

Appendix A



Head teachers Swindon Primary, Special and
Secondary Schools

Commissioning

Civic Offices
Euclid Street
Swindon, SN1 2JH
Tel: 01793 463280
Minicom: 01793 436659

Please ask for: Peter Nathan
e-mail: pnathan@swindon.gov.uk

Our ref: PN/scm

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Dear Head teacher

We are writing to you concerning school budgets for the next financial year. As you may be aware, some difficult decisions have had to be made which are explained below. This is in the context of a wide range of funding reductions in local government.

The Local Authority consulted with Head teachers regarding the 2016/17 budget and prior to the January Schools Forum meeting invited Head teachers to two consultation events. The budget issues were explained and the options being proposed were discussed. In addition the LA circulated documents that showed the financial impact of changes in pupil characteristics on a school by school basis and the details of the financial impact that each option would have on a school by school basis.

At the Schools Forum held on 12th January the LA requested a view from Schools Forum members on the preferred option to balance the 2016/17 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget and the proposed changes to the high need (HN) top-up banding rates. Following significant debate on the impact of the options on the budget for mainstream settings and the reduction in band values for specialist settings, forum members did not agree to any of the options put forward by the LA. Forum members stated that this was not a reflection on the LA but a reaction to the inadequate funding received by Swindon to meet the needs of its students. Swindon is a member of the F40 club and is one of the lowest funded local authorities for funding it receives from central government for its schools.

Subsequent to the preparation of the schools forum papers, additional information was received from the EFA and LA commissioners that reduced the demand on both the mainstream and High Needs budgets. As a consequence of these changes the LA has reviewed the options presented to balance the 2016/17 budget.

The High Needs (HN) savings come from a reduction in the demand for additional places and the reduction of two places in one SRP. These savings have been recycled within the HN block, which has resulted in a smaller reduction in banding values for all HN pupils.

The mainstream savings come from a reduction in Free School Meals Ever 6 numbers for two academies as agreed between the EFA and the LA. In addition there is a saving in the estimated cost for National Non Domestic Rates due to a lower than anticipated increase. These savings have resulted in a reduction in the budget gap to £1,056,780, which means that the reduction in school budgets is lower than was previously advised to Schools Forum.

Subsequent to the Schools Forum meeting, the Head of Education and the Head of Finance, Schools met with some Schools Forum head teachers to explain the changes and the revised proposals.

2016/17 Budget decisions

The Interim Director of Children Services (DCS) has delegated authority to set the DSG budget after due consultation and consideration of the recommendation of Swindon's Schools Forum.

The five original options were ranked by the LA to establish which provided the best outcome for the highest number of schools and which option had the biggest impact on the lowest number of schools. The option to reduce all factors by x% had the best overall ranking and therefore is the LA's preferred option although the LA recognises that this option may not have been the one that provided the best outcome for individual schools. In the LA's opinion this option is equitable as the reduction to each factor is in proportion to the factor value.

The DCS is proposing that an overall reduction of all mainstream school funding factors of **1.508%** is implemented to balance the budget; this will be undertaken in conjunction with a lower than anticipated reduction in banding values.

The attached appendix shows the detail and summary of mainstream school and academies' 2016/17 adjusted individual school budgets (ISB) once the reduction of 1.508% has been applied to all factors.

The DCS has proposed that the HN banding values for Special and SRP settings are as follows:

Current Band and Supplement Values				
	2015/16		Proposed 2016/17	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
Band Values	£	£	£	£
Bespoke Package	No change		No change	
Band 1	£12,029	£12,662	£11,668	£12,282
Band 2	£10,826	£11,396	£10,501	£11,054
Band 3	£7,217	£7,597	£7,001	£7,369
Band 4	£4,511	£4,748	£4,376	£4,606
Band 5	£3,609	£3,799	£3,500	£3,685
Band 6	£1,804	£1,899	£1,750	£1,842
BESD Graduated Response Assessment Class	£2,550	£2,684	£2,550	£2,684
Primary band values are 95% of secondary values				

The DCS has proposed that the HN banding values for pupils in mainstream settings are as follows:

Mainstream High Needs Top-up rates		
	2015/16 Budget	Proposed Budget 2016/17
Band 1	£8,640	£8,285
Band 2	£7,200	£6,845
Band 3	£5,760	£5,405
Band 4	£4,320	£3,965
Band 5	£2,880	£2,525
Band 6	£1,440	£1,085
Bespoke	No change	No change

The DCS has advised the Education Funding Agency of Swindon's decision on funding for all mainstream schools and academies within the LA area by the statutory deadline of 21st January 2016.


Help & Support

The LA schools finance team are currently preparing budget templates to be circulated to all settings, these will include details of how each settings funding is calculated. It is anticipated that these will be with schools shortly after the half term holidays. If you have any queries please contact Anne Mackay amac-kay@swindon.gov.uk or Ian Burbidge iburbidge@swindon.gov.uk and they will be happy to help.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Nathan'.

Peter Nathan
Head of Education
Swindon Borough Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'I M Burbidge'.

Ian Burbidge
Head of Finance, Education