

# **SCHOOL OPINION OF THE VALUE OF THE QUALITY OF CENTRAL LEA SERVICES PROVIDED BY HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

**Report By: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

## **Wards Affected**

Countywide.

## **Purpose**

1. To provide information about the results from the survey of schools carried out in the spring term 2004.

## **Financial Implications**

2. None.

## **Report**

3. During the early part of the spring term 2004, all schools in the County were asked to give their assessment of the quality and responsiveness of the centrally managed LEA services provided by the Council. A copy of the letter and survey form are attached at Appendix 1.
4. The level of response to the survey has been substantial, with 80% of all schools having responded by 5th March.
5. The detailed responses received from schools have been aggregated, according to the scoring system used, ranging from 1 (the lowest rating) and 5 (the highest or most favourable rating). Appendix 2 provides a summary for each of the 43 services included in the survey. Taking all 43 LEA services together, the overall rating for centrally managed services for schools was 3.95, meaning that schools generally regarded LEA services as good.
6. Among the most encouraging of the results were those shown for the LMS Budget Support Service (4.5) and Education Personnel (4.39). The significant point to note in both cases is that schools were able to acknowledge the quality of the information, advice and support they receive from the Budget Support Service and Personnel, notwithstanding the underlying budget and personnel difficulties with which they were dealing.

## Comparison with earlier surveys

7. There are 26 areas which can be broadly compared across the 2000 Audit Commission and the 2004 Education Directorate surveys (Appendix 3). Of these 26 areas 88% (23) show improvement in satisfaction levels as expressed by schools. Those services showing the greatest improvement in satisfaction levels are: Educational Psychology (+1.0), Payroll Services (+0.95), Learning Support Services (+0.83) and the Pupil Referral Service (+0.73). The service area to show the largest decrease in satisfaction levels is Support for Pupil Performance Data (-0.45).
8. Although surveys of individual services are carried out more frequently, overall surveys are held only occasionally. That decision has been based on experience – for example, when a survey carried out in 2002 by the Audit Commission produced a response rate of only 10% - and in response to requests from schools to consider the effects on their workload.
9. The next survey to be carried out will be the survey that has to be conducted by the Audit Commission as part of the Ofsted inspection of the Council in its capacity as Local Education Authority. That inspection is now expected to take place in 2005, with the Audit Commission survey preceding it to provide basic information.

## RECOMMENDATION

**THAT the Committee note the report, and identify areas of work that they might wish to be the subject of a more detailed report at a future meeting.**

## BACKGROUND PAPERS