meeting will be prepared by the LA.
- The Service Director – Learning will evaluate the role, purpose and value of the Group at least tri-annually, and will bring forward proposals for any changes as and if required.

How will the group achieve its purpose?

How the purpose of the group will be met is briefly summarised below:

Purpose	How
support the setting of school improvement priorities by contributing a governor/trustee perspective	autumn term meeting to consider education outcomes and Ofsted judgements
allow school governors and trustees to raise issues of interest or concern	email, Knowledge Hub Forum, biannual meetings
suggest items for the termly briefings	Knowledge Hub Forum
advise the School Governance Team on all aspects of the traded offer to schools (to include the training programme, the annual conference, the Clerking Service)	sub-group to meet with the School Governance Team in the spring term; Knowledge Hub Forum for wider involvement
support the local authority's communication with schools governors and trustees	a termly 'newsletter', supported by officers; a member of the Group to give a brief update at all Termly Briefings
agree governor representation on local authority groups, e.g. Cambridgeshire School Improvement Board (see above)	advise on process (biannual meetings) and agree recommendations made by officers (email)
provide feedback on LA documents, plans or policies where a governor / trustee perspective is sought	The Knowledge Hub Forum
give a governor / trustee perspective on DfE consultations affecting schools	The Knowledge Hub Forum