

WIRRAL COUNCIL

WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM 8th OCTOBER 2008

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

FINANCIAL ISSUES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report forms the basis of consultation on a number of financial issues affecting school budgets. These issues are set out in the School Forum Regulations 2008

1. Arrangements for Pupils with SEN

The financial arrangements for SEN were amended by the Schools Forum in December 2007 following consultations with schools. The changes included:

- 4 secondary school inclusion bases at a cost of £300,000
- An increase in the unit value supporting statemented pupils at a cost of £510,000 (phased over 3 years)
- An increase in the exceptional needs budget at a cost of £100,000
- Changes in the number of places at Elleray Park and Lyndale.

A separate report regarding proposals at the Observatory School will be brought to the Forum.

Any changes that may need to be considered must be met from within the overall resources identified for the 3 year funding period.

2. Arrangements for the use of WASP and Home Tuition

The budgets for these two services are £929000 and £167100 respectively. The WASP service and budget is being reviewed and will be subject of a future report.

3. Insurance

Insurance premiums for cover provided through the Council's Insurance Fund total £1,150,000. From 30 June 2008 buildings insurance cover has been extended to include losses from storms, floods, burst pipes and business interruption.

For 2009/10 insurance premiums are being recalculated to better reflect pupil numbers, employee costs, building values and claims experience. This is intended to produce a fairer charge for each school and will be introduced/phased over the current funding period.

4. Arrangements for the Allocation of Central Government Grants

The Standards Fund programme was reported to the Forum on 16th January. This included proposals for the allocations of School Development Grant. The use of the School Lunch Grant has been considered by the Schools Meals Reference Group on 1st October.

Changes are being developed to route funding for 16-18 year olds through local authorities rather than the Learning and Skills Council (from September 2010). The implications and arrangements/partnerships that will be put in place will be reported to the Forum over the coming months.

Arrangements for Free School Meals

The buyback arrangements together with the increase in the paid meals price was discussed at the Forum on 11th June 2006.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Forum note the current and future areas for consultation on financial issues.

Howard Cooper
Director of Children's Services