Appendix A

Schools Revenue Funding 2027/2028

Briefing & Consultation Document for Schools

October 2026

1. How to respond to this consultation

Schools are invited to submit their views on the proposals set out in this document. Please email responses to:

Mollie McQuade, Finance Business Partner <Mollie.McQuade1@westberks.gov.uk>
Please copy:
Schools.SchoolsAccountancy@westberks.gov.uk

Responses should be submitted by **6 November 2026**.

When responding, schools are encouraged to consider the impact of any proposed changes across all schools in West Berkshire and provide supporting reasons for any alternative proposals.

As final 2027/28 school budgets will depend on the October 2026 census and final funding announcements from the Department for Education (DfE), schools are encouraged to focus on the principles of funding rather than individual budget impacts.

2. Purpose of the Consultation

The purpose of this consultation is to seek schools' views on aspects of school funding that remain subject to local decision-making for 2027/28.

The consultation seeks views on:

- West Berkshire Council's proposed local funding formula.
- A possible transfer of funding from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block.
- The criteria for allocating Growth Funding.
- The criteria for allocating the Additional High Needs Fund.
- Proposed de-delegated services for maintained schools.
- The methodology used to calculate schools' Notional SEN Budgets.

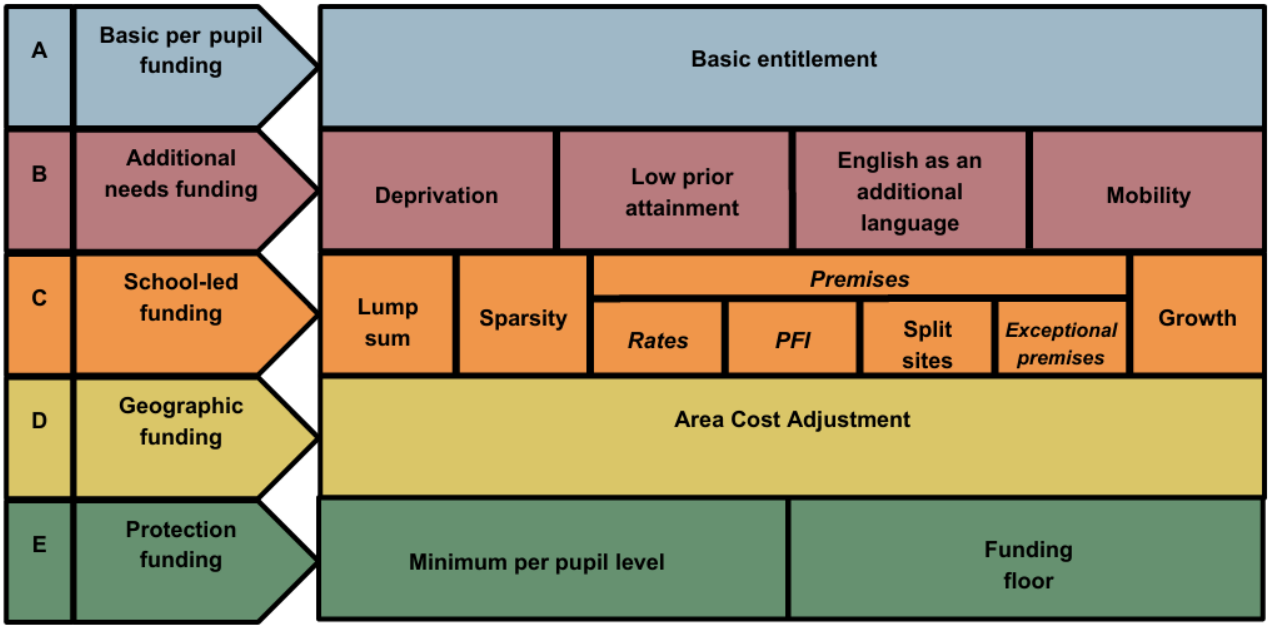
3. Background

School funding is provided through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), which is split into four funding blocks:

- Schools Block
- High Needs Block
- Early Years Block
- Central Schools Services Block

The DfE allocates funding to local authorities through the National Funding Formula (NFF). Local authorities must then distribute funding to schools through a local formula which complies with national regulations.

The NFF structure of Schools Block is shown in the diagram below.



The Government continues to move towards a fully national, or "hard", funding formula. As a result, local authorities have very limited flexibility in determining school funding arrangements.

West Berkshire Council's long-standing approach has been to mirror the National Funding Formula as closely as possible and it is proposed that this approach continues for 2027/28. This:

- Maximises transparency.
- Supports consistency with national funding policy.
- Simplifies the transition towards a hard National Funding Formula.
- Provides greater certainty for schools.

Final funding allocations for 2027/28 had not been published by the DfE at the time this consultation document was prepared. Final school budgets will therefore be calculated once confirmed funding allocations and pupil data become available.

4. High Needs Pressures and Schools Block Transfers

The High Needs Block continues to experience significant financial pressure due to increasing demand for SEND provision and rising costs associated with specialist placements and support services.

The Council's DSG deficit has increased significantly in recent years and these pressures are primarily attributable to High Needs expenditure.

Regulations allow local authorities to transfer up to 0.5% of Schools Block funding to another DSG block with Schools Forum approval.

A transfer would provide additional support for High Needs services but would reduce the funding available for allocation through the mainstream Schools Block formula.

The consultation therefore seeks views on the following options:

- No transfer.
- Transfer of 0.25% of Schools Block funding (approximately £350,000).
- Transfer of 0.5% of Schools Block funding (approximately £700,000).

5. Additional Funds Outside the Formula

Growth Funding
Growth Funding supports:

- Growth in pupil numbers to meet basic need.
- Additional classes required to comply with infant class size legislation.
- The opening and expansion of schools.

The proposed criteria for Growth Funding are set out in Appendix B.

Additional High Needs Fund
West Berkshire Council operates an Additional High Needs Fund to provide additional support to schools with disproportionately high levels of need.

The proposed criteria for allocating this funding are set out in Appendix C.

6. De-delegated Services for Maintained Schools

Certain services can be funded through de-delegation for maintained schools only.

The services proposed for de-delegation in 2027/28 are:

Primary and Secondary Maintained Schools

- Trade Union Local Representation
- CLEAPSS
- Statutory & Regulatory Duties (Statutory accounting functions, Internal audit, Pension administration)

Maintained school representatives on Schools Forum will determine whether these services continue to be de-delegated for 2027/28.

7. Notional SEN Budget Methodology

Schools are notified each year of a Notional SEN Budget within their overall delegated budget.

The Notional SEN Budget is intended to help schools understand the level of funding available within their delegated budget to support pupils with special educational needs. It does not represent separate funding and does not limit schools' responsibilities to meet pupils' needs.

West Berkshire currently calculates Notional SEN Budgets using:

Funding Factor	Current Percentage Included
Basic entitlement (AWPU)	4%
Deprivation factors	30%

Low prior attainment	100%

This currently results in a Notional SEN Budget equivalent to approximately 11.1% of Schools Block formula funding.

The Council proposes to continue this methodology for 2027/28 and seeks schools' views on this approach.

8. Consultation Questions

1. **Do you agree that West Berkshire Council should continue to mirror the National Funding Formula as closely as possible?**

   □ Yes
   □ No

2. **Do you agree that any funding surplus or shortfall should be managed through adjustment of AWPU values?**

   □ Yes
   □ No

3. **What level of Schools Block transfer would you support?**

   □ 0%
   □ 0.25%
   □ 0.5%

4. **Do you agree with the proposed criteria for allocating additional funds outside the formula?**

   □ Yes
   □ No

5. **Do you agree with the proposed de-delegated services for maintained schools?**

   □ Yes
   □ No

6. **Do you agree that the current Notional SEN Budget methodology should continue for 2027/28?**

   □ Yes
   □ No

9. Timetable

Date	Activity
12 October 2026	Schools Forum considers consultation proposals
14 October 2026	Consultation opens
6 November 2026	Consultation closes
November to December 2026	Consultation responses reviewed
December 2026	DfE publishes final DSG allocations
January 2027	Schools Forum considers final funding proposals
January 2027	Local authority confirms final funding formula
February 2027	Final school budget shares issued