

## Slough Borough Council

### 5-16 Funding Formula Schools' Consultation results.

#### Introduction

Slough Borough Council has to notify the Department for Education (DfE) of any planned changes to its funding formula by 31 October 2014. This means changes such as adding or removing one of the allowable factors, and implementing or removing the use of tools, within the formula, that ensure it is affordable. After that date, revisions can be made to unit values until mid-December.

This consultation with all schools follows a meeting held by a Task & Finish Group that consisted of headteachers and a governor with support from council officers. The Task & Finish Group looked primarily at introducing the use of Capping and Reception uplift into the formula; they are not currently part of the formula, and it is believed their introduction would lead to a fairer distribution of funding and ensure it is affordable. The group also recommended maintaining the existing factors within the formula.

#### Replies from schools

Replies to the consultation were received from the following bodies:

IQRA Primary  
Langley Grammar School  
Littledown School  
Ryvers School  
St Mary's Primary  
Wexham Court Primary  
Wexham School

Their views can be added to those of the Task & Finish Group to give a reasonably representative view from Slough schools and academies as a whole.

The questions asked are tabulated below with the replies from schools and the Trust:

#### **Question 1.**

#### **Do you agree with implementing reception uplift into the formula?**

Six of the seven replies agreed with implementing reception uplift as recommended by the Task & Finish Group.

Ryvers School gave the following response:

*As only 14 pupils in Slough would currently have been affected, it seems disproportionate to change the whole formula. Although if they were all at 1 or 2 schools it could be a significant amount of money for them.*

**Question 2.**

**Do you agree with the principles of implementing capping within the formula?**

Six of the seven replies agreed with implementing capping as recommended by the Task & Finish Group.

Ryvers School gave the following response:

*It is hard to make a judgement without knowing how many schools would be affected or what the cap would be. If the formula is being changed to become fairer, capping it because some schools have received a significant increase in funding seems wrong.*

**Question 3.**

**Do you agree that the existing factors in the formula should be maintained for 2015-16?**

All responses indicated that the existing factors should be maintained for 2015-16.

**Any Other Comments.**

*IQRA – Have concerns about the proposed capping – school funding formulas are designed to respond to identified needs, and if that need is present in the pupils in the school then it should be funded. We would also like clarification please as to where the cap would be placed, e.g. 0.5%, 5% etc?*

*Langley Grammar - As a grammar school, our funding is being severely constrained and we are losing funds for 11-16 and post-16 year on year. Our total funding position this year is approximately £140k lower than last year despite the minimum funding guarantee and transition protection for post-16. We would benefit – or rather our losses would be minimised – by the use of capping at the lowest level. We would favour capping at 2%.*

*We would also find it extremely difficult to support any changes to the unit values in the factors which would result in the further movement of funds from the secondary phase to the primary phase.*

Next Steps

Once the Chief Executive and the Commissioner for Education have agreed the formula, we will return the funding proforma to the DfE. Any surplus funding will be added to the primary and secondary basic entitlement for the purposes of this draft version of the formula. The Task and Finish Group's reasons for recommending the use of reception uplift and capping are reproduced below:

The Task and Finish Group considered the impact of introducing capping and the reception uplift into the formula. Following some modelling detailing the impact of both capping and reception uplift, and further discussions on the principles of funding all pupils and ensuring equity in funding between Slough schools, it is recommended to introduce both capping and reception uplift into the formula.

It was also recommended that the existing factors within the formula should be maintained. The DfE have made no changes to the criteria of eligibility for any of the available factors, and therefore the Task and Finish group recommend maintaining those factors that were used in the 2014-15 formula.

### Reception Uplift

Reception uplift recognises reception children that start after the October census date, but would be included in the January census date and therefore would have been funded under the “old” funding rules. The DfE calculate the estimated number and these children receive funding in the formula. In Slough for 2014-15 the estimated number of children was 14.

### Capping

The introduction of capping will ensure that rises in schools per pupil budget are capped to an affordable level. Capping gains in per pupil budgets at a level agreed by the Schools Forum will ensure reasonable increases to the budgets of each school.

The funding that is capped is recycled back into the formula through the Minimum Funding Guarantee and the AWPU factors.

By limiting the gains of schools per pupil budget this will ensure funding is distributed with a greater degree of fairness, maintains affordability within the formula, and provides greater stability in schools budgets.

No school will have a reduced budget as a result of the capping, the effect is to limit the maximum increase in a schools per pupil budget.

The Task & Finish Group will meet again before 21<sup>st</sup> January 2015 to discuss the unit values. The October 2014 data should be available for modelling for the meetings.

Atul Lad (Principal Accountant)

29 October 2013