

SCHOOLS FORUM AGENDA ITEM

For Action

For Information

Brief Description of Item (including the purpose / reason for presenting this for consideration by the Forum)

This report provides an update on a number of matters relating to the 2019/20 Dedicated Schools Grant and includes a summary of areas of DSG review.

Date (s) of any Previous Discussion at the Forum

The Schools Forum made its recommendations on the 2019/20 DSG on 9 January 2019.

Background / Context

See the details for consideration below.

Details of the Item for Consideration

Short Updates on Various DSG Matters

The Executive proposed to Council on 21 February 2019, un-amended, the School Forum's recommendations on the allocation of the 2019/20 DSG. These recommendations were ratified by Council. Detailed budget information was published for maintained schools and early years providers on 22 February.

Members may wish to raise for the Forum's attention any significant feedback they have received directly on the 2019/20 DSG recommendations and / or the budget information that has now been published.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) formally confirmed its approval of our Schools Block Pro-forma for 2019/20 (the primary and secondary funding formula) on 1 March.

We currently await final confirmation of the 2019/20 High Needs Block allocation. A detailed forecast of the spending position of the High Needs Block in 2019/20, including the cost of delivery of new places, will be presented to the Schools Forum in September. Interim updates will continue to be presented to each Forum meeting. Improving / managing the future year trajectory of the High Needs Block remains a key area of work to be progressed with the Schools Forum during 2019.

The reconciliation of the DSG's carry forward balances will be presented to the Schools Forum as usual in July following the 2018/19 year end closedown.

Within its recommendations, the Schools Forum established a new £250,000 Falling Rolls Fund within the Schools Block for the primary phase. Recognising the information that is required in order to finalise allocations, it is anticipated that proposals for Falling Rolls funding will be presented to the Forum in March 2020 (at the end of the 2019/20 financial year). The Schools Forum has still to conclude its discussions on place-planning and further support (for schools that are not eligible for Falling Rolls funding). It is anticipated that the Forum's sub-group will be reconvened shortly to progress these discussions.

It is expected that new allocations from the established Schools Block Growth Fund (including all new allocations for the secondary phase) will be presented to the Schools Forum in October or December, depending on the timing of the release of the October 2019 census data.

In previous reports, we have highlighted the very significant issue of the uncertainty around the protection of funding for maintained nursery schools after 2019/20. The Authority has begun discussions with the nursery schools directly on this issue. The DfE did announce on 28 February that the supplement within the DSG, which is used by local authorities to protect the per pupil funding for nursery schools at 2016/17 values, is extended until the end of the 2019/20 *academic* year. However, the longer term funding position for nursery schools is still uncertain and is now not expected to be confirmed outside the Government's autumn 2019 settlement announcements.

We are again entering a period of uncertainty. Document KG summarises the main uncertainties as they affect school and academy budget planning over 2019-2022. More immediately for the Schools Forum and the Authority, in our DSG management, is the lack of view or informed insight into the shape and value of our DSG and the National Funding Formula at April 2020. We normally begin to receive detailed information from

Details of the Item for Consideration

Government on the following's years DSG arrangements in June / July, which enables us to formulate plans for consultation, which we can then begin to discuss with schools and providers early in the autumn term. However, we are currently not clear about the Government's timetable for announcements associated with the 2019 spending review and the 2020/21 DSG. The critical DSG announcements will cover:

- Early Years Block overall settlement.
- Early Years Block nursery school protection.
- Schools Block overall settlement.
- Schools Block development of National Funding Formula at factor level including mobility, growth and PFI.
- Schools Block Minimum Funding Guarantee.
- Schools Block permitted framework for de-delegated funds.
- Schools Block flexibility for the movement of funds to the High Needs Block.
- High Needs Block overall settlement and release of damping.
- High Needs Block uplift of the Place-Plus thresholds.
- High Needs Block funding of education in hospital and medical home tuition.
- High Needs Block national re-definition of notional SEND.
- High Needs Block outcomes of the national alternative provision review.
- Central Schools Services Block historic commitments funding.
- The merger ('mainstreaming') of grant streams e.g. teacher pay grant into the DSG and the impact on baselines and protections.

The autumn 2019 spending settlement could result in quite significant changes in the funding framework and we need to be 'geared up' for busy autumn term.

Bradford DSG - Areas of Formula Funding Review

We have identified areas of formula funding that we wish to review locally for 2020/21 and, although the outcomes of these reviews will be affected by Government announcements, we aim to progress them as best as possible within our normal annual review cycle. As we have now moved to adopt National Funding Formula at local level within the Schools Block, these formula funding reviews are primarily Early Years Block and High Needs Block related.

Within the Early Years Block, most significantly, we have presented to the Schools Forum previously our intention to holistically assess and review the balance of rates of funding delivered by our Early Years Single Funding Formula, in particular the balance between the universal base rate and deprivation and SEND rates for 3&4 year olds (where we are currently using one off monies to support the value of the universal base rate and where this is not sustainable in the longer term). We intend shortly to bring together our Early Years Working Group to begin to progress this assessment and review. As is standard annual practice, we will also discuss with the EYWG whether any aspects of our EYSFF approach could be incrementally improved in 2020/21. This will include a review of the impact of the newly established Early Years SEND Inclusion Fund.

There are some key areas of review within our High Needs Block that we have already signalled, including:

- Our SEND Funding Floor mechanism for primary & secondary mainstream schools and academies.
- Our funding model for special schools and special academies.
- An incremental review of our Ranges Model approach to the funding of Top Up (Element 3) across all sectors.
- Clarification of the flow of monies related to alternative provision, including the establishment / refinement of local agreements to enable and control the flow of monies where pupils are permanently excluded from mainstream schools and academies, in support of the District's SEMH review.

Implications for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) (if any)

As set out in the report (this is an item for information)

Recommendations

The Schools Forum is asked to consider and to note the information provided in the report.

List of Supporting Appendices / Papers (where applicable)

None

Contact Officer (name, telephone number and email address)

Andrew Redding, Business Advisor (Schools)

01274 432678

andrew.redding@bradford.gov.uk