



West Lothian
Council

EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

TOUGH CHOICES ED 23 REVIEW OF SCHOOL SUPPORT FUNCTIONS

REPORT BY HEAD OF SERVICE – SCHOOLS WITH EDUCATION SUPPORT

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Panel on the proposal for phase two of the implementation of the Review of School Support Functions (ED23) in line with the required budget efficiency for financial year 2012/13 and to agree to progress these proposals to the Education Executive.

B. RECOMMENDATION

The Panel is asked to consider the content of this report and present the following recommendations to the Education Executive:

1. To note the implementation of the Area Business Manager (ABS) model of school support based on 11 geographic school clusters was undertaken during school session 2011/12 – phase 1.
2. To note that the revised arrangements were evaluated after 6 months through key stakeholder engagement to inform phase 2 of revised school support.
3. To agree to implement the phase 2 to ensure appropriate school support arrangements as outlined within this report and to undertake a further review in one year.
4. To note that implementation of these recommendations will deliver the required efficiency for financial year 2012/13.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values

- Focusing on our customer's needs
- Being open, honest and accountable
- Providing equality of opportunities
- Developing employees
- Making best use of our resources
- Working in partnership

II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Education Services requires to reduce the level of resources deployed to school support functions in order to realign service requirements and available resources. Council's Workforce Management Policies and Procedures.
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	N/A
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	N/A
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	N/A
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Tough Choices (ED23) required an efficiency for financial year 2011/12 of £175,000. Due to staff turnover, an efficiency of £250,000 was achieved in 2011/12. A further efficiency in financial year 2012/13 of £100,000 is required to achieve the overall total - £350,000.
VII	Consideration at PDSP	
VIII	Other Consultations	<p>In early 2011, a short life working group (SLWG) developed the new model of school support with membership comprising Head Teacher, Business Support Manager, and Administrative Officer representatives from primary and secondary school sectors and officers from relevant corporate services (Human Resources, Finance Services and Health and Safety). The Trade Unions and Professional Associations were also invited to participate but were unable to attend the meetings. They have therefore received copies of all documentation and notes of meetings. The Strategic Resource Manager chaired the SLWG.</p> <p>Following representations from stakeholders during the consultation process, undertaken through the SLWG and management meetings, transition arrangements were developed to assist effective implementation and mitigate risks to service provision.</p>

Review meetings with all stakeholders have been held between August–December 2011 chaired by the Head of Education/Strategic Resource Manager to monitor and review the implementation and to inform the next phase of the new arrangements for school support.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

1 Introduction

West Lothian Council agreed at the meeting on 11 January 2011 to implement ED 23, Review of School Support functions in order to achieve a budget reduction of £175,000 in financial year 2011/12. On 11 January 2012, West Lothian Council agreed a further efficiency of £175,000 for financial year 2012/13 in relation to school support functions i.e. full implementation of ED23.

Due to staff turnover, an efficiency of £250,000 was achieved in 2011/12. A further efficiency in financial year 2012/13 of £100,000 is required to achieve the overall total - £350,000.

Given the financial position, there is a continual need to review all support functions and ensure that service requirements can be met in the most efficient manner, removing duplication, streamlining systems and optimising the business benefits of new technology. ED23 sought to achieve this through a review of school support functions.

2 Background

The review of school support functions focused on the most efficient use of available resources. In particular the Short Life Working Group formed in 2011 looked at what functions could most efficiently be undertaken at school level, those that could more appropriately be provided at area level and those that could be delivered through a corporate resource working across all schools. The review therefore impacted on school sectors and required consideration of corporate support functions.

3 Area Business Manager Model

The following model was implemented from August 2011 as agreed by the Education Executive in early 2011:

- An Area Business Support Model (ABS) based on the 11 **geographic school clusters**.
- The ABS Manager is **based in the secondary school** and provides a business management support service to the other schools in the local area.
- The ABS Manager is **deployed** approximately 70% within the secondary school with the balance available to provide support for the other local schools. In order to ensure that all schools receive the required service from the ABS Manager, it is recognised that there would need to be

consistency in the role undertaken by the BSM resource since it will now operate on a cross sector basis.

- A dedicated **Health and Safety officer (Schools)** was appointed to ensure that core Health and Safety requirements are delivered across schools (e.g. risk assessments, fire risk assessments).
- **Transitional arrangements** related to the retention of 4 former Business Support Managers staff providing support across the primary school sector.
- The Strategic Resource Manager has **strategic responsibility** for the management of ABS Managers ensuring an efficient alignment with corporate services and consistency in the application of council policy.
- There is an associated review of the wider school administration/support functions across schools in order to streamline processes, optimise the benefits of information technology and remove duplication. This review started during school Session 2011/12 and will continue throughout 2012/13, linked into the new ABS Manager model.

It is recognised that the revised model removes a material element of the business support resource across schools and that it is therefore important to manage any risks through the implementation and review phases. In response to issues raised by the SLWG and feedback from managers and Head Teachers, the senior management team proposed transitional arrangements that have been in place since August 2011 and agreed to undertake a related review of the efficiency of the administrative support functions in schools.

4 **Transitional Arrangements**

Transitional arrangements were required to ensure that the new model was implemented without risk to core school requirements and to support those taking up the revised ABS role from August 2011 to March 2012.

This took the form of deployment of 4 former Business Support Managers working across the primary/ALN school sector in support of ABS Managers. In response to the feedback from stakeholders over the last six months, it is proposed that the new model will be a variant of the transitional arrangements for a further year period from 1 April 2012–31 March 2013 but at a reduced level in order to ensure that the further efficiency of £100,000 is achieved for financial year 2012/13. These support posts have been adjusted to meet business requirements .

5 **Revised Arrangements**

It is important that the new arrangements are put in place from 1 April 2012 following the Education PDSP/Executive since a member of staff will be leaving the service and suitable support must be in place to sustain service provision. The new arrangements are proposed in this context.

The revised arrangements have therefore been proposed by the Education

Senior Management Team:

- To agree the temporary post of school support **Resource Officer** to provide continued support to new arrangements for the next twelve months. Three posts would be established to meet business needs and achieve the required budget efficiency of £100,000 for 2012/13.
- The **draft job description** for this post is attached at **Appendix 1** and has been graded by Human Resources at Band F.
- The service need is for a 36 hour **contract** Monday-Friday over 41 weeks.
- That existing transition BSMs be redeployed/matched into these posts from 1 April 2012. It should be noted that two transition BSMs have requested figures for voluntary severance/early retirement and there is a business case to release them.

It is proposed that the above staff are deployed as indicated in **Appendix 2**.

The Strategic Resource Manager will monitor service delivery and a review will be undertaken with the next school session and will involve input from all stakeholders. It is anticipated that at this point a revised service delivery model will be finalised.

As noted at section 2 above, a review of the administrative/support function in schools will be continued ensure business efficiency is optimised to support the new school support. It is anticipated that there is scope for further efficiencies that could support the new model and sustain high quality service provision for schools.

E. CONCLUSION

There is a need to ensure high quality school support provision and deliver the financial efficiency detailed in Tough Choices ED 23. The new model for school support will be operated for the next financial year and evaluated to ensure that business needs are met within available resources. Continued review of school administration will be undertaken to ensure that support services are efficient and fit for purpose.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Tough Choices Consultation reports to the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel – 23 and 24 August 2010.

Tough Choices report to the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel – 28 October 2010.

Tough Choices report to the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel – 15 March 2011.

Appendices 2

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