



Schools Forum

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Centre

Item

Public

Paper

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JOINT USE LEISURE CENTRES AND SWIMMING POOLS FUNDING

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1 Summary

- 1.1 The funding arrangements for joint use leisure centres and swimming pools has been the subject of previous reports to Schools Forum and, in particular, a detailed review undertaken by a Task & Finish Group in autumn 2013 and early spring 2014. The review culminated in a report with recommendations being presented to Forum on 20 March 2014.
- 1.2 At the 20 March 2014 meeting Schools Forum supported the recommendation to move over a 4 year period, starting in 2015/16, to the full delegation of the joint use leisure centres and swimming pools funding of over £1 million, which is allocated to support provision in 15 secondary schools and 3 primary schools.
- 1.3 This report updates Forum on a recent change in the approval from the Education Funding Agency on the treatment of this funding as an exceptional premises factor in the local funding formula from 2016-17 onwards, which has an impact on the strategy approved by Schools Forum on 20 March 2014.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 To note the change in the approval for the use of a joint use premises related factor in the Shropshire school funding formula from 2016-17 onwards, and to consider the impact on the previous approval by Schools Forum to move over a 4 year period from 2015-16 towards the full delegation of the funding for joint use leisure centres and swimming pools.

REPORT

3 Background

- 3.1 Prior to changes in local government in 2009 Shropshire County Council (as LEA) had, since 1968, entered into a series of joint use arrangements and agreements with other councils in Shropshire. The key drivers for this policy had been to improve the quality of provision and maximise the potential for using the facilities. Joint use funding is a delegated budget, distributed through the schools formula funding arrangements, which covers the schools daytime pupil use of the joint use facilities. The funding does not cover community use.
- 3.2 The introduction of the Government's funding reforms for the financial year 2013-14 meant that premises related factors were no longer an allowable factor within local authority funding formulas. However, Shropshire Council was able to secure approval from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) to treat the funding of joint use leisure centres and swimming pools as an exceptional local premises related factor in the 2013-14 formula and future years. As a consequence the funding for this provision has been able to be targeted to 15 secondary schools and 3 primary schools – in 2014-15 this amounted to £1,006,411 (including an element for rates on the joint use facilities).
- 3.3 Schools Forum considered a detailed report on the funding for joint use leisure centres and swimming pools at their meeting on 20 June 2013 and agreed to continue treating the funding as an exceptional premises factor for 2014-15. They also agreed to the establishment of a Joint Use Task & Finish Group to review the arrangements and to report back to Forum in the spring of 2014 on the way forward for the financial year 2015-16.
- 3.4 The Joint Use Task & Finish Group reported back to Forum on 20 March 2014, who supported a recommendation to move, over the next 4 years starting in 2015-16, to the full delegation of the joint use leisure facilities and swimming pools funding, noting that the funding released would be redistributed to all schools via the Age weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU).

4. Revised Education Funding Agency Position

- 4.1 An Authority Proforma Tool (APT) has to be submitted annually to the Education Funding Agency (EFA) by each local authority to ensure that the funding formula it is proposing for the next financial year is compliant with 2015-16 financial regulations and conditions relating to the Dedicated Schools Grant.
- 4.2 The authority has received notification that its final APT submission is compliant. However, it was noted that the approval of this exceptional premises factor is for the financial year 2015-16 only as it supports the move to a simplified formula while protecting schools in transition and because

Shropshire schools are benefiting from the additional funding allocated to 69 local authorities the next year financial year.

- 4.3 In 2015-16 the joint use funding for the 15 secondary schools and 3 primary schools in receipt of funding will reduce by 25% as per the strategy agreed by Schools Forum on 20 March 2014. The schools have been informed of this reduction.
- 4.4 Beyond 2016-17 the EFA will not approve any exceptional formula factor that is less than 1% of an individual schools overall budget share. This means that from 2016-17 onwards, any further planned reduction of 25% in joint use funding that is below this 1% threshold will not be approved as an exceptional formula factor and so the schools in this position will not be able to receive any further joint use funding.
- 4.5 The attached appendix details the position for each of the 18 schools receiving funding. The overall impact on the agreed strategy is that the funding will be removed at an accelerated rate, which could have consequences at the individual site level of managing a removal of funding over a shorter period (noting that the released funding is redistributed to all schools via AWPU, including those with joint use facilities).
- 4.6 The table below compares the impact of the EFA requirements to the original Schools Forum approved strategy for eliminating the joint use funding over the next 4 years.

Year	Original Strategy Annual Joint Use Funding	Revised Annual Funding in line with EFA Requirements	Increased Reductions in Joint Use Funding
2015-16	£753,020	£753,020	£0
2016-17	£502,020	£314,550	£187,470
2017-18	£251,010	£72,490	£178,520
2018-19	£0	£0	£0

- 4.7 Schools Forum will want to consider the impact of this development on their agreed strategy from March 2014 and whether any further action is required beyond notifying the schools in receipt of the funding of the changed arrangements for eliminating the support from April 2016 onwards.