

West Berkshire Schools' Forum	
Title of Report:	School Funding Arrangements 2015/16
Date of Meeting:	9th June 2014
Contact Officer(s)	Claire White
For Discussion	

1. Arrangements and Timetable

- 1.1 On 13th March 2014, the DfE set out their proposals for school funding in 2015/16. Their consultation closed on 30th April.
- 1.2 No major changes were proposed other than the DfE allocating an additional £350m to the lowest funded local authorities. The consultation mainly dealt with how this funding should be allocated. There is no intention to move to a national funding formula in 2015/16, and the formula will remain much the same, other than a possible change to the sparsity factor.
- 1.3 Local authorities will continue to choose which factors to use out of those permitted, and at what funding rates – within specified funding bands and whatever is affordable out of its DSG funding.
- 1.4 It is possible that West Berkshire will receive some additional DSG funding, and in the exemplification using 2012 data, we receive an additional £300k.
- 1.5 We expect that the funding arrangements and regulations for 2015/16 will be released by the DfE in June. The timetable for agreeing the 2015/16 school formula will therefore be as follows:

Date	
1st July 2014	Heads Funding Group review current formula and agree a proposal on any formula changes
14th July 2014	Schools' Forum agree 15/16 formula to go out to consultation with schools
16th July to 9th September 2014	Consultation with Schools
18th September 2014	Heads Funding Group review formula in light of any comments received from schools
29th September 2014	Schools' Forum recommend the formula for 2015/16
9th October 2014	Formula for 2015/16 agreed by Council's Executive
31st October 2014	Formula for 2015/16 submitted to Education Funding Agency

2. Funding Formula Options 2015/16

2.1 It must be noted that the DfE has been very explicit in stating that the use of the DfE's "minimum funding levels" to allocate additional funding in 2015/16 is not the same as a national fair funding formula and does not reflect the minimum amount of funding any individual school needs or deserves over the long term.

2.2 It is therefore recommended that for 2015/16 no changes are made to the local formula, other than allocating any additional funding received, and correcting/tweaking any factors where there is a view that the funding is not reaching the schools it is intended for in a fair and equitable way.

2.3 If West Berkshire does receive additional funding in 2015/16, the options for its allocation (assuming it all stays in the Schools Block) are:

- Add to per pupil funding (AWPU)
- Add to lump sum
- Add to quantum of funding available for deprivation and/or notional SEN (prior attainment) if it is deemed there is a shortfall of funding in these areas.
- Reduce the cap on schools gaining funding under the new funding formula (which goes towards paying for the minimum funding guarantee which the DfE proposes will continue at -1.5% in 2015/16).
- A combination of any of the above.

2.4 Other considerations for the 2015/16 formula include:

- Use of the sparsity factor – in particular if there is an advantageous change to the parameters
- Use of exceptional premises factors (which will require a request to the Secretary of State) for rents and/or joint use of leisure facilities – we will need to hear from any schools that consider they meet the DfE criteria.

2.5 The Heads Funding Group will agree on a proposal at its next meeting, and will bring a recommendation to the next meeting of the Schools' Forum. Members of the Schools' Forum are to contact the Schools' Finance Manager by 20th June if they would like a particular option to be modelled and considered at that meeting.