## CONSULTATION ON SCHOOL AND ACADEMY FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS 2015-16

#### Introduction

This consultation relates to school funding arrangements for 2015-16. We are consulting on 12 questions. We welcome and seek the views of all schools, academies and other stakeholders within this consultation process. Even if you have a strong view on only one point we want to hear that view.

This consultation is for all sectors (primary, secondary, nursery, special and education support centres), although some proposals only relate to particular sectors or groups of schools/academies. This is indicated in the text.

The consultation closes on Tuesday 23rd September 2014. Responses must be submitted by electronic survey. The results will be considered by Schools Forum in October.

#### **Background**

After the major national reforms of the last two years, 2015-16 will be a year of consolidation, with relatively few changes in school funding arrangements. The DfE will not be introducing a national funding formula (NFF) in 2015-16.

The Minimum Funding Guarantee will continue to operate at 98.5%, providing protection for schools and academies against the ongoing impact of funding formula changes.

Although academies receive most of their funding directly from the Education Funding Agency, rather than the County Council, they are funded through the same formula and on the basis of the same budget decisions as maintained schools. Thus this consultation applies to both maintained schools and academies.

## **Overview of the Consultation Document**

Schools and academies will continue to face significant budget pressures and we are carrying out a survey of the financial pressures that schools/academies are facing, to inform the budget process for 2015-16. Section 1 of the consultation relates to this survey.

Section 2 covers new delegation and changes to the primary and secondary funding formula in 2015-16. These comprise the delegation of the remaining central revenue budget for capital maintenance and a DfE change to the sparsity factor, which affects two middle schools. There is also a proposal to continue the capping of gains in the primary and secondary funding formula in 2015-16.

The Hertfordshire Growth Fund provides additional funding to expanding primary and secondary schools/academies and for delivering the infant class size requirement. The operation of the Growth Fund has been reviewed and section 3 outlines some proposed changes.

Finally section 4 sets out a proposal to introduce a new Fund for primary schools with falling pupil rolls in areas of demographic growth.

## SECTION 1 SURVEY OF THE FINANCIAL PRESSURES BEING EXPERIENCED BY SCHOOLS

#### **Government Grant for School Funding**

Funding for the budget shares of Hertfordshire's schools and academies is provided by the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), allocated to Hertfordshire by the DfE. The rate of DSG funding per pupil varies between local authority areas for historic reasons. The Government had intended to undertake a major rationalisation of these differences with the introduction of a national funding formula (NFF) for the main element (schools block) of the DSG in 2015-16. However, this has now been postponed and will not happen in 2015-16.

The amount of DSG per pupil does not generally increase from year to year. Thus there is no allowance for inflation or other cost pressures. The DfE calls this "flat cash". The Government has, however, announced that, although a NFF will not be introduced, one step will be taken in 2015-16 to rationalise the levels of DSG allocated to different local authority areas. A national minimum funding level (MFL) will be introduced for the main element (schools block) of the DSG. This is based on average levels of primary and secondary budget shares across all authorities and incorporating an uplift for the higher cost of London and the South East. Where authorities' levels of schools block DSG funding per pupil are below the MFL they will be uplifted to that level. Just under half of the local authorities in England have been allocated extra DSG through this initiative. Hertfordshire has been allocated approximately £11.1m extra, equating to an increase of 1.7% in schools block DSG.

In view of the flat cash DSG funding, in 2014-15 Hertfordshire used approximately £9.5m from reserves, accumulated from underspends on central budgets, to provide an uplift in the Schools Budget, to fund pay and price inflation and the rise in employers' pension contributions for local government staff. However, reserves are a one-off resource and it had been expected that this funding would have to be discontinued in the future, resulting in a cut in budget shares.

The additional DSG provided to Hertfordshire through the MFL exercise will enable the current level of budget shares to be sustained going forward.

#### **Budget Pressures**

However, looking ahead to 2015-16 and future years there will be a number of significant budget pressures for schools. These include:

- Inflation in pay and prices
- Increase in the rate of employer's contribution to teachers pensions from 14.1% to 16.4% from September 2015.

In addition, from April 2016, the 3.4% rebate which currently applies to the employers' national insurance rate for staff in occupational pension schemes (e.g. teachers and local government pension schemes) will cease. We do not know whether the Government will provide any extra resource for schools in 2016-17 to reflect this extra cost.

The Authority will continue in 2015-16 to use reserves as far as possible to increase budget shares in order to assist schools and academies in meeting these pressures. However, this will only provide a temporary and limited solution.

In order to ensure that the Authority and the Schools Forum make the most effective and informed budget decisions for 2015-16, it would be helpful to understand better the financial pressures being faced by schools/ academies and the projections that they are making in their multi-year financial plans. Schools and academies are therefore asked to complete the survey questions below.

## Questions on financial pressures facing schools

The Authority already collects a number of key pieces of financial information from maintained schools. These include:

- the level of balances at the end of the last financial year (from the 2013-14 year end returns),

-the approved budget return for the current financial year, including projected balances at 31/3/15.

Most schools prepare three year financial plans, often using the FPS budgeting software supported by the Authority. However, except in specific cases, the Authority does not collect information from these three year financial forecasts or on the level of future budget pressures that schools are identifying.

The Authority does not collect any budget information from academies or PVI nurseries as these are independent institutions.

Therefore to inform the decision making of the Authority and the Schools Forum during the 2015-16 budget process, schools and academies are asked to answer

the following questions, drawing where applicable on the information from their three year financial plans.

Question 1	Projected	balances /	All schools and academies		
This question has been split into two parts, one for maintained schools, and the other for academies. This is to avoid recollecting the information which the Authority already holds for maintained schools and to reflect the different approaches to reporting balances between maintained schools and academies.					
a) Maintained Schoc What are your schoc	l's projected revenue	e balances ?			
	Revenue balance (CFR lines B01 and B02)	Community Focused Extended School balance (CFR line B06)	d Total		
31/03/2016					
31/03/2017					
	emy's estimated actual Unrestricted funds		enue balances? Total		
31/08/2014 estimated actuals					
31/08/2015					
31/08/2016					
31/08/2017					
Using balances for	lemy's balances are f capital work (project support annual rever	s/refurbishments et			
Impact of an expar Falling pupil roll Other (please spec	nsion or reorganisatio	on of the school			

We are aware that schools/academies will be experiencing a range of financial pressures in addition to the major items of pay inflation and pension and national insurance increases mentioned above.

Question 2		Budget Pressures (other than pay, pensions and NI increases)	All schools and academies	
Please indicate which budget pressures are expected to cause your school the greatest challenges over the next three years. Please rank the following pressures in descending order of their impact on your school, 1 for the most severe, 2 for the next most severe etc. If a pressure is not relevant, please indicate N/A in the box.				
Staffing	Cost of agend Extra cost to e Auto enrolme	high cost staff by staff due to recruitment dif ensure recruitment and reter ent to pension schemes and management costs		
Resources				
Curriculum School Size				
Premises SEN				
Funding Changes Other	additional support for Exceptional Needs pupils) Impact of changes in last two years to funding formula			

Question 3	Leadership and Management (L&M)	All schools and academies		
This question relates to the cost of the leadership team (assistant heads and upwards) and the cost of TLRs.				
a) Are leadership and management costs increasing as a proportion of the budget? Yes/No				
b) If the proportion of L&M costs is increasing, why do you think this is?				

Question 4	New Curriculum	All schools and academies
Are you expecting the intro	duction of the new curriculu	m to increase costs?
Yes/No		
If yes, in which areas do yo	ou expect costs to increase?	
-books and materials,		
-training		
-teaching staff		
-other staff		
-other (please specify)		
	costs are expected to increas to offer more subjects etc).	se (e.g. need to replace

Question 5				
This question relates to the cost of support staff including teaching assistants (i.e. all staff except qualified teachers).				
a) Are support staff costs in	ncreasing as a proportion c	of the budget?		
Yes/No				
b) If the proportion of supp	ort staff costs is increasing	, why do you think this is?		

Question 6	Sixth Forms	Secondary schools and academies				
	a) Please indicate the amount of sixth form funding that your school/academy received from the EFA in 2010/11 and the amount projected to be received in 2015/16.					
2010/11 academic year						
- EFA sixth form funding a	llocation	£				
-number of sixth form pupi	ls on which the allocation wa	as based				
2015/16 academic year						
-projected EFA sixth form	funding allocation	£				
-number of pupils on which	h the projected allocation is	based				
b) How much formula prote 2014/15 academic year EF	ection funding is your school	/academy receiving in its				
c) Is the cost of your sixth form being subsidised by pre 16 funding? Y/N						
d) What are the particular challenges in the economics of running the sixth form?						
(e.g. small group sizes, lac	k of collaboration arrangeme	ents)				

Question 7	Impact of economy measures	All schools and academies
making or is projecting to h cutbacks on curriculum ma	on about any economy meas have to make (e.g. staff restr iterials, fewer learning suppo when the school is expecting	ucturings, redundancies, ort assistants, reduced

## SECTION 2 NEW DELEGATION AND FUNDING FORMULA CHANGES

This section outlines the new delegation and changes to the primary and secondary funding formula for 2015-16 and consults on the continuation of capping for gaining schools.

## a) Delegation of revenue funding for capital maintenance to primary schools

The Authority was required by the DfE to delegate this budget and in December 2013 undertook a consultation on which formula factors should be used to delegate this funding in 2014-15 budget shares. In the event the DfE permitted the Authority to continue to retain an element of this budget centrally in 2014-15 to fund capital work in primary school kitchens in connection with the introduction of the universal infant free meals entitlement. A further element was retained to fund the completion in 2014-15 of previously committed projects. Therefore only a proportion of the budget was delegated in 2014-15, partly through the AWPU and partly through the lump sum. It is expected that the balance of the funding will be delegated to primary schools/academies in 2015-16 using the same formula. (The equivalent budget for the secondary sector was delegated from 2011-12.)

	Delegated in 2014-15	Additional delegation in 2015-16	Total
Per primary pupil	£12.17	£18.31	£30.48
Primary Lump Sum	£3,929.40	£5,909.60	£9,839.00

(The amounts shown exclude London fringe uplift of 1.63% where applicable.)

As this delegation was consulted on last year, we are not re-consulting on it in this document.

## b) Delegation of revenue funding for capital maintenance to special schools and ESCs

The majority of this budget was delegated via top ups (special schools) or commissioned service allocations (ESCs) in 2014-15. It is expected that the remaining balance will be delegated in 2015-16.

## c) Sparsity Factor

Hertfordshire's funding formula currently allocates sparsity funding to two middle schools, Edwinstree and Ralph Sadleir. Each receives an allocation of £100,000, including London fringe uplift. The DfE is changing the eligibility criteria for sparsity funding in 2015-16, such that, to qualify, schools must have an average year group size below a set threshold.

Under the DfE's new criteria, neither Edwinstree nor Ralph Sadleir will qualify for sparsity funding in 2015-16. The Minimum Funding Guarantee will provide some protection against this funding reduction.

## d) Capping

Given the scale of the recent funding changes and in order to provide resources to fund protection under the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG), the DfE allows authorities to cap the funding increases of gaining schools. In 2014-15, in Hertfordshire, gains were capped at 3.34% per pupil. Capping reduced the budget shares of gaining schools in total by £1.0m. The Authority, in consultation with the Schools Forum, will need to decide whether to continue to cap gainers in 2015-16 and respondents to the consultation are asked to give a view on this.

Question 8	Capping	Primary and secondary schools and academies
Do you agree that gaining order to help fund MFG pro	schools should continue to b otection for losing schools?	be capped in 2015-16 in

If capping is continued, the final capping percentage would be determined as part of the 2015-16 budget process.

## SECTION 3 GROWTH FUND

The Growth Fund provides allocations to primary and secondary schools/academies which are expanding to meet basic need and to support schools facing particular difficulties in delivering the infant class size requirement.

The operation of the Growth Fund has been reviewed and this section sets out the changes which it is proposed to make.

# i) Schools required to appoint an additional teacher as a result of their expansion

Schools, which are expanding at the request of the County Council, receive allocations from the expansions element of the Fund. Additional funding is provided in this situation because the extra cohort of pupils starting in September is not recorded in the schools' census in time to generate additional funding in the normal way through the budget share. The Growth Fund therefore provides per pupil funding for the extra pupils for the period September to March. To enable schools to plan, allocations are based on the planned increase in the size of the annual cohort at the school. (e.g. increase in the Published Admission Number).

Most school expansions are by a form of entry in which case the Growth Fund allocates per pupil funding for 30 additional pupils for the period September to March. However, the situation may arise where the number of additional places required to meet the demand in the locality does not equate to a form of entry, for example 20 places. A Growth Fund allocation based on this level of increase in pupil numbers may not generate enough funding to provide for a new class at the school.

To respond to this issue, a minimum threshold for Growth Fund allocations was introduced in 2014-15, based on the principle of 24 AWPUs per class required. It is now proposed to replace this threshold with a system whereby all expanding schools, which are required to appoint an additional full time teacher as a result of the expansion, will receive a Growth Fund allocation of 30 pupils. Schools not required to appoint an additional teacher will receive a Growth Fund allocation based on the planned increase in the size of the annual cohort at the school.

It is therefore proposed that September to March funding allocations will be calculated as follows:

a) When a school is required to appoint an additional full-time teacher as a result of the allocation of additional pupils:

30

*X* AWPU (plus London fringe uplift where applicable)

X 7/12

b) When a school is allocated additional pupils but can accommodate those within existing class organisation (i.e. it is not necessary to appoint an additional full time teacher as a result of the increase):

Planned increase in the size of the annual cohort at the school (e.g increase in the Published Admission Number)

- *X* AWPU (plus London fringe uplift where applicable)
- X 7/12

(The additional arrangements required by the DfE for a Summer Term allocation to academies, to reflect their funding on an academic rather than a financial year basis, would continue on the same basis as currently.)

Question 9	Growth Fund - Schools required to appoint an additional teacher	Primary and secondary schools and academies				
Do you agree with the proposed approach for calculating Growth Fund						
allocations to expandin	allocations to expanding schools?					

## ii) Revenue Protection Factor for expanding schools where pupil numbers fall back to the pre expansion level

In addition to the September to March funding described above, the Growth Fund incorporates a protection factor which guarantees pupil funding for expanding primary schools up to 24 or multiples thereof. This means, for example, that a school expanding from 1 to 2 f.e. would be guaranteed funding for a minimum of 48 pupils in the expanded cohort if the actual number of pupils fell below this level. In the case of temporary expansions, the classes with the "bulge" cohort will be protected at the target number throughout the cohort's time in the school. For permanent expansions the protection will also be applied to subsequent cohorts until the new PAN has worked its way through the school (i.e. for 7 years in the case of a primary school).

It is not intended that this factor should provide a greater degree of protection to expanding schools than they would have received if they had not expanded. Therefore the criteria currently specify that if the actual pupil numbers of the school fall to (or below) its original, pre expansion size, this protection would not apply.

This approach is reasonable if the school's Published Admission Number (PAN) has not been increased above its "pre expansion" size. The most likely instance of such a situation is where a local agreement is reached between the Authority and the school to facilitate a temporary expansion of the school. If the additional places are not required and therefore the school's original "pre expansion" PAN

continues to apply, then the school will not have to cater for the possibility of casual admissions increasing the cohort above that original number.

However, where a school's PAN has been increased, and the school will be expected to admit up to that number, casual admissions may at any point increase the school above its pre expansion size and the school has to provide for this.

It is therefore proposed to amend the funding criteria to distinguish between these two situations. The proposed new wording is as follows:

It is not intended that this factor should provide a greater degree of protection to expanding schools than they would have received if they had not expanded. Therefore, if the actual pupil numbers of the school fall to (or below) the pre expansion Published Admission Number (PAN) and it is agreed that thereafter the pre expansion PAN would apply; this protection funding would not be payable.

Question 10	Growth Fund - Revenue Protection Factor where pupil numbers fall back to the pre expansion level	Primary schools and academies		
Do you agree with the proposal only to exclude a school from this protection where: - its actual pupil numbers fall to (or below) the pre expansion PAN				
and - its PAN has not been increased above the pre expansion level?				

#### iii) Brand new schools/academies

In recent years all new schools opening in Hertfordshire have been free schools whose start-up costs have been funded by the EFA. However, it is expected that a new primary academy will open at the new Bishop's Stortford North development in September 2016, with a second primary and a secondary academy opening the following year. The new academies in Bishop Stortford will not be free schools and the EFA will not fund their start-up costs.

Brand new schools have a range of revenue start-up costs of which the main elements are:

**Start-up costs prior to opening (** e.g. the appointment of a headteacher and other key staff for a period prior to opening, such that they can prepare the school to open to pupils).

#### Post opening costs

a)Resources- a brand new school will need to purchase classroom materials and resources

b)Leadership diseconomies of scale in the period after opening. The leadership and management of the school will need to be largely in place from the date of opening, although initially the school may only have on roll, and be funded for, one year group of pupils. The cost of leadership is therefore disproportionate as a proportion of the budget share in the first years after opening.

## a) Growth Fund allocation for start-up costs of brand new schools and academies

It is therefore proposed to fund the start-up costs of brand new primary and secondary schools/ academies, which are established in response to basic need for pupil places.

## b) Eligibility Criteria

Funding will be payable to brand new schools and academies with no predecessor school, which have been established at the request of the Authority to meet basic need for pupil places. Free schools would not be eligible for this funding as they receive start-up funding from the EFA.

#### c) Allocation Formula

#### **Pre-opening funding:**

A one off allocation of £150,000 for a primary school and £200,000 for a secondary school.

#### **Post-opening funding:**

The proposed allocation formula is based on the EFA's start-up funding payable to new free schools. (The funding amounts shown would be updated periodically to reflect any changes in the level of EFA funding for new free schools.)

#### i) Resources element

This would be paid annually as the school builds up to full capacity, at the following rates:

£250 per each new primary age place,

£500 per each new secondary age place (excluding sixth form)

#### ii) Leadership element

This would be paid annually as the school builds up to full capacity. The amount paid each year to mainstream schools with pupils aged 5 to 15 would depend on how many year groups (cohorts) for pupils aged 5 to 15 (years reception to 11) are empty (i.e. cohorts that will have pupils when the school is full but do not yet have any pupils). Sixth form cohorts in secondary and all-through schools with sixth forms would not count in the calculation of leadership diseconomies funding.

The amount that would be payable each year, given the number of empty cohorts, is set out in the table below. No school would receive more leadership diseconomies funding in total than the maximum amount in the table below. (If the school/academy recruits more than one year group within a single year, it would receive less than the maximum amount below.)

Empty cohorts (R-Y11 only)	6+	5	4	3	2	1	MAXIMUM
Primary	£80,500	£67,500	£54,000	£40,500	£27,000	£13,500	£283,000
Secondary (regardless of whether the school plans to have a sixth form)	N/A	N/A	£125,000	£93,500	£62,500	£31,000	£312,000
All- through	£125,000	£93,500	£62,500	£54,000	£40,500	£27,000	£402,500

#### Leadership element of post opening funding

Question 11	Growth Fund -Start Up funding for brand new schools	Primary and secondary schools and academies	
Do you agree with: a)the proposal to establish a new element of the Growth Fund to fund start-up costs of brand new schools and academies? b)the eligibility criteria for this funding? c)the allocation formula?			

## SECTION 4 FUND FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITH FALLING PUPIL ROLLS IN AREAS OF DEMOGRAPHIC GROWTH

Under the new funding arrangements introduced in 2013-14, the great majority of resources are distributed according to the number and characteristics of pupils.

The DfE has recognised that there may be schools which are currently small but which have surplus places, expected to be required in the next few years to meet demographic growth. It therefore makes no sense to incur expensive redundancies at such a school when the spare places it offers will be required in due course. Authorities are therefore permitted to operate a fund to offer short term protection to such schools.

The Authority considers that the lump sum in the school funding formula provides sufficient protection for small primary schools but not small secondaries. Therefore, in 2014 -15 Hertfordshire introduced a Fund for small secondary schools in areas of future demographic growth.

Primaries are not currently covered by the Fund; however, the Authority has identified a particular situation, which it would be appropriate to address through the Fund. This is where a primary school has experienced a major short term drop in pupil numbers but where this spare capacity will be required within the next few years. In such a situation, the school has to plan for its future expansion, retaining more staff and supporting larger premises, than would be required if the reduction in pupil numbers was permanent.

# a) Fund for primary schools with falling rolls in areas of demographic growth

It is proposed to introduce a fund for primary schools which have experienced a substantial short term fall in pupil numbers but where the surplus places will be needed in the near future.

## b) Eligibility Criteria

It is proposed to set the following eligibility criteria:

- The school has had a reduction in its pupil numbers (excluding nursery pupils) of both more that 20% and more than 30 pupils, between the October 2012 census and the October 2014 census.
- ii) The Authority has forecast that by Autumn Term 2019, the school's pupil numbers will have returned to, or exceeded, the October 2012 census number.

iii) The school is Good or Outstanding. (This is a DfE requirement for eligibility for the Fund) The date at which Ofsted category data will be taken will be 31<sup>st</sup> August prior to the start of the financial year to which funding relates, except that a school which becomes Good or Outstanding during the subsequent Autumn Term prior to the start of the financial year shall also be eligible.

## c) Allocation Formula

It is proposed to allocate funding using the following formula:

The decrease in the number of pupils on roll between October 2012 and October 2014 – 30, x primary AWPU x 50%

Example:

A primary school had 400 pupils on roll in October 2012 and 300 in October 2014, a decrease of 100 pupils in the number on roll. It is forecast to have 420 pupils on roll by the Autumn Term 2019. The school would be eligible for an allocation from the Fund and this would be calculated as follows (based on the 2014-15 primary AWPU):

(100-30) pupils x £2632.32 x 50% = £92,131 allocation from the Fund.

It is estimated that two schools would be eligible in 2015-16 and would receive allocations of approximately £80,000 and £100,000.

Question 12	Fund for primary schools with falling rolls in areas of demographic growth	Primary schools and academies	
Do you agree with:			
a) the proposal to establish this new fund?			
b) the eligibility criteria?			
c) the formula for making allocations?			