



Northumberland County Council

Your ref:

Our ref: AT

Enquiries to: Andrea Todd

Email: Andrea.Todd@northumberland.gov.uk

Tel direct: 01670 622606

Date: 8 February 2024

Dear Sir or Madam,

A virtual meeting of the **SCHOOLS' FORUM** will be held on **Wednesday, 14 February 2024 at 9.30 a.m.** You will be sent a link to the meeting via a Microsoft Teams Meeting invite and I would be grateful if you could accept or decline the invitation accordingly.

I remind you that if you are unable to attend, you should arrange for an appropriate substitute to attend on your behalf. Alternatively forward any written representations to me in advance.

In the current situation can I ask that Forum members read all papers prior to the meeting and forward any questions or contributions to me in advance of the meeting, however, we will do everything possible to take comments at the meeting too.

Yours faithfully

Andrea Todd
Clerk to the Forum

To: Members of the Schools' Forum

AGENDA

It is expected that the matters included in this part of the agenda will be dealt with in public.

		Decision/Consultation/ Information/Action
1.	MEMBERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP UPDATE	Information
2.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	Information
3.	DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS (IF ANY)	Information
4.	MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING (Pages 1 - 8) Minutes of the meeting of the Schools' Forum held on Wednesday 17 January 2024, as circulated, to be confirmed as a true record, and signed by the Chair.	Action
5.	COMMUNICATION	Information
6.	SETTING THE 2024/25 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (REPORT TO FOLLOW)	Information, Consultation, Decision
7.	HIGH NEEDS FUNDING CONSULTATION FEEDBACK (Pages 9 - 22)	Information
8.	ESFA FUNDING FOR SCHOOLS IN FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES (Pages 23 - 26)	Information
9.	2024 WORK PROGRAMME AND MEETING DATES (Pages 27 - 28)	Information
10.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	Decision
11.	DATE OF NEXT MEETING The next scheduled meeting of the Schools' Forum is Wednesday, 17 July 2024 at 9.30 a.m. at County Hall, Morpeth.	Information

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

SCHOOLS' FORUM

At a meeting of the Schools' Forum on Wednesday, 17 January 2024 at 9.30 a.m. held virtually.

PRESENT

Alan Hardie, NCEA
(Chair, in the Chair)

Headteacher Representatives

A. Brown, Corbridge Middle School	A. Crawley, James Calvert Spence
M. Deane-Hall, Wooler and Glendale Middle School	College (substitute for N. Rodgers)

Governor Representatives

K. Faulkner, Collingwood School	B. Watson, St Robert's RC First School
B. Mansfield, Newbrough CE Primary School	G. Wilkins, St Wilfrid's RC Primary School

Academies Representatives

G Atkins, Hadrian Learning Trust	J. Wilson, The Duchess's
J. Holmes, Malvins Close Academy (part of Wise Academies Trust)	Community High School

Roman Catholic Diocese – Vacant Post

Church of England Diocese –

EYDCP-PVI – K. Dickinson

Pupil Referral Unit Representative – R. Carr

19-19 Provider of Education Representative – W. Stephenson

Trades Union Representative – Vacant Post

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OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

S. Aviston	Head of School Organisation and Resources
M. Finlay	Head of Inclusive Education Services
A. Kingham	Executive Director - Children, Young People and Education
B. Parvin	Education and Skills Business Manager
C. Ponting	Senior Manager - Schools HR
A. Russell	Principal Accountant – Non-Team Leader
D. Street	Director of Education, SEND and Skills
A. Todd	Democratic Services Officer

32. MEMBERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP DETAIL

- 32.1 Members were notified of two expressions of interest that had been received to join the Schools' Forum. These were from Joanne (Jo) Holmes, Headteacher at Malvins Close Academy (Primary School - part of Wise Academies Trust) and James Wilson, Co-Headteacher of The Duchess's Community High School.
- 32.1 Members agreed to the appointments and welcomed them both to join Schools' Forum as academy representatives.

RESOLVED that the appointments be agreed.

33. APOLOGIES

- 33.1 Apologies were received from B. Reed, A. Mead, N. Threlfall, N. Rodgers, Councillor R. Wearmouth and Councillor G. Renner-Thompson.

34. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Schools' Forum held on Wednesday, 22 November 2023, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

35. COMMUNICATIONS

- 35.1 Members were informed that the F40 Group had recently secured debate in the House of Commons to discuss SEN provision and funding. A full report on this was being prepared for discussion at the next Schools' Forum meeting.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

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36. SETTING THE 2024/25 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT

- 36.1 B. Parvin, Education and Skills Business Manager informed Schools' Forum of the DSG settlement for 2024/25, as provided by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on 19 December 2023, and the proposed formula values for the allocation of funds to Schools for 2024/25. (A copy of the report has been filed with the signed minutes).
- 36.2 Regarding school consultations, this year's focussed mainly on SEN. Schools were consulted on the Schools' Forum decision to transfer up to 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block. A total of 31 schools responded, numbers far higher than previous funding consultations. Information concerning the responses specifically related to the 2024/25 School Funding settlement and options were contained within the report. Details of the responses to the other SEN consultation questions were to be provided to the next meeting of Schools' Forum scheduled for February.
- 36.3 It was noted that members of the Schools' Forum representing mainstream schools would be asked to agree on a phase by phase basis to the de-delegation in respect of the services listed for 2024/25 using the per unit values, and estimated overall values as set out in the report.
- 36.4 It was noted that Schools' Forum had previously received reports outlining developments in relation to the National Funding Formula (NFF). The November 2023 report outlined the position to date, confirmed Northumberland's position as a local authority that now "mirrors the NFF in all factors". A transfer of up to 0.5% from the School Block to the High Needs Block was agreed, and it was noted that final decisions were delegated to the Executive Director of Children's Services once the final figures were received in December.
- 36.5 In the Chancellor's Autumn Statement 2023 it was stated that there was to be no additional funding available to schools. It was noted that the Mainstream Schools Additional Grant (MSAG) funding paid in 2023/24 had been consolidated into the DSG for 2024/25.
- 36.6 It was reported that Northumberland's total 2024/25 DSG allocation was £316,573,869, (£299,843,517 in 23/24) before any recoupment or deductions for academies, or any High Needs Adjustments.
- 36.7 Other influences on the 2024/25 Schools Block allocated figures were reported as:
- A continuing fall in the overall number of pupils.
 - A continuing shift in pupils from primary (down 476) to secondary (up 223).
 - Further increases in deprivation funding.

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36.8 It was advised that the DSG remained as a ring-fenced grant subject to formal grant conditions. As in 2023/24, the DSG was split into four blocks and each block would be determined by a separate national funding formula.

Early Years Block

36.9 Members were advised that the Northumberland Early Years National Funding Formula hourly rate for 3 and 4-year-olds had increased further to £5.47 for 2024/25. 13p of this reported uplift included the Teacher Pay and Pensions Grant (TPPG). This grant had historically gone directly to schools and not been a recorded part of the Early Years Block. It was proposed that for 2024/25 this be kept within the early years hourly rate and passported to all providers to support the whole sector with rising staffing and business costs.

36.10 It was reported that the Northumberland Early Years National Funding Formula hourly funding rate for 2-year-olds had increased by 23p to £7.50 for 2024/25. The Northumberland Early Years National Funding Formula hourly funding rate for under 2-year-olds was £10.20 for 2024/25.

36.11 The Disability Access Fund (DAF) annual rate had been increased to £910 and been extended to meet all age ranges for the extended entitlement roll out.

36.12 The Early Years Pupil Premium hourly rate had increased by 6p to 68p per hour for 2024/25 and would also be extended to all age ranges.

36.13 It was noted that the Early Years Block expenditure beyond the hourly rates, SEND and deprivation payments also included the Early Years Team. The Team supported around 400 providers and families with high quality training, assessment, guidance, Ofsted preparation, SEND, funding, sustainability and business management. Historically Northumberland settings had received a pass through of above 95%. For 2024/25 this was to be over 97%.

36.14 Members acknowledged the excellent work carried out by the Early Years Team and supported the allocation of funds to this area.

36.15 The initial allocation for the Early Years Block for 2024/25 was £30,293,355. Both the EYPP and the DAF include allocations for 2 year olds and under 2s for 2024/25. It included an initial allocation of £18,271,269 for 3 and 4-year-olds and an initial allocation of £2,857,197 for disadvantaged 2 -year-old children.

36.16 Members noted that as in previous years, all allocations were indicative and based on the January 2023 census. In the light of the January 2024 and January 2025 census data the figures would be revised.

36.17 The proposal for 2024/25 rates were based on the principles of-

- Passing on the maximum funding possible to providers to support all equally.
- Maintaining the two-year-old base rate.
- Passing on the full DAF uplift to providers.

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- Maintaining the Northumberland Pupil Premium Plus rates.

36.18 Members welcomed the passing on of the maximum funding possible to providers. This would benefit providers but acknowledged that this would be offset by increases to pay, fuel and other running costs in this difficult financial climate. The potential drop in numbers of fee paying children would also impact on the amount of money coming into PVI Early Years settings. The change in eligibility was also a concern to providers as there could be an increase in demand which might not be able to be met due to building sizes, particularly in those Early Years settings within schools.

High Needs Block

36.19 The latest indicative High Needs Block (HNB) allocation for 2024/25 was £53,831,547, a 5.4% uplift on the 2023/24 figure of £51,072,682. The current 2024/25 allocation after ESFA deductions for High Needs place funding is £50,385,547.

36.20 Work was continuing on the detail of the total requirements within the High Needs Block, and it was recommended that the total 2024/25 budget for the High Needs Block was set at this time, with the detailed breakdown of that funding into the various services being provided to the Schools' Forum meeting on 14 February 2024, together with details of the School Funding consultation responses.

Schools Block

36.21 Members were advised that the 2024/25 total Schools Block was £229,709,652, before the deduction for rates of £2,533,172, as detailed within the report. As agreed by Schools' Forum at the meeting on 17 November 2023 and the subsequent consultation with schools, a maximum transfer of £ 1,148,548 (0.5%) of the Schools Block to the High Needs block was available. This enabled Northumberland to continue to fund all formula values at NFF levels, but this was only possible through the use of £1,060,895 funding allocated to NCC to fund any required growth on a year to year basis, and through the application of capping and scaling measures. Without these measures it would not be possible to fund at NFF levels.

36.22 It was anticipated that there would be no further contribution to the growth fund or the falling rolls fund in 2024/25.

36.23 A concern was raised about utilising the NCC funding available for growth and application of capping and scaling measures to reach the NFF levels. It was questioned whether this was sustainable and whether there would be any long-term implications for using this funding in this way. In response it was confirmed that this had been raised to the EFSA as without cross subsidising from NCC the formula values at NFF level would not be met. This issue would continue to be raised through the F40 Group.

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- 36.24 As reported to the November 2023 meeting, the only disapplication request made to the ESFA in respect of 2024/25 is in respect of the transfer of funds between Schools within the Coquet partnership. This had been approved by the ESFA. No further contribution to the growth fund or the falling rolls fund was anticipated in 2024/25.
- 36.25 It was noted that as in previous years, it was intended to provide maintained schools with their 2024/25 budget via the Schools E-courier bulletin by the ESFA deadline of 29 February 2023. The equivalent figures for academies will be included for illustrative purposes only; the ESFA was responsible for the provision of the general annual grant statements to academies for the period from September 2024 to August 2025 by 31 March 2024.

De-Delegation

- 36.26 Members were reminded that the School and Early Years Finance Regulations permitted that certain services could have funding centrally retained by the de-delegation of funding from maintained schools. Academies, special schools and the PRU were free to purchase these services, either through a Service Level Agreement (SLA) or on a Pay As You Go basis.

Central School Services Block

- 36.27 Members were informed that the 2024/25 allocation for this block was £2,157,405. This reduction in the historic element was expected and had previously been reported.
- 36.28 As with the High Needs Budget, the overall budget would be set at £2,157,405 in line with the allocation, with the details of the budget being provided to the February Schools' Forum meeting.
- 36.29 Following on for the detailed report and presentation it was **RESOLVED** that Schools' Forum:
- (a) note this report and the information provided in respect of the various elements of the 2024/25 Dedicated Schools Grant.
 - (b) note the Early Years Block budget to be set at the DfE allocation of £30,293,355 as detailed in Annex 1.
 - (c) note the 3- and 4-year-old rate will increase with a 29p uplift from £4.91 (2023/24) to £5.20 per hour (2024/25).
 - (d) note the 2-year-old rate will be maintained at £7.27 per hour (2024/25).
 - (e) note the under 2-year-old rate will be introduced at £9.87 per hour (2024/25).
 - (f) note the budget for the High Needs Block will be set at £50,385,547, after the deduction by the ESFA for the place funding outlined at Annex 1.
 - (g) agree that the various budgets within the High Needs Block be set at the meeting on 14 February 2024.
 - (h) note the budget for the Schools Block to be set provisionally at £227,176,480, before the deduction of a proposed amount of £444,626 in respect of de-

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delegation. This figure is further reduced to £225,606,850 after the transfer of £1,125,004 to the High Needs Block.

- (i) note that the School budget shares be provisionally constructed based on the formula values shown the final column of Table 1 of the report, including an MFG value of 0.5%, and capping and scaling values of 2.13% and 75% respectively subject to any adjustments required once the ESFA's decision is known.
- (i) note that delegated powers to the Executive Director of Children's Services to set the final formula values was agreed at the 17 November 2023 Schools Forum meeting.
- (k) Members of the Schools' Forum representing maintained mainstream schools agree on a phase by phase basis to the de-delegation in respect of the four services listed above for 2024/25 using the per unit values, and estimated overall values as set out in the final column of Annex 1 of the report.
- (l) note the budget for the Central Schools Services Block will be set at £2,157,405 as set out in Annex 1 of the report.

37. 2024 WORK PROGRAMME AND MEETING DATES

- 37.1 The schedule of dates had been circulated with the agenda papers and a copy filed with the signed minutes.

It was suggested that a meeting of the HN Committee be convened before the next meeting of Schools' Forum in February to discuss emerging funding issues. It was agreed for officers to discuss with the Chair of the HN Committee outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

38. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED that the next scheduled meeting of the Schools' Forum will be Wednesday, 14 February 2024.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____

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Northumberland County Council

Children, Young People and Education

Agenda Item 7

SCHOOLS FORUM

14 February 2024

High Needs Block funding consultation feedback.

1. Purpose of the Report

To update School Forum regarding the initial outcomes of the consultation exercise with schools on SEN funding.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Schools Forum

- 2.1. notes this report and agree to wider consultation in order to seek as many views as possible prior to making any formal proposals/changes in order to address the financial challenges and pressures on the High Needs Block.
- 2.2 Note the format and areas for consultation will be delegated to the High Needs sub group with the finding from the wider consultation being reported back to schools forum in the summer term.

3. Background.

- 3.1 The annual consultation with schools in Northumberland on the funding was extended this year to ask schools a number of questions relating to SEN funding in order to develop some new principles and guidance to reduce the predicted overspend within the High Needs Funding Block. The results will help shape the format and ideas for further discussions with all schools.
- 3.2 This report sets out the feedback from the consultation with the aim of the high needs sub group using this feedback to launch a wider consultation in the form of workshops around the county in order to fully engage schools developing solutions to the challenges faced in meeting the changing needs of our children and young people.

4 Key Issues

- 4.1 Although not directly linked to Cabinet approval for setting of the funding formula values. The consultation exercise was extended to ask schools a number of questions relating to SEN funding in order to develop some new principles and guidance in order to reduce the predicted overspend within the High Needs Funding Block. The results will help shape the format and ideas for further discussions with all schools.
- 4.2 The consultation with all schools was carried out between 27 November and 12 December 2023. Where the following 14 questions were asked:

- Q1 - Do you support the Schools Forum Decision to seek a 0.5% transfer from schools block to high needs block for financial Year 2024/25?
- Q2 - Would you be supportive of a larger transfer from schools block to high needs block in subsequent years to help address the current £3m gap in resources?
- Q3 - At what level do you believe Northumberland's MFG should be set for 2024/25?
- Q4 - Do you support the potential use of capping and scaling as part of the 2024/25 School Budget setting process?
- Q5 - Do you support a freeze or reduction in SEN banding rates at the present time, subject to review on an annual basis?
- Q6 - Should Northumberland consider a fundamental review of the banding rates paid?
- Q7 - Should any review of the banding rates paid be done on a "cost neutral" basis, i.e. a redistribution of existing funds, or seek to deliver financial savings?
- Q8 - Northumberland does not currently consider any information in relation to the School Balances held by a school in relation to a request for Top Up funding, or an increase in Top Up funding. Should we?
- Q9 - Do you feel you understand Notional SEN and your Schools Notional SEN figure?
- Q10 - Do you support the use of a schools Notional SEN figure as a mechanism for distributing additional SEN Funding?
- Q11 - Should we require schools to demonstrate how they are using their allocated Notional SEN total across the school before considering requests for Top Up payments?
- Q12 - Would it help Schools if additional School Level Notional SEN payments were made at the beginning of each term rather than the end as is currently the case?
- Q13 - Should Northumberland continue to make Top Up payments to learners without EHCPs?
- Q14 - Should Northumberland review the scope of Top Up payments to learners without EHCPs?

- 4.3** There were 31 responses received during the consultation period. There was overwhelming support for the transfer of 0.5% from the School Block to High Needs Block with 27 schools supporting Schools Forums View. Schools in the main were also supportive of increasing the transfer further with 20 supporting this idea. In response to the question three, 28 schools felt MFG should be set at 0.5%. 22 schools also supported the use of capping and scaling
- 4.4** Cabinet supported the findings from the consultation in relation to the transfer to high needs block, capping and scaling as well as agreeing the level of MFG. Cabinet also understood that there was more detailed work to be undertaken by school's forum in relation to the remaining questions which related to high needs funding.
- 4.5** Attached at appendix one is the feedback from the 31 schools that responded to the consultation. It is recommended that the High Needs Sub Group use this information to launch a wider consultation on options and ideas with all schools on how to address the financial challenges in meeting the increased demand to meet the needs of our pupil population

5 Summary and Conclusion.

- 5.1** There is support from schools shown within the feedback to review bandings on a cost neutral basis and review top ups to non EHCP learners. There was also supported to take a higher percentage of transfer from the schools block to high needs block. There was also some support to review additional notional and the date in which the payment occurs.
- 5.2** Whilst the number of schools responding to this year's funding consultation was higher than experienced in previous years it was still a relatively small sample of the number of schools overall. Officers are therefore recommending, that a wider more interactive consultation is undertaken to engage as many schools as possible in the process.

2024/25 School Funding Consultation for 'School Block' and 'High Needs Block'

<https://haveyoursay.northumberland.gov.uk/education-skills/77258754>

This report was created on Tuesday 12 December 2023 at 09:15

The activity ran from 24/11/2023 to 11/12/2023

Responses to this survey: **31**

1: What is your name?

Name

There were 31 responses to this part of the question.

2: What is your email address?

Email

There were 31 responses to this part of the question.

3: What is your organisation?

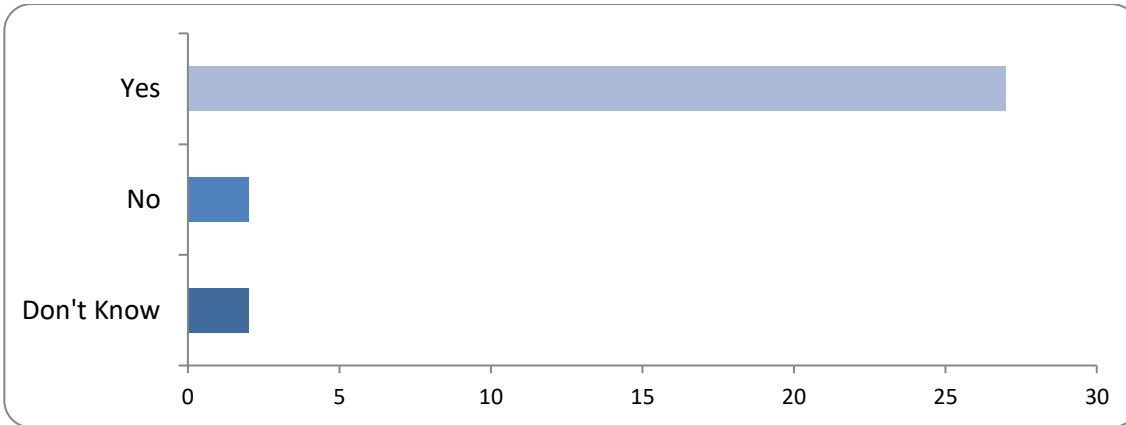
Organisation

There were 31 responses to this part of the question.

4: Do you support the Schools Forum Decision to seek a 0.5% transfer (approx. £1.148million) from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block for the financial year 2024/25 ?

Yes/No/Maybe

There were 31 responses to this part of the question.

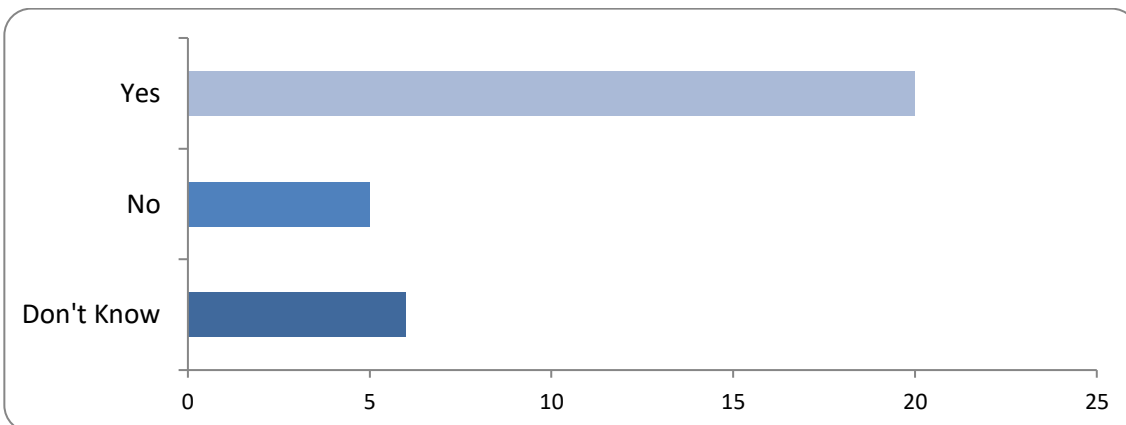


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	27	87.10%
No	2	6.45%
Don't Know	2	6.45%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

5: Would you be supportive of a larger transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block in subsequent years to help address the current £3 million gap in resources:

Yes/No/Don't Know

There were 31 responses to this part of the question.



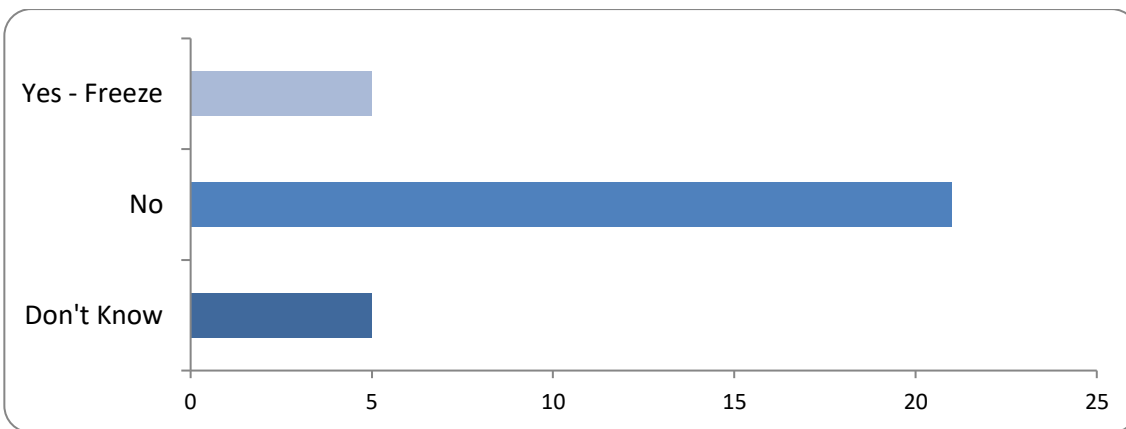
Option	Total	Percent
Yes	20	64.52%
No	5	16.13%

Don't Know	6	19.35%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

6: Do you support a freeze or reduction in SEN banding rates at the present time, subject to review on an annual basis?

Yes freeze; Yes reduction; No; Don't Know

There were 31 responses to this part of the question.

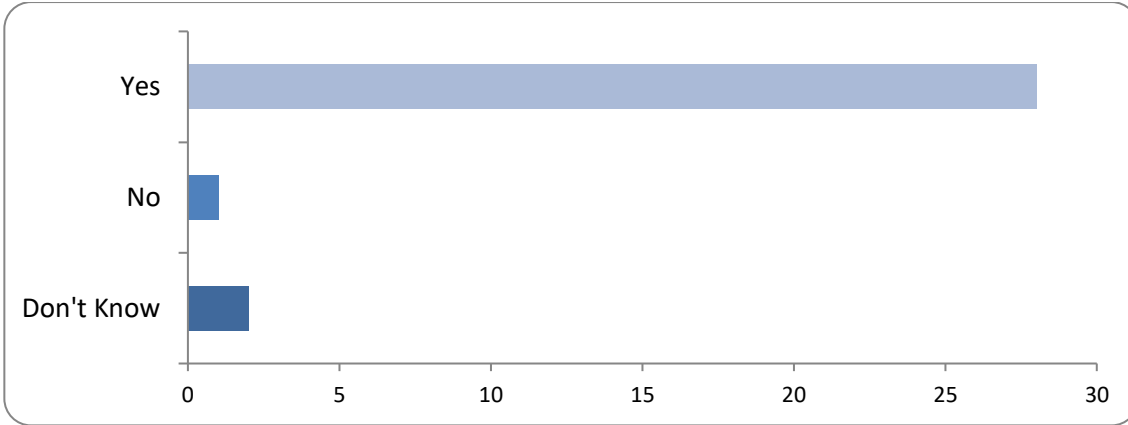


Option	Total	Percent
Yes - Freeze	5	16.13%
Yes - Reduction	0	0.00%
No	21	67.74%
Don't Know	5	16.13%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

7: Should Northumberland consider a fundamental review of the banding rates paid?

Yes/No/Don't Know

There were 31 responses to this part of the question.

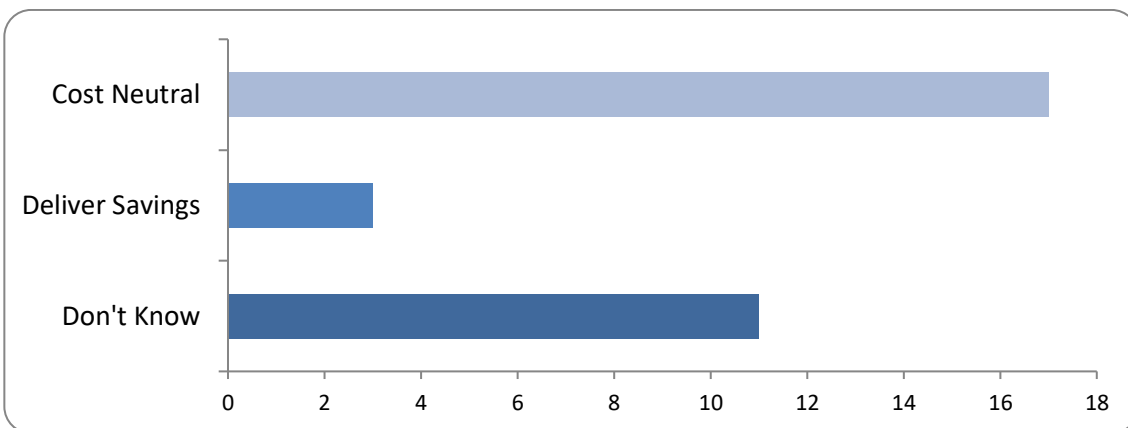


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	28	90.32%
No	1	3.23%
Don't Know	2	6.45%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

8: Should any review of the banding rates paid be done on a “cost neutral” basis i.e. a redistribution of existing funds, or seek to deliver financial savings?

Cost Neutral; Deliver Savings; Don't Know

There were 31 responses to this part of the question.



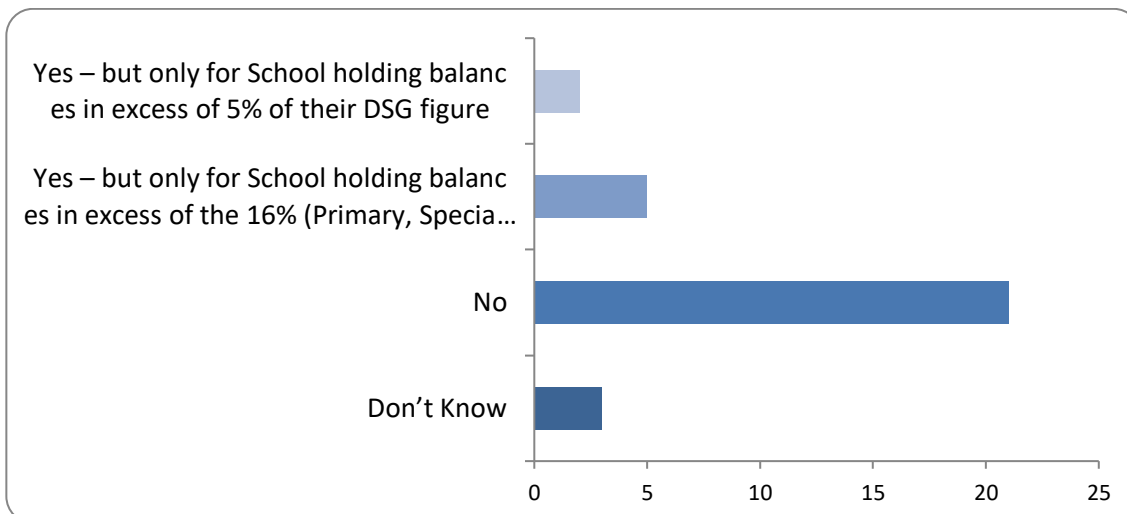
Option	Total	Percent
Cost Neutral	17	54.84%
Deliver Savings	3	9.68%
Don't Know	11	35.48%

Not Answered	0	0.00%
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9: Northumberland does not currently consider any information in relation to the School Balances held by a school in relation to a request for Top Up funding, or an increase in Top Up funding. Should we?

Yes – for all schools holding positive School Balances; Yes – but only for School holding balances in excess of 5% of their DSG figure as laid out in the Scheme for Financing Schools; Yes – but only for School holding balances in excess of the 16% (Primary, Special Schools) or 10% (Secondary/High/Middle Schools) of their DSG figure as laid out in the Scheme for Financing Schools; No; Don't Know

There were 31 responses to this part of the question.

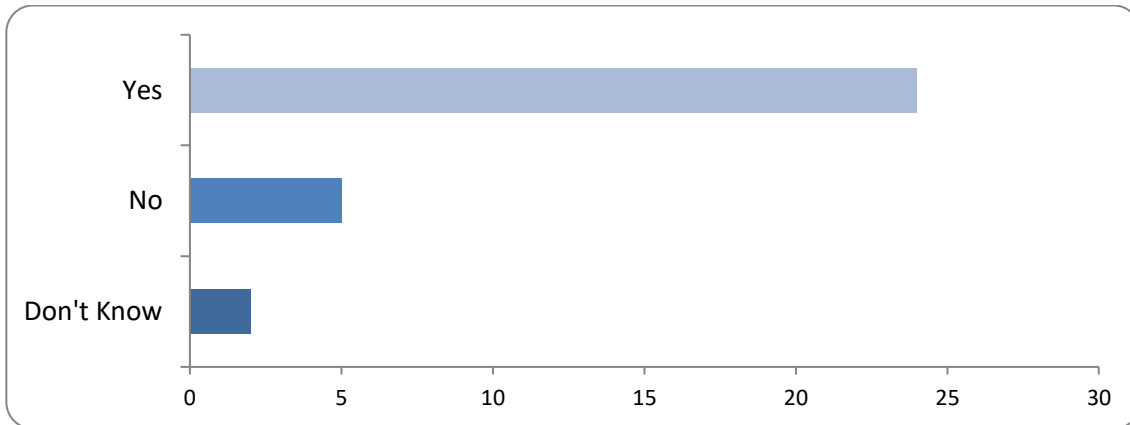


Option	Total	Percent
Yes – for all schools holding positive School Balances	0	0.00%
Yes – but only for School holding balances in excess of 5% of their DSG figure	2	6.45%
Yes – but only for School holding balances in excess of the 16% (Primary, Special Schools) or 10% (Secondary/High/Middle Schools) of their DSG figure as laid out in the Scheme for Financing Schools.	5	16.13%
No	21	67.74%
Don't Know	3	9.68%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

10: Do you feel you understand Notional SEN and your Schools Notional SEN figure?

Yes/No/Don't Know

There were 31 responses to this part of the question.

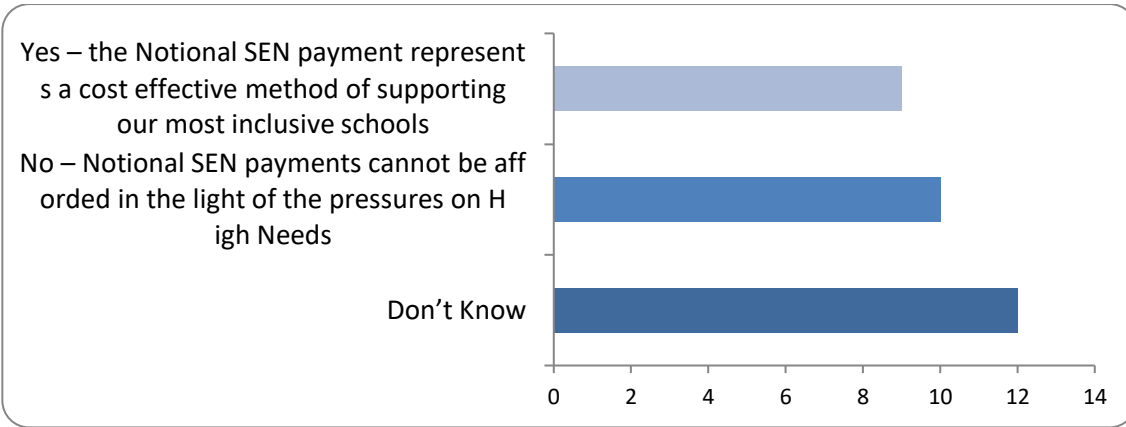


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	24	77.42%
No	5	16.13%
Don't Know	2	6.45%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

11: Do you support the use of a schools Notional SEN figure as a mechanism for distributing additional SEN Funding?

Yes – the Notional SEN payment represents a cost effective method of supporting our most inclusive schools; No – Notional SEN payments cannot be afforded in the light of the pressures on High Needs; Don't Know

There were 31 responses to this part of the question.

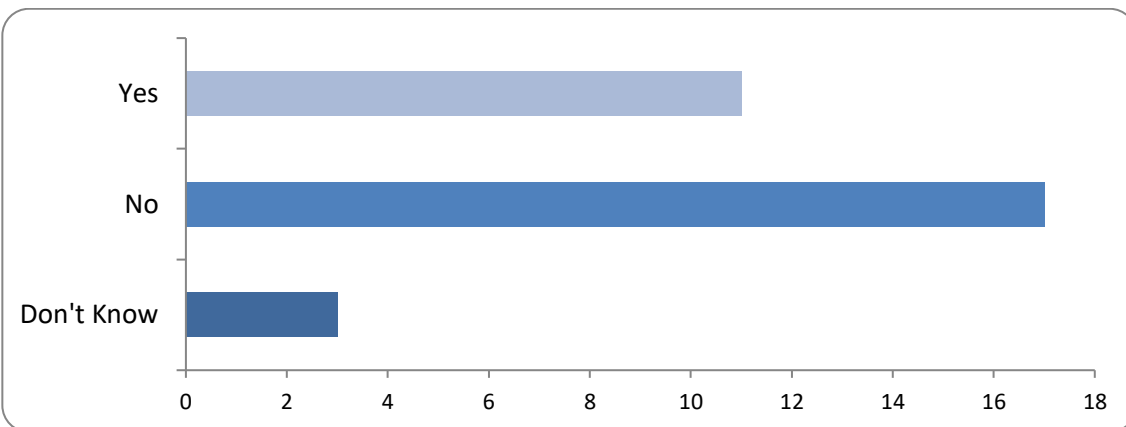


Option	Total	Percent
Yes – the Notional SEN payment represents a cost effective method of supporting our most inclusive schools	9	29.03%
No – Notional SEN payments cannot be afforded in the light of the pressures on High Needs	10	32.26%
Don't Know	12	38.71%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

12: Should we require schools to demonstrate how they are using their allocated Notional SEN total across the school before considering requests for Top Up payments.

Yes/No/Don't Know

There were 31 responses to this part of the question.

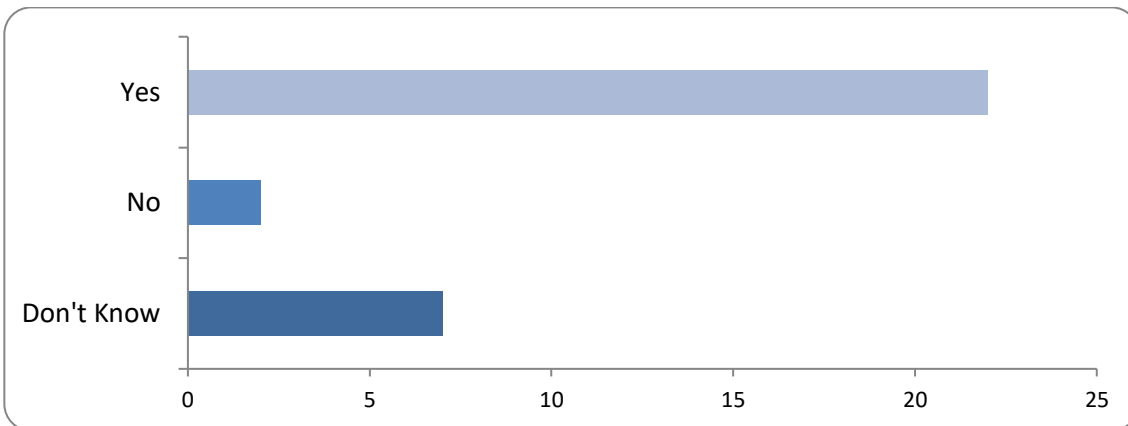


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	11	35.48%
No	17	54.84%
Don't Know	3	9.68%

Yes	11	35.48%
No	17	54.84%
Don't Know	3	9.68%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

**13: Would it help Schools if additional School Level Notional SEN payments were made at the beginning of each term rather than the end as is currently the case?
Yes/No/Don't Know**

There were 31 responses to this part of the question.

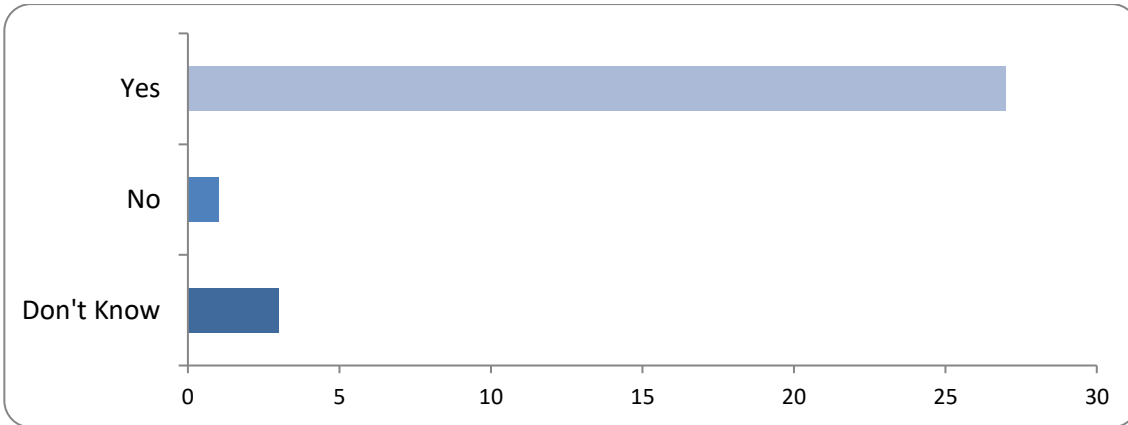


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	22	70.97%
No	2	6.45%
Don't Know	7	22.58%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

14: Should Northumberland continue to make Top Up payments to learners without EHCPS?

Yes/No/Don't Know

There were 31 responses to this part of the question.

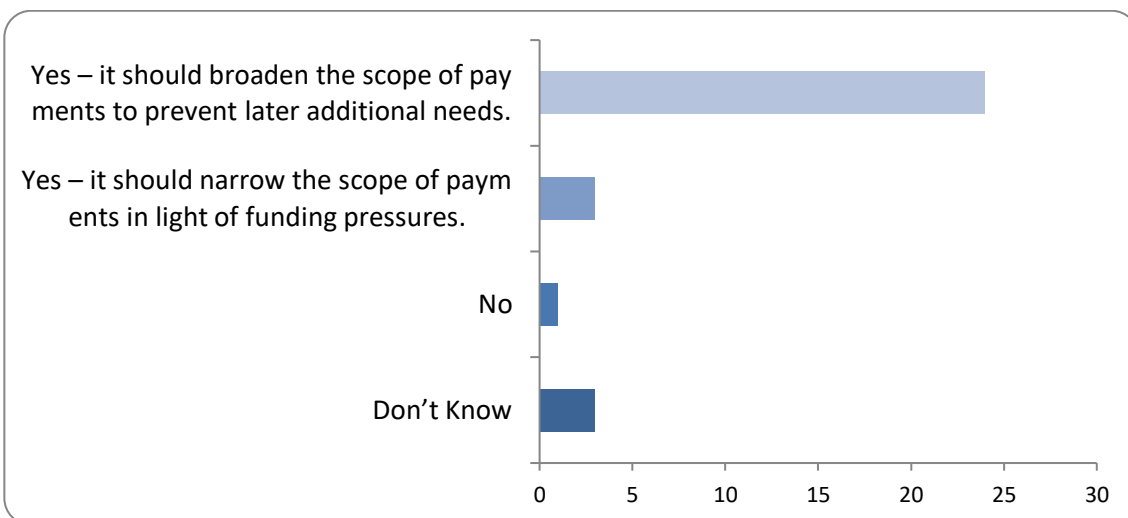


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	27	87.10%
No	1	3.23%
Don't Know	3	9.68%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

15: Should Northumberland review the scope of Top Up payments to learners without EHCPs ?

Yes – it should broaden the scope of payments to prevent later additional needs; Yes – it should narrow the scope of payments in light of funding pressures; No; Don't Know

There were 31 responses to this part of the question.



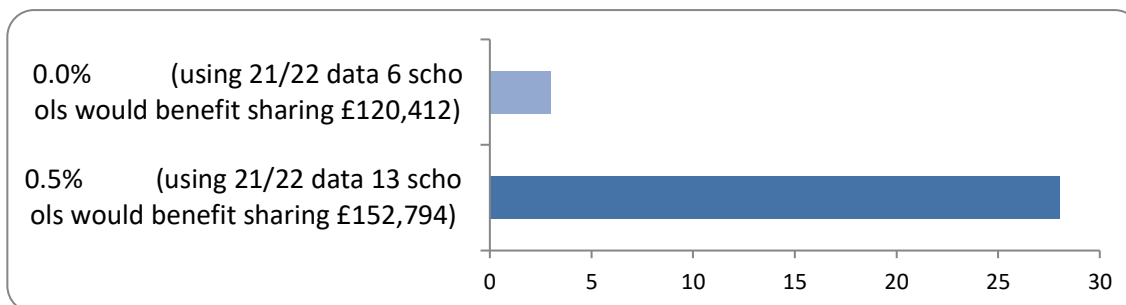
Option	Total	Percent
Yes – it should broaden the scope of payments to prevent later additional needs.	24	77.42%
Yes – it should narrow the scope of payments in light of funding pressures.	3	9.68%
No	1	3.23%
Don't Know	3	9.68%

Yes – it should broaden the scope of payments to prevent later additional needs.	24	77.42%
Yes – it should narrow the scope of payments in light of funding pressures.	3	9.68%
No	1	3.23%
Don't Know	3	9.68%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

16: At what level do you believe Northumberland's MFG should be set for 2024/25

0.0% (using 21/22 data 6 schools would benefit sharing £120,412); **0.25%** (using 21/22 data 6 schools would benefit sharing £131,350); **0.5%** (using 21/22 data 13 schools would benefit sharing £152,794)

There were 31 responses to this part of the question.

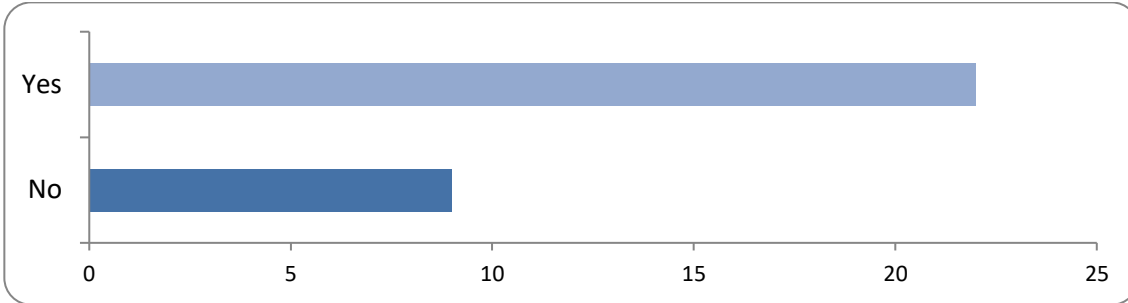


Option	Total	Percent
0.0% (using 21/22 data 6 schools would benefit sharing £120,412)	3	9.68%
0.25% (using 21/22 data 6 schools would benefit sharing £131,350)	0	0.00%
0.5% (using 21/22 data 13 schools would benefit sharing £152,794)	28	90.32%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

17: Do you support the potential use of capping and scaling as part of the 2024/25 School Budget setting process?

Yes/No

There were 31 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	22	70.97%
No	9	29.03%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

18: Please use the box below for any other comments that you have in relation to School Funding or SEN Finance:

Comment

There were 14 responses to this part of the question.



Northumberland County Council

Children, Young People and Education

Agenda Item 8

SCHOOLS FORUM

14 February 2024

ESFA Funding for Maintained Schools in Financial Difficulty

1. Purpose of the Report

To update School Forum regarding the Northumberland's allocation from the ESFA funding for distribution for schools in financial difficulty.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Schools Forum notes this report.

3. Background

Initial information was announced by the ESFA in August. LA level allocations have now been published, the details of which have been attached at Appendix A. The latest information and the grant conditions are available at the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/additional-support-for-schools-in-financial-difficulty-in-2023-to-2024>

4. Latest Information

Of the £40 million allocated by the ESFA, £20 million has been allocated to Local Authorities for maintained schools. A total of 35 local authorities have received funding, with amounts paid ranging from £1,741,000 to £179,000. Northumberland has received £344,356, one of 4 North East local authorities to receive funding.

The ESFA methodology for the distribution of funding was as follows:

This funding will be allocated proportionately among local authorities who have aggregated school-level deficits which represent more than 1% of their total maintained schools' income.

For academies, the remaining funding will be used to expand the existing route for academies in financial difficulty, and allocated to academy trusts in line with existing criteria and processes.

The funding is in addition to other support available to schools and academies, such as the Schools Resource Management Adviser (SRMA) programme, or the licensed deficits available to maintained schools. Where schools are in serious financial difficulty, schools should contact their local authority or ESFA, who can provide advice and support on a case by case basis.

5. Northumberland Position

To provide some context in relation to the sum received by Northumberland, the latest School Forum report in relation to school balances in July 2023, reported that, as at 31 March 2023, there was 23 maintained school with total deficit balances of £2,708,039. The sum received therefore only represents 12.7% of this figure.

A targeted approach is therefore required in relation to the allocation of this funding. It is therefore proposed that funding will be awarded to schools only in the most serious financial

position, as demonstrated by the issue of a notice of concern, and where a school is actively working towards producing a balanced in year budget.

It is anticipated that funding would then be allocated proportionately on a per pupil basis or similar.

6 Summary and Conclusion

The ESFA has stated that this funding for schools in financial difficulty is very much one off funding and "*the department has no plans for similar additional funding in 2024 to 2025*". It is therefore felt that the funding should be used on a very targeted basis as outlined above, in line with other support measures to maintained schools.

B Parvin
Education and Skills Business Manager
07 February 2024

Funding for local authorities to support their maintained schools in financial difficulty: allocations for 2023-24			
LA Name	LA number	Allocation	
Liverpool	341	£	1,741,291.50
North Tyneside	392	£	1,868,147.92
Worcestershire	885	£	1,563,479.89
North Yorkshire	815	£	972,188.39
Enfield	308	£	965,741.96
Lambeth	208	£	959,277.21
Bradford	380	£	934,212.12
Southampton	852	£	559,332.03
Bristol, City of	801	£	675,992.45
South Tyneside	393	£	605,844.96
County Durham	840	£	582,480.41
Greenwich	203	£	554,688.45
Southwark	210	£	516,380.60
Sheffield	373	£	517,960.04
Isle of Wight	921	£	517,146.08
Hillingdon	312	£	491,623.25
Leicester	856	£	422,217.56
Lewisham	209	£	458,226.44
Wiltshire	865	£	405,502.97
Cumberland	942	£	371,578.64
Islington	206	£	364,816.41
Hackney	204	£	359,975.15
Northumberland	929	£	344,356.84
Waltham Forest	320	£	343,459.83
Oxfordshire	931	£	331,272.92
Walsall	335	£	309,601.02
Somerset	933	£	288,318.49
Wirral	344	£	296,310.10
Westminster	213	£	290,418.52
Westmorland and Furness	943	£	301,410.78
Croydon	306	£	264,529.05
Windsor and Maidenhead	868	£	222,129.63
Reading	870	£	218,584.70
Sutton	319	£	202,475.48
Gateshead	390	£	179,028.20
		£	20,000,000.00

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Northumberland County Council SCHOOLS' FORUM

Agenda Item 9

14 February 2024

2024 WORK PROGRAMME AND MEETING DATES

Wednesday 14 February 2024: 9.30-12.00 (Virtual Meeting)

Setting the DSG budget for 2022/23 – individual budgets

Wednesday 17 July 2024: 9.30-12.00 (Face to Face Meeting, Council Chamber, County Hall Morpeth)

DSG Provisional Outturn
Scheme for Financing Schools
Analysis of School Balances

Wednesday 25 September 2024 : 9.30-12.00 (Virtual Meeting)

NFF Update
Review of Schools Forum Membership

Wednesday 27 November 2024 : 9.30-12.00 (Virtual Meeting)

National Funding Formula Update & Consultation for 2023/24
SEN Update

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