

The proposals offered an opportunity to bring change across the system and to do things differently in order to make schools more inclusive.

The group had seen a cross phase approach as important.

The group had emphasised the need for greater understanding of the resources currently available and their impact and to build on the work of the inclusion round table and the team around the school pilot. There was much work to be done to map existing resources and work and their impact on the ambition for schools to be more inclusive.

It was important that the distribution of funding was effective and benefited young people, that the activities, leadership and governance arrangements were school led and that they were seen to be transparent and that changes were sustainable and promoted fair access. The working group had proposed locality governance boards plus a central board with an independent Chair to co-ordinate. All would be largely school led and the council would only have a small role. The locality boards could be chaired by a school leader and include headteachers from all phases, and Schools Forum representatives. Associate members could be included in local groups to bring in specific expertise.

There could be a specific countywide objective (autism had been suggested) or there could be individual locality foci (eg transition). Further discussions were needed on this.

suggested that exhaustion among school leaders, following the additional challenges of the past year, might slow down progress.

It was difficult to generalise as to the funding loss to individual schools' budgets, for example schools on the minimum per pupil level (MPPL) would lose nothing, schools on minimum funding guarantee would lose around 0.5% of budget, and a loss of 0.9% of budget was typical of schools which were not on MPPL or on minimum funding guarantee. School budgets would generally increase in 2022/23 (subject to pupil numbers). It was noted that a large secondary school might lose £35,000 for the proposed transfer.

One member noted that an 0.5% reduction meant around £20 per pupil and thought a transfer of that order needed further consideration. He thought the proposals were a cultural move in the wrong direction and expressed concern that some of the funding would be spent on running or administration costs. He

8 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) management plan

Further information would be circulated after the meeting.

The reference in section 15 to potentially “repurposing” funding between Dedicated Schools Grant blocks was just a statement of the possible.

9 Special schools banding review

Cabinet had ratified the proposed changes (as presented to Schools Forum on 1 Nov) on 30 November. EG had had discussions with Family Voice. The proposals had been discussed at special schools’ phase council on 3 December. Only one school had not agreed to the proposal. That school wanted to retain the existing arrangements for another year. EG had indicated to the school that that would be acceptable. The proposed changes would be implemented for all other schools. Pupils currently on IPSB funding would be transferred to the new arrangements in September 2022, together with new pupils and pupils at key stage transfer.

10 Approval of centrally managed Schools Block and central services levy proposals for 2022/23

Centrally managed schools’ budget (CSSB)

DG explained that the CSSB covered a range of statutory services for all schools (both maintained and academies) and is funding which is outside the NFF and mostly has never been in school budgets. Schools Forum approval is required to individual lines. The table showed budgets for 2021/22 and proposed budgets for 2022/23. Little change was proposed. IT costs had been scaled back to match the estimated budget, but final October census pupil numbers suggested funding approximately £35,000 higher, so DG proposed to add that back to the IT budget.

The Forum approved the proposed centrally managed Schools Budget.

“Central services levy” budget (i.e., costs deducted from budgets of maintained primary, secondary and special schools and pupil referral units)

This item was considered in three parts.

reserved the right to ask for a deduction in following years. The LA had the right to appeal to the Secretary of State if the Forum refused the request.

One member asked for an assurance that none of the funding would be spent on academies. JW advised that SAFE's contract for statutory work did not include academies.

Members noted that It wasn't clear whether full academisation was current DfE policy. However, even if it was still the DfE intention that all maintained schools should convert to academies, it would take time to reach that point. They

change. The Chair noted that the Forum's view was required now in case the government position didn't change.

A member asked that DfE should be sent the clear message that their proposed change was not supported. The Chair advised that the consultation had now closed. LM advised that the LA position had been made clear, including to MPs and by the leader. Any school leader wishing to make further representations could only add weight.

LM advised that the general fund contributed to school improvement costs but could not bear the additional costs for which the levy was proposed.

Representatives of maintained schools voted 8-1 in favour of the proposed additional levy for statutory school improvement services, subject to DfE proposals being implemented (with 1 recorded abstention).

Additional school improvement services

The DfE proposals meant that decisions on deducting funding for additional school improvement services could no longer be sector specific but would apply equally to primary, secondary and special schools and PRUs. This meant that deductions could no longer be limited to primary schools, as in Surrey at present. Therefore, it was proposed that the £8.75 per pupil deduction, already agreed for primary schools as de-delegation, should be extended to maintained secondary and special schools and PRUs if the DfE proposals were implemented.

Members suggested that there was a wide difference between the needs of primary and secondary schools for additional school improvement and leadership support.

Members suggested that the LA should agree to refund any funding deducted from individual maintained secondary and special schools and PRUs, to those schools. It was noted that primary schools had already agreed to the deduction in another form. Any refund may need to be earmarked for expenditure linked to school improvement issues.

Representatives of maintained primary, secondary and special schools and PRUs agreed to the proposed additional deduction by 9 votes to 1, on the basis that funding deducted from secondary and special schools and PRUs would be refunded.

11 Approval of growing schools fund budgets and criteria for 2022/23

DG reminded the Forum that the growing schools fund provides additional support to growing schools (i.e. planned increase in capacity, whether permanent or temporary). This is because mainstream funding must usually be based on previous October census data and growing schools fund helps schools which are adding classes in year who would otherwise have to wait a year for funding for those extra pupils. It can apply only to planned growth, not to filling existing vacancies. The budget and criteria require annual approval by Schools Forum.

