

Schools and Children's Services Finance update

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This report updates members on recent developments in schools funding issues.

Recommendations

That members:

1. Note this report and
2. Agree to receive further reports on any future developments.

Action

Officers to continue to provide updates to your Board.

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Schools and Children's Services Finance update

Schools' Funding

1. The Department for Education (DfE) have still not yet issued their reply to the July 2011 consultation on schools' funding. Detailed proposals for changes to schools funding starting from 2013-14 are expected shortly. These are likely to focus on simplifying local fair funding formulae, on introducing a national formula, and on aspects such as reforming special needs funding. Officers have not yet been briefed on the proposals in detail. Any updates will be reported at the Board meeting.

Capital

2. There has also been no Government response to the consultation on the James Review; this is expected soon. The key issues remain the scope of any single capital pot to distribute funding locally and how new school building is to be procured. There have been discussions about a regional procurement model using existing authority expertise but nothing has yet been announced.
3. Allocations for the Priority Schools Building programme have also not yet been announced; officers understand that it has been heavily oversubscribed.

Academies top slice

4. We are also awaiting a response to the second Government consultation on the academies top-slice; it closed in January 2012. There has been contact at both officer and member level with the DfE, including a meeting between Sir Merrick Cockell, Cllr Simmonds and Lord Hill on 18 January, but still no definitive steer.
5. We are expecting a future consultation to cover arrangements in 2013-14 and following. In its response to the consultation on business rates retention, the Government indicated that they would explore removing the funding for central education functions from formula grant into DfE budgets. This would be likely to mean that authorities and academies would be paid grants direct from DfE.

Financial Implications

6. None specific to this report.