

Dudley Schools Forum – 8th July 2014

Report of the Interim Director of Children’s Services

Feedback on the Consultation on School Funding Arrangements and Changes for 2015/16

Purpose of Report

1. To report consultation feedback in order that Schools Forum can approve the Interim Director of Children’s Services proposed changes to the school funding arrangements for mainstream schools prior to implementation for the 2015/16 financial year.

Budget Working Group Discussed

2. Yes – .2 July 2014.

Schools Forum Role and Responsibilities

3. The Director of Children’s Service is responsible for proposing and deciding on changes to the local funding formulae for Dudley schools. As part of this process, Schools Forum must be consulted and it is normal practice to discuss the proposals with Headteachers Consultative Forum – Budget Working Group.
4. Whilst the Director’s decision on this matter is final, Schools Forum members (excluding non school members other than the representative of the early years providers) are invited to vote in respect of the proposed changes before a final decision is reached.
5. The Schools Finance and Early Years (England) Regulations 2013 at Regulation 9 prescribes that for determining the budget shares etc for certain maintained schools and early the local authority must consult their schools forum and schools maintained by the authority of any proposed changes in relation to the factors and criteria taken into account, and the methods, principles and rules adopted.
6. The Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012 at Regulation 8(10) prescribe that non-schools members, other than those who represent early years providers, must not vote on matters relating to the formulae to be used by the local authority to determine the amounts to be allocated to schools and early years providers in accordance with regulations made under sections 47 and 47a of the Act.

Action for Schools Forum

7. Following a period of consultation, to approve the Interim Director of Children's Services proposed changes to the school funding arrangements for mainstream schools effective from April 2015.

Attachments to Report

8. None

Sue Coates
Senior Principal Accountant
20 June 2014

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Purpose of Report

1. To report consultation feedback in order that Schools Forum can approve the Interim Director of Children's Services proposed changes to the school funding arrangements for mainstream schools prior to implementation for the 2015/16 financial year

Background

2. At the meeting on 18 March 2014 Schools Forum were provided with details of a local consultation exercise in respect of proposed changes to school funding arrangements for mainstream schools effective from 1 April 2015.
3. The consultation covered two areas as summarised below:
 - Question 1 – Do you prefer Option 1 (25% clawback of gains) or Option 2 (no clawback of gains) in order to meet the cost of funding the Minimum Funding Guarantee in 2015/16?
 - Do you agree that any additional funding that becomes available within the school's budget should be allocated to funding for deprivation?
4. The consultation closes on 27 June 2014 and at 17 June nine responses were received as follows:
 - Five maintained primary schools.
 - Two Academy schools (secondary).
 - Two individual responses.
5. Table 1 below provides a brief summary of the responses received in respect of Questions 1 and 2 relating to proposed changes to the local school funding formula for 2015/16. A final update will be provided to Schools Forum at the meeting.

Table 1 – Questions 1 & 2 of Consultation on School Funding Arrangements and Proposed Changes for 2015-16

Qn No.	Detail	Response / Comments	Proposal
1	Do you prefer Option 1 (25% clawback of gains) or Option 2 (no clawback of gains) in order to meet the cost of funding the Minimum Funding Guarantee in 2015/16?	5 primary schools / 1 Academy (secondary) school/ 2 other –all agree. Option 2 (no clawback), 1 Academy (secondary) school – no opinion. <u>Comments:</u> <i>“We have had to give back our gains for 2 years so it is only fair that we now benefit from them - as per the intention”</i>	To remove the clawback of gains for 2015/16.
2	Do you agree that any additional funding that becomes available within the schools budget should be allocated to funding for deprivation?	5 primary schools / 2 Academy (secondary) schools / 2 other –all agree. <u>Comments:</u> <i>“The National Funding Formula will do little to increase levels of funding in Dudley. Any additional funding would be welcome but until the weightings for deprivation in the formula are increased it will fail to have any sustained impact. The decision taken when the Local Formula was changed two years ago caused huge turbulence in schools and Academies serving disadvantaged communities and continues to do so. The impact of those decisions are being felt year on year. It is immoral to leave the situation as it is and condemns another generation of disadvantaged students to an uncertain economic future.”</i>	To allocate any permanent funding that becomes available within the schools budget to funding for deprivation.

Proposal

6. The Director of Children's Service is responsible for proposing and deciding on changes to the local funding formulae for Dudley schools. As part of this process, Schools Forum must be consulted and it is normal practice to discuss the proposals with Headteachers Consultative Forum – Budget Working Group.
7. Whilst the Director's decision on this matter is final, Schools Forum members (excluding non school members other than the representative of the early years providers) are invited to vote in respect of the proposed changes outlined in Table 1 (which will be updated at the meeting to reflect the full set of consultation responses), before a final decision is reached.

Finance

8. The funding of schools is prescribed by the Department for Education (DfE) through the School Finance and Early Years (England) Regulations 2013.
9. Schools Forums are regulated by the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012.
10. From 1 April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct grant: Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

Law

11. Councils' LMS Schemes are made under Section 48 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Education Acts 1996 and 2002 also have provisions relating to school funding.

Equality Impact

12. The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy is taken into account when considering the allocation of resources.

Recommendation

13. Those Schools Forum members that are eligible to vote on this matter, which excludes the non school members other than the representative of the early year's providers, are invited to:
 - Receive an updated and final summary of the consultation responses in Table1 at the meeting and from that information vote in respect of the School Funding Reform consultation proposals recommended by the Interim Director of Children's Services.



Pauline Sharratt
Interim Director of Children's Services

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