

**SCHOOL FUNDING 2024-25:
AGREEMENT OF THE LOCAL FUNDING FORMULA.**

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform the Schools Forum of the responses from schools and academies to the Authority's local funding formula consultation.
2. To seek agreement and vote on the Minster Disapplication. This was discussed at the November School Forum. It is a requirement for the Disapplication that there is a formal vote.
3. To seek agreement of the 2024-25 local funding formula for schools for recommendation to the Local Authority's Members.

Information and Advice

4. The formal consultation on the proposals for schools was held from 16th November to 30th November 2023.
5. In order to agree the local funding formula, Schools Forum members will need to vote on the proposals in consideration with the financial models and responses to the consultation. Each of the proposals that require a vote to be taken are detailed in the main body of the report.
6. Forum members are reminded that, in accordance with the Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012, only the following members are allowed to participate in a vote regarding the local funding formula:
 - Schools (Primary, Secondary and Special)
 - Academies
 - Governors
 - Private, Voluntary and Independent providers

Other non- schools' members (Diocesan and Trade Union) can engage and participate in any discussions held but are not eligible to participate in a vote. The Chair of the Forum has a casting vote in the event of a tied result.

Minster MPP disapplication request 2024-25

7. This is a repeated disapplication request for funding following approved requests in 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24. The current NFF Minimum Per Pupil (MPP) methodology disadvantages the Minster School due to the school not having a standard number of year groups and a disproportionate number of primary and secondary pupils. Currently, the Minimum Per Pupil (MPP) methodology which does not allow for schools with non-standard year groups. This is a well-known anomaly, and it is often mentioned as an example for a disapplication in the annual guidance.

8. The forum are advised that no change has been made to the NFF MPP methodology. Therefore, the amendment will be required for the school's 2024-25 funding and a disapplication request will need to be made again.
9. Following support at School Forum in November a disapplication has been submitted to the ESFA.
10. As part of the disapplication, **School forum members are required to vote on this request.**

Consultation responses

11. A total of 79 (45 2022) responses were received to the Schools consultation which was a response rate of 24.0% (13.7% last year).
12. A full analysis of the responses received, along with the comments for each question are attached as **Appendix A**.
13. The responses to the questions on the LA's proposals are summarised below.

Consultation Proposals

14. All proposals requiring a decision for 2024-25 are outlined in paragraphs 16 to 24 below.
15. Prior to each proposal reference will be made to the consultation responses and comments received at **Appendix A** for consideration by the Forum.

Schools Local Funding Formula

16. The first question (question 4) in the consultation was "Do you agree (or disagree) that reserves should be used to fund a shortfall in the Nottinghamshire funding formula this year?" Following extensive conversations with the ESFA we are unable to recommend or vote on question 4 of the consultation. Proceeding with this would have negative financial implications to the LA and school funding in the future.
17. The second question (question 5) was If there is an unaffordable formula, please select one of the four models (Model 2, 3, 4 or 5)? Model 1 is not included as this assumes sufficient funding.
18. Most respondents voted for Model 4 (43%), followed by 25% preferring Model 2. **School forum are invited to vote on which is the preferred model.**
19. The third question (question 6) asked for additional comments on the models. Please refer to **Appendix A** for these comments.
20. The fourth question (question 7) asked if schools were maintained. 71% of schools were maintained and 29% were academies. Academies moved onto question 9 to answer the final question on additional comments on the consultation. Responses to question 9 are collated in **Appendix A**. Maintained schools went on to answer question 8 regarding de-delegation for 2024-25.

De-delegation of funding for maintained primary and secondary schools

21. As outlined in the consultation document, there are a limited list of services that the local authority can continue to operate centrally for maintained schools only.
22. Of the 79 responses 56 were maintained schools. The consultation responses showed that the majority of respondents felt that the services listed should be centrally operated. For detailed responses please refer to **Appendix A**.
23. However, the final decision is made by the members of the Forum who represent the maintained primary and secondary sector. As de-delegation decisions can differ between the sectors, separate votes will need to take place.
24. A vote is required by primary and secondary phase of **maintained school members** on the following services and rates:

Question 8 (to be answered by maintained schools only)

Do you agree to the de-delegation of the following in 2024-25?

- *Free schools' meals eligibility assessment?*
- *Support to underperforming ethnic minority groups and bilingual learners?*
- *Contingency for crisis communications?*
- *Trade Union Facilities?*
- *School Improvement Service?*

25. **School forum are invited to vote on the below rates for de-delegation.**

	Primary per pupil de-delegation	Secondary per pupil de-delegation
Free school meal eligibility assessment	£0.75	£0.75
Support to underperforming ethnic minority groups and bilingual learners	£5.71	£5.71
Contingency for crisis communications	£0.90	Nil
Trade Union Facilities	£2.00	£2.00
School Improvement	£6.13	£6.13

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Schools Forum

- 1) Notes the content of the report; and
- 2) Undertakes the votes required to recommend the schools local funding formula for 2024-25. The schools local funding formula will be discussed at the Cabinet Member Briefing meeting on 8 January and then final approval on 22 January. The funding formula will be submitted to the ESFA on 22 January 2024.

- 3) Undertakes vote required for Minister Disapplication.
- 4) Consider and agree the approach to be taken regarding the methodology of mirroring the National Funding Formula (in keeping with the acceptable minimum and maximum values) and reducing factors (if required) to ensure affordability of the 2024-25 formula.

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