Fair Funding Review Consultation Response from City of York Council

Question 1): What are your views on the Government's proposals to simplify the relative needs assessment by focusing on the most important cost drivers and reducing the number of formulas involved?

On the whole we support the Government's proposals to simplify the relative needs assessment by focussing on the most important cost drivers and reducing the number of formulas.

However, we note that this consultation does not touch on the resources block or damping. So whilst we agree with the simplification of the existing mechanism, we await consultation on these in order to assess the overall impact of the fair funding review.

Question 2): Do you agree that the Government should use official population projections in order to reflect changing population size and structure in areas when assessing the relative needs of local authorities?

We support the use of official population projections and would support any mechanism which is capable of fairly reflecting underlying changes in population so that they are recognised as soon as practicably possible in funding allocations.

Question 3): Do you agree that these population projections should not be updated until the relative needs assessment is refreshed?

We would support any move that provided reliable and updated population figures to be included in the 2020/21 Settlement.

Question 4): Do you agree that rurality should be included in the relative needs assessment as a common cost driver?

Question 5): How do you think we should measure the impact of rurality on local authorities' 'need to spend'? Should the relative needs assessment continue to use a measure of sparsity or are there alternative approaches that should be considered?

Rurality is not a significant issue to City of York Council, so we do not have any strong views on this question.

Question 6): Do you agree that deprivation should be included in the relative needs assessment as a common cost driver?

We agree that deprivation should be included in the relative needs assessment as a common cost driver. However, we feel that only some of the services, such as housing and homelessness, intended for inclusion in the foundation formula correlate to deprivation. We do not feel that many foundation formula services correlate to deprivation and we would want to ensure that deprivation is not overstated in the foundation formula.

Question 7): How do you think we should measure the impact of deprivation on 'need to spend'? Should the relative needs assessment use the Index of Multiple Deprivation or are there alternative measures that should be considered?

Deprivation measures are currently too narrowly focussed around benefits take-up. We support a greater focus on Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) measures in terms of giving a less one dimensional view of deprivation as is the case with existing formulae.

Question 8): Do you have views on other common cost drivers the Government should consider? What are the most suitable data sources to measure these cost drivers?

We do not feel that there are other common cost drivers.

Question 9): Do you have views on the approach the Government should take to Area Cost Adjustments?

We support the proposal to widen the ACA to cover other running costs in addition to labour costs and rateable values.

Question 10a): Do you have views on the approach that the Government should take when considering areas which represent a small amount of expenditure overall for local government, but which are significant for a small number of authorities?

Question 10b): Which services do you think are most significant here?

We support the concept of identifying specific expenditures which are limited to a small number of authorities, such as drainage board levies.

Question 11a): Do you agree the cost drivers set out above are the key cost drivers affecting adult social care services?

Question 11b): Do you have views on what the most suitable data sets are to measure these or other key cost drivers affecting adult social care services?

We support the Government's thinking set out in the consultation paper, particularly in respect of the focus on means testing and higher levels of impairment. We feel that the existing proxies for deprivation are too narrowly focussed around income deprivation, particularly benefits rates.

Question 12a): Do you agree that these are the key cost drivers affecting children's services?

Question 12b): Do you have views on what the most suitable data sets are to measure these or other key cost drivers affecting children's services?

We support the Governments thinking set out in the consultation paper and note the additional work to be undertaken on Children's Services.

We feel that the existing indicators for deprivation are too narrowly focussed around income deprivation, particularly benefit rates, and would welcome investigation of other cost drivers for Children's Services.

Question 13a): Do you agree that these are the key cost drivers affecting routine highways maintenance and concessionary travel services?

Question 13b): Do you have views on what the most suitable data sets are to measure these or other key cost drivers affecting routine highways maintenance or concessionary travel services?

We agree with the highways maintenance and concessionary fares cost drivers.

Question 14a): Do you have views on what the most suitable cost drivers for local bus support are?

Question 14b): Do you have views on what the most suitable data sets are to measure the cost drivers for local bus support?

We do not have any further suggestions, other than those already proposed.

Question 15a): Do you agree that these are the key cost drivers affecting waste collection and disposal services?

Question 15b): Do you have views on what the most suitable data sets are to measure these or other key cost drivers affecting waste collection and disposal services?

We do not support the proposal that deprivation is a key cost driver for waste collection and disposal services.

We do not have any further suggestions for cost drivers in this area.

Question 16a): Do you agree these remain the key drivers affecting the cost of delivering fire and rescue services?

Question 16b): Do you have views on which other data sets might be more suitable to measure the cost drivers for fire and rescue services?

This is not applicable to City of York Council, so we do not have any views on this question.

Question 17a): Do you agree these are the key cost drivers affecting the cost of legacy capital financing?

Question 17b): Do you have views on what the most suitable data sets are to measure these or other key cost drivers affecting legacy capital financing?

We agree with the capital financing cost drivers.

Question 18a): Are there other service areas you think require a more specific funding formula?

Question 18b): Do you have views on what the key cost drivers are for these areas, and what the most suitable data sets are to measure these cost drivers?

We do not feel that there are any other services which require a more specific funding formula.

Question 19): How do you think the Government should decide on the weights of different funding formulas?

Question 20): Do you have views about which statistical techniques the Government should consider when deciding how to weight individual cost drivers?

We are pleased that the Government has recognised some of the limitations with multiple regression modelling. Whilst we accept that regression modelling is a necessary part of the system, we feel that the Government should be prepared to use other statistical techniques as appropriate.

Question 21): Do you have any comments at this stage on the potential impact of the options outlined in this consultation document on persons who share a protected characteristic? Please provide evidence to support your comments.

We have no comments in respect of this question