
Schools Forum 23rd September 2014

Report of the Interim Director of Children's Services

Dudley's Scheme for Financing Schools – Approval of Amendments following Consultation

Purpose of Report

1. To seek approval by Schools Forum for the amendments to the Dudley's Scheme for Financing Schools following a period of consultation during the Summer Term 2014. Following approval the amended scheme will be implemented with immediate effect.

Budget Working Group Discussed

2. Yes – 12th September 2014

Schools Forum Role and Responsibilities

3. The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2013 advise on the approval, by the Schools Forum or the Secretary of State, of proposals to revise a local authority's scheme of financing:
 - a. Where a local authority submit a copy of their proposals to revise their scheme to their Schools Forum for approval, the members of the Schools Forum who represent schools maintained by the authority may:
 - i. approve any such proposals;
 - ii. approve any such proposals subject to modifications; or
 - iii. refuse to approve any such proposals.
 - b. Where the Schools Forum approves the proposals to revise the scheme, it may specify the date upon which the revised scheme is to come into force. Where:
 - i. the Schools Forum refuses to approve proposals, or approves any such proposals subject to modifications which are not acceptable to the local authority; or
 - ii. the local authority are not required to establish a schools forum for their area,the authority may apply to the Secretary of State for approval of such proposals.
 - c. The Secretary of State may:
 - i. approve any such proposals;
 - ii. approve any such proposals subject to modifications; or
 - iii. refuse to approve any such proposals.

- d. When approving proposals to revise the scheme, the Secretary of State may specify the date upon which the revised Scheme is to come into force.
- e. No revised scheme is to come into force unless approved by the Schools Forum or the Secretary of State in accordance with Part 4 of the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2013.

Action for Schools Forum

4. Schools Forum to note the proposed amendments required in respect of Dudley's Scheme for Financing Schools (as outlined in Appendix A) and, taking into account the consultation response, to approve the revised scheme for immediate implementation.

Attachments to Report

5. Appendix A – Summary of Changes.

Aimee Clarke
Senior Accountant
8th September 2014

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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 schools setting out the relationship between the local authority and the schools it maintains.
3. Any revision to the scheme for financing schools must be approved by the Schools Forum or the Secretary of State in accordance with Part 4 of the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2013.
4. The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2013, schedule 5, lists the issues that all schemes should address. The Department for Education (DfE) 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.
5. Where the DfE issue revised Schools Finance Regulations, then Dudley's Scheme of Financing is automatically updated and there is no requirement for consultation on these occasions as the amendments are normally formal directions.
6. The Scheme for Financing Schools was last updated in January 2014 for directed revisions effective from 1st August 2013.

Approval Process

7. Schools Forum has the power to approve amendments to the Scheme for Financing Schools without the need for consultation with stakeholders. Full details can be found in Part 4 of the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2013.

Proposed Amendments

8. The Scheme for Financing Schools has been updated to reflect both the statutory guidance issued by the DfE in February 2014 and a number of local amendments. A summary of the proposed changes are attached at Appendix A.
9. The proposed changes to the Scheme for Financing Schools were issued for a period of consultation to all schools and stakeholders in the Summer Term 2014. The standard 13 week consultation period was adopted.

Consultation Responses

10. Only one response was received during the consultation period. This response was in support of the proposed changes, as per comments below.
11. Response: "Section 13.1. Now that not all kitchens are under Dudley Catering all kitchens need their own budgets."
12. In response to this comment Dudley do not hold a revenue repairs and maintenance budget for school kitchens.
13. Additional Comments: "It would be useful to have a transparent copy of Dudley Catering finances received from the Government and from Dudley detailing actual expenditure on each kitchen to make sure the allocations are fair."
14. This comment has been passed to the manager of Catering and Client Services to provide a response

Finance

15. The funding of schools is prescribed by the Department for Education (DfE) through the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2013.
16. Schools Forums are regulated by the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012.
17. From 1st April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct grant; Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

Law

18. 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

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

Recommendation

20. Schools Forum to approve Dudley's Scheme for Financing Schools for implementation with immediate effect.



Pauline Sharratt
Interim Director of Children's Services

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