

To: **Schools Forum**  
**5 December 2024**

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**2025-26 School Budgets: outcomes from the November 2024  
Financial Consultation with Schools  
Executive Director: People / Resources**

**1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the outcomes from the November consultation with schools on whether the calculation of the Block Transfer from the Schools Block (SB) to the High Needs Block (HNB) should be widened to include those schools funded at the lowest per pupil amount normally permitted by the Department for Education (DfE) through the Minimum Per Pupil Funding Level (MPPFL).
- 1.2 Results from this consultation were not available at the publication of this report and are expected to be distributed to Forum members on 3 December through a supplementary report.
- 1.3 Several budget recommendations remain outstanding from the previous Forum meeting and are also presented for a decision.
- 1.4 The report also confirms that due to the on-going delay in release by the DfE of the detailed information relating to the 2025-26 Financial Settlement for Schools, it will not be possible to present budget proposals for Bracknell Schools to the Forum until the 15 January 2025 meeting. The statutory deadline to provide DfE with individual school budgets is 22 January meaning limited consultation will be possible.

**2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 **To AGREE after taking account of the school responses to the November 2024 financial consultation on the calculation of the Schools Block Transfer / top slice to the High Needs Block, whether the calculation is updated to include those schools on the Minimum Per Pupil Funding Level.**
- 2.2 **To AGREE that after taking account of school responses to the October 2024 financial consultation on general finance matters:**

**Item for Maintained Primary School members only**

- 1) **de-delegation of budgets continues for the services requested by the council.**

**Item for all Maintained School members only**

- 2) **a £20 per pupil contribution continues to be made by maintained schools towards the cost of delivering 'general' education related statutory and regulatory duties.**
- 3) **as in previous years, funding rates for de-delegated budgets are increased at the average rate of increase in per pupil funding, currently estimated at 7.5%**

### Item for all Forum Members

- 4) to set the Minimum Funding Guarantee for mainstream schools at the lowest permitted level of -0.5%
- 5) the cost of financing any impact from the Minimum Funding Guarantee is met from deductions to schools receiving the highest increase in funding, typically those above the average rate of increase

**2.3 To NOTE that due to the on-going delay in release by the Department for Education of the detailed information relating to the 2025-26 Financial Settlement for Schools, it has not been possible to present budget proposals for Bracknell Schools to the Forum until the 15 January 2025 meeting.**

### **3 Reasons for Recommendations**

3.1 To ensure the majority views as expressed by schools through the financial consultations are considered when relevant budget decisions are taken.

### **4 Alternative Options Considered**

4.1 These were set out in the consultation documents.

### **5 Supporting Information**

5.1 At publication of this report, relevant information had not been released by the DfE for any meaningful modelling of 2025-26 budgets for schools. However, the previous meeting of the Forum received a verbal update on the most recent DfE announcements with the key information on national funding rates as follows:

- Funding rates for the National Funding Formula (NFF)<sup>1</sup> would increase by around 7.5%
- Around 7% of the increase relates to mainstreaming 2024-25 specific grants into the NFF, with the remaining 0.5% increase included to contribute to 2025-26 pay awards and other costs

Annex 1 shows the information that was tabled at the previous meeting.

5.2 One new update to the School Funding Framework was reported to the Forum. This related to the calculation of the Block Transfer/Top Slice from the SB to the HNB. The DfE has now confirmed that local authorities can request a “disapplication” to the MPPFL<sup>2</sup> values i.e. apply different values than those set by the DfE in the NFF. This means that subject to Secretary of State agreement, the calculation of the Block Transfer/Top Slice could in future include a contribution from schools that are initially funded at the national MPPFL.

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<sup>1</sup> The NFF distributes funding based on schools’ and pupils’ needs and characteristics and uses the same factor values for all schools across the country. The exception to this being an area cost adjustment (ACA) uplift which is paid to areas with high costs. BF receives a 5.7% uplift

<sup>2</sup> The MPPFL is a funding protection mechanism in the NFF that LAs are ordinarily required to ensure each individual school budget receives. The rates for 2025-26 have been provisionally set at £s to be set

- 5.3 When the 2024-25 Block Transfer/Top Slice proposals were being considered by the council, DfE indicated that a reduction to MPPFL values would not be agreed and was not therefore included as an option for schools to consider.
- 5.4 Considering this updated information, the Schools Forum agreed that it was appropriate to undertake a consultation with schools to gauge views on whether the calculation should be updated to include a contribution from schools on MPPFL values. The key considerations taken into account were:
- For consistency and equity, should all schools contribute, irrespective of their funding position? For example, the current calculation makes a transfer from schools with deficit balances but not those on MPPFL with surplus balances.
  - If the DfE had permitted a reduction to MPPFL when the initial Block Transfer/Top Slice decision was taken, would all schools have been included in the calculation?
- 5.5 Such a change would not generate a greater transfer of funds out of the Schools Budget (SB) as this is capped at 1% of the total SB, and within this, no more than 0.5% per school. If agreed, the change would mean all schools make a financial contribution, with 7 currently exempt. The additional funds from this are expected to reduce the contribution from the DSG Growth Fund allocation, resulting in more of these funds remaining in the general Schools Block budget for distribution to all schools.
- 5.6 With the detailed 2025-26 financial settlement for schools yet to be published, it is not possible now to produce robust calculations on likely 2025-26 top slice contributions from individual schools. The consultation document did provide details of the Block Transfer/Top slice contributions for 2024-25 on the agreed calculation methodology, along with potential amounts for those schools on the MPPFL. These are set out in Annex 2.
- 5.7 Results from the November consultation was not available at the publication of this report and are expected to be distributed to Forum members on 3 December through a supplementary report.

#### Outcomes from the October consultation with schools

- 5.8 The previous Forum meeting also received an update on the outcomes from the October financial consultation with schools which sought views on the level and funding required for setting the minimum per pupil funding increase from 2024-25 through the MFG, whether maintained schools supported on-going de-delegation of budgets and whether a financial contribution should continue to be made to the council in respect of the cost of meeting statutory education related duties.
- 5.9 DfE only allows Forum members representing affected groups to make relevant decisions on these matters. However, affected members were not in attendance to confirm all decisions, meaning they have been deferred to this meeting. Furthermore, several related recommendations have also been added for the first time. The report recommendations have been presented to reflect the restricted member voting requirements.
- 5.10 As a reminder, responses from the financial consultation showed clear support from maintained schools for continuing to maximise the strategic and cost-effective benefits that can arise from central management through the de-delegation route on permitted services. Furthermore, there was strong support from maintained schools to continue to contribute £20 per pupil towards the cost to the council of meeting education

statutory and regulatory duties that the DfE no longer provides LAs with grant funding to meet their responsibilities. Schools also demonstrated strong support for the treatment proposed for the MFG. Whilst the response rate reduced from 51% to 37%, there is confidence that the consultation responses provide enough consensus to make decisions.

- 5.11 The following tables set out a summary of the key elements of the financial consultation.

*Responses to the questions (note not all schools responded to all questions)*

Question	Yes	No	No. of Replies	Impacts:
1. Should minimum increases in per pupil funding be set at the lowest amount permitted by the DfE, estimated at nil %?	100%	0%	14	All schools including special
2. Should the cost of financing any impact from 1. be met from deductions to schools receiving the highest % increase?	92%	8%	13	Mainstream schools only
3. Should de-delegation continue on permitted services?	100%	0%	9	Maintained mainstream schools only
4. Should maintained schools continue to contribute £20 per pupil to LA statutory education related costs?	100%	0%	9	Maintained schools only

## **7 Advice Received from Statutory and other Officers**

### Borough Solicitor

- 7.1 The relevant legal implications are addressed within the main body of the report.

### Director of Resources

- 7.2 The Director of Resources is satisfied that there are no significant financial implications arising from this budget policy setting report.

### Equalities Impact Assessment

- 7.3 Not required.

### Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 7.4 None identified.

### Climate Change Impact

- 7.5 None identified.

### Health Impact

7.6 None identified.

## **8 Consultation**

### Principal Groups Consulted

8.1 People Directorate Management Team, school governors, head teachers, Schools Forum, and schools.

### Method of Consultation

8.2 Written reports and formal consultation with schools.

### Representations Received

8.3 Included in body of this report.

### Background Papers

None

### Contact for further information

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### Doc. Ref

[https://bfcouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/fina/bpm/FIBPSCB-FIN9.6/Schools Forum/\(126\) 051224/25-26 Schools Budget - Outcomes fr Nov 24 top slice consultation.docx](https://bfcouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/fina/bpm/FIBPSCB-FIN9.6/Schools%20Forum/(126)%20051224/25-26%20Schools%20Budget%20-%20Outcomes%20fr%20Nov%2024%20top%20slice%20consultation.docx)

Summary 6 November DfE update on 2025-26 Financial Settlement for schools

## 2025-26 SCHOOL BUDGETS

### Post October Budget Update from DfE:

- **An additional £2.3 bn funding for schools, £1 bn of which will be directed to the Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) system, with the remaining increase to the schools budget to fully fund the 5.5% September 2024 pay award for teachers and help cover pay awards in 2025-26. Additional funding will also be made available to support schools with the additional cost associated with changes to employer National Insurance Contributions.**
- **According to the Education Policy Institute (EPI), these changes represent a real-terms increase in funding of 1.8%**
- **NB: EPI a charity aiming to “raise standards in education through rigorous data analysis, research and the exchange of information and knowledge to help inform the public and hold government and decision-makers to account”**

## **2025-26 SCHOOL BUDGETS**

### **6 November DfE Update:**

- **NFF allocations to individual schools and LAs, plus supporting information to be published by the end of November**
- **This shows after mainstreaming 2024-25 grants into 2025-26 NFF funding rates, there remains a circa 0.5% increase**
- **The 0.5% increase represents the new funding to cover pay awards and other cost pressures**
- **Further funding to be provided in respect of increase in employers' National Insurance contributions. Details to follow.**
- **LA funding allocations through the Dedicated Schools Grant to be published in December**
- **LAs to provide details of individual school budgets to the DfE by 22 January 2025**
- **LAs to confirm budget shares to schools by end of February**

## **2025-26 SCHOOL BUDGETS**

### **6 November DfE Update:**

- **Level of Minimum Funding Guarantee (setting lowest per pupil increase from 2024-25) must be between -0.5% and +0.0% for mainstream schools. Was between +0.0% and +0.5% in 20204-25.**
- **Level of Minimum Funding Guarantee (setting lowest per place increase in top up funding from 2024-25) for special schools must be +0.0%**
- **Minimum Per Pupil Funding Levels (MPPFL) will ensure that primary aged pupils receive at least £4,955 per pupil (was £4,610) and secondary aged pupils at least £6,465 per pupil (was £5,995). Increase of circa +7.5%. Roughly +7% for the mainstreamed grants and +0.5% for 2025-26 cost pressures.**



## Annex 2

## 2024-25 school contributions to block transfer/top slice

School	October 2023 Provisional NOR, October 2022 other data	0.5% max deduction per school, all NFF factors reduced by 0.5%		
	Forecast budget at 2024-25 NFF rates	0.5% max reduction per school	% change from unscaled	£'s change from unscaled
Ascot Heath Primary School	£1,862,680	£1,862,680	0.00%	£0
Binfield Church of England Primary School	£1,905,870	£1,905,870	0.00%	£0
Birch Hill Primary School	£1,890,826	£1,881,574	-0.49%	£-9,252
College Town Primary School	£2,128,740	£2,128,740	0.00%	£0
Cranbourne Primary School	£961,641	£956,968	-0.49%	£-4,673
Crown Wood Primary School	£2,676,489	£2,671,950	-0.17%	£-4,539
Crowthorne Church of England Primary	£1,013,897	£1,008,937	-0.49%	£-4,959
Fox Hill Primary School	£1,055,505	£1,050,340	-0.49%	£-5,166
Great Hollands Primary School	£1,407,538	£1,400,533	-0.50%	£-7,006
Harmans Water Primary School	£2,065,616	£2,055,672	-0.48%	£-9,944
Holly Spring Primary School	£2,951,937	£2,937,411	-0.49%	£-14,527
Jennett's Park CofE Primary School	£1,844,652	£1,835,503	-0.50%	£-9,149
Meadow Vale Primary School	£2,753,958	£2,740,459	-0.49%	£-13,498
New Scotland Hill Primary School	£1,012,018	£1,007,086	-0.49%	£-4,932
King's Academy Oakwood	£1,067,132	£1,061,832	-0.50%	£-5,300
Owlsmoor Primary School	£2,363,630	£2,363,630	0.00%	£0
The Pines School	£1,548,467	£1,540,884	-0.49%	£-7,584
Sandy Lane Primary School	£1,994,885	£1,984,959	-0.50%	£-9,926
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	£1,028,151	£1,023,039	-0.50%	£-5,112
St Margaret Clitherow Primary School	£996,052	£991,090	-0.50%	£-4,963
St Michael's Easthampstead Primary School	£982,526	£977,630	-0.50%	£-4,896
St Michael's Primary School, Sandhurst	£967,252	£962,437	-0.50%	£-4,815
Uplands Primary School and Nursery	£1,001,621	£996,726	-0.49%	£-4,895
Warfield Church of England Primary School	£2,035,420	£2,035,420	0.00%	£0
Whitegrove Primary School	£1,973,830	£1,973,830	0.00%	£0
Wildmoor Heath School	£1,020,421	£1,015,340	-0.50%	£-5,082
Wildridings Primary School	£1,991,083	£1,981,339	-0.49%	£-9,744
Winkfield St Mary's CofE Primary School	£976,546	£971,751	-0.49%	£-4,794
Wooden Hill Primary and Nursery School	£1,804,118	£1,795,278	-0.49%	£-8,840
The Brakenhale School	£7,022,277	£6,987,326	-0.50%	£-34,951
Easthampstead Park Community School	£6,153,762	£6,123,194	-0.50%	£-30,568
Edgbarrow School	£6,855,502	£6,821,346	-0.50%	£-34,156
Garth Hill College	£9,136,932	£9,093,527	-0.48%	£-43,405
Ranelagh School	£5,359,238	£5,332,554	-0.50%	£-26,684
Sandhurst School	£6,659,703	£6,626,608	-0.50%	£-33,095
King's Academy Binfield - All through	£7,004,732	£6,969,798	-0.50%	£-34,934
<b>Primary Totals</b>	<b>£47,282,504</b>	<b>£47,118,908</b>	<b>-0.35%</b>	<b>£-163,596</b>
<b>Secondary totals</b>	<b>£48,192,144</b>	<b>£47,954,352</b>	<b>-0.49%</b>	<b>£-237,792</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£95,474,648</b>	<b>£95,073,260</b>	<b>-0.42%</b>	<b>£-401,388</b>

**Illustration of potential school contributions to block transfer/top slice for schools currently on MPPFL using 2024-25 budget data**

<b>School</b>	<b>October 2023 Provisional NOR, October 2022 other data</b>	<b>0.5% max deduction per school, all NFF factors reduced by 0.5%</b>		
	Forecast budget at 2024-25 NFF rates	0.5% max reduction per school	% change from unscaled	£'s change from unscaled
Ascot Heath Primary School	£1,862,680	£1,853,367	-0.50%	-£9,313
Binfield Church of England Primary School	£1,905,870	£1,896,341	0.50%	-£9,529
College Town Primary School	£2,128,740	£2,118,096	0.50%	-£10,644
Crown Wood Primary School	£2,676,489	£2,663,107	0.50%	-£13,382
Owlsmoor Primary School	£2,363,630	£2,351,812	0.50%	-£11,818
Warfield Church of England Primary School	£2,035,420	£2,025,243	0.50%	-£10,177
Whitegrove Primary School	£1,973,830	£1,963,961	0.50%	-£9,869
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£14,946,659</b>	<b>£14,871,927</b>	<b>0.50%</b>	<b>-£74,732</b>