

REPORT TO: School Forum

DATE: 16th March 2015

REPORTING OFFICER: Senior Finance Officer, Financial Management Division

SUBJECT: Revision of Halton Scheme For Financing Schools

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 **To report to the School Forum on the revision of the Halton Scheme For Financing Schools (SFFS).**

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDED:

- (1) The report be noted,
- (2) That the revised Scheme be put out to consultation to Head Teachers and Governing Bodies as per Section 1.4.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The Halton Scheme For Financing Schools and Financial Guidance for Schools have not been reviewed or updated for some time. Representatives from maintained schools plus Internal Audit, Schools Support and Financial Management met during the Autumn Term and went through the document discussing changes that were needed.

We have amalgamated the two documents to ensure that all financial guidance is easily accessible in just one document. Changes have been made in line with Statutory Guidance issued by the Department for Education in February 2014.

3.1 MAJOR CHANGES

- Clarification has been given as to which schools the Scheme applies to, specifically excluding Academies.
- Clarification regarding orders requirement payment in foreign currency.
- Deletion of the section regarding the payment of GTC registration fees by deduction from salary.
- Insertion of the Notice of Concern section as per the DfE guidance.
- Insertion of the Schools Financial Value Standards section.
- Insertion of the Fraud section.
- Insertion of ability of schools in financial difficulties to apply to Schools Forum for additional funding.
- Deletion of the section regarding the Schools Loan Scheme.
- Clarification on the Charging of School Budget Shares.

- The PFI section is being worked on and will be included for consultation with Head Teachers and Governing Bodies of schools maintained by the LA.
- The Insurance section is also being finalised to ensure it complies with the Council's current policy.
- Insertion of the Redundancy/Early Retirement costs section.
- Deletion of the Grant-Maintained Schools section.
- Deletion of the S255 loans section.
- A new Annex to be inserted regarding Procurement (updated from the Financial Guidance regulations)
- A new Annex to be inserted regarding the operation of Local Bank Accounts (updated from the Financial Guidance regulations).

3.2 **OTHER CHANGES**

There has been a general updating of the Scheme with regard to post titles, board titles etc.

3.3 **CONSULTATION**

It is our aim to consult with Head Teachers and Governing Bodies of all maintained schools after the Spring Break. This will allow time to finalise certain areas of the SFFS. Only after this consultation can we bring the SFFS back to Schools Forum (in June) and ask for it to be approved. We are therefore aiming to bring the SFFS into effect from 1st September 2015.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None

5.0 **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None