

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 asks Forum members to consider the feedback received to the consultation on our 2023/24 Schools Block formula funding arrangements and Schools Block centrally managed funds.

Date (s) of any Previous Discussion at the Forum

The consultation document and modelling was presented to the Schools Forum meeting 12 October 2022.

Background / Context

The consultation document outlined the Authority's proposals against the key decisions that are required to set Bradford's 2023/24 financial year mainstream primary and secondary funding formula arrangements. These decisions are:

1. Whether we transfer budget from Schools Block to the High Needs Block and, if we do, the value of this transfer.
2. Whether we continue to fully mirror the DfE's National Funding Formula (NFF).
3. The value (% level) of the Minimum Funding Guarantee, which can be set between 0% and positive 0.5%.
4. Whether we continue our existing local approaches to the factors that are still not covered by the National Funding Formula.
5. In light of the DfE's new recent guidance, whether we continue our existing approach to the definition of Notional SEND budgets, or whether we now take steps to review and to incrementally adjust this definition in the movement towards the 'hard' NFF.
6. How we would amend our mainstream primary and secondary funding formula, if necessary for affordability reasons, should the total cost of our formula substantially increase (and be unaffordable) when the October 2022 Census dataset is used.
7. Whether we retain, with their existing criteria and methodologies, the funds currently managed centrally within the Schools Block.

The consultation document also set out proposals for the continuation of de-delegated and other centrally managed funds (e.g. Growth Fund). These funds are discussed in more detail in Document PI. However, responses to the consultation are presented here.

Details of the Item for Consideration

Consultation & Responses

The consultation ran between 12 October and 29 November. For the first time this year, responses could be submitted electronically via a web-based survey. It was anticipated that this would help improve the number of responses that are received.

Forum members are encouraged to present to the meeting their feedback from their discussions with colleagues.

In support of the publication of the consultation document on Bradford Schools Online, School Funding Team attended the autumn term Governor Forum, BSIP, and the Primary & Secondary Business Manager Forums.

The Authority received one formal response, submitted using the web-based survey. Of the questions answered, the respondent 'strongly agreed' with the proposals that were set out in the consultation.

In presenting to various groups, the Authority did not receive any negative comments expressed in real time specifically about the proposals themselves. Some feedback expressed concerns about the general adequacy of funding in the context of rising costs.

Forum members are asked to consider whether any of the proposals should be amended in the light of feedback and / or whether further information is required in order for the Schools Forum to make its recommendations, on 11 January 2022, on the primary & secondary mainstream formula for 2023/24.

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

As set out in Document PF (DSG update).

Recommendations

- (1) The Forum is asked to consider the responses received to the consultation and whether any of the proposals on the 2023/24 primary and secondary mainstream funding formulae, or Schools Block centrally funds and criteria, should be changed in the light of these responses.
- (2) Members are asked to note that they will be asked to make final recommendations on the Schools Block formulae, and the criteria for the allocation of Schools Block central funds, on 11 January. As such, Members are asked to consider whether sufficient information has now been provided to enable these recommendations to be made.

List of Supporting Appendices / Papers (where applicable)

None

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