

Wiltshire Council

Schools Forum

02 December 2010

REPORT FROM THE SCHOOLS FORUM SCHOOL FUNDING WORKING GROUP

Purpose of report

1. To report on the meeting of the School Funding Working Group held on 16th November 2010.

Main considerations for School Forum

2. The draft minutes of the meeting are attached at Appendix 1.
3. The School Funding Working Group makes the following recommendations to Schools Forum:

4. *Broadband Connectivity*

The Group considered a number of pricing options for charging schools for broadband connectivity in 2011/12 and beyond. The 5 options are attached at Appendix 2 to this report. It was agreed that Option 2 most closely reflected the way in which schools are funded and therefore this option should be recommended to Schools Forum.

It was also recommended that this should count as a cashless item on the school funding certificate, similar to rates, so that schools would not be invoiced for this contribution.

5. *Schools Facilities Maintenance Contract*

The group considered a report from the Corporate Procurement Unit on the current position with the Sodexo Facilities Management contract. This paper is also included as a substantive item on the Schools Forum agenda.

The recommendation of the group is that schools should be contacted by the Corporate Procurement Unit to outline the options available as the contract is coming to an end. Schools should be signposted to the relevant documentation and support that is available to guide them through the process.

6. *Schools Finance Regulations 2011 Consultation*

The group considered a report on the draft School Finance Regulations for 2011. The report is included at Appendix 3. It was recommended that:

- a. The issue of including quality and flexibility factors within the Early Years Single Funding Formula should be considered by the Early Years Reference Group in the review of the current formula.
- b. That the inclusion of a negative formula factor to recognise savings achieved by Federations may act as a disincentive to federate.

- c. That the requirements in the draft regulations had been overtaken by more recent announcements in the Comprehensive Spending Review and therefore the issues on carbon reduction should be referred to the Climate Change Team.
- d. That the change in regulations to allow schools to use their delegated budget for community facilities (non educational spend) would require a change to Wiltshire's funding scheme.
- e. That further clarification is required from the DfE on the issue of expenditure on pupils with low incidence needs in Academies.

7. SIMS Licence – 3 Year Fixed Term Arrangement

It was recommended that, subject to procurement rules, Wiltshire should enter in to the three year arrangement in order to maximise value for money on the SIMS contract.

8. Results of Consultation to change the School Funding Scheme

It was recommended that, following consultation, the following changes be made to the School Funding Scheme:

- a. That differential levels of debt write off for Primary and Secondary Schools be set as follows:

Primary Schools	£2,000
Secondary and Special Schools	£5,000
- b. That schools be required to obtain Central Finance endorsement for any lease arrangement (unless it is with Unilink Finance)

9. Schools Budget Planning Software

Following consideration of the available options it was agreed to recommend a three year contract of the basic version of the FPSAdvance.net software, without the additional School Development Plan functionality.

It was agreed that if schools wished to use the SDP modules they could purchase the additional functionality separately.

Proposals

10. That the following recommendations are considered by Schools Forum:

- a) That Option 2, outlined in Appendix 2 to this report, be the agreed method for charging schools for the cost of broadband connectivity from 2011/12, and that the charges should be treated as a cashless item on the school funding certificate.
- b) That the schools currently within the Sodexo Facilities Maintenance Contract be contacted by the Corporate Procurement Unit to outline the options available to them as the contract draws to a close, and to signpost schools to the relevant support and guidance. (paragraph 5)
- c) That the recommendations of the Schools Funding Working Group on the response to the consultation to the draft Schools Finance Regulations be agreed (paragraph 6)

- d) That, subject to procurement rules, Wiltshire should enter in to the 3 year agreement for the SIMS Licence to maximise value for money (paragraph 7)
- e) That the Schools Funding Scheme be amended to reflect the changes to debt write off levels and leasing arrangements, outlined in paragraph 8.
- f) That from April 2011 a 3 year contract should be agreed for the FPSAdvance.net software at an annual cost of £61,150, for the basic version of the software, i.e. without the inclusion of the School Development Plan functionality.

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Background papers

None

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft minutes of the School Funding Working Group, 16.11.10

Appendix 2 – Provision of South West Grid for Learning Network Services.xls

Appendix 3 - School Finance Regulations 2011 – Consultation .doc