



Sheffield Schools Forum September 2021 Executive Summary of Decisions

National Funding Formula (NFF) Consultation

- This is Stage 1 of a Consultation about how quickly the DfE should ask LAs to move towards the full implementation of the NFF, with a response deadline date of 30 September 2021.
- The Funding Working Group had previously reviewed the consultation questions and proposed response in detail.
- The Schools Forum considered the response further and input additional comments, prior to political approval and submission.
- Further NFF modelling will be brought back to the December Forum.

Falling Rolls

- The Policy was developed due to the number of births in Sheffield falling since 2012 which has resulted in a growing number of surplus places in primary schools and the expectation is that this trend will continue for the next few years.
- The Falling Rolls Funding Policy for 2021-22 amounts to £250,000, as agreed at the December 2020 Schools Forum, which will be top-sliced from the current Growth Fund. Requests from schools for support will not necessarily result in any financial award.
- The Policy will be subject to changes due to the full implementation of the National Funding Formula, and any progress made towards it.
- The Forum Approved that the Falling Rolls Funding of £250k and the Policy for 2021-22.

Broadband Contract Renewal (maintained schools)

- Each education setting will be offered an option to renew their broadband provision and education standard content filtering with Sheffield City Council (through Virgin Media Broadband). This offer will be tailored to the site. Schools are free to go to the market for their Broadband provision.
- Forum members agreed for Sheffield City Council to have a mandate to continue negotiations with Virgin Media, ensuring continuity and allowing time to consider the options which may include schools choosing to source another broadband provider to agree an individual contract.
- Further updates to be shared with the December Forum.

SIMS and Financial Management System (FMS) Contract Renewal/Procurement (maintained schools)

- SIMS is a Student Management Information System (MIS) fulfilling essential school functions.

- Sheffield City Council procures SIMS and FMS licences on behalf of maintained schools. This enables us to negotiate a reduced per-pupil cost which is passed on to schools. Academies procure their own licenses but can opt to take support.
- The current contract with SIMS is due to expire on the 1st April 2022 and has a 90-day notice period.
- The Forum approved the preferred option of a 12-month waiver to allow Sheffield City Council to have a mandate to negotiate with SIMS in time to inform schools of their need to contact SIMS / other system vendor to agree an individual contract.

Schools Insurance (maintained schools)

- The Council's existing insurance programme long-term agreement (LTA) expires on 31 March 2022.
- All Schools currently buy back into the Mandatory Insurance Scheme and Optional Locally Managed Scheme (LMS) provided in this programme. These schemes are not open to Academy Schools.
- The Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) was established as an alternative to insurance for Academy Schools in 2014 and was opened up to Local Authority Maintained, Special, Foundation, Foundation Trust and Voluntary Aided Schools in 2020 as an alternative to insurance for schools not already in an existing LTA with their Local Authority. This is charged on a per pupil cost calculation and is a membership scheme and is not an insurance contract.
- Zurich Municipal, in response to the RPA have launched their own per pupil costed option for Local Authority Maintained schools. This is an insurance contract and is governed by the Financial Conduct Authority and insurance law.
- There is no scope for schools individually choosing either scheme. The only option available is to decide which of the two schemes all schools want to join from 2022-23.
- The Forum was asked to consider the options and return to vote for the preferred option at the December meeting.

School Balances

- There are 10 schools with a deficit balance at March 2021, totalling £2.3m. The Council's Deficit Steering Group meets on a regular basis to review these schools and to ensure that they have a robust recovery plan.
- 68 schools have a surplus balance totalling £18.7m.
- The Forum approved:
 - the request to write to maintained schools requesting confirmation of balances, strategic expenditure plans and reasons for the balances, and that
 - further work be undertaken with special schools with a deficit and a link to SEND.

All Forum papers and other meeting information is available to download at

www.sheffield.gov.uk/schoolsforum

You can also download a list of Forum members on this page should you wish to raise an issue/ask a question

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