

## Schools Funding Consultation 2016/17

General comments:

### Pupil number growth fund

The budget consultation suggests that £1,947,000 is the estimated requirement for the Growth Fund. Other than a split between existing schools and the new Q3 – Langley Academy no breakdown has been provided to show how this figure has been arrived at

**More detail is required to judge the merits of such a significant retention of funds**

### Proposed Exceptional Premises Factor for Shireland Collegiate Academy

The budget consultation states that "Shireland Collegiate Academy wish to be considered for an exceptional premises factor. The school does not have access to any sports facilities and do not have a hall/sports hall to set up for exams. The school therefore have for a number of years hired Hadley Stadium to deliver the PE curriculum and examinations."

However, last year the school opened its own "Performing Arts and Sports Facility" that had been purpose built. This includes a sports hall, dance hall, music room and auditorium.

**The information in the budget consultation would appear to be out of date and Shireland seems to be self-sufficient.**

### Capping Gains

If gains were not capped to fund the minimum funding guarantee then the required funding would have to be top sliced from the total Dedicated Schools Grant.

**A cap on gains is the only logical and fair way to fund a minimum funding guarantee**

### Primary:Secondary Ratio

No educational rationale is presented for the proposed move in funding

There is no correlation nationally between higher Secondary funding and exam results

It has been suggested that Primary schools hold high balances in relation to Secondary schools. The facts are:

- Primary balances 2014/15      £629 per pupil
- Secondary balances 2014/15    £956 per pupil

This is a ration of 1:1.52 considerably above the Sandwell funding ratio of 1:1.23 and national average of 1:1.28

- Primary balances            176% of the Local Authority 8% of income marker
- Secondary balances        416% of the Local Authority 5% of income marker

It has also been suggested that Secondary schools have struggled to balance budgets this year. The facts are

- Increase in Primary balances for 2014/15 budget outturn 140%
- Increase in Secondary balances from 2014/15 budget outturn 764%
- Last year the 5 maintained secondary schools said they would only have a combined reserve of £305,387 after setting budgets, they finished the year with £2,639,184 an increase of 764% from their original figures

How was the ratio originally calculated?

What has changed since that time?

Who determined that 1:1.28 was desirable and on what grounds?

The government were considering a prescriptive range not an exact ratio for every authority – it has asked Local Authorities to be aware of the ratio, not to change it

The ratio hasn't changed but Sandwell Primary schools have improved their performance considerably, why would changing the ratio therefore improve secondary schools?

What does Sandwell credit with improving the performance of Primary schools?

If you exclude the anomaly of the Scilly Isles, the Knowsley has the biggest Secondary funding ratio of 1:1.53 but the worst GCSE results at 43.7%

If you consider specific pupil funding, the ratio in Sandwell is 1:1.39 this ranks the Borough 73<sup>rd</sup> rather than 15<sup>th</sup> nationally. This may be a better indicator as the other funding factor areas are based on very specific rationale and have been assessed in the last 3 years.

The consultation presupposes moving money from Primary to Secondary only offering movement from 1:1.23 to 1:1.28. A genuine investigation into the ratio would examine movement in both directions.

**There seems to be no case to move funding from the Primary sector to the Secondary sector.**