

CABINET – 01 JUNE 2021**PROCEDURAL MATTERS****Members Questions****Question (1) Will Forster (Woking South):**

The Local Government Association has recently reported that bringing forward the reporting deadline for pupils becoming eligible for the pupil premium from January 2021 to October 2020 would result in a funding loss of £118m across the country. Schools in England will not receive funding for those primary and secondary pupils who qualified for the extra payment between October 2020 and January 2021 until October 2021, with schools having to bridge the gap.

1. Would the Cabinet Member confirm the number of pupils in Surrey affected by the change and the corresponding shortfall in funding?
2. Will the Cabinet Member agree to lobbying the Government to reverse this decision?
3. Will the Cabinet Member commit Surrey County Council to providing financial support to any schools adversely affected by the change of deadline?

Reply:

I would like to thank the County Councillor for Woking South for his question as it draws attention to a cohort of children that the County Council has gone to great lengths to support through this pandemic. Children eligible for pupil premium are also eligible for free school meals which for some children provides the sole nutritious meal of their day. Over the Christmas, February half term, Easter and May school holidays (6 weeks in total) we have provided supermarket vouchers to all children eligible for pupil premium and free school meals so that they would not go hungry in the school holidays. In total, we have supported 20,000 children to be fed with funding of £2.5million.

1. We have been monitoring the impact of the Department for Education's decision to calculate eligibility for pupil premium from October 2020 rather than January 2021 on our schools in Surrey, both individually and collectively. Our estimates are that the loss of funding collectively is £1.1million, and this relates to approximately 900 Surrey pupils. Clearly, taken as a whole, this is a significant financial impact, although when broken down to individual school level, the financial consequences vary by setting depending on the number of pupils attending who fall into this category.
2. I will raise this issue with Ministers in the Department for Education so that they are aware of the impact of this decision and have the opportunity to review it.
3. The Council is prevented by national policy to use its general funds to subsidise school funding and thus we are unable to fund the gap for schools that has been created. We will however discuss with the Schools Forum what mechanisms we have through the schools funding formula to mitigate financial impacts on individual schools.

Mrs Denise Turner-Stewart
Cabinet Member for Education and Learning
01 June 2021

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