

Schools Forum 17 March 2009

Report of the Interim Director of Children's Services

Dudley's Scheme for Financing Schools - Consultation

Purpose of Report

1. To advise Schools Forum of the amendments required to the Dudley's Scheme for Financing Schools and seek approval for consultation.

Discussed at HTCF – BWG

2. Yes - 12 March 2009

Actions for Schools Forum

3. To note the amendments required to Dudley's Scheme for Financing Schools and advice the Director if a period of formal consultation is required before final approval and implementation.

Attachments to Report

4. Appendix 1 – amendments proposed to Dudley's Scheme for Financing Schools, in draft consultation document format.

Mirella Harris
Senior Principal Accountant - Children's Services
2 March 2009

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Purpose of Report

1. To advise Schools Forum of the amendments required to the Dudley's Scheme for Financing Schools and seek approval for 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. Where the DCSF issue revised Schools Finance Regulations, then Dudley's Scheme of Financing is automatically updated, there is no requirement for consultation on these occasions as the amendments are normally formal directions.
5. 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. Paragraphs 5-10 of the proposed revisions attached at Appendix 1 outlines the approvals process for Schools Forum.
6. The Scheme for Financing Schools was last updated in April 2008 for which a twelve week period of formal public consultation was undertaken.
7. The draft consultation document containing the main proposed amendments to the Scheme is attached at Appendix 1. A full copy of the proposed Scheme will be available at <http://www.dudley.gov.uk/council--democracy/council-directorates/childrens-services/consultation-documents>
8. It is proposed that the consultation period will end on 18 June 2009 and be reported to Schools Forum for approval on 7 July 2009. In order to achieve this timescale the consultation period will need to be shortened to 10 weeks; as the

next opportunity for Schools Forum to meet and approve will be October 2009.

Finance

9. The funding of schools is prescribed by the DCSF through the School Finance (Amendment)(England) Regulations 2008.
10. 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.
11. From 1st April 2006, the Schools Budget will be funded by a direct DCSF grant: Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

Law

12. 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

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

Recommendation

14. That Schools Forum note the amendments required in respect of Dudley's Scheme for Financing Schools (as outlined in Appendix 1) and endorse the Director's proposal to undertake a formal period of consultation. The outcomes of the consultation will be reported to Schools Forum in July 2009 for final approval before implementation.



Jane Porter

Interim Director of Children's Services

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