

# Swindon Borough Council

## Schools Forum

**Tuesday, 9 March 2010**

Committee Room 6, Civic Offices, Swindon at 4.00 p.m.  
(Light refreshments will be available from 3.40 p.m. in Committee Room 5)

**School Members:**

Nick Capstick, Primary Headteachers  
Lauren Connor, Primary Headteachers  
Chris Davis, Primary Headteachers  
Debbie Kalyinka, Primary Headteachers  
Terri Menham, Primary Headteacher  
Paul Boyles, Primary Governor  
David Easter, Primary Governor  
Heidi Teague, Primary Governor  
Peter Crockett, Special Headteachers  
Steve Colledge, Secondary Headteacher  
Rachael Matthey, Secondary Headteacher  
Clive Zimmerman, Secondary Headteacher  
Peter Wells, Secondary Headteachers  
John Newman, Secondary Governor  
Kevin Gray, Secondary Governor

**Non-School Members:**

Sally Inskip, Diocese Representative  
Rhian Cockwell, Diocese Representative (Deputy)  
Debbie Waldron, Early Years Representative  
Cathy Parker, Early Years Representative (Deputy)  
Jan Downie, 14-19 Partnership

**Committee Officer:** Helen Harris

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## **AGENDA**

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Minutes** (Pages 1 - 4)  
To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2010
- 3. Financial Management Standards in Schools** (HIA-CE) (Pages 5 - 10)
- 4. Budget Monitoring 2009/10** (GDC)  
Report to follow.

**5. 2010/11 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Budget (GDC)**

The report on the outcome of the Sub-Group meetings will be issued as soon as possible.

**6. Equal Pay (GDC)**

The report on the outcome of the Sub-Group meetings will be issued as soon as possible.

**Date of Despatch:** 01 March 2010

**Key:**

**Officers:**

CE	-	Chief Executive
GDC	-	Group Director: Children
GDHSC	-	Group Director: Housing & Social Care
GDER	-	Group Director: Environment & Regeneration
GDBT	-	Group Director: Business Transformation

***Access Arrangements*** – *The Venue is wheelchair accessible and an infrared receiver hearing system is provided. If you would wish to attend the meeting but have any special requirement to enable you to do so please contact the Committee Clerk above, as soon as possible prior to the date of the meeting.*

If you would like to receive any of the pages contained in this agenda in a larger print size please contact the Committee Officer whose name appears on the first page of this agenda.

**SCHOOLS FORUM**

**MONDAY, 8 FEBRUARY 2010**

PRESENT: -

**School Members:** Nick Capstick, Primary Headteachers  
Lauren Connor, Primary Headteachers  
Chris Davis, Primary Headteachers  
Debbie Kalynka, Primary Headteachers  
Terri Menham, Primary Headteacher  
Paul Boyles, Primary Governor  
David Easter, Primary Governor  
Peter Crockett, Special Headteachers  
Steve Colledge, Secondary Headteacher  
Rachael Matthey, Secondary Headteacher  
Clive Zimmerman, Secondary Headteacher  
Peter Wells, Secondary Headteachers

**Non-School Members:** Rhian Cockwell, Diocese Representative (Deputy)  
Debbie Waldron, Early Years Representative

**Officers:** Nicki Archer (Deputy Group Finance Manager, Schools)  
Neil Haddock (Interim Group Finance Manager)  
Ian Bickerton (Director Access and Provision)  
Paddy Bradley (Director Schools and Learning)

Apologies for absence were received from Sally Inskip (Diocese Representative).

**23. Minutes**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2009 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**24. Budget Monitoring 2009/10**

Nicki Archer (Deputy Group Finance Manager, Schools) introduced a report with the budget monitoring information to the end of December 2009 in respect of the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2009/10.

Mrs Archer commented on changes that had taken place since the last report and in particular highlighted that the current projected overspend could increase by £167k if the potential out of borough placements happened before the end of the year.

Resolved – (1) That the 2009/10 financial projections in respect of the Dedicated Schools Grant for the current financial year be noted.

(2) That the Group Director, Children Services continue rigorous and robust monitoring of the Dedicated Schools Grant and bring budget monitoring reports to future meetings of the Schools Forum.

## **25. Draft Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Budget 2010/11**

Nicki Archer (Deputy Group Finance Manager, Schools) provided a draft of the Dedicated Schools Grant budget for 2010/11.

The overspend of £661k from 2009/10 had to be absorbed initially and this was the main cause of the shortfall in budget for 2010/11. It was noted that this could increase further if the potential out of borough placements, referred to in minute 24, occurred before the end of March. There was also a significant gap between the increase in DSG income generated from the increase in pupil numbers of 21, and the funding needed for the expansion of school provision.

An indication of where savings could be made was set out in appendix C to the report and Paddy Bradley (Director Schools and Learning) commented that there was now a need to introduce a greater level of control on demand led budgets. It was acknowledged that the DSG was a finite amount of money, however, Steve Colledge (Secondary Headteachers) commented that if officers were considering moving any costs to the schools, it should also be recognised that there was a limit to what could be provided within their budgets.

In addition to the proposals set out in the report and appendices, members also put forward ideas for consideration:

- Scrap the 5% and 8% limit on retained monies.
- Reduce Statementing.
- Set a deficit budget along with a recovery plan.
- Capitalise on the old Even Swindon School and site.

Nick Capstick (Primary Headteacher) remarked that Heads were continually being asked to raise standards but reduce budgets. It would be helpful to inform the Council that raising standards cost money, and they were not going to increase on the current level of funding. David Easter (Primary Governor) commented that governors were responsible for setting school budgets and yet they were often left out of the loop. The Director Schools and Learning agreed to arrange a meeting with governors to inform them of the situation.

Members agreed to set up a sub group to consider the 2010/11 budget and a possible strategy for future years. In addition, it would also consider the process for settling equal pay claims, as set out in minute 26. Both items would be reported to the meeting on 9 March 2010 but an additional meeting would be scheduled for 17 March at 4.00 p.m. in case it was not possible to make final decisions at the earlier date.

### **Resolved – That the Schools Forum:**

- (1) Notes that there is a potential budget deficit of £1.62 million in 2010/11.
- (2) Will work with Officers to identify proposals that will reduce the deficit (Appendix C to the report detailed some options for discussion).
- (3) Agrees to set up a Schools Forum Sub Group to work with officers on setting a balanced 2010/11 DSG budget by the Schools Forum meeting on 9 March 2010 and to work on planning for future year budgets. The Sub-Group to consist of Rachael Matthey, Clive Zimmerman, Peter Crockett, Chris Davis, Nick Capstick, Steve Colledge and Peter Wells.

**26.**

### **Equal Pay Consultation**

Paddy Bradley (Director Schools and Learning) presented a report with the outcome from the Equal Pay consultation responses commented on the proposals that had received the most votes from Headteachers, as set out in paragraph 2.2.

Peter Wells (Secondary Headteachers) advised that the options involving top slicing would be particularly detrimental to voluntary aided and foundation schools, because of the way their finances worked. It became apparent that there had been confusion as to which schools could vote in the consultation and that many of the voluntary aided or foundation schools would not have voted for a preferred option. Members also noted that without any clarity on the actual amounts involved, there could be a significant difference in a school's liability between the two most popular options and there were now other pressures to be considered.

It was agreed that the Sub-Group, set up under minute 25(3), should also consider options for settling the equal pay claims, taking all points into consideration.

Resolved – That the Schools Forum Sub-Group submit proposals to the meeting on 9 March 2010 for setting a budget for 2010/11 and for settling equal pay claims, which takes into account the extreme pressure on the Dedicated Schools Grant and the requirement to agree the process for funding equal pay, and also takes into account the needs of the maintained, voluntary aided and foundation schools.

**27.**

### **Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF)**

Nicki Archer (Deputy Group Finance Manager, Schools) provided an update on the implementation of the Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF).

It was noted that the EYSFF had previously been agreed for implementation from April 2010 and that all nurseries within the Borough had been planning for that date. The Chair raised the issue of funding as she had received a query from the Head Teacher of Goddard Park Primary School.

Resolved – That the Schools Forum agrees that Swindon make an application to the Department for Children, Schools & Families (DCSF) to become a pathfinder for the EYSFF and therefore that the EYSFF is implemented as planned from April 2010.

**28.**

### **Announcement**

Terri Menham (Primary Headteachers) advised that she was resigning from the Schools Forum and as she was unable to attend the meeting on 9 March, this was her last meeting. On behalf of the Forum, the Chair thanked Mrs Menham for all her hard work and contributions to the Schools Forum.

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## Financial Management Standards in Schools

Schools Forum

9<sup>th</sup> March 2010

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**Author:** Head of Internal Audit

**Parish / Wards Affected:** All

### **Purpose**

To inform the Schools Forum of the Financial Management Standards in Schools (FMSiS) reassessment process for Primary and Special Schools.

### **Recommendation**

Schools Forum is requested to note the 2010/11 FMSiS external assessment process and the progress made to date of the external assessments conducted in 2009/10.

## **1. Reasons**

- 1.1 This report has been compiled to provide an update on the progress made on the 2009/10 reassessments of Secondary Schools and the forthcoming 2010/11 reassessment of Primary and Special Schools, and to notify the Schools Forum of the timetable for completing the reassessments.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Financial Management Standards in Schools (FMSiS) was developed and released to schools as a self-management package in June 2004. It provides schools with a benchmark that can be used to encourage improvement and is intended to cover Standards and processes that should already be in place in schools.
- 2.2 The FMSiS was added to the Scheme for Financing Schools in October 2006 through directed revisions, which, from January 2007 requires that meeting the Standards is now a legal requirement for schools.
- 2.3 The FMSiS accreditation is awarded to Schools for good financial management practices, rather than to any individual, and requires renewal every three years. The renewal date commences from the date that the School met the requirements of the Standards. To allow flexibility when planning the audit and assessment timetables, the reassessment can be carried out any time during the relevant financial year.
- 2.4 In January 2009, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) was given Ministerial approval that FMSiS re-assessments should continue and that the Standards should remain the same in its current form, at least until March 2010.

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Nick Hobbs on 01793 463940 or Email [nhobbs@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:nhobbs@swindon.gov.uk)

# Financial Management Standards in Schools

Schools Forum

9<sup>th</sup> March 2010

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- 2.5 There has been no further reported update on this, although initial indications are that the Standards will remain in place until 2012. At this time, it is understood they will be drastically overhauled. The FMSiS Policy Lead at the DCSF has informed us that the overhaul will be based on the discussion paper published by the DCSF in November 2009 entitled 'Securing our future: Using our resources well'.
  - 2.6 Swindon Borough Council's Section 151 Officer, Stuart McKellar, has decided that the Council's Internal Audit Service will conduct external assessments of all schools, in order to confirm their adherence to the Standards and to allow accurate completion of the Section 52 Outturn declaration.

## 3. Primary and Special Schools 2009/10

- 3.1 In order to achieve the targets set by the DCSF for assessment levels, we need to have assessed 12 Primary/Special schools in 2009/10.
- 3.2 As at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2010, we have completed 10 assessments and the remaining 2 schools are booked in for February and March.
- 3.3 There are currently 3 schools that have been assessed as not meeting the Standards. 3 schools have 'conditional passes' and need to provide additional evidence to meet the Standards. We are working with all these schools to assist them in meeting the 31<sup>st</sup> March deadline.
- 3.4 The latest information we have received from the DCSF is the following:  
*'All schools have to achieve the Standards at least once by March 2010. Information will be requested on schools that have not achieved the Standards and the reasons for not doing so.'*  
*DCSF Ministers, Treasury, National Audit Office and the Audit Commission are particularly interested in receiving this data especially as resources will be tighter in the next spending review. This information will be reported to these interested parties and we will let all LAs know of any penalties to be incurred'.*
- 3.5 At this stage, we have not been notified of what the penalties will be.

## 4. Primary and Special Schools 2010/11

- 4.1 There are 28 Primary and Special Schools that are due for reassessment in 2010/11 and we are currently working on preparing a timetable for these reassessments.
- 4.2 We have notified the schools being assessed in 2010/11 in order to allow them time to prepare for their assessments.
- 4.3 Once the timetable has been finalised, the schools will be contacted and offered pre assessment visits and will be provided with an updated FMSiS guidance pack. A copy of the assessment visit plan will be made available

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Nick Hobbs on 01793 463940 or Email [nhobbs@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:nhobbs@swindon.gov.uk)



# Financial Management Standards in Schools

Schools Forum

9<sup>th</sup> March 2010

to the Swindon Borough Council School's Finance Team and Governors Support and we will be working with them to support the schools in their preparation for their re-assessment.

- 4.4 A review of our current charges and the time required by the Audit Team to conduct the assessments has identified that more time is needed to complete the assessments than originally budgeted for, this is primarily due to changes in support procured by various schools. We are proposing that the re-assessment charge for 2010/11 is £700 for primary and special schools.

## 5 Secondary Schools 2009/10

- 5.1 The reassessment of Secondary Schools commenced in April 2009. As at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2010, 5 Secondary Schools have been reassessed which has resulted in 2 schools fully meeting the Standards, 1 school has not met the Standards and a revisit will be conducted before March 2011 and 2 Schools are still work in progress.

### Risk Management

#### *Financial and Procurement Implications*

Schools will need to fund the cost of the external assessment from their budgets. Internal Audit is expected to fund the resource required to complete the external assessment of schools from these charges. Risks include the availability of staff to carry out the external assessment, increasing staffing costs and the possibility that other audit resources will be needed to subsidise this requirement. Schools may also be required to find additional resources to meet the Standards required by the external assessment.

#### *Legal / Human Rights Implications*

The Council's Section 151 Officer, the Director of Finance, has requested Internal Audit carry out the external assessments of all Swindon's schools.

The DCFS Financial Management Standards in Schools is encompassed in the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998.

#### *Links to Corporate Plans and Policies (in particular to Swindon 2010 Promises)*

Effective systems of internal control within the Council will help to ensure that the objectives set out in the Corporate Plan and Swindon 2010 are achieved.

### Consultees

The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.  
The Chair of Schools Forum

### Background Papers and Appendices

Appendix A – Proposed Charges for 2010/11

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Nick Hobbs on 01793 463940 or Email [nhobbs@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:nhobbs@swindon.gov.uk)

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## APPENDIX A

Type of Assessment	Charge for Secondary Schools (£)	Charge for Primary & Special Schools (£)
Full external assessment of a school	950	700
Reassessment of a conditional pass (additional evidence to be provided by the school within 20 days)	Nil	Nil
Reassessment of a 'fail' within 6 months of a full external assessment (charge will be dependent on the extent of the failure)	Up to 950	Up to 700
Guidance notes, best practice documentation etc.	Nil	Nil
Advice regarding the external assessments	Nil	Nil

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