

Schools Forum			
REPORT TITLE	School Funding Reform		
KEY DECISION	Yes	Item No.	6
CLASS	Part 1	Date	17 March 2016

1. Purpose Of The Report

To update members on the consultation document issued by the Department for Education on the 7 March 2016 on the reforms to school funding, the High Needs Funding block, the future role of Schools Forum and Local Authorities and the Education Services Grant. **This report does not look at the consultation in detail** as this is the function of the task group set up by the Forum. It does though provide a summary overview

2. Recommendation

- The Schools Forum note the report
- The Forum delegate that task of responding to the consultation to the task group

3. Overview

3.1 Schools Funding Formula

The consultation sets out the Department for Education proposals to change the school funding system to deliver what they consider a fair, transparent system where the amount of funding children attract for their schools is based on need and is consistent across the country.

This consultation is the first of 2 planned consultations and seeks views on

- the principles that underpin a national formula
- the pupil characteristics and school factors in the formula

The Department for Education are also seeking views on the overall funding system in particular their proposals to

- introduce a school-level national funding formula where the funding each pupil attracts to their school is determined nationally

- implement the formula from 2017-18, allocating funding to local authorities to distribute for the first 2 years, and then to schools directly from 2019-20
- create a central schools block for local authorities' ongoing duties
- ensure stability for schools through the minimum funding guarantee and by providing practical help, including a restructuring fund.

3.2 High Needs Block

This part of the consultation seeks views on changes to the way that high needs funding is distributed, and other ways the Department feel they can support the administration of funding for pupils and students with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities, and for those who are in alternative provision (AP). Specifically

- the overall design of a formula to fund high needs spend
- whether the formula factors are appropriate
 - Population
 - Health and disability factors
 - Low attainment
 - Deprivation factors
- how the formula should be phased in, to avoid disrupting the education of children and young people with SEN and disabilities, suggesting a 5 year period
- the ways the Department intend to help authorities address the cost pressures they face.

3.3 The consultations are in two stages. The current consultation is first stage and covers high level principles, key proposals and options on the way that high needs funding is allocated to local authorities. There are no details on the funding rates that will be attached to the formula and this will be considered in the second consultation.

3.4 Future Role Of The Local Authority

The consultation considers the future role of the local authority and proposes this should be around

- Securing sufficient school places
- Ensuring the needs of vulnerable pupils are met
- Acting a champions for all parents and families

The Local Authorities responsibility for school improvement will cease from the end of the academic year 2016/17. The Department for Education are planning to provide funding support to deliver their new strategy for school improvement and will provide details shortly on this.

3.5 **Schools Forum**

The current role of the Schools Forum will continue in 2017/18 and 2018/19. A review of the role, functions and membership of the Forum will take place to consider the long term future of the Forum.

3.6 **Education Services Grant**

The documentation talks about reducing the funding and links it to the revised role of Local Authorities. The consultation is however light on the exact details apart from the fact that some funding will move to the Dedicated Schools Grant

3.7 The consultation closes on the 17 April 2016.

4. **Response to the consultation**

A funding task group has already been set up to look at the consultation and to oversee the implementation of the changes.

The group will meet on the 18 March 2016 and the 14 April 2016 to consider the issues.

There is not another full Schools Forum meeting between now and the end of the consultation. With this in mind it is suggested that the responsibility for responding to the consultation is delegated to the task group.

The task group members are as follows but if any other members wish to join the group they are welcome.

Name	Position	School
Paul Moriarty	Headteacher	Good Shepherd
Rosamund Clarke	Governor	Perrymount
Debbie Tompkins	Headteacher	All Saints
Pat Barber	Governor	Bonus Pastor
Sara Sanbrook–Davies	Headteacher	St Bartholomew's

Yvonne Smithers,	Chief Finance Officer	Haberdashers Aske's Trust
Samantha Davies	School Business Manager	Prendergast Ladywell School
Theresa Fry	Finance Director	Bonus Pastor

5 Consultation Documents

For information the link to the consultation documents is

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/funding-policy-unit/schools-national-funding-formula>

There are number of quite detailed documents contained within this link. The following link provides an overview

https://consult.education.gov.uk/funding-policy-unit/schools-national-funding-formula/supporting_documents/Summary%20and%20case%20for%20change.pdf

6 Conclusion

It is disappointing that the current consultation is only on principles and therefore it is still not known how it will impact on schools. The second consultation will provide more details on this and will be no doubt have a much high profile.

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