

**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 7<sup>th</sup> January 2011.

**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. *Delegation of Health & Safety Maintenance Contracts***

It is recommended that the budget for health & safety maintenance contracts should be delegated on the basis of a flat rate and a per pupil amount as follows:

	Primary	Secondary	Special
Flat Rate	£50	£500	£250
Per Pupil	£0.65	£0.81	£0.70

It was agreed that that the Health & Safety Manager should contact schools regarding the availability of a county wide fire equipment maintenance contract and specific suppliers available for gym and kiln equipment maintenance. The group requested that guidance is issued to schools.

**5. *Section 251 Benchmarking***

The group considered a report on Section 251 benchmarking figures and asked for further information on the following:

*Speech & Language Therapy* – the group questioned why Wiltshire benchmarks as a high spender and asked that statistical neighbours are contacted to establish in each case

- The level funded by the local authority
- The level delegated to schools
- The level funded by Health

*School Improvement* – the group requested details of what statistically similar authorities included within this line on the Section 251 budget return in order to understand why Wiltshire benchmarks as a high spender.

**6. *Updated Schools Finance Scheme Guidance 2011***

The group considered a report on the DfE guidance on schools funding schemes (appendix 2). Amendments will be made to the Wiltshire funding scheme in accordance with the guidance.

The group recommended that no decision is made on whether to continue with the Wiltshire controls on surplus balances scheme after 2010/11 until more detail is known on the national context and the view of the current government on surplus balances in schools.

#### **7. *Schools Funding Settlement***

The group recommended that the pupil premium for maintained special schools and for the Young Person's Support Service be paid directly to the schools concerned from April 2011.

It was agreed that further work be carried out to finalise the potential shortfall in DSG for 2011/12 including cost pressures and potential areas for savings.

It was agreed that the former Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant which has now been rolled in to DSG should continue to be retained centrally to form part of the funding for the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service.

It was agreed that a further meeting be held to consider models for the allocation of former standards funds being rolled in to DSG for 2011/12 and that proposals be considered at the briefing prior to the Schools Forum meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> January.

#### **Proposals**

8. That the following recommendations are considered by Schools Forum:
  - a) That budgets for health and safety maintenance contracts be delegated to schools in accordance with the model in paragraph 4 above.
  - b) That the Health & Safety Manager should issue guidance to schools on available countywide contracts and providers of specialist maintenance services such as gym and kiln equipment.
  - c) That further information on the detail behind the benchmarking figures on Speech & Language therapies and on Schools Improvement be sought from statistical neighbours and reported back to the Schools Funding Working Group (paragraph 5)
  - d) That a decision on whether to retain the Wiltshire controls on surplus revenue balances scheme after 2010/11 be delayed until further detail is known about the national picture and the government's view on surplus balances in schools. (paragraph 6)
  - e) That the pupil premium for pupils in maintained special schools and the YPSS be paid directly to the schools/YPSS (paragraph 7)
  - f) That the former Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant continue to be retained centrally to form part of the core funding for the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (paragraph 7).

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### **Background papers**

None

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Draft minutes of the School Funding Working Group  
Appendix 2 – Report on the updated Funding Scheme Guidance