

# KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

**DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:**

Roger Gough,  
Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and  
Education Services

**DECISION NO:**

18/00060

For publication

Key decision: Yes

Reason Key: Affects 2 or more electoral divisions

**Subject: School Funding Arrangements for 2019-20**

**Decision: As Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education Services I agree to:**

- a) introduce a split site factor based on the criteria agreed with the Schools' Funding Forum at their meeting on 30 November 2018,, and
- b) to repeat the 0.5% transfer of funds from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block in 2018-19 and to transfer a further 0.5% for 2019-20. Both transfers would be from 1 April 2019.

**Reason(s) for decision:**

The split site factor would be to recognise the genuinely unavoidable costs associated with schools with a single Department for Education (DfE) number but who operate on more than one site. The consultation focused on the principal if this was a factor that schools would like to see within their Local Funding Formula. Details of eligibility and funding rates are still to be developed (if there is support to introduce such a factor).

The reasons behind the proposal to transfer funding from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block to support the growing demand is set out in detail within our Consultation document.

**Financial Implications:**

The costs associated with both proposals would be fully met from the Dedicated Schools Grant and will not be a cost to Council funding.

**Equality Implications**

An EqlA assessment has been undertaken.

**Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:**

This matter was initially considered by the Schools' Funding Forum on 28 September (this discussion focused on principals) before being considered by the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on 29 November and their views will be added following the meeting. The Schools' Funding Forum will also consider the consultation responses at their meeting on 30 November.

At its meeting on 29 November 2018, Simon Pleace (Revenue and Tax Strategy Manager, Strategic and Corporate Services), and Keith Abbott (Director of Education Planning and Access) were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Gough (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education) and Mr Pleace introduced the report which set out the proposals contained within the School Funding Formula

## Consultation 2019-20.

- a) In response to a question, Mr Pleace referred to the figures set out in the report and referred to the cost of providing additional support for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). He said that the average cost of an EHCP could be calculated. Mr Gough added that the majority of the costs within the High Needs Block reflected children that had an EHCP in place.
- b) In response to a question, Mr Pleace referred to children in Kent with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and said that Kent County Council were working closely with paediatricians and GP's to seek ways in which children with ASD could be better supported.
- c) In response to a question, Mr Dunkley referred to the significant increase in EHCP's in Kent and said that Kent County Council continued to refine the outcome measures that were used for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). Mr Gough referred to the need for extra resource in the high-needs system, the extensive action programme that had been put in place for children with SEND and ensuring that appropriate support was provided in schools to ensure that the needs of children and families could be met locally.
- d) In response to a question, Mr Gough referred to the large increase in independent sector placements in recent years and said that it was important to continue to ensure that children were in the right schools, to ensure that individual needs could be met appropriately.
- e) In response to a question, Mr Pleace referred to English as an Additional Language (EAL) and said that EAL was part of the local funding formula.
- f) In response to a question, Mr Dunkley said that the demand for EHCP's was impelled by parents and health professionals. He said that Kent County Council had become less robust in terms of refusing EHCP applications for assessment, which in turn increased workflow.
- g) In response to a question, Mr Abbott said that work was being undertaken across the Council to re-establish a parent/carers forum in Kent to ensure that parents and carers were kept well informed and were receiving clear and concise information.
- h) In response to a question, Mr Pleace said that a protective lump sum of £120,000 was provided to all schools in Kent, regardless of their size.

2. The Chairman suggested that the officers circulate a briefing note to Members of the Committee, which would provide more information in relation to each of the divisions in Kent.

3. **RESOLVED** that the decision proposed to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education, to

- a) introduce a split site factor, and
- b) repeat the 0.5% transfer of funds from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block in 2018-19 and to transfer a further 0.5% for 2019-20,

be endorsed.

### **Any alternatives considered and rejected:**

Almost half of those schools who responded to the consultation are not in favour of the introduction of a split site factor into the Kent Local Funding Formula, with only 35% in support of its introduction.

With regards to the High Needs transfer, if it proceeds, the LA is confident that it would be able to

afford the LFF funding rates it has already published for 2019-20. Stability in school funding is paramount and that is why the Authority is confident that turbulence in school budgets will be avoided if this transfer is supported.

We consulted with schools about our High Needs Funding challenge – the upward pressure on provision and resources, and our proposal to transfer 1% of the SB to the HNB for 2019-20. Two thirds of those who responded to the consultation support our proposal to transfer 1% to the HNB. Over the medium term this transfer, along with management action, will place us in a stronger position so that we are more able to bridge the anticipated future High Needs funding demand within the anticipated funding levels.

Working with Special School headteachers, we have identified a further series of actions that are encapsulated in a SEND Action Plan which will be the vehicle for delivering sustained improvements over the next 18 months.

**Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer: None**



signed

6 / 12 / 2018

date

