

SCHOOLS FORUM AGENDA ITEM

For Action



For Information

**Brief Description of Item** (including the purpose / reason for presenting this for consideration by the Forum)

The Schools Forum is asked to consider the outcomes of consultation that has been completed on the amendment to the Council's Financial Regulations for Maintained Schools and School Contract Standing Orders, and the subsequent amendments to the Scheme for Financing Schools.

Date (s) of any Previous Discussion at the Forum

This consultation was presented to the Schools Forum on 11 July 2018.

Background / Context

The Schools Finance Regulations permit the Local Authority to amend the provisions within the Scheme, subject to the approval of the Schools Forum. Provision 1.4 within the current Scheme states that, "Any proposed revisions to the Scheme will be the subject of consultation with schools maintained by the Local Authority, before the proposed revisions are submitted to the Schools Forum for their approval." Where the Schools Forum does not approve the Local Authority's proposals for amendment, the Local Authority has the right of appeal to the Secretary of State, who will make a final judgement.

The Schools Forum approved consulting with maintained schools on the proposed changes to the Scheme at its meeting on 11 July 2018.

The outcomes of this consultation are now presented. Subject to the Forum's approval of the final amended documents, the FRfMS and SCSOs will be presented to the Authority's Governance and Audit Committee for final decision / approval. The Authority intends to implement agreed amendments as soon as possible following the completion of the decision making processes.

As the consultation document set out, the amendments to the 3 documents have been put forward with the aims of:

- Ensuring that our provisions remain accurate and refer correctly to legislation and officer posts / committee structures within the Authority.
- Incorporating recent changes in requirements, including changes in legislation, since the provisions were last updated.
- Responding to feedback from the Authority's Internal Audit Team on areas of weakness found in school's financial accounting and also where our current provisions would benefit from greater clarity or amendment.
- More clearly setting out for schools their responsibilities in the procurement of contracts, goods and services.
- More clearly signposting for schools the Authority's working protocols and additional guidance.
- Expressing more clearly (but not materially altering) existing requirements placed on schools in areas where the Authority holds concern about compliance, and
- Establishing new or firmer provisions (and materially altering requirements placed on schools) in areas where the Authority holds concern about compliance.

Appendix 1 repeats for reference the summary of the substantive changes proposed within all 3 documents.

Appendix 2 is the final proposed Scheme for Financing Schools.

Details of the Item for Consideration

The consultation ran from 11 July to 12 October 2018.

The consultation simply asked whether the amendments to 3 documents are agreed, if not agreed for an explanation of which amendments and why not, and for any other additional comments.

An analysis of responses will be presented to the meeting.

In response to the feedback we have received so far (at 10 October) we propose to take forward the amendments as set out in the consultation, adjusted as follows:

- All references to the governing *body* or *bodies* have been amended to governor *boards* in line with the terminology now used by the DfE within its guidance.
- Annex 1 within the Scheme (list of schools covered by the Scheme) has been updated to take account of the conversion of maintained schools up to 1 September 2018.
- The definitions of quotations and tenders within the Schools Contract Standing Orders have been clarified.
- Within the Scheme, provision 2.14 now includes a link to further guidance provided for schools by facilities management. It also include clarification on notification requirements.

With the inclusion of these adjustments, the Authority now asks the Schools Forum to approve the final Scheme for Financing Schools, attached at Appendix 2, and to recommend to the Governance and Audit Committee that the amendments to the Financial Regulations for Maintained Schools and the Schools Contract Standing Orders are approved.

Implications for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) (if any)

None

Recommendations

The Schools Forum is asked to agree the proposed amendments to the Scheme for Financing Schools and to recommend to the Authority's Governance and Audit Committee that the amendments to the Scheme, the Financial Regulations for Maintained Schools and School Contract Standing Orders are implemented.

List of Supporting Appendices / Papers (where applicable)

Appendix 1 – Summary of the proposed amendments to the 3 documents
Appendix 2 – Final proposed Scheme for Financing Schools

Contact Officer (name, telephone number and email address)

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