

## Schools Forum

13th December 2021

### Funding Formula Review 2022-23 – Results of the Consultation

**This report is for decision**

#### **1. Recommendation**

- 1.1 That Schools Forum makes a recommendation on the following consultation proposals:
- The preferred option to use for calculating the school funding formula for 2022/23
  - Implementation of an MFG of between +0.5% and +2.00%.
  - The level at which to set the Pupil Number Growth Contingency Fund.
- 1.2 That Schools Forum Maintained school members make a decision on the following consultation proposals:
- De-delegation budget proposals.
  - The Education Functions budget proposals.
- 1.3 That Schools Forum makes a decision on the following consultation proposals:
- The Central Schools Services Block proposals.
- 1.4 That Schools Forum approves that a review of the Attendance and Safeguarding Team be undertaken as outlined in section 4.39 and 4.40:
- 1.5 That Schools Forum consider the comments received in the consultation and agree on a way to take these forward.

## **2. Purpose**

- 2.1 To gain a recommendation from Schools Forum members for the basis for the school funding formula for 2022/23 following consultation with schools.
- 2.2 To make a decision on which de-delegated proposals are approved for 2022/23.
- 2.3 To make a decision on which Education Function proposals are approved for 2022/23.
- 2.4 To make a decision on which Central Schools Services Block proposals are approved for 2022/23.

## **3. Links to School Improvement Priorities**

- 3.1 The decisions of the Forum define the budget setting processes for all schools and academies within the borough for the next financial year. Given national government announcements on future funding for schools, this process will assist schools in preparing strategic plans, ensuring schools are able to create viable budget, staffing and curriculum plans. All decisions will affect the amount available to be delegated directly with schools and focus on what funding is centrally retained to protect services and schools with falling rolls.

## **4. Report Details**

- 4.1 The Schools Budget Consultation was issued to schools on 10th November 2021 after approval at the Schools Forum meeting on 8th November 2021; with a deadline of noon 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021 to respond.
- 4.2 A summary of responses to this consultation can be found in **Appendix (1), (2), (3), (4) and (5)**.

Consultation with the following stakeholders was held:

- Joint Executive Group – 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021
- Primary/Secondary Partnership – 15<sup>th</sup> November 2021
- Joint Union Panel - 16<sup>th</sup> November 2021
- Association Sandwell Governing Bodies – 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021

4.3 A total of 53 responses were received (compared with 70 last year), with 43 out of 94 (46%) primary schools/academies, and 10 out of 20 (50%) secondary schools/academies responding.

4.4 The authority has received two responses from individual unions.

#### **Consultation Responses**

4.5 The consultation on the formula funding for schools for 2022/23 includes proposals on the following:

4.6 The funding formula to use for allocating schools budgets;

- Option 1 – Stepped change in the ratio - LA Formula with a ratio of 1:1.29 in year 3.
- Option 2 – Secondary Schools receive 1% more above the overall increase in funding.
- Option 3 – National Funding Formula Factor Values
- Pupil Number Growth Contingency Fund.
- Minimum funding guarantee and capping of gains.
- Education Functions.
- De-delegation proposals.
- Central Schools Services Block.

#### **4.7 Funding Options – Consultation responses**

4.8 The authority modelled 3 options for calculating schools revenue budget for 2022/23. There are some general adjustments which apply to all options which are as follows:

- Q3 Langley opened in September 2016 with a PAN of 240 for each year group. The PAN has increased to 300 from September 2021. (however, for modelling purposes the pupils numbers are the same as 2021/22 to allow for comparison)

- The Shireland Technology Primary opened in September 2019 with a PAN of 60 for Reception.
- The West Bromwich Collegiate Academy opened in September 2019 with a PAN of 150 for each year group.
- The amalgamation of Warley Infants and Bleakhouse Junior Schools into Bleakhouse Primary School on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020. The guidance states that where schools have amalgamated during the financial year, they retain the equivalent of 85% of the predecessor schools' lump sums for the following financial year (2021/22).

For example, assuming a lump sum of £100,000, the additional payment would be £70,000 ( $(£100,000 \times 2) \times 85\% - £100,000$ ).

Local authorities may apply to provide a second year of protection. Applications must specify the level of protection sought, although the expectation from the DfE is that the additional protection would not exceed 70% of the combined lump sums. They have stated they will consider applications on a case-by-case basis.

At its meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021; Forum members agreed that an application could be submitted for Bleakhouse Primary School requesting a second year of the lump sum protection equivalent to 70% of the predecessor schools lump sum for the financial year 2022/23.

The ESFA has approved the application request.

4.9 The funding formula options were as follows:

**Option 1: Stepped increase to the 2022/23 Local authority model - Increase of the Primary: Secondary Ratio to 1:1.29 (3rd Year)**

4.10 This model uses the same factors as previous years, except for the two factors mentioned below. In Sandwell's local school funding formulae, the 2021/22 rate for Basic Entitlement/AWPU is significantly above the National Funding Formula (NFF) rate. The recommendation was therefore to keep these rates the same for

2022/23 and instead introduce for the first time, factor value rates for Free School Meals (FSM) and Free School Meals Ever 6 (FSM6) in order to reflect the change of moving to a primary secondary ratio of 1:1.29:

**Option 2: Secondary Schools receive 1% more above the overall increase in funding.**

- 4.11 This model gives secondary schools 1% more of the additional funding than primary pupils (The 1% is calculated on the basis of funding to primary and secondary schools prior to applying MFG and MPPF). The model uses the same factors as previous years, except for the FSM6 which was introduced for the first time in order to reflect the change of secondary schools receiving 1% more above the overall increase in funding.

**Option 3: National Funding Formula Factor Values**

- 4.12 This model uses the factor values used in the National Funding Formula, without applying the Area Cost Adjustment. In order to fund the Pupil Number Growth fund and the MFG to be set at 0.5% to keep in line with the modelling of the other options, the English as an additional language factor had to be changed from those eligible pupils recorded on the census as having entered state education in England during the last three years, whose first language is not English, to those pupils entering during the last two years to remain within the funding envelope announced.
- 4.13 Most respondents voted for Option 1. The responses for each option is shown below.

- Option 1 – 42 Agreed, 11 against
- Option 2 - 1 Agreed, 52 against
- Option 3 – 0 Agreed, 53 against

- 4.14 The following responses reflect some of the comments received:

- *“I have not indicated an option as my preference is to request a standstill as I do not believe any more money should be moved from primary sector to secondary sector as no evidence /research as been provided to support. Further consultation is needed through schools forum.”*

- *“Without discussing and agreeing an educational rationale, it should not be possible to make any of the changes to school funding mechanisms as proposed”*

4.15 The comments above are a small reflection of the comments received in relation to the options for the authority funding formula. **Appendix 5** provides further detail on the comments made about the funding formula as well as detailing comments on each question in the consultation and general comments overall.

#### 4.16 **Pupil Number Growth Fund**

4.17 Local authorities may topslice the DSG to create a growth fund. The growth fund is ring-fenced so that it is only used for the purposes of supporting growth in pre-16 pupil numbers to meet basic need, to support additional classes needed to meet the infant class size regulation and to meet the costs of necessary new schools. These will include the lead-in costs, post start-up costs and any diseconomy of scale costs

4.18 Local authorities are responsible for funding these growth needs for all schools in their area, for new and existing maintained schools and academies.

- Local authorities must fund all schools on the same criteria.
- Where growth occurs in academies that are funded by ESFA on estimates, the ESFA will use the pupil number adjustment process to ensure the academy is only funded for the growth once.

4.19 The Authority has estimated the costs for authority led expansions of schools to cater for the increase in birth rates, pre-opening and diseconomy of scale costs for West Bromwich Collegiate Academy and it has also estimated mid- year admissions costs.

4.20 For the last 4-5 years the pupil number growth fund has been set at £2.269m, however since 2019/20 the level of recoupment that the LA has been able to retain has increased to an average of £0.544m per year compared to levels of £0.178m per year prior to 2019/20. This has therefore increased the total Pupil number growth funding in the last few years.

4.21 In 2021/22 the Pupil number growth fund was reduced from the levels set in previous years of £2.269m to £1.091m as a result of accrued balances built up over the last few years.

4.22 The government have stated in their consultation document “Fair School Funding for all: completing our reforms to the National Funding Formula” that they are planning to change growth funding and the basis on which they fund new and growing schools.

#### **DFE Growth fund – Current formulaic method**

4.23 Growth funding is within local authorities’ schools block NFF allocations. Since 2019/20, growth funding has been allocated to local authorities using a formulaic method based on lagged growth data. The change in the method of funding to local authorities has not changed the way in which authorities can allocate funding locally.

4.24 For each local authority, the growth factor will allocate:

- £1,485 for each primary “growth” pupil,
- £2,220 for each secondary “growth” pupil
- £70,800 for each brand new school that opened in the previous year (that is, any school not appearing on the October 2020 census but appearing on the October 2021 census).

4.25 The authority currently funds schools as follows:

- LA agreed PAN Increase/Bulge Class at 100% of Basic Entitlement/AWPU; which for 2021/22 is £3,512 for primary pupils and £4,977 for secondary pupils.
- Mid Year Admissions at 50% of Basic entitlement/AWPU for 2021/22.
- New/Growing schools – ESFA rates for leadership and resources.

4.26 Given the disparity between the Growth funding rates received by the authority and the Pupil number growth rates used to pay schools; and because of the government’s plans to change the basis of funding; the authority is proposing two options for setting the allocation:

- 4.27 Option 1 – Continue with the current criteria as set out in section 4.25. above. An estimation of the Pupil Number Growth amount required is £1.850m.
- 4.28 Option 2 – To fund schools for LA agreed PAN/Bulge increase and New/growing schools only. The funding for mid year admissions would cease. An estimation of the Pupil Number Growth amount required is £1.300m.
- 4.29 Option 2 was put forward for schools to consider working towards aligning the authority’s Pupil growth fund with the government’s direction of travel; particularly in relation to the growth values.
- 4.30 The majority of respondents agreed option 2 with a Pupil Number growth fund set at £1,300,000.
- Option 1 – 21 Agreed, 32 against
  - Option 2 - 35 Agreed, 18 against

### De-delegation Proposals

- 4.31 There were 5 de-delegation proposals and the details are set out in the table below.

<b>De-delegation Budget Proposals 2022/23</b>				
<b>Ref</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>Primary Phase Cost</b>	<b>Secondary Phase Cost</b>
		<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
1	Health & Safety Licenses	5,990	4,970	1,020
2	Evolve Annual Licence	6,300	5,200	1,100
3	Union Facilities Time	213,000	177,000	36,000
4	School Improvement Service	100,000	83,000	17,000
5	School in financial difficulty	88,000	73,000	15,000
	<b>Total De-delegation proposals</b>	<b>413,290</b>	<b>343,170</b>	<b>70,120</b>



4.32 Schools Forum maintained school members are asked to make a decision on these budgets taking into consideration the responses from schools.(Refer to appendix 2).

**Education Functions Proposals for maintained schools**

4.33 Local authorities can fund services previously funded from the general funding rate of the ESG (for maintained schools only) from maintained school budget shares, with the agreement of maintained school members of the Schools Forum.

4.34 The relevant maintained schools members of the Schools Forum (primary and secondary), should agree the amount the local authority will retain.

4.35 Sandwell, in line with guidance, intend to set a single rate per 5 to 16 year old pupil for all mainstream maintained schools, both primary and secondary. The rate of £14.97 per pupil is based on October 2020 census data, this will be updated to be based on October 2021 census data.

4.36 If the local authority and Schools Forum are unable to reach a consensus on the amount to be retained by the local authority, the matter can be referred to the Secretary of State.

4.37 There are 3 education function proposals and the details are set out in the table below.

<b>Education Functions Budget Proposals 2022/23</b>		
<b>Service</b>	<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>Amount per pupil</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Education Benefits Team	175,000	5.55
Children’s Clothing Support Allowance	33,000	1.05
Safeguarding & Attendance	264,000	8.37
<b>Total Education Functions</b>	<b>472,000</b>	<b>14.97</b>

4.38 Schools Forum maintained school members are asked to make a decision on these budgets taking into consideration the responses from schools. (Refer to appendix 3).

### **Attendance and Safeguarding Team**

- 4.39 At the last meeting Schools' Forum expressed an interest in better understanding the services provided by the Attendance and Safeguarding team and the appropriateness of the funding approved by the Forum. The request for additional information was made at a stage in the current consultation process that would not allow time for wider consideration and enable the Forum to make an informed decision about future funding.
- 4.40 It is suggested that the Children's Directorate undertake a review of the team, with the assistance of the Forum, seeking to assess the value added by the team compared to the funding made available from DSG. The review to be completed in the first half of 2022 and reported to Schools Forum no later than the meeting scheduled for 20 June 2022, with the objectives of the review agreed in advance with the Chair of the School Forum.

### **Minimum Funding Guarantee**

- 4.41 Local authorities continue to have the ability to set a pre-16 minimum funding guarantee (MFG) in their local formulae, to protect schools from excessive year-on-year changes and to allow changes in pupil characteristics (for example reducing levels of deprivation in a school) to flow through.
- 4.42 The DfE have stated there continue to have greater flexibility for the MFG in 2022/23; local authorities are able to set an MFG between plus 0.5% and plus 2.00% per pupil. Setting the MFG between these rates gives the authority the flexibility to make local decisions about the distribution of funding and enables the authority to manage any changes in pupil characteristics when characteristics data is updated in December.
- 4.43 The respondents have unanimously voted for an MFG of at least 0.5% and up to 2.00% if modelling proved this was achievable within the funding given (53 agreed, 0 against).
- 4.44 The majority of respondents agreed with the scaling and capping of the MFG if it proves necessary to ensure the MFG is within the funding envelope. (40 agreed, 13 against).

### **Central School Service Block**

- 4.45 The Central Schools Service Block (CSSB) continues to provide funding for local authorities to carry out central functions on behalf

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of maintained schools, and academies, comprising two distinct elements:

- Ongoing responsibilities; such as admissions and schools forum costs.
- historic commitments; in this case pensions administration.

4.46 Funding for historic commitments is based on the actual cost of the commitment. The DfE have stated they expect these commitments to reduce and cease over time and there will be no protection for historic commitments in the CSSB.

4.47 For 2022/23 the DfE have reduced Historic commitment funding by 20%; this has resulted in a cut for Sandwell from £0.182m to £0.146m.

4.48 Schools Forum approval is required each year to confirm the amounts on each line for central school services the detail of which is included in the table below. In the event that Schools Forum does not agree with the authority CSSB proposal as detailed below, the authority can ask the DfE to adjudicate.

<b>Central School Services Budget Proposals 2022/23</b>	
<b>Service</b>	<b>Total Budget</b>
	<b>£</b>
Statutory & Regulatory, Education Welfare and Asset Management	1,662,000
Schools Forum	3,000
Admission Service	452,600
Pensions Administration	145,900
<b>Total Central School Services</b>	<b>2,263,500</b>

4.49 The majority of respondents agreed with each service element detailed in the table. Schools Forum members are asked to make a decision on these budgets taking into consideration the responses from schools. (Refer to appendix 4).

### **Schools Response**

4.50 The anonymised comments from schools in relation to the consultation are included in Appendix 5.

## **Trade Union Response**

- 4.51 The authority has consulted with the Joint Union Panel and received responses from the National Education Union (NEU) and the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT).
- 4.52 The NEU response commented:  
*“Sandwell is NOT what you call an ‘average’ area. In 2018, according to a report on childcare, it was reported that more than 20,000 children were living in poverty in Sandwell, which is one in every four children. It is for you to decide if you think things have improved since then. According to The English Indices of Deprivation 2019, which is an official measure of deprivation, Sandwell is one of the most deprived areas in the country. On most measures, Sandwell is the most deprived local authority within the Black Country.  
The DfE acknowledged the essential role of LAs during the pandemic to support education, however, such praise will be short lived. The consultation document mentions significant financial challenges ahead such as the increasing outsourcing of services, once provided by the council. This is a further step towards a fragmented, privatised system in which, sadly, competition and profit will come before pupils.”*
- 4.53 The NEU stated in relation to question 1:  
*“Whilst Sandwell NEU recognises the historic primary/secondary ratio as being favourable to primary schools, there is a reason for this. As stated above, Sandwell is not an ‘average’ LA, regarding poverty and deprivation. Sandwell NEU would have preferred a standstill option.”*
- 4.54 The NAHT agreed with the proposal to change the Pupil Number Growth criteria and they agreed with all the other proposals for the MFG and capping and scaling, de-delegations, Education functions and the Central Schools Services Block.
- 4.55 The NAHT did not respond to question 1 in the consultation but stated that *“A number of members have been in touch to express disappointment that there was no standstill option presented this year given the significant increases in their ongoing expenditure.”*
- 4.56 The NAHT agreed with the proposal to change the Pupil Number Growth criteria and they agreed with all the other proposals for the

MFG and capping and scaling, de-delegations, Education functions and the Central Schools Services Block.

### **Proposed Schools Funding Formula 2022/23**

4.57 The views of all stakeholders will be taken into consideration in relation to the consultation on the schools funding formula for 2022/23. The authority will consider the recommendation of School forum, but ultimately it is a local authority decision.

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Date: 05/12/2021

Consultation Response Summary

Question	Primary		Secondary		Total	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1. Please indicate the option you prefer to use for calculating school funding for 2022/23						
a) Option 1: LA formula with a stepped increase in the primary: secondary ratio of 1:1.29 (3rd year)	33	10	9	1	<b>42</b>	11
b) Option 2: Secondary Schools receive 1% funding than primaries above the overall increase in funding.	0	43	1	9	1	52
c) Option 3 – National Funding Formula factor values.	0	43	0	10	0	53
2. Do you agree that we should set the pupil Number Growth Fund for 2022/23 at:						
Option 1: Current Pupil Number Growth formula with an estimated cost of £1.850m	16	27	5	5	21	32
Option 2: Current Pupil Number Growth formula with an estimated cost of £1.300m	29	14	6	4	<b>35</b>	18
4. Which of the De-delegated budget proposals do you agree with (see Appendix 2)	See Appendix (2)					
5. Which of the Education Function budget proposals do you agree with (see Appendix 3)	See Appendix (3)					
6. Please indicate whether you agree with:						
a). MFG of 0.05% and up to 2% if modelling proves this achievable with the funding given.	43	0	10	0	<b>53</b>	0
b) If an MFG where with scaling and capping in order for the MFG to be within the funding envelope.	36	7	4	6	<b>40</b>	13

<p>7. Do you agree for the authority to provide for the responsibilities it holds for all schools from the “Central School Services Block” funding. The provisional 2022/23 allocation is £2,263,500.</p>	<p>See Appendix (4)</p>
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## De-delegated Budgets Consultation Responses

Ref	Name	Lead Officer	Primary		Secondary	
			Yes	No	Yes	No
1	Health & Safety Licences & Subscriptions	Group Head – Learning Improvement	<b>35</b>	7	<b>3</b>	0
2	Evolve Annual Licence	Residential Manager	<b>40</b>	2	<b>3</b>	0
3	Union Facilities Time	Group Head – Learning Improvement	<b>27</b>	15	1	<b>2</b>
4	School Improvement Services	Group Head – Learning Improvement	<b>39</b>	3	<b>3</b>	0
5	Schools in financial difficulties	Group Head – Learning Improvement	<b>28</b>	14	<b>3</b>	0



## Education Functions Budgets Consultation Responses

Ref	Name	Lead Officer	Maintained Schools	
			Yes	No
1	Education Functions	Group Head: Education Support	42	3
2	Children's Clothing Allowance Support	Group Head: Education Support	38	7
3	Safeguarding and Attendance	Attendance & Prosecution Manager	40	5

## Central Schools Services Block Budgets Consultation Responses

Service	£m	Yes	No
<b>Provisional Allocation 2022/23</b>	<b>2.264</b>		
<b>Expenditure Items:</b>			
Statutory & Regulatory, Education Welfare and Asset Management	1.662	<b>49</b>	4
Schools Forum	0.003	<b>52</b>	1
Admissions Service	0.453	<b>49</b>	4
Historical Commitment – Pensions Administration.	0.146	<b>50</b>	3
<b>Total Central Schools Services Block</b>	<b>2.264</b>		

**MAIN THEMES/COMMENTS ON SCHOOL FUNDING 2022/23  
CONSULTATION**

**Question 1: Please indicate the option you prefer to use for calculating school funding for 2022/23 (Please only mark one option).**

- \*Purpose of National Funding Formula is to reduce the historical inequalities between different geographical locations and not close the gap between secondary and primary funding per pupil to my knowledge. No clear rationale provided, from an educational perspective, to move funds from Primary to Secondary. Should be a 4th option "Standstill (Status Quo)" position - especially noting current climate and considering requests made at Schools Forum both last year and this year. This should be revisited at Cabinet due to changes in the educational landscape since they last discussed this in 2019. Furthermore, when reviewing the minutes of the Cabinet meeting in February 2019, it states in the resolution that primary and secondary schools should "work together to consider the educational journey or children of staged movement towards the NFF". To my knowledge no education rationale has ever been discussed. Without discussing and agreeing an educational rationale, it should not be possible to make any of the changes to school funding mechanisms as proposed.
- Without discussing and agreeing an educational rationale, it should not be possible to make any of the changes to school funding mechanisms as proposed
- A request to include a standstill option was made at Schools Forum last year and again this year. The request was denied on both occasions. The Cabinet Member for Children and Education has been contacted to ask for her reasoning behind endorsing the original directive from Councillor Simon Hackett, the Cabinet Member during the 2019/20 consultation The Local Authority regularly refers back to this directive from Councillor Hackett as the justification for only offering options that move money from the primary sector to the secondary sector. No reasons relating to the educational needs and outcomes of children have ever been

discussed in this process but the Council minutes from the Cabinet meeting 20th February 2019 are clear that this should have been the case: To ensure full and proper consultation on this matter, the Schools Forum would be tasked to develop an options paper which demonstrated the impact of movement toward the NFF on children's educational journey. This process would be in consultation with all schools and academies. Without discussing and agreeing an educational rationale, it should not be possible to make any of the changes to school funding mechanisms as propose

- I have not indicated an option as my preference is to request a standstill as I do not believe any more money should be moved from primary sector to secondary sector as no evidence /research as been provided to support. Further consultation is needed through schools forum.

**Question 2: Do you agree that we should set the Pupil Number Growth fund for 2022/23 at a) Option 1 £1.850m or b) Option 2 £1.300m.**

- This option would fund schools for significant increase in the number on role between census. Budgets are normally set within the allocations received. For most schools this would be additional funding they have managed without. Mid year admissions wouldn't be funded but all schools would benefit from additional £1.3m

**Question 3: De-delegations: Health and Safety Licences**

- Risk of duplicating options which are already available to most schools through subscriptions such as The Key. If this is de-delegated then more effort needs to be made to promote the services available as we don't use half of what is listed in the impact report as we never knew we had access to it.
- Schools should be made aware of what services are available.

**Question 3: De-delegations: Evolve**

- This is a useful tool but were no savings made over the past year, given that trips didn't happen, to reduce the amount for this year? Also, I do not believe it is fair that primaries have to fund the majority of the costs. If the request is for the licence fee only then surely this should simply be split evenly between all the schools it is available

too rather than based on the proportion of how often schools use the site?

### **Question 3: De-delegations: Union Facilities Time**

- Costings aimed at primary schools only - would like further details of the benefits primary's receive compared to secondary
- Seems very high and no evidence of impact
- Time too generous, no consideration to austerity and reducing budgets. Primary is subsidising Secondary's, along with Consultation Q1 it appears majority of funds being directed to secondary schools. Also, I find it flabbergasting that union time would be funded at more than twice the level of what we are investing into the school improvement team (which should be our priority)

### **Question 3: De-delegations: School Improvement Team**

- This is vital to all schools
- School Improvement roles need to be reviewed. Are all roles necessary? The core role of advisors in supporting, challenging and intervening in school is very important and valued in Sandwell
- We value the support of our SIA, however we do not feel we have £1394.80 worth of support based on 440 pupils on role

### **Question 3: De-delegations: Schools in financial difficulties**

- This penalises schools that make cost savings on their budgets and that generate their own income. Schools with deficit budgets should be made more accountable and the staff that manage the budgets should be trained and qualified to understand budgets and how to manage public money.
- For schools to manage own finances. In effect of sponsored conversion LA needs to put in measures to manage any potential overspend; having a provision available may result in LA being pressured to utilise such a fund in order to push a conversion through. May result in unintended consequences and inequitable use of reserves.

**Question 4: Education Functions: Education Benefits Team**

- This service can be purchased by schools at lower cost. Schools can identify their own families in need of FSM/PP we already to the leg work at the start of the school year by asking families to complete the forms. Schools no longer receive alerts of new entitlements From LA and have to check the lists themselves increasing the admin burden.
- As in previous years, it would have been useful to see how much money is forecast to be spent in the current year

**Question 4: Education Functions: Clothing Support Allowance**

- Schools that employ Family support workers can identify their own families in need and provide assistance where needed.
- As in previous years, it would have been useful to see how much money is forecast to be spent in the current year

**Question 4: Education Functions: Safeguarding & Attendance**

- Would be helpful to separate these please in order to see financial commitments.
- Can costs of Safeguarding and Attendance Services be split. More responsibilities relating to Attendance Services are being passed back to schools
- As in previous years, it would have been useful to see how much money is forecast to be spent in the current year
- Not in the way it is currently structured. If this was separated as different services then it would be a different response. I find it hard to believe that the A&P team require as much money as they do when you compare it to the other services which come under this area, e.g. safeguarding , CME etc (who provide a much higher quality of service and have a much greater need). I also think information needs to be shared about the impact of A&P, e.g. how many PNs were issued, how much income was generated and where does this get used?

**Question 5: An MFG of between +0.5% and 2% if modelling proves this is achievable within the funding given; and**

- Primary schools will lose significant funding, both in real terms and because of consultation proposals. Protection, even in the short term, is essential in the current climate.

**Question 5: The application of scaling and capping if it proves necessary to be able to implement an MFG as outlined in a). And to remain within then available funding**

- Depends on what the MGG is

**Question 6: Do you agree for the authority to provide for the responsibilities it holds for all schools from the "Central School Services Block" funding? The provisional 2022/23 allocation is £2,263,500 (This figure will be adjusted in December to reflect the October 2021 census pupil numbers).**

**For all 4 sections: (1) Statutory & Regulatory, Education Welfare & Asset Management £1,662,000, (2) Schools forum £3,000; Admission Services £452,600; Historical Commitment – Pensions administration £145,900**

**Specific response Statutory & Regulatory.....**

- Separating these would be helpful to consider costs.
- Increase of £140,000 from 2020/21 to 2021/22 and increase of £220,600 from 2021/22 to 2022/23. This is not reflective of budget increase in schools funding
- The details provided in the service block proposal are not detailed enough to fully understand the purpose of this money, i.e. it refers to certain functions and services where de-delegation decisions are taken separately such as attendance. Also, I am concerned that schools do not/have not had the same quality of input as they had when Chris Ward was in post so I would like to understand more about the statutory responsibility of the Directors role in relation to schools (i.e. are school contributions propping up a social care system)?
- Yes and no - if Academies as wellm the Asset Manangement element shoud be split out from planning for Ed Services etc
- Unfair for PFI schools, as the Asset Management does not take into account PFI school.
- As in previous years, it would have been useful to see how much money is forecast to be spent in the current year

### **Specific response: Admissions Service**

- Would like an option where LA manages admissions at the beginning of the year, with schools managing in year admissions. Can this be explored further so schools have more choice than just yes or no next year?
- Whilst we have voted yes to the Admissions service this year we have not been happy with the service levels nor with the information provided as part of this consultation. We will be investigating whether we would be better served by opting out and providing this service in house next year should the service not improve substantially.
- If academeis as well? There is a separate SLA bought into.
- Impact and deployment is missing from paperwork

### **General Comments**

- No reasons relating to the educational needs and outcomes of children have ever been discussed. Without discussing and agreeing an educational rationale, it should not be possible to make any of the changes to school funding mechanisms as proposed
- Question 1 - A request to include a standstill option was made at Schools Forum last year and again this year. The request was denied on both occasions. We believe that this remains the most appropriate course of action in the current climate of uncertainty relating to finances of schools and finances generally. We're very disappointed to see that there is still no educational rationale provided to explain any movement of funds from the primary sector to the secondary sector. We firmly believe that any discussion around relative funding levels must take into account the Sandwell context. This was the reason for setting the primary:secondary ratio at its original level and it remains as vital to the overall progress of Sandwell pupils as it was when the ratio was originally discussed and agreed. seven years ago, the primary sector has suffered a far greater burden of the costs related to non-teaching staff. To move funding from the primary sector to the secondary sector would not recognize these additional expenditure burdens. All schools, primary and secondary, have faced additional costs relating to National Insurance and pension increases. This has had a much more profound impact on primary schools because of the workforce

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distribution. Primary schools employ nearly four times as many Education Support Staff as secondary schools (176,200 compared to 47,800). For an average two-form entry school in Sandwell this equates to over £20,000 per year in additional costs. This amount is similar to the impact of moving money from the primary sector to the secondary sector to match national funding ratios.

Question 7 - There appears to be a contradiction in this area of the consultation: the consultation document states that "a number of the services that are covered by funding are subject to a limitation of no new commitments or increase in expenditure from 2021/22. This limit no longer applies to the Admissions Service or the servicing of schools forums", however the Statutory and Regulatory, Education Welfare and Asset Management request has increased from £1,441,400 in last year's consultation to £1,662,000 in the current consultation. An increase of £220,600 or 15.30%.

It would be difficult to support such an increase without understanding why it has happened and whether it is legitimate given the narrative in the consultation document replicated above.

- We are extremely disappointed to hear that despite being told last year that a standstill option would be considered by cabinet, it hasn't. The answer given to Primary schools is that by raising the ratio in favour of secondary funding you are doing Primary schools a favour and preparing us for the national funding formula. This is not appreciated, this stance suggests that we are incapable of budgeting appropriately for ourselves. We are in a situation where the youngest children (primary aged, in particular current KS1) have been most negatively impacted by covid in terms of their learning progression. During closures they were less able to make progress during home learning due to lack of independence and support at home. They have missed out on valuable basic skills that underpin learning. A year of standstill would have supported Primary schools, enabling them to utilise those funds to better focus on closing those gaps. Instead, Primary schools face further cuts and a greater challenge in terms of learning recovery. In time this will negatively impact on the Secondary sector because children will begin to arrive less ready to cope with the KS3 curriculum.
- It is important that comments collated from this year's consultation are considered carefully, even if de-delegated decisions are taken, ahead of designing the consultation for next year. Finally, there appears to be a contradiction in the final area of the consultation:

The consultation document states that "a number of the services that are covered by funding are subject to a limitation of no new commitments or increase in expenditure from 2021/2022. This limit no longer applies to the Admissions Service or the servicing of schools forums", however, the Statutory and Regulatory, Education Welfare and Asset Management request has increased from £1,441,400 in last years consultation to £1,662,000 in the current consultation, an increase of £220,600 or 15.30%

- There appears to be a contradiction in the "Central Services Block" section of the consultation: The consultation document states that "a number of the services that are covered by funding are subject to a limitation of no new commitments or increase in expenditure from 2021/22. This limit no longer applies to the Admissions Service or the servicing of schools forums", however, the Statutory and Regulatory, Education Welfare and Asset Management request has increased from £1,441,400 in last years consultation to £1,662,000 in the current consultation. An increase of £220,600 or 15.30%
- It is disappointing that again Primary schools have no voice in Sandwell's funding consultation options. The only rationale offered for the movement of funds from the primary to secondary sector appears to be to bring the authority more in line with other authorities. Primary schools have not been given reasoning that links to the educational needs of the children in Sandwell for this change. Is there clear evidence that secondary school children are disadvantaged by the current funding formula? There is certainly research showing that the youngest pupils have been most effected by the covid pandemic yet indicative figures show increases to our budget will not even cover national insurance rises and teacher pay increases that the DfE have promised will be in our budgets. Following last years consultation Chris Ward told Primary Heads that our voices had been heard at Cabinet and that there would be different conversations for this year it is sad for our children that this has not been the case.