

**REPORT TO THE WORCESTERSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM (WSF)**  
**PROPOSED SCHEME TO SUPPORT SCHOOLS IN FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY**

**1. PURPOSE**

1.1 To update the WSF on the current position and to make recommendations for the scheme.

**2. BACKGROUND**

2.1 At its last meeting in July 2007 the WSF considered the outcomes of the consultation and requested the WSF Sub Group to reconvene to consider the detail comments by schools and to make recommendations for the scheme.

2.2 The sub group comprising Peter Garner, Sean Devlin, Malcolm Richards, Andy McHale and Trish Mallinson met on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2007 to consider the issues and finalise the proposals.

**3. OUTCOMES**

3.1 The sub group considered the individual responses on each of the consultation questions in line with the draft scheme.

3.2 For each of the questions the sub group commented as follows: -

- Question 1: Support for a Scheme – the replies from schools were generally supportive but more so in the primary sector.
- Question 2: Comments on 'Unique Individual School Circumstances' – the need to make clear any list of these is a guide only and school circumstances will be different.
- Question 3: Qualifying Time Criteria – although schools raised concerns on the long qualifying times in section B6 of the draft scheme it was felt these were appropriate.
- Question 4: Limits on Support – the working group felt that section B8 for a potential ceiling on any support, in line with the limits for surplus balances were not appropriate. The responses from schools raised concerns on the proposed matched funding arrangements in section B9. The sub group felt a 50:50 matched funding arrangement was appropriate but this could be considered over the whole proposed support period.
- Question 5: Safeguards – it was agreed in the listed criteria meeting the FMSiS should be mandatory in any potential application and that schools may have to opt for assessment earlier than programmed.
- Question 6: Application Process – it was felt a re-application provision needed to be included.
- Question 7: Any Other Comments – the group supported the proposal to rename the proposal as the 'Schools Deficit Recovery Scheme'

3.3 The sub group agreed to recommend to the WSF for an introduction of the scheme from 2008/09 taking account of the changes in section 3.2 above. A revised scheme is attached as an Appendix for approval.

3.4 In doing this the sub group further recommend that this is totally dependent upon there being headroom in the centrally retained part of the DSG in 2008/09 with a sum of £200,000 being earmarked at this stage.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATION**

The WSF notes the issues and agrees the sub group recommendations in section 3.2 to 3.4 above.

Andy McHale  
Service Development Manager Resources  
September 2007