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# Children, Schools and Families

**Consultation responses**

**For the 2020/21 Schools Funding Formulas**

November 2019

**Children, Schools and Families**

Director: Rachael Wardell



**Response Summary**

22 Primary Schools

5 Secondary Schools

0 Special Schools

A list of the 26 respondents is given at the end of this document

**Response Analysis**

**Section 2.1.7 Schools Funding Formula Options**

Respondents were asked to indicate which schools funding formula option they would prefer Merton to use for the 2020/21 allocation:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Primary | Secondary | Special | Weighted % |
| Option A | 17 | 5 | 0 | 87% |
| Option B | 5 | 0 | 0 | 13% |

**Comments**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  | | --- | |  | | * The increase in funding for Hollymount for both formulas is considerably lower than any other school in Merton, including smaller schools. This will no doubt have an impact on our budget in 2020/21. This should be considered by the borough when Hollymount have no option but to set a deficit budget due to underfunding. | | | * Benefits most schools in the cluster | | | * The local formula will provide the school with a higher income based on the information provided in the consultation papers | | | * The local formula affords our school another year of protection before transferring to NFF. | | | * It would appear that more of the schools will be financially better with Option A. | | | * Because of the flexibility to adjust budgets through the free school meals element, this will target more funding towards disadvantaged pupils. | | | * We would prefer option B but have ticked option A in line with Merton's decision to apply the option which favours most schools. | | | * To enable the school to set a balanced budget | | | * Higher allocation for maintained schools | | |  | |

**2.2 MFG percentage**

Respondents were asked to select which level of protection they thought should be applied to schools from the options below:

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| |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | Primary | Secondary | Special | Weighted % | | Option A - Set MFG at 1.84% | 21 | 5 | 0 | 97% | | Option B - Set MFG at a different % | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |     **NB – 1 school did not respond either way**  **Comments** | | |
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| * All schools benefit | | | |
| * This arrangement offers schools maximum protection from fluctuations in income | | | |
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**Options from Section 2.4 relating to de-delegation**

Respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they would prefer a number of services to be de-delegated back to the Local Authority to be managed centrally rather than by each individual school.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Para.** | **Service** | **Primary**  **Total responses** | **%**  **Yes** | **%**  **No** | **Secondary**  **Total responses** | **%**  **Yes** | **%**  **No** |
| 2.4.5 | Contingencies - Schools in challenging circumstances | 22 | 95% | 5% | 5 | 100% | 0% |
| 2.4.6 | Contingencies - Merton Strategic School Effectiveness Partnership | 22 | 86% | 14% | 5 | 100% | 0% |
| 2.4.7 | Contingencies - Tree maintenance | 22 | 86% | 14% | 5 | 40% | 60% |
| 2.4.8 | Primary school meals management | 22 | 86% | 14**%** | N/A |  |  |
| 2.4.9 | Licences and subscriptions | 22 | 100% | 0% | 5 | 100% | 0% |
| 2.4.10 | Supply staff cost for parenting cover and public duties. | 22 | 95% | 5% | 5 | 100% | 0% |
| 2.4.11 | Support to under-performing ethnic minority groups and bilingual learners | 22 | 68% | 32% | 5 | 80% | 20% |
| 2.4.12 | Behaviour support | 22 | 91% | 9% | 5 | 100% | 0% |
| 2.4.14 | School Improvement | 22 | 95% | 5% | 5 | 100% | 0% |

Respondents were asked to provide any comments they would like to be considered by the Schools Forum on the de-delegation of budgets for 2020/21.

**Comments**

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| * It remains unclear how school can access the challenging circumstances funding. Within our local cluster a school was allocated a considerable amount where as another was not. Both schools were in deficit and both schools had asked for support. Great clarity on how you can access this fund and how decisions are made on allocations. It still feels that Attain is a confused concept and has had little impact on schools. Greater clarity on impact is needed. The quality of meals and service is not acceptable and the local authorities’ management of this has not had any impact. This is a concern from schools across the borough. I will be looking at other providers and how we can opt out of using the LA’s chosen supplier. It is not clear what the support for under-performing ethnic minority groups and bilingual learners is. How do we access the bilingual assistants? When we asked for a translator, the local authority was unable to provide us with one and we had to use a service from another authority. Hollymount’s proposed de-delegation cost is in line with similar schools. However, those schools are receiving, in some instances, an increase in funding of £77, 475 compared to Hollymount’s £3,156. This will have an impact on our budget and is likely to cause a deficit budget. As a result, we cannot pay into de-delegation services when they are not having a significant impact on the school. | |
| * I have answered No to **2.4.5, 2.4.6, 2.4.8**, and **2.4.11** because I am not convinced that my school is getting value for money from any of these de-delegated services. Over the past few years I have asked for clarification on how the money that is de-delegated is actually spent and yet answers are never forthcoming. I am sure that the majority will say yes, so I will have no choice in the matter but I ask, once again, for more transparency. School budgets are being squeezed so hard and yet we are expected to pay for these de-delegated services with very little or no advantage to our own schools. | |
| * **2.4.5** What's the rationale behind some schools getting extra funding for difficulties? We would like to see some transparency here. **2.4.6** How sustainable is Attain and what is the impact it's having - should schools do this on a cluster/local level to have more benefit? **2.4.8** Big concerns with meals. **2.4.11** Lack of understanding where this money goes - 2nd/3rd year of asking this question. Transparency is not here. Would appreciate a breakdown of where this money is spent. **2.4.12** How sustainable is this service? Is it better to have a buy-in service? **2.4.14** Should schools be doing improvement at a cluster level to have a more sustainable model - what is statutory and what is not? | |
| * It would be helpful to have some indication on how the funding provided for each of the above services is spent. | |
| * I would like some detail to show transparency as to what item 2.4.5 has been used for in the past. Is it generally used for schools requiring improvement? | |
| * With **2.4.10** how is the underspend absorbed or refunded at the end of the financial year (granted it is not a large amount)? | |
| * There has been no claim of schools supply staff cost from the Council for the last 5 years from Liberty school. This type of cover is also available under the school Sickness Absence insurance cover. Given the low claim, the school believe there is no reason to pay into this. | |
| * The shortage of personnel in the tree department at the Local Authority has impacted the service we have received. We had to contract an outside provider to treat the Oak Processionary Moth, work that was previously undertaken by the LA. | |
| * How is the Attain funding allocated? | |
| * **2.4.5** Last year we asked for information about how this had been used so its use was transparent & equitable; we do not feel this has been addressed & would ask that it is made clear who has benefited & what for. | |
| * The school has never benefited from any of the de-delegation options ticked as No. | |
| * Is there sufficient funding for tree maintenance? | |
| * Governors voiced doubts about the effectiveness of the Behaviour support service. In addition to the de-delegated amount school have to buy-in to the service anyway through the SLA. A report on the outcomes of the behaviour support service would be helpful in understanding the cost effectiveness of the service. | |
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**Section 2.7 Transfer between blocks**

For 2020/21 Merton proposes to maintain the transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block.

This is estimated to be about £640,000 based on indicative grant allocations and will be used to continue to fund the increase in numbers at special schools, the 2% increase in top-up (banding) fees which were agreed for 2018/19 (£610,000) and maintaining the prudential borrowing agreed by Schools Forum in 2007 (£30,000).

Respondents were asked whether or not they supported this transfer from the schools to High Needs block.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Primary | Secondary | Special | Weighted % |
| Yes | 20 | 5 | 0 | 94% |
| No | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4% |

**NB – 1 school did not respond either way**

**Comments**

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| * Governors believe that rather than take funding out of main-stream schools to support special schools, more funding should be directed at the main-stream schools to reduce the amount of exclusions that results in a need for special school. |
| * In particular there should be better access to interim funding for very vulnerable and challenging pupils while EHCPs are being evaluated. This could result in lower demand for special school facilities. |

**Other comments**

Respondents were asked to provide any other comments they would like to be considered by the Schools Forum.

**Comments**

* I was already very concerned about my 2020/21 budget and the allocations contained in this document, combined with the cost of de-delegation, only increases my concern and anxiety.

**Respondents**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **PRIMARY** | |  | **SECONDARY** |
|  |  |  |  |
| **All Saints' CE Primary** | **Merton Park Primary** |  | **Raynes Park** |
| **Bishop Gilpin CE Primary** | **Morden Primary** |  | **Ricards Lodge** |
| **Cranmer Primary** | **Pelham Primary** |  | **Rutlish** |
| **Dundonald Primary** | **Poplar Primary** |  | **Ursuline High** |
| **Gorringe Park Primary** | **Sacred Heart RC Primary** |  | **Wimbledon College** |
| **Hatfeild Primary**  **Hillcross Primary** | **The Sherwood Primary** |  |  |
| **Hollymount Primary** | **SS Peter & Paul RC Primary** |  |  |
| **Liberty Primary** | **St John Fisher RC Primary** |  |  |
| **Links Primary** | **St Matthew's CE Primary** |  |  |
| **Malmesbury Primary** | **Wimbledon Chase Primary** |  |  |
| **Merton Abbey Primary** |  |  |  |

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