

**FAIR FUNDING CONSULTATION OUTCOMES 2024-25**  
**WORCESTERSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM (WSF) ISSUES, DECISIONS AND**  
**RECOMMENDATIONS ON 21 JUNE 2023, 21 SEPTEMBER 2023, AND VIA**  
**EMAIL ON 9 NOVEMBER 2023**

As the statutory consultation body for schools funding issues and local schools' formula development, the Worcestershire Schools Forum (WSF) met to receive and discuss the national Fair Funding Policy Direction and Local Issues as follows: -

- On 21 June 2023 for the overall outcomes of the Department for Education (DfE) policy direction for the National Funding Formula (NFF) and for consideration of potential local issues for 2024-25.
- On 21 September 2023 the changes and announced funding levels for the School Block DSG.
- On 9 November 2023 confirmation of the de-delegated and centrally retained services for 2024-25.

The main areas discussed are detailed in the following sections.

**ISSUES CONSIDERED AT THE WORCESTERSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETINGS**

The WSF considered and debated the Government's school funding and NFF policy announcements and draft communication to schools.

The WSF endorsed and approved: -

- The continuation of the existing local policy arrangements for 2023-24 into 2024-25 for the Local Schools Funding Formula (LSFF) to be based upon the DfE NFF parameters as far as is practicable and affordable.
- No transfer of Schools Block DSG into the High Needs Block DSG to support cost pressures.
- The continuation of the current arrangements for 2023-24 into 2024-25 for de-delegation for maintained mainstream schools and centrally retained services for all schools.

In doing this the WSF noted with Local Schools Funding Formula (LSFF) the need for stability so supported the continuation of a LSFF based upon the NFF parameters Year 7 and that school budget allocations will differ between 2023-24 and 2024-25 due to: -

- The MFG and capping calculation for 2024-25 having to be based upon the revised NFF parameters.
- Data not yet available from the October 2023 pupil census and other 2023 DfE data sets, including prior years, which must be used for the 2024-25 allocations.
- The final Schools Block Dedicated Schools Grant quantum for 2024-25, which will not be notified by the DfE until late December 2023.
- The need to continue to incorporate the mandatory DfE sector Minimum Funding Levels (MFLs) in the LSFF.

## **1. Local Schools Funding Formula (LSFF)**

The WSF further considered the issues for the LSFF for 2024-25 to continue to be based as far as is practicable and affordable on the DfE NFF Year 7 parameters.

The WSF noted: -

- The proposal by the DfE for mandatory Minimum Funding Levels (MFLs) in LAs LSFF.
- Despite the LSFF being based upon the DfE NFF there is still not enough resource in the school funding system to support significant demands and cost pressures.

The WSF further noted no contra indications had been received from schools and concluded overall that this gave credence to continuing with the DfEs NFF based model in 2024-25 for the LSFF.

The WSF **resolved to endorse** this approach for the LSFF in 2024-25 and for it to continue as far is affordable and practicable to using the DfE Year 7 NFF parameters using the DfE required data sets and formula factors as detailed in paragraph 34 of this report, noting the potential impact of this on individual school allocations discussed at its previous meetings.

In doing this the WSF **noted** the requirements of the NFF as the LSFF in 2024-25 as far as affordable and practicable including the effect of: -

- The actual schools block DSG allocated.
- The mandatory sector Minimum Funding Levels (MFLs) per pupil.
- The Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) of between +0.0% and +0.5% per pupil in each year.
- The potential need for a relevant cap per pupil yet to be determined for affordability purposes.

The WSF **further noted** the estimated LSFF NFF units of resource, and these may need to be reviewed together with the need for a capping % yet to be determined in January 2024, as required, to take account of: -

- October 2023 census data impact and requirements including use of estimated data for changes in school age ranges if required.
- Other DfE prescribed 2023 data changes including those from prior years.
- The final Schools Block Dedicated Schools Grant for 2024-25.
- Statutory requirements relating to the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG)/Capping and the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations.

As in previous years the WSF noted the LSFF model for 2024-25 will **not** include factors for:

- Looked After Children (LAC) – not part of the NFF and previous funded reflected in the previous increase in the separate LAC Pupil Premium Grant.

- Higher Teacher Costs – only applies to London fringe Local Authorities.

## **2. Potential to Transfer Schools Block Funding to Support High Needs Budget Pressures**

The WSF considered its statutory responsibility in deciding on the proposed transfer.

In line with the Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012, the Worcestershire Schools Forum **resolved NOT to approve** any transfer of funding in 2024-25 from the Schools Block to support High Needs budget pressures.

## **3. Delegation and De-delegation of Centrally Retained Dedicated Schools Grant Services for Maintained Schools**

The WSF considered its statutory responsibilities in making decisions on the delegation or de-delegation of services for maintained schools only currently centrally retained in the Dedicated Schools Grant.

In line with the Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012, the WSF maintained school members by phase considered these areas. By phase these WSF members **resolved to approve** to either delegate or de-delegate these areas in 2024-25 as detailed in this report in paragraphs 37 to 39 together with the method of delegation or de-delegation proposed.

## **4. Centrally Retained Dedicated Schools Grant Services**

The WSF also considered its statutory responsibilities in making decisions on other centrally retained services for all schools retained in the Dedicated Schools Grant.

In line with the Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012, the WSF **resolved to approve** the continued central retention in 2024-25 of the centrally retained services as detailed either limited to the 2017-18 budget level or as prescribed by the DfE (indicative budgets are shown either limited to previous year levels or **estimated** funding subject to final clarification and change) as detailed in this report paragraph 40 for: -

- Copyright Licensing Agency (CLA) and Music Publishers Association (MPA) licences (subject to DfE prescription) – £0.903m **estimated**.
- Contributions to Combined Services – the Early Intervention Family Support (EIFS) service budget – £0.492m **actual** (reflecting the 2022-23 amount being reduced by a further 20% because of the DfE reduction to all LAs Central Services Schools Block DSG).
- Co-ordinated admissions scheme – £0.60m **estimated**.
- Servicing of the Schools Forum – £0.06m **estimated**.
- Services previously funded by the retained rate of the Education Services Grant – £1.26m **estimated**.

## **5. Overall**

In terms of all their deliberations and decisions above, the WSF **resolved** that these be communicated to the Worcestershire County Council Cabinet as required.