

Schools Forum 21st October 2014

Report of the Interim Director of Children's Services

DfE Section 251 Planned Expenditure Benchmarking Data for 2014/15

Purpose of Report

1. To advise Schools Forum of the DfE's national Section 251 statistical benchmarking data relating to planned expenditure for the financial year 2014/15.

Budget Working Group Discussed

2. Yes – 15th October 2014.

Schools Forum Role and Responsibilities

3. National regulations govern the composition, constitution and procedures of Schools Forums.
4. Schools Forums generally have a consultative role. However, there are situations in which they have decision-making powers.
5. From 1st April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct Department for Education (DfE) grant: the Dedicated School Grant (DSG).
6. Schools Forum is the 'guardian' of the local Schools Budget, and its distribution among schools and other bodies, and therefore must be closely involved throughout the development process.
7. The Education Funding Agency's best practice guide advises that Schools Forum have a role in the challenge and scrutiny function whereby the Forum may be asked to agree to proposals from their local authority that will have an effect on all schools and academies in the local area. The extent to which Schools Forums can scrutinise and challenge such proposals is an important aspect of their effectiveness.
8. The Authority may consult the forum on such other matters concerning the funding of schools as they see fit.

Action for Schools Forum

9. The Section 251 benchmarking statistics are issued annually by the DfE. They relate to the planned expenditure for a particular financial year and cover all expenditure of the Local Authority; both the Dedicated Schools Grant and the Local Authority's General Grants and Income generating activities.

10. Forum should be aware of how the local authority's planned expenditure compares to other local authorities; particularly statistical and regional neighbours.

Attachments to Report

11. Section 251 Planned Expenditure Benchmarking Data for 2014/15.
- a. Appendix 1a and 1b -Year-On-Year Table – calculations and underlying data for statistical neighbours and regional neighbours, respectively.
 - b. Appendix 2a and 2b - per capita all lines net for statistical neighbours and regional neighbours, respectively.
 - c. Appendix 3a and 3b - Additional Information Table – calculations and underlying data, for statistical neighbours and regional neighbours, respectively.

Karen Cocker
Children's Services Finance Manager
6th October 2014

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Purpose of Report

1. To advise Schools Forum of the DfE's national Section 251 statistical benchmarking data relating to planned expenditure for the financial year 2014/15.

Background

2. The DfE's benchmarking tables of planned expenditure attached at Appendix 1, 2 and 3 are drawn from the published Section 251 budget statements for the 2014/15 financial year and are primarily aimed at schools forums and local authorities (LAs).
3. The benchmarking tables are published as Official Statistics as they are:
 - nationally representative;
 - a structured collection system that is part of a series; and
 - subject to sound statistical principles.
4. Some of the Department for Education's Financial Data Collection budget statement lines (also referred to as Section 251 budget statement) have been divided by population figures rather than pupil numbers. This means that in order to be more accurate in the description of the tables, all tables are called "per capita", to reflect that some lines are divided by pupil numbers, while others are divided by population.
5. This year, the information provided by LAs relating to those items of expenditure for which the LA only has responsibility towards the schools it maintains, gives full-year budgets for schools which were maintained as at 31 March 2014, irrespective of if some of these were known to be converting to academy status during the course of the year.
6. The layout of the tables mirror those published in 2013/14, showing the minimum, maximum, median and mean for each column.
7. The DfE issue a set of statistical benchmarking data to cover:
 - Year on year planned expenditure variance;
 - Net expenditure planned per capita;
 - Gross expenditure planned per capita;
 - Additional supplementary information.

Year-On-Year Table – calculations and underlying data (Appendix 1)

8. The table provides information on percentage changes in authorities' planned expenditure on education from 2013/14 to 2014/15 for selected expenditure categories.
- Schools Budget
 - ☐ High needs budget
 - ☐ Contingencies
 - LA Budget
 - ☐ Statutory / regulatory duties
 - ☐ Other strategic management
 - ☐ School improvement including Education Development Plan
 - ☐ Home to school/college transport

Per Capita Tables – calculations and underlying data (Appendix 2)

9. There are two per capita tables:
- per capita all lines gross;
 - per capita all lines net.
10. Appendix 2 relates to the per capita table net which is the most useful benchmarking indicator.
11. The table will contain each individual Section 251 budget LA Table line divided through either by:
- a count of pupils aged 3 to 19 in maintained schools only in the LA;
 - a count of pupils aged 3 to 19 in maintained schools and recoupment academies in the LA;
 - a count of pupils aged 3 to 19 in maintained schools and all academies in the LA;
 - the resident population aged 0-17 in the LA; or
 - the resident population aged 0-19 in the LA.
12. The divisor used will be the count which is most appropriate for the expenditure line.

Additional Information Table – calculations and underlying data (Appendix 3)

13. This table provides additional information for Schools Forums and authorities and draws data from a number of Section 251 tables and other sources.
- Dedicated Schools Grant
 - ☐ 2014/15 DSG Schools block unit of funding (SBUF) per pupil
 - ☐ Planned expenditure in addition to DSG in 2014/-15
 - ☐ Minimum Funding Guarantee for primary and secondary schools
 - ☐ Home to school transport: SEN transport expenditure
 - ☐ Total children looked after
 - ☐ Total safeguarding children and young people's safety

Finance

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

Law

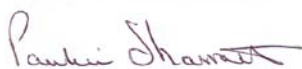
17. Councils' LMS Schemes are made under Section 48 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Education Acts 1996 and 2002 also have provisions relating to school funding.

Equality Impact

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

Recommendation

19. Schools Forum to note the recent publication of the national Section 251 statistical benchmarking data relating to planned expenditure for the financial year 2014/15, as attached at Appendix 1, 2 and 3 and highlight any issues for further discussion.



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Interim Director of Children's Services

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