

NORFOLK SCHOOLS FORUM

AGENDA

Meeting on Wednesday 16 November 2022 09:00 – 13:00

Venue: Room JB031 Jubilee Building Easton College

Members will be asked on the day for their permission to record the meeting to support the preparation of the minutes. The recording will be deleted once the minutes are approved.

Individual members, named below, are asked to provide verbal reports for these items.

09:00	1 Welcome and Introductions Apologies	Report	
09:05 – 09:30	2 Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising		2 - 7
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of Vice-Chair – update (Martin White) • School Catering Contract – update (Sam Fletcher) • Safety Valve Executive Board – members (Martin White) • Central Schools Services Block – item 3b 		
09:30 – 10:40	3 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)		
	a) Schools Block (including consultation outcomes and Schools Block transfer decision)	Comment/ Decision	8-52
10:40 – 11:00	Break		
11:00 – 12:15	b) De-delegation/CSS Block including de-delegation of services for maintained schools previously from the Monitoring & Improvement Grant	Decision	53-79
	c) Notional SEN	Comment	80-87
	d) Early Years Block 2023-24 Funding Formula Update	Information	88-93
	e) DSG Safety Valve (standing item)		
12:15 – 12:40	4 MyOracle – update (Sam Fletcher/John Baldwin)		
12:40 – 12:50	5 Review Future Meeting Plan		94
12:50 – 13:00	6 Any Other Business		
	7 <u>Date of Next Meeting</u> Friday 27 January 2023 09:00 – 12:00 hours Venue TBC		

Norfolk Schools Forum

Minutes of Meeting held on Friday 30 September 2022 at Easton College
09:00 – 12:30 hours

Present:

Lacey Douglass
Mike Grimble, Avenue Junior School
Bob Groome
Glyn Hambling, Unity Education Trust
David Hicks
Carol Jacques
Clare Jones, Boudica Schools Trust
Howard Nelson, Diocese of Norwich
Peter Pazitka, SJB CMAT
Joanne Philpott
Sarah Porter, The Heart Education Trust
Rachel Quick, The Wherry School
Sarah Shirras, St Williams Primary
Joanna Tuttle, Aylsham High School
Martin White, (Chair) Nebula Federation
Rebecca Wicks, The Clare School
Edwina Wright, Enrich Learning Trust

Michael Bateman

Martin Brock

John Crowley

Marilyn Edgeley
Dawn Filtness
Nicki Rider
Sara Tough

Apologies:

Adrian Ball, Diocese of Ely Multi Academy
Chris Snudden

Martin Colbourne, City College
David Shaw, Creative Education Trust
Vicky Warnes

Representing

Early Years Representative
Primary Maintained Governors
National Education Union
Alternative Provision
Academies
Maintained Nursery School
Academies
Diocesan Board of Education
Academies
Academies
Academies
Special School Academy
Primary Maintained Schools
Secondary Maintained Schools
Primary Maintained Governors
Maintained Special Schools
Academies

Assistant Director, SEND Strategic
Improvement & Early Effectiveness
Accountant, Schools, SEN, and Early
Years

Assistant Director Learning &
Achievement
Admin Officer
Finance Business Partner
Head of High Needs SEND
Executive Director Childrens
Services

Academies
Director of Learning &
Inclusion
16 – 19 Representative
Academies
National Education Union

1. Welcome and Introductions

Edwina Wright attended as Academy Substitute

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising

- Central Schools Services Block will be covered in item 4.
- Schools Catering Contract

Officers confirmed that there was a plan to review this next week at the Catering Board meeting.

Officers confirmed this will be an Executive Director or a Norfolk County Council Members decision. Catering Board will look at this for due diligence.

Forum members suggested it comes back to Forum for scrutiny.

It was highlighted that schools need information to be able to decide if they wish to continue with the Norse contract and, if they did not want to go with the Norse contract, it could be too late to look at other options. There was a question around whether there can be a short-term contract with Norse, enabling schools to change provider if necessary.

Officers confirmed that review will be undertaken by the Catering Board, Schools Forum and then Executive Director Children's Services.

Action

- **Sam Fletcher/Sara Tough to discuss timeline and obtain clarity regarding the next steps NCC will follow. Schools Forum will have an opportunity to review**
- MyOracle

Action: Sam Fletcher to check if communication went out to all schools.

Forum members commented on the issues schools were still experiencing such as staff still not being paid on time and that John Baldwin had not re-scheduled the briefing to Forum. It was suggested getting feedback from schools and Forum requested that a survey is distributed to schools to ensure we have an accurate position of the key issues that can then be discussed at a meeting with volunteered Forum Members.

Action:

- **Sara Tough to discuss issues with Simon George**
- **Sam Fletcher to set up meeting and potentially consider a survey**

School Forum Group to join discussions:

Glyn Hambling
Howard Nelson
Jo Tuttle
Carole Jacques
Bob Groome
Sarah Shirras
Martin White

3. Appointment of Vice Chair

Sarah Porter, Bob Groome and Glyn Hambling all nominated themselves in advance of the meeting. During the item, Bob Groome withdrew his nomination on the basis of Glynn Hambling's nomination.

Members felt that they did not have sufficient information to complete a vote during the meeting and so it was agreed that Glyn Hambling and Sarah Porter would email a profile to the Clerk of Forum to share with via email with all Members so that a vote can take place at the start of the next meeting.

4. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

a) DSG Management Plan Update and Safety Valve Programme

Michael Bateman went through the paper and thanked School Forum members who had attended the Safety Valve meetings in August and September.

Officers highlighted that the plan submitted to the DfE assumes the on-going transfer from the schools block to the high needs block and that the DfE expect this to be the case, however, this is also covered in the fair funding consultation.

Comments:

HN – With schools suffering huge rise in costs I would find it difficult to vote for a transfer from Schools Block to High Needs Block.

ST – We have discussed robustly with Department of Education (DfE) and they are clear that this has to happen, they would not accept a plan without this – we hope investment will bring people together.

HN – I believe inflation pressure on salaries will put pressure on the plan.

MW – The question of a transfer will go out to consultation as part of Fair Funding process.

Michael B – Effectively if the DfE agree the plan then it is a fair assumption that the transfer would be agreed, but this would be a separate Secretary of State decision making process. Therefore, we need to make sure we convey schools' views to the Secretary of State regarding the impact of the transfer on individual school budgets.

GH – Does the disapplication include the School Supplementary Grant – Does timeline of disapplication fall in line with decisions?

DF – This will be rolled into the schools block going forward.

GH – Important people understand this.

DF – Timeline will need to submit final version of plan beginning of October and shortly after some Capital Bids. Secretary of State decision on the Safety Valve application will be December and before that is the normal disapplication deadline (mid-November).

Michael B – Monitoring will be significant – quarterly monitoring

MG – 20225/26 concerns in paper where it says 800 independent places will be taken out but only adding 300 initially.

DF – New special schools place availability coming online and SRBs are in line with this – we have done a review of how you would reduce that independent usage - who is placed in independent provision over next couple of years is key.

MW – Tribunal system could put a spanner in the works.

ST – Need to bring state provision into play also stem the flow. But also is about a culture change.

CJ – How will this align with Early Years provision?

Michael B – The School and Community Cluster will need to ensure that it is modelled in a way that takes account of early years provision, for example the Thetford schools pilot has taken this approach and will be used, in part, as the basis for the new model.

ST - Absolutely expect that community resources development is part of this program. Family Hubs – we have been successful in getting funding.

CJ – Request information on Family Hubs.

Representative for Executive Board:

MW – Important to make sure there is spread of representation across the board.

Michael B – School Forum as a full body will remain critical throughout the process.

The following people volunteered:

Martin White, Carole Jacques, Lacey Douglass, Sarah Shirras, Jo Tuttle, Bob Groome, Sarah Porter, Rachel Quick, Glyn Hambling, Mike Grimble.

Action: The Chair will consider which members should sit on the Executive Board to achieve the best possible representation across the sectors.

b) Provisional DSG Allocations for 2023-24 and Fair Funding Consultation for Mainstream Schools

This year's Fair Funding Consultation/Survey is planned to run from 4 October to 1 November.

Members said people need to understand the proposals and may view that their responses would be disregarded because of the Safety Valve program needed to be addressed. Members highlighted that some finance staff in schools did not attend headteacher meetings and it would also be a good idea to reach out to them. Members said that Governors needed to be included in communications and suggested the Governor website. Members said there needed to be a vehicle to reach schools that were not members of Educate Norfolk. Officers said they would take all comments into account and attend as many headteacher and school leader groups as possible

Action:

Sam/Michael to co-ordinate and liaise with colleagues to devise a series of communications.

Members suggested getting across to schools that this was more of a survey than a consultation. Officers said that regulations stated they must 'consult' with schools but would look at promoting as a survey.

MW – Important to have input into the school leaders and headteacher meetings.

Martin B highlighted the options in the paper to implement alternatives to the use of the hard funding cap in Norfolk. Members said this was a very complex issue and that people will vote for what is best for their setting.

Officers were inclined to not ask people to rank their responses. Members agreed.

Members suggested communicating this as an Impact and Feedback Survey.

c) Early Years Funding Consultation

John Crowley went through the paper.

Indicative 2023-24 hourly rates for Norfolk published by the DfE as part of their consultation are on page 38 of the papers. NCC has submitted a response recommending the use of the most recent data sets to determine allocations to LAs.

Comments are very useful to guide us through the work we need to do.

What we intend to do this term is to run a full consultation of the local Norfolk formula. We do not expect that to present providers with a range of options as experience shows that many would choose the one that is best for them financially and that does not provide meaningful information. What we are keen to do is get a view from providers as to whether the direction of travel that we set years ago is still the right one or should we be looking in different areas. So, section 6 gives those principles we intend to consult on and gives the opportunity for providers to tell us of other areas we could consider as well.

We are keen to form a consultative group where we can discuss the implications. Things like changes coming from the Safety Valve, Family and Community Clusters and the additional sources of funding and support that will be available. This would be a permanent group that we would establish to set a longer-term Early Years strategy, this group would look at the consultation responses and make a sector recommendation to Schools Forum.

Comments:

SS – Working Group last year was effective.

LD - Feeling across the sector that things are done to us and we are not engaged in the process of how decisions are arrived at. Feeling work we do gets ignored – want to raise the profile.

CJ – also found consultative group useful for getting up to date information.

Action:

Survey to be undertaken alongside the Schools Fair Funding consultation in line with the proposals in the report

d) Central Schools Services Block: information on LA Services

Chris Snudden was unable to attend for this item – John Crowley said she had asked that information on monitoring and improvement grant and support work around inclusion be highlighted and Chris will be bringing to Schools Forum an ask for funding to continue to this work.

Officers confirmed that there would be a request for de-delegation at the next meeting and that Chris Snudden would have a discussion with the three maintained representatives before that meeting.

The Chair said the main concern is that there is a list of responsibilities by the LA but this does not show the funding source. Forum would be interested to know how much each item cost, such as the authority intervening in schools causing concern or intervention work.

Action: Sara Tough said she would like to be involved in the meeting with Chris Snudden/Sarah Shirras/Martin White/Mike Grimble. The representatives will need to understand what de-delegation is being requested, specifically what it would pay for and what intervention that would provide.

5. Next Meeting

The next meeting is on 16 November – it was agreed that this be held in room JB031, Jubilee Building, Easton College. Colleagues are reminded this meeting is scheduled to run from 09:00 – 13:00 hours.

6. AOB

Michael Bateman highlighted that there is new operational guidance around notional SEN budget. He said he would like to bring a paper to the November meeting as part of the Safety Valve update.

Schools Forum

Item No. 3a

Report title:	Fair Funding Consultation / National Funding Formula
Date of meeting:	16 November 2022

Executive summary

This report summarises the responses to the autumn 2022 Fair Funding Consultation with Norfolk schools and sets out the proposed changes to the funding distribution formula of the Schools Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) from April 2023 as well as proposed changes to the Scheme for Financing Schools.

PART 1: FAIR FUNDING CONSULTATION/FUNDING FORMULA

Schools Forum are asked to:

- Consider and comment on the proposed changes to the distribution formula of the Schools Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant;
- Consider the feedback from the autumn 2022 Fair Funding Consultation;
- Vote on continuation of the movement of 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block for 2023-24;
- Comment on the potential movement of additional funding (an additional 1%) from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block for 2023-24 and provide a clear indication as a Forum as to whether such a movement is supported;
- Make a recommendation for how any necessary funding cap should be implemented in 2023-24, considering feedback from the autumn 2022 Fair Funding Consultation.

PART 2: SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS

Schools Forum members representing maintained schools are asked to:

- Consider and comment on the proposed changes to the Scheme for Financing Schools;
- Consider the feedback from the autumn 2022 Fair Funding Consultation;
- Approve, if members agree, proposed changes to Scheme for Financing Schools (maintained school representatives only) taking into account feedback from the autumn 2022 Fair Funding Consultation for:
 - Analysis of balances
 - School Building Maintenance holding account

Funding Formula Consultation Responses

The Local Authority received 37 completed responses to the online survey (and a further 61 partial responses that were not submitted and discarded). Of these responses:

- 22 were from individual schools/academies within the Primary sector
- 2 were from individual schools/academies within the Secondary sector
- 5 were from federations or partnerships of schools representing the Primary sector
- 6 were from academy trusts representing multiple academies
- 2 were from special schools

A total of 110 schools were represented within the responses, out of 422¹ state-funded schools in Norfolk.

The overall number of **schools** represented within each of the responses were as follows:

	Primary	Secondary	Federations /Partnerships	Academy Trusts	Special Schools	Total
Number of Responses	22	2	5	6	2	37
Representing:						
Primary	22		10	53		85
Secondary		2		18		20
All-Through				1		1
Special School				2	2	4
Total Schools	22	2	10	74	2	110

The number of **pupils** represented within the responses was as follows (out of c.119k² pupils in state-funded schools in Norfolk):

	Primary	Secondary	Federations /Partnerships	Academy Trusts	Special Schools	Total
Number of Responses	22	2	5	6	2	37
Total Pupils	4,912	1,626	2,115	29,274	261	38,188

As part of the survey, we asked for any other comments on funding formula or Scheme for Financing Schools.

¹ [Pupil Numbers on Roll \(norfolk.gov.uk\)](http://norfolk.gov.uk)

² [Pupil Numbers on Roll \(norfolk.gov.uk\)](http://norfolk.gov.uk)

Some of the comments received were from schools that were unhappy with the timing and notice period of the consultation. The timing of the consultation, was, as usual very tight as it has to fit in between Schools Forum meetings. Despite this, the survey was open for approximately 3 and a half weeks from 7th October to 1st November, and schools were notified via MI sheet on 4th October, with reminders sent on 11th and 18th of October. Whilst the period did include a half-term holiday, the maximum amount of time possible was given for schools/trusts to make their responses.

The comments received are provided in **Appendix D**.

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper, please get in touch with:

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PART 1: FAIR FUNDING CONSULTATION/FUNDING FORMULA

1. National Funding Formula 2023-24

The DfE announced in their 'Schools Operational Guide: 2023 to 2024' that the following changes will be made to the 2023-24 National Funding Formula:

- Additional support directed to disadvantaged pupils, by increasing the FSM6 and IDACI factors in the schools NFF by a greater amount than other factors. These factors will increase by 4.3%, compared to their 2022-23 values. This means that we will be targeting a greater proportion of schools NFF funding towards deprived pupils than ever before with 9.8% of the schools NFF allocated according to deprivation in 2023-24;
- The core factors in the schools NFF (such as the basic entitlement, and the lump sum that all schools attract) will increase by 2.4%;
- Through the minimum per pupil funding levels, every primary school will receive at least £4,405 per pupil, and every secondary school at least £5,715;
- The funding floor will ensure that all schools attract at least 0.5% more pupil-led funding per-pupil compared to its 2022-23 NFF allocation;
- Rolling the 2022-23 school supplementary grant into the schools NFF ensuring that this additional funding forms an on-going part of schools' core budgets. Appropriate adjustments have been made to NFF factor values and baselines to reflect this;
- Local authorities will only be allowed to use NFF factors in their local formulae. This means that the looked after children (LAC) factor will no longer be an allowable factor (Norfolk does not use this factor). The government provides funding directly to support looked after children and previously looked after children through the pupil premium;
- Local authorities must use the NFF definition for the English as an Additional Language (EAL) factor, whereby pupils attract additional funding for three years after they enter the statutory school system. Norfolk already does this. (Previously local authorities could choose to provide funding for one, two or three years).
- Premises funding which will be allocated at local authority level based on actual spend in 2022-23 (no increases) plus PFI factor will receive RPIX inflation of +11.2%;
- Local authorities have the freedom to set the Minimum Funding Guarantee in the local formulae between +0.0% and +0.5% per pupil, as well as to use a gains cap applied on the same basis for all schools.

The current 2022-23 National Funding Formula unit rates and the DfE's proposed 2023-24 NFF unit rates are set out in the table below:

Funding Factor	2022-23 Formula £ NFF unit rates	2023-24 Formula £ NFF unit rates
Age Weighted Pupil Unit		
Primary	3,217	3,394
Key Stage 3	4,536	4,785
Key Stage 4	5,112	5,393
Minimum Per Pupil Funding		
Primary	4,265	4,405
Secondary	5,525	5,715
Additional Needs Funding		
Primary FSM	470	480
Secondary FSM	470	480
Primary FSM6	590	705
Secondary FSM6	865	1,030
Primary IDACI A	640	670
Primary IDACI B	490	510
Primary IDACI C	460	480
Primary IDACI D	420	440
Primary IDACI E	270	280
Primary IDACI F	220	230
Secondary IDACI A	890	930
Secondary IDACI B	700	730
Secondary IDACI C	650	680
Secondary IDACI D	595	620
Secondary IDACI E	425	445
Secondary IDACI F	320	335
Low Prior Attainment		
Primary LPA	1,130	1,155
Secondary LPA	1,710	1,750
EAL		
Primary EAL	565	580
Secondary EAL	1,530	1,565
Mobility		
Primary Mobility	925	945
Secondary Mobility	1,330	1,360
Lump Sum		
Primary Lump Sum	121,300	128,000
Secondary Lump Sum	121,300	128,000
Sparsity		
Primary Sparsity	55,000	56,300
Secondary Sparsity	80,000	81,900

2023-24 sees the first year of transition to the direct schools NFF, with the end point by 2027-28 at the latest being a system in which every mainstream school in England is funded through the same national formula without adjustments through local funding formulae.

In 2023-24, local authorities will only be allowed to use NFF factors in their local formulae, and must use all NFF factors, except any locally determined premises factors. Local authorities will also be required to move their local formulae factors 10% closer to the NFF values, compared to where they were in 2022-23, unless they are already mirroring the NFF.

To aid the transition, the DfE published the acceptable factor value range for each local authority. The range for Norfolk is shown in the table below:

Factor	2023-24 NFF Factor Values (£)	2023-24 Minimum Factor Values for Norfolk (£)	2023-24 Maximum Factor Values for Norfolk (£)
Primary basic entitlement	3,394	3,309.15	3,478.85
KS3 basic entitlement	4,785	4,665.38	4,904.63
KS4 basic entitlement	5,393	5,258.18	5,527.83
Primary FSM	480	468	492
Secondary FSM	480	468	492
Primary FSM6	705	687.38	722.63
Secondary FSM6	1,030	1,004.25	1,055.75
Primary IDACI F	230	224.25	235.75
Primary IDACI E	280	273	287
Primary IDACI D	440	429	451
Primary IDACI C	480	468	492
Primary IDACI B	510	497.25	522.75
Primary IDACI A	670	653.25	686.75
Secondary IDACI F	335	326.63	343.38
Secondary IDACI E	445	433.88	456.13
Secondary IDACI D	620	604.5	635.5
Secondary IDACI C	680	663	697
Secondary IDACI B	730	711.75	748.25
Secondary IDACI A	930	906.75	953.25
Primary EAL3	580	565.5	594.5
Secondary EAL3	1,565	1,525.88	1,604.13
Primary LPA	1,155	1,126.13	1,183.88
Secondary LPA	1,750	1,706.25	1,793.75
Primary mobility	945	921.38	968.63
Secondary mobility	1,360	1,326.00	1,394.00
Primary lump sum	128,000	124,800.00	131,200.00
Secondary lump sum	128,000	124,800.00	131,200.00
Primary sparsity	56,300	54,892.50	57,707.50
Secondary sparsity	81,900	79,852.50	83,947.50
Middle-school sparsity	81,900	79,852.50	83,947.50
All-through sparsity	81,900	79,852.50	83,947.50

2. Minimum Funding Guarantee/Affordability

A Minimum Funding Guarantee of +0.5% (the maximum allowed for 2023-24) is proposed for all funding options to ensure that all schools see increases to their funding. Please note that if any further adjustment is required to calibrate Norfolk's formula to the final level of DSG funding available for 2023-24 it is proposed that this would be managed as explained below, including potential adjustment to factor values.

For additional funding to allocate to schools, it would be allocated in the following order until all funds are allocated:

- Remove any funding cap on gains, if possible, or increase cap % to the maximum value that is still affordable;
- Increase the factor values, within the DfE's allowable range, by an equal percentage until all additional funding is allocated (maintaining the compulsory NFF Minimum Per-Pupil Levels)

If a reduction in allocation to schools is required based on final pupil data, the formula would be adjusted in the following order until the formula is affordable:

- Reduce the level of the funding cap, if there is one being used, reducing the level of maximum gains. The funding cap must not be lower than the MFG threshold;
- Reduce factor values within the allowable range by an equal percentage until the formula balances (maintaining the compulsory NFF Minimum Per-Pupil Levels);
- Reduce the level of MFG protection within the permitted range of +0% to +0.5%;
- Finally, and unlikely to be needed, request a disapplication from Secretary of State to reduce MFG or Minimum Per-Pupil Levels.

3. Schools Block Transfer

Norfolk is working with the DfE as part of its Safety Valve programme for recovery of very high DSG deficits.

As part of the Safety Valve plan, a transfer between Schools Block and High Needs Block is likely to be expected by the DfE.

The Local Authority is required to submit a full business case in the form of a 'disapplication request' by 18th November 2022 if the LA requires a decision of the Secretary of State for either:

- (i) a block transfer above 0.5% where Schools Forum has supported a 0.5% transfer; or,
- (ii) any block transfer not supported by Schools Forum.

The following options for a Schools Block Transfer were modelled in our consultation.

Option 1 – Transfer of 1.5% from Schools Block to High Needs Block

If we transfer 1.5%, the LA's Safety Valve model balances in 2027-28 and could therefore be acceptable by the DfE. It should be noted that a significant, cumulative deficit would remain at the end of the 2028-29 that will need repayment via LA and DfE contributions (presuming the DfE accept the plan).

Option 2 – Transfer of 0.5% from Schools Block to High Needs Block

If we transferred 0.5%, the LA's Safety Valve model does not balance and will, therefore, not be accepted by the DfE. However, this would show recognition from the system as a whole that too many children in Norfolk with SEND are being educated within specialist provision rather than in mainstream provision. This is very likely to result in reductions being made to the funding and support available to mainstream schools (both SEND and non-SEND).

Option 3 – No transfer from Schools Block to High Needs Block

If we made no block transfer the LA's Safety Valve model does not balance and, therefore, will not be accepted by the DfE. Whilst individual schools would retain more funds individually, there is significantly less that can be done collectively to support those who could and should be in the mainstream sector to remain there. Additionally, this is very likely to result in reductions being made to the funding and support available to mainstream schools (both SEND and non-SEND) and may adversely impact upon the preventative (non-statutory) safeguarding services that the LA offers.

In all options it is proposed to continue to mirror the unit values and methodologies of the National Funding Formula, updated for the financial year 2023-24, as this was the basis for all options given in the consultation and in line with previous Schools Forum recommendations to align Norfolk with the NFF factors and unit values.

However, the Local Authority (LA) is expected by the DSG regulations to repay the DSG deficit from within DSG allocations and therefore the LA recommends the higher transfer of funding of 1.5% from Schools Block to High Needs Block.

The LA recognises the pressures on schools' budgets and the desire of schools to receive the maximum funding possible directly into their budgets via the funding formula, and that maximising funding in schools may support increased inclusivity and reduced escalation of needs.

However, the LA must weigh this up against the demand for specialist high needs SEND provision, the current and forecast levels of DSG deficit and be responsible in considering how the deficit can be repaid from within the DSG in future years, as required by the regulations. The LA is required to have a plan in place for recovery of the DSG which must be presented to the DfE as well as to Schools Forum.

The LA also recognises the difficulty that this situation presents for Schools Forum members in recommending an option for the 2023-24 funding formula. Schools Forum members are asked to take into account the views of schools' responses from

the consultation, but also to consider the wider landscape of the DSG in making their recommendation to the LA.

Norfolk's current DSG Recovery Plan is underpinned by two key elements:

- the £120m capital investment to build new special schools, specialist resources bases and to develop student support hubs;
- and, the assumption of ongoing transfers of funding between the Schools Block and High Needs Block (0.5% plus a further transfer of 1%).

The LA is, therefore, minded to submit an application to the Secretary of State for an additional 1% transfer, estimated at £5.975m, and, if necessary, the movement of the 0.5% estimated at £2.987m (if Schools Forum vote against the 0.5% movement). In doing so the LA will be required to demonstrate, with a business case, that this is the best possible option for Norfolk as a whole schools system.

In our survey, schools/trusts were asked to state the impact of the each of the three block transfer options:

Option 1 – Transfer of 1.5% from Schools Block to High Needs Block

Option 2 – Transfer of 0.5% from Schools Block to High Needs Block

Option 3 – No transfer from Schools Block to High Needs Block

- a) Based on implications for their school or trust, and
- b) Based on implications for the system as a whole;

Summary of impact on schools/trusts for Option 1 (1.5% transfer from SB to HNB)

Responses were mainly against a transfer of 1.5% from Schools Block to High Needs Block. Some of the reasons stated were:

- Unable to balance budgets
- Pay awards
- Energy costs
- Not sustainable
- Would need to restructure/make staffing reductions
- Building maintenance and improvement delayed
- Learning resources reduced

Other responses included:

- Very little difference between the 3 options
- Increased element 3 funding could mitigate loss of core funding

Summary of impact for system as a whole for Option 1 (1.5% transfer from SB to HNB)

Responses to the option of a transfer of 1.5% from Schools Block to High Needs Block appeared, in many cases, to understand the need for a transfer for the system as a whole, even if they couldn't support it. Responses included:

- Critical to allow in-year balancing of HN Block and support DfE Safety Vale achievement criteria

- Offers real plan of eliminating HN Block deficit
- Beneficial for NCC
- As long as some is used to support element 3 and more inclusion
- Needed to support HN Block

Other comments included:

- Schools and pupils disadvantaged, unsustainable
- It would help to see what benefit schools would get back for SEND provision
- Not the year to be going for this option when schools are under extraordinary pressures
- Large majority of schools could do without significant impact to budgets and going into deficit
- Would not support if sparsity not protected
- Would not be able to maintain children safely in mainstream classes
- Significant impact at a point when schools' budgets are stretched
- We are chasing an ever increasing budget
- Adequate funding must be pursued at the highest level with no further transfers

Summary of impact on schools/trusts for Option 2 (0.5% transfer from SB to HNB)

Responses to the option of a transfer of 0.5% from Schools Block to High Needs Block highlighted similar, but less severe issues. Some of the reasons stated were:

- Not affordable unless funding given nationally for pay awards
- Unable to balance if sparsity is not received
- Inflation makes it a cut in real terms
- Fewer TA's, reduced curriculum choice and larger class sizes
- Ask parents for greater contributions to school trips
- Could spend more effectively on SEN in schools' budgets
- Significant impact on staffing

Other comments included:

- Loss of element 3 could cost more than option 1
- Absorbable, by holding vacancies and through efficiencies with no material impact
- Seems a balanced position

Summary of impact on system as a whole for Option 2 (0.5% transfer from SB to HNB)

Summary of responses:

- Minimum necessary to ensure remote chance of HN Block being balanced. High risk of not meeting DfE Safety Valve achievement criteria.
- Will reduce schools' immediate income and not deliver sufficient savings to reduce HNB overspend.
- Closest to expected position, provides some certainty.
- Would favour as a system solution for now but Government needs to put its hand in its pocket.
- Significant impact on very large majority.
- Exclusions will increase.
- More in line with schools' expectations this year
- 'Not viable'.

Summary of impact on schools/trusts for Option 3 (no transfer from SB to HNB)

Responses to the option of no transfer from Schools Block to High Needs Block suggested it being the preferred option for many, although not all schools agreed, and responses included:

- Real terms cut
- Concerns that there would be less element 3 funding
- 'Rejected'
- Option would potentially threaten current SEND support mechanisms
- Gain in core funding could be cancelled out by a decrease in element 3
- 'Would not consider this option'

Other comments included:

- Most preferred option
- Transfer of funds not affordable unless pay awards funded nationally so option is the most prudent
- Realise it makes more difficult for LA to then provide specialist provision
- All options give same impact due to MFG protection
- The only option that is, reluctantly, supported by Governors
- Feasible financially
- Allows autonomy to enhance SEND provision at a direct local level

Summary of impact on system as a whole for Option 3 (no transfer from SB to HNB)

Summary of responses:

- High Needs Block will continue to be overspent. Failure to meet DfE Safety Valve achievement criteria.
- Great for schools but not the children who need High Needs provision.
- Does not move closer to balancing the system.

- Exclusions will increase.
- Isn't really an option because then there would be no funding available to schools from County.
- Danger that additional funding opportunities from DfE would be lost.
- Schools would need to support high needs pupils and most don't have enough expertise or space.
- The long-term impact of no transfer could be significant.
- Would improve standards and give pupils the best opportunity for success.
- 'We would not consider this'
- 'Not viable'
- Would allow schools and trusts the opportunity to provide direct support.

Detailed technical papers were provided alongside the survey.

Appendix A provides the transcript of comments submitted by schools/trusts, grouped by each option.

4. Funding Cap

The LA is reviewing the use of a funding cap on gains, due to issues highlighted by some small schools following the implementation of the 2022-23 formula.

Historically, a funding cap has been necessary in order to mirror the NFF unit values and methodologies whilst making a Schools Block to High Needs Block transfer. The cap in 2022-23 meant that small schools receiving the sparsity factor for the first time did not realise the large gain in 2022-23 that they may have been expecting as part of the NFF, as overall per-pupil funding in the local formula was capped at increases of +2.82% for schools (beyond which no further increase was received by the schools). This means that the large gains expected by those schools have, effectively, become delayed and, potentially, will be spread over a number of years. This issue could apply equally to other factors if/when there are changes in the methodology within the NFF that target additional amounts to specific school types, although sparsity is thought to be the most notable example of this.

To address this issue for 2023-24 and future years, the local authority consulted on implementation of alternatives to the use of a hard funding cap in Norfolk.

The modelling of the options shown used in consultation was based on a 1.5% Schools Block to High Needs Block transfer in the technical paper, in order to demonstrate the estimated scenario for the levels of cap that would be required as per the Safety Valve programme.

In our survey schools/trusts were asked to rank their preference of these funding cap options in the consultation survey.

Option 1 – Hard cap on gains

MFG of +0.5% and an estimated cap for all gains of +2.54%. Maintains the current principles used within the funding formula.

Option 2 - MFG baseline adjustments to affected schools (sparsity factor impacted)

The LA could request disapplications from the Secretary of State to enable MFG adjustments to the 2022-23 MFG baselines of affected schools in order to ensure that their sparsity funding, if capped in 2022-23, is uplifted to its full value and protected from 2023-24 onwards. This would be subject to DfE approval.

With an MFG of +0.5%, and baseline adjusts for the affected schools, it is estimated that the cap on gains would need to be set at +1.84% in order to still be affordable.

On its own, this may not prevent the problem from occurring again in future. Any school that becomes eligible for sparsity, based on pupil data, for the first time in 2023-24 would not be picked up in disapplication requests which are due for submission in November 2022, and would therefore be subject to the same capping issue when final budgets are set in February 2023 as other schools have been in the past.

A tighter overall cap percentage would be required to enable those schools affected to have their baselines adjusted within the overall funding envelop available.

Option 3 - Scaling in addition to the capping of gains

MFG of +0.5%, an estimated cap of +0.82%, and scaling of 50%.

Scaling allows for a proportion of gains above the cap level to be allocated. Whilst the hard cap that has historically been used prevents any gains above the level of cap, +2.82% per-pupil in 2022-23, scaling allows for a proportion of the gain above the cap to be allocated in addition. It is possible to add scaling of between 0% and 100% to the cap calculation. For example, a cap of +0.82% and scaling of 50% would allow all per-pupil gains up to +0.82% to flow through to schools, with any gains above +0.82% scaled back by 50%. For schools with very large percentage gains due to methodology or data changes, e.g. for sparsity factor in small schools, this option could allow for them to receive a larger proportion of the gain which would speed up their transition to the new formula.

Note that a tighter overall cap percentage would be required in order to implement scaling for those schools with large gains above the cap. Capping and scaling must be applied on an equal basis to all schools. This option potentially removes the need for approval of MFG baseline adjustments from the DfE or could be used in addition to MFG baseline adjustments to mitigate against hard caps on large NFF gains occurring in future.

Option 4 - Reduction to unit values, removal of the funding cap

The transition to a direct national funding formula, and the DfE's publication of an allowable range of factor values for Norfolk for 2023-24, provides for continued 'mirroring' of the NFF within the DfE's definition (within 2.5% of the NFF formula values) without having to exactly replicate the national unit values.

This means that it is possible to continue to mirror the NFF, with a reduction to Norfolk's unit values, without the need for a funding cap on gains.

Removal of the funding cap would ensure that all schools eligible for gains from the sparsity factor, or any other factor, would no longer be capped in 2023-24 irrespective of whether they were eligible for sparsity and capped in the past, or become eligible for the factor for the first time in 2023-24.

It is estimated that all factor values would need to be reduced by -1.44% for this option to be affordable, which is well within the DfE's range for mirroring the National Funding Formula.

This option removes the need for approval of MFG baseline adjustments for specific schools from the DfE but would reduce factor unit values for all schools by an equal percentage.

The rankings given by responses to the survey were (2 responses did not rank the options):

Option	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	No Ranking
Option 1- Hard Cap on gains	10	3	7	15	2
Option 2 - MFG Adjustments	5	11	16	3	2
Option 3 - Scaling/Capping	9	18	8	0	2
Option 4 - Reduce unit values	11	3	4	17	2

Allocating weightings (4 points to the most preferred, 1 point to the least preferred) to the rankings to produce a survey score, as follows:

Option	Survey Score*	Ranking
3 – Scaling/Capping	106	1
2 – MFG Adjustments	88	2
1 – Hard Cap	78	Joint 3rd
4 – Reduce Unit Values	78	Joint 3rd

Overall, option 3, a combination of capping and scaling of gains was ranked 1st preference due to a higher number of combined 1st and 2nd rankings than for any other option. Also, it was never ranked 4th by schools (never the least preferred option).

Whilst option 4, a reduction of unit values with no cap applied, was selected as 1st preference more times than the other options, it was also selected as 4th (least preferred) more times than any other option and therefore only ranked joint 3rd overall.

Ranked 2nd was MFG adjustments to the baselines of schools affected (those for whom the sparsity factor was impacted in 2022/23).

An alternative ranking from the responses, based on the number of schools represented by each response would give:

Option	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	No Ranking
Option 1- Hard Cap on gains	42	5	19	42	2
Option 2 - MFG Adjustments	39	27	39	3	2
Option 3 - Scaling/Capping	16	68	24	0	2
Option 4 - Reduce unit values	11	8	26	63	2

With the same weightings applied this would give:

Option	Survey Score*	Ranking
2 – MFG Adjustments	318	1 st
3 – Scaling/Capping	316	2 nd
1 – Hard Cap	263	3 rd
4 – Reduce Unit Values	183	4 th

Taking into account the number of schools represented by each response, the use of MFG adjustments to the baselines of schools that had their sparsity factor affected in 2022-23 is ranked 1st, followed very closely by scaling and capping in 2nd place.

Of the responses, 17 schools (15% out of 110) represented had gained sparsity for the first time in 2022-23, and for 10 of those schools (8 across 3 academy trusts and 2 within a federation) MFG adjustments was the 1st ranked option. Those 3 academy trusts and the federation together represent 38 of the 39 schools with a ranking of 1st for MFG adjustments, so this does weight the results heavily towards MFG adjustments based on those trusts' responses.

Option 4, with no cap at all but a reduction in factor values, was the favoured option among the remaining schools affected by the sparsity issue in 2022-23 that had not voted for MFG adjustments as their 1st choice.

MFG adjustments and capping/scaling are, in both interpretations of the data, ranked either 1st or 2nd place and could, technically, be used together within the formula. An argument for this is that a combination of MFG baseline adjustments and scaling of the hard funding cap could improve the funding cap situation for those schools affected by the sparsity issue in 2022-23 as well as protect against similar future occurrences – however, this combination would make the cap very tight, with an estimated cap of 0.5% and scaling of 56% (gains above 0.5% per-pupil scaled back by 56%).

It should be noted that if MFG adjustments were to be used to recognise the specific circumstances set out in the consultation relating to sparsity in 2022-23, that the LA does not wish it to be considered as setting a precedent for the use of MFG adjustments as a way of resolving issues on other funding factor changes in the future. This is because it potentially undermines the fundamental purpose of the

MFG and capping system and there have been many schools in the past who have not been in receipt of full gains when there have been past formula changes.

Furthermore, whilst MFG adjustments would alleviate the problem for those affected by the sparsity issue in 2022/23, out of the options available it is not necessarily the overall best option for other similar small rural schools that already have sparsity funding within their baselines from previous years – those schools were usually better off with either the scaling/capping option or no cap at all in the technical papers.

The interaction of sparsity factor with the funding cap is not something that will apply to all schools, so it is important for Schools Forum to also consider the impact on those schools that might be adversely affected, particularly small rural schools, when making their recommendation.

Modelling was provided for all schools within technical papers that were issued with the survey and it is available to help members understand the implications of the different cap options modelled for all schools at: <https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/schools/files/school-finance/fair-funding/fair-funding-consultation-technical-paper-caps-options.xlsx>

Schools were asked to provide a rationale for their rankings. The comments are provided in **Appendix B**.

Schools Forum are asked to:

- **Consider and comment on the proposed changes to the distribution formula of the Schools Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant;**
- **Consider the feedback from the autumn 2022 Fair Funding Consultation;**
- **Vote on continuation of the movement of 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block for 2023-24;**
- **Comment on the potential movement of additional funding (an additional 1%) from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block for 2023-24 and provide a clear indication as a Forum as to whether such a movement is supported;**
- **Make a recommendation for how any necessary funding cap should be implemented in 2023-24, considering feedback from the autumn 2022 Fair Funding Consultation.**

PART 2: SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS

5. Analysis of Balances

In the consultation survey it was proposed that the Scheme for Financing schools is amended to:

- Remove the exception process from the analysis of balances mechanism within the Scheme for Financing Schools;
- Remove the contingency limits, currently the greater of £20k or 8% of final budget share, from the analysis of balances mechanism within the Scheme for Financing Schools (subject to all items being fully justified within this category).
- Include a paragraph stating that “As there will be no general contingency limit, a level of redistribution will be introduced if the school cannot provide sufficient evidence to justify its surplus. The Local Authority will reserve the right where schools have consistently built up significant excessive uncommitted balances to redistribute if deemed appropriate.”

LA maintained schools are asked in the survey to provide ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ answers and comments for the following proposed changes to the Scheme for Financing Schools:

5.1 Exception Process

Schools were asked whether they agreed with removal of the exception process from the balances of analysis mechanism within the Scheme for Financing Schools.

The responses from maintained schools (including federations/partnerships of schools) were:

Response:	Number of Responses	Schools Represented
Yes	15	18
No	10	11
Not answered	1	2

Comments in support of the responses are provided in **Appendix C**.

5.2 Contingency Limits

Schools were asked if they agreed with the removal of the contingency limits, currently the greater of £20k or 8% of final budget share, from the analysis of balances mechanism (subject to all items being fully justified within this category).

The responses from maintained schools (including federations/partnerships of schools) were:

Response:	Number of Responses	Schools Represented
Yes	16	19
No	10	12
Not answered	0	0

Comments in support of the responses are provided in **Appendix C**.

5.3 Redistribution/Extra paragraph

Schools were asked whether they agree to including a paragraph stating that:

“As there will be no general contingency limit, a level of redistribution will be introduced if the school cannot provide sufficient evidence to justify its surplus. The Local Authority will reserve the right where schools have consistently built up significant excessive uncommitted balances to redistribute if deemed appropriate”.

The responses from maintained schools (including federations/partnerships of schools) were:

Response:	Number of Responses	Schools Represented
Yes	17	19
No	9	12
Not answered	0	0

Comments in support of the responses are provided in **Appendix C**.

6. School Building Maintenance Holding Account

6.1 Increased limits

Due to the current limits having not been revised since the introduction of the scheme, it is proposed to increase the limits for monies lodged into the Schools Building Maintenance holding account as follows:

- For mainstream schools that do not contract into BMPP the total amount lodged should be up to a maximum of £650 per pupil on roll at the time of the previous October Census, or £360,000, whichever is the lower.
- For special schools that do not contract into BMPP the total amount lodged can be up to a maximum of £815 per place at the time of the previous October Census.

Once lodged, funds cannot be returned to the school. The funds can only be used to fund building maintenance expenditure.

The responses from maintained schools (including federations/partnerships of schools) were:

Response:	Number of Responses	Schools Represented
Yes	19	22
No	4	5
Not answered	3	4

Comments in support of the responses are provided in **Appendix C**.

6.2 Additional allowance

The LA also proposes to amend the scheme to make an additional allowance so that those schools with community assets that are required to have a sinking fund for regular repair and maintenance of those assets e.g. swimming pools, Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) etc, may also lodge funds in Schools Building Maintenance Holding Account.

The responses from maintained schools (including federations/partnerships of schools) were:

Response:	Number of Responses	Schools Represented
Yes	24	29
No	1	1
Not answered	1	1

Comments in support of the responses are provided in **Appendix C**.

Schools Forum members representing maintained schools are asked to:

- **Consider and comment on the proposed changes to the Scheme for Financing Schools (affects LA maintained schools only);**
- **Consider the feedback from the autumn 2022 Fair Funding Consultation;**
- **Approve, if members agree, proposed changes to Scheme for Financing Schools (maintained school representatives only) considering feedback from the autumn 2022 Fair Funding Consultation for:**
 - **Analysis of balances**
 - **School Building Maintenance holding account**

Appendix A – Funding Formula and Schools Block Transfer

Comments verbatim as submitted through the survey, including if there appear to be errors in understanding of the factual data provided.

Responses for impact on school/trust only:

Option 1 – 1.5% Schools Block Transfer:-

“Reduction in funding of £283k versus option 3 (a further £146k less than option 2) based on technical papers provided. This option would likely lead to a level of service narrowing and sub-optimisation either in terms of dis-establishing posts lost through natural attrition and non-renewal of educational software/licences.”

“Even the biggest schools in the Trust with health reserves as at August 2022 will be unable to balance budgets unless more funding is available to cover the nationally agreed pay awards. For this reason the transfer of funds from Schools Block to High Needs Block is not an affordable option. Short term financial security is becoming more and more critical and on that basis a transfer of 1.5% is the least popular of the three options.”

“All schools disadvantaged compared to planned 2023 24 budgets, which do not assume a 1.5% transfer.

2 Primary schools will not be sustainable at this funding level. 3 out of 4 secondaries will not be able to achieve a balanced budget for 2023 24. Cuts will be required and/or reliance on balances to maintain staffing levels.”

“As a trust, and in common with all schools and trusts, we are faced with a growing gap between funding and spend. The combined effects of current year pay awards, energy inflation and inflation in general adds up to a gap next year of c£800k. A transfer of 1.5% would increase this gap by c£100k. Whilst we are urgently looking at actions to address the gap, this significantly increases it.”

“The impact of unfunded pay awards, energy costs, inflation and trf of 1.5% will have a significant impact on the financial viability of individual schools and the MAT. The overall impact across the Trust of all of these factors is c£1m, but a number of our schools are more severely impacted than others e.g. XXX and XXX will have a deficit of c£280k and the variance between option 1 and 3 is c£74k. Clearly individual schools will have to manage their deficit through staff reductions. Ironically this will have a detrimental effect on their ability to support pupils with SEN.”

“Under all of the options put forward the Trust is facing a real terms cut in funding. This options shows an average growth in funding of 1.8% however, with inflation currently at 10.1% and payrises for teachers currently of 5%, this represents a real terms cut in school funding.

Based on the current inflation rate this option would mean a cut in funding of 8.3%, which is £2.6m per annum across the Trust’s schools or £472 per pupil. This will mean that the Trust is required to make cuts to staffing and resources that are the equivalent of 49 teaching staff.

If inflation reduces to a more manageable level of 5% (in line with teachers pay awards) this still represents a cut of 3.2%, which is £986k per annum across the Trust's schools or £182 per pupil.

In addition, this option fails to redress the challenges by the 2022-23 funding model that disproportionately impacted rural schools including those who received increased sparsity funding. The Trust operates the 5th smallest school in the county with only 25 pupils, this school will see funding grow by only 0.5%, in comparison two of the largest schools (Springwood High and Sprowston Academy) will see funding grow by 2.5%.

The Trust is not a profit making organisation and does not have finite reserves, we have therefore started planning how such cuts will be delivered. As we always have we will seek to maximise efficiencies across all of our schools to deliver value for money, but this level of cut will have an impact on the standards delivered. Given the vast majority of education budgets are people it will ultimately result in fewer Teaching Assistants, reduced curriculum choice for pupils and larger class sizes. As a Trust we are committed to ensuring that students have broad personal development opportunities, however to continue offering some of the activities we currently do such as trips we will need to ask parents for greater contributions to these. This is likely to be challenging given the pressures families are facing and will ultimately lead to fewer opportunities for pupils."

"Our school would support the safety valve model balancing in order to support the declining numbers on our role, but a significant, cumulative deficit would be a concern to us with regards to its potential to impact future funding made available to us. We would support the 1.5% transfer to the HND as we have a number of pupils already in receipt of banded additional SEN funding, this funding is needed to support their learning in school. We also support the need for the HND to have funding available to support collective and preventative investment."

"Very little difference between all 3 options"

"This is the least preferred as our SEN provision is not greatly topped up from anywhere else so it is more critical to us to maximise budget share rather than see it go elsewhere, in the short term. This is also affected by the hopefully short term unfunded staff pay awards which have put us into deficit. We cannot therefore justify any option which minimises our income."

"This would mean our school would have an extra £52,103 taken from our budget."

"Option 1 : Transfer of 1.5% from schools block to High Needs Block

In principal, the two schools in our Federation do not oppose the 1.5% transfer to the High needs block but it is the second part that causes real issues. If you also impose the 0.5% MFG protection and the 2.54% cap on gains, particularly where sparsity is awarded, as in the case of our two schools, the effect for XXX with the cap on gains not only is the sparsity allowance of £46,166 wiped out but also another £2,000! In the case of XXX the sparsity allowance of £56,100 is reduced by £26,000. This would not be acceptable for either school.

If Norfolk is really serious about supporting small schools and we would like to think it is, as there are so many, then it should select a system that doesn't take away any of the sparsity entitlement for the children's education. It is no good giving with one

hand and taking away with the other. If this issue, regarding the funding cap, is not resolved to ensure all sparsity allowances are protected then we would certainly not support this option. As it stands, it would not give equality of education to all pupils in Norfolk because of the fact that it is so hit and miss. Please see our responses to the Funding Cap Consultation.”

“Impact on staffing and capacity to support individual needs”

“High impact”

“HIGH IMPACT - LARGE SEND NUMBERS”

“Medium Impact. High SEND numbers”

“Should be able to maintain current SEND provisions for pupils, including support staff levels.”

“This will mean further reductions in support staff for those high needs children that currently have support. I'm not convinced that the extra 1.5% going to the LA will deliver the specialist places we desperately need. At the moment we are 'holding' 3x EYFS pupils, 2x Year 1 pupils, 2x Year 2 pupils, 1x Year 3 and 1x Year 4 pupils who all have evidence stating they require specialist provision. With less funding we will be even less able to meet their needs.”

“XXX would be adversely affected and would need to make staffing cuts which will affect provision for SEN children in mainstream”

“There is a balance for our school here, due to the amount of Element 3 Top Up funding (due to higher than average SEND) we receive, any increase to that funding supported by the higher transfer would mitigate some of the loss of core funding. There is still difficulty however with increased unfunded TA costs to support these children, of us struggling even further to support these children in a mainstream setting.”

“This will significantly impact staffing, particularly in relation to supporting pupils with additional needs.”

“This option would mean that the Federation would be significantly poorer as a result of the large transfer to the High Needs block. We are currently in a strong financial position, but this could change very quickly with pay rises, energy costs, and income not increasing at the same pace.”

“Year on year our schools are increasingly providing for children who have high needs which are difficult to address in a mainstream setting, in an environment that has had to be modified for those needs, with staff who have had to be trained specifically to meet their needs.

This is from a budget where the amount of SEN funding has reduced and also where the application for grants for children with an EHCP has become more onerous. The amount of funding taken by this option would provoke an inspection of the budget to

examine if the level of support we can give these children can be sustained without impacting the provision for rest of the children in our schools.”

“All options have the same impact as a result of the minimum per pupil funding guarantee.”

“Reduction in school funding”

“As a school we could not function without the Element 3 funding given the very high level of need in school. I am fully in favour of educating more SEND pupils in mainstream schools but the funding in Norfolk is not adequate to support this.”

“We would need to restructure and lose staff. We only have a one year approved budget as moving forward, our budget is in deficit”

“1) XXX continues to have SEND nos. above both Norfolk County and National figures. SEN funding included in the Budget Share, said to be 'Low Cost High Incidence' is insufficient to address the classroom disruption and learning of fellow pupils, caused by those pupils needing, and deserving, a greater level of support.
2) Indicative figures for Option 1 show an increase in funding for 2023/24, subject to changes in pupil numbers, of only 1.7%, far less than the expected inflationary increases in expenditure.

3) To help meet the challenges of 1) and 2) above, cuts in expenditure will be required. Building maintenance and improvement programmes are likely to be delayed resulting in more expensive future works being required; Learning resources not ICT budgets will be reviewed and reduced as appropriate; Bought in professional services budgets will be reviewed and reduced as appropriate; all other budgets will be reviewed for efficiency savings.

OPTION 1 IS NOT SUPPORTED BY GOVERNORS”

“1) XXX continues to have SEND nos. above both Norfolk County and National figures. SEN funding included in the Budget Share, said to be 'Low Cost High Incidence' is insufficient to address the classroom disruption and learning of fellow pupils, caused by those pupils needing, and deserving, a greater level of support.
2) Indicative figures for Option 1 show an increase in funding for 2023/24, subject to changes in pupil numbers, of only 1.6%, far less than the expected inflationary increases in expenditure.

3) To help meet the challenges of 1) and 2) above, cuts in expenditure will be required. Building maintenance and improvement programmes are likely to be delayed resulting in more expensive future works being required; Learning resources not ICT budgets will be reviewed and reduced as appropriate; Bought in professional services budgets will be reviewed and reduced as appropriate; all other budgets, including staffing, will be reviewed for efficiency savings.

OPTION 1 IS NOT SUPPORTED BY GOVERNORS”

“Likely year 2 deficit. We have maxed classes, there is no more capacity at present for growth without a stable budget. Our SLT is stretched, our admin is stretched, the 1.5 would impact our ability to continue being a strong good school.”

“The school cannot really afford this. It may impact on the number of LSAs we can employ.”

“This would financially cripple the school and have a significant effect on us being able to deliver provision. The school has worked exceptionally hard for 7 years to balance budgets and provide a high quality education with an inherited debt and no support from the LA or EFSA.”

Option 2 – 0.5% Schools Block Transfer:-

“Reduction in funding of £137k versus option 3 based on technical papers provided. This would be absorbable through a combination of temporarily holding vacancies, further financial efficiencies gained through our recent merger. No material negative impact on operations and offer of our schools.”

“Even the biggest schools in the Trust with health reserves as at August 2022 will be unable to balance budgets unless more funding is available to cover the nationally agreed pay awards. For this reason the transfer of funds from Schools Block to High Needs Block is not an affordable option. Short term financial security is becoming more and more critical and on that basis a transfer of 0.5% is the second least popular of the three options.”

“This is closest to planned 2023 24 budgets. However, planned primary budgets assume receipt of sparsity funding so both primaries negatively impacted compared to planned budgets and will not be able to balance budgets.”

“Same comment as for Option 1, except that this obviously is much less of a hit to our budgets.”

“Under all of the options put forward the Trust is facing a real terms cut in funding. This options shows an average growth in funding of 2.7% however, with inflation currently at 10.1% and payrises for teachers currently of 5%, this represents a real terms cut in school funding.

Based on the current inflation rate this option would mean a cut in funding of 7.4%, which is £2.3m per annum across the Trust’s schools or £421 per pupil. This will mean that the Trust is required to make cuts to staffing and resources that are the equivalent of 44 teaching staff.

If inflation reduces to a more manageable level of 5% (in line with teachers pay awards) this still represents a cut of 2.3%, which is £712k per annum across the Trust’s schools or £131 per pupil.

In addition, this option fails to redress the challenges by the 2022-23 funding model that disproportionately impacted rural schools including those who received increased sparsity funding.

The Trust is not a profit making organisation and does has finite reserves, we have therefore started planning how such cuts will be delivered. As we always have we will seek to maximise efficiencies across all of our schools to deliver value for money, but this level of cut will have an impact on the standards delivered. Given the vast majority of education budgets are people it will ultimately result in fewer Teaching Assistants, reduced curriculum choice for pupils and larger class sizes. “

“As a Trust we are committed to ensuring that students have broad personal development opportunities, however to continue offering some of the activities we currently do such as trips we will need to ask parents for greater contributions to these. This is likely to be challenging given the pressures families are facing and will ultimately lead to fewer opportunities for pupils.”

“The impact of this option on our school would not allow recognition of the fact that whilst there are undoubtedly too many children in Norfolk with SEND being educated outside of mainstream education, there are also a number of children with SEND that are being educated in mainstream education because there isn't a place for them in a specialist provision. Our ability to support our learners with SEND could be impacted if our Element 3 funding dropped but given our high numbers on roll, we would likely see a positive offset in the day 1 budget share we receive. However, the impact of our falling numbers of roll may also contribute to a worsening in our funding.”

“This seems a balanced position and allows us to recognise the role that SEN support outside of school play, which we do need for two particular pupils whilst being close to maximising our main budget to keep us out of deficit.”

“Any more than 0.5% as in the past will mean that I will need to reduce staffing. In a very challenging school, with high safeguarding and SEND needs, every member of staff on site is important.

I would need to consider if I cut PSA's who support our families or TA's who help the children in need.”

“Option 2 : Transfer of 0.5% from Schools Block to High Needs Block

It has been made clear that this option won't be accepted by the DFE. It does give favourable results for our two schools (XXX and XXX) and would make a real difference to what we are able to offer. However, this does cause a dilemma. We do have some concern about the comment that there would be less Element 3 funding which is worrying. Disappointing that it is an either/or situation. We are not, however, in favour of option 1 as it stands.”

“Less impact across the board”

“Better than Option3”

“Acceptable”

“Second Best”

“Will not be able to provide the level of SEND provision for pupils;
Reduction in staffing will be required”

“It gives the SEN Block some money but we feel we could spend the money in our budget more effectively than putting in the SEN block”

“This will mean reductions in support staff for those high needs children that currently have support. I'm not convinced that the extra 0.5% going to the LA will deliver the

specialist places we desperately need. At the moment we are 'holding' 3x EYFS pupils, 2x Year 1 pupils, 2x Year 2 pupils, 1x Year 3 and 1x Year 4 pupils who all have evidence stating they require specialist provision. With less funding we will be even less able to meet their needs. However, if the extra 0.5% does equate to specialist provision for these children then I would support it."

"XXX would be adversely affected and would need to making staffing cuts which will affect provision for SEN children in mainstream"

"If this causes a loss of Element 3 Funding, depending on the amount of the reduction this could end up costing us more than Option 1"

"This will still significantly impact staffing."

"I can see from your figures that, for our federation, there is no difference in the contribution from the budget as for Option 1. The same applies, as for option 1. All options have the same impact as a result of the minimum per pupil funding guarantee."

"Reduction in school funding"

"This is, in theory, financially better for us than Option 1 but given that Element 3 funding may not then be sustained, we would not be able to meet needs and this would result in less funding for us."

"1) Indicative figures for Option 2 show an increase in funding for 2023/24, subject to changes in pupil numbers, of 13.3%. This will allow support of SEND pupils at the current level and for building maintenance and improvement programmes to be maintained.

2) All other budgets will be reviewed for efficiency savings.

Whilst this indicative level of funding is lower than Option 3, **OPTION 2 IS SUPPORTED BY GOVERNORS.**"

"1) Indicative figures for Option 2 show an increase in funding for 2023/24, subject to changes in pupil numbers, of just 6%, far less than the expected inflationary increases in expenditure. As in the commentary for option 1 above, cuts in expenditure will be required. Building maintenance and improvement programmes are likely to be delayed resulting in more expensive future works being required; Learning resources not ICT budgets will be reviewed and reduced as appropriate; Bought in professional services budgets will be reviewed and reduced as appropriate; all other budgets, including staffing, will be reviewed for efficiency savings.

OPTION 2 IS NOT SUPPORTED BY GOVERNORS."

"This is an acceptable impact for our school, though as budgets are now so tight, there would be some minor impact."

"This is feasible financially, however, the school appreciates the necessity for specialist provision, which some of our young people have gained from."

“Again this has similarly significant implications. We are already unable to balance our budgets with electric and gas, the cost of the teacher pay rise and support staff pay rise adds significant strain. We will not see a direct impact from this contribution.”

Option 3 – No Schools Block Transfer:-

“Treated as the basis case, see comments on Option 2 and Option 1 above.”

“Even the biggest schools in the Trust with health reserves as at August 2022 will be unable to balance budgets unless more funding is available to cover the nationally agreed pay awards. For this reason the transfer of funds from Schools Block to High Needs Block is not an affordable option. Option 3 is therefore the most prudent from our Trusts' / Schools point of view.”

“Under all of the options put forward the Trust is facing a real terms cut in funding. This options shows an average growth in funding of 3.6% however, with inflation currently at 10.1% and payrises for teachers currently of 5%, this represents a real terms cut in school funding. Based on the current inflation rate this option would mean a cut in funding of 6.5%, which is £2m per annum across the Trust’s schools or £369 per pupil. This will mean that the Trust is required to make cuts to staffing and resources that are the equivalent of 38 teaching staff. If inflation reduces to a more manageable level of 5% (in line with teachers pay awards) this still represents a cut of 1.4%, which is £431k per annum across the Trust’s schools or £80 per pupil. The Trust is not a profit making organisation and does has finite reserves, we have therefore started planning how such cuts will be delivered. As we always have we will seek to maximise efficiencies across all of our schools to deliver value for money, but this level of cut will have an impact on the standards delivered. Given the vast majority of education budgets are people it will ultimately result in fewer Teaching Assistants, reduced curriculum choice for pupils and larger class sizes. As a Trust we are committed to ensuring that students have broad personal development opportunities, however to continue offering some of the activities we currently do such as trips we will need to ask parents for greater contributions to these. This is likely to be challenging given the pressures families are facing and will ultimately lead to fewer opportunities for pupils.”

“We have a relatively high number of learners with SEND in our school and would want them to be supported via the existing funding mechanisms in place. This option would potentially threaten the viability of sustaining the current mechanisms and we would not support that.”

“This is the most preferred option at school level as it maximises our 23/24 budget to +3.8%. In normal years we could absorb funding standing still but this is not a normal year, and we cannot allow our own school to fail this one year for the sake of the system as a whole starting off a five year journey of righting the books.”

“Option 3: No transfer from Schools Block to High Needs Block. It has been made clear that this option won’t be accepted by the DFE. Again, this option gives favourable results for our two schools (XXX and XXX) and would obviously make a

real difference in what we are able to offer. However, we do have concerns about the comment that there would be less Element 3 funding the expected impact with SEND. Disappointing that it is an either/or situation. We are not, however, in favour of option 1 as it stands.”

“impact on staffing capacity”

“Reject”

“Rejected”

“Reject”

“Will not be able to provide the level of SEND provision for pupils; Reduction in staffing will be required”

“We would continue trying to meet need for the 9 pupils we currently have in school that require specialist provision. However, I do realise it make it more difficult for the LA to then provide the specialist provision we need.”

“This is the best option for XXX children due to the current pressures on staffing costs and utilities.”

“This would give us a gain in core funding, but we are sure this would be cancelled out (and probably more) by any decrease in Element 3 as suggested in the notes and just prolong the pain of an higher amount needing to be transferred next year.”

“We still need more staff to support pupils who need special school placements.”

“Obviously, with this option we would be better off as a school, and in a better place to soak up some of the increased costs that we will see in the coming months.”

“The Federation has always provided provision for children with high needs at a level which is the best that can be provided with limited budget and expertise. Option 3 would allow our schools to continue to do so with more training and support than we would be able with options 1 and 2.”

“All options have the same impact as a result of the minimum per pupil funding guarantee.”

“Reduced funding from LA to schools in terms of SEN support when requested”

“As above although this is financially better for us as a school.”

“The impact would see no support for the children who need the most support.”

“1) Indicative figures for Option 3 show an increase in funding for 2023/24, subject to changes in pupil numbers, of 13.8%, slightly above that for Option 2. Depending on inflationary increases in expenditure budgets, additional support for SEND pupils might be possible.

2) All budgets will be reviewed for efficiency savings.”

“1) Indicative figures for Option 3 show an increase in funding for 2023/24, subject to changes in pupil numbers, of 6.6%, slightly greater than that for Option 2. Similar budget cuts as outlined in Option 2 will be required.

2) All budgets, including staffing, will be reviewed for efficiency savings.

OFTHE 3 OPTIONS PUT FORWARD FOR CONSIDERATION, THIS IS THE ONLY OPTION THAT IS, RELUCTANTLY, SUPPORTED BY GOVERNORS.”

“We would not consider this option.”

“This is feasible financially, however, the school appreciates the necessity for specialist provision, which some of our young people have gained from.”

“Preferred option- this would allow us the autonomy to enhance SEND provision at a direct local level and see immediate impact. It is hard for leaders to trust that the safety valve plan will work when we have effectively heard the same story for many years with no improvement in support or service.”

Responses for impact on system as a whole:

Option 1 – 1.5% Schools Block Transfer:-

“Critical to allow in-year balancing of the high needs block and support the DfE safety value achievement criteria. Will also perpetuate the high volume of administrative work around applying for high needs top up funding for mainstream pupils with complex needs. Recommended.”

“We understand that Option 1 is the only one acceptable to the DfE as it offers real plan of eliminating the HNB deficit and Norfolk's inclusion in the Safety Valve programme.”

“Schools and pupils currently on roll will be disadvantaged to the extent that individual schools will become unsustainable or unable to achieve balanced, in year budgets. This is a national funding issue exacerbated by a high-needs strategic failure over many years. A national solution is required.”

“Clearly we are very supportive of NCC's need to stabilise the funding and provision of the High Needs Block, and understand the need to get more funds from somewhere. This does appear to be the most viable solution to the problem, except for the challenge it transfers to schools and trusts in the current economic environment. It would help if we could see the full picture, eg what (if any) added benefit we would get back for SEND provision in schools. The whole set-up isn't ideal, as there's clearly an overall funding shortfall, and this just moves part of that problem from the LA to the schools.”

“Will obviously be beneficial for NCC as helps the SEN overspend.”

“I (think) I can see the argument being presented. Whilst it seems reasonable I think the same as at school level - that this is not the year to be going for the option that

sees the least going to mainstream schools, with the extraordinary cost pressures we are all under, which were unimagined six months ago.”

“This is not an option I feel that the large majority of schools could do without significant impact on the budgets and everyone going into deficit.”

“If Norfolk is really serious about supporting small schools and we would like to think it is, as there are so many, then it should select a system that doesn’t take away any of the sparsity entitlement for the children’s education. It is no good giving with one hand and taking away with the other. If this issue, regarding the funding cap, is not resolved to ensure all sparsity allowances are protected then we would certainly not support this option. As it stands, it would not give equality of education to all pupils in Norfolk because of the fact that it is so hit and miss. Please see our responses to the Funding Cap Consultation.”

“Schools will be able to educate SEND pupils”

“As a school we lose out on £15 000 compared to option 3. The system as a whole takes more each year and delivers less. Even with option 1, there would still be a deficit at the end of 29/29. We would get more additional funding (than under the other options) - maybe - to school from the HNB to support children in mainstream under this option but with the overall budget being reduced because of this, we will need to look at reducing staff which will directly impact the children in our school who are SEN. We are very inclusive and self - fund an intervention class for high level SEN who do not cope in mainstream. Without this provision we have 12 children who would most certainly have been excluded by now on a permanent basis. If we want high SEN children in mainstream then we need to pay for it - we cannot afford the provision without additional funding that we lose on option 1. This will affect the system as a whole because we will not be able to maintain these children safely in mainstream classes. For schools like ours who are not full, SEND costs are even higher because our per pupil funding doesn't cover all the costs and yet we still have to provide the same by way of staffing etc.”

“I am not sure that the 1.5% top slice will have a great impact on the service provided but it will have a significant impact on the budgets of schools at a point when they are already very stretched. How will this be reconciled – if schools can’t afford lighting and heating, let alone resources and staff, where are we? A further key area of concern in relation to high needs pupils in mainstream schools is finding staff who are appropriately qualified to work with them. How does Norfolk intend to support schools with this i.e. recruitment and retention of staff to ensure that the young people are in a sustainable placement? I have seen placements fail many times due to this, so it is also key area for me as it often means specialist placements are needed after the breakdown of the mainstream placement.”

“As long as some of this is used to support Mainstream provision through Element 3 Funding and more inclusion support then with the hope of additional funding from the DfE, this would hopefully support improved ways of working whilst reducing the deficit.”

“Pupils with significant needs may not be supported properly and at the worst may not be safe.”

“High Needs is in desperate need of finances, and I'm sure 1.5% would start to reduce the ever increasing deficit. My concern is that an equilibrium has not been found in the funding requirement of the High Needs Block, and we are chasing an ever increasing budget.”

“Schools are being asked again to give up part of their budget to cover the High needs deficit while the support and services provided by the LA are failing to address problems experienced by schools, parents and, most importantly, children with high needs.

This 1.5% is only to address a deficit and does not provide extra services and support urgently needed.

In our schools we are using the money to improve the experience of high needs pupils.”

“I can see the logic of an additional 1% transfer. However, given inflationary pressures faced by many schools, this could be very difficult in advertently ultimately lead to less support for SEN pupils.”

“I am not in favour of this due to the very low SEN funding provided for High Needs pupils in schools. However, as it is the only option that the DFE will accept, it is in effect the only choice and the reality is that other options may result in less Element 3 High Needs Funding so would in effect impact individual schools to a far greater extent.”

“The children who need most support would take a step towards gaining the support they need to flourish and succeed.”

“As this appears to be the only option acceptable to DFE and potential DFE investment, it is, rightly or wrongly, perceived to be the preferred option for NCC. The schools block has supported the high needs block for many years, to the detriment of many pupils, masking the shortfall in high needs block funding by DFE. Adequate funding of high need block must be pursued at the highest level, with no further transfers from the schools block.”

“The system needs this, we have all watched the presentation by Michael Bateman and we have read the NGN blog. There is insufficient capacity in Norfolk HN and significant challenges in mainstream. The system needs a positive feedback loop and schools are essential to this. As one governor mentioned, if we don't give we lose, if we do give we lose”

“It will hopefully support a greater number of special school places which the county will continue to need even beyond the current building phase. Unfortunately, the timing with regard to school funding is clearly a concern”

“Many colleagues have lost faith in the capacity of the LA to provide effective SEND provision. We are being asked to extend that faith to a future project without sharing the details of what that will look like and how quickly we will see effects.”

“Needed to support High Needs Block”

Option 2 – 0.5% Schools Block Transfer:-

“Minimum necessary transfer to ensure a remote chance of the high needs block being balanced. High risk of not meeting DfE safety value achievement criteria. Will also perpetuate the high volume of administrative work around applying for high needs top up funding for mainstream pupils with complex needs. Not recommended.”

“This option will reduce schools' immediate income and will not deliver sufficient savings to reduce the HNB overspend.”

“This is the closest to a planned/expected position. Although not ideal, this is the expected reality, which provides some funding certainty from year to year.”

“Whilst this would have a much smaller impact on our funding and budgets, we understand that it would not satisfy the DfE or provide the additional resources needed for High Needs.”

“This seems a balanced position but looking down the table I can see school level impact varies and I cannot comment on those cases. I would favour this as a 'system' solution for now, and then revisit next year, assuming the unprecedented funding crisis in schools has been resolved by then. Government has to be put its hand in its pocket and accept that running state schools costs money.”

“With increased staffing costs and rise in energy costs any money taken from budgets will have a significant impact on the very large majority of schools.”

“We do have some concern about the comment that there would be less Element 3 funding which is worrying. Disappointing that it is an either/or situation. We are not, however, in favour of option 1 as it stands.”

“Exclusions will increase”

“This option doesn't clear the enormous deficit built up by county. As a school we lose £9 000 between this and option 3. I cannot see how county will function with SEN needs with this option. I actually think that more children need specialist provision than fewer - we are inclusive but without our intervention class for those who don't manage mainstream, there would be higher rates of exclusion and more children in mainstream whose education would be disrupted. Children all need the right environment to learn and we need to accept that for some this is special provision - OR FUND fully intervention classes like ours.”

“I am not sure that the 0.5% top slice will have a great impact on the service provided but it will have a significant impact on the budgets of schools at a point when they are already very stretched.”

“There is a danger that any additional funding opportunities from the DfE would be lost and that Element 3 Funding would reduce due to increased unfunded staffing payrises in the High Needs Block.”

“Pupils with significant needs may not be supported properly and at the worst may not be safe.”

“This was the 'normal' amount that supported the High Needs Block from schools.”

“This seems more in line with schools' expectations for this year.”

“I am concerned that whilst the SEND transformation project is providing more specialist provision, the number of high needs pupils in schools has and is increasing beyond prior levels despite the fact that more pupils are in specialist provision. Exclusions remain high because of the lack of SEND funding in schools. This is not the fault of individual schools (although it is often used as a way to pitch us against each other), it is a failure of the system and SEND funding. As an example, I have a high needs pupil from LCC who will transfer to specialist provision in Sep 23. Given that he will need to remain at our school in the meantime, I have been awarded over £14,000 to support him. As a result I can employ staff and meet his needs temporarily. The High Needs funding for schools in Norfolk is woefully inadequate.”

“There will be insufficient funds within Norfolk HN. This will have negative impacts, which will impact Norfolk children and schools.”

“Schools will be better off but will have to manage very high needs, which is often overwhelming when so much is asked of us already. School's want to be inclusive but not to the detriment of our young people or staff wellbeing.”

“If this was the preferred model it should be focused on creating more specialist settings only which then free up more funding to allow schools to provide effective in school provision to the children within their care when they need it most”

“Not viable”

Option 3 – No Schools Block Transfer:-

“High needs block continues to be over spent, failure to achieve DfE safety value achievement criteria. Not recommended.”

“While this will have a negative impact on the HNB funding gap, will the schools actually be able to operate as going concern for a bit longer?”

“Not likely to ever come about. See 2 above.”

“Great for us, but not for the High Needs Block or more importantly for the children who need this provision. Doesn't give any confidence in the longer term provision.”

"This does not move closer to balancing the system, and there are costs incurred by the SEN support system outside of school which should be considered. Therefore I don't support this."

"This would support schools financially, but not with the SEND children."

"we do have concerns about the comment that there would be less Element 3 funding the expected impact with SEND. Disappointing that it is an either/or situation. We are not, however, in favour of option 1 as it stands."

"Exclusions will increase"

"This isn't really an option because there is then no real funding available to schools from county. County has to repay its debt somehow and schools need to meet needs. This option wouldn't work - even though it gives us more in our budget."

"The impact on individual schools will be more resources and staffing to support those high needs children that aren't gaining specialist places within the system as it is."

"There is a danger that any additional funding opportunities from the DfE would be lost and that Element 3 Funding would reduce due to increased unfunded staffing payrises in the High Needs Block. The increasing deficit under this option in the High Needs Block would exponentially increase and affect schools across the board in future years."

"We desperately need school places for high levels of need that are not able to be met by a mainstream school."

"If schools stop supporting the High Needs Block, then how do the schools supporting pupils with High Needs get funding? If no High Needs Schools, then maintained schools would need to support High Needs pupils and most schools do not have the expertise and space to support these children."

"The DfE has to be made aware of the increasing costs of the High Needs block. By devising a plan to eliminate the deficit, it could be that we are showing that there is enough in the budget to adequately address the requirements of high needs children. To address these needs put the funds in the hands of those who can meet the demand."

"The long-term impact of no transfer could be significant."

"As above. In addition, schools do need to support the wider system and additional specialist provision is still required."

"This option should be followed to improve standards and give pupils the best opportunity for success."

"We would not consider this."

"Schools will be better off but will have to manage very high needs, which is often overwhelming when so much is asked of us already. Schools want to be inclusive but not to the detriment of our young people or staff wellbeing."

“This would allow schools and Trusts the opportunity to provide direct support”

“Not viable”

General Comments on formula options and Schools Block transfer:-

“The high needs block needs to be brought back into balance, DfE safety value compliance should be given highest priority. There is a false economy in mainstream schools not transferring funds to the high needs block given the amount of high needs funding then needs to be claimed, which comes with significant admin burden as there is not enough high needs funding.”

“A national strategic funding solution is required to address the overall deficit on high needs funding.”

“It seems to us fundamentally wrong that the issue has to be solved by taking more money out of schools' funding, putting the schools at a disadvantage. And the timing is particularly unfortunately given the need to find money to pay high pay awards, energy and other costs. The solution has to be that DfE find more funds for the system as a whole.”

“The 2022-23 funding model had a disproportionate impact on small schools as small movements in pupil numbers or funding quickly exceeded the cap. These schools already face significant financial pressures due to the reduced ability for efficiencies in staffing models and for the majority rurality. Given the large number of small rural schools in Norfolk it is essential that schools forum put forward a model that is fair and proportionate for schools across the county and that includes resolving the issues that arose in the 2022-23 funding model. This consultation outlines possibilities on how this could be done which is a step forward, but without further detail it is not clear that this will resolve the issues faced. This on top of wider economic pressures may result in a number of these small schools no longer being financially viable. The Trust is one of the few MATs that has actively sought to take on schools of this nature as we feel it is essential to give children at these schools the best possible education, but the financial models must continue to support this.”

“The main thing I would say is that we have been overtaken by circumstances. I have never been in predicted deficit before, but now due to the underfunding of staff pay rises I am in that position. There is no one factor that is to blame but the fact remains that this is not the year to be diverting more to the high needs block than absolutely necessary. I feel the 0.5% option is a fair compromise.”

“If staff uplifts in wages were being funded and the energy cap was in place and we knew what this was, then as headteachers we would be able to make adjustments to help with these costs. However, change takes time and needs to be prepared for.”

“It is most important that we have a fair system and we do not have that at the moment. So often we play around with caps and transfers without thinking everything through. Please, this time, give very careful consideration to how sparsity funding is distributed.”

“There is no decision to be made - the application for safety valve funding has been made already and this is a consultation in name only. The system as a whole has insufficient funding.”

“Funding needs to be provided for the staffing pay increases. If this does not happen the school will be in deficit budget every year moving forward.”

“More Special School places need to be made available urgently. Pupils and staff are being let down by the current system, which is inadequate.”

“I would like to see a balanced budget for the High Needs Block, and High Needs working within their budget, the same as is expected of maintained schools.”

“I feel I have addressed this above but SEND funding remains a significant concern. Current discussions around unfunded pay rises and potential real term cuts to schools will result in larger class sizes and less inclusion. The government support for energy bill caps has done nothing to cap expenditure in many schools and fuel oil is not included - to say that schools are being supported with this is disingenuous.”

“There is significant unease within schools currently, this has a negative secondary impact on provision. Hearing the challenges repeatedly does little to ease this and in fact it is detrimental. There are still many isolated schools, some doing a wonderful job, others less so. The current funding concerns in schools is not new but there is now a perfect storm developing. This cannot continue, it is unacceptable we are pushing the very people who we need to focus on school improvement into scraping every penny and reducing the very staff and resources that they need to deliver the improvements that they are tasked to do.”

“The marginalised in society need our support. Their families need our support. Specialist provision needs to be desirable and accessible. The use of private provision for specialist support is financially inefficient (as least twice as costly) and needs to be reduced. I.e. greater investment required in specialist provision”

“The options outlined do not seem to be transformative enough to cope with the increasing demand and significant need that already exists. Many schools and Trusts feel that the money would be more wisely used at a local level to provide immediate and direct support.”

“Which ever option is chosen, my budget is awful. I have over 110 staff to pay, my electricity has gone up extortionately and sadly, I have to keep both the lights and heating on due to the nature of the pupils. I have highly trained specialist staff leaving to become cleaners because they will be paid more. The whole situation is now a joke. As a four times outstanding school, I face losing that accolade because of a lack of funding, meaning redundancies and then unsafe staff ratios with Norfolk's most complex and disabled pupils. Such an awful state of affairs.”

Appendix B – Funding Cap/Sparsity

Comments verbatim as submitted through the survey, including if there appear to be errors in understanding of the factual data provided.

In support of Option 1 – Hard Cap

“Option 1 Hard cap is the most equitable way to ensure that there is relative moderation for all schools. Also options 2, 3 and 4 appear to see a more significant reduction funding for secondary schools, where pupils have less time left in their school careers to catch up their lost learning over COVID, as such again preference would be for Option 1.”

“We have chosen this based purely on the effect on our school, as an average school that is not subject the sparsity factor but does have the cap applied.”

“Systems works as it is. Rural schools should close if they are not financially viable.”

“Based on the money we would receive in our budget.”

In support of Option 2 – MFG Baseline Adjustments

“Many small schools did not receive funding that they should have received for the first time in 2022 23, and which they had been denied for many years due to flawed eligibility criteria (ie as the crow flies vs road distance) Option 2 redresses this on a once and for all basis and corrects this unintended consequence of the 2022 23 funding settlement. 2 primaries will be unsustainable in 2023 24 unless sparsity funding is allowed to pass, un-capped, into their funding.”

“It is important the unintended consequences of the 2022-23 funding structure are rectified in this proposal. Therefore adjustments need to be made to the MFG baseline for schools that received sparsity for the first time as a priority. Utilising capping and scaling enables schools to retain a proportion of any gain and therefore do not lose everything , this would help the model cope with unexpected consequences and builds a fairer system where all share in the benefits. Therefore it is the Trust’s preference this is used in conjunction with adjustments to the MFG baseline for sparsity. The hard cap on schools gains was part of the issue in 2022-23 and therefore is the least preferred option.”

“Schools qualifying for sparsity for the first time this year have lost out on much-needed funding. This was not included in the consultation last year so there was no opportunity to give feedback on proposals at the time. The result is that those schools disproportionately lost out this year and are now in the position of having to fight to get the funding back. Although some of our other schools will lose money as a result of Options 2 and 3, it is still fairer to the small schools who have a bigger challenge and fewer opportunities to balance their budgets.”

“most funding available”

In support of Option 3 – Scaling/Capping

“We all reviewed this and have varying considerations. Though some did not understand the narrative. The hard cap as we saw it challenged some of our rural schools which for maintained causes additional issues.”

“As a small school, our funding is always a close run thing. Anything that allows small schools which are popular and serve their local communities, is desirable. I found the explanations of the different options not entirely clear in the technical paper however.”

“It is important that small schools receive sparsity payments as they need them and not have to wait for the cap to gradually bring their extra funding into their budget. However, it is important that schools with budgets which are reducing are protected in the short term from a sudden drop in income.”

“A combination of capping and scaling will allow money to go quicker to where it is needed most - but with some transition for those losing money.”

In support of Option 4 – Reduce unit values, no cap on gains

“If the sparsity factor is seen as a gain instead of a necessity, then the issues some of us had last year of giving with one hand and taking with the other will continue. There is no fairness in this at all and it cannot be acceptable. Option 4 includes a 1.5% Schools Block to High Needs Transfer. Option 4 seems the most appropriate and, in our opinion, deals with all the issues raised in comments for the other options. It does, however, reduce the factor unit values for all schools by an equal percentage. This is listed as -1.44%. Option 3 is cumbersome and possibly subject to misinterpretation. It implies that, in some cases, sparsity factor will not be paid in full but there will be transition. Why? In the second paragraph you say that “capping and scaling must be applied on an equal basis to all schools”. Why is it not possible to include the Sparsity Funding as basic pupil entitlement and not make it subject to any capping? Surely that is an equal base. That would be the equitable solution. Option 2 includes a 1.5% Schools Block to High Needs Transfer. This option is not clear cut and would require more approval. Odd really that schools need more approval to receive the funding they should have had last year! Option 1 includes a 1.5% Schools Block to High Needs Transfer. This option would not be acceptable. It does not offer equal opportunity for all. If the sparsity factor is seen as a gain instead of a necessity, then the issues some of us had last year of giving with one hand and taking with the other would continue. There is no fairness in this at all and it cannot be acceptable. We are still very concerned about the timescale of this consultation which makes planning budgets very difficult. We are also anxious that the same will happen this year as last year. That would not be acceptable to our two schools. Do we, at that point, inform the media?”

“Small School”

“I feel this needs to reflect realistic funding to help factor this into future years.”

No ranking chosen:

“I would need to take more advice on this from the financial director”

Appendix C – Scheme for Financing Schools

Comments verbatim as submitted through the survey, including if there appear to be errors in understanding of the factual data provided.

Comments in support of removing exception process from analysis of balances mechanism:

“Streamlining this process will prove beneficial to all.”

“The arbitrary 8% cap does not reflect real life and leads to inefficient spending of funds prior to budget close to ensure that this cap is met. All schools should be able to justify their carry forward.”

“If contingency limits removed, no need for exception process.”

“This is often inaccurate due to the timing. However, I do not wish to see this as a means of taking funds from prudent schools.”

“If contingency limits in 9) below are removed, there is no need for exception process.”

“We believe that this will streamline the process.”

“The 8% is too hard a line drawn, and in most cases schools are only justifying balances of a few thousand above the 8%.”

“Enables a level playing-field with academies.”

“This would save a lot of time and make the process simpler.”

“More time to get on with improving our schools rather than filling in forms.”

“Given their unique contexts and current financial pressures, school leaders need as much budgetary flexibility as possible.”

Comments against removal of the exception process from analysis of balances mechanism:

“Having been almost in this situation ourselves recently, this would have caused a considerable knock on effect. We had already prepared a justification in case we were closer. However, I would expect that there are very few LA maintained schools with this surplus.”

“There does need to be an exemption process for unforeseen circumstances.”

“There are times that as a school we have needed this provision to prove why we have not spent all of the funds within a year. This has helped us with activities in further years. We would have had to spend money in an unsustainable way if this provision wasn't in place. We have been able to be clear about our spending and is the reason why we haven't been in deficit before.”

“Schools need the exception process sometimes, for example the costs incurred to establish and embed a new curriculum.”

“Clarity of expectation”

Comments in support of removing the contingency limits from analysis of balances mechanism:

“We believe our approach to strategic financial planning already supports Governor's understanding of what reserves will be used for and so support in full the removal of this mechanism.”

“We should be able to have as much as a contingency as possible going forward and not limited to a flat 8%.”

“There will be times where a school has more than 8%, especially with a change of headteacher. The new headteacher needs to have time to sort out what needs to change and then use the money effectively. The 8% needs to be taken away, as long as the school can justify.”

“Providing we don't lose money and justifications are accepted. It might allow schools to carry money forward to reduce the need to lose staff in future years and stop schools just spending money so as not to lose it.”

“However, I do not wish to see this as a means of taking funds from prudent schools.”

“Enables a level playing-field with academies.”

“Given their unique contexts and current financial pressures, school leaders need as much budgetary flexibility as possible.”

“The arbitrary 8% cap does not reflect real life and leads to inefficient spending of funds prior to budget close to ensure that this cap is met. All schools should be able to justify their carry forward.”

“Allows improved financial planning and dealing with slippage in projects.”

Comments against removal of the contingency limits from analysis of balances mechanism:

“The current system works. I don't think there should be any loosening of the accountability required if a school goes way off its balance position. Schools should not hold surplus balances over 8% without great scrutiny.”

“The contingency balances surpluses carried forward are usually utilised in the next years budget setting, allowing for the level of staffing and educational materials to be maintained.”

“The 8% or £20k limit may be too hard a line drawn, but it does give an indication of the level of contingency deemed appropriate for a given school. Not having this indicator leaves the level of contingency open for different interpretations of allowable surplus. The conditions of redistributing a school's surplus must be fully defined and not just left to individual cases.”

“We would almost be needing a 4th revision in this instance. We are talking about schools, in the most part, without business managers. This would not work and potentially detrimental to the school and the school's provision.”

“We are saving hard to make massive capital improvements because the LA won't fund it. We get £7000 a year to do capital works on a building that is 120 years old. It is a joke. I won't have any surplus this year anyway - we will be paying for gas and electricity”

Comments in support of additional paragraph re: redistribution within the analysis of balances mechanism:

“Only if this were to happen, which I disagree with. There should be limits.”

“I would expect some precision to the wording here, what do significant excessive uncommitted balances look like? Redistribute to, the other LA maintained schools?”

“I do have some concerns though that this gives the LA the right to take back balances despite it being allocated for future years to cover such things as falling pupil numbers, staff reductions, etc. There has to be some protection for the schools.”

“Every school that does have a contingency must have a plan in place as to how they are going to spend it.”

“As long as genuine reasons are accepted as there would be no 'rules'. This does not need to become a way of taking money from schools.”

“But reasons for carryover needs to be widened as there are so many external pressures on school budgets currently.”

“This is clear. However, it is important that examples and criteria are provided at the beginning of the financial year so that schools are clear what is acceptable.”

Comments against an additional paragraph re: redistribution within the analysis of balances mechanism:

“Too vague”

“Schools already provide evidence to justify their surpluses.”

“There must be a defined list of allowable reasons for surpluses and acceptable evidence. The Local Authority must not be able to indiscriminately recover surplus

without good reason. Will there be a right of appeal if governors think that the LA is acting unreasonably? Is this process defined and documented?"

"The money has come to the school for the children. Not for county to take back. This should not be added in at all. I was away ill last year. My deputy didn't spend the money that I have put in the budget. We then went a little over the 8%. As she hadn't filled in the form in February when I was off we were threatened to have £48k taken. This was not the fault of the children in the school. It was because I was off ill. I had to fight at the end of last term to be able to keep this money and are having to prove throughout this year how we are spending it. However, with other costs this year, we would rather not spend it on how we had the justification at the end of the year on and keep the money for increased wages etc. So we are having to spend in areas which we might not spend as much. I do not believe money that has been given for the children within a school to other schools."

"I think this statement is too vague and open to interpretation. What constitutes 'sufficient evidence'? I do think that there needs to be rigour in carrying forward a surplus which the governing body and headteacher would need to clarify with the FSO. In the current climate, holding a surplus to maintain the schools current staffing through uncertain times should be seen as good financial management."

"Schools should be allowed to benefit from their good financial management without fear of losing resources."

Comments in support of increasing limits to amounts that may be lodged in Schools Building Maintenance Holding Account:

"Increasing monies lodged will help schools as the costs of labour and materials have increased substantially."

"Although if there is a large building project being saved for this should be taken into consideration."

"Allows improved project planning and phasing"

"Building costs are skyrocketing. BMP limits need to be uplifted accordingly."

"This is important, for those not with BMP, the challenge can be significant and the impact even moreso. School estate management is of concern and even some of the newer builds are coming into major repairs being required. BMP membership really needs to be an ongoing conversation with boards."

"Given the strain on school budgets across the County the limits proposed appear both appropriate and unlikely to be exceeded."

"Schools need to be able to save to maintain buildings - you are not guaranteed to get everything done within BMPP and it is expensive to belong."

"Thank you for listening about this, I personally will see a positive impact of this proposal should it be approved."

Comments against increasing limits to amounts that may be lodged in Schools Building Maintenance Holding Account:

“Small schools in old buildings will really struggle if this is the case.”

Comments in support of allowing money to be lodged in Schools Building Maintenance Holding Account for sinking funds and maintenance of community assets:

“Costs of maintenance and repairs have increased, so it is only fair that the schools with community assets may lodge funds in building maintenance holding account.”

“Allows improved project planning and phasing.”

“It doesn't seem that there's any reason why not.”

“Because these community assets are increasingly in short supply in our rural county. An approach to ensuring that there is some partnership use of facilities would be of course preferable. The additional allowance would need to be stipulated, considering funds being moved back out for example.”

“This amendment seems entirely practical.”

“This will be extremely helpful as the current transfers to capital are not always easy to separate from the general pot.”

Comments against allowing money to be lodged in Schools Building Maintenance Holding Account for sinking funds and maintenance of community assets:

No comments were submitted by schools.

Appendix D – Any other comments on funding formula or Scheme for Financing Schools

Comments verbatim as submitted through the survey, including if there appear to be errors in understanding of the factual data provided.

“Please aim to consult in a period which does not include school closure weeks.”

“Provide schools and academies with sufficient notice (not over Half Term) so that Principals and Senior Leads have time to discuss this properly and with the appropriate staff.”

“The system is broken. It is having an impact on everyone. The fact that cleaners are paid more than school support staff is appalling - especially when they are literally saving children's lives day in, day out. I won't be able to keep the lights and heating on - who is going to help? Who will be there when the bills come in and there is no money to pay for them. It is not the fault of the pupils that they are blind and cannot move, therefore need the lights on and to stay warm. We will plough on - we have no choice. Such a shame that the support from those in LA managerial positions is so very poor.”

“School funding needs to be addressed at central govt as school leaders cannot continue to make cuts whilst still being expected to maintain or raise standards.”

“This is not the year for mainstream, small schools, to be seeing any funding gains due to them, minimised for the sake of the system. Once the immediate crisis of underfunding staff wages, and other rocketing costs, has abated, then we should look at things again from a more balanced position.”

“Highest priority should be given to balancing the high needs budget in year to take advantage of the DfE safety value.”

“Schools like ours with classes that aren't full suffer. The difference between resourcing a class of 25 from a class of 30 is the same in terms of staffing, heating, cleaning etc and yet there is a shortfall of (in this case) approx £20 000. Multiply this up over 14 classes and the budget becomes very difficult to manage. Year groups are too big to mix and yet too small to be financially manageable. I know this is a national issue but it is a real issue. SEN in Norfolk has been poorly funded and provided for in many years. I hope that if the safety valve funding is implemented that the resources and services will be well managed - schools cannot get bailed out in this manner.”

Schools Forum

Item No. 3b

Report title:	De-delegation/Central School Services Block
Date of meeting:	16 November 2022

Executive summary

In this paper Schools Forum members are asked to decide on the de-delegation of services from primary and secondary schools' budgets in 2023-24 (nursery and special schools are invited to buy-back into the same services), to approve the level of growth fund and growth criteria for 2023-24, and to approve the funding of central services from the Central School Services Block for 2023-24.

Schools Forum are asked to undertake the following decisions:

- **Decision 1a – Should staff cost budgets for the primary sector be de-delegated? (To be agreed by maintained primary representatives).**
- **Decision 1b – Should staff cost budgets for the secondary sector be de-delegated? (To be agreed by the maintained secondary representative).**
- **Decision 2 – To agree de-delegation of a contingency at an indicative rate of £8.46 per-pupil for 2023/24 from maintained schools' budgets, for a budget of £277k (to be agreed by all maintained school representatives).**
- **Decision 3a – Should Free School Meals eligibility be de-delegated for the primary sector (maintained)? (To be agreed by maintained primary representatives).**
- **Decision 3b – Should Free School Meal eligibility be de-delegated for the secondary sector (maintained)? (To be agreed by the maintained secondary representative).**
- **Decision 4 – Should £150k for two full time adviser posts be de-delegated at an estimated rate of £4.58 per-pupil? (Maintained schools' representatives only).**
- **Decision 5a - The maintained special school representative is asked to decide on the buyback of services for all maintained special schools in the 2023-24 financial year.**
- **Decision 5b - The academy special school representative is asked to decide on the buyback of services for academy special schools in the 2023-24 financial year.**
- **Decision 6 - The maintained nursery school representative is asked to decide on the buyback of services for maintained nursery schools in the 2023-24 financial year.**
- **Decision 7a – To approve a £1.101m centrally retained fund for pre-16 growth in 2023-24 (vote for all Schools Forum members)**

- **Decision 7b – To approve the pre-16 growth fund criteria as detailed in section 1.7 of this paper (vote for all Schools Forum members)**
- **Schools Forum are required to approve the retention of Central School Services Block items (vote by all members)**
 - **Decision 8a – To approve the level of Admissions funding (£487,011).**
 - **Decision 8b – To approve the level of funding for Schools Forum (£30,000).**
 - **Decision 8c – To approve the level of funding for Fees to Independent Schools for pupil without SEN (£100,000).**
 - **Decision 8d – To approve the level of contribution towards the Director of Learning & Inclusion central budgets- Early Intervention and Achievement (£119,700).**
 - **Decision 8e – To approve the level of Termination of Employment Costs (£64,994).**
- **Decision 9 – Schools Forum (all members) to approve funding for responsibilities held for all schools from Central School Services Block, including Teachers’ Pay Grant and Teachers’ Pension Employer Contribution Grant for centrally employed staff (£2,566,546).**

The Schools Forum members eligible to make decisions or vote on the items in this paper are as follows:

Decisions/votes for maintained primary representatives only:

Martin White, Nebula Foundation (Forum Chair)

Mike Grimble, Avenue Junior School, NGN

Sarah Shirras, St Williams Primary School

Decisions/votes for maintained secondary representatives only:

Joanna Tuttle, Aylsham High School

Decision/vote for maintained special school representative only:

Rebecca Wicks, The Clare School

Decision/vote for academy special school representative only:

Rachel Quick, The Wherry School

Decision/vote for nursery school representative only:

Carole Jacques, Earlham Nursery School

All other decisions/votes:

All members of Schools Forum (LA Officers do not vote)

1. De-delegated Services/Buyback

Schools Forum are asked to vote separately by **maintained Primary and Secondary sector** on the de-delegation of services (de-delegation to be agreed amongst representatives of those sectors only).

If agreed, the cost of de-delegated services for maintained schools will be removed from the Basic Per-Pupil Entitlement at a single per pupil rate for all year groups, except for Free School Meal eligibility which will be removed from FSM deprivation funding. This paper shows budget estimates based on the October 2021 census data as the LA does not yet have the October 2022 census data which will drive the final 2023-24 de-delegation figures.

Nursery schools, Special Schools, and Special Academies are offered services as a buy back option, as they are not allowed to de-delegate under the statutory finance regulations. (Buy-back to be agreed by representatives of those sectors only).

1.1 Staff Costs

The staff cost budgets that may be de-delegated relate to redeployment and safeguarding, maternity cover, supply cover for special circumstances, suspended staff and additional costs relating to disabled staff (note that there was no expenditure on disabled staff in 2021-22, hence the proposed de-delegation for it in 2023-24 has been reduced to £0).

It is proposed that the current practice of allowing Nursery Schools, Special Schools and Special Academies to buy-back into the same fund is continued.

Annex A provides more information for each of the staff budgets.

The suggested pupil amounts for each of the staffing budgets included in de-delegation have been reviewed based on the 2021-22 financial year outturn, which totalled £1,030,891 (£903,317 for primary after deducting the suggested contributions for buy-back from nursery and special schools, and special circumstances for secondary schools³). This is divided by the number of pupils for which funding is estimated to be de-delegated in 2023-24 to reach a total of £28.56 per-pupil (down from £29.85 in 2022-23) for the combined staffing budgets.

The suggested de-delegation from Basic Per-Pupil Entitlement funding is as follows, based on estimated pupil numbers:

³ Secondary maintained schools de-delegated special circumstances in 2022-23.

Primary De-Delegation	2023-24 Per-Pupil Rate (£) *	2023-24 Indicative Budget (£)
Redeployment/Safeguarding	1.87	59,122
Maternity Cover	23.76	751,446
Special Circumstances	0.67	21,150
Suspended Staff	2.26	71,598
Disabled Staff	0.00	0
TOTAL	28.56	903,317
Estimated Pupil Numbers**		31,627

* Per-pupil rates shown rounded to 2.d.p.

** Estimated pupil numbers are from the 2023-24 draft APT

The LA would de-delegate an indicative budget total for staffing costs of £903,317 for the primary sector.

At the same de-delegation rates per-pupil, if the secondary sector also voted for de-delegation of staffing costs, the indicative contributions for secondary would be:

Secondary De-Delegation	2023-24 Per- Pupil Rate (£) *	2023-24 Indicative Budget (£)
Redeployment/Safeguarding	1.87	2,074
Maternity Cover	23.76	26,350
Special Circumstances	0.67	742
Suspended Staff	2.26	2,506
Disabled Staff	0.00	0
TOTAL	28.56	31,672
Estimated Pupil Numbers**		1,109

* Per-pupil rates shown rounded to 2.d.p.

** Estimated pupil numbers are from the 2023-24 draft APT

The LA would de-delegate an indicative budget total for staffing costs of £31,672 for the secondary sector. However, if the secondary sector wished to de-delegate only the special circumstances budget as in 2022-23, the cost for 2023-24 is estimated at £742.

Note that final de-delegated budgets may differ based upon final pupil numbers in the 2023-24 APT when de-delegated at the rates shown above (if those rates are agreed by the appropriate Schools Forum representatives).

Decision 1a – Should staff cost budgets for the primary sector be de-delegated? (To be agreed by maintained primary representatives).

Decision 1b – Should staff cost budgets for the secondary sector be de-delegated? (To be agreed by the maintained secondary representative).

1.2 Contingencies

Where a school with a deficit is to open as a sponsored academy, the deficit remains with the local authority. If Schools Forum agree to de-delegate a contingency provision, then the deficit may be funded from that contingency. Otherwise, the cost must be funded from the LA's core budget and, therefore, is effectively a charge to local council taxpayers and not one that the LA has budget for. In effect, it would reduce the funding available to the LA to support schools and the wider system.

A de-delegated contingency of £277k is requested for 2023/24 to meet the anticipated costs of writing off a deficit for one primary school. The LA understands that this is a significant ask, particularly in the current financial context, but it is appropriate for de-delegated Schools Block funds to be used for this purpose.

The school concerned currently has its finances overseen by an LA Performance Officer and there is a strong likelihood that it will convert to a sponsored academy in 2023/24. The situation with this school is highly unusual.

The LA allocated a lead officer who has provided significant support to the school. The current Headteacher is leading the school effectively. It is anticipated that the school will become an academy prior to the 'turn-around' being completed, thus leaving the cumulative deficit with the LA that will need repaying.

Additionally, significant support from the LA's finance team has been in place to attempt to mitigate the ongoing deficit. 2022-23 is forecasted to be a small in-year underspend, alongside appropriate funding that allows for school improvement and secures the services this school requires. However, the previous years' deficits have resulted in the outstanding cumulative deficit. Pupil numbers have increased significantly during the time and the projections are that the school is viable in the longer-term.

De-delegation of the £277k contingency fund required would be at an indicative rate⁴ of £8.46 per-pupil. The final per-pupil rate would be calculated based on October 2022 pupil numbers and therefore may change slightly in order to keep the de-delegated sum at £277k.

Decision 2 – To agree de-delegation of a contingency at an indicative rate of £8.46 per-pupil for 2023/24 from maintained schools' budgets, for a budget of £277k (to be agreed by all maintained school representatives).

1.3 Free School Meal eligibility

The Free School Meal eligibility budget provides schools with a central service for checking free school meal eligibility data.

⁴ If maintained pupil numbers are lower/higher in the final APT the rate per-pupil would need to be increased/decreased slightly in order to meet the estimated contingency requirement in 2022/23.

Maintained mainstream schools and maintained special schools all use this service, and, therefore, the funding required to run the service, which is £27,500, has been apportioned between the sectors based on estimated FSM⁵ pupils as follows:

	Primary	Secondary	Special	TOTAL
Estimated FSM Pupils*	5,949	134	561	6,644
Share of Budget (£)	24,623	555	2,322	27,500

*Rounded to nearest FSM pupil numbers

The indicative charge to FSM deprivation funding for mainstream schools would be £4.14 (to 2 d.p.) per eligible FSM pupil to cover the costs of this service which include staff costs, postage and other administration costs.

For special schools, which are funded on the basis of place numbers, the cost contribution would be split over funded place numbers of approximately 1,307 equalling £1.78⁶ per-place (included in the special schools' buyback schedule) which is equivalent to £4.14 per estimated eligible FSM pupil.

The suggested per-pupil/place amount is the rate required to de-delegate a sufficient budget to run the service, £27,500, based on an estimate of 6,644 pupils eligible for Free School Meals in maintained schools.

Note that the final de-delegated budgets may differ when based upon October'22 FSM pupil numbers in the final 2023-24 APT. If the final pupil data results in the de-delegated budget being less than the £27,500 required to run the service, then the rate per-pupil would need to be adjusted accordingly to reach £27,500.

Decision 3a – Should Free School Meals eligibility be de-delegated for the primary sector (maintained)? (To be agreed by maintained primary representatives).

Decision 3b – Should Free School Meal eligibility be de-delegated for the secondary sector (maintained)? (To be agreed by the maintained secondary representative).

Buyback of FSM eligibility for maintained special schools is included below.

⁵ FSM meal numbers are from draft 2023-24 APT for mainstream schools and for special schools are calculated as being 42.9% of pupils eligible (based on FSM information from the Government's 'Get Information About Schools' website).

⁶ This methodology, based on number of places and average FSM eligibility levels of 42.9% in special schools, brings the rate for special schools in 2023-24 into line with the rate charged to primary/secondary schools for the FSM eligibility service.

1.4 School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant

The school improvement monitoring and brokering grant has been allocated to local authorities since September 2017 to allow them to continue to monitor performance of maintained schools, broker school improvement provision, and intervene as appropriate.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 defines the statutory function as:

- promoting high standards,
- ensuring fair access to educational opportunity, and
- promoting the fulfilment by every child concerned of his educational potential.

The October 2022 DfE Schools causing concern guidance define the actions local authorities should take to carry out this function:

- understand the performance of maintained schools in their area, using data as a starting point to identify any maintained school that is underperforming, while working with them to explore ways to support progress;
- work closely with the relevant Regional Director (RD), diocese and other local partners to ensure maintained schools receive the support they need to improve;
- where underperformance has been recognised in a maintained school, proactively work with the relevant RD, combining local and regional expertise to ensure the right approach, including sending warning notices, and using intervention powers where this will improve leadership and standards; and
- encourage Good and Outstanding maintained schools to take responsibility for their own improvement; support other maintained schools; and enable other maintained schools to access the support they need to improve.

Since 2022-23, local authorities have been permitted to de-delegate from maintained schools' budget shares to fund this core school improvement activity.

There are several teams that currently contribute to this statutory function and the school improvement monitoring and brokering grant contributes to their operating costs:

- The Learning and Achievement Service
- The Education Partnerships and Infrastructure Service
- The Education Quality Assurance, Intervention and Regulation

The removal of the school improvement monitoring and brokering grant gives two options:

- A significant reduction in the level of oversight and support for local authority maintained schools; or
- A de-delegation from maintained schools budget shares.

Given the significant financial strain schools are under, we do not think it is appropriate to ask for a full de-delegation to cover the loss in funding (£656,974 at 2021-22 levels) as a significant budget reduction for schools will not support school improvement.

In order to maintain a viable team of link advisers for local authority-maintained schools, we are asking maintained schools to fund the equivalent of two full time adviser posts, £150k, at a rate of £4.58 per-pupil based on estimated pupil numbers.

Note that final de-delegated budgets may differ based upon final pupil numbers in the 2023-24 APT.

Decision 4 – Should £150k for two full time adviser posts be de-delegated at an estimated rate of £4.58 per-pupil? (Maintained schools’ representatives only).

1.5 Special Schools – Buyback of Services

A decision on the buyback of services in the 2023-24 financial year is required for special schools (by the maintained and academy special school representatives).

Buyback vs De-delegation

The local authority is not allowed, under the finance regulations, to offer de-delegation of services to special schools in the same way as for maintained mainstream schools.

Instead, special schools are allowed to buy back into the same services.

The services offered for buy back are:

- FSM Eligibility (used by all maintained special schools)
- Staff Costs (safeguarding, maternity, special circumstances, suspended staff, disabled staff)

In previous years the maintained special schools have bought into these services.

We have also offered to hold a central contingency for special schools in previous years, to meet costs that it would be unreasonable to expect to be paid from a school's budget share e.g. schools in financial difficulty or other circumstances which were unforeseen when setting budget, but this has never been taken up in any year and, hence, is not included within this year's paper.

The cost for each service is the rate per place delegated to special schools within top-up funding (except for FSM eligibility which has been updated in line with costs and the current FSM % of special schools). The rates represent the higher staffing ratios of special schools compared to mainstream schools.

Annex B provides a schedule of the indicative costs for each service based on number of pro-rata places in each school in 2022-22. Final cost will be based on actual places funded in the 2023-24 budget share.

Decision 5a - The maintained special school representative is asked to decide on the buyback of services for all maintained special schools in the 2023-24 financial year.

Decision 5b - The academy special school representative is asked to decide on the buyback of services for academy special schools in the 2023-24 financial year.

1.6 Maintained Nursery Schools – Buyback of Services

A decision on the buyback of services in the 2023-24 financial year is required for maintained nursery schools (by the maintained nursery school representative).

Buyback vs De-delegation

The local authority is not allowed, under the finance regulations, to offer de-delegation of services to maintained nursery schools in the same way as for maintained mainstream schools.

Instead, maintained nursery schools are allowed to buy back into services.

The services offered for buy back (as previously requested by Nursery Schools) are:

- Staff Costs (safeguarding, maternity, special circumstances, suspended staff, disabled staff)

The cost for each service for 2023-24 is double the rate that is suggested for primary and secondary schools. Historically, the LA has charged nursery schools a buyback rate that is equal to mainstream schools but, upon review, have identified that this did not consider the requirement for nursery schools to have at least one member of staff for every thirteen children.

Annex C provides a schedule of the indicative costs, based on the number of hours/FTE in each school, is attached.

Decision 6 - The maintained nursery school representative is asked to decide on the buyback of services for maintained nursery schools in the 2023-24 financial year.

1.7 Growth Fund (Schools Block)

The growth fund sits within the School Block and all Schools Forum members are required to vote on the criteria and amount.

Pupil Growth

In 2022-23, £0.500m was top sliced from the Schools Block for growth fund. The current forecast is for approximately £0.601m of growth allocations to schools in 2022-23 (£0.781m including academies' lagged growth payments for April'22-August'22 but the LA receives £0.179m back from DfE to cover those), so there is currently an overspend forecast. The allocations made for growth in 2022-23 are as follows:

School Name	Apr-Aug'22		Sep'22-Mar'23		Total Growth 2022-23
	Pupils	Amount	Pupils	Amount	
Cawston Primary	10	13,013	10	18,766	31,778
Diss High			30	79,380	79,380
Downham Market Academy			30	79,380	79,380
Great Yarmouth Charter Academy	26	47,710	25	66,150	113,860
Greenpark Academy	26	33,833	30	56,298	90,130
Hethersett Woodside			15	28,149	28,149
Little Snoring*	19	24,724			24,724
Ormiston Victory Academy			60	177,282	177,282
Sewell Park Academy	15	27,525	15	39,690	67,215
St Michaels C E VA Junior			15	28,149	28,149
Trowse Primary			15	28,149	28,149
White House Farm Primary	25	32,531			32,531
Total		179,335		601,392	780,727

*Due to West Raynham closure

The amount requested for 2023-24 is £0.711m based on the current view on admissions for the next transfer rounds. The number of pupils due to transfer to secondary schools in 2023 similar (9,734) to the number that transferred in 2022 (9,758) and it is anticipated that there will be a requirement for some schools to over-admit pupils at the Local Authority's request to ensure local school places can be offered. In particular, the requirement for growth funding at the following schools is being monitored:

Hethersett Academy (PAN 230/Catchment Numbers 294)

Wymondham High (PAN 260/Catchment Numbers 315)

Thetford Academy (PAN 260/Catchment Numbers 325)

The Admissions team is also expecting need for growth in North Norwich.

Estimating a potential 244 secondary growth places, and continuation of 15 primary growth places for Trowse, results in an estimate of £0.711m to cover Sept'23-March'24.

The LA will be publishing the latest Schools Local Growth and Investment plan in Jan 2023 for approval by Norfolk County Council's Cabinet, which will reflect this expected level of growth.

New Schools

In addition to the growth funding requested for schools' admissions over PAN, a further £0.390m is requested as part of the growth fund to cover the potential pre-opening costs in 2023-24 for two new primary schools at £0.195m (Silfield and Cringleford) with the expectation of them then opening the following financial year from Sept'24.

Total Growth Fund and Criteria

The total growth fund top-slice requested for 2023-24 is therefore £1.101m.

The current growth criteria are (with no amendments proposed):

- Growth has been identified by the authority as required in the area for the following academic year. i.e. a comparison of numbers between the two October counts, and;
- Growth must be the greater of 10% of a year group or 5 pupils and will be funded at 7/12th of Basic Pupil Entitlement, the starting point for the growth must be over and above a school's/academy's current Pupil Admission Number (PAN).
- Growth for an additional year group or class will be given at 7/12th of the Pupil Admission Number, e.g. a school/academy is increasing from an intake of 30 pupils to 60 pupils p.a. - school/academy will therefore qualify for 30x7/12th AWPU.
- Growth for pre-opening costs for new maintained schools and academies (including free schools) where the school is opening in response to basic need, maximum value based upon the table below:

Type of School	Grant funding for first school opening in a given financial year	Grant funding for each additional school opening in the same financial year and with the same sponsor
Primary	£195,000	£125,000
Secondary and all-through	£275,000	£175,000
AP	£195,000	£125,000
16-19	£225,000	£145,000

- Growth for post-opening costs for new maintained schools and academies (including free schools) where the school is opening in response to basic need, value negotiated based upon financial plans.
- There are no additional payments to schools or academies in respect of Infant Class Size Funding.
- Where growth fund payments are made to academies for the period September-March, the payment is continued by the local authority for the following April-August.
- Pupils moving from a closing school in advance of that school's official closure date will be funded at their new school at up to 5/12th of the AWPU value (1/12th for each full month) where the number of pupils received early is the greater of 10% of a year group or 5 pupils. The number of pupils on roll does not need to exceed the PAN.

It is proposed that £1.101m is retained centrally from the Schools Block for pre-16 growth and the pre-opening costs of new schools, in 2023-24, and that funding continues to be allocated to schools and academies using the existing criteria above. This includes growth within existing schools and any new schools set up to meet basic need, whether maintained, academy or free school.

Decision 7a – To approve a £1.101m centrally retained fund for pre-16 growth in 2023-24 (vote for all Schools Forum members)

Decision 7b – To approve the pre-16 growth fund criteria as detailed in section 1.7 of this paper (vote for all Schools Forum members)

2. Central School Services Block (including ongoing and historic commitments)

The Central School Services Block (CSSB) funds local authorities for the statutory duties they hold for both maintained schools and academies. The CSSB brings together:

- Funding previously allocated through the retained responsibilities element of the Education Services Grant (ESG);
- Funding for ongoing central functions, in Norfolk this is admissions, servicing of the Schools Forum and fees to Independent schools without SEN;
- Residual Funding for historic commitments, previously top-sliced from the schools' block, totalling £98,304 in 2023-24 (the DfE have reduced the allocation for this by 20% compared to 2022-23);
- The licences and subscriptions paid for centrally by the DfE.

Norfolk's indicative allocation for 2023-24, based on 107,460 pupils, for the Central School Services Block is £4,061,757.

This is just over £36.88 per pupil plus £98,304 for agreed historic costs.

The provisional Central School Services Block figure of £4,061,757 is broken down by the LA as follows:

	(£)	
Forum approval line-by-line:		
Ongoing Central Functions	617,011	Approval required
Historic Commitments	184,694	Approval required
Central Licences (no approval required):		
Central Licences	693,506	Estimated DfE deduction
Ongoing Responsibilities requiring Forum approval:		
TPG/TPECG	181,607	Approval required
Responsibilities held for all schools	2,384,939	Approval required
Central School Services Block	4,061,757	Provisional Allocation

Schools Forum are required to approve the retention of Central School Services Block items as follows:

Specific budgets:

Category	2022-23	2023-24	Difference	Explanation for change
Ongoing Central Functions – approval required on a line-by-line basis:				
8a. School Admissions	487,011	487,011	0	No change. This is an allowable item under the regulations
8b. Servicing of Schools Forum*	30,000	30,000	0	No change. This is an allowable item under the regulations.
8c. Fees to independent schools for pupils without SEN	100,000	100,000	0	No change. This is an allowable item under the regulations.
Historic Commitments – approval required on a line-by-line basis:				
8d. Contribution towards the Director of Learning & Inclusion central budgets - Early Intervention and Achievement.**	119,700	119,700	0	No change. This can be evidenced as a historic commitment prior to April 2013. This meets the rules of contributing towards Education Benefit.
8e. Termination of Employment Costs (existing pension costs)	64,994	64,994	0	No change. This can be evidenced as a historic commitment prior to April 2013.
Total	801,705	801,705	0	

**This covers the clerk to the forum, relevant expenses such as venue hire, supply and travel expenses. Expenditure during and post-pandemic reduced due online meetings only. The decision has been made to move to a mix of face-to-face meetings and online meetings; the expenditure will need to be kept under review in future years as the new pattern settles.*

*** Improvement and Strategy work, Head teacher and Educational conferences.*

Schools Forum approval (vote by all members) is required on a line-by-line basis for each of the items:

Decision 8a – To approve the level of Admissions funding (£487,011).

Decision 8b – To approve the level of funding for Schools Forum (£30,000).

Decision 8c – To approve the level of funding for Fees to Independent Schools for pupil without SEN (£100,000).

Decision 8d – To approve the level of contribution towards the Director of Learning & Inclusion central budgets- Early Intervention and Achievement (£119,700).

Decision 8e – To approve the level of Termination of Employment Costs (£64,994).

2.1 Central School Services Block (Central licences)

The following licences have been negotiated centrally by the Secretary of State for all publicly funded schools, paid for by the DfE from the LA's Central School Services Block:

- Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI)
- Copyright Licensing Agency (CLA)
- Education Recording Agency (ERA)
- Filmbank Distributors Ltd. (for the PVSL)
- Mechanical Copyright Protection Society (MCPS)
- Motion Picture Licensing Company (MPLC)
- Newspaper Licensing Authority (NLA)
- Performing Rights Society (PRS)
- Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL)
- Schools Printed Music Licence (SPML)

The estimated cost of licences in 2023-24 for all schools based on historic cost is £693,506. Schools Forum approval is not required for this as the final licence cost will be deducted from Norfolk's DSG allocation by the DfE.

2.2 Central School Services Block (Responsibilities held for all schools)

Since April 2021, the Central School Services Block (CSSB) has included an allocation for Teachers' Pay Grant (TPG) and Teachers' Pension Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG) in respect of centrally employed staff at a rate of £1.69 per-pupil as part of ongoing responsibilities. Based on indicative pupil numbers the amount of the grants included for centrally employed staff is £181,607.

The Education Services Grant retained element for ongoing responsibilities held for all schools became part of the Dedicated Schools Grant in September 2017 and now

sits within the Central School Services Block. Based on the provisional allocation for 2023-24, indicative funding provided for ongoing responsibilities (excluding TPG/TPECG for centrally employed teachers) within the Central School Services Block is £2,384,939.

Annex D provides a breakdown of the responsibilities held for all schools.

Schools Forum approval is required for the LA to retain funding from the Central School Services Block for responsibilities held for all schools. DfE guidance does not state that approval is required for retention of the TPG/TPECG element of the CSS Block; however, for transparency, the amount is separately identified in this paper. The total indicative funding requested for responsibilities held for all schools including TPG/TPECG (based on the provisional CSSB allocation for 2023-24) is therefore £2,566,546.

Decision 9 – Schools Forum (all members) to approve funding for responsibilities held for all schools from Central School Services Block, including Teachers’ Pay Grant and Teachers’ Pension Employer Contribution Grant for centrally employed staff (£2,566,546).

3. Other De-delegations / Top-slices

Within the DfE's School Revenue Funding 2023 to 2024 Operational Guide, [Schools operational guide: 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/115112/schools_operational_guide_2023_to_2024.pdf), the LA can request de-delegation or top-slices for a number of other purposes. At this time, the LA are of the view that schools would not want these responsibilities and funding de-delegated/top-sliced, or the LA is of the view that schools are best placed to make their own decisions:

- De-delegate funding for maintained only responsibilities, e.g. responsibilities detailed in **Annex E** – the LA has never requested de-delegation with provision either traded, the LA core funding covering the costs of any provision required, where appropriate, not covered by the Central School Services Block;
- Top-slice Schools Block for Falling Rolls Fund – the LA previously consulted with schools and asked Schools Forum whether this should be de-delegated and the proposal was rejected and the question has not been asked again;
- De-delegation of Behaviour Support – the LA has never requested de-delegation as it has been understood that schools would want to manage these arrangements themselves;
- De-delegation of under-performing ethnic groups and bilingual learners – the LA has never requested de-delegation as it has been understood that schools would want to manage these arrangements themselves;
- De-delegation of Insurance – the LA has never requested de-delegation as it has been understood that schools would want to manage these arrangements themselves;
- De-delegation of Museum and library services – the LA has never requested de-delegation as it has been understood that schools would want to manage these arrangements themselves;
- De-delegation of Licences and Subscriptions outside of central licences scheme – the LA no longer has any additional subscriptions/licences, but de-delegation used to be in place for Consortium of Local Education Authorities for the Provision of Science Services (CLEAPSS) and Norfolk Governance Network (NGN).

At this point in time, the LA is not requesting de-delegation for any of these purposes.

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper, please get in touch with:

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If you need this report in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact 0344 800 8020 or 0344 800 8011 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.

Annex A – De-delegated / Buyback Staffing Budgets

Redeployment/Safeguarding

Where there is a risk of redundancy, the school is red rag rated, and the reason for redundancy is financial, then redeployment or salary safeguarding may be a less costly option than redundancy costs.

Redeployment/safeguarding inevitably occurs from a staffing adjustment, so the school will already be working with an HR consultant who will advise on costs and whether redeployment/ safeguarding is an option.

Where salary safeguarding costs are paid by the LA, the salary will be re-coded to reflect that contribution.

School Action: Speak to your HR Consultant at an early stage of the staffing adjustment process to establish whether this is an option.

Supply/Special Circumstances

This budget covers trade union facility time and other functions, such as jury service and reservist duties.

For trade union facility time, the money pays for trade union officials who are available to all schools. These officials are paid directly from the budget by the HR Business Partner.

School Action: For jury service, and for covering reservist duties, the school should provide evidence of any additional cost incurred to the HR Business Partner, schools. This could be the relevant supply claims or invoices. Where there is additional cost incurred, the school will be reimbursed usually through a journal transfer.

Maternity Cover

Anyone on maternity leave and entitled to maternity pay is automatically recoded to the de delegated maternity budget, on the basis of information provided by the school.

Suspended Staff

Where a school has agreed with the HR Consultant that an employee should be suspended, the salary is recoded to this budget.

School Action: Speak to your HR Consultant before suspending staff to establish whether this is an option.

Disabled Staff

This budget is accessible to schools to support staff who may have additional needs due to disability and enable them to be at work and is decided on a case-by-case basis. In the past this has been used for equipment to enable access to work;

training in respect of a disability and for supply cover where it is deemed appropriate (such as phased return to work) and is not covered by the Sickness Insurance Scheme. This does not include Capital Works such as providing ramps for accessibility for those with disabilities, etc.

School Action: The school should be in touch with the HR Consultant about this, and requests are passed to the HR Business Partner. Decisions about spend from this budget will be made alongside other routes that may also provide support, such as Access to Work.

Schools should contact HR in respect of the above for information on these funds. These budgets are not advertised on the intranet as funding is only available in certain situations and schools will usually be in contact with HR when they have an issue.

Further to the above, queries can be directed to the HR Consultant or to ehenquiries@norfolk.gov.uk or to Kate.Philpin@norfolk.gov.uk.

Annex B – Special Schools Indicative Buyback Costs 2023-24

RATE (£)										
			1.78	2.86	68.32	10.23	10.38	0.00		
Locn	DfE	School	Est. Number of Places* @31st March 2023	FSM Eligibility £	Safeguarding/ Redeployment £	Maternity £	Special Circumstances £	Suspended Staff £	Disabled Staff £	TOTAL £
2650	7010	Chapel Green School	154.83	275	443	10,578	1,584	1,607	0	14,487
2670	7020	John Grant School	174.00	309	498	11,888	1,780	1,806	0	16,280
2675	7007	Sheringham Woodfields School	146.00	260	418	9,975	1,494	1,515	0	13,661
2695	7013	The Clare School	115.00	204	329	7,857	1,176	1,194	0	10,760
2705	7016	Harford Manor School	99.00	176	283	6,764	1,013	1,028	0	9,263
2710	7014	The Parkside School	179.11	318	512	12,237	1,832	1,859	0	16,759
2715	7006	Hall School	90.67	161	259	6,194	928	941	0	8,483
2720	7001	Sidestrand Hall School	193.00	343	552	13,186	1,974	2,003	0	18,058
2721	7004	Fred Nicholson School	155.00	276	443	10,590	1,586	1,609	0	14,503
			1,306.61	2,322	3,737	89,268	13,367	13,563	0	122,256
2690	7021	Churchill Park School	220.00	391	629	15,030	2,251	2,284	0	20,585
2723	7015	Eaton Hall Academy	55.00	98	157	3,758	563	571	0	5,146
7000	7000	The Fen Rivers Academy	73.28	130	210	5,006	750	761	0	6,856
7002	7002	The Wherry School	110.58	197	316	7,555	1,131	1,148	0	10,347
7005	7005	Bure Park Specialist Academy**	88.00	156	252	6,012	900	913	0	8,234
7011	7011	Duke of Lancaster School**	90.83	162	260	6,206	929	943	0	8,500
7997	7997	The Bridge Easton**	83.00	148	237	5,671	849	862	0	7,767
			720.70	1,282	2,061	49,238	7,373	7,481	0	67,435

*Number of places estimated at 31st March'23. These will be updated to the number of places funded in the 2023-24 budget share, so the final costs may change for each school.

**For the new schools (Bure Park Specialist Academy, Duke of Lancaster School and The Bridge Easton) the number of places has been pro-rated for 2023-24 based on growth plans.

Annex C – Nursery Schools Indicative Buyback Cost 2023-24

Staff Costs - Supply/Cover, buyback rate £ per converted F.T.E.

Locn	DfE	School	Total Hours (Current)*	Redeployment/ Safeguarding	Maternity	Special Circumstances	Suspended Staff	Disabled Staff	TOTAL
				3.74	47.52	1.34	4.53	0.00	
				£	£	£	£	£	£
0004	1001	Emneth Nursery School	45,922.00	181	2,297	65	219	0	2,761
0007	1002	King's Lynn Nursery School	33,104.50	130	1,656	47	158	0	1,990
0010	1005	Earlham Nursery School	35,694.00	140	1,785	50	170	0	2,146
114,720.50				451	5,738	162	547	0	6,898

*Hours will be updated to the number of hours funded in the 2023/24 budget share, so costs may change for each school.

Annex D

Responsibilities held for all schools

Statutory and regulatory duties

- director of children's services and personal staff for director (sch 2, 15a)
- planning for the education service (sch 2, 15b)
- revenue budget preparation, preparation of information on income and expenditure relating to education, and external audit relating to education (sch 2, 22)
- authorisation and monitoring of expenditure not met from schools' budget shares (sch 2, 15c)
- formulation and review of local authority schools funding formula (sch 2, 15d)
- internal audit and other tasks related to the local authority's chief finance officer's responsibilities under section 151 of LGA 1972 except duties specifically related to maintained schools (sch 2, 15e)
- consultation costs relating to non-staffing issues (sch 2, 19)
- plans involving collaboration with other local authority services or public or voluntary bodies (sch 2, 15f)
- Standing Advisory Committees for Religious Education (SACREs) (sch 2, 17)
- provision of information to or at the request of the Crown other than relating specifically to maintained schools (sch 2, 21)

Education welfare

- functions in relation to the exclusion of pupils from schools, excluding any provision of education to excluded pupils (sch 2, 20)
- school attendance (sch 2, 16)
- responsibilities regarding the employment of children (sch 2, 18)

Asset management

- management of the local authority's capital programme including preparation and review of an asset management plan, and negotiation and management of private finance transactions (sch 2, 14a)
- general landlord duties for all buildings owned by the local authority, including those leased to academies (sch 2, 14b)

Other ongoing duties

- licences negotiated centrally by the Secretary of State for all publicly funded schools (sch 2, 8); this does not require schools forum approval
- admissions (Sch 2, 9)
- places in independent schools for non-SEN pupils (sch 2, 10)
- remission of boarding fees at maintained schools and academies (sch 2, 11)
- servicing of schools forums (sch 2, 12)
- back-pay for equal pay claims (sch 2, 13)
- writing to parents of year 9 pupils about schools with an atypical age of admission, such as UTCs and studio schools, within a reasonable travelling distance (sch 2, 23)

Historic commitments

- capital expenditure funded from revenue (sch 2, 1)
- prudential borrowing costs (sch 2, 2(a))
- termination of employment costs (sch 2, 2(b))
- contribution to combined budgets (sch 2, 2(c))

Source: [Schools operational guide: 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/100000/schools_operational_guide_2023_to_2024.pdf)

Annex E

Responsibilities held for maintained schools only

School improvement

expenditure related to core school improvement activities of local authorities with respect to maintained schools (Schedule 2, 54)

Statutory and regulatory duties

- functions of local authority related to best value and provision of advice to governing bodies in procuring goods and services (sch 2, 59)
- budgeting and accounting functions relating to maintained schools (sch 2, 75)
- authorisation and monitoring of expenditure in respect of schools which do not have delegated budgets, and related financial administration (sch 2, 60)
- monitoring of compliance with requirements in relation to the scheme for financing schools and the provision of community facilities by governing bodies (sch 2, 61)
- internal audit and other tasks related to the local authority's chief finance officer's responsibilities under section 151 of LGA 1972 for maintained schools (sch 2, 62)
- functions made under section 44 of the 2002 Act (Consistent Financial Reporting) (sch 2, 63)
- investigations of employees or potential employees, with or without remuneration to work at or for schools under the direct management of the headteacher or governing body (sch 2, 64)
- functions related to local government pensions and administration of teachers' pensions in relation to staff working at maintained schools under the direct management of the headteacher or governing body (sch 2, 65)
- retrospective membership of pension schemes where it would not be appropriate to expect a school to meet the cost (sch 2, 78)
- HR duties, including advice to schools on the management of staff, pay alterations, conditions of service and composition or organisation of staff (sch 2, 67), determination of conditions of service for non-teaching staff (sch 2, 67); appointment or dismissal of employee functions (sch 2, 68)
- consultation costs relating to staffing (sch 2, 69)
- compliance with duties under Health and Safety at Work Act (sch 2, 70)
- provision of information to or at the request of the Crown relating to schools (sch 2, 71)
- school companies (sch 2, 72)

- functions under the Equality Act 2010 (sch 2, 73)
- establish and maintaining computer systems, including data storage (sch 2, 74)
- appointment of governors and payment of governor expenses (sch 2, 75)

Education welfare

- inspection of attendance registers (sch 2, 81)

Asset management

- general landlord duties for all maintained schools (sch 2, 79a & b (section 542(2)) Education Act 1996; School Premises Regulations 2012) to ensure that school buildings have:
 - appropriate facilities for pupils and staff (including medical and accommodation)
 - the ability to sustain appropriate loads
 - reasonable weather resistance
 - safe escape routes
 - appropriate acoustic levels
 - lighting, heating and ventilation which meets the required standards
 - adequate water supplies and drainage
 - playing fields of the appropriate standards
- general health and safety duty as an employer for employees and others who may be affected (Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974)
- Management of the risk from asbestos in community school buildings (Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012)

Central support services

- clothing grants (sch 2, 55)
- provision of tuition in music, or on other music-related activities (sch 2, 56)
- visual, creative and performing arts (sch 2, 57)
- outdoor education centres (but not centres mainly for the provision of organised games, swimming or athletics) (sch 2, 58)

Premature retirement and redundancy

- dismissal or premature retirement when costs cannot be charged to maintained schools (sch 2, 80)

Monitoring national curriculum assessment

- monitoring of national curriculum assessments (sch 2, 77)

Therapies

- This is now covered in the high needs section of the regulations and does not require schools forum approval

Source: [Schools operational guide: 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/100000/schools_operational_guide_2023_to_2024.pdf)

Schools Forum

Item No. 3c

Report title:	Notional SEN
Date of meeting:	16 November 2022

Executive summary

The DfE have issued new operational guidance that LAs are expected to review the size of their notional SEN allocations for the 2023-24 financial year. Norfolk's percentage allocation is relatively low compared to the national picture and this paper proposes a consultation with schools that will then allow Schools Forum to recommend a revised size of notional SEN allocations for next financial year.

Schools Forum are asked to:

- **Consider and comment on the proposed consultation survey to be undertaken with schools in relation to the overall percentage and methodology for calculating notional SEN for 2023-24 schools' budgets**

1. Context

The DfE have issued operational guidance on notional SEN values for the first time, for the financial year 2023-24. LAs are now expected to review the size of their notional SEN allocations following consultation with schools and Schools Forum.

The DfE have provided national data on notional SEN, with 78% of authorities allocating between 5% and 15% of their Schools Block funding as notional SEN. In Norfolk, this percentage is approximately 7% currently. Across all authorities, the average is 11.3% which is a significant difference.

There is therefore a need to review whether Norfolk's notional SEN budget should be brought into line with the national average.

2. Notional SEN

Mainstream schools and academies are notified each year of their notional SEN allocation via the budget share document. Notional SEN is used towards the costs of fulfilling schools' duty to use their 'best endeavours' to secure special educational provision for their pupils with SEN.

Using funds from the Schools Block of the dedicated schools grant (DSG), local authorities are responsible for calculating the amount of this notional budget using their local mainstream schools funding formula factors.

The notional SEN budget is not a budget that is separate from a school's overall budget share. It is an identified amount within a maintained school's delegated budget share or an academy's general annual grant. It is intended as a guide for a school's spending decisions, and is neither a target nor a constraint on a school's duty to use its 'best endeavours' to secure special provision for its pupils with SEN.

Mainstream schools are expected to:

- meet the costs of special educational provision for pupils identified as on SEN Support in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice; and
- contribute towards the costs of special educational provision for pupils with high needs (most of whom have education, health and care (EHC) plans), up to the high needs cost threshold set by the regulations (currently £6,000 per pupil per annum). This cost threshold is calculated by reference to the additional costs of provision, above the costs of the basic provision for all pupils in the school. High needs top-up funding is provided above this threshold on a per-pupil basis by the local authority that commissions or agrees the placement.

It is important to note that the notional SEN budget is not intended to provide £6,000 for every pupil with SEN, as most such pupils' support will cost less than that. Nor is the notional SEN budget intended to provide a specific amount per pupil for those with lower additional support costs, even though the local authority may make reasonable assumptions about what those costs might be for the purpose of ensuring that their schools' notional SEN budget calculation is realistic.

There is currently no national approach to the calculation of schools' notional budget for pupils with SEN through the National Funding Formula. This could change within the context of the SEND Green Paper published earlier this year; the Government has signalled that the next steps following the green paper consultation will be published before end of December and these can be reflected when Forum makes its recommendation in January.

Most local authorities calculate their schools' notional SEN budget using a combination of funding from the basic entitlement factor, the deprivation factors, and the low prior attainment factors in the local funding formula. Depending on how the local formula is constructed and the overall weighting of the different formula factors, the DfE expect the calculation of the notional SEN budget to include⁷:

⁷ Para 13, [The notional SEN budget for mainstream schools: operational guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612222/SEN_budget_guidance.pdf)

- a small part of the basic entitlement funding;
- a larger part of deprivation funding, reflecting the higher prevalence of lower-level SEN amongst disadvantaged pupils, and
- the majority or whole of the low prior attainment factor funding, as this is the best proxy we currently have for pupils with low-cost, high-incidence SEN

Other elements of the funding formula may also be used.

3. Why is it important?

It has always been important to achieve consistency across the county for SEN funding and for access to specialist services and formula funding, locally and nationally, is the mechanism that aims to achieve this in an objective way. However, in addition to the obvious reasons that consistency should be an aim, there are pragmatic reasons that relate to the allocation of additional funding. We need to be certain, for example with the allocation of Element 3 funding, that schools have access to support where this is necessary to ensure the inclusion of children and young people whilst also ensuring that the High Needs Block is not used incorrectly, where individual school budgets can and should be the source of funding.

Our approach to 'top up' funding has evolved over the years and is linked to the concept of notional SEN funding within national DSG guidance the SEND Code of Practice. Therefore, with the publication of the revised operational guidance for notional SEN funding in mainstream schools from the DfE, it is right that we reflect on Norfolk's below national average level. Additionally, in the context of the Safety Valve programme of work this makes the need to consider increasing the level even more important.

Whilst it is true that a change in the ratio of Schools Block funding assigned for notional SEN funding does not change any individual schools' budget allocation, it will have implications for our work regarding 'top up' funding and access to other LA SEND services. The LA needs to ensure that requests for additional support are considered in the context of how schools use their delegated funding, and we need to determine if the Norfolk wide rate of 7% notional SEN is reflected at individual school level in terms of spend.

4. Norfolk's Notional SEN Budget

Norfolk's current notional SEN budget is £38.4m, representing just under 7% of Schools Block funding within the funding formula.

Norfolk uses basic entitlement funding, IDACI deprivation data, low prior attainment and part of schools' lump sums to calculate notional SEN funding.

The table below summaries Norfolk's 2022-23 notional SEN budget:

Factor	Total Value of Notional SEN 2022-23
Total BPPE	£6,956,139
Primary IDACI	£5,416,738
Secondary IDACI	£5,618,191
Primary LPA	£8,881,823
Secondary LPA	£8,477,347
Total Lump Sum	£3,065,186
Total Notional SEN 2022/23	£38,415,425
Total Funding for Schools Block Formula	£559,594,607
Notional SEN as a % of SB funding	6.86%

The proportion of factors currently used to calculate notional SEN in Norfolk are as follows:

Factor	Factor Unit Values	Notional SEN within factor	% of factor relating to Notional SEN
BPPE (Primary)	£3,217.00	£64.60	2.01%
BPPE (KS3)	£4,536.00	£64.60	1.42%
BPPE (KS4)	£5,112.00	£64.60	1.26%
IDACI Pri band F	£220.00	£212.18	96.45%
IDACI Pri band E	£270.00	£254.62	94.30%
IDACI Pri band D	£420.00	£277.34	66.03%
IDACI Pri band C	£460.00	£277.34	60.29%
IDACI Pri band B	£490.00	£277.34	56.60%
IDACI Pri band A	£640.00	£277.34	43.33%
IDACI Sec band F	£320.00	£307.66	96.14%
IDACI Sec band E	£425.00	£413.75	97.35%
IDACI Sec band D	£595.00	£423.42	71.16%
IDACI Sec band C	£650.00	£423.42	65.14%
IDACI Sec band B	£700.00	£423.42	60.49%
IDACI Sec band A	£890.00	£423.42	47.58%
Primary LPA	£1,130.00	£512.12	45.32%
Secondary LPA	£1,710.00	£774.97	45.32%
Pri Lump Sum	£121,300.00	£7,617.26	6.28%
Sec Lump Sum	£121,300.00	£7,617.26	6.28%

The current arrangements mirror the way that School Specific Allocations were made to mainstream schools prior to the 2013 Funding Reform, with the historic principles for calculation aligned in the best way possible into the National Funding Formula factors. The notional SEN allocation has only been inflated in Norfolk by small amounts over the years, with 3% added to factors in both 2021/22 and 2022/23. Being aligned with the National Funding Formula factors, Norfolk's notional SEN does currently use allowable factors in its calculation.

However, lack of inflation to the notional SEN budget over the years now leaves Norfolk's percentage (c. 7%) lagging significantly behind the average nationally of 11.3%, although Norfolk neither has the lowest % nor is alone in using a percentage in the 5-7.5% range which 21 other LAs did in 2022-23 (c. 20% of all LAs were at 7.5% or under).

As a result, it is clear that Norfolk's notional SEN budget is due for a review and, in that sense, the new guidance from the DfE is a good reminder to LA's to refresh notional SEN calculations for 2023-24 as they begin to align with the National Funding Formula, and in future years, a more direct formula from the DfE.

5. National Averages

The DfE have provided data regarding notional SEN allocations within a summary of analysis of local funding formulae submitted by all LAs in January 2022. Section 18 of the DfE analysis provides an overview of both the percentage of funding allocated to notional SEN as well as the formula factors used to allocate it⁸.

Some 119 (78%) local authorities are allocating between 5% and 15% of Schools Block funding as notional SEN.

The overall percentage of formula allocation which is designated as the notional SEN budget across all local authorities is 11.3%, a slight increase from 11.14% in 2021 to 2022. The median notional SEN allocation is 10.8%. However, there is a wide variation across local authorities.

The table below shows the percentage of funding allocated to notional SEN nationally (number of authorities shown in each percentage band):

⁸ [Schools block funding formulae 2022 to 2023: analysis of local authorities' schools block funding formulae - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/107442/schools_block_funding_formulae_2022_to_2023_analysis_of_local_authorities_schools_block_funding_formulae_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

Percentage	2022-23	2021-22
0%	0	0
0% to 5%	9	7
5% to 7.5%	22	23
7.5% to 10%	35	39
10% to 12.5%	38	36
12.5% to 15%	24	28
15% to 17.5%	16	13
17.5% to 20%	5	3
Above 20%	3	3

Formula factors used to allocate notional SEN nationally (number of authorities shown using each):

Factor	2022-23	2021-22
Basic entitlement	138	135
Deprivation	152	152
English as an additional language	100	103
Looked-after children	9	8
Prior attainment	148	149
Mobility	96	97
Lump sum	95	100
Sparsity	3	7
MPPF	14	0
MFG	10	0

The deprivation is the factor most commonly contributing to notional SEN with all 152 local authorities using it.

The majority of local authorities are also assigning a percentage of their basic entitlement and prior attainment funding into notional SEN. The analysis for 2022-23 does not provide information as to proportion of the low prior attainment factor funding used⁹. However, as indicated in section 2 of this report, the DfE expect the majority or whole of the low prior attainment factor funding to be used within the notional SEN calculation, as they see this as being the best proxy currently available given the correlation with pupils with low-cost, high-incidence SEN.

⁹ 2021-22 equivalent analysis showed that 114 LAs (out of 152) used 100% of primary and secondary LPA, with a handful at 0%.

6. Consultation

The LA intends to carry out a consultation survey of mainstream schools for a 2-week period starting w/c 21 November to inform discussion at Schools Forum in January 2023. The purpose of the consultation survey would be to raise awareness of the difference between Norfolk's level of notional SEN funding and national, gain insights into schools' current use of notional SEN funding and to align any changes with the implementation of the 'Safety Valve' programme of work within our new SEND improvement programme, Local 1st Inclusion.

The proposed consultation survey would be based on the following:

- Continuing with the status quo would not be appropriate given that Norfolk is an outlier, and this is anticipated to be an area of challenge to the Norfolk system by the DfE through the Norfolk Safety Valve programme
- An option to move directly to the national average of 11% from April 2023 (A)
- An option to move incrementally over a 3-year period, 1.5% over 3 years (B)

For illustrative purposes, an increase to 8.5% for 2023-24 notional SEN for Norfolk would be expected to be in the region of £50m (an increase of c. £11.5m compared to 2022-23). As a comparison, 11% would be in the region of £65m for 2023-24.

Schools will be asked to:

- Calculate the current % of spend in their existing budgets that would fit within the definition of notional send and to share this %
- Then to confirm whether option A or B would be closer to their current spend
- Indicate what has been their recent direction of travel within their school budgets over the last 5 years for notional send (i.e. increasing, decreasing or stable percentage)

Additionally, the consultation survey is also proposed to consider if changes within the formula would also be appropriate at this time given that Norfolk's notional SEN formula currently uses a low percentage of LPA compared to the DfE recommendation.

Schools will be asked whether:

- Norfolk should adopt the DfE recommended approach
- Rationale for response

7. Timeline

It is proposed that the consultation survey will open week commencing 21st November with a notice will be shared with schools via an MI sheet via e-courier. The consultation survey will be expected to close on the 9th December, providing in excess of 2 weeks for this consultation. Whilst we understand that schools are extremely busy, as always, it is hoped that the timing prior to the end of term will hopefully be manageable.

The LA will then review the outcome of the consultation survey with key representatives, including the nominated Safety Valve representatives from Schools Forum, in advance of the January Schools Forum meeting where a recommendation for the LA will be sought. The purpose of this dialogue with key representatives in advance of the Forum meeting is to secure a clear steer prior to the Authority Pro-

Forma Tool¹⁰ (APT) having to be submitted to the DfE prior to the January Schools Forum meeting. However, Schools Forum will be able to discuss the recommendation in full and will be able to recommend an alternative approach if felt appropriate¹¹.

Finally, the final decision will be made by Norfolk County Council's Cabinet at the end of January along with its decision on the overall schools funding formula.

8. Recommendation

Schools Forum are asked to:

- **Consider and comment on the proposed consultation survey to be undertaken with schools in relation to the overall percentage and methodology for calculating notional SEN for 2023-24 schools' budgets**

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper, please get in touch with:

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¹⁰ The APT is required to be submitted by all local authorities detailing their schools funding formulae to the ESFA. The information submitted in the APT allows ESFA to calculate academy budgets and recoupment deductions to dedicated schools grant allocations.

¹¹ If an alternative decision is made to that submitted in APT then the LA would need to inform the ESFA.

Schools Forum

Item No. 3d

Report title:	Early Years Block 2023-24 Funding Formula Update
Date of meeting:	16 November 2022

Executive summary

This paper is for information only.

The local early years funding formula for 2023-24, including central costs, must be set by the LA by 28th February 2023 following consultation with providers and Schools Forum.

Schools Forum are asked to note:

- **The LA's autumn Early Years Block 2023-24 funding formula consultation with providers, and**
- **The LA's intention to discuss feedback from the survey with an Early Years Consultative Group prior to bringing a report to Schools Forum in January with a proposed formula for their recommendation.**

1. Background

Funded early education and childcare entitlement for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds is financed by the Early Years Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The DSG is paid to Local Authorities based on an hourly rate calculated using the Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF).

Local authorities are then required to follow the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2022 (S.I. 2022/27) to determine their own local formulae to pay providers for funded hours (early education) claimed by families.

The LA is required to consult with providers and Schools Forum on proposed changes prior to deciding on a final funding formula for 2023-24 by 28th February 2023.

2. Early Years Consultation Period

The LA's Early Years Block funding formula consultation with providers opened via online survey on Wed 19th October and will conclude on Tue 15th November 2022.

It is important to the LA that providers are given enough time to respond to the survey. Unfortunately, it was not possible to produce the early years consultation in time to allow it to run concurrently with the Fair Funding Consultation, and to give time for the EY Consultative Group to consider the responses, hence the feedback from the early years consultation will be discussed at the Schools Forum's January meeting. As at 9th November 174 responses had been received but only 94 completed in full (there are 725 providers that could respond, although only 619 of these currently have early years funding agreements). Providers have been reminded to take part as the deadline approaches to maximise the number of responses.

3. Survey

The consultation was designed to engage providers to consider what their funding priorities for the sector as a whole are, and to provide feedback in relation to the importance of particular funding elements, rather than comments on a specific overall formula proposal. This approach was intended to support debate about how funding should be prioritised for the whole sector rather than feedback being primarily focused upon impact of a specific proposed formula to an individual settings.

The key areas covered by the consultation are:

- The priority of the funding factors in the existing formula
- Preferences in relation to funding approach for the mandatory supplement (deprivation)
- Preferences in relation to the continuation of use, and size of, discretionary supplements (quality and flexibility)
- Preferences in relation to SENIF funding methodology for 3-4-year-olds
- Preference regarding either SENIF funding for 2-year-olds or higher base rate for all

During the 2020 consultation held with Early Years providers, the conclusion had been that Norfolk should move away from discretionary supplements to allow for the base rate for everyone to increase. However, removal of the discretionary supplements at that time would have been too big an impact for some providers as they would have seen significant losses in their hourly rate. Therefore, the decision was made to halve the funding provided for the discretionary factors and with the signalling that the direction of travel would be to remove the discretionary factors altogether. Therefore, the potential to fully remove discretionary supplements would be considered next time the formula was substantially reviewed.

The online consultation survey questions are provided in Appendix A for reference purposes.

4. Early Years Consultative Group

An invitation has been sent to seek nominations from across the sector for representatives to join an Early Years Consultative Group. This group is being set up

to allow the LA to meet with representatives of providers on a regular basis, to enable discussion on local policy affecting the sector in Norfolk. This group will also advise on the development of early education funding policy.

The LA are looking for the following representatives to form the consultative group:

- A head teacher of a maintained school with a nursery class and out of school provision
- A headteacher of a maintained nursery school
- A representative of the Voluntary sector
- A representative of the Private sector
- A representative of Childminders
- A representative of the Independent Sector
- A representative of an Academy run early years provision
- A representative of an out of school/holiday/breakfast club provision

As this is the first representative body for Norfolk, there is not an existing method for reviewing nominations and agreeing who should be the appointed representatives. If we receive more than one nomination for each sector, the LA will make a decision as to who the representative is based upon trying to get the widest breadth of representation taking into account the size and location of providers nominated. Going forward, the LA will discuss with the group how to ensure that representatives are as representative as possible.

The early years Schools' Forum representative, Lacey Douglass, has agreed to initially chair the group and initially 4 meeting dates have been agreed as follows:

Weds 30th Nov 2022 at 10AM

Thurs 2nd Feb 2023 at 2AM

Tues 9th May 2023 at 10AM

Tues 11th July 2023 at 10AM

At the first meeting in late November, the group will analyse the responses received via the online survey to enable a recommendation to be shared with Schools Forum in January.

5. Schools Forum Recommendation

Schools Forum will be asked at the January meeting to make a recommendation for the local early years funding formula for 2023-24 financial year before Norfolk County Council's Cabinet makes its final decisions on the formula. Schools Forum members will also be asked to agree the retention of funding by the LA for central costs, within the allowable limits, to support the early years sector.

School Forum action:

This paper is for information only.

Officer Contact

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Appendix A: Survey Questions

The online consultation survey comprised the following questions:

Questions 1-4 covered privacy notice, provider type, provider area, and respondee role).

Question 5.

Please rank the factors for 3- and 4-year-old funding in order of importance to you as a provider in meeting the needs of children and families.

- Base Rate
- Deprivation Supplement
- Quality Supplement
- Flexibility Supplement
- SENIF

Please provide your rationale for your ranking to enable understanding for when decisions are being taken.

Question 6.

Do you currently receive a deprivation supplement?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

Question 7.

Which of the following options would you prefer? Please choose one answer only.

- Maintain the current criteria and continue to pay two rates
- Remove the criteria for the 11-20% most deprived and focus the funding only on those living in the 0-10% most deprived
- Combine the current criteria so that one rate is paid to those living in the 0-20% most deprived parts of the county

Please provide your rationale for your preference to enable understanding for when decisions are being taken.

Question 8.

Does your provision currently meet the Quality Supplement criteria?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

Question 9.

Which of the following options would you prefer? Please choose one answer only.

- Maintain the current criteria.
- Remove the supplement from the formula.
- Change the current criteria.

Please provide your rationale for your preference to enable understanding for when decisions are being taken.

Question 10.

Does your provision currently meet the Flexibility Supplement criteria?

- Yes
 No
 Do not know

Question 11.

Which of the following options would you prefer? Please choose one answer only.

- Maintain the current criteria.
 Remove the supplement from the formula.
 Change the current criteria.

Please provide your rationale for your preference to enable understanding for when decisions are being taken.

Question 12.

Does your provision currently apply for SENIF funding?

- Yes
 No
 Do not know

Question 13.

Which of the following options would you prefer? Please choose one answer only for each row (option).

	Decrease the current rate	Maintain the current rate	Increase the hourly rate
Low and Emerging Need Average is below 3 £1.13	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Low and Emerging Need Average is between 3 and 4 £1.50	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complex and Medical Need Average is 4 or more £6.50	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please provide your rationale for your preference in relation to 3- and 4-year-old SENIF Funding to enable understanding for when decisions are being taken.

Question 14.

Which of the following would you prefer? Please choose only one.

- The continuation of top slicing the allocation to fund additional support for funded 2-year-olds with SEN
 To enable an increase in the 2-year-old base rate consider removing the ability to apply for SEN funding (SENIF) for funded 2-year-olds, which would mean each child is funded at the same rate irrelevant of need

Please provide your rationale for your preference in relation to 2-year-old SENIF Funding to enable understanding for when decisions are being taken.

SCHOOLS FORUM FORWARD PLAN

I – Information

D- Decision

	Autumn Term			Spring Term			Summer Term	
30/9/22 (Friday)	September (Face-to-face, Easton College)		27/01/23 (Friday)	January (Venue TBC)		17/05/23 (Wed)	May (Venue TBC)	
09:00 – 12:00	DSG Management Plan Update and Safety Valve Programme	D	09:00 – 12:00	Election of Chair/Vice Chair	D	09:00 – 12:00	Dedicated Schools Grant 2022/23 Outturn	I
	Provisional DSG Allocations for 2023-24 and Fair Funding Consultation for Mainstream Schools' Formula	D		Review Membership	I/D		Annual Audit Report (Norfolk Audit Service)	I
	Early Years Funding Consultation	D		Proposed Schools Budget including central costs	D		DSG Safety Valve (standing item)	I
	Central Schools Services Block: info on LA services	I		Pupil variations 2023-24	I			
				DSG Safety Valve (standing item)	I			
16/11/22 (Wed)	November (Face-to-face, Easton College)		15/03/23 (Wed)	March (Venue TBC)		07/07/23 (Friday)	July (Venue TBC)	
09:00 – 13:00	Early Years Block 2023-24 Funding Formula Update	I	09:00 – 12:00	Agree next year's plan	D	09:00 – 12:00	Updates on Scheme for Financing Schools (Financial Regulations)	D
	Schools Block (inc. consultation outcomes and Schools Block transfer)	D		Final pupil variations	I		DSG Safety Valve (standing item)	I
	De-delegation/CSS Block	D		DSG Safety Valve (standing item)	I			
	Notional SENDSG Safety Valve (standing item)	D						
		I						