

VALUABLE LESSONS ACTION PLAN – SCHOOL GOVERNORS

Ref	Audit Commission requirements	What do we do now?	Action required	Who responsible	Timescale
1.	Supporting and challenging the school				
1.1	How much time does your finance committee spend on value for money?				
1.2	How can you improve the consideration of value for money by the finance committee?				
1.3	How well does your finance committee challenge the head teacher on value for money?				
1.4	How does the finance committee keep the full governing body informed about its decisions?				
1.5	How well does the full governing body understand them?				
1.6	What information on value for money have you made available to staff, parents and pupils?				
2.	Ensuring the school has considered the financial implications of its plan				
2.1	How well do the spending patterns in your school reflect the school's development plan and overall vision?				
2.2	How well does the school development plan cover staff costs?				
2.3	How are you using this information to challenge your school on the use of its funding?				
2.4	How does the three-year financial				

	plan assess potential changes in pupil numbers or major costs?				
2.5	What contingency arrangements does it include?				
2.6	How will you know if the assumptions in the plan prove to be too optimistic?				
3.	Reviewing the school's financial balance				
3.1	Is your school's surplus balance in excess of the recommended level?				
3.2	If so, what is the school's plan to reduce the balance?				
3.3	How confident are you that the plan will reduce the balance?				
3.4	Is the school on track to reduce the surplus this year?				
3.5	School balances can only be spent once; can you be sure that your balance is not committed to recurring spending?				
3.6	Does your school have a deficit management plan?				
3.7	How will you achieve it?				
4.	Supporting the school in purchasing goods and services				
4.1	How well do the goods and services that your school buys meet your requirements?				
4.2	If they do not, has your school considered alternatives?				
4.3	Which goods and services cost the school most and which does the school spend more on than other schools?				

4.4	Has the school reviewed whether there are better or cheaper alternatives?				
4.5	Is your school reviewing the quality and cost of each individual service bought from the council annually?				
4.6	How is the school using technology, including electronic procurement, to minimise the cost of purchasing its goods and services?				
4.7	How do you know that: The financial limits on buying decisions made by the head teacher, and other school staff, are appropriate?				
4.8	You have purchasing thresholds over which quotations or tenders must be sought?				
4.9	You have effective separation of duties between the authorisation and processing of purchasing decisions?				
4.10	There is an audit trail for all major buying decisions?				
4.11	Has your school made savings by using goods and services more efficiently?				
4.12	How can your school use goods or services more efficiently to reduce costs?				
5.	Ensuring the school uses the workforce to best effect				

	<i>For existing staff</i>				
5.1	How well does the pattern of staff deployment follow your school's vision and the priorities outlined in the school development plan?				
5.2	How do you ensure this happens?				
5.3	How well does the workforce deployment by subject or year group match your school's priorities?				
5.4	How well does your school understand the cost of changes to the breadth of the curriculum or class structures?				
5.5	To what extent is the current, or desired, curriculum offer affordable?				
5.6	If it is unaffordable, what options for working with other schools have you considered?				
	<i>For new posts</i>				
5.7	How well does your school understand the long-term financial consequences of creating a new post?				
5.8	How does any proposed new post support the school's vision and school development plan?				
5.9	Does the school know from which budget a new post will be funded?				

	Absence cover				
5.10	How has the school assessed the value for money of different supply and cover staff arrangements and any temporary staff?				
5.11	What options has it explored?				
6.	Encouraging collaborative working with other schools				
6.1	Have you challenged your school to consider buying goods and services or carry out joint training with other schools?				
6.2	What opportunities are there to save money by sharing teaching or non teaching staff with other schools?				
6.3	What are the opportunities to buy or sell specialist staff skills between local schools?				
6.4	Has your school reviewed the costs and benefits of federation or clustering with other schools to achieve possible economies of scale?				
6.5	What did it find?				
7.	Using financial information to inform decision making				
7.1	How well do you understand the financial reports and performance data you receive?				
7.2	How do they help you to make decisions about economy and efficiency?				
7.3	Do you know which areas of spending in your school are				

	higher than in a similar school?				
7.4	And in which areas is it lower?				
7.5	Do you know why?				
7.6	What savings has the school made in the last year?				
7.7	What further savings can the school make this year?				
7.8	What was the cost to your school of improving outcomes?				
7.9	What will the school's future improvement plans cost?				