

<b>West Berkshire Schools' Forum</b>	
<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>School Financial Value Standard 2012-13</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> June 2013</b>
<b>Contact Officer(s)</b>	<b>Clare Warren</b>
<b>For Discussion</b>	

## **1. Summary**

1.1 All schools had submitted a School Financial Value Standard (SFVS) assessment by the end of April 2013. Seven had to be chased after the Easter holidays on 16<sup>th</sup> April (a further four had submitted unsigned copies). Of these seven, four schools were sent a reminder letter from the Head of Finance.

1.2 Generally the schools seem to have taken on board the training and the Best Practice Example and the majority gave quite good detail. It would appear that most governors have used this as was intended, as a self-assessment tool to develop their statutory role of financial management.

1.3 20 schools had submitted a draft copy for review and the majority of feedback suggestions were incorporated into the final submission.

1.4 Two schools submitted a revised signed version following feedback/audit comments on their original signed submissions.

1.5 Nine schools were submitting an SFVS for the second year running. Most showed some progress against previously identified actions.

## **2. Number of responses**

2.1 In total 69 SFVS for the 74 WBC schools were submitted with the five Federations only submitting one SFVS for both schools as required.

2.2 Maintained nurseries and special schools are included in the total but the PRUs are not required to submit an SFVS until March 2014 to reflect the change in their funding.

2.3 The responses to the 23 questions were:

Type of response	Number of schools	Number of responses	% Average response
Yes	69	1,362	85.8
No (including 2 N/A)	16	35	2.3
In Part	51	189	11.9

16 schools responded with 23 'Yes' including two secondary schools.

### 3. Quality of responses

3.1 Each SFVS was reviewed and classified as:

- Poor: No dates and very few details, generally listed documents only
- OK: Some details but no dates and a few key details not commented on
- Good: Mostly gave dates and quite a bit of detail
- Very Good: Included dates and enough detail to evidence that clear, up-to-date processes were in place

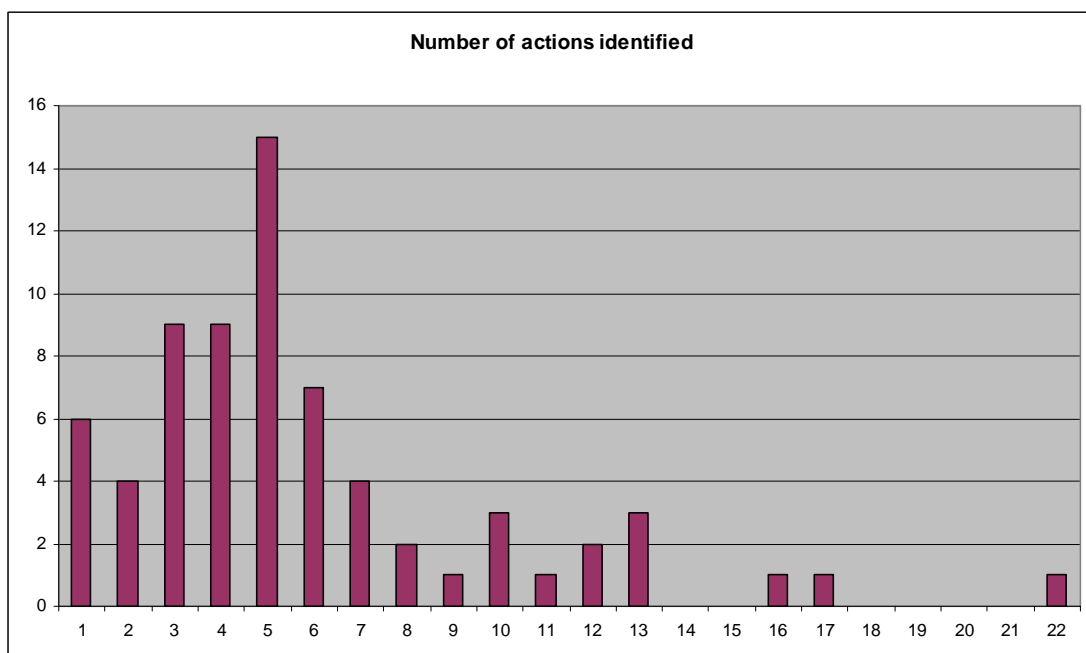
3.2 This was very much an arbitrary classification and given that the reviews took place over two months may have slightly changed over time.

3.3 Of the 69 SFVS responses made:

Classification	Number
Poor	8
OK	11
Good	40
Very Good	10

### 4. Number of actions identified

4.1 In total 337 actions were identified by schools. It was felt that generally governors were very open about what they needed to improve on which can be seen by the spread in the number of actions. The most actions identified by a school were 22 as can be seen below in the chart of the incidence of actions.



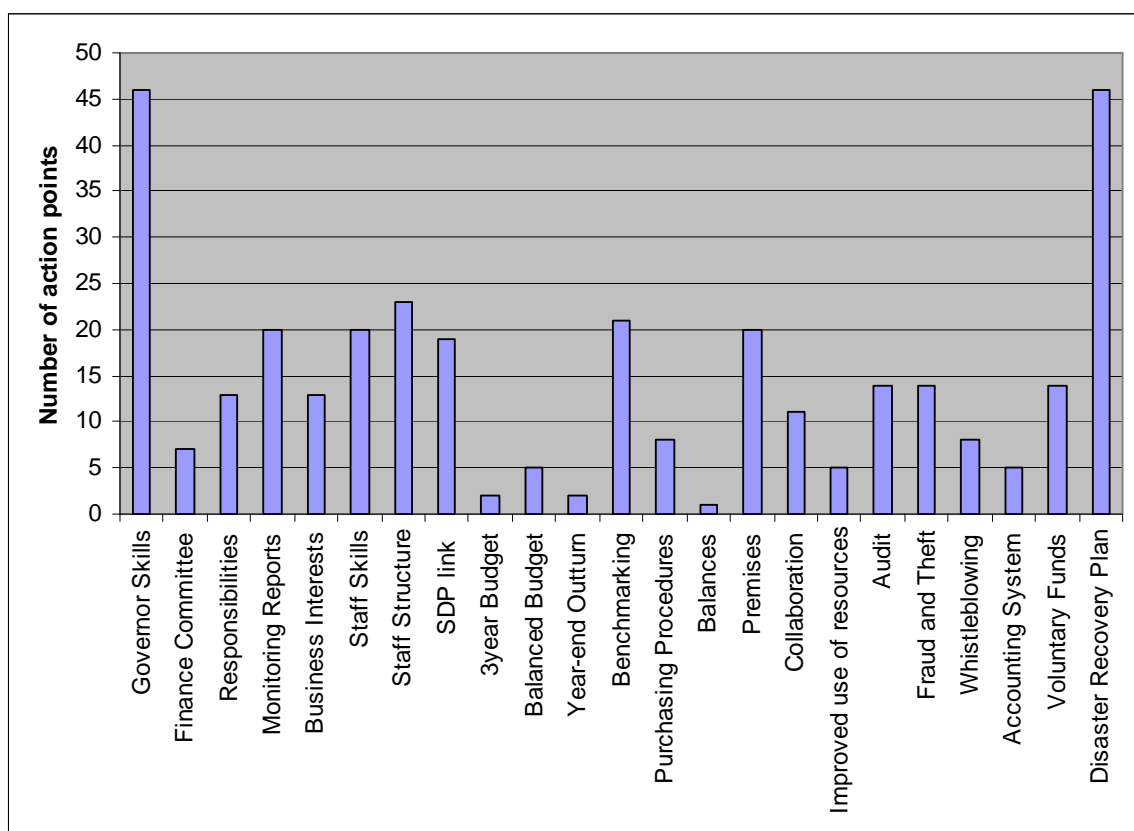
4.2 The average number of actions identified was five. Where one action addressed two questions this was counted as two to get a clear understanding of where governors were taking action.

4.3 Some of the schools who responded 'Yes' to all 23 questions still had identified some action points. Only six schools had no action points.

## 5. Types of actions identified

5.1 All but one school summarised their actions in Section E, the majority with clear owners and timelines, although often the owner was the SBM/FO.

5.2 The questions to which actions were identified are summarised on the chart below:



5.3 Clearly governors felt they could do more on training and on the final question with regards to asset registers and the Critical Incidence Plan.

5.4 These statistics also bear out our experience of questions being raised in training on staff structure and premises planning but what was also surprising was the number identifying benchmarking for further work

5.5 Probably the weakest responses were with regards to staff structure. Generally it is reviewed as part of the SDP or budget but it was not always clear how this was presented. Our Best Practice would be an actual organisation chart and we will provide an example on future training courses.

5.6 The question on voluntary funds was also quite weak as whilst the date of audit was often provided it was not clear what period had been audited and

whether this had been presented to governors. This was rarely within the recommended guidance note of 3 months from the end of the financial year.

## 6. Impact on training

6.1 55 schools attended some sort of training, mostly in the three training sessions that were held. Of the 14 that did not attend training, four schools did send in a draft for review.

6.2 Of the ten that did not do any training, the average score for quality was 2.7 (OK) compared to the rest which was 2.2 (Good) - where 1 was very good and 4 was poor.

6.3 On average the responses for the two groups were:

	Attended training	Did not attend
Yes	19.7	20.1
No	0.6	0.1
In Part	2.7	2.8
Number of actions	5.1	3.8

6.4 Generally training was very well received and the governors seemed to appreciate the course structure which allowed them time for group discussions. The training courses scored overall between 83% to 87%.

## 7. Follow up

7.1 Schools that submitted an SFVS with a number of action plans have already been offered support. This was also mentioned on an email to the Chairs of Governors thanking them for their submissions sent on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2013.

7.2 The timing of future SFVS submissions was also mentioned in this email to encourage them to complete a review of the SFVS before March 2014.

7.3 We have also informed them that, in future, training with regards to the SFVS would be incorporated into the Role of the Finance Governor training.

7.4 Audit has also been informed where concerns were identified regarding responses e.g. out of date documents. The majority of schools flagged to audit are already on the 2013/14 audit programme. The remainder will be in the 2014/15 audit programme.

## 8. Conclusion

8.1 Overall the process seems to have worked well.

8.2 The Best Practice Example seems to have helped schools consider what should be included. However a future version should perhaps include a table of documents to avoid repetition as well as include references to Pupil Premium tracking and the Scheme for Financing Schools.

8.3 Training, as part of the Role of the Finance Governor, should continue to emphasise staff structure, premises plans, training and Critical Incidence Plans but should also include benchmarking.

8.4 It should consider whether a template for staff structure/premises plan should be developed. This should take place in the autumn based on the audit team's findings for audits taking place this summer.

8.5 Finally for next year's submission the progress against actions will be key.