

## Review of systems, tools and processes for financial reporting: an update

(as at 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021)

Please see table below for action taken so far based on the feedback received from our discussion sessions with Business Managers, Headteachers, Governors and Trustees.

**Additionally, Orovia have amended the Time Out warning - you will now get 10 minutes from the first appearance of the Time Out Warning Screen to being logged out and losing your work.**

Area of Development	Comments	Action required	Update
General	There was much discussion about recharges and adjustments made centrally without notification to school - both mid-year and at year-end. This was one of the areas that has repeatedly been mentioned as part of the work done by some schools to review their variance in outturn. SBMs have also requested that more recharges be made to the 9316 suspense account - this means more journals at school level, but the consensus was that SBMs would retain control.	Finance Team to draft procedure on recharges so that SBMs know what to expect, where items will be charged, etc.	Procedure has been drafted - we need to review as a team before sending out to schools for consultation.
	All parties agreed that there was a lack of clarity on the treatment of in-year trips income/expenditure on budget monitors as well as the requirement for improved guidance on year-end processes and handling of y/e trips surpluses/deficits.	Finance Team to draft guidance on Trips to ensure clarity and consistency, including guidance on in-year trips 'housekeeping'.	Guidance has been drafted - we need to review as a team before sending out to schools.
Monitoring processes	There was consensus that the current system of monitoring was cumbersome and time-consuming, particularly the 'calculated	Request 'calculated remaining' function to be switched off with Orovia.	Orovia have confirmed that this should be a 'quick fix'. We aim to make this request to

	<p>remaining' function on Orovia, which SBMs would prefer to be switched off, to enable them to make their own adjustments.</p>		<p>remove this function at the beginning of February - after the December monitors have been marked for central and reviewed.</p> <p>Additionally, we have asked Orovia to allow us to use the adjustment column to amend the balance b/fwd from the estimate at budget setting stage to the actual position. This would avoid the need to produce a revised budget forecast and budget monitors would show the variance on the balance b/fwd from the projected balance at the time that the budget was submitted to the final y/e balances.</p>
	<p>SBMs found the Staffing elements of Orovia to be really beneficial.</p>	<p>No action required, but if Orovia cannot meet our needs for monitoring and reporting, it is important that this element of the system is considered.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
	<p>SBMs requested the ability to produce budget monitoring information using either/both cost centres and nominal codes (including reporting). Cost centre reporting was particularly highlighted for areas with</p>	<p>Discuss the options of budget monitoring at cost centre and nominal level with Orovia, paying particular regard to any functionality that might be lost and speed of</p>	<p>We have another meeting with Orovia during w/b 18<sup>th</sup> January to view a demo by Orovia of how this might work before making a final decision.</p>

	a separate funding stream such as trips, PE/sport grant or where funding is allocated to an internal budget holder	development/action.	
	SBMs find budget monitoring more time consuming due to the lack of 'split screens'. For example, to view the budgeted income and expenditure details or Employee Scenario reports without leaving the budget monitor. Being able to split screens would speed up the process.	Request urgent development of additional functionality from Orovia.	A 'quick fix' is to log on twice using 2 different browsers (E.g, Google chrome and MS Edge). (You cannot log on more than once using the same browser).
	SBMs liked the fact that the comments pulled through to from one monitor to the next.	SBMs to be encouraged to use comments to record the reasons for the outturn. This helps the central team review monitors, but can also reduce the time each monitor takes. SBMs do not need to use the full Budgeting Monitoring guidance, but use the instructions to find an effective method of monitoring that works for them and their school.	N/A
<b>Budget Monitoring reporting</b>	SBMs were less keen on the fact that Orovia was dependent upon manual downloads from PSF.	Consider use of 'SmartView' to use information from PSF.	Work still to be undertaken.
	In general, there was support of the Summary Monitoring Report, although for many, the 'calculated remaining' column on the report was confusing and the consensus was that it should be removed.	See monitoring processes above. If the function cannot be switched off, request that it be hidden from reports.	See above. We hope that we can remove the 'calculated remaining' function.
	However, the expenditure headings on the Summary Report were considered to be too	The Finance Team to suggest an improved reporting framework,	We are able to amend what goes into each heading and add up to 2

	<p>broad and more sub totals were suggested.</p>	<p>including descriptors so that it is clearer to school leaders what is included.</p>	<p>more expenditure headings quite easily, but will undertake a thorough review of CFR coding first before making changes to these headings. Will review in Spring 2021.</p>
	<p>The Ledger Code Monitoring Report was helpful in the way that comments can be shared, but it needs to be condensed to print out on far fewer pages to be useful to share.</p>	<p>Feedback to Orovia.</p>	<p>Orovia have a new reporting suite and will be updating all reports in time so that they download easily into Excel, csv and pdf format.</p>
	<p>A major issue is the poor functionality when downloading to Excel. Although it was recognised that any system used for reporting should be able to generate reports that work well without additional manipulation, there are some occasions where downloading to excel would be useful (e.g. for Federated Schools)</p>	<p>Feedback to Orovia.</p>	<p>See above. Additionally, Orovia are going to give us access to the raw data in the database which will hopefully more easily allow us to consolidate school level reports.</p>
	<p>Governors requested reporting that would highlight exceptions/key variances, although it was acknowledged that the 20-21 system of monitoring against the LGB Approved or Revised Budget was an improvement.</p>	<p>Consider use of 'SmartView' to use information from PSF.</p>	<p>Work still to be undertaken.</p>
	<p>All parties felt that there would be some benefit in a report that could give a 'snap shot of the budgetary position', although this would have limitations due to timing of income received, and</p>	<p>Consider use of 'SmartView' to use information from PSF.</p>	<p>Work on 'SmartView' still to be undertaken. However, if 'calculated remaining' function is removed, an</p>

	the different profiling of expenditure. Most also felt that it was the projected balance b/fwd that was helpful and any report without this would have shortcomings.		upload from PSF to Orovia will give schools a 'snap shot' that may be helpful.
<b>Timing</b>	The consensus was that governors should ideally receive up to date monitoring 6 times/year for termly governor meetings. However, it was recognised that the current system is time-consuming.	Final guidance on timings and frequency will be dependent on other actions.	Work still to be undertaken.
<b>Training/Information</b>	Some SBMs/Finance staff mentioned on-going PSF training needs.	Training/guidance could be provided via monthly Teams 'drop-in' sessions suggested on the Finance Team Business Plan rather than formal training sessions	TBC
	More training on income streams and the sharing of any tools to aid income projections was suggested.	Guidance/training on projecting income to be shared. Some training/guidance can be given through improved finance support service.	Session on budgeting & projecting income has been advertised for 4 <sup>th</sup> February.
	Other training and development will be dependent on actions taken.	To be confirmed.	TBC
<b>Quality Assurance</b>	SBMs welcomed the additional support and feedback on monitors. Finance governors were advised of the feedback forms provided as part of the monitoring checks carried out.	Feedback forms to be shared with Finance governors.	Schools to action.