



- Other Cabinet Members consulted  .....
- Chief Executive  .....
- Legal  Paul Fairweather, Christine Williamson, Diane Nation – comments incorporated in the report
- Finance  David Clarke, Strategic Director of Resources – no comments to make
- Other Strategic Directors  David Carter, Strategic Director of Performance and Development – no comments to make
- District Councils  .....
- Health Authority  .....
- Police  .....
- Other Bodies/Individuals  .....

**FINAL DECISION** **YES**

**SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:**

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee  .....
- To Council  .....
- To Cabinet  .....
- To an O & S Committee  .....
- To an Area Committee  .....
- Further Consultation  .....

## Audit and Standards Committee – 24<sup>th</sup> February 2009

### Update on the Implementation of the New Contract Standing Orders for Schools

#### Report of the Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families

##### **Recommendation:**

That the Audit and Standards Committee considers the progress made to date and endorses the proposals for the way forward.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 In April 2008 Contract Standing Orders for Schools (CSOfS) were reviewed by the County Council, amended on the basis of feedback received from schools and revised. The new CSOfS came into operation from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008.
- 1.2 A summary paper of updates was submitted to this Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2008. It outlined the list of documents communicated to schools, school governors and contracting staff.
- 1.3 This report provides further information about the communication and support to schools on CSOfS since July/August 2008.

## **2. New Contract Standing Orders for Schools**

- 2.1 The new CSOfS has been in force since 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008. All the documents related to the new guidance are available via the websites for schools and the headteachers' handbook. (The headteachers' handbook is a mini website that schools can login securely. It provides information on statutory guidance, briefing circulars, professional training and links to local businesses).
- 2.2 The following key documents are available to download via the websites on the schools and learning webpages and the Warwickshire Education Services website (which is part of the traded support services offered to schools) (see legal service page);

- (a) New Schools CSOs – in force from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008.
- (b) Main summary of changes document.
- (c) Procurement of new build/refurbishments flow chart.
- (d) Procurement of catering/cleaning grounds maintenance flow chart.
- (e) Procurement of equipment/goods flow chart.
- (f) TUPE guidance note.
- (g) Procurement guidance for staff.
- (h) Procurement guidance for governors and head teachers.

2.3 In addition to this, Multi-Agency Commissioning team within CYP&F Directorate and Legal Services are available to support and advise schools.

2.4 During July and August 2008 schools and governors were informed by means of a letter to schools and an article in the governors' monthly briefing newsletter about the new CSOfS coming into effect for 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008.

2.5 Since then the documents have been available on the websites with the plan to support this with a training package.

### **3. Training Package**

3.1 Multi-Agency Commissioning and Legal Services have planned a series of half-day training workshops for all staff involved in contracting in schools from March 2009.

3.2 This has been informed by the feedback from some schools.

3.3 The presentation and training will cover the key elements and the main changes in the New Contract Standing Orders.

3.4 The training is targeted at all contracting staff, headteachers and governors who have a role and responsibility in contracting services and goods.

3.5 It will have a sustainable approach and build on the annual induction training programmes for new headteachers and governors.

### **4. Key Development**

4.1 The DCSF have recruited National Schools Procurement Officers across the region to support schools to improve their procurement of goods/services for at least 2 to 3 years.

4.2 Debra Whittaker, who is the designated National Schools Procurement Officer for Warwickshire, has already established links with the Children, Young People and Families Directorate and has a 'hotdesk' available to use within the Multi-Agency Commissioning Team.

### **5. Way Forward**

5.1 The feedback from the training in March 2009 should inform the sustainable approach in the near future.

- 5.2 The National Schools Procurement Officer will be working with the Children, Young People and Families Directorate to find synergies in supporting schools when procuring services and goods.
- 5.3 Internal Audit is currently contacting a random selection of schools to audit the application of the new Contract Standing Orders for Schools. The results will be reported to the Audit and Standards Committee in July 2009.

## **6. Summary**

- 6.1 In summary the New Contract Standing Orders for Schools is now operational and accessible via the website.
- 6.2 A series of training workshops has been scheduled from March 2009 across the County.
- 6.3 The County Council will offer a sustainable approach to ensure headteachers, governors and Contracting staff are informed about their roles and responsibilities when procuring and contracting services and goods.
- 6.4 Links with the Schools National Procurement programme has been developed to enhance the improvements, in line with Gershon's Efficiency agenda.
- 6.5 Internal Audit will be reporting on their research into the application of CSOfS in schools to the Audit and Standards Committee in June 2009 and further work can be identified from this report.

## **7. Recommendation**

That the Audit and Standards Committee considers the progress made to date and endorses the proposals for the way forward.

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12<sup>th</sup> February 2009