

**SCHOOL SERVICES WORKING GROUP**

**Purpose of the Paper**

1. To enable consideration of the terms and reference and membership of the School Services Working Group.

**Background**

2. The Schools Services Board was originally convened in February 1998 to co-ordinate the selling of LEA services which were bought back by schools. It was responsible for developing the "Right Choice" document to enable schools to purchase services as efficiently and effectively as possible from the Local Authority.
3. At its meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2005 the Schools Forum agreed that the Schools Services Board be reconstituted as a formal sub group of Schools Forum, the Schools Services Working Group, reporting back to the Forum as appropriate. New Terms of Reference were also agreed for the Working Group and these are attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
4. As was reported back in 2005, the success of the Working Group has depended upon the time commitment and involvement of a number of Headteachers and Governors to advise LA Officers, and to report back on discussions to a number of different consultative groups including WASSH and PHF. Over recent years this has become more difficult with increased time pressures on schools and on LA Officers, in addition to the increase in number of Academies and the resulting changes to the number and types of traded services offered to schools. Traded services for Academies are not offered through the Right Choice document and there are a number of services which are offered free of charge to maintained schools but which must be purchased by Academies.
5. The Working Group has only met twice since March 2013 and the processes for agreeing services and consulting on changes has become less co-ordinated, particularly since the introduction of "rolling contracts" for many of the Right Choice services. The Working Group has not produced annual reports for Schools Forum.
6. The terms of reference and membership list for the Working Group are now out of date as many of the LA Officer posts named are no longer in place, and nor is the Education Advisory Panel. There is therefore a need to review and revise the terms of reference. In reviewing the terms of reference a number of issues or questions need to be addressed:
  - Is there still a need for a strategic overview of the provision of services to schools through a Schools Services Working Group?

- Should that overview just be of services to maintained schools or should it take in to account services to academies who may act as more independent purchasers?
- Is the role of the Group consultative or decision making? In particular this question relates to the process for agreeing price changes.
- Is there a role for the Group in reviewing service quality and value for money?
- If there is a continued need for the Working Group how frequently should it meet?
- What should the membership be?
- How frequently should the Group report and to whom?

### **Recommendation**

7. Schools Forum is asked to consider these questions in order to inform the revised terms of reference for the Schools Services Working Group, if the Group is still required.

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Unpublished documents relied upon in the production of this Report: NONE

Environmental impact of the recommendations contained in this Report: NONE KNOWN

*Report Author:* Liz Williams, Head of Finance  
*Tel:* 01225 713675  
*e-mail:* elizabeth.williams@wiltshire.gov.uk

**Appendix 1:  
School Services Working Group: Terms of reference (January 2005)**

The Schools Forum School Services Working Group will:

1. Consider and agree services to be provided by Wiltshire County Council for and with schools.
2. Consult with schools on the provision of these services
3. Produce a prospectus of these services on an annual basis in *The right choice for your school*
4. Monitor the quality and value for money of services, including those provided via central contracts
5. Maintain a strategic overview of the future provision of services
6. Liaise, as appropriate, with other Council departments, working groups, advisory and scrutiny panels, and with other partners on all aspects of service provision, monitoring/review and procurement
7. Report annually to Schools Forum and the Education Advisory Panel on its work

**Proposed membership (based on existing School Services Board)**

Primary Heads Forum, (3 representatives)  
Wiltshire Association of Secondary Heads, (2 representatives)  
Wiltshire Association of Governors (1 representative)  
Teachers' Associations (1 representative)

Assistant Director, Schools  
Assistant director, Resources and Improvement  
Head of Administration (Schools)  
Head of School leadership  
Head of Children and Education Personnel  
Payroll Manager