

West Berkshire Schools' Forum	
Title of Report:	School Formula 2015/16
Date of Meeting:	29th September 2014
Contact Officer(s)	Claire White & Ian Pearson
For Decision	

1. Background

1.1 The Department for Education (DfE) announced the arrangements for the 2015/16 funding formula for primary and secondary schools on 17th July 2014. As expected, there are just a few minor amendments to the regulations, and the relevant proposals agreed at the Schools' Forum meeting on 14th July went out to all schools for consultation on 26th August. The consultation document is attached (Appendix A).

1.2 The consultation document sets out the changes made by the DfE and the proposals for the West Berkshire formula for 2015/16.

2. Proposal

2.1 The consultation with schools closed on 11th September. There were 2 responses to the specific proposals on the school formula for 2015/16 (questions 1 to 4). Schools were only asked to respond if they disagreed with any proposal or wanted to submit a case for exceptional premises costs to be included within the formula.

2.2 One of the responses was a comment from a small primary school (who meets the current DfE sparsity criteria) disappointed that there are no changes proposed to the sparsity factor. West Berkshire has tried through several channels to get the DfE to act upon our very valid arguments to change the distance criteria to give us the option to fund our small primary schools in a fair and equitable way. Unfortunately the DfE continues to refute these arguments and has not changed the sparsity distance criteria for 2015/16.

2.3 The second response was from The Willink, submitting a case for funding of exceptional premises costs. Appendix B contains their case.

2.4 The following recommendations for changes to the 2015/16 formula were agreed by the Heads Funding Group on 18th September:

- (1) In order to provide schools with stability to their funding for a third year, the formula factors are to remain the same as those used in 2014/15. There are no perceived anomalies that need to be

addressed, and it is felt that the current formula is as equitable and fair as it can be within the current funding regulations.

- (2) The funding cap that was placed on schools with "per pupil" funding gains since the new formula was introduced in 2013/14 is to be removed so that schools gaining funding through the new formula receive the full amount of this funding. It was expected that this cap would only be in place for two years (same as minimum funding guarantee (MFG) protection for those schools losing funding), though the MFG protection is now to be continued.
- (3) The funding rates for each formula factor are to remain the same (including the rates used for the deprivation and prior attainment factors - a change from previous years which maintained the total level of this funding block). Compared to the national averages, West Berkshire is not an outlier in the rates used for the main factors and lies close to the average. It does not make sense to attempt to pre-empt rates that a national formula may use which may be no closer to the final rates than the current rates being used by West Berkshire.
- (4) It is agreed that the case received from The Willink for joint use of leisure facilities is exceptional, and is to be submitted to the EFA for approval to use this factor in West Berkshire's formula. The funding is to be at 50% of the actual total cost, based on the last financial year the actual cost is available for and meets the exceptional criteria.
- (5) Once the 2015/16 schools block of the Dedicated Schools Grant funding allocation is known (expected mid December 2014), any shortfall in funding or additional funding available will be allocated by an adjustment to the basic per pupil rate.

2.5 The recommended formula for 2015/16 to be submitted to the Council's Executive for approval is as follows:

Factor	Rate - Primary	Rate - Secondary
Basic Entitlement per Pupil:		
Primary	£2,919	
Secondary KS3		£4,346
Secondary KS4		£4,346
Prior Attainment per eligible Pupil	£284	£2,063
Deprivation per eligible Pupil:		
Free School Meals Ever 6	£875	£670
Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI):		
IDACI Band 1	£40	£60
IDACI Band 2	£120	£180
IDACI Band 3	£240	£360
IDACI Band 4	£240	£360
IDACI Band 5	£240	£360
IDACI Band 6	£240	£360
English as an Additional Language	£345	£345

Looked After Children	Not used	Not used
Pupil Mobility	Not used	Not used
Rates - actual cost to school	Actual cost	Actual cost
Lump Sum per School	£126,400	£126,400
Sparsity	Not Used	£100,000
Split Sites	Not used	Not used
Post 16	Not used	Not used
Exceptional Premises Factor (cost in excess of 1% of total delegated funding and applies to less than 5% of schools) – joint use of leisure facilities	50% of actual cost	50% of actual cost

2.6 The only impact on individual schools will be where they are receiving minimum funding guarantee due to the original formula changes (their funding will reduce by 1.5% per pupil) or their funding gains were being capped (they will now benefit in full from the original formula changes). The exemplification in the consultation document uses current (October 2013) data. Schools' final funding allocation for 2015/16 will be based on their pupil numbers (and other relevant data) in the October 2014 census. If this changes significantly then so will their funding.

Recommendation: To recommend to the Council's Executive for approval the formula for 2015/16 as set out in this report

Appendices

Appendix A – Proposed Funding Formula for 2015/16 – Consultation Document sent to schools.

Appendix B – The Willink School – Exceptional Premises Costs