

The 2019-20 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement Consultation

Preamble

The provisional local government finance settlement did not include Kent as a business rates pilot for 2019/20.

We strongly urge government to reconsider this decision and to include Kent as a pilot for 2019/20.

Firstly, because the Ministry specifically asked for two-tier areas to come forward as pilots in the current year to help them understand how the system could work. Kent & Medway is the largest pilot and was described by officials as an exemplar bid. We have received no feedback explaining why our bid for pilot status in 2019/20, which was previously well received and called strong, was unsuccessful this year. Secondly, Kent is facing unprecedented challenges arising from Brexit and its position as the 'front-line county' with Europe. Even if there is no impact to our trading relationship, we have been significantly affected by preparations for Brexit including both physical disruption and opportunity costs from a lack of investment arising from the uncertainty caused by Brexit and the requirement for staff to be heavily involved in contingency planning.

Summary of Questions and Responses

Question 1: Do you agree with the methodology for allocating Revenue Support Grant in 2019-20?

Agree.

Question 2: Do you agree with the Government's proposed approach to allocating £410 million un-ringfenced funding for adult and children's social care according to the existing Adult Social Care Relative Needs Formula?

Not applicable.

Question 3: Do you agree with the Government's proposal to fund the New Homes Bonus in 2019-20 with the planned £900 million from Revenue Support Grant, with any additional funding being secured from departmental budgets?

Agree.

Question 4: Do you agree with the Government's proposed approach to paying £81 million Rural Services Delivery Grant in 2019-20 to the upper quartile of local authorities based on the super-sparsity indicator?

Not applicable.

Question 5: The Government intends to distribute £180m of the levy account surplus. Do you agree with the proposal to make this distribution on the basis of each authority's 2013-14 Settlement Funding Assessment?

Agree.

Question 6: What are your views on the council tax referendum principles proposed by the Government for 2019-20?

Remain of the view that council tax increases should be a local decision, but if that is not an option support the council tax referendum principles proposed.

Question 7: What are your views on the Government's approach to tariffs and top-ups in 2019-20?

Support the approach to tariffs and top-ups in 2019-20.

Question 8: Do you have any comments on the impact of the 2019-20 local government finance settlement on those who share a protected characteristic, and on the draft equality statement published alongside this consultation document? Please provide supporting evidence.

No comments.