

Schools Forum 22 May 2007

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Audit Commission School Balances Toolkit

Purpose of Report

1. To advise the Schools Forum on the Audit Commission School Balances Toolkit data for the period 2003 to 2006.

Budget Working Group Discussed

2. No

Schools Forum Action

3. To note the issue of the data from the Audit Commission.

Attachments

4. Appendix A – School Balances Toolkit – Outturn 2003/04, 2004/05 & 2005/06.

Mirella Harris

Senior Principal Accountant

8 May 2007

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1. To advise the Schools Forum on the Audit Commission School Balances Toolkit data for the period 2003 to 2006.

Background

2. In March 2005 the Audit Commission launched their school balances toolkit to support Councils' work in managing school balances. This builds in initial work undertaken as part of their 2004 Education Funding report.
3. The data covers all 150 LEAs in England and is intended to provide councils and auditors with key information about how effectively school balances are being managed, what are the trends, and the distribution of surpluses and deficits.
4. The information, which is contained in the toolkit, shows the position for each Council in the Country and confirms a picture that overall net balances have in fact risen from £1.508 billion in 2005 to £1.537 billion by the end of March 2006. The detail of this is presented within the toolkit.
5. The risk assessment tool presents overall school balances, by Council, at 31st March 2004, 31st March 2005 and 31st March 2006, by sector (primary, secondary, special). An individual Council can compare the overall position of its schools balances (highlighting overall surpluses and deficits), with those in similar Councils and in the Country as a whole. This toolkit can be used by the Authority to help with self evaluation and benchmarking against education statistical neighbours, similar authorities, and regional and national comparators.
6. Appendix A details Dudley MBC balances.
7. The toolkit is available on the Audit Commission website for download at <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/schoolbalances/downloads/schoolbalances-tool.xls>

Finance

8. The funding of schools is prescribed by the DfES through the School Finance (England) Regulations 2007.
9. From 1st April 2006, the Schools Budget is funded by a direct DfES grant: Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

Law

10. 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

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

Recommendation

12. It is recommended that Schools Forum note the issue of the Audit Commission data in respect of the Schools Balances toolkit for the period 2003 to 2006.



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