

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 23rd September 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. *Delegation of School Maintenance Contracts*

The group discussed a proposal to delegate funding for a number of maintenance contracts that are currently held centrally. It was recommended:

- a. That the group agreed with the principle that budgets for these contracts should be delegated
- b. That the potential for a pooling scheme should be investigated with proposals to be brought to the next meeting;
- c. That if contracts are to be managed centrally additional capacity may be required, this would potentially add to the costs of contracts.

5. *Broadband Connectivity*

The Group considered a report outlining options for funding broadband connectivity in 2011/12 and beyond. Officers were seeking a steer from the group as to the preferred way forward and it was recommended that:

- a. Any charging schedule developed for schools should reflect size of school rather than the real cost of maintaining connectivity in any particular school, this is to avoid disproportionate charges for schools in more rural areas.
- b. Options for the future should be considered at an early stage so that plans can be made for the end of the SWGfL contract at the end of 2012/13.

6. *Small School Curriculum Protection Formula*

A specific issue in relation to the operation of the small school curriculum protection formula element was considered to establish how the protection element should work if a school were to operate as a Key Stage 1 only school. It is recommended that:

- a. The protection formula should be applied on a pro rata basis ie., protection based on 5 x reception pupils x AWPU plus 10 x Infants pupils x AWPU.

7. *Schools Balances 2009/10 and Controls on Surplus Balances Scheme*

The group considered those schools who had exceeded the permissible threshold for their 2009/10 balance. It is recommended that:

- a. The 5 schools who have exceeded the permissible threshold for 2009/10 revenue balances should be written to informing them of the amount subject to clawback, giving them until 29th October to appeal in writing.

8. *Working With Academies – Developing Traded Services*

The group considered proposals for working with schools through the autumn period to develop services that would then be offered on a traded basis to academies and Wiltshire schools. It was agreed:

- a. That the recommended process for service proposals to be developed be adopted.

Proposals

9. That the following recommendations are considered by Schools Forum:
 - a) The approach to delegation of maintenance contracts recommended in paragraph 4 be agreed with proposals to be brought to the next meeting
 - b) The recommendations of the Schools Funding Working Group for the funding of broadband connectivity (paragraph 5) be agreed.
 - c) The proposed change to the Small School Curriculum Protection formula be adopted (paragraph 6)
 - d) That the 5 schools who have exceeded the permissible revenue balance threshold be advised that the balances are subject to claw back following appeal (paragraph 7)
 - e) That Schools Forum note the recommendations of the Schools Funding Working Group when considering the paper on Working with Academies (paragraph 8)

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Background papers

None

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft minutes of the School Funding Working Group