

**SLOUGH SCHOOLS FORUM**  
**22 September 2010**

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**School Support Services**  
**(Director of Education & Children's Services)**

**1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To update Schools Forum on the delivery of the Schools Support Service agreed in May 2010.

**2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That Schools Forum notes the report  
2.2 That Schools Forum endorses the proposed contract with Reading Borough Council to deliver a range of Governor Support Services.

**3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is appropriate for Schools Forum to be aware of the progress made in delivering the School Support Service

**4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 Not applicable.

**5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 5.1 In May 2010 Schools Forum delegated £150,000 to the Deputy Director for Finance to establish a Schools Support Service to meet any potential shortfall in school needs and to complement where appropriate current service delivery. This stemmed from concerns that had been raised following a significant number of schools failing the FMSiS assessment.
- 5.2 Schools Forum will recall that three levels of support were identified and ranging from individual school support to broader support to all schools. Annex A represents an extract from the May 2010 report which outlines the three levels.
- 5.3 Officers are pleased to inform Schools Forum that significant steps have been made in addressing two key areas where concerns were raised in May 2010.
- 5.4 Finance Support**

5.4.1 Schools Forum will recall that in 2009-10 a number of schools failed to meet the standards necessary to receive accreditation under the Financial Management Standard in Schools. The standard assesses schools against five key areas:

- Leadership & Governance
- People Management
- Policy & Strategy
- Partnership & Resources
- Processes

5.4.2 The issues that arose for those schools that failed to meet the standard in 2009-10 included the following areas

- Governors not understanding of their roles and responsibilities (39 recommendations)
- Staff Management, including effective performance management and training (14 recommendations)
- Poor financial process relating governors decisions making role (21 recommendations)
- Specific financial processes (21 recommendations)
- Benchmarking and linking the School Development Plan to finances (5 recommendations)

5.4.3 In order to support schools auditors from Deloitte have been appointed to provide FMSiS support to schools. This is currently operating in two ways.

5.4.4 The first has involved undertaking an initial review with the school over a 2 day period for those schools that are scheduled to be assessed for the standard in 2010-11. Where necessary recommendations are made to the school on what action would be needed to meet the standard. A final meeting is then held at a later date to evaluate whether the school have taken the appropriate action and is now meeting the required standard. Written reports are provided at both stages outlining what action needs to be done.

5.4.5 The second way will be to review with those schools who did not meet the standard in 2009-10 the recommendations made at that time and establish what subsequent progress has been made towards meeting the standard.

5.4.6 Where a school has been identified as causing concern then this support will be tailored to meet both their needs and those of the authority.

5.4.7 Both types of support outlined above will allow heads and governors to be aware of any issues prior to the formal FMSiS assessment and will provide an opportunity to address any concerns raised. It will also

allow the authority to be made aware of any issues at an earlier date and when combined with a broader knowledge of the school offer appropriate support.

## **5.5 Governor Support**

- 5.5.1 The role of School Governors is crucial to ensuring the success of schools and following the training in May 2010 with Headteachers and Chair of Governors it became apparent that there were weaknesses in the support provided by Slough Borough Council.
- 5.5.2 In order to address these weaknesses and to meet the needs of both the schools and the authority at the strategic level, quotations were sought from a number of organisations to deliver support at the three levels outlined in May 2010. This included support to individual schools that had not met the FMSiS standard or were causing concern as well as broader support to specific groups of schools. Annex B provides the specification issued to potential providers.
- 5.5.3 Following that process Reading Borough Council is being put forward as the preferred supplier to deliver a range of Governor Support Services. This will include:
- Bespoke Training for schools requiring Level 1 support
  - Individual coaching sessions for Chairs of Governors
  - Bespoke training for schools requiring level 2 support for example
  - Simple and straight-forward guidance on the roles and responsibilities of school governors
  - A range of training sessions available to all schools
- 5.5.4 Final details on the exact content of the support are still being negotiated as this report is being prepared but it is expected that the service will become available from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010. Information will be issued to all schools when available.
- 5.5.5 Schools Forum is asked to endorse this proposal in order that the needs of schools may be met at the earliest opportunity.

## **6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS**

### **Borough Solicitor**

- 6.1 The relevant legal provisions are contained within the main body of this report.

Section 151 Officer – Strategic Director of Resources

- 6.2 The financial implications of the report are outlined in the supporting information.

Access Implications

- 6.3 There are no access implications.

**7 CONSULTATION**

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 None.

Method of Consultation

- 7.2 Not applicable.

Representations Received

- 7.3 Not applicable.

Background Papers

Annex A – Levels of Support

Annex B – Outline Specification for Governor Support Services

Contact for further information

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## **Annex A –Levels of Support**

The first level would be targeted support to individual schools, for example where they met the criteria set out in the policy on schools in financial difficulty or causing concern. This would enable individual schools to address the issues raised through the challenge and support process. For example, where a school has not passed the FMSiS assessment, it may require dedicated support for both governors and finance staff in order to embed the required standard.

The second level of support would be available to specific groups of schools and would provide a broader range of support. For example further analysis of the recommendations in recent audits may indicate that training on the roles and responsibilities for governor would be of benefit to specific schools but it would provide better value for money if a single training session was provided. Alternatively, it could include a pre-FMSiS assessment for schools expecting to be assessed during the year so that they were aware of the work necessary to meet the standard.

The third level would be support across all schools. Examples include the development and delivery of a comprehensive induction programme for new headteachers or the coordination of procurement opportunities in schools for energy supplies.

## Annex B – Specification Outline

### Level 1

10 schools are deemed to require level 1 support.

The table below is an analysis of the recommendations made following the assessment for FMSiS, where applicable.

School	Leadership & Governance	People Management	Policy & Strategy	Partnership & Resources	Processes	Total
A	4				4	8
B	9	4	2	2	8	25
C	4			1	4	9
D	5	5	2	2	5	19
E	3		1		13	17
F	8	4	3	2	7	24
G	7	1	2	1	4	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>45</b>	

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Please describe the support that you would provide for these schools. This should include individually tailored support as well as access to a generic support service if appropriate.

It is expected that this support would be provided between September 2010 and December 2010, with ongoing support until March 2011

### Level 2

Level 2 support, whilst potentially targeted at individual schools, is to provide more 'preventative' support. Please describe how individual schools would be identified and how support to governors would be delivered. This should include individually tailored support as well as broader access to support services if appropriate.

It is expected that this support would be provided between September 2010 and March 2011.

Level 3

Please describe the support you could provide to meet the level 3 needs of governing bodies, identifying any specific areas that you think currently relevant to governing bodies.

It is expected that this support would be provided between September 2010 and March 2011.