

APPENDIX B - RESPONSE TO ACTION POINTS

AUDIT COMMITTEE	
29 JUNE 2015	PUBLIC

1. External Audit: Draft Audit Plan 2014 / 2015
2. Risk Management: Strategic Risks

ACTION – 16 March 2015

1. Audit Committee to receive an update as to what rights the Council has to audit or intervene in the financial management at Free Schools or Academies.
2. Audit Committee to receive further information with regards to the comparisons between Free Schools and Academies and their rules around school admissions policy.

Contact Officer (s)	Jonathan Lewis – 01733 863912 Email: jonathan.lewis@peterborough.gov.uk	
---------------------	--	--

Response:

1	Council's Right of Intervention of Financial Management at Free Schools or Academies
1.1	The Local Authority (LA) has no rights to audit or intervene in the financial management of free Schools or Academies. The Council does however, have good co-operation from the financial leads in these schools in the City by attending the schools finance manager / bursars group, where good financial management practices are discussed. Where the LA has concerns over financial management, these can be raised directly with the Education Funding Agency (who have direct financial responsibility). Academies and Free Schools are required to publish accounts and the Council does monitor these from a perspective of understanding the schools capacity and the quality of their leadership – this helps inform the Council's judgement for school improvement. In response to national concerns around financial management in academies, the Council have decided as a Local Authority, to issue Peterborough schools with a gifts and hospitality policy, which schools can tailor for their position. A copy of the G&H Policy can be found at Appendix C. The Policy has been adopted by many of the Academies in the City following the high profile issues at Sawtry Village College.
2	Free Schools and Academies School Admissions Policy
2.1	The new schools network, which is attached at Appendix D, outlines the key differences between the various types of schools. Admissions for all schools are governed by the admissions code of practice which is legislative and

owned by the Department for Education. Academies and Free Schools are required to meet these requirements. The Council monitors their admission arrangements closely and all work as part of the Council's co-ordinated admissions system. To strengthen the Council's challenge in this area, there was a re-established admissions forum implemented (no longer a statutory requirement) to support monitoring admissions, which includes academy representatives.