

Appendix B - Summary of consultation responses to NFF consultation - November 2018

Background

Schools were consulted on the options that could be used to fund schools in the 2019/20 financial year as part of a transition to a National Funding Formula. The consultation document (appendix A) was sent to all schools via the Council's citizen hub webpage and ran from 15 October to 12 November.

The consultation was for schools in the London Borough of Sutton only. It was requested that only one response from a school was received and that this came from either the Head Teacher or the Chair of Governors. A summary of the responses that were received during the consultation is set out below. Questions 1-4 cover basic details about respondent's details, questions 5-10 were substantive questions relating to the National Funding Formula proposals. A summary of the reasons for the responses are given below - note that not all respondents chose to provide a reason for their answer.

Response Summary

Total Responses - There were 20 schools that responded to the consultation. 10 responses were from secondary schools, 9 from primary schools and 1 from a special school (this out of a total of 54 mainstream schools for whom this consultation directly relates, and 7 special schools/PRUs/maintained nurseries for whom this consultation indirectly relates).

Respondent types - 17 respondents were Headteachers and 3 were Chairs of Governors.

Question 5 - Which option do you think would be the best for the Council to adopt when funding schools in 2019/20 as part of a transition to the National Funding Formula?

Option	Description	Preferred option - count / %	Respondent Type
Option 1	NFF Factors	2 (10%)	1 Primary 1 Special
Option 2	NFF Factors plus lump sum for primaries	5 (25%)	5 Primary
Option 3	NFF Factors plus lump sum for all schools	10 (50%)	10 Secondary
Option 4	NFF Factors with MFG 0%	3 (15%)	3 Primary

Question 6 - Please explain your answer to question 5. Are there any specific reasons why you think this is the best option? Would you make any adjustments to the chosen option?

e.g. increase or decrease the Minimum Funding Guarantee or lump sum to create more or less money for High Needs / Growth?

There were 20 responses to this question. The majority preferred option (50%) was option 3. Those in support of this option stated the following (number of citations in brackets):

- This is the fairest option of those presented because all schools benefit from allocating the residual funding (5)
- With the exception of option 1, this option provides the most funding for growth / hybrid version to allow for more growth (2)
- This was the recommended option by the Formula Review Group (2)
- Some schools are very close to the diminutive minimum per pupil funding amounts and that additional residual funding would help mitigate pressures on the lowest funded schools (1)

The next favoured option (25%) was option 2. Those that supported option 2 made the following statements in explanation:

- Protects primary schools the best (3)
- Is the option with the least amount of growth funding allocated (1)

The next favoured was option 4 (15%). Those that commented in favour stated the following:

- Fairest option (1)
- Option that protects schools that lose the most from the NFF (1)
- Allows schools time to adjust to the changes brought in by the NFF (1)

The least favoured option was option 1 (10%). Those that commented in favour stated the following:

- Is the option that provides the most funding for SEND in the Borough which will be needed to support schools to develop skills and experience necessary to deal with more complex needs (1)
- Is the options that provides the most funding for growth (1)

Question 7: Do you agree / accept the Council’s request for 0.5% (£754k) to be transferred from the Schools Block given the pressures on high needs in the Borough?

Option	Count / %	Respondent Type
Yes	12 (60%)	4 Primary 7 Secondary 1 Special
No	2 (10%)	1 Primary 1 Secondary

Not sure	6 (30%)	4 Primary 2 Secondary
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Question 8: Please explain your answer to question 7 where possible

The majority of respondents (60%) agreed with the Council's request. The reasons stated in their responses were:

- This is accepted as necessary, but not happy with the proposal given the financial pressure on schools (7).
- Agreement on the basis that the funding is 'transitional' - recognition that the LA needs time to make SEND more sustainable as well as the fact that the LA won't be able to do this under the hard NFF (3)
- SEND has not had significant oversight in the past (1)
- The 0.5% shouldn't be a blanket reduction - schools only just above the funding floor should be exempt/tapered (1)
- Increasing numbers of pupils with SEND that require support justifies the cost pressures that this will help mitigate (1)

Two respondents (10%) didn't agree with the request chose to provide reasons. Only one responded provided reasons for their answer:

- Schools shouldn't be expected to give money allocated to them through the Schools Block to supplement an area where there has been significant overspending for a number of years (1).

30% of respondents stated that they were 'not sure' with the following reasons were given:

- As a school they are investing significantly in inclusion, with the increasing numbers of EHC plans being refused they are not sure where all the money is being spent (1).
- This is not a new issue and should have been addressed by now (1).
- Because it seems very unlikely that the 0.5% taken in 2019/2020 will resolve the long term issue around High Needs Funding, but will merely act as a short term stop gap (1).

Question 9: It would appear that Sutton will attract more growth funding in 2019/20 by up to £800-900k as a result of changes to the way growth is calculated nationally. It has been stated by the DfE that they do not necessarily expect Schools Forum to use this revised methodology when allocating growth to schools. Should Schools Forum increase growth funding to schools that are growing if this can be afforded taking into account delivery of the NFF factors, high needs and MFG?

Option	Count / %	Respondent Type
Yes	12 / 60%	7 Primary 4 Secondary 1 Special
No	4 (20%)	1 Primary 3 Secondary
Not sure	4 (20%)	1 Primary 3 Secondary

Question 10: Please explain your answer to question 9 where possible

There were 20 responses to this question. The majority of respondents (60%) thought that Schools Forum should increase growth funding if it could be afforded against the other factors. The main reasons cited in response were:

- Given that there is a lagged funding effect to growing, schools should be funded for growth where they have provided extra places to meet basic need. (5)
- Growth was significantly reduced for schools that had planned on this income reasonably and in good faith in partnership with LBS and in support of local need. Schools Forum's decision to reduce growth was understandable but now that there is more flexibility and a greater total allocation some additional growth funding should be agreed for those schools that have expanded. (2)

Of those that said they didn't agree with increasing growth funding (20%), the following reasons were cited:

- Unaffordable (2)
- Unfair on other schools (2)

Of those that said they were not sure about growth funding (20%) the following reasons were cited for the response:

- Most of the growth in the future will now be in secondary not primary. Secondary schools already receive a higher funding allocation than primary schools and therefore need it less. (1)
- Should consider the minimum per pupil funding levels when considering what additional growth to allocate (1)