**Report to Schools’ Forum 05 February 2020**

**From Amanda Whitehead – Assistant Director, Education**

# Item 10: Closure Process 2020/21

**1. Introduction**

* 1. This report provides an update on the statutory deadline for local authorities’ statutory accounts in 2020/21 with particular reference to the date Easter falls in 2021.
  2. Good Friday falls on 2 April 2021 and Easter Monday on 5 April 2021.

**2. Deadline For 2020/21 Closure of Accounts**

2.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 came into force on 1st April 2015. The regulations require local authorities in England and Wales to produce their statutory accounts by 31st July each year.

2.2 The regulations reduced the timescales to produce the statutory accounts by one month. The accounts now having to be prepared by 31st May 2021. The external auditors then have a further two months to audit the accounts.

**3. What this means?**

3.1 The local authority has a statutory duty to ensure maintained school accounts are incorporated into its accounts. To provide sufficient time to carry out this work, the school accounts will need to be closed during the first week of April.

3.2 To ensure the statutory deadlines are adhered to we will need to make the necessary arrangements to ensure the building and the systems to be available for local authority finance staff to complete the preliminary close visit.

3.4 The visits will take place between Tuesday 6 April 2021 and Friday 9 April 2021. The visit will be booked in advance to minimise any disruption, the visit typically takes one hour to complete. To avoid any delay, school staff are advised to ensure their bank reconciliation; suspense items and purchase card transactions are cleared in advance of the visit.

**4. Recommendations**

4.1 Schools’ Forum is asked to:

a) note the contents of this report;

b) ensure that the head teachers (maintained schools only) they represent are aware that adequate staff cover is required in each school to support the closure of accounts over Easter 2021.