

Public Document Pack

Officer Decisions

Friday, 12th February, 2021
Time Not Specified

AGENDA

1. **Political ratification of Schools Block allocations 2021-22**
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Date Published: 12th February 2021
Denise Park, Chief Executive

Agenda Item 1

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS OUTLINED IN THE CONSTITUTION – Part 3 Section 16



DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION TAKEN BY: Jayne Ivory, Director of Childrens Services
PORTFOLIO AREA: Children's Services

SUBJECT: RATIFICATION OF THE LOCAL FUNDING FORMULA USED TO ALLOCATE THE SCHOOLS BLOCK OF THE 2021/22 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT TO BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN SCHOOLS

1. DECISION

The Director of Children's Services:

Notes the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) settlement for Blackburn with Darwen schools for 2021/22.

Notes the decision of Schools Forum to use the national funding formula to allocate the Schools Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant to Blackburn with Darwen schools.

Notes the decision of Schools Forum to allow 0.5% of the Schools Block settlement to be transferred from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block in 2021/22.

As a result of the above, ratifies the Schools Forum decision to use the national funding formula to allocate school budget shares for 2021/22 as set out below and in the papers presented to Schools Forum on the 14th January 2021.

2. REASON FOR DECISION

To seek the approval of the Director of Children's Services for the decisions on the schools funding formula for 2021/22 made by Schools Forum, and to record the decisions as ratified.

3. BACKGROUND

In accordance with current legislation, political ratification is the approval needed under the local authority's internal scheme of delegation in order to be able to issue budgets to maintained schools before 28th February 2021.

Political ratification may be provided by the local authority's Cabinet, Cabinet Member, Mayor or Director of Children's Services.

The funding for school budget shares is received through the Schools Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) issued by the Department for Education, which is payable to local authorities under section 14 of the Education Act 2002. The conditions of the grant were updated in December 2020 for financial year 2021/22 and are available from www.gov.uk.

Funding is allocated to local authorities through the national school funding formula, which seeks to ensure that schools are allocated funding fairly to meet their pupils' needs.

The formula includes pupil-led factors such as Deprivation, English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Low Prior Attainment, as well as school-led factors such as a Lump Sum and a Sparsity factor. Minimum per-pupil funding levels for Key Stage 2 (£4,180 per pupil) and Key Stages 3 and 4 (£5,415 per pupil) also apply.

Although local authorities still have some autonomy to allocate their Schools Block funding using a local formula, data suggests that two thirds of local authorities have now moved towards allocating their funding for schools based on the national funding formula, and it is likely that application of the full national funding formula methodology will become compulsory within the next few years. The vast majority of Blackburn with Darwen's local funding formula in financial year 2020/21 was aligned with the NFF, only differing in the following ways:

- The Blackburn with Darwen local formula included a Looked After Children (LAC) factor of £200 per pupil. The national funding formula has not included a LAC factor since 2018/19 when a significant increase in the rate of LAC Pupil Premium was introduced as an alternative way of allocating funding to this cohort
- The Lump Sum in Blackburn with Darwen was set slightly higher than the figure in the national funding formula

The proposed Blackburn with Darwen formula for 2021/22 mirrors the national funding formula across all factors, and includes the rates shown below.

Basic per-pupil factors

Factor	BwD Unit Value
Primary age basic per pupil funding	£3,123
Key Stage 3 basic per pupil funding	£4,404
Key Stage 4 basic per pupil funding	£4,963

Other pupil-led factors

Factor	BwD Unit Value
Primary Free School Meals	£460
Primary Free School Meals Ever 6	£575
Primary IDACI A	£620
Primary IDACI B	£475
Primary IDACI C	£445
Primary IDACI D	£410
Primary IDACI E	£260
Primary IDACI F	£215
Primary Low Prior Attainment	£1,095
Primary EAL	£550
Primary Looked After Children	£0
Primary Mobility	£900

Factor	BwD Unit Value
Secondary Free School Meals	£460
Secondary Free School Meals Ever 6	£840
Secondary IDACI A	£865
Secondary IDACI B	£680
Secondary IDACI C	£630
Secondary IDACI D	£580
Secondary IDACI E	£415
Secondary IDACI F	£310
Secondary Low Prior Attainment	£1,660
Secondary EAL	£1,485
Secondary Looked After Children	£0
Secondary Mobility	£1,290

School-led factors

Factor	BwD Unit Value
Lump sum	£117,800
Primary sparsity	£26,000
Secondary sparsity	£45,000

Other elements of the formula

Factor	BwD Unit Value
Private finance initiative per school	£300,000
Split sites per school	£25,800
Rates per school	Estimated by school
Pre-16 growth fund	£697,000
Minimum funding guarantee	2.00%

Private Finance Initiatives (PFI)

This factor enables the contractual arrangements associated with a PFI contract to be funded. It applies to three schools in Blackburn with Darwen.

Split Sites

The purpose of this factor is to support schools which have unavoidable extra costs because the school buildings are on separate sites. There are three primary schools within Blackburn with Darwen who are eligible for split-site funding and each receives a lump sum.

Pre-16 Growth Fund

Local authorities may centrally retain funding to create a growth fund to support schools which are required to provide extra places in order to meet basic need within the authority, including pre-opening and reorganisation costs. The growth fund may not be used to support schools in financial difficulty.

Minimum funding guarantee

In line with the national funding formula, Blackburn with Darwen has applied a minimum funding guarantee of 2.00% in 2021/22. This ensures that schools will see an increase in their per-pupil funding of at least 2.00% compared to the prior year.

De-delegated factors

The maintained schools continue to de-delegate funding on a per-pupil basis to support.

- Staffing costs covering maternity leave
- Staffing costs for trade union representatives
- Free school meals eligibility checks

Education Services Grant (ESG)

Schools Forum approved the continued retention of £19.00 per pupil in maintained schools to assist in funding the general duties previously covered by the Education Services Grant.

Transfer from Schools Block to High Needs block

Schools Forum approved a transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block to support high needs activities.

4. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

The funding formula has been determined in consultation with Schools Forum.

Three options of the funding formula were considered, one which mirrored the national funding formula and included a 0.5% transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block, one which mirrored the national funding formula but also included a LAC factor of £200, and included a 0.5% transfer to the High Needs Block, and one which didn't include a 0.5% transfer to the High Needs Block and incorporated higher Basic Entitlement rates than the national funding formula.

Schools Forum voted unanimously for the version that mirrored the national funding formula and included the transfer to the High Needs Block, to guard against significant fluctuations when the national funding formula eventually becomes mandatory, and to support the pressures being faced across high needs provision in the borough.

Further information is available via the following link [Blackburn with Darwen Schools Forum](#) or from the report author.

5. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of the officer with delegation and the any Member who has been consulted, and note of any dispensation granted should be recorded below:

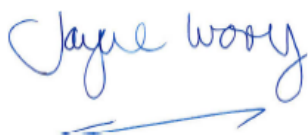
VERSION:	1
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Jenny Hackett
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DATE:	25/01/2001
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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:	Schools Forum minutes 14 th January 2020
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Signed:



Director: JAYNE IVORY

Date: 08 February 2021

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS OUTLINED IN THE CONSTITUTION – Part 3 Section 16



DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION TAKEN BY: Paul Fleming
PORTFOLIO AREA: Digital & Customer Services

SUBJECT: Replacement of Election Scanners

1. DECISION

In consultation with the Director of Finance and Customer Services to reallocate £21,000 from the earmarked ICT Capital Reserve to replace the existing scanners for registrations and elections.

2. REASON FOR DECISION

The existing scanners for elections were purchased seven years ago and are now outdated. Due to the age of these devices there is no support for these and therefore they would be cost prohibitive to repair.

A tender exercise was undertaken on the Chest Portal for the provision of the new scanners with associated scanning software. Responses were received from three suppliers with the proposal to award the contract to the cheapest supplier.

3. BACKGROUND

The Registrations and Elections function of the Council is conducted within the Governance Team. The team has the use of six desktop Cannon scanners with two scanners being used throughout the year for registration documents and a further four are then used during elections in the postal vote room.

The elections team have previously tested one of the proposed scanners and are happy to proceed with the proposed replacement model which is widely used across multiple local authorities.

4. KEY ISSUES AND RISKS

- The current scanner are over seven years old and have a tendency to jam and are not efficient due to their age.
- One scanner is currently out of operation due to faults.
- Failure of more scanners would cause issues to the Council for the function of registration as well as elections.
- Due to the age of the devices they are not efficient and need replacing with modern technology.

5. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Do Nothing – Due to the risk of more scanners failing during the election process this option was rejected.

Further information is available from the report author

6. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of the officer with delegation and the any Member who has been consulted, and note of any dispensation granted should be recorded below:

VERSION:	1
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Peter Hughes
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DATE:	05/02/2021
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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:	None
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Signed:



Director : Paul Fleming	Date: 08/02/2021
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