

Schools Forum – 18th March 2008

Report of the Director of Children’s Services

Dudley’s Scheme for Financing Schools – Consultation Outcomes

Purpose of Report

1. To seek Schools Forums approval to Dudley’s Scheme for Financing Schools, as revised after the recent consultation.

Discussed at HTCF – BWG

2. No

Actions for Schools Forum

3. To accept the changes proposed to Dudley’s Scheme for Financing Schools.

Attachments to Report

4. Appendix 1 – Summary of consultation responses.

Mirella Harris

Senior Principal Accountant - Children’s Services

4 March 2008

Schools Forum – 18th March 2008

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Dudley's Scheme for Financing Schools- Consultation

Purpose of Report

1. To seek Schools Forums approval to Dudley's Scheme for Financing Schools, as revised after the recent consultation.

Background

2. Under section 48 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 all local authorities are required to establish and maintain a scheme for financing school's setting out the relationship between the local authority and the schools it maintains.
3. The Schools Finance (England) Regulations 2008, schedule 5, lists the issues that all schemes should address. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) provides guidance to local authorities on the more detailed content of their schemes. This guidance is revised from time to time to reflect changes and amendments to legislation and policy directed through the School Finance Regulations.
4. Schools Forum has the power to approve amendments to the Scheme of Financing without the need for consultation with stakeholders. Full details can be found in Part 4 of the School Finance (England) Regulations 2008.
5. Four responses were received in respect of the consultation; these are detailed in Appendix 1. One from Dudley Association of Governing Bodies stating that the policy, as outlined in the consultation document, is transparent and fair. The others were from Pedmore Technology College, the Brier and Councillor Lynn Boleyn these cover a number of points which will receive a response where necessary.
6. Since issuing the consultation document, discussions are now underway with Dudley headteachers in respect of single status costs for 2008/09 and future years. The Director of Children's Services has confirmed that whilst the claw back mechanism will not be relaxed the scheme will be reviewed to accommodate the setting of Single Status and Equal Pay contingencies.
7. Taking into account the outcomes of the consultation the Director of Children's Services is recommending acceptance of the revisions proposed to Dudley's Scheme for Financing with an additional item to be added to the Controls on Surplus Balances section to accommodate the acceptance of single status and

equal pay contingencies, to a value as agreed with the local authority. The revised scheme will be immediately effective once approved by Schools Forum.

Finance

8. The funding of schools is prescribed by the DCSF through the School Finance (Amendment)(England) Regulations 2008.
9. Schools Forums are regulated by the School Forums Regulations 2002 as already amended by the Schools Forums (Amendment) Regulations 2004 the Schools Forums (Amendment) 2005 Regulations and the Schools Forums (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008.
10. From 1st April 2006, the Schools Budget will be funded by a direct DCSF grant: Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

Law

11. Councils' LMS Schemes are made under Section 48 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Education Acts 1996 and 2002 also have provisions relating to school funding.

Equality Impact

12. The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy is taken into account when considering the allocation of resources.

Recommendation

13. That Schools Forum approve the proposed revisions to Dudley's Scheme for Financing Schools as set out in the recent consultation document to also include an amendment (set out in paragraph 7 of this report), which provides for an additional item to be added under the Controls on Surplus Balances section to accommodate the acceptance of single status and equal pay contingencies, to a value as agreed with the local authority



John Freeman

Director of Children's Services

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