

DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT UPDATE REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Schools Forum with an update on issues affecting Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for the current and future financial years.

Main Considerations

2. Schools Forum received a report at the October 2016 meeting outlining a number of changes proposed by the Department for Education (DfE) to the DSG for 2017-18. This report provides some further detail on those issues and outlines a number of other issues affecting Wiltshire's DSG.

High Needs Places Review 2017-18

3. The EFA have once again asked the Local Authority (LA) to complete a High Needs Place Change Review. Unlike last year, the review has included both the number of pre and post 16 places in institutions within Wiltshire.
4. All places within maintained schools are locally managed and do not require consultation with the EFA. However any changes to places with Academy schools do require consultation and agreement between the EFA, school and the LA.
5. A wholesale review of High Needs places was performed last year and therefore there have only been minor tweaks to the numbers of places in institutions. All changes have been considered in light of current and projected pupil numbers and agreed with the respective institution.
6. The main changes requested are;
 - Creation of a new Resource Base at Castle Mead Primary School
 - Increase of 104 places at Wiltshire College
 - All post-16 places either transferred to pre-16 or removed
7. The return was submitted prior to the deadline and the outcome will be notified in the New Year.

De-Delegation 2017-18

8. At the October meeting Schools Forum considered the de-delegation of central budgets. A decision relating to the schools maternity budget was deferred so that further information on the costs that schools would need to cover could be provided. Further detail will be provided at the meeting in order that a decision can be made.

Central DSG Historic Commitments Supplementary Guidance

9. The DfE has issued [supplementary guidance](#) to local authorities to clarify the process and the evidence required for setting the budgets for historic commitments within central DSG for 2017-18. Schools Forum will be required to approve central Schools Block budgets on a line by line basis. The DfE has now confirmed the criteria for approving historic commitments as follows:
 - **Minutes from the schools forum prior to 1st April 2013** – schools forum should have agreed the commitment prior to 2013
 - **Proof that the commitment extended at least as far as the 2017-18 financial year.** Evidence can include reports which indicated an end date in to 2017-18 or beyond, or where the commitment has no specific end date.

- **Where budgets relate to non-staffing costs, there must be a contractual commitment** (such as a PFI agreement or lease agreement) which extends in to the relevant financial year.
 - **Schools forum papers and minutes that show that approval has been granted for the financial year.** The forum is expected to approve each spending line annually. It is important that schools forums have sufficient information to be able to make an informed decision
10. The EFA will also check that the proposed budgets do not represent an increase on prior years.
 11. Whilst the DfE has not fed back to local authorities on their individual expenditure commitments we will use this guidance to inform the budget setting for 2017-18 and determine whether items currently recorded as historic commitments are eligible to be approved in 2017-18. Detailed budget proposals will be brought to Schools Forum in January 2017.

Free School Bids affecting Wiltshire

12. The Wessex Area Schools Partnership (WASP) has notified the Council that it has submitted a proposal for a 52 place Alternative Provision Free School to meet the needs of pupils at risk of exclusion in the South Wiltshire area.
13. Alternative Provision free schools are funded on a place plus basis. Once open the EFA will decide on the number of places to be funded each year based on the free school's plans and the numbers of pupils actually attending the school. Initially the funding comes directly from the EFA and from the third year of opening the EFA will start to deduct an appropriate proportion of the base funding from the DSG of the local authorities who commission (or whose schools commission places at the free school.

Proposals

14. Schools Forum is asked to note the updates contained within the report.
15. Schools Forum is asked to determine whether the schools maternity budget for 2017-18 should be delegated to maintained schools or de-delegated and held centrally.

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