



Schools Governance – SOFA and Scheme for Financing Schools

Report to:	Schools Forum
Date of Meeting(s):	11 December 2025
Report of:	Colette Dutton: Director Children and Families
Contact Officer:	Mark Rotheram – Strategic Finance Manager Kirsten Reid – Group Finance Manager
Summary:	To provide details of the updated SOFA and Scheme for Financing Schools revised for change of finance system, procurement rules and formatting.
Recommendation(s):	For Schools Forum members to note the contents of the report
Implications: What are the financial implications? What are the staffing implications?	Contained within the report. There are no currently identified staffing implications resulting from this report.
Risks	Contained within the report.

Please list any appendices:

Appendix 1 SOFA

Appendix 2 Wigan Scheme for Financing Schools

1. The Scheme of Financial Administration and Wigan Scheme for Financing Schools

- 1.1 The Scheme for Financing Schools sets out the financial relationship between the local authority and the maintained schools which it funds. It contains requirements relating to financial management and associated issues, which are binding on both the local authority and on the schools.
- 1.2 Any proposed revisions to the scheme are required to be presented at Schools Forum, for approval by members representing maintained schools. The purpose of this report is to summarise the proposed updates to the Local Scheme (including directed revisions from the Secretary of State).
- 1.3 The Scheme of Financial Administration (SOFA) reflects the advice and guidance from Wigan Council to the schools. This document is used by schools to agree roles, responsibilities and determine limits of the authority agreed for financial administration. It cover the school's management of the delegated budget, the unofficial funds and also the governors' finances in aided schools. Each school updates their SOFA for its own particular requirements.

2. SOFA updates

- 2.1 The revised SOFA has been included in full in Appendix 1 to this report. Outlined below are the key changes made to the scheme and the reasons behind these changes.

Annex D School Contract standing orders section - 4. Procurement requirements and financial thresholds

Following the regulatory changes to procurement Table 1 setting out the procurement routes has been updated to reflect Wigan Council's revised financial thresholds and procurement requirements.

9. Financial procedures and controls, 9.1, 9.2, 9.5, 9.10, 9.11, 9.21, 9.22, 11. Arbor system reconciliation, 11.4 14. Agresso/Arbor reconciliation, 14.1, Annex B 7.6,

The Wigan Council schools no longer use SIMS FMS6 as the main schools financial system as the contracts ceased on 31 March 2025. Using the procurement system a new contract was approved with Arbor Education Finance, (Arbor) as the preferred finance system to be used in Wigan LA schools. The SOFA has been updated to reflect this change.

Progress with Unity

The template for communications for Wigan Council has been updated, and the full report has been revised to reflect the corporate identity changes.

3. The Wigan Scheme for Financing Schools

- 3.1 The revised Wigan Scheme for Financing School has been included in full in Appendix 2 to this report. Outlined below are the key changes made to the scheme and the reasons behind these changes.

2.2 Basis of Accounting

The Wigan Council schools no longer use SIMS FMS6 as the main schools financial system as the contracts ceased on 31 March 2025. Using the procurement system a new contract was approved with Arbor Education Finance, (Arbor) as the preferred finance system to be used in Wigan LA schools. The Scheme for Financing Schools has been updated to reflect this change.

Progress with Unity

The template for communications for Wigan Council has been updated, and the full report has been revised to reflect the corporate identity changes.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 Schools forum members are requested to note and approve the changes to
- a) the Scheme of Financial Administration and
 - b) the Scheme for Financing Schools