

Agenda

SCHOOLS FORUM

Date: Tuesday 3 December 2019
Time: 1.30 pm
Venue: Darke Hall, Green Park, Aston Clinton

Reminder - If you are unable to attend a meeting, please send a substitute from the sector you represent.

Agenda Item	Time	Page No
5 SCHOOLS BUDGETS 2020-21 To be presented by Ms J Try, Finance Business Partner (Schools). To include updates on: A. Schools Block B. Central Schools Services Block C. High Needs Block D. Early Years	13:50	3 - 12
7 SEN UPDATE To be presented by Ms E Williams, Head of Finance (Childrens), BCC and Ms H Slinn, Head of Integrated SEND, BCC. To include a presentation from Impower.	14:20	13 - 18
8 GROWTH FUND To be presented by Mr J Carter, Schools Accountant, BCC.	15:00	19 - 20

If you would like to attend a meeting, but need extra help to do so, for example because of a disability, please contact us as early as possible, so that we can try to put the right support in place.

For further information please contact: Christina Beevers on 01296 382938, email: cbeevers@buckscc.gov.uk

MEMBERSHIP:

Headteachers

Kevin Patrick, Chiltern Hills - Secondary Academy (Chairman)
Julia Antrobus, Newtown School - Primary (Infant) Maintained
Jeanette Cochrane, Sir Henry Floyd Grammar School - Secondary Academy
Paula Coppins, Manor Farm Community Infant School - Primary (Infant) Maintained
Anita Cranmer, Cabinet Member for Education & Skills
Sharon Cromie, Wycombe High School - Secondary Academy
Jo Divers, Turnfurlong School - Primary (Junior) Maintained
Janice Freeman, King's Wood School - Primary (Combined) Maintained
Andy Gillespie, Burnham Grammar School - Secondary Academy
David Hood, Cressex Community School - Secondary Maintained
Jinna Male, Alfriston School - Special Academy
Debra Rutley, Aspire - PRU
Sue Skinner, Bowerdean & Henry Allen Nursery Schools - Nursery Maintained
Steven Sneesby, Kite Ridge School - Special Maintained
Eileen Stewart, Stoke Mandeville Combined School - Primary (Combined) Maintained
Bradley Taylor, Chiltern Wood School - Special Maintained
Aaron Wanford, Green Ridge Academy - Primary Academy
Jill Watson, Lent Rise School - Primary Academy

Governors

Howard Beveridge, Long Crendon School - Primary (Combined) Maintained
Gaynor Bull, Sir Henry Floyd Grammar School - Secondary Academy
Roy Page, Chalfont Community College - Secondary Academy
Katy Simmons, Cressex Community School - Secondary Maintained

Representatives

Sarah Fahey, Brindley House School - Early Years
Claudia Glasgow, NASUWT - Trade Union
Nicky Lovegrove, The Village Pre-School (Tylers Green) Early Years
Sarah Stephens, National Education Union - Trade Union

Observer



Buckinghamshire County Council Schools Forum

Report to the Schools Forum

Title:	School Budgets 2020-21– Consultation Results
Committee date:	3rd December 2019
Author:	Liz Williams, Head of Finance Children’s Service
Contact officer:	Janaki Try, Finance Business Partner (Schools) jtry@buckscc.gov.uk

1. Purpose of Supplementary Paper to Agenda Item 5 SCHOOLS BUDGETS 2020-21

1.1. This supplementary paper sets out the results of the consultation on ‘Local Schools Funding Formula – Principles for 2020-21’. In October Schools Forum agreed that the consultation on principles should take place over the autumn term. The consultation ran from 12th November to the 25th November 2019.

2. Summary of Results

2.1. There were 29 responses from the survey via schools bulletin and 21 results from email responses following reminder letters to schools. In total there were 50 answers, although 3 schools did not respond to question 3, as follows:

Question 1 – Principle b

“Minimum level of per-pupil funding for primary and secondary schools. The purpose of this factor is for local authorities to provide the National Funding Formula minimum per-pupil funding levels to every school. We intend to make the use of this factor, at the NFF cash values, mandatory in local funding formulae this year. Local authorities and schools should plan on this basis.”

b. Do you agree to: Adopt the minimum funding level of per pupil funding and prorate (scaling) of **all other factors in the formula** to match the available allocation of funding from the DfE?

Agree	46	92%	Disagree	4	8%
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Question 2 – Principle c					
<i>“Local authorities will continue to set a minimum funding guarantee in their local formulae, to protect schools from excessive year-on-year changes”</i>					
c. Do you agree to: Use a minimum funding guarantee factor that brings the greatest number of schools closest to the National Funding Formula?					
Agree	39	78%	Disagree	11	22%

*Question 3 – Principle d					
<i>“It is likely that protection will still be required in some areas as a result of changes to formulae, so we will again allow overall gains for individual schools to be capped as well as scaled back to ensure that the formula is affordable...Capping and scaling must not take a school below the minimum per-pupil funding levels. “</i>					
d. Do you agree to: Use capping of gains per pupil to pay for the cost of protecting schools where the formula reduces their budget by more than the minimum funding guarantee, as required?					
Agree	35	70%	Disagree	12	24%

*3 schools (6%) skipped this question in their response.

2.2. Comments made by schools on each question are given in Appendix 1 and 2

3. Recommendations

3.1. To note the outcome of the consultation as shown in this paper and the appendices

3.2. To note for discussion at the Schools Forum meeting in December, that the majority of schools responding have agreed with all 3 consultation questions.



Schools Consultation November 2019 - Comments from email responses								
Q1			Q2			Q3		
Agree	Disagree	Comments	Agree	Disagree	Comments	Agree	Disagree	Comments
1			1		If any school is significantly below the NFF it should be treated as a special case to bring funding in line as soon as possible. We need to recognise that each school caters for students so a statistical exercise need to records schools are organisations not just a datum point.	1		Capping of gains need to be minimised for those schools below the NFF to bring them into line as quickly as possible. This is not covered by the wording which states 'take them below'. If a school is significantly above the NFF now they have had several years of notice that this is to end and so capping gains to continue this reduction to NFF should be absolutely minimal to enable other schools to meet the NFF as soon as possible.
1		The minimum per pupil funding per the NFF should be used with other factors being scaled in the remainder of the formula	1		NFF criteria have been widely known for a number of years and schools should have been planning their budgets based on the published factors. The argument of having a MFG in the early years of the introduction of the NFF was valid, but is no longer as relevant as schools have had significant time to prepare for changes. This is particularly important if it prevents schools that have been underfunded for years, continuing to be underfunded due affordability. The aim of the NFF is undermined by not implementing it fully.	1		As with question 2, the principles of the national funding formula have been known for many years now and schools should have been planning their budgets based on the published factors. The argument of having a MFG in the early years of the introduction of the NFF is no longer as relevant as schools have had significant time to prepare for changes. This is particularly important if it ensures that schools that have been underfunded for years, continuing to be underfunded due to a capping mechanism to fund other schools' MFG. To continue to maintain caps for so long continues to penalise previously underfunded schools, who have greatly suffered by not receiving the full NFF levels over the last three years.
1			1			1		This is the fairest outcome for all schools
1		As we understand it, the DfE expects LAs to use the national minimum per pupil funding levels in their own formulae. So yes, we strongly agree that the minimum funding level per pupil should be adopted and that other factors should be scaled for the rest of the formula.	1		We are several years in to to the use of the NFF. We have all had time to prepare and plan for this and a number of schools have been underfunded for a long time. The NFF needs to be fully implemented in line with DfE expectations referred to above.	1		We have known about the NFF and MFG for a number of years. Schools which gain from the NFF should not lose out for even longer still because of capping of their gains. Those schools which have lost out previously because the NFF has not been fully implemented will miss out further and this is not acceptable.

Schools Consultation November 2019 - Comments from email responses								
Q1			Q2			Q3		
Agree	Disagree	Comments	Agree	Disagree	Comments	Agree	Disagree	Comments
1		The latest DFE guidance here states:"As a first step towards hardening the formula, from 2020-21 we will make it compulsory for local authorities to use the national minimum per pupil funding levels in their own funding formulae." Therefore YES - the minimum per pupil funding per the NFF should be used with other factors being scaled in the remainder of the formula.			The principles of the national funding formula have been known for many years now and schools should have been planning their budgets based on the published factors. The argument of having a MFG in the early years of the introduction of the NFF is no longer as relevant as schools have had significant time to prepare for changes. This is particularly important if it prevents schools that have been underfunded for years, continuing to be underfunded due affordability. The principle of the National Funding Formula is undermined			As with question 2, the principles of the national funding formula have been known for many years now and schools should have been planning their budgets based on the published factors. The rgument of having a MFG in the early years of the introduction of the NFF is no longer as relevant as schools have had significant time to prepare for changes. This is particularly important if it prevents schools that have been underfunded for years, continuing to be underfunded due to a capping echanism to fund other schools' MFG. To maintain caps after a long period of time to adjust pending penalises previously underfunded schools, who have compromised on the full implementation of the NFF over the last three years.
			1		by not implementing it fully.		1	

Schools Consultation November 2019 - Comments from email responses								
Q1			Q2			Q3		
Agree	Disagree	Comments	Agree	Disagree	Comments	Agree	Disagree	Comments
1		As the wording suggests, the requirement is that “minimum per-pupil funding rates will rise from £3,500 to £3,750 at primary level and from £4,800 to £5,000 at secondary. The primary funding rate will then rise again to £4,000 in 2021-22.” There is no discretion for Bucks to not adopt the MPPF rates (there has been a consultation on some of the technical aspects of this, eg for schools with both primary and secondary aged year groups, but no consultation on the principle). The scaling of the other factors is necessary if the money received by Bucks is less than the NFF allocations for all schools. To understand the effect of this you really need to see indicative allocations to individual schools. The DfE guidance says:11. However, local authorities must continue to engage in open and transparent consultation with all maintained schools and academies in their area, as well as with their schools forums, about any proposed changes to the local funding formula including the principles adopted and any movement of funds between blocks. 12. Any consultation should include a demonstration of the effect of modelling such changes on individual maintained schools and academies. Bucks should have had the indicative allocations in October.	1		Cautious agreement – the phrase in bold suggests there is discretion about what level to apply for the MFG, so some narrative is needed here to understand the possibilities. Note that the guidance says: “ <i>Local authorities will have the freedom to set the MFG in local formulae between +0.5% and +1.84% per pupil</i> ”.	1		Yes, what alternatives are there and what does the modelling show us?
	1	It does not cost the same to educate all pupils and there should be more towards those with the highest need		1	Should be as per the principle minimum funding guarantee to protect from excessive year on year changes	1		See comments on b about the costs related to need
1			1		It is vital that small schools are protected and remain viable. No school should receive less than they did last financial year and indeed we expect to benefit from any increased funding that may arise following the election.	1		With the two tier education system caused by Grammar schools in Bucks, funding should be capped as they are shown to have the capacity to generate large sums from parents and grant funding by dint of them having resources to employ highly qualified fund raisers.

Schools Consultation November 2019 - Comments from email responses								
Q1			Q2			Q3		
Agree	Disagree	Comments	Agree	Disagree	Comments	Agree	Disagree	Comments
1		For far too long some schools in Buckinghamshire have been left severely underfunded and a minimum per pupil funding is essential to redress this.	1		If this (use of MFG) is compulsory then agree that this is the fairest way to do it. If it is not compulsory then I would argue that at some point the balance must be properly redressed and consistently applying MFG only prolongs the difficulty which has been faced for many years by underfunded schools.		1	As above. Apply the formula without favour and scale for affordability.
1		The per pupil funding level is the most important factor	1		With no minimum funding guarantee the reductions can be too difficult for schools to cope with	1		Need to cap if you want a minimum funding guarantee
1		The latest DfE guidance states: "As a first step towards hardening the formula, from 2020-21 we will make it compulsory for local authorities to use the national minimum per pupil funding levels in their own funding formulae." We strongly believe that this should be the case so that the minimum per pupil funding per the NFF is used with other factors being scaled in the remainder of the formula.	1		The principles and concept of the national funding formula have been known for many years now and schools should have been planning their budgets based on the published factors. The argument of having a MFG in the early years of the introduction of the NFF is no longer as relevant as schools have had significant time to prepare for changes. This is particularly important if it prevents schools that have been underfunded for years, continuing to be underfunded. The principle of the National Funding Formula is undermined through the failure, after many years of forewarning, to fully implement it.	1		As with question 2, the principles of the national funding formula have been known for many years now and schools should have been planning their budgets based on the published factors. The argument of having a MFG in the early years of the introduction of the NFF is no longer as relevant as schools have had significant time to prepare for changes. This is particularly important if it prevents schools that have been underfunded for years, continuing to be underfunded due to a capping mechanism to fund other schools' MFG. We should not accept further prevarication.
1		Agree in line with DfE guidance document	1		The debate re NFF has been in all schools' minds for some time now. Several schools have been massively underfunded and have been waiting for the implementation of the NFF to put right this wrong. We were happy to go with the MFG in previous years, but now wish to have our own budget protected	1		As per the answer to Q3, it is unfair on previously particularly underfunded schools to continue to compromise on the full implementation of the NFF

Schools Consultation November 2019 - Comments from email responses								
Q1			Q2			Q3		
Agree	Disagree	Comments	Agree	Disagree	Comments	Agree	Disagree	Comments
1		The latest DFE guidance states: "As a first step towards hardening the formula, from 2020-21 we will make it compulsory for local authorities to use the national minimum per pupil funding levels in their own funding formulae." Therefore YES - the minimum per pupil funding per the NFF should be used with other factors being scaled in the remainder of the formula.			The principles of the national funding formula have been known for many years now and schools should have been planning their budgets based on the published factors. As schools have had significant time to prepare for changes, the argument of having a MFG in the early years of the introduction of the NFF is no longer as relevant. This is particularly important if schools that have been underfunded for years, continue to be underfunded due affordability. The principle of the National Funding Formula is undermined			As with question 2, the principles of the National Funding Formula have been known for many years now and schools should have been planning their budgets based on the published factors. as schools have had significant time to prepare for changes. The argument of having a MFG in the early years of the introduction of the NFF is therefore no longer as relevant. This is particularly important if it prevents schools that have been underfunded for years, continuing to be underfunded due to a capping mechanism to fund other schools' MFG. To maintain caps would continue to penalise previously underfunded schools, who have had to compromise over the last three years.
			1		by not implementing it fully.	1		

Local Schools Funding Formula – Principles for 2020-21

#12

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, November 19, 2019 11:29:42 AM
Last Modified: Tuesday, November 19, 2019 11:35:29 AM
Time Spent: 00:05:46
IP Address: 184.28.188.12

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Q1 Principle b "Minimum level of per-pupil funding for primary and secondary schools. The purpose of this factor is for local authorities to provide the National Funding Formula minimum per-pupil funding levels to every school. We intend to make the use of this factor, at the NFF cash values, mandatory in local funding formulae this year. Local authorities and schools should plan on this basis."Do you agree to: Adopt the minimum funding level of per pupil funding and prorate (scaling) of all other factors in the formula to match the available allocation of funding from the DfE? **Agree**

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Q2 Principle c"Local authorities will continue to set a minimum funding guarantee in their local formulae, to protect schools from excessive year-on-year changes" Do you agree to: Use a minimum funding guarantee factor that brings the greatest number of schools closest to the National Funding Formula? **Disagree,**
 Additional comments:
 Question not very clear. The NFF should be applied so those schools who are only in receipt of minimum funding get the full allocation. Years of under funding should not continue and a local formula should not prevent a school historically underfunded to continue to be under the minimum

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Q3 Principle d"It is likely that protection will still be required in some areas as a result of changes to formulae, so we will again allow overall gains for individual schools to be capped as well as scaled back to ensure that the formula is affordable... Capping and scaling must not take a school below the minimum per-pupil funding levels." **Agree,**
 Additional comments:
 as previous answer- all schools should receive at least the minimum- where schools receive over this the formula should ensure all schools receive at least the minimum

Do you agree to: Use capping of gains per pupil to pay for the cost of protecting schools where the formula reduces their budget by more than the minimum funding guarantee, as required?

#17

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, November 20, 2019 8:57:39 AM
Last Modified: Wednesday, November 20, 2019 9:02:18 AM
Time Spent: 00:04:39
IP Address: 2.18.66.110

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Q1 Principle b "Minimum level of per-pupil funding for primary and secondary schools. The purpose of this factor is for local authorities to provide the National Funding Formula minimum per-pupil funding levels to every school. We intend to make the use of this factor, at the NFF cash values, mandatory in local funding formulae this year. Local authorities and schools should plan on this basis."Do you agree to: Adopt the minimum funding level of per pupil funding and prorate (scaling) of all other factors in the formula to match the available allocation of funding from the DfE? **Agree**

Page 3

Q2 Principle c"Local authorities will continue to set a minimum funding guarantee in their local formulae, to protect schools from excessive year-on-year changes" Do you agree to: Use a minimum funding guarantee factor that brings the greatest number of schools closest to the National Funding Formula? **Disagree,**
Additional comments:
The NFF has been designed and being brought in to make school funding fairer for all. It is not then for the LA to reduce a schools possible gain from the NFF through the MFG. A school should react to the funding set by the Government and not have it falsely raised by the LA to the detriment of other schools.

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Q3 Principle d"It is likely that protection will still be required in some areas as a result of changes to formulae, so we will again allow overall gains for individual schools to be capped as well as scaled back to ensure that the formula is affordable... Capping and scaling must not take a school below the minimum per-pupil funding levels."
Do you agree to: Use capping of gains per pupil to pay for the cost of protecting schools where the formula reduces their budget by more than the minimum funding guarantee, as required? **Disagree,**
Additional comments:
The NFF has been designed and being brought in to make school funding fairer for all. It is not then for the LA to reduce a schools possible gain from the NFF through the MFG. A school should react to the funding set by the Government and not have it falsely raised by the LA to the detriment of other schools budget gain. This goes completely against the whole principle of the NFF



Buckinghamshire County Council Schools Forum

Report to the Schools Forum Funding Group

Title:	SEND Update
Committee date:	20 th November 2019
Author:	Liz Williams, Head of Finance Children's Service & Hero Slinn, Head of Integrated SEND
Contact officer:	Liz Williams, Head of Finance, Children's Services eawilliams@buckscc.gov.uk

1. Purpose of Agenda Item

1.1. To provide an update on the following:

- a) National SEN Update - Education Select Committee's SEND report 23rd October 2019
- b) High Needs expenditure 2019-20 and funding settlement for 2020-21
- c) Funding Mechanism for Special Schools
- d) Actions to reduce high needs block expenditure - current work to understand demand trajectories and opportunities to reduce demand on specialist provision and statutory assessment.

2. National Update - Education Select Committee's SEND report 23rd October 2019

"A generation of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities is failing to receive the support it deserves, with poorly implemented legislation leaving families facing a nightmare of bureaucracy, buck-passing and confusion".

"The DfE cannot continue with a piecemeal and reactive approach to supporting children with SEND. Rather than making do with sticking plasters, what is needed is a transformation, a more strategic oversight and fundamental change to ensure a generation of children is no longer let down."



Summary by Hero Slinn:

- 2.1. This report shines a light on some of the systemic challenges that local authorities face as we work hard to implement a complex and underfunded system of reforms. The 2014 reforms rightly raised expectations, required partners to join up holistically to meet the needs of children and young people and extended support from birth to 25 years. However, children's services were not adequately funded to meet these expanded duties.
- 2.2. The report outlines that even though record levels of spending have occurred in the SEND system, there are growing levels of dissatisfaction. It recognises that funding alone cannot solve the operation challenges we all face in meeting statutory duties.
- 2.3. Issues include:
 - A school accountability system focused on academic attainment above inclusion which means some pupils with low level needs are being pushed out of the mainstream system into costlier, often independent specialist provision.
 - The lack of a national workforce strategy. Shortages in the wider workforce (across education, health and care services) that act as a barrier to achieving an inclusive education system.
 - Health and social care are still not equal partners in the process – little evidence of cooperation and communication from these sectors.
 - Challenge of developing joint commissioning arrangements at a local level with health.
- 2.4. Key message quoted from Select Committee Report:

“Our shared endeavour must be on improving the experiences and outcomes of all children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and ensuring no child is left behind.”

Key Recommendations of the SEND select committee report:

- 2.5. Give the ombudsman more power over schools
 - Powers for the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to investigate complaints about schools.
- 2.6. Let schools report non-compliant councils to the government
 - Parents and schools should be able to report LAs directly to the DfE if they are not complying with the law. This would include reports of non-compliance, the school placement of children and young people with SEND including those without a school place, tribunal hearings and how local authorities meet statutory timescales.

- DfE should implement an annual scorecard for local authorities and health bodies “to measure their success against the SEND reforms”. The scorecards should then be made available via the House of Commons library “no later than three months after the end of the year to which they relate”.

2.7. Inspections

- A more rigorous inspection framework for local authorities, with clear consequences for failure.
- Make Ofsted issue a separate judgement for SEND provision as the Committee feels that not enough is being done to ensure every pupil with SEND receives a “high standard” of education, or that all schools are inclusive.
- This should either be done through the current programme of inspections, or Ofsted should alternatively develop “a separate type of specialised inspection focusing on SEND, with a particular focus on the school’s responsibility to deliver for pupils on SEN Support and that inclusive schools get the recognition that they deserve”.
- The committee acknowledges this may require legislative change, and says this must happen “at the earliest possible opportunity”.
- Independent reviewer to examine cost implications of requiring all schools and colleges to have a full-time SENCo and how small a school should be to warrant this role being part-time or diverted from their duties to other responsibilities.

2.8. Appoint a neutral SEND ‘co-ordinator’

- The committee raised concerns about the “conflicts of interest, or challenges” that stem from councils holding both an assessor and commissioner role when it comes to SEND provision.
- Need “to create some neutrality in the system”.
- DfE to explore the potential for a neutral role, someone who would be allocated to every parent or carer with a child going through an assessment. This person would have the responsibility “for co-ordinating all statutory SEND processes including the annual review, similar to the role of the independent reviewing officer for looked-after children”.

2.9. Open new special schools

- DfE should, in the absence of “other plausible solutions”, enable councils to create new maintained specialist schools, including specialist post-16 provision “outside of the constraints of the free school programme”.
- Amend its capacity building guidance “to ensure that local authorities are able to be more responsive to their local population’s needs and address the unfortunate unintended consequences of the programme”.

2.10. Develop more employment and training opportunities for post-16 young people

- Underpinned by a lack of collective ambition for our young people.

3. High Needs Block Expenditure 2019-20 and Funding Settlement 2020-21

Expenditure 2019-20

- 3.1. The projected overspend against the High Needs Block reported to Schools Forum in October was £565k. This included the following pressures:
- (i) £446k Additional and exceptional support: funding for over number places in special schools and at the secondary PRU. An additional 9 places have been funded within BCC special schools during this year.
 - (ii) £76k for top-up funding in special schools.
 - (iii) £25k additional costs of pupils in independent schools.
- 3.2. Activity and spend have been reviewed at the end of October. Forecasts for external placements are likely to increase as September starter data is confirmed.
- 3.3. Additional pressures have also been identified on the budget for top up payments for pupils with EHCPs in mainstream schools following the successful work to clear the backlog of EHCPs and issue plans. The detailed schedules of pupils have been sent to schools for data checking and this will inform the forecast reported to Schools Forum in January however it is expected that the forecast spend will increase by in excess of £0.5m.

Funding Settlement 2020-21

- 3.4. The funding settlement for High Needs Block in 2020-21 includes an additional £700 million to ensure that every local authority receives an increase at least 8% per head of 2–18 population. The indicative funding allocation for Buckinghamshire indicates that the increase could be £7.2 million for the High Needs Block in 2020-21. Whilst this funding is very welcome there is currently no indication as to whether it will be built in to the baseline for future years. Given that lack of certainty the Council is of the view that additional funding should not be committed fully in 2020-21 against recurring commitments. There is, however, the opportunity to support the existing gap in the high needs block in order to reduce any call on reserves, and to consider utilisation against projects that may require transitional funding. It is likely that in the first instance this funding will need to be utilised to support the overall gap in funding on high needs.
- 3.5. Final proposals will be brought to Schools Forum in January for final budget setting once the funding settlement has been confirmed.

4. Special School Funding 2020-21

- 4.1. An updated timeline for consideration of a needs led funding system was presented to Schools Forum in October.

- 4.2. This timeline has been further impacted by the purdah period leading up to the general election which means that the LA cannot enter in to any consultations, other than statutory consultations (for example on the minimum funding guarantee for mainstream schools), during that period. This will delay consultation with schools on the principles for a funding mechanism for high needs provision until the new calendar year. The impact of this on the proposed time line is that Schools Forum will now consider the outcome of the consultation and any financial implications at the March 2020 meeting with implementation of any changes from September 2020.

5. Update on actions to mitigate overspend

- 5.1. At the October meeting of Schools Forum a number of actions to reduce expenditure against the High Needs Block were presented and discussed. These actions will be monitored and progress reported to Schools Forum. As previously reported, the main financial impact of these actions will be in future years.
- 5.2. Increase collaborative working with health partners to jointly commission provision to meet the needs of children and young people.
- 5.3. The LA has funded a project to support the service to develop a clear understanding of:
- Current demand for children with SEND including opportunities to reduce demand on specialist provision and statutory assessment.
 - Partner behaviours and beliefs around support for children with SEND to enable their engagement in the co-design of and contribution to a future model centred more on earlier intervention initiatives.
 - How needs compare with support, costs and outcomes.
- 5.4. This work is due to be completed at the end of November and will be presented to Schools Forum at the December meeting to outline the work that has been done and some of the emerging themes and actions.



Buckinghamshire County Council Schools Forum

Report to the Schools Forum

Title: Pupil Growth Fund 2020-21

Committee date: 3rd December 2019

Author: Liz Williams, Head of Finance Children's Service

Contact officer: Jonathan Carter, Accountant, Education
jacarter@buckscc.gov.uk

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. This paper highlights the new guidance issued by DfE on Growth and Falling Rolls Funds for 2020-21 and recommends that further proposals are brought to Schools Forum Funding Group and then to Schools Forum in January 2020 on the growth fund for 2020-21.

2. Background

2.1. Schools Forum had previously requested that a paper should be brought to the December 2019 Schools Forum meeting outlining proposals for the growth fund in 2020-21. Initial work had been completed on this paper however new guidance has been published by the DfE on 25th November 2019 and it is essential that any proposals brought to Schools Forum for the financial year 2020-21 take this guidance in to account.

2.2. The new DfE guidance can be accessed via the [DfE Website](#).

3. Key Principles within the Guidance

3.1. The DfE guidance outlines the purpose of the growth fund, what is should and should not be used for and how growth criteria should be set.

3.2. The growth fund can only be used to:



- Support growth in pre-16 numbers to meet basic need
 - Support additional classes needed to meet the infant class size regulation
 - Meet the revenue cost of new schools
- 3.3. The growth fund must not be used to support
- Schools in financial difficulty; any such support for maintained schools should be provided from a de-delegated contingency
 - General growth due to popularity; this is managed through lagged funding.
- 3.4. The guidance states that local authorities' growth fund criteria should contain clear objective trigger points for qualification, and a clear formula for calculating allocations with these criteria applying to all schools on the same basis. Compliance will be checked by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).
- 3.5. The document includes examples of criteria that may be included within a local authority's growth fund and of appropriate methodologies for allocating funding.

4. Buckinghamshire Growth Fund

- 4.1. Schools Forum had already requested a review of the growth fund for Buckinghamshire Schools including a review of other local authority approaches and a move towards a more formula generated approach.
- 4.2. The publication of the new DfE guidance is helpful in supporting the review of our current criteria and will ensure that any revised proposals are compliant with the required approach. It is therefore proposed that further work take place in order to bring revised growth fund criteria to the Schools Forum meeting in January 2020. This will also give an opportunity for consideration by the Schools Forum Funding Group.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1. To note the publication of new guidance on growth and falling rolls funding.
- 5.2. To agree that the review of the Buckinghamshire growth fund will be carried out using the revised guidance and proposals will be brought to Schools Forum in January 2020.