

**CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT –  
8 FEBRUARY 2012**

**PROPOSED CHANGES TO SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA – 2012/13**

**Report by Interim Director for Children, Education & Families**

**Introduction**

1. Oxfordshire's Fair Funding Formula for schools has not been fundamentally reviewed or changed in the 20 years since it was introduced. The last significant formula change was the delegation of the Statementing budget introduced in 2006-07. Cabinet previously agreed in May 2009<sup>1</sup> that a strategic review should be undertaken. This review commenced in April 2010 and has been fully supported by Schools Forum with representatives of Schools Forum on both the Project Board and the Project Working Group.
2. The Government conducted a consultation from 19 July to 11 October 2011, on the distribution of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) to Local Authorities and a possible simplified national funding formula for schools. Final proposals are still awaited following this consultation. The Government has confirmed that no changes will be made to the distribution of DSG for 2012-13.
3. The Strategic Review of School Funding Project conducted a consultation with Oxfordshire Schools between 10 November and 16 December 2011, asking for views on proposals for a revised partnership approach to funding and moderating special needs in Primary and Secondary schools. Proposals were also included for other amendments to the funding formula, intended to simplify and smooth transition to a national funding formula and address recognised anomalies.
4. The report on the results of the consultation was discussed at a meeting of the Strategic Review Project Board ("Project Board") on 10 January 2012. The Project Board have recommended to Schools Forum that the revised partnership SEN arrangements should not be introduced generally for 2012-13, but that partnership pilot/ pathfinder arrangements be set up and supported for 2012-13 in order to test the proposals.
5. The Project Board also recommended that some of the other formula simplification changes be introduced for 2012-13, where these do not create significant turbulence.

6. Schools Forum will consider these recommendations at the meeting on 1 February 2012 and decide whether to recommend their implementation for 2012-13.

### **Proposal**

7. The recommended changes to the school funding formula for 2012-13 are outlined in the attached papers for Schools Forum on 1 February 2012. These changes are recommended for implementation for 2012-13.

### **Financial and Staff Implications**

8. The recommendations should not result in any significant redistribution of funding between schools, subject of course to pupil number changes. Any changes would fall within the areas covered by the Minimum Funding Guarantee. This means that schools do not lose more than 1.5% of their budget, as adjusted for changes in pupil numbers, comparing 2011-12 with 2012-13.
9. There is not expected to be any change in the Central Expenditure Limit as these proposals do not involve changing the total overall allocation to schools compared with that made to centrally held budgets.

### **Equality and Inclusion Implications**

10. There were a number of reasons for the initiation of the Strategic Review of School Funding, including in particular the need to link the distribution of funding with the County Council priorities of raising achievement and narrowing the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged pupils. No changes are proposed that are expected to adversely impact pupils.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

11. **The Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement is RECOMMENDED to:**
  - (a) **Consider the recommendations made by Schools Forum at their meeting of 1 February 2012; and**
  - (b) **approve the changes to the school funding formula for 2012-13 as summarised at paragraph 7 above.**

### **JIM LEIVERS**

Interim Director for Children, Education & Families

**Background Papers:** Schools Forum papers for meeting on 1 February 2012:  
Paper 3a – Outcome of Consultation re Strategic Review of School Funding  
Paper 7e - Merging of Combined Grants into School Funding Formula

Paper 7f - Miscellaneous Schools Budget Allocations and Minor Formula Adjustments

Contact Officer: Simon Pickard, Finance Business Partner – Children, Education & Families, 01865 797512

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<sup>i</sup> Cabinet paper item CA5 - 26 May 2009

<http://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Data/Cabinet/20090526/Agenda/CA260509-05.htm>