

## WIRRAL COUNCIL

WIRRAL SCHOOLS' FORUM 13<sup>th</sup> January 2015

### REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

#### Scheme for Financing Schools – Consultation

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#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report informs the Schools Forum of the responses to a consultation regarding some minor changes to the Scheme for Financing Schools and advises on further changes proposed by the Department for Education.

#### Revisions to the scheme

Local Authorities are required to publish Schemes for Financing Schools. This document sets out the financial relationship between the LA and the Schools they maintain. Guidance is issued by the DfE on what the scheme must, should or may include and periodically this will be updated. This guidance must be taken into account when schemes are revised in consultation with the Schools Forum and local schools.

In 2014 there were 2 directed revisions concerning

- 2.9: A requirement for maintained schools to publish a register of the business interests of their governors, along with any relationships to staff.
- 3.6: Clarification that borrowing includes the use of finance leases and is not allowable, with the exception of certain schemes approved by the Secretary of State. Currently only Salix loans have such approval.

A further suggested revision was included to amend 2.10.1 (c) Purchasing, Tendering and Contracting Requirements as follows:-

- (c) to seek **five** tenders **or quotations** in respect of any contract with a value exceeding £10,000 in any one year.

#### Consultation

There were 4 responses from governing bodies and a number of comments at Financial Support Group Meetings.

The main issue was the change from 3 tenders to 5 tenders or quotations as schools have difficulty getting 3 quotes, particularly for specialised items. This will be revised to read:-

- (c) to seek **Three** tenders **or quotations** in respect of any contract with a value exceeding £10,000 in any one year.

There was one comment concerning business interest, which is a directed change. These comments will be forwarded to the EFA.

The Scheme will be updated and issued early January.

#### Scheme Change December 2015

Since consulting with schools the DfE have issued further guidance in December. This latest document includes a change that enables local authorities to charge schools for the

cost of administering school admission appeals – where these costs have already been delegated to schools.

Wirral's current appeal costs for presenting officers are met from within the Admissions budget of £341,800.

The option of charges will be considered, however there are difficulties in matching any further amounts delegated to appeals activity in schools.

### **Recommendation**

That Forum notes the report.

**Julia Hassall**  
**Director of Children's Services**