

NATIONAL SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA 2017/18

CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM



The budget response form must be returned by:
12pm on 4th November 2016 to:
School.funding@herefordshire.gov.uk

Q1: SCHOOL FUNDING VALUES 2017/18	Yes	No
<p>Do you agree with the proposals to maintain the school funding values at the same values as 2016/17 to ensure budget stability for Herefordshire schools?</p> <p><i>Note: Business rates will be funded at cost with an expected increase of 2%. PFI costs will increase by £25,000 as approved by Schools Forum to cover contracted inflation.</i></p>	23	2
Additional Comments		
<p>Blackmarston - We would prefer to see additional funding coming into schools in 2017/18 to cover increasing cost pressures. However we are realistic and understand that there is no additional budget available at this time. So therefore realistically we have to agree to the proposals to maintain the school funding values as 2016/17.</p> <p>Ivington - We agree in principle. However, schools cannot continue to maintain the same level of service in the face of increased pressure on their budgets year on year. we are concerned that cost saving measures such as cutting back on staff will have an impact on academic achievement.</p> <p>Aylestone, Broadlands and Withington - Maintaining the 2016/17 values means all pay and cost inflation has to be absorbed by the school. While there is little choice but to accept this recommendation, pressure should be put on Central Government to demand that all inflationary increases, particularly pay factors are funded as an absolute minimum. In addition pressure should be put on Central Government to ensure the National Funding Formula recognises the increased cost of providing education in rural localities.</p> <p>Earl Mortimer College - Accept that the 2017-18 funding year will be in a holding position prior to the NFF introduction</p> <p>Weobley High and Primary - Yes, in principle. At least this gives us a baseline for budgeting/forecasting purposes. Still very unhappy having to subsidise increasing PFI costs. This seems to very much contradict the other budgeting principles outlined.</p> <p>Luston - There is no chance to do otherwise and this will be overtaken by National Funding Formula proposals for later years.</p> <p>Shobden - The governors believe this is the most sensible way forward until there has been some movement on funding the formula nationally.</p> <p>Colwall - Schools that are in receipt of the same funding whilst incurring increasing mandatory staff costs do not</p>		

have budget stability.

Ewyas Harold - I cannot think of an alternative proposal given the funding cuts.

Q2: DE-DELEGATION	Yes	No
As in previous years, it is proposed that the following services should be de-delegated for local authority maintained schools:		
A) trade union facilities Primary only – Charged at £3.50 per primary pupil	20	3
B) Ethnic minority support – secondary and primary – Charged at £1.12 per pupil, £6.60 per Ever-6 FSM pupil and £107 per EAL first year pupil.	23	2
C) free school meals administration secondary and primary - Charged at £4.51 per Ever-6 FSM pupil	24	1
D) School budgeting software licence estimated at £350 per school	25	0
<p><i>Please answer individually for each service. Please note that de-delegation will continue to apply for the above services. The impact of the ESG cuts and local authority statutory services are considered in section 5</i></p>		
<i>Additional Comments</i>		

Barrs Court - as an academy school it would be unfair of us to comment.

Earl Mortimer - Agree to current de-delegation for next year. Would welcome some assurance there will be no hidden cost relating to the budgeting software and that any support relating to the use of the software is separately visible within the Hoople or council SLAs.

Luston - I imagine that the trade union facilities will increasingly come under pressure if there is growth in academies. It would be helpful for primary schools to be told what they now get under this heading - but for this year I agree that all these areas should be regarded as de-delegated.

Ashfield Park - Trade Union facilities is the only service which questionably should not be de-delegated.

Ewyas Harold - I assume de-delegation provides a cheaper service for schools given the economies of scale that the LA can negotiate,

Q3: EDUCATION SERVICES GRANT REDUCTIONS	Yes	No
1. Do you agree with the proposals to make cuts in the council's corporate services and in education and commissioning services as follows: A) Corporate services £500K B) School Improvement fund £47k C) Increased SLA costs £53k	21	1
2. £200k School redundancies for maintained schools, do you prefer either; A) charged directly to the maintained schools that incur them; or B) top sliced from maintained schools budgets at £15 per pupil to be retained by the LA to meet costs C) Do you support the provision of loans from the local authority to help spread the cost of redundancies over a five year period?	19	5
3. £200k budget top-slice of £15 per pupil for maintained schools only to cover statutory duties carried out by the local authority	6	18
4. £200k new SLA proposals for all schools that cover safeguarding and pupil wellbeing, including data analysis	21	3
<i>If you disagree with the above proposals, please suggest alternatives that permit the council to continue to meet its statutory responsibilities on behalf of maintained schools with no Education Services Grant</i>	16	9
<i>Additional Comments</i>		

Almeley - Reluctantly, I do not see any other option unless we can change the government's philosophy on funding. The ESG provides essential support for schools, the government needs to be held to account over its actions to cut this budget. Schools have already made enormous cuts. I believe a letter should be written and signed by the LA and as many heads as possible, with the clear impact on our already deprived and underfunded area of the country. These letters should be sent to all pressure groups, MPs, the media etc. The media needs to know that despite claims that the government is protecting the Schools budget that in real terms it is being eroded. We need a huge campaign to stop a political philosophy damaging the education of the next generation.

Blackmarston - We do not agree with having to make these cuts however we recognise that this is probably the only way forward in the current climate. We recognise that these costs will have to be incurred, but also are very concerned that with no increase in school budget we will be expected again to find further funding to cover new costs.

Westfield - re (3) Schools can use their money to buy these in from elsewhere, or the council can make further cuts to its departments as has been the case elsewhere. Statutory implies that this has to be carried out, but £15 per pupil will lead to schools being potentially unable to carry out their own statutory duties safely.

Westfield re(4) Schools take greater responsibility for their own safeguarding using systems in existence, and contact social care directly where necessary. If an SLA is in place, individual schools will be able to buy if they choose.

Ivington - re 2a and 2b - it is difficult to make an informed choice without knowing how many years the top slicing would be expected to continue and the basis on which loans would be made e.g. interest rates.

Aylestone, Broadlands, Withington - While agreeing with the proposals we would like to see a higher value of corporate savings being pursued through a robust and exhaustive review of all costs. We propose that interest free loans should be available for schools to help pay redundancies. We disagree with the top-slicing from schools to pay for statutory duties. It has not been made clear exactly what services schools get for this cost which are not already covered by existing SLAs. Such top slicing cannot be sustainable, instead internal efficiencies should be further explored.

Barrs Court - There is a statutory duty for the LA to provide a service that receives safeguarding referrals.

Lea & Gorsley Goffs - I feel that schools have had plenty of warning about redundancy costs and should incur costs themselves rather than top slicing all schools.

Earl Mortimer - Corporate and other service cuts are welcomed as these could not be afforded from the school budgets. Self funding of redundancies for maintained schools is supported by EMC and the safety net of loan facilities will provide time for schools to adjust their budgets whilst paying the severance costs over a longer period. Whilst agreeing with the principle of SLA proposals, we would expect complete transparency for schools to understand precisely what is contained in each element of the SLAs to be offered and how much service schools can expect for the money paid.

Our Lady's - Q3 (1) - We do not feel that we can give an opinion on this at the moment as we do not have enough details. Q3 (4) - We would need more understanding of how this would work to enable us to give an opinion.

Weobley High and primary - Q3 (2) We strongly feel that redundancy costs should be met by schools making the redundancies rather than spread across schools who may have budgeted more efficiently. Q3 (3/4) These are clearly additional and significant costs which schools will need to address. Although we understand that there is no money, we are concerned that it is becoming increasingly impossible to run schools with such financial restraint. This cannot continue and due representation will need to be made. We are now beginning to consider options which mean that we are not fulfilling our statutory duties.

Luston - Q3(1) A - In relation to this question, we welcome the approach suggested to take £500k from Corporate Services but remain concerned about the lack of detail about what this would actually entail. Clearly, if some of this reduction leads to a shunting of pressure to other funds which could affect schools, this would be undesirable. Q3 1(B) We recognise that Herefordshire has already moved to the position being suggested by the DfE, and therefore the scope for any reductions is very limited. However, we accept that some saving can be made. Q2 A- We simply don't see how this could be achieved in small schools without significant effect on other provision. As you will be aware, a very small drop in pupil numbers could lead to the need to reduce staffing, hence we reluctantly favour B. However, it would be helpful to know in what circumstances any centrally held payments would be used and seek assurance that any redundancies occasioned by reductions in budget are fully justified and, where appropriate, supported by a curriculum analysis. In the light of the Secretary of State's recent announcement, we assume that the Authority will be pressing for a reversal of this overall reduction in ESG since it would appear that the LA must now continue with its statutory duties.

Pencombe - I cannot agree to the cost of safe guarding being charged for as it could be detrimental to a child's life. I know that this is something that other local authorities are starting to do, but what if someone slips through the net in Herefordshire because a school hasn't bought into the SLA and can not afford to spend the necessary money from the budget? This is something that ALL schools, no matter what their financial status should have access to as it is for ALL the children in Herefordshire.

Bishop's - Q3 (2) - qualifying our Yes - only if the school concerned has actively engaged with the LA and followed advice to reduce/minimise the impact of any redundancies Q3 (3) - could internal audit be an SLA? - our experience is that whilst we have been paying this we have not had anything re internal audit since 2011. Should strategic HR be an SLA given we already pay an additional SLA for HR plus the add on Trade Union Facilities or per policy payment.

Shobden - A) the governors felt there was not sufficient information to know whether these savings are sustainable and therefore to be able to provide a well informed response. (C) - The governors agreed in principle but were not entirely sure what the savings would entail. (D) - the governors were confused as this is a statutory entitlement for all schools and puts the LA into an invidious position.

Colwall - re 3 - We would like to see other options considered. Re 4 - Safeguarding is a statutory duty and should not be part of a SLA.

Eywas Harold - My impression is there is little choice in these decisions - constrained as we all seem to be by central budget cutting. Charging schools directly for redundancy costs seems preferable to top slicing because this encourages schools to plan staffing wisely. The alternative might result in a less considered approach to staffing by some schools in the knowledge that the council will pick up the redundancy tab if cutbacks become necessary.

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Name

School

Signed

Date.....

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12pm 4th November 2016.