

SCHOOLS FORUM AGENDA ITEM

For Action



For Information

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

Schools Forum members representing maintained schools are asked to agree to conduct a short consultation with maintained schools on proposed amendments to the Scheme for Financing Schools. These amendments have been triggered by the DfE's refreshed guidance for local authorities, which was published on 1 April 2020.

Date (s) of any Previous Discussion at the Forum

The Schools Forum agreed the current Scheme on 22 May 2019 and this came into force on the same day.

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 the current Scheme on 22 May 2019, which updated the Scheme for the DfE's guidance published in February 2019.

The DfE refreshes annually its guidance for local authorities on Schemes to take account changes in legislation and policy. The DfE sometimes directs local authorities to amend their schemes to incorporate specific changes or wordings. These are known as 'directed revisions' and are not required to be consulted on locally before insertion into Schemes.

Details of the Item for Consideration

The DfE published amended guidance for local authorities on Schemes on 1 April 2020. There are no new directed revisions (where exact new wording is prescribed). However, the additions proposed in 9.2 and 12.17 below (regarding the RPA) are based on a new requirement.

Following review of the DfE's new guidance, we propose to make some amendments to our current Scheme. These are included within the re-drafted Scheme presented at Appendix 1.

Simple changes in wording (where there is no material change to provisions) are highlighted in red.

Proposed amendments that are more material, and additions, are highlighted in red and yellow. They are in:

- 1.1, the insertion of an explanation of where people reading the Scheme can access further information on Bradford's formula funding and centrally managed DSG budgets.
- 1.4, a repeat of the facility for the Authority to seek approval from the Secretary of State for Scheme amendments that are not approved by the Schools Forum. This provision is already stated in paragraph 1.1, but is repeated here for clarity and in keeping with the DfE's guidance.
- 2.3, the insertion of a paragraph regarding revised budgets, which states our current practice. This is inserted for clarity and in keeping with the DfE's Scheme guidance.
- 3.5.1, a repeat of the provision already stated in 1.1 regarding the Authority's 'ownership' of funds held in school bank accounts. This is inserted for clarity and in keeping with the DfE's Scheme guidance.
- In 9.2 and 12.17, the insertion (as required by the DfE) of a new provision, which permits maintained schools to enter into the national Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA), as an alternative to insurance, where the risk that is being insured is covered by the RPA. The DfE has stated that it may prescribe exact wording for this in subsequent guidance revisions. The wording proposed now following the wording used in the DfE's current guidance.

The list of school maintained by the Authority has also been updated, for the position at 1 July 2020.

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

None

Recommendations

Schools Forum members representing maintained schools are asked to agree to conduct a short consultation with maintained schools on amendments to the Scheme for Financing Schools as proposed in Document LP Appendix 1. The Schools Forum will be asked to take a final decision on these amendments in September.

List of Supporting Appendices / Papers (where applicable)

Appendix 1 – Proposed Scheme for Financing Schools with highlighted amendments

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