

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET EXECUTIVE

22 November 2022

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Pete Roberts
Cabinet Member for a Learning Powys

County Councillor David Thomas
Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate
Transformation

REPORT TITLE: School Funding Formula Review – Extension to
deadline for final agreement

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Purpose

1.1 To request a one-month extension to 31st January 2023 for the final Cabinet decision for the proposed amendments to the school funding formula for implementation during the 2023-24 financial year.

2. Background

2.1 Section 1.1 of the Powys Scheme for Financing of Schools for 2022-23, which must be agreed by both the Schools Forum and Cabinet, states that “Any proposed changes to the funding formula will be consulted upon and agreed by the Cabinet of the Council before the end of the December prior to the commencement of the financial year to which they apply”.

2.2 This deadline puts a great deal of unnecessary time pressure on the first half of the Autumn Term each year, in order to ensure that there is adequate time for consultation on any proposed changes with all schools’ governing bodies, as required by the School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010. In order to meet the meeting schedule for agreement in December, the consultation period must end prior to the October half-term. A proposed change to the Scheme for 2023-24 that will be put to schools for consultation will be to change this to “end of January”, but this will not address the issue in the 2022-23 financial year.

2.3 In addition to the existing time pressure, at the start of this Autumn term unforeseen circumstances beyond our control led to the postponement of the September Schools Budget Forum meeting, creating a delay in the process. This was then compounded by staff resources being diverted to address the budget pressures in 2022-23 and 2023-24. The Schools Finance Team and

School Service are requesting an extension to allow for an appropriate length of time to consult with schools and governing bodies regarding the proposed amendments to the secondary and all age funding formula.

3. Extension Request

- 3.1 This report requests a one-month extension to the final decision on the proposed changes to the school funding formula, moving the decision date from 31st December 2022 to 31st January 2023. This would allow sufficient time for a meaningful consultation with all schools to run between mid-November and mid-December and then sufficient time for officers to reflect the outcomes of the consultation in the final proposals for the secondary phase formula to be put to the Schools Forum and to Cabinet in January.
- 3.2 This request has already been considered and agreed by the Schools Forum at the rescheduled meeting in October 2022.

4. Resource Implications

- 4.1 The resource implications of the final proposals for the school funding formula review will be set out in the final proposals decision report to be brought to Cabinet in January 2023, estimated values are included within the Schools Delegated Finance Resource Model (FRM). There are no cost implications of delaying the decision deadline from December 2022 to January 2023.
- 4.2 The Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) notes the content of the report and comments as follows: "The resource implications of the final proposals for decision will need to be considered as part of the budget setting process. It is important that the authority fulfils its obligations for consultation with schools on proposed changes to the school funding formula."

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 Legal: The Schools Forums (Wales) regulations 2003 and the School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010 set out the requirements of the School Funding Formula and consultation with schools. As the Powys Scheme for Financing Schools for 2022-23 were agreed by both the Schools Forum and by Cabinet, agreement for extending the deadline must be sought from both also. The recommendation can be supported from a legal point of view.
- 5.2 The Head of Legal Services and the Monitoring Officer has commented as follows: "I note the legal comment and have nothing to add to the report".

6. Data Protection

- 6.1 The proposals do not involve the processing personal data.

7. Comment from local member(s)

7.1 Not applicable.

8. Impact Assessment

8.1 An impact assessment of the final proposals for the school funding formula review will be undertaken in advance of the final proposals decision report being brought to Cabinet in January 2023. Delaying the decision deadline from December 2022 to January 2023 will not change any aspects of the impact assessment.

9. Recommendations

9.1 It is recommended that any proposed changes to the school funding formula to be implemented within the 2023-24 financial year will be consulted upon and agreed by Cabinet before the end of January 2023.

Contact Officers:	Anwen Orrells, Service Manager for Education Support Service (anwen.orrells@powys.gov.uk) Mari Thomas, Interim Schools Finance Manager (mari.thomas@powys.gov.uk)
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Pete Roberts, Cabinet Member for a Learning Powys
Head of Service: Corporate Director:	Georgie Bevan (Education) / Jane Thomas (Finance) Lynette Lovell – Director of Education and Children