

Summary of Questions and Responses (Local Government Finance Settlement 2017/18)

Question 1: What other, additional grants, beyond those set out in para 2.2.2, could the Government consider including in the multi-year offer?

The funding to be made available in respect of the New Homes Bonus scheme and how it is to operate should be made clear as part of the multi-year offer to further aid financial planning. The inclusion of administration grants, e.g. housing benefits and council tax reduction support in the multi-year offer would again aid financial planning.

Question 2: Do you agree with the proposed methodology for allocating funding for the improved Better Care Fund as outlined in paragraph 2.3.4?

This is a matter for authorities with responsibility for adult social care to respond, but noting that allocations in respect of disabled facilities grants are met from the iBCF and it is assumed that these allocations will continue to be separately identified with a requirement that they be passed on in full.

Question 3: Do you agree with the council tax referendum principles for 2017-18 proposed in paragraphs 3.2.1 to 3.2.2 for principal local authorities?

To give greater control and flexibility over their finances council tax levels should be a decision for councils and the council tax referendum principles withdrawn, a point made on a number of occasions in the past.

Question 4: Do you agree that referendum principles should be extended to larger, higher-spending town and parish councils in 2017/18 as set out in paragraphs 3.3.3 to 3.3.4?

If the referendum principles are not to be withdrawn, to apply the referendum principles to larger, higher spending town and parish councils might be appropriate. However, we would not support them being applied to all town and parish councils for the reasons referred to in the consultation paper – i.e. proportionality, practicality and cost; and in the scheme of things is unwieldy and unnecessary. The precept at which the referendum principles apply should be at least £500,000 and for this to be subject to annual indexation.

Question 5: Do you agree with the proposed approach to take account of the transfer of responsibilities to town and parish councils as outlined in paragraph 3.3.5?

If the referendum principles are not to be withdrawn, but extended, they should apply to larger, higher spending town and parish councils only. On that basis, agree.

Question 6: Do you have any comments on the suggestion that referendum principles may be extended to all local precepting authorities as set out in paragraph 3.3.6? If so what level of principle should be set?

If the referendum principles are not to be withdrawn, to apply the referendum principles to larger, higher spending town and parish councils might be appropriate. However, we would not support them being applied to all town and parish councils for the reasons referred to in the consultation paper – i.e. proportionality, practicality and cost; and in the scheme of things is unwieldly and unnecessary.

Question 7: Do you have views on the practical implications of a possible extension of referendum principles to all local precepting authorities as set out in paragraph 3.3.7?

See response to question 6.

Question 8: Do you agree with the methodology for calculating the revaluation adjustment to business rates tariff and top-up payments as outlined in paragraphs 3.4.1 to 3.4.8?

The proposed approach would appear to be a logical way to adjust for revaluation.

Question 9: Do you agree that the methodology as outlined in paragraphs 3.5.5 to 3.5.13, for calculating changes to the local share of business rates and tariff and top up payments is correct and does not adversely affect non-pilot areas?

The proposed approach would appear not to adversely affect non-pilot areas.

Question 10: Are you contemplating a voluntary transfer of funding between the Combined Authority and constituent authorities?

Not applicable.

Question 11: Do you have any comments on the impact of the proposals for the 2017-18 settlement outlined in this consultation document on persons who share a protected characteristic? Please provide evidence to support your comments

No comments.