

Schools Forum
13 January 2023
School Funding 23-24

Background to School Budget report

- DSG published on 16 December 2022
- Schools Block £123.2m
- 18 fewer pupils and £79k less grant

But compared with autumn consultation

- FSM pupils +564 (+4.3%) +£333k
- EAL pupils +245 (+26%) +£211k
- Minimum Funding Guarantee +£291k
- No capping of NFF winners +£252k
- Less savings on other factors -£181k
- Net cost increase +£906k

No money for full NFF or High Needs transfer

School Budget 2023-24

Three options considered by BWG

- A: trim NFF by 0.26%; No SEN protection
- B: trim NFF by 0.5%; Smaller SEN scheme
 - Quarter to half sized SEN protection scheme funded by £214k transfer to high needs and possible £200k contribution from high needs block dependent on budget availability as determined by Schools Forum in March
- C: trim NFF by 1%; SEN Protection scheme continues in 23-24 much as 22-23.

Option C is the preferred option of HC and BWG

- Forecast spend of SEN Protection in 22-23 is £700k and at least £750k for 23-24

School Additional Grant 2023-24

- Schools will receive £4.15m in addition to the NFF in 2023-24 i.e. +25% on £3.3m in 22-23
- Details not yet confirmed but applying +25% to 22-23 per pupil values would give +£120 primary, +£170 KS3 and +£190 KS4
- By comparison Option C – continuing with the SEN protection scheme would give schools a net increase similar to 22-23
- **i.e. Total 23-24 grant is £4.15m less transfer to high needs £0.616 = £3.53m compared with £3.3m in 22-23 and remains up by +7%.**

SEN Protection Scheme - Reminder

- Hugely supported by schools in previous years
- Funds the extra £6,000 threshold costs for SEN pupils for schools with greater than average (2.7%) of high needs pupils who receive top-ups
- 9 high and 44 primary schools receive funding
 - max primary is £72,900 for 21.6 pupils (6%)
 - max high is £71,200 for 25.9 pupils (4.9%)
- Without the scheme the impact on the most inclusive schools will be significant
- **Now at the maximum 0.5% transfer to high needs that Schools Forum can approve. We will need properly considered changes for 24-25 in any case.**
- **Need to take time to consider carefully**

Budget Working Group

- Separate report circulated to Forum
- Discussed in detail the three options
- Supported Option C i.e. the full transfer to the high needs block as the continuation of existing practice for the last 5 years
- Considers to abolish the scheme would be counter productive and lead significant increase in the DSG deficit
- Have supported the SEN protection scheme since its inception in 2014
- Update on the nurture group project – pleased and would like to see it extended if funds permit

Summary of Recommendations today

Rec 1

The recommendation is for Option C i.e.

- 1% reduction to NFF
- 0.5% transfer to the high needs block
- £616,000 to fund the SEN protection scheme same as now
- Supported by Budget Working Group on 6 Jan
- And Schools Leadership Conference on 10 Jan

Rec 2

- Continuation of growth fund for Basic need 30 places for Kingstone High and 10 places for Fairfield Year 4 of 5.

Rec 3

- Transfer of 0.5% i.e. £616k to High needs for continuation of the SEN protection scheme

Recommendations to Schools Forum

Rec 4

- Authorise minor adjustments up to £5k to balance budget

Rec5

- Inflationary increase 1.9% on central services block

Rec 6 – LA school members vote only

- De-delegation proposals for LA schools – small increase apart from new items for £6 per pupil school improvement and £1 for contingencies e.g. ET tribunal costs. Much reduced from consultation proposals

Rec 7

- Early Years – uplift by inflationary increase given by DfE i.e.
- 5.64% increase on 3 and 4 year old NEF
- 1.01% increase on 2 year old NEF
- 5.64% increase on central costs

Recommendations to Schools Forum

Rec 8

- Balanced budget be approved for 23-24 i.e. spend = income
- Unusable DSG reserve of £275,319 deficit be carried forward – this is required by Secretary of state - but auditors have asked for evidence in the past.

- High needs budget is agenda item for March Forum
- Lots of detail set out in the report
- Supported by BWG
- Any questions – before we proceed to take the recommendations