

**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
SCHOOLS FORUM**

11 February 2015

AGENDA ITEM

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ENERGY MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 To update the Forum on matters relating to Energy Management issues.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The Energy Management Team are currently working on several contracts and reports relating to Schools and are providing an update on these here.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 The Forum is invited to note and comment upon the report.

4. Background

- 4.1 The Energy Management Team (EMT) manage various contracts for the acquisition of schools and non-schools energy requirements and have presented an update to Forum on previous occasions, below is a brief summary of the main areas we are currently working on.

Current Contract Billing Gaps Reporting (2012 – onwards)

As in previous years the team are currently finalising a mailing to all schools to identify any gaps in their gas and electricity billing to aid with accruals for year end. These reports will be sent out via email to the head@ address in the next few days.

With regard to the current gas and electricity contracts there are less than 10% of sites that are reporting billing issues. The industry norm for contracts of this size is 20%. To achieve this positive result the team have proactively chased through issues with suppliers, collected manual meter reads from schools and have increased the validation checks on the bills

prior to payment being made. EMT are working on reducing this figure going forward and hope to produce more regular reports detailing billing issues for individual schools.

If schools have queries, or wish to check their billing data, they can use their online look up facility on 'Systems Link' <http://www.systems-link.co.uk/webreports3>. If they cannot find the information required they should email the Energy Management Team with the full details of their issue on energy.management@hertfordshire.gov.uk. This mailbox is monitored daily and the query will be picked up and dealt with as soon as possible.

Historic Gaps Reporting – British Gas (pre Oct 2012)

Despite the best efforts of the EMT there remain a small number of sites with ongoing queries relating to gas consumption made in this period. The affected schools are aware but British Gas appear reluctant to respond to any and all attempts to engage them with regard to resolving these issues.

The EMT are currently investigating whether or not schools can legally refuse to pay any of the outstanding invoices or offer a reduced settlement fee. Whilst these disputes remain ongoing the EMT will continue to advise schools of the need to maintain these accruals. Any update to this situation will be notified immediately to the schools concerned.

Gas & Electricity AMR Contracts

A document relating to procurement of the new AMR contract, due to start in April 2015, was seen by Forum in October 2014. Since then positive responses from nearly 170 schools have been received advising that they would be interested in carrying on with the contract. The EMT are currently finalising the contract data with the suppliers and plan to contact these interested schools prior to the end of February, with more exact details on price and contract length, with a view to finalising numbers in early March.

Gas and Electricity Supply Contracts

In late 2014 the EMT wrote to all schools to ask if they wished to join the new supply contract to run for 4 years from September 2016. Over 98% of schools have agreed to be part of the new contract and the EMT are currently working on finalising the new contract details. As soon as this is complete further emails will be despatched advising all schools of the new contract details.

This email will also include details of the updated SLA charges. These have not increased since 2011 and, as reported previously, will be in line with the 2014/15 budget inflation factor of 1.5%. As a guide, an approximate SLA cost for a 2FE primary will be £25 per month or £300 per year.

Going Forward

Over the last few years EMT have worked hard to deliver a better service to schools by providing more information in a more timely fashion, and by attempting to engage earlier with regard to any change in energy related matters.

In late Autumn 2014 the team met with the Financial Services to Schools team of Herts for Learning to discuss potential service improvements to assist them in supporting schools. We will progress these ideas during the Spring term. If any member of Forum has any ideas on how we could improve or add to our services to schools we would be pleased to discuss them, either today if you have time or via email to our team address:-

energy.management@hertfordshire.gov.uk

We look forward to hearing from you.