

SCHOOLS FORUM

Agenda item: 8

Date	4 th October 2018
Report title	SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS
Contact Officer/s	Steven Hurdley
Telephone number/s	01902 554106

Summary

As required by regulation, before making any proposed changes to the local Scheme for Financing Schools, the Authority must consult with head teachers and the Chair of Governors of all maintained schools in its area holding a delegated budget and following this receive the approval of the members of forum representing maintained schools. This period of consultation commenced on 20th September and will end on 9th November 2018.

Decision

Members of the Schools Forum are asked to:

- a) note the period of consultation referred to above and;
- b) agree to receive a further report following the above consultation period, for consideration, and to give approval to publication and implementation of the revised Scheme.

Schedule of background papers (If applicable)

- a) Wolverhampton Scheme for Financing Schools, February 2016
- b) Statutory guidance produced by the Department for Education March 2018

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This report is to inform Forum of the consultation currently taking place in order to implement proposals to update the Authority's Scheme for Financing Schools prior to its proposed implementation and re-publication in January 2019.
- 1.2 Following consultation and subject to Forum approval the revised Scheme will replace the existing statutory document.
- 1.3 Re-publication and public availability of the revised Scheme will be in accordance with statutory requirements.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Scheme for Financing Schools sets out the relationship between the Authority and the schools it maintains. The current Scheme was last republished in February 2016. Since then it has become apparent that changes are required both for technical reasons and clarity. Details of proposed revisions to the Scheme are detailed within Appendix 1 to this report.
- 2.2 Any amendments which the Authority wishes to make to the Scheme must be consulted on with all maintained schools and be approved by members of Schools' Forum representing maintained schools in accordance with regulation. The publication of the Scheme following such approval is also subject to regulation.

3.0 Consultation Process

- 3.1 A consultation process has begun with head teachers and Chairs of Governors of all maintained schools with a delegated budget. This consultation will end on 9th November 2018.
- 3.2 Written notification of the consultation has been provided to schools and comments invited.
- 3.3 A full draft of the proposed revised Scheme for Financing Schools is available to members of the Schools' Forum should it be required.

PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS

- Updates made throughout the Scheme, to reflect changes in the Schools and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2018.
- Paragraph 4.9 has been updated to reflect changes on balances of closing schools, as detailed under Regulation 25 (9).

‘Where in the funding period, a school has been established or is subject to a prescribed alteration as a result of the closure of a school, a local authority may add an amount to the budget share of the new or enlarged school to reflect all or part of the unspent budget share (including any surplus carried over from previous funding periods) of the closing school for the funding period in which it closes’.

- Annex D: Responsibility for redundancy and early retirement costs has been updated to reflect changes under Schedule 2 Part 7, of the Finance Regulations. This details how a local authority can retain a central budget within the schools’ budget to fund the costs of new early retirements or redundancies by a deduction from maintained school budgets (excluding nursery schools) only, where the relevant maintained school members of the Schools’ Forum agree.
- Within paragraph 6.2.16, ‘statement of SEN’ has been replaced with ‘Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)’.
- Other minor amendments to the wording to reflect latest statutory regulation, guidance, good practice, clarity and avoidance of doubt.