

## 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 Forum members with updated indicative modelling of mainstream Primary & Secondary formula funding delegated budget shares for 2024/25, using the pupil numbers taken from the October 2023 Census. This modelling is tabled only for information at this stage, prior to asking Forum members to make final recommendations on Schools Block funding on 10 January.

### **Date(s) of any Previous Discussion at the Forum**

The consultation on Primary and Secondary formula funding arrangements for 2024/25 was discussed at the last Forum meeting 11 October.

### **Background / Context**

The 2024/25 consultation document incorporated modelling:

- Using estimated October 2023 Census pupil numbers.
- Using October 2022 Census based pupil circumstances data i.e. the data (such as Free School Meals, English as an Additional Language, Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index, Low Prior Attainment) that was used to calculate actual 2023/24 allocations.
- Continuing to exactly mirror the DfE's National Funding Formula, as this exists for 2024/25, including the uplifted mandatory per pupil minimums (MFLs).
- Incorporating a positive 0.5% per pupil Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG).
- On the basis that we continue to use our current methodologies for the factors not yet included in the National Funding Formula.

Under 'Decision 6' in our consultation document, as we did this time last year, we set out the concerns we have that significant changes in pupil circumstances data between October 2023 and October 2022, such as a significant increase in the number of children recorded as eligible for Free School Meals, may affect the affordability of our proposals. We have previously discussed these concerns, and possible approaches to managing these, with the Schools Forum, and we set these out in the consultation document.

We will not have a good view of the overall affordability position until we have access to the full dataset later in December. As such, this is a matter that we will pick up with the Schools Forum on 10 January.

### **Details of the Item for Consideration**

The modelling, attached at Appendices 1a, 1b and 1c, provides Forum members with an updated view of primary and secondary mainstream school and academy indicative (estimated) core formula funding and Pupil Premium Grant allocation totals for 2024/25, now using pupil numbers taken from the October 2023 Census where these are available. However, the census data for 41 academies has not yet been released. In these cases, the modelling is still based on the previous estimates of October 2023 Census pupil numbers.

For clarity, these indicative allocations for individual schools and academies have still not been updated for changes in pupil circumstances data (e.g. Ever 6 FSM %, IDACI, EAL, Low Prior Attainment etc.) that will have been recorded in the October 2023 Census. The Census dataset will not be made available by the ESFA until later in December. Updated modelling will be presented to the Schools Forum on 10 January.

The modelling is based on the same assumptions and proposals that were used to construct the modelling, which accompanied the consultation document. These assumptions are listed above. The only difference is the use of October 2023 Census actual pupil numbers, where these are now available.

The factors that may result in variances in formula funding and Pupil Premium Grant allocations for individual schools and academies in 2024/25, not yet built into the modelling we present now, are:

- Final recommendations on the decisions for consideration, as set out in the consultation document e.g. the value of the Minimum Funding Guarantee, whether we need to make adjustments to our mirroring of the NFF to secure an affordable approach.
- Changes in individual setting pupil circumstances data, such as IDACI, FSM, EAL, SEN low prior attainment, as recorded in / based on the October 2023 Census.

### **Details of the Item for Consideration**

- Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) allocations, as these allocations will be calculated on Ever 6 FSM numbers taken with reference to the pupils on roll that were recorded in the October 2023 Census. On a like-for-like basis, schools and academies that have recorded growth in their FSM numbers between October 2022 and October 2023 should see increased PPG allocations in 2024/25, alongside increased deprivation funding through the core-funding formula.
- Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) funding rates for 2024/25 are still to be announced; critically whether these rates will increase for pay award and for inflation. This is especially critical where schools and academies allocate PPG to support staffing capacity. Modelling does not increase the rates on 2023/24 values.
- Growth Fund allocations for existing expanding schools and academies, which will be based on final confirmed October 2023 census numbers and the final base £app values within our 2024/25 mainstream funding formula.
- Any allocations that may come from the Falling Rolls Fund.

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

This is an item for information. As introduced above.

### **Recommendations**

#### **Recommended –**

- (1) The Forum is asked to note the Primary and Secondary modelling information. A further update will be provided on 10 January, when Forum Members will be asked to make final recommendations on the values of funding allocated via each formula factor.**
- (2) Members are asked to consider whether sufficient information has been provided to enable final recommendations to be taken on 10 January on the matters presented in this report.**

### **List of Supporting Appendices / Papers (where applicable)**

- Appendix 1a - Indicative Variances Analysis 2024/25 - Individual Primary School / Academy Modelling
- Appendix 1b - Indicative Variances Analysis 2024/25 - Individual Secondary School / Academy Modelling
- Appendix 1c - Indicative Variances Analysis 2024/25 - Individual All Through Schools Modelling

### **Contact Officer (name, telephone number and email address)**

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