

Wiltshire Council

Schools Funding Working Group – 5 October 2020

Schools Forum - 15 October 2020

Split Site Allowance Funding 2021-22

Purpose of report

1. To outline and update Schools Forum regarding the Split Site Allowance for schools in Wiltshire.

Historical Position

2. The use of a split site allowance for mainstream schools is an optional factor within the Wiltshire funding formula but is used to support a single school operating over two separate sites.
3. The current criteria for schools in receipt of a split-site allowance, as amended at Schools Forum in December 2017 is defined as follows:

'A school will receive split site funding if, of necessity, it has 2 (or more) distinct campuses between which travel of 0.5 miles or more, by means of a public highway, is required and Class teaching and learning must take place on all sites with physically detached administration.'

4. It is widely recognised that schools operating over two separate sites incur additional expenditure compared to single site schools including:
 - Reception / Front of House staffing
 - Administration costs
 - Photocopier and printing facilities
 - Internet lines, IT and utility costs
 - Premises costs including repairs and maintenance
 - Travel costs
 - Additional Caretaking costs
 - Loss of site-based grants such as PE& Sports Premium
5. Wiltshire currently has six primary schools and no secondaries operating over a split site arrangement, these schools are:
 - Greentrees
 - The Mead
 - Corsham Primary
 - Brinkworth Earl Danby's
 - The New Forest
 - Churchfields
6. Two split site schools have closed one of their sites in recent years, due to pupil numbers and viability. These schools are Whitesheet and Five Lanes.

Funding

7. The current level of funding is set at £65,000 for Primary and £100,000 for Secondary schools. These values have been in place for a number of years, when the lump sums for Primary and Secondary schools were £85,000 and £175,000 respectively.

8. Following the introduction of the NFF, the differentiation between Primary and Secondary Lump Sum allowances was removed, with both being funded at £110,000.
9. The difference between the split site allowance and the lump sum for primary schools used to be £20,000 (£85k lump sum and £65k split site allowance). The split site funding equates to 76.5% of the lump sum.
10. Following the introduction of the NFF, the lump sum increased to £110,000 and the difference between the lump sum and split site allowance increased to £45,000 (for 2021-22 will be £52,800 less than the lump sum). Aligning the split site allowance to the lump sum, based upon the NFF lump sum for 2021-22, would increase the split site allowance to £90,000. Keeping the split site allowance aligned to the lump sum would ensure that the allowance keeps pace with NFF movements.
11. The difference between the lump sum and the split site allowance acts as a disincentive to small schools when considering their future structuring options as the loss of the lump sum overshadows the additional split site funding which would be received.

Impact upon Wiltshire's Schools Block

12. Under the NFF, the split site allowance forms part of the 'Premises' funding for the Schools Block. As there is no national measure for split site funding, the DfE fund Wiltshire on the basis of the funding awarded to schools. In essence, whatever level Wiltshire sets the split site allowance at, will be funded fully through the Schools Block. Therefore, the impact of uplifting the split site allowance has a neutral impact upon Wiltshire's funding.

Other LA Approaches

13. The approach does vary between local authority areas however in terms of values, the following approach is taken by others:
 - Surrey £135,000
 - South Gloucestershire £93,000
 - Central Bedfordshire £120,000
 - Worcestershire £83,668
14. Some authorities apply a model of a basic lump sum and an amount per pupil. This is more complicated and need not necessarily reflect the true additional costs.

Proposals

15. Schools Forum consider the following:
 - Retaining the status quo
 - Aligning split site allowances at 76.5% of the lump sum value.