

APPENDIX 3

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN ISSUES FROM THE CONSULTATION RESPONSES **OCTOBER 2016 RELATING TO STABILITY FOR THE** **LOCAL SCHOOLS FUNDING FORMULA FOR 2017-18 OCTOBER 2016**

All the Worcestershire Schools Forum representatives who represent the school phases voted for stability in the Local Schools Funding Formula for 2017-18, hence the steer for the consultation was stability.

The consultation paper reflected this position but schools were given the opportunity to comment.

A summary of the main issues raised by phase is detailed below.

Primary Schools Sector

Of the **7** schools responding **5** made comments with **3** schools showing support for stability.

The main issues raised were:

- In supporting the approach for stability more details about how maintaining the current Local Schools Funding Formula would have been useful.
- The government's funding strategy for 2017-18 makes the Local Authority (LA) recommendation to leave the funding formula unchanged for stability purposes the best option.
- Proposing no change to the current structure is the safest option in the circumstances.
- Concerns on the workings of formula capping for gaining schools.
- The prospect of the reduction of the one-off per pupil funding from central reserves will only exacerbate an already difficult situation.
- Changes to the deprivation funding factor for Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index have resulted in an unexpectedly large fall in income.
- Needs to be clarity of the impact of the new Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index dataset on funding.
- Funding requires significant increases to Age Weighted Pupil Unit and the lump sum in 2017-18.
- Next year is set to be a very challenging year financially.

Middle Schools Sector

Of the **2** schools responding **1** made comments.

The main issues raised were:

- Disappointed that no changes are being put in place for 2017-18 to support schools in funding – this is required for schools in need.
- It has been a continual struggle since 2009 to keep the budget in surplus – the school will set a deficit budget for the first time.

Secondary Sector

Of the **9** schools responding **9** made comments with **7** schools showing support for stability.

The main issues raised were:

- Stability is important, especially in very tight financial circumstances where schools may need to re-model their workforce.
- Schools would rather know the indicative budget to be dealt with rather than run the risk of greater volatility.
- Understand the reasons to maintain the current formula for another year, and that if changes had been made, that these would have been mitigated through the effects of the Minimum Funding Guarantee.
- Would not want to upset the apparent stability that the formula has created in Worcestershire.
- In supporting stability noted that a continuation of the use of the current formula further disadvantages the schools serving hard pressed communities.
- The Local Schools Funding Formula has hindered the progress that schools in disadvantaged circumstances in supporting the most vulnerable learners with low starting points on entry to the secondary sector.
- Concern in terms of supporting the most disadvantaged learners in schools when compared to other LAs who are facing similar, if not more challenging funding issues.
- Do not agree with the chosen funding model but understand that there will be no change to this so reluctantly agree to the proposal.
- In order to preserve financial stability across Worcestershire Schools it is understood the LA currently has no appetite to change the formula with the new basis for funding due to be introduced in 2020.
- Concerns arise from the fact that the previous additional support of £6.2m, which Worcestershire received because of its low funding status, was simply allocated into existing formula. So 'losing' schools could not be helped and the inadequacies of the formula became further exacerbated.
- Appreciate that the LA attempted to rectify an element of this position last year by aiming to allocate additional funds into the element of the formula.
- In the current formula model gaining schools just gain further.
- The current funding formula for Worcestershire did not allow for the aggregated effect of its impact on schools with large sixth forms.
- This and other nationally imposed budget reductions in the last three years, has produced a funding crisis in some schools resulting in significant budget reductions in staffing, operational budgets and the curriculum offer.
- The lack of flexibility allowed to the LA by the Education Funding Agency to adjust factors locally is something which needs to be jointly lobbied on.
- If the LA were allowed to take control of how the £6.2m is allocated then only a small proportion of the total Schools Block Funding would be needed to assist approximately one third of the Secondary/High Schools in Worcestershire to enable some of the losses to be mitigated.