

# NORFOLK SCHOOLS FORUM

## AGENDA

Meeting on Friday 29 September 2023 09:00 – 12:30

Venue: Cranworth Room County Hall

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 – 09:05	1	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>  <b>Apologies</b>	<b>Report</b>	
09:05 – 09:20	2	<b>Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SRB's - school which expressed an interest has not had a response. Officers will follow up.</li><li>• Alternative Provision – the Cambridgeshire system, Nicki Rider to discuss with Andy Tovell.</li><li>• Clarity regarding redundancy costs for maintained schools.</li></ul>		<b>3-11</b>
09:20 – 10:00	3	<b>Strategic Planning:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Local First Inclusion<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Standard report/DSG Management Plan update</li><li>• List of SRB's and which agreed)</li><li>• Impact of move on timeline</li><li>• Highest risk area</li></ul></li><li>• Early Years Pathfinder - <b>presentation</b></li></ul>	<b>Information/ Comment</b>	<b>12-27</b>
10:00 – 10:30	4	<b>Dedicated Schools Grant Consultation Proposals</b>		
	4a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consultation and engagement plan - <b>presentation</b></li><li>• Provisional DSG Allocations for 2024/25 and Fair Funding Consultation for Mainstream Schools' Formula</li></ul>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>28-52</b>
	4b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Notional SEN</li></ul>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>53-61</b>
10:30 – 10:50		<b>COFFEE</b>		
10:50 – 11:20	4c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Early Years Funding Consultation</li></ul>	<b>Comment Info/</b>	<b>62-67</b>
	4d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Special Schools Funding Review</li></ul>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>68-74</b>
	4e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MFG Disapplication – Amalgamation funding</li></ul>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>75-76</b>

<b>11:20 – 11:45</b>	<b>5 Catering Contract update</b>	<b>Information/ Comment</b>	<b>77-81</b>
<b>11:45 – 12:15</b>	<b>6 Risk Protection Arrangement update</b>	<b>Information/ Comment</b>	<b>82-92</b>
<b>12:15 – 12:20</b>	<b>7 Review 2023-24 Future Meeting Plan</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>12:20 – 12:30</b>	<b>8 Any Other Business</b>		

**9 Date of Next Meeting**

22 November 2023, 9.00am – 12.30pm, Cranworth Room  
County Hall

# Norfolk Schools Forum

Minutes of Meeting held on Friday 7 July 2023 Easton College

09:00 – 12:30 hours

## Present

Adrian Ball Diocese of Ely Multi Academy  
Helen Bates Roman Catholic Diocese  
Lacey Douglass The Heather Nursery  
Mike Grimble Avenue Junior School  
Glyn Hambling Unity Education Trust  
David Hicks Synergy Multi Academy Trust  
Georgie Howell (sub) West Norfolk Academy Trust  
Carol Jacques Earlham Nursery School  
Karen McIntosh (sub) City College  
Joanne Philpott City of Norwich School  
Sarah Porter The Heart Education Trust  
Tom Snowdon (sub) Blakeney School  
Daniel Thrower The Wensum Trust  
Joanna Tuttle Aylsham High School  
Martin White (Chair) Nebula Federation

## Representing

Academies  
Roman Catholic Diocese  
Early Years Representative  
Maintained Primary Governors  
Alternative Provision  
Academies  
Academies  
Maintained Nursery Schools  
16 – 19 Representative  
Academies  
Academies  
Maintained Primary Schools  
Academies  
Maintained Secondary Schools  
Maintained Primary Governors

John Baldwin Head of Finance Exchequer services (for item 9)  
Martin Brock Accountant (Schools, SEND & EY)  
John Crowley Assistant Director, Learning & Achievement  
Marilyn Edgeley Admin Officer  
Dawn Filtness Finance Business Partner  
Victoria Groom Senior Advisor Strategy and Partnership  
Paul Harker Place Planning Manager (for item 6 (Falling Rolls))  
Simon Paylor Strategic Commissioner, Health & Disability (for item 8)  
Nicki Rider Assistant Director High Needs SEND  
James Wilson Director of Quality and Transformation

## Apologies:

Martin Colbourne City College 16 – 19 Representative  
Bob Groome Joint Consultative Committee  
Clare Jones Boudica Schools Trust Academies  
Rachel Quick The Wherry School Special School Academy  
Hayley Porter-Aslet Church of England Diocese Church of England Diocese  
Hayley Ross Bure Park Academy Special School Academy  
Sarah Shirras St Williams Primary Maintained Primary Schools  
Rebecca Wicks The Clare School Maintained Special School  
Vicky Warnes Joint Consultative Committee  
Michael Bateman Assistant Director, SEND Strategic Improvement & Early Effectiveness  
Sara Tough Executive Director Childrens Services  
Sam Fletcher Assistant Director, Education Strategy & Infrastructure

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## 2. Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising

### Accuracy

- Comment re tribunals: sentence read that tribunals this year exceed those lodged in 2022. It should read that numbers exceed *those lodged at the same point in time of 2022*
- Word Indices should be INDES.

The minutes were accepted as a true record

### Communications

The Chair confirmed the “Schools Forum Briefing” from last meeting has been sent out via an MI Sheet and asked members for comments.

- very good
- Comment on governor hub – how do clerks receive it?

*Chair suggested the document be shared via governor hub as well as an MI sheet alert.*

### Balances

Will be discussed in item 5

## 3. Strategic Planning

### Learning Strategy

We have been undertaking a programme of engagement activities inviting colleagues in the education system to share their views on the co-creation of a shared learning ambition for Norfolk. Communications have gone out to schools and other stakeholders. There will be a meeting on 10 July to consider the views shared so far and determine next steps. We will continue engagement in September and beyond. Feedback so far has identified Raising Expectations and Strengthening a Self-Improving systems as key areas to prioritise resource towards.

### Comments

Not sure there has been agreement that the Learning Board will oversee the Learning Strategy and that is why people are asking questions. A discussion is required.

*In response, if we get it right the Learning Board will get behind it –there isn't yet broad agreement on a strategy.*

Where does Schools Forum sit in the Learning Strategy process?

*In response, not a specific decision making role but an opportunity for us to engage with you.*

### Local First Inclusion

Forum were presented with the second formal report, which comes following a recent submission to the DfE of the first Tri-Annual Report on 16 June.

The report is in 3 parts:

- Progress on programme
- Spotlight on school led alternative provision
- High Needs and DSG Recovery Plan

The authority has reported to the DfE that it is on track across all workstreams, The report details the current position of the overall programme, which is structured according to the LAs / DfE's Safety Valve Agreement rather than the LFI programme structure.

The headline is that, whilst there is slippage in some areas, the overall programme remains on track to deliver the financial recovery within the specified timeframe. The key risk that has been highlighted in the first report is the delay of delivery of some of the SRB schemes to February 2024 rather than September 2023.

The report also highlights the local arrangements for governance, monitoring and challenge and the strong and visible role of Schools Forum within this.

### **Comments**

Have the DfE responded to report?

*In response, No and we are taking this as a positive sign.*

There were wide reflections that it is disappointing not to have received a response from the DfE as School's Forum would want to understand their views especially since this is the first report.

Are we happy that DfE are happy with the way we are reporting?

*In response, Richmond are being held up as the example of how to do reporting but we have not had feedback*

How confident are you that you can deliver the identified SRBs by February 2024?

*In response, this is achievable*

If cost of refurbishment is greater than first anticipated where is the contingency in the plan?

*When the capital programme was put together it presumed 50:50 split between refurbishment and new build. Expressions of interest initially indicated a higher percentage were refurbishment, but this is not the case now the feasibility work has been completed. The capital programme may have to be reviewed once full costs are known.*

Schools Forum members agreed that the report provided insufficient detail on the individual capital schemes (particularly SRBs) and their relative status of deliverability against the agreed timescale. In order to provide appropriate oversight, support and challenge, School's Forum requested that this be included in future reports.

#### **ACTION: Members requested:**

- **List of SRB's and which agreed**
- **Impact of move on timeline**
- **Highest risk area**

How are you approaching the secondary phase?

*In response, schemes for the Secondary Phase combine SRB expansion and Alternative Provision. Under School Organisation, an AP facility in a mainstream school would also be designated as a "unit", the same as a SRB.*

One member reported he has a school, which expressed an interest in having an SRB, that has not had a response.

*In response, Officers will follow up*

*KPIs – it was noted in discussion regarding KPIs that EHCP demand had risen even further – As we are only in the first phase of the programme with capital schemes not yet on stream or School and Community Teams fully operational, the impact on demand for EHCPs is yet to be felt as was anticipated and forecast. **Work stream 3 School Led Alternative Provision** (slides circulated in the meeting)*

A presentation was given on the delivery of Work Stream 3 as part of a deep dive into this element of the LFI Programme.

Observations from Schools Forum members following presentation:

- The Programme is focussed exclusively on secondary, when there is substantial need within primary and can only access with permanent exclusion.

*The new AP provision is targeted at secondary schools as the data on permanent exclusions and cohorts within existing AP shows significant pressure in this age range.*

*The AP in secondary mirrors the SEMH SRB provision in primary, insofar that it is schools run unit provision for children who would be at risk of exclusion. Substantial investment into primary provision is included within the overall programme.*

- It was noted that the way in which NCC has undertaken the engagement with schools in the development of this area of the programme had been very strong and thanks was extended to NCC for the way it has approached this with schools from the outset.
- Broad support for the ambitions of the workstream but since we have known these issues for years, why has this taken so long?

*Thinking regarding a “responsibility based” approach to AP had started in 2017/18 but there have been wider factors in the system that have impacted on moving towards this approach, (i.e. the rebrokering of Norfolk’s principal AP provision, Covid 19).*

A level of caution was expressed regarding the “Responsibility based” approach to AP based on existing experiences of working with Cambridgeshire who have operated in this way for many years. Adrian Ball offered to lend his experiences of the Cambridgeshire system with Norfolk officers.

**Action:** Nicki Rider to follow up Adrian’s offer with Andy Tovell with a view to speaking in the new term.

**Comments:**

Discussion point: zero exclusion authority - early support does not exist in Cambridgeshire worried that this will happen here. Need to think carefully about what terminology we use and how it can be interpreted.

**DSG Management Plan**

The reason for the circulation of these slides is to give Forum the most recent information. The initial reset work utilising the 2022-23 outturn and other known updates increase result in a small increase per annum throughout the plan but do not change the year when a surplus is anticipated. However, Officers advised that further work is underway to review all the assumptions and to consider any additional mitigations, which will be reported to the Executive Board in September ahead of submission of the second Tri-annual report to the DfE

**Comments:**

Concern that situation always underestimated – we need a genuinely worst case scenario.

Built on certain assumptions so important Forum know what key assumptions are.

*In response, Officers accepted this point and will share further details.*

The spend has always been increasing for years, and now a further increase from 6 months ago - so a confidence issue for Members.

*In response, Officers accepted the point. This modelling is far more complex than we have ever done before and there is an element of testing those assumptions and we need to keep working on it.*

**Action: NCC will share more detail with Schools Forum in future.**

#### **4. Early Years Funding from September**

Information was received from DfE which gave the Norfolk allocations and clarified an expectation that the additional Early Years Supplementary Grant was expected to be ported through to providers in full as part of the base rate. The options discussed in the circulated paper were therefore not discussed.

The LA is not required to consult with Schools Forum but authorities are encouraged to engage with their early years providers about the funding amounts from September. This will be brought back to the September meeting for an update.

#### **Comments:**

Nothing significant happening to 3 & 4 year old funding.

*In response, Officers did expect the bulk of the uplift to be for 2 year olds in line with the budget announcement.*

#### **5. Schools Balances and projections (matters arising)**

At the Forum meeting in May Forum members requested further information in respect of the deficits shown, the 'cluster' balance and projections of schools' balances for the next two years. It was confirmed the 'cluster' balance is a group of schools in the Acle area that have put money together on a cost centre – it is not an SEN cluster.

#### **Cluster' Comments:**

Who governs 'that budget? What about if it increases?

*In response, Governors across the schools.*

#### **Licensed deficits**

These are not licensed deficits but we have included information about how that process works, they are not accepted as a budget but can be entered on the system.

#### **Comments:**

What about if it increases and the school becomes an academy – we can be in danger of paying the bill.

#### **Projections of schools' balances for next two years**

Included in a worst case scenario for income and expenditure and will review after revision 1 visits with consideration of action required.

#### **Comments:**

If a school keeps running a deficit in year 3 they will have to act.

*In response, Officers think it is a serious issue before year 3 and the projections on maintained schools budgets are really worrying and do think this is a bigger problem currently and we don't have clarity from the DfE currently on how the system can resolve that.*

It is the uncertainty; we don't know what is coming in.

On schools that are having to make staffing adjustments in past has been a provision if you can show this is because of funding complications, not clear who picks the costs up. Interesting to know how the redundancy position fits and who picks up the costs in maintained schools.

**Action: NCC we will seek to clarify regarding redundancy costs for maintained schools**

## **6. Dedicated Schools Grant Consultation Preparation**

### **a) Autumn Consultation Approach**

This item is an attempt to get ahead on what we consult on and to get a steer on what should be worked up over the summer so that we can launch the consultation as early as possible.

Response has been low in the past and we need to be clear that we need that response in order to make decisions. The one we need most guidance on is gains and capping.

#### **Comments:**

Response rate has been very low and there is a lot going on at the moment if you are trying to communicate with schools so communication handling is really important including on governing boards.

That notion of it being a Schools Forum consultation so communication really important.

Question about clarity about procedure of what goes into consultation.

*In response, Officers confirmed that the authority makes recommendations and Schools Forum then has the decision regarding what to consult on*

*This is then reversed for decisions on outcome of consultation.*

#### **Early Years**

Officers considered around what we should consult on in relation to early years.

Most significant one is around teachers pay and pension grants.

Should this be part of consultation?

#### **Comments:**

Can we have more information in September, analysis of costs and potential implications.

*In response, we can model different areas of how we distribute it.*

Qualifications – would question whether the qualifications currently deemed equivalent are actually the same level; need more information in September to be able to discuss.

Supplements – there hasn't been any consensus to change the approach in previous consultations so there is no point in revisiting as we are not expecting a significant change in 3- and 4-year-old rates.

**It was agreed to consult on all points apart from supplements.**

#### **Special School**

Forum were advised that special schools had request further review of two areas of funding; residential and GCSE provision.

The paper provides further details on these areas and asks Forum to provide comments that will be fed back to the working group.

Any additional funding would have an adverse impact on the LFI plan and so one question is whether any amendments are a redistribution or an increase.

Last time the authority only consulted with Special Schools, should this now be open to all given the potential impact?

#### **Comments:**

The Chair highlighted that the two Special Schools representatives were not present and not on the funding review group. He said they should be included in the discussions on what should be consulted on.

Concern that the group is not representative of NASSH.

*In response, Officers advised that all groups are represented.*

Concern raised about the potential impact



**It was agreed any proposed changes need to go to consultation with all schools if there is any additional funding ask**

### **Gains and Capping**

This was consulted on last year with no clear steer to change. -The main issue for the last two years relates to sparsity and small, rural schools. Officers briefly reminded of the options. It was confirmed that the authority will make the final decision but ask Forum for a steer.

#### **Comments:**

Schools Forum feel they have been blamed in the past for the authority's decision. *In response, Officers advised that the LA does not feel it is appropriate to make a significant change to the schools funding formula without a clear steer from Schools Forum given that any amendment could have a significant impact upon a wide range of schools.*

Can you model impact of taking out?

*In response, Officers confirmed this detail was shown last year at a school level and will be part of any consultation paper.*

**It was agreed that Gains and Capping needs to be part of consultation**

### **Falling Rolls**

There is a proposal for School Forum to consider introducing a Falling Roll Fund that will support schools that may be vulnerable where there is significant decline, to protect school places where the Local Authority expect growth to return and will need to utilise those establishments in the future. The funding guidance will set out a possible formulaic approach to the funds introduction that will be transparent for all stakeholders. Paul Harker talked through the data.

#### **Comments:**

That pupil planning process being accurate is key to which schools get this.

Need transparency on how any funding decision is worked out.

Need to be made clear that this is part of the formula.

*In response, Officers are reviewing our place planning processes all the time. NCC are within our 1% threshold for both primary and secondary forecasting.*

**Agreed needs to be part of consultation.**

**Forum noted Fair funding - Block Transfer and De-delegation of Audits to both be part of a consultation**

### **7. Notional SEN**

Clarification provided that funding is notional, but links with access to Element 3 funding.

The LA are considering whether Norfolk should make a change now given the indication from the Government as to the level expected in a hard funding formula, and the steer from the DfE that Safety Valve authorities are expected to implement their guidance. Key point - we could be facing a cliff edge if the Government moves to a hard formula, so should we move now in stages?

The intention is to go out at same time as main funding consultation.

#### **Comments:**

Needs to be alongside the other consultations as ties into main Schools budget. The discussion reflected that there was a need for transparency and for clarity as to the

impact upon schools, meaning that messaging to schools is vital to enable them to understand proposals and implications.

**Agreed needs to go to consultation to consider option on page 68 of report – phased increase in coming years.**

Forum suggested the following options:

All in one go

Or not at all

Suggestion of extending an extra year to allow Local 1<sup>st</sup> Inclusion to have an impact but have the end point the same.

**8. Catering**

Simon Paylor went through the options in papers and said the purpose is to present the risks, challenges and options available and said the LA needed Forum to give a steer on the way forward.

The authority want to establish a schools catering commissioning group to make some key decisions.

There has been some interest from providers. It is possible that a group contract could be secured.

Two options available:

- Competitive procurement
- NCC assist schools to procure their own catering services – this becomes a default option in the event of failure of the first option.

In this instance, Norse have stated to the LA that they would not let schools go without provision even past the end of March 24 to mitigate the risk of disrupted services. In practice, this would mean that individual schools would need to make interim arrangements with Norse to continue service on their terms.

**Comments:**

The Chair summed up saying therefore the two options are a group contract or schools procuring their own contract.

There was the opinion that large schools or schools part of a group would do better organising their own contract. Stand alone schools would not find this so easy.

*In response, Schools Forum can play a role in promoting engagement.*

Certain timelines that are dictated by the process: if you want to open up opportunities for people to think about then their needs to be some principles for people that potentially want to tender and a roll in roll out programme.

**Chair summed up that the view was in the first instance the authority would look into a group contact.**

Catering Commissioning Group – the following people volunteered:

Martin White

Glyn Hambling

Tom Snowdon

Georgie Howell

The following people's names were put forward by the Chair:

Ashley Best-White

Sarah Shirras

Diocese of Norwich representative

**Action: The initial meeting will be arranged to take place before the end of term.**

**9. DfE Risk Protection Arrangement**

RPA are changing the offer relating to maintained schools.

All maintained schools at the moment take up the NCC offer.  
Question is do the LA encourage schools to go one way or the other?

Government sees it long term as the place for schools to go. The RPA scheme is effectively underwritten by central Government, but are expected to increase the price per pupil annually as they have done to date.

The LA are looking through the options. The authority has always advocated the NCC option but feel the recent changes are worth looking at.

The LA presume Forum want us to continue looking at this and then come back with a LA view.

**It was agreed that officers continuing investigating.**

#### **10. Future Plan**

**Add Catering for September and November**

**Add RPA for September**

#### **11. Date of next meeting**

29 September 09:00 – 12:30 Cranworth Room County Hall

The meeting ended at 12:30

# Schools Forum

Item No. 3

<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Local First Inclusion</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>29 September 2023</b>

## Executive summary

This is the third report to Schools Forum on the Local First Inclusion programme and occurs two weeks on from our submission to the DfE of the second Tri-Annual Report (15<sup>th</sup> September 2023). The Tri-Annual report was signed off by the Local First Inclusion Executive Board (14<sup>th</sup> September 2023) and, at the request of the DfE, had a particular focus on education health & care plans (EHCP) and development of new specialist provision.

However, the report also set out the initial re-modelling work that was shared with Schools Forum in the July meeting and confirmed to the DfE that a full re-modelling of the DSG High Needs Block would take place during the autumn term, alongside the fair funding consultation process. The results of which would be shared with the Schools Forum prior to submission to the DfE within the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tri-Annual Report (15<sup>th</sup> December 2023).

Reflecting discussion at the LFI Executive Board this month the report to Schools Forum provides extracts from the submitted Tri-Annual report alongside indicative timescales for the development of specialist resources bases (SRB), new special schools and information regarding increases needed to the SRB revenue model.

[note there will be a presentation during the Schools Forum meeting to ensure that all schools, those already agreed through formal consultation stage and those that are pending that process, are highlighted and individual timelines illustrated].

### **Schools Forum are asked to:**

1. Note progress within the programme overall with reference to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tri-Annual Report to the DfE
2. Provide comment, support and challenge regarding the sub-set of KPI's to be used for regular tracking and reporting within Schools Forum (noting that updated actuals are pending for the majority of categories and will be updated as part of the DSG High Needs Block re-modelling)
3. Provide comment, support and challenge regarding the SRB revenue funding changes

## 1. Introduction

This is the third report to Schools Forum on the Local First Inclusion programme and occurs two weeks on from our submission to the DfE of the second Tri-Annual Report (15<sup>th</sup> September 2023). The Tri-Annual report was signed off by the Local First Inclusion Executive Board (14<sup>th</sup> September 2023) and, at the request of the DfE, had a particular focus on education health & care plans (EHCP) and development of new specialist provision.

However, the report also set out the initial re-modelling work that was shared with Schools Forum in the July meeting and confirmed to the DfE that a full re-modelling of the DSG High Needs Block would take place during the autumn term, alongside the fair funding consultation process. The results of which would be shared with the Schools Forum prior to submission to the DfE within the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tri-Annual Report (15<sup>th</sup> December 2023).

Therefore, the report today has three main elements:

- **Extracts from the September Tri-Annual report to the DfE setting out progress across the Local First Inclusion Programme and highlighting risks and mitigations**
- **A focus on specialist resources bases, setting out the current timescales for the primary bases and a revised approach to revenue funding for all current and future SRBs**
- **Confirmation of the parallel process of fair funding consultation alongside the full re-modelling of the DSG High Needs Block prior to reporting to DfE within 3<sup>rd</sup> Tri-Annual Report (December 2023)**

## **2. Governance update / Forward Plan**

The Local First Inclusion Programme will be reported to all Schools Forum meetings over the six-year period of the programme, up to March 2029, and there will be a flow of information between Schools Forum and the Local First Inclusion Executive Board to ensure regular scrutiny, support and challenge.

In addition, Norfolk County Council will provide oversight to the programme via the Committee structure. A report on Local First Inclusion has already been provided to NCC Cabinet (March 2023), NCC Scrutiny Committee (May 2023) and NCC People & Communities Select Committee (September 2023). It has been agreed that Scrutiny will receive an annual report and prior to this there will be bi-annual reporting to the NCC People & Communities Committee.

The reporting schedule to the DfE each year throughout the six-year period is on a Tri-Annual basis each June, September and December.

Schools Forum provides six representatives to the LFI Executive Board, and a draft of the Tri-Annual Report was provided in advance of the meeting and, with suggested amendments, agreed. The LFI Executive Board, in addition to senior managers across NCC, also has representation from the Children & Young People Strategic Alliance and, in the autumn, will also include representatives from the Norfolk Learning Board / Educate Norfolk. A copy of the submitted report to the DfE, on 15<sup>th</sup> September, was then provided to all Board Members.

## **3. Tri-annual Reporting and KPIs**

Tri-annual reporting to the DfE will take place each June, September and December throughout the six year Local First Inclusion (LFI) programme and is set out within a standard template provided by the DfE. The template focusses on the 9 Conditions

within the Funding Agreement, rather than the LFI 5 Workstreams, and a summary of progress and next steps alongside an overall rag rating is provided.

Within the 1st Tri-Annual report we set out 7 Green and 2 Ambers within the Rag Rating, with Ambers related to projects relating to School Led Alternative Provision and to the Specialist Resource Base developments. Below is the rag rating set out within 2<sup>nd</sup> Tri-Annual report,

	Green	Amber	Red
C. 1	Green		
C. 2	Green		
C. 3	Green		
C. 4	Green		
C. 5	Green		
C. 6	Green		
C. 7	Green		
C. 8	Green		
C. 9		Amber	
<b>Programme</b>		Amber	

As can be see the Amber status for SRB remains (Condition 9.), however, the Condition related to Alternative Provision (Condition 5.) has been changed to Green to reflect the good progress made in the summer term, through the engagement of secondary school leaders in particular. The overall programme rating of Amber reflects the outcome of the initial re-modelling work that has highlighted changes to the forecast balanced budget in year 6 of the programme, currently attributed to the SRB projects.

To assist Schools Forum with ongoing information about progress of the overall LFI programme and knowledge of our reporting to the DfE below are key extracts from the first Tri-Annual Report:

## Norfolk Safety Valve Tri-annual Monitoring Report within NCC's Local First Inclusion Programme

September 2023

# Local First Inclusion

DfE Tri-annual report requirement elements	'Executive Summary'																																												
<p><u>Content</u></p> <p>Is the LA still on track to meet the deficit control and reduction targets as set out in the agreement? Please demonstrate evidence of your answer.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="301 869 751 1361"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Green</th> <th>Amber</th> <th>Red</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>C. 1</td> <td>Green</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>C. 2</td> <td>Green</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>C. 3</td> <td>Green</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>C. 4</td> <td>Green</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>C. 5</td> <td>Green</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>C. 6</td> <td>Green</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>C. 7</td> <td>Green</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>C. 8</td> <td>Green</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>C. 9</td> <td></td> <td>Amber</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Programme</td> <td></td> <td>Amber</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Green	Amber	Red	C. 1	Green			C. 2	Green			C. 3	Green			C. 4	Green			C. 5	Green			C. 6	Green			C. 7	Green			C. 8	Green			C. 9		Amber		Programme		Amber		<p>We remain confident that at the end of the 6 year programme we will have achieved the reduction. However, as signalled within the June monitoring report, there have been delays to aspects of the development of specialist resource bases and we have been carrying out re-modelling work within the DSG recovery plan to determine the impact within the short, medium and long term of the overall programme.</p> <p>The outturn for the overall DSG (FY2022/23) was an overspend of £19.9m against a deficit within our submitted plan of £19.637m. We believe this is within an acceptable 'margin of error' for the financial year 22/23; noting that, during this time, the benefits that will flow from the Local First Inclusion programme were not in place.</p> <p>In July this year we provided a report to the Schools Forum regarding this part of the programme and the outcome of initial re-modelling of the associated part of the DSG recovery plan. A copy of this is provided within Appendix 3.</p> <p>We will be carrying out a full re-modelling of the DSG recovery plan during the autumn term and will provide a full update within the December monitoring report to the DfE. This work will be carried out in parallel with the annual fair funding consultation process with Norfolk schools (including disapplication process for the 1.5%</p>
	Green	Amber	Red																																										
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Programme		Amber																																											
	<p>transfer between Schools Block and High Needs Block modelled within our DSG recovery plan) and will take account of the impact of teacher's pay award and progress across our Local First Inclusion programme.</p> <p>Within Appendix 1 of this report we have set out the DSG update work carried out to date and key messages to schools forum in July stating that:</p> <p>The additional deficit would be repaid in 2029/30 presuming similar income &amp; expenditure that year.</p> <p>Removal of the block transfer may extend this repayment, but the HNB would still be projected to deliver ongoing surpluses from 2028/29</p> <p>However, until we have concluded the full remodelling exercise across the 5 workstreams and in excess of 50 projects this high level assumption must be treated with caution. We believe that risks to the programme overall at this stage do not require a Red Rag status and that Amber is correct until we conclude this next stage of the programme.</p>																																												

<p>What progress has been made towards implementing the conditions set in the agreement, and are the timelines set in your detailed proposals still on track?</p> <p>See Appendix 2. KPI Update</p>	<p>As above, progress has been made in line with the agreement with the exception of elements of the specialist resource base project. However, as set out below in this summary and within Condition 9. we have now made good progress within our amended timeline for this part of our programme of work.</p> <p>Of particular note is the good progress made in establishing the new School &amp; Community Teams (set out below in Condition 4.) Recruitment to the teams was successful with over 80 new staff recruited and with induction complete the county-wide roll-out of the new teams starts with effect from 4<sup>th</sup> September.</p>
<p>What are the current risks to implementation, and how are you mitigating these?</p>	<p>In our final safety valve submission we set out a high level risk analysis alongside mitigations and these have not changed significantly as we have moved out of 'initiation' stage and into 'implementation' stage. Within our programme management framework we have ensured that risks are considered throughout the stages of our work, we have been consistent in this as we have moved from defining the programme and into managing the workstreams and delivering the capability. We are now at the initial stages of realising the benefits, within individual projects, and our KPI tracking will be used to inform the rate of benefit realisation.</p> <p>As set out in the June monitoring report, due to the size and complexity of the programme we have established a full risk log across the 5 workstreams and 80 projects with a total number of risks identified and mitigations set out for</p>

<p>Note:</p> <p>in Condition 9. we set out that, despite the welcome news about our successful special school capital bids, the DfE delay to the announcement does create a risk, set out here for ease of reference: <i>'...This does create a risk regarding the September 2026 opening dates and related reduction on the use of independent specialist provision. Therefore, we would ask that support is provided to ensure the optimum join up between DfE safety valve and capital teams alongside DfE Regional Office to ensure that all efforts are combined, with the LA, to achieve September 2026 opening dates for both schools....'</i></p>	<p>over 170 separate risk lines. Monitoring of these risks is overseen by a dedicated Programme Manager with reporting to both a monthly Delivery Group and the half-termly Executive Board.</p> <p>Within the June monitoring report we also set out delay to aspects of our specialist resource base developments and set out, at a high level, the likely implications of this and associated mitigations. An update on new provision developments is included within Condition 9 in this monitoring report.</p> <p>In July this year we provided a report to the Schools Forum regarding this part of the programme and the outcome of initial re-modelling of the associated part of the DSG recovery plan. A copy is provided within Appendix 3.</p>
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<p>Have there been any unforeseen difficulties or setbacks in implementing the agreement? How have you mitigated these?</p>	<p>Within the DfE response to Norfolk's June monitoring report submission there was a request for two specific updates within the September monitoring report, in relation to the development of new provision and education, health and care plan numbers.</p> <p><b>EHCP</b></p> <p>We continue to experience high referral rates for EHCP, in line with the ongoing trend nationally:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="724 1729 1286 1805"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>EHCP 2022</th> <th>SEN SUPPORT 2022</th> <th>EHCP 2023</th> <th>SEN SUPPORT 2023</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Norfolk</td> <td>4.1%</td> <td>13.6%</td> <td>4.7%</td> <td>13.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>National</td> <td>4.0%</td> <td>12.6%</td> <td>4.3%</td> <td>13.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>As mainstream schools have not yet experienced the full benefits that will come within the Local First Inclusion programme this is not unexpected. However, in addition to our initial plans to 'turn the tap off' for EHCP referrals we are currently planning a further workstream within the programme to establish a new 'front door' for EHCP to ensure that we can fast-track the benefits of LFI to schools and families.</p>		EHCP 2022	SEN SUPPORT 2022	EHCP 2023	SEN SUPPORT 2023	Norfolk	4.1%	13.6%	4.7%	13.9%	National	4.0%	12.6%	4.3%	13.0%
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	<p><b>New Provision</b></p> <p>Since the June monitoring report good progress has been made within the statutory consultation process for establishing specialist resource bases (SRB) with 3 new SRB's agreed by the Regional Director's Office and with 6 new SRB's agreed locally within the Executive Director of Children's Services delegated authority. These will now progress within their different capital timelines with the first new SRB opening in February 2024.</p> <p>Norfolk has also received confirmation of the final decision regarding Free School Capital funding for the two new special schools set out in our initial safety valve</p>
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	<p>submission. Whilst this is welcome news the delay to national announcements does add potential risk to this part of the programme.</p> <p>More detail on both of these elements is set out, respectively, within Condition 2. for EHCP and within Condition 9. for Capital Developments.</p>
<u>Additional Information</u>	
Any relevant Schools Forum papers.	<p>Copy of July report to Schools Forum attached at Appendix 3.</p> <p>Forward Plan agreed with Schools Forum to receive update reports at all meetings, copy within Appendix 4.</p>
Details of any substantial changes to the senior staff at the LA responsible for implementing your agreement.	<p>The only change since the June 2023 monitoring report was the appointment of Tom McCabe to the position of Chief Executive Officer Norfolk County Council. Noting that Tom McCabe previously held the post title of 'Head of Paid Service'.</p>
<p>In addition, we are keen to be able to increase our reporting on the positive impacts of Safety Valve agreements on local areas, and share learning where appropriate. One area we wish to explore in more detail is how each LA has responded to being involved in the Safety Valve programme by making improvements to its service delivery for children, young people, and their families. We ask therefore that you consider the positive impacts your DSG management plan is having on the experiences for C&amp;YP, and ways in which your future monitoring reports could share these insights. If you could provide us with some information with future monitoring reports, such as an example case study, piece of narrative or contribution from your Parents Carer Form, that would be very helpful.</p>	<p>Within the initial, June, monitoring report we stated that <i>'...we will aim to include case study and engagement feedback information from parent/carers, young people and professionals and would anticipate being able to attribute the impact of the Local First Inclusion programme to improved outcomes for C&amp;YP and their families by the start of Spring Term 2024.'</i></p> <p>Since then we have shared the latest Richmond upon Thames safety valve monitoring reporting with members of Norfolk's Local First Inclusion Executive Board and it has been agreed that we will adopt this exemplar for case study information with effect from our December monitoring report. We anticipate that this is likely to be based, initially, on the work of our new School &amp; Community Teams.</p>

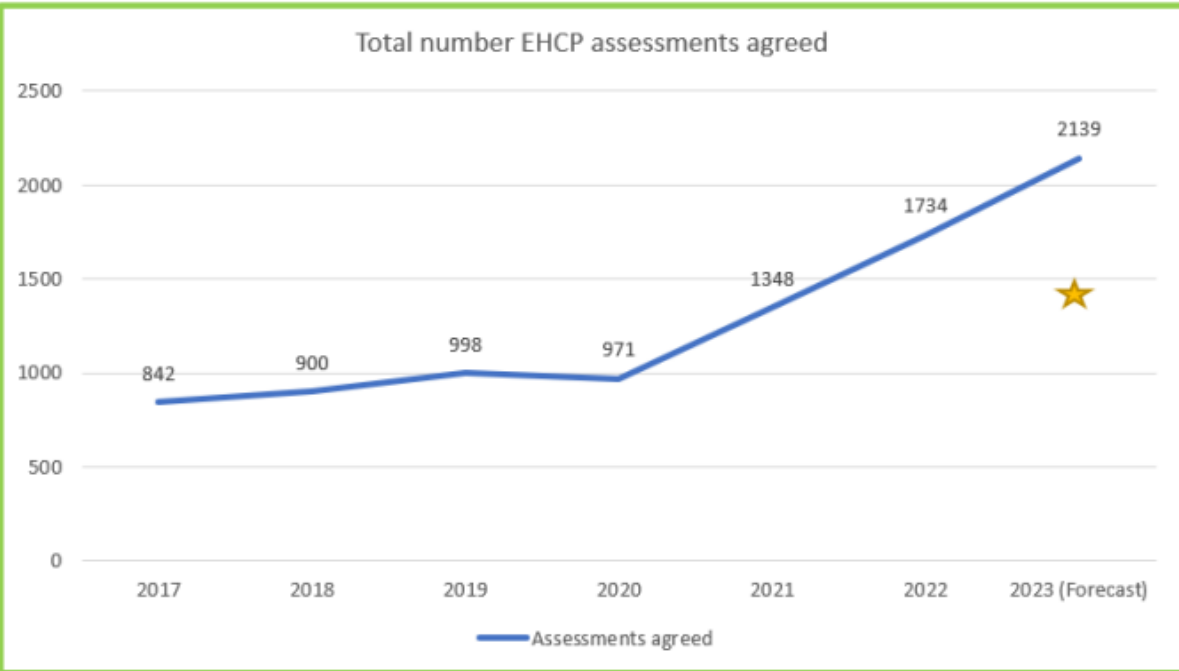
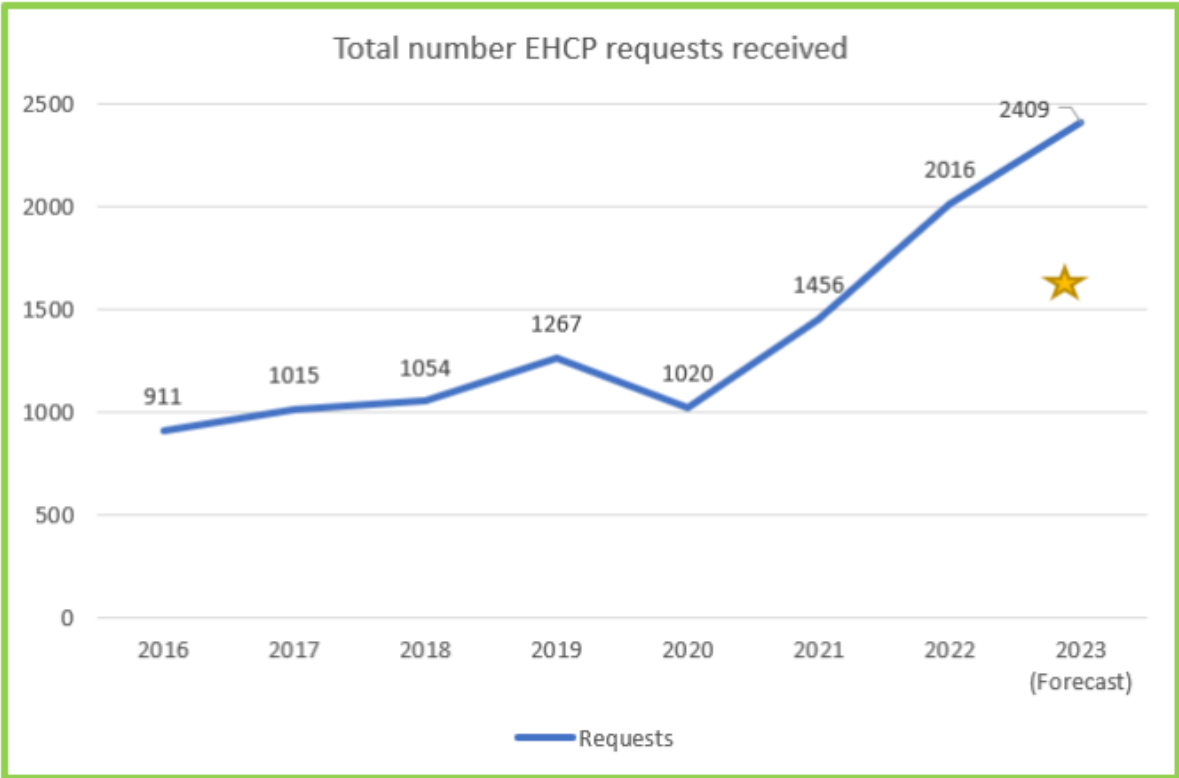
Safety Valve Monitoring template

Date Submitted	15 September 2023
Signed off by S151 Officer	Signed off by Director of Children's Services
	
Harvey Bullen, Director of Strategic Finance (Section 151 Officer)	Sara Tough, Executive Director Children's Services

## Focus on Condition 2. EHCP and Condition 9. New Provision

The Tri-annual report set out the following progress, issues and next steps within these conditions at the request of the Dfe. [note: Condition 2. does not currently relate to a stand-alone workstream but a project is being developed as an inter-dependent workstream to LFI with a working title of 'EHCP Front Door'. Condition 9. relates directly to Workstream 5. within the LFI programme]:

Agreement Condition	Assurance Level																																									
	Q1	Q2	Q3																																							
Condition 2: Improve the systems and processes for annual reviews	RAG	RAG	RAG																																							
<p>Note: whilst this condition relates to the annual reviews of EHCP's we will use this section of the monitoring report to also provide an update on total number of EHCP's and referral rates in future, ensuring that a full picture of EHCP within Local First Inclusion is provided.</p> <p><b>EHCP</b></p> <p>We continue to experience high referral rates for EHCP, in line with the ongoing trend nationally:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>EHCP 2022</th> <th>SEN SUPPORT 2022</th> <th>EHCP 2023</th> <th>SEN SUPPORT 2023</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Norfolk</td> <td>4.1%</td> <td>13.6%</td> <td>4.7%</td> <td>13.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>National</td> <td>4.0%</td> <td>12.6%</td> <td>4.3%</td> <td>13.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>As mainstream schools have not yet experienced the full benefits that will come within the Local First Inclusion programme this is not unexpected. However, in addition to our initial plans to 'turn the tap off' for EHCP referrals we are currently planning a further workstream within the programme to establish a new 'front door' for EHCP to ensure that we can fast-track the benefits of LFI to schools and families.</p> <p><b><u>EHCP Total numbers, referrals and trends</u></b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2"></th> <th colspan="4">Financial years</th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="2"></th> <th>2023/24</th> <th>2024/25</th> <th>2025/26</th> <th>2026/27</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>LFI EHCP Targets/Assumptions:</td> <td></td> <td>8611</td> <td>8908</td> <td>9040</td> <td>8742</td> </tr> <tr> <td>EHCP ACTUAL Apr 2024:</td> <td></td> <td>TBA</td> <td>TBA</td> <td>TBA</td> <td>TBA</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Norfolk's SEN2 return in 2023 confirmed the total number of EHCP's, 'active on census day', as 8,735. This compared to 8,671 in the previous year.</p> <p>However, this modest increase in total active caseload, prepared as a 'snap-shot' for the return, should be seen in the context of total referrals, current total active cases and cease to maintains:</p> <p>Total referrals in 2022 calendar = 2,016</p> <p>Total referrals in 2023 3<sup>RD</sup> Quarter + Forecast = 2,409 (1,606 to date)</p> <p>Total new EHCP's issued 2023 calendar year to end August = 1,661 (1,093 in 2022)</p> <p>Total EHCP cease to maintain within SEN2 2023 = 1,080</p> <p>Total EHCP's active end of August 2023 = 10,194</p>					EHCP 2022	SEN SUPPORT 2022	EHCP 2023	SEN SUPPORT 2023	Norfolk	4.1%	13.6%	4.7%	13.9%	National	4.0%	12.6%	4.3%	13.0%			Financial years						2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	LFI EHCP Targets/Assumptions:		8611	8908	9040	8742	EHCP ACTUAL Apr 2024:		TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
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### EHCP Annual Review numbers and trends

The Annual Review 'backlog' continues to operate around 31% overdue, as reported within the June monitoring report, in comparison to a 40% backlog prior to our 'written statement of action' improvement programme.

### EHCP Mitigation

EHCP 'levels' in Norfolk, in relation to total number and referral rates, do not directly provide a risk to the Local First Inclusion programme. The key reasons for our historic overspend are related to the reliance on high-cost independent sector provision and rates of permanent exclusion, not EHCP numbers. We provided evidence within our safety-valve submission that overall EHCP numbers in the context of mainstream 'vs' special were not different to national comparison at the time, instead it was the ratio of special in independent places rather than state-funded places.

For this reason the ongoing rise in EHCP referrals is not being flagged as a significant risk within the programme.

However, the reason that we are taking mitigation activity is to reduce unnecessary referrals and to cease to maintain EHCP's that are not required, primarily, to reduce caseload of individual EHCP Co-Ordinators.

The benefit of reducing EHCP caseload is that it will result in higher levels of 'quality' casework with families and schools and by extension reduce parental anxiety regarding changes to provision.

In plain English, casework time spent on targeted work with families where changes to provision type will benefit both the child and contribute to HNB and SEN Transport budget savings is the priority.

We do not plan to resource casework teams to the level that would enable this within an overall EHCP number of 10,000+ as we believe this is not appropriate. We believe that the vast majority of children with SEND can have their needs met appropriately at SEN Support. To enable this we have made changes to our funding and provision models in Norfolk to ensure that EHCP is only 'required' for attending special school. Access to Element 3 funding no longer requires EHCP, Specialist Resource Base admissions do not require EHCP, access to support teams including the new School & Community Teams do not require EHCP.

Our key mitigation is to ensure that these facts are known by all families and professionals in Norfolk to ensure that unnecessary referrals for EHCP are not made and, ultimately, that families have confidence in the provision available within their local school through a combined effort of MAT, School and LA with our partners in the ICB and with the support of the Parent Carer Forum.



Agreement Condition	Assurance Level		
Condition 9:  Implement Phase two of the LA's special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) Sufficiency Capital Programme, which centres around capacity in special schools and specialist resource bases (SRB) and the construction of two new special schools	Q1	Q2	Q3
	RAG	RAG	RAG

**NOTE RAG STATUS:** this element is currently RAG Rated **AMBER** due to the change to opening date for first wave of Specialist Resource Bases. Red RAG rating is not considered appropriate due to the mitigations that are in place and we will continue to monitor this closely ahead of December reporting and overall DSG refresh.

Progress Update:

**New Provision**

Since the June monitoring report good progress has been made within the statutory consultation process for establishing specialist resource bases (SRB) with 3 new SRB's agreed by the Regional Director's Office and with 6 new SRB's agreed locally within the Executive Director of Children's Services delegated authority. These will now progress within their different capital timelines with the first new SRB opening in February 2024.

Norfolk has also received confirmation of the final decision regarding Free School Capital funding for the two new special schools set out in our initial safety valve submission. Whilst this is welcome news the delay to national announcements does add potential risk to this part of the programme.

Specialist Resource Bases

The tables below summarise the status of the SRBs currently being developed, illustrating opening dates and total capacity:

Phase 1 SRB

SRB Type	First cohort	Final cohort	Phase	School	Sept 2023	Jan 2024	Apr 2024	Sept 2024	Apr 2025	Sept 2025
ASD	18	26	KS 1	Sprowston Infant			8			
ASD	10	16	Primary	Greyfriars						10
ASD	10	20	KS 3/4	Stalham High	10	10				
ASD	10	25	KS 3/4	Acle Academy					10	
ASD	10	25	KS 3/5	Alderman Peel High					10	
SEMH	8	16	Primary	Watton Infant & Junior				8	8	
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>138</b>			<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>10</b>

Phase 2 SRB

SRB Type	Final cohort	School	Opening Date
<i>school organisation statutory process complete</i>			
SLCN	10	Necton Primary	Sep 25
SEMH	16	Reffley Academy	Apr 24
SEMH	16	St Williams Primary	Sep 25
Complex	8	Lionwood Infant	Feb 24
Complex	8	Lionwood Junior	Feb 24
Complex	16	Redcastle Family School	Sep 24
Complex	8	Falcon Junior	Jan 25
Complex	16	Sprowston Junior	Sep 25
Complex	16	Holly Meadows School	Sep 25
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>		

### Special Schools

In August the DfE announced that Norfolk had been successful in securing investment to build two more special schools. One of the new schools will be for 170 complex needs places in the Great Yarmouth area and one of the new schools will be for 100 ASD places in the Downham Market area. In September we will be hosting an information event for interested Multi-Academy Trust's as part of the 'competition' for DfE to determine the successful sponsor to operate each school. Information regarding these announcements can be found within Norfolk's SEND Local Offer website here [New special schools in Norfolk - Norfolk County Council](#)

These capital developments are key to our overall Local First Inclusion programme and the additional places that they will provide are one of the main aspects of

mitigation to avoid future use of high cost independent sector placements.

Within our safety valve submission, and in line with the original timeline for capital applications, we had modelled the first cohorts starting in these new schools from September 2026.

However, due to the delay to national announcements the revised timeline from the DfE for the next stage of these capital developments is as follows:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>23 August 2023</b>	<b>Application window opens.</b>
<b>23 August 2023</b>	<b>Mandatory pre-registration opens.</b>
<b>22 September 2023</b>	<b>Mandatory pre-registration closes</b>
<b>3 November 2023</b>	<b>Application window closes at midday.</b>
<b>6 November – 1 December 2023</b>	<b>We will assess the applications.</b>
<b>8 - 31 January 2023</b>	<b>Interviews will take place.</b>
<b>March 2024</b>	<b>Announcement</b>

This does create a risk regarding the September 2026 opening dates and related reduction on the use of independent specialist provision. Therefore, we would ask that support is provided to ensure the optimum join up between DfE safety valve and capital teams alongside DfE Regional Office to ensure that all efforts are combined, with the LA, to achieve September 2026 opening dates for both schools.

In addition to planning for the new special schools we continue to oversee the growth of the special schools that were created with a combination of NCC and DfE capital funding from our SEND & AP Transformation programme (2019-2022):

- Duke of Lancaster (ASD special school) has maintained steady growth, achieving Year 2 planned growth and intake for Year 3 of 95 is almost at target of attaining full capacity of 100 during 2023/24 academic year.
- Bure Park Specialist Academy (Social Emotional & Mental Health difficulties special school) has a slightly longer growth plan agreed from 60 to 80 in the 2023/24 academic year and is currently on target. The school will need to fill the primary teacher vacancy to enable the growth plan to be achieved.
- The second growth plan cohort started this month as planned at The Bridge Easton (170 place Complex Needs school), which is the third new special school.


#### **4. Specialist Resource Base Revenue Funding**

There is a need to adopt a new approach to the arrangements for Specialist Resource Base revenue funding to ensure that historic/current SRBs are not 'under-funded' in comparison to the new SRBs being developed. This is an issue that has been flagged by schools over the past few months as the impact of rises in operating costs, through increased staffing costs primarily, risks current host schools registering deficit budgets.


A summary of the issue and a proposed way forward was presented to the Local First Inclusion Executive Board (September meeting), and, prior to implementation of the recommended approach, we wanted to ensure that Schools Forum members were made aware.

Below are extracts from the presentation to Executive Board:

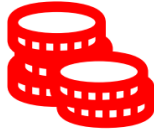
### Current challenges = risks to manage now...



**SRB budgets are fixed with no inflation**



**Unbudgeted rolling annual pay rises for 162 FTE current staff**



**Multiple SRB schools seeking clarification over funding uplift**

### SRB Budget principles to support a sustainably funded high needs system.....

High Needs funding operational guidance compliant

+

Top of scale spinal points per post + oncost

+


Allowance for running costs

+

15% management overhead

=

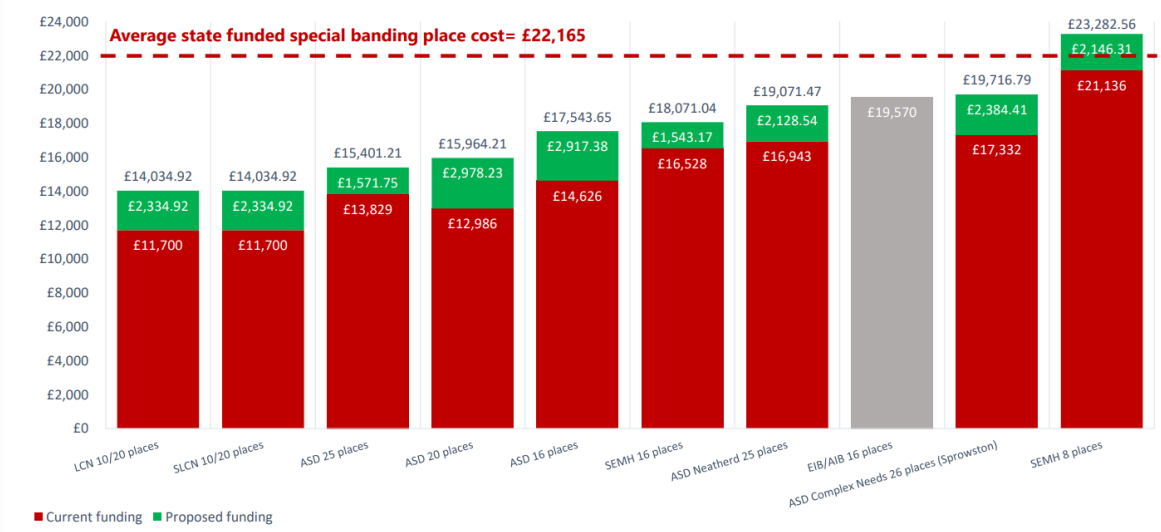
Total delegated budget



**Should we move to an auto adjustment NCC budget model given annual pay awards/cost increases?**



## Additional revenue of **£996,403.31** supports sustainable model for existing SRBs



## Can we afford to do nothing...options appraisal

### Option 1: Continue on status quo funding models



- Lowest NCC cost
- Inconsistencies in srb budget models
- Risk to relationships with existing srb schools
- Risk to LFI project and benefit realisation – time and places not realised
- Unfair funding model penalising early adopter schools

### Option 2: Move to an auto adjustment budget allocation across programme

A - £1.3M  
B - £996K

- Levels up current, pipeline and new SRBs under same budget principles
- Sustainable future proofed budget modelling and delivery of local first provision
- Supports positive relationship management with current SRBs
- If auto applied – LA may pick up unnecessary additional cost e.g. if SRB school carrying vacancies
- Unbudgeted cost pressure for High Needs block recovery

### Option 3: Move to auto adjustment NCC Budget share but only provide if school/Trust complete NCC finance return as part of SRB annual reporting demonstrating no underspend

- All pros realised in option 2 plus:
- Demonstrates due diligence with tax payers money
- Likely to generate in year saving due to pro rata point in time uplift being provided
- Mitigates risk in option 2 unnecessary cost



The local authority plans to move to Option 3 (which will lead to a forecast cost of £996k as referenced in Option 2. B.) as we believe that this ensures that current schools hosting SRBs and those schools that are in development will be on an equal basis. In addition, this will support the principle that host schools should be fully funded and provides reassurance that the funding will be sustainable for the long term. This approach will require individual school allocations to reflect actual costs and the LA will need to work with schools to determine how to do this in a way that does not create unnecessary work for either the LA or schools.

The additional costs will be reflected in the overall DSG High Needs Block re-modelling and set out in our report to Schools Forum in November and in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tri-Annual report to DfE in December.

## 5. Schools Forum are asked to:

1. Note progress within the programme overall with reference to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tri-Annual Report to the DfE
2. Provide comment, support and challenge regarding the sub-set of KPI's to be used for regular tracking and reporting within Schools Forum (noting that updated actuals are pending for the majority of categories and will be updated as part of the DSG High Needs Block re-modelling)
3. Provide comment, support and challenge regarding the SRB revenue funding changes

### Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained or want to see copies of any assessments, e.g. equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

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

<b>Officer Name:</b>	<b>Tel No:</b>	<b>Email address:</b>
Michael Bateman	01603 307502	michael.bateman@norfolk.gov.uk



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.

### Appendix 1: Local First Inclusion KPIs

# Appendix 1: Local First Inclusion KPI's

LFI Programme KPI's													
Ref		Measure most aligned to workstreams:					Data Source	Regularity	Baseline 31st March 2022	Baseline 31st March 2023	Actual 2023 July	Actual 2023 Dec	Actual 2024 Mar
		Prog	1	2	3	4	5						
<b>EHCP</b>													
1	Actual EHCPs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Synergy	Monthly	8671	8735	10,194 (at 31.8.23)	
2	% change in EHCPs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Synergy	Monthly	11.8%	0.7%	Dec Tri-Annual	
3	Net EHCPs Projected	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	SEN2	Annually			Dec Tri-Annual	
4	New EHCPs	Yes	Yes					SEN Key headlines	Monthly	1032	2093	1,661 (at 31.8.23)	
5	% of EHCP per head of school age population	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			school census	Termly	3.8%	4.4%	Dec Tri-Annual	
6	EHCP referral rates from schools	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			manual/Synergy	Monthly	69.4%	64.9%		
7	EHCP referral rates from parents	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			manual/Synergy	Monthly	30.2%	34.9%	1,606 (at 31.8.23)	
8	EHCP referral rates from other professionals & self referrals	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			manual/Synergy	Monthly	0.40%	0.20%	combined	
9	% of pupils with SEN support	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			school census	Termly	14.2%	14.6%	13.9% (SEN2 2023)	
10	Movers and other pupil flow including incomers into county	Yes					Yes	spreadsheet	Annually		131 in 14 Out	Dec Tri-Annual	
<b>HNB</b>													
11	HNB surplus (+) / deficit (-)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	My Oracle	Termly	-21.681	-21.197	Dec Tri-Annual	
12	HNB spend	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	My Oracle	Termly	128.142	150.314	Dec Tri-Annual	
13	HNB spend - direct (includes recoupment and future demand)	Yes					Yes	My Oracle	Termly	122.592	144.372	Dec Tri-Annual	
14	HNB spend - central	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	My Oracle	Termly	5.550	5.942	Dec Tri-Annual	
15	Average cost - all HNB 0-25	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	My Oracle	Termly	0.012	0.014	Dec Tri-Annual	
<b>DSG</b>													
16	In Year DSG surplus/deficit	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	My Oracle	Termly	-22.179	-19.900	Dec Tri-Annual	
17	Cumulative DSG surplus/deficit - before safety valve funding	Yes					Yes	My Oracle	Termly	-53.976	-73.877	Dec Tri-Annual	
18	Cumulative DSG surplus/deficit - after safety valve funding	Yes					Yes	My Oracle	Termly	-53.976	-45.877	Dec Tri-Annual	
19	Funding gap as % of HNB allocation	Yes					Yes	My Oracle	Annually	23.4%	24.7%	Dec Tri-Annual	
20	HNB DSG allocation	Yes					Yes	My Oracle	Annually	103.840	120.588	Dec Tri-Annual	
21	Block transfers	Yes					Yes	My Oracle	Annually	2.621	8.529	Dec Tri-Annual	
22	General Fund (Councils core budget)	Yes					Yes	My Oracle	Annually	0.000	0.000	Dec Tri-Annual	
<b>Savings/mitigation</b>													
23	Savings/mitigation < 16	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	manual	Termly			Dec Tri-Annual	
24	Savings /mitigation > 16	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	manual	Termly			Dec Tri-Annual	
25	Savings /mitigation - all HNB	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	manual	Termly			Dec Tri-Annual	
26	Savings / mitigation - alternative provision	Yes					Yes	manual	Termly			Dec Tri-Annual	
<b>Average Costs</b>													
27	Average placement cost < 16s	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	manual	Termly	0.024468	0.023724	Dec Tri-Annual	
28	Average placement cost > 16s	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	manual	Termly	0.014892	0.016338	Dec Tri-Annual	
29	Average cost of in county special school < 16	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	manual	Termly	0.026672	0.027378	Dec Tri-Annual	
30	Average cost of in county special school > 16	Yes				Yes	Yes	manual	Termly	0.02415	0.032075	Dec Tri-Annual	
31	Average cost of maintained / academy special school place - in county	Yes					Yes	manual	Termly	0.021257	0.022215	Dec Tri-Annual	
32	Average cost of maintained / academy special school place - out county	Yes					Yes	manual	Termly	0.023035	0.022828	Dec Tri-Annual	
33	Average cost of in county FE college place	Yes					Yes	manual	Termly	0.010069	0.010295	Dec Tri-Annual	
34	Average cost of in county Independent special school place > 16	Yes				Yes	Yes	manual	Termly	0.044177	0.046423	Dec Tri-Annual	
35	Average cost of in county Independent special school place < 16	Yes				Yes	Yes	manual	Termly	0.085672	0.100307	Dec Tri-Annual	
36	Average placement cost - alternative provision	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	manual	Termly	0.019378	0.021344	Dec Tri-Annual	
37	Average cost of new independent <16	Yes				Yes	Yes	manual	Termly	0.05653	0.055649	Dec Tri-Annual	
38	Average cost of new independent >16	Yes				Yes	Yes	manual	Termly	0.114092	0.074551	Dec Tri-Annual	
39	Average cost of ceased independent <16	Yes				Yes	Yes	manual	Termly	0.0341	0.021128	Dec Tri-Annual	
40	Average cost reduction from independent placement renegotiations	Yes				Yes	Yes	manual	Termly			Dec Tri-Annual	
<b>Independent</b>													
40	Number of independent providers	Yes				Yes	Yes	manual	Annually		63	Dec Tri-Annual	
41	Number of independent providers with >1 place commissioned	Yes				Yes	Yes	manual	Annually		34	Dec Tri-Annual	
42	Number in independent provision	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	SEN2	Termly	854	877	Dec Tri-Annual	
43	% of SEMH placements in independent provision	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	SEN2	Termly			Dec Tri-Annual	
44	Ratio of placements, Independent vs Maintained special school	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	SEN2	Termly			Dec Tri-Annual	
<b>Alternative Provision</b>													
45	PEX numbers	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Fex/Pex dashboard	Termly			168 (spring and summer terms)	
46	Number in school based AP	Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes	manual	Annually			Dec Tri-Annual	

# Schools Forum

Item No.4a

<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Provisional DSG Allocations for 2024-25 and Fair Funding Consultation for Mainstream Schools' Formula</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>29 September 2023</b>

## Executive summary

This report sets out indicative levels of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding for 2024-25 and the Local Authority's proposed options for consultation with schools for the 2024-25 mainstream schools' local funding formula including:

- Options for the capping of gains
- Introduction of a falling rolls fund
- Charging of maintained schools' budgets for internal audits
- Potential transfer from Schools Block to High Needs Block to meet ongoing demand upon high needs placements and support, and as part of the DSG deficit recovery plan through the DfE Safety Valve programme.

**Schools Forum are asked to:**

- **Note the increase in overall DSG funding for 2024-25**
- **Consider and comment on the proposed options for the Local Authority consultation with schools for the 2024-25 mainstream schools' funding formula, including potential transfers of Schools Block funding to the High Needs Block. A list of the proposals for comment is included at the end of this paper.**

## 1. Dedicated Schools Grant 2024-25

### 1.1 National Funding Increases

The total core Schools Budget will total over £59.6 billion in 2024-25 – the highest ever level per pupil, in real terms, as measured by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS).

This total includes the additional funding for teachers' pay announced in July 2023; the Teachers Pay Additional Grant (TPAG) provides an additional £482.5m in 2023-24, and £827.5m for 2024-25 for mainstream, special and alternative provision schools.

TPAG will be allocated outside of the National Funding Formula in 2024-25. Further details on the TPAG can be found here: [Teachers' pay additional grant - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/teachers-pay-additional-grant)

Funding through the mainstream schools National Funding Formula (NFF) is increasing by 2.7% per pupil in 2024-25, compared to 2023-24. Taken together with the funding increases seen in 2023-24, this means that funding through the schools NFF will be 8.5% higher per pupil in 2024-25, compared to 2022-23.

The Department of Education announced arrangements for the 2024-25 National Funding Formula on their website on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2023. Please see the links below for detailed information:

Policy paper: [National funding formula for schools and high needs 2024 to 2025 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/115444/nff-2024-25-policy-paper.pdf)

Provisional allocations: [National funding formula tables for schools and high needs: 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/115444/nff-2024-25-provisional-allocations-tables.pdf)

[Operational guidance: Schools operational guide: 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/115444/nff-2024-25-operational-guidance.pdf)

## 1.2 Norfolk's Provisional DSG Allocations

The DfE's published provisional Dedicated Schools Grant funding for Norfolk for 2024-25 is **£781.337m**, excluding the Early Years Block<sup>1</sup>, growth funding, and falling rolls funding:

	<b>£(m)</b>
Schools Block (exc. growth/falling rolls)	637.388
High Needs Block	139.713
Central School Services Block	4.236
<b>Provisional DSG Allocation (exc. EY)</b>	<b>781.337</b>

Provisional DSG allocations for the Schools Block exclude funding to be received through the growth and falling rolls factors, estimated by the Local Authority at £4.586m for 2024-25.

Mainstream Schools Additional Grant (MSAG) of £20.446m, allocated in 2023-24, has been rolled into provisional DSG allocations for 2024-25 and is included in the Schools Block figures shown above.

It is expected that the High Needs Block allocation may be updated in December to include a higher allocation for import/export adjustments following data checking carried out by the LA over the summer, and also to reflect increased special school places in October'23 census compared to the previous year. Together these could potentially add an estimated £1.8m to the allocation but any such updates will not be confirmed until December.

DSG allocations, including the provisional Early Years Block will be updated by the DfE in December '23.

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<sup>1</sup> Provisional Early Years Block allocations are expected to be published in December 2023. The current EY Block allocation for the 2023-24 financial year is £46.071m (as at the July'23 DSG update).

### 1.3 Schools Block

Norfolk's latest provisional Schools Block DSG allocation published by the DfE for 2024-25 is £637.388m (including the Mainstream Schools Additional Grant of £20.446m) compared to £597.439m received in 2023-24 (excluding growth factor allocations for both years).

For 2024-25 the Mainstream Schools Additional Grant of £20.446m, allocated in 2023-24, has been rolled into the DSG Schools Block for allocation to mainstream schools via the funding formula.

It is estimated by the Local Authority that a growth factor allocation of £4.026m may be received for 2024-25, compared to £3.594m received in 2023-24. A new factor allocating for Falling Rolls is estimated to bring a further £0.560m when the provisional Schools Block allocations are updated in December by the DfE based on October'23 census data.

The estimated Schools Block DSG for 2024-25 is as follows (2023-24 shown for comparison):

	2023-24 (£m)	2024-25 (£m)	Change (£m)
Schools Block (exc. growth)	597.439	616.942	19.503
Mainstream Schools Additional Grant (MSAG) within DSG in 2024-25	n/a	20.446	20.446
Growth Allocation (estimated amount for 2024-25)	3.594	4.026	0.432
Falling Rolls Allocation (estimated)	0.00	0.560	0.560
<b>ESTIMATED SCHOOLS BLOCK</b>	<b>601.033</b>	<b>641.974</b>	<b>40.941</b>

**Therefore, the additional comparable increase for 2024-25 estimated to be available to use within the local funding formula for mainstream schools (including growth and falling rolls) based on like-for-like pupil numbers in 2024-25 is £20.495m** (i.e., £40.941m minus £20.446m of existing funding for MSAG which is being rolled into DSG from April'24).

The final allocations for the 2024-25 Schools Block will not be confirmed until December 2023.

Information on technical changes to the National Funding Formula including allowable unit rates for NFF factors in 2024-25 are included in Appendix A.

It should be noted that Government policy continues to be towards transferring to a direct National Funding Formula, which will determine school funding allocations directly rather than through a local formula. Further details are also included in appendix A.

## 1.4 High Needs Block

The department has confirmed the following aspects of the High Needs NFF for 2024-25:

- the funding floor is set at 3% so each local authority will see an increase of at least 3% per head of population
- the gains cap is set at 5%, allowing local authorities to see gains up to this percentage increase under the formula

There is an indicative increase to High Needs Block for 2024-25 of £4.859m as shown below, compared to the latest HN Block allocation for 2023-24 (as updated July 2023):

	2023-24 (£m)	2024-25 (£m)	Change (£m)
High Needs Block	134.854	139.713	4.859

Following work carried out to check Import/Export data utilised by the DfE over the summer, the LA expects that the import/export funding within the final High Needs Block to be increased by £0.792m for both 2023-24 and the 2024-25 allocations.

In addition, based on an increasing number of special schools places in the October'23 census it is estimated that a further £1m may be received within the 2024-25 allocation (indicative allocation has been based on October'22 census data).

Any updates to the High Needs Block allocation for 2024-25 will not be confirmed until December.

This level of increase in High Needs Block funding will not resolve the ongoing High Needs Block overspend pressure due to the level of cumulative DSG deficit, and the anticipated ongoing and increasing demand.

In the LA's LFI plan, High Needs Block funding of £141.474m had been estimated for 2024-25. It is expected that the final HN Block allocation in December should end up being closer to this original estimate once the adjustments mentioned above have been taken into account.

## 1.5 Central Schools Block

There is an indicative increase to Central Schools Services Block for 2024-25 of £0.156m as shown below:

	2023-24 (£m)	2024-25 (£m)	Change (£m)
CSS Block	4.080	4.236	0.156

The use of the Central Schools Services Block of the DSG will be discussed further at the November Schools Forum meeting when decisions on the de-delegation of services for schools, agreement to the top-slicing of the growth fund and its criteria, and agreement for the use of a falling rolls fund will also be discussed.

## **1.6 Early Years Block**

The DfE does not publish provisional DSG allocations for the EY Block until December 2023.

A separate paper is included on this agenda setting out the information received to date and the LA's proposal for consultation on the local Early Years funding formula.



## **2. Fair Funding Consultation for Mainstream Schools' Formula**

### **2.1 Norfolk's Allowable Range of Unit Values**

Local authorities are required to move their local formulae a further 10% closer to National Funding Formula (NFF) unit values in 2024-25 (building on the 10% movement made towards the NFF in 2023-24).

Norfolk is one of many LAs that already 'mirrors' the National Funding Formula (NFF) unit rates. Mirroring is defined by the DfE as using rates for each of the funding factors that are within 2.5% of the respective NFF values published by the DfE.

To aid the transition to allowable 2024-25 funding values, the DfE have published the acceptable factor value range for each local authority. The allowable range for Norfolk is shown in the table in appendix B.

### **2.2 NFF vs Local Formula**

Norfolk County Council (NCC), as the organisation with responsibility for setting the formula for Norfolk in consultation with schools and Norfolk's Schools Forum, proposes to continue to mirror the National Funding Formula unit values and methodologies for 2024-25, updated to reflect the new values published by the DfE.

A Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) will be set between the allowable range of +0.0% to +0.5%. Setting the MFG protection at +0.5% is preferable as it ensures that all schools will receive per-pupil increases through the formula, based on like-for-like pupil data. A funding cap on gains, or a reduction in unit values within the range allowed for Norfolk (within the allowable range that mirrors NFF), may need to be applied in order to ensure that the final formula is affordable. All proposed options provide for the DfE's compulsory Minimum Per-Pupil Funding Levels at increased levels of at least £4,655 per pupil for primary schools, and at least £6,050 per pupil for secondary schools.

In accordance with DfE expectations that local authorities should be working towards balancing the DSG overall as a grant, including repaying brought forward cumulative deficits, the Local Authority (NCC) is also required to consider the transfer of funding from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block in 2024-25 to meet the ongoing pressures of the High Needs Block and to continue working towards recovery of the current cumulative and in-year DSG deficit. Also, Norfolk has a Safety Valve agreement with the DfE which may expect block transfers to be made as part of the overall recovery of the DSG deficit.

The Local Authority plans to hold a survey consultation with schools during October 2023 setting out three main funding formula options for 2024-25 based on mirroring the National Funding Formula factor values and methodologies but with modelling demonstrating the impact of transfers from Schools Block to High Needs Block of 0%, 0.5% and 1.5%. Alternatives to the current hard cap on gains will also form an important part of the consultation, due to the current impact that has been seen upon

some small schools due to formula changes in the 2022-23 NFF relating to sparsity funding.

Feedback from the consultation will be brought back to the November Schools Forum meeting for Schools Forum members to consider in relation to their recommendation for the 2024-25 local formula that will be requested from Schools Forum at that time. This will include whether a Schools Block to High Needs Block transfer is supported by the Forum.

The Local Authority intends to consult with Norfolk schools via an online survey from 3rd October to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023.

## **2.3 Proposals**

This year, the Local Authority will be consulting with stakeholders on the following aspects of the local funding formula for mainstream schools:

- Capping of gains (section 2.4)
- Introduction of a falling rolls fund (section 2.5)
- Charging of maintained schools' budgets for internal audits (section 2.6)
- Schools Block to High Needs Block Transfer (section 2.7)

The proposals are based on continued 'mirroring' of the National Funding Formula factor unit values and methodologies (no change to the overall approach to setting the formula, as previously agreed through consultation and with Schools Forum).

Indicative Minimum Funding Guarantee and Cap values are provided as part of the Schools Block to High Needs Block Transfer options.

A list of the proposals for Schools Forum members to comment on can be found at the end of this paper.

In the consultation document, the LA will include relevant background information to support the consideration that schools need to make to enable them to respond effectively, including:

- the purpose of consultation and why it is important to respond along with the role of Schools Forum in the process
- an explanation of the MFG (see Appendix C)
- how the funding arrangements of special schools impacts upon mainstream schools
- the link between schools block funding for mainstream schools and additional allocations from the high needs block, such as for element 3 or specialist resource bases
- an overview of the Local First Inclusion, progress to date, plans moving forward and where to find further information

In addition, for growth funding and Split Sites factor, the DfE have made changes for 2024-25 that are compulsory as part of the National Funding Formula. For those changes, which do not require consultation, the LA is including explanations in appendices D and E.

## 2.4 Capping of Gains

- An explanation of MFG and caps, and the DfE's example of how Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) is calculated is provided in Appendix C. The DfE's guidance [Schools operational guide: 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/schools-operational-guide-2024-to-2025) sets out further details of how caps on gains and scaling are implemented as part of the MFG calculation.
- As agreed at the July'23 Schools Forum meeting, the LA is reviewing the use of a funding cap on gains again for 2024-25 due to the significant impact highlighted by some small schools following the implementation of the 2022-23 and 2023-24 formulae.
- The sparsity factor changed in 2022-23, to be based on road distances instead of straight-line distances, as well as adding a distance taper calculation. This brought a number of small schools into the sparsity allocation for the first time.
- The DfE's MFG/Cap calculation excludes the sparsity amount for the new year budget from the previous year's baseline, i.e., the 2024-25 sparsity value will be excluded from the 2023-24 funding baseline. This is intended to protect schools against significant changes in sparsity value between years. However, this also means that a school becoming eligible for sparsity for the first time has the sparsity amount deducted from its protected baseline, even though it didn't receive sparsity in the prior year, and, therefore, the remaining increase is large and likely to be capped under the current hard cap arrangements. This initial cap of the gain continues to affect schools' future years' budgets, even once sparsity has been established, as part of their budget share, producing significant caps on gains for the affected schools.
- In previous years, a funding cap has been used in order to enable the LA to mirror the NFF unit values and methodologies whilst making a Schools Block to High Needs Block transfer. As explained above, the caps in recent years have particularly impacted on small rural schools receiving the significant sparsity allocations that they may have been expecting following changes to the sparsity factor calculation as part of the NFF. Per-pupil funding in the local formula was capped at increases of +2.4% for schools in 2023-24 (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. A similar issue could apply 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 because of the impact of its deduction from the prior year's protected funding baseline.
- To resolve this issue for 2024-25 and future years, the LA is consulting schools on alternatives to the use of a hard funding cap in Norfolk. The alternative

options have been previously consulted on by the LA as part of the 2023-24 Fair Funding process, but the response rate from schools was extremely low and primarily split between being in favour of making a change from those schools affected, with less support from other schools. The low level of response in turn meant that the Schools Forum did not have clear input from both a significant number and wide range of schools / Trusts in order to enable them to make a recommendation on behalf of all mainstream schools and to be able to understand the consequences to schools of their decision. In turn, this meant that the LA concluded that they had no mandate to make a change from the status quo of a hard cap for 2023-24.

- Given the significant feedback received from affected schools, and the likely ongoing impact of future capping due to potential Block Transfers that may be agreed as part of the DSG recovery plan, the LA wishes to revisit this part of the formula afresh for 2024-25. As part of this, the LA wishes to re-iterate the significant impact that the current cap arrangements have on small rural schools and to confirm that the LA will be seeking a recommendation from Schools Forum members in November, following consultation with all schools, before making a final decision on arrangements for 2024-25.
- The identified options for capping of gains are detailed below, presuming a Block Transfer of 1.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block is agreed. It is proposed that an illustration of these alternative options should be provided as part of the autumn fair funding consultation and feedback sought once again from schools.

- **Hard Cap (No change to current arrangements)**

Suggested MFG of +0.5% (the maximum allowable for 2024-25) and an estimated cap for all gains of +4.89%. This would maintain the current principles used within the funding formula that limits gains to a fixed percentage per-pupil with no further gains beyond that. The sparsity issue for affected small rural schools would remain significant and it could take a very long time for the expected sparsity gains to be passed through to those schools in the way intended by the National Funding Formula.

- **MFG baseline adjustments to affected schools**

The LA could request disapplications from the Secretary of State to enable MFG adjustments to the 2023-24 MFG baselines of affected schools so that sparsity funding, where previously capped, could be adjusted upwards in their baselines as technical MFG adjustments (reducing the calculated gains between years that are then being capped) and then protected from 2024-25 onwards. This would be subject to DfE approval.

On its own, this may not prevent the same problem from occurring again in future, although it would be less likely now that the revised sparsity arrangements have

been in place for 2 years. Even so, any school that became eligible for sparsity based on pupil data for the first time in 2024-25 would not be picked up in disapplication requests which are due for submission in November 2023, and would therefore be subject to the same capping issue when final budgets are set in February 2024 as other schools affected by the issue have been in the past.

To implement MFG adjustments, if approved by Secretary of State, a tighter overall cap percentage, currently estimated at +3.28%, would be required to enable those schools affected to have their baselines adjusted within the overall funding envelope available.

- **Scaling in addition to the capping of gains**

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 the cap, which was set at +2.4% per-pupil in 2023-24, 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 2% and scaling of 80% would allow all per-pupil gains up to 2% to flow through to schools, with any gains above 2% scaled back by 80%. 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.

A tighter overall cap percentage, currently estimated at +2.64%, would be required in order to implement 50% 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 does not require approval of any MFG baseline adjustments from the DfE as it can be decided locally. This option could be used in conjunction with approved MFG baseline adjustments to more quickly increase those schools that have been affected by the sparsity issue, and to mitigate against similar effects of hard caps on large NFF gains that may occur in the future.

- **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 2024-25, 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 should be possible to continue to mirror the NFF, working within the range of Norfolk's allowable unit values for 2024-25, and be able to remove the need for any funding cap on gains (depending on the final DSG available and the final census data used).

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 2024-25 irrespective of whether they were eligible for sparsity and capped in the past, or become eligible for the factor for the first time in 2024-25.

This option removes the need for approval of MFG baseline adjustments for specific schools from the DfE but would reduce the factor unit values in 2024-25 for all schools by an equal percentage (but not by more than 2.5% as that would be outside of the allowable range for Norfolk's factor values). This would affect all schools as it would change the value of the funding factors used but would be the option closest to mirroring the DfE's National Funding Formula outputs - which do not apply a cap to schools' gains. It is estimated that a reduction of -0.90% to the NFF factor values would allow for the removal of the funding cap.

## **2.5 Falling rolls**

For the first time in 2024-25, LA's will receive funding for Falling Rolls as part of the DSG based on changes between the October 2022 and October 2023 censuses within 'Middle Layer Super Output Areas' (MSOA) which are areas used by the ONS based on population data that enable the DfE to capture falling rolls in small geographical areas within local authorities. LAs will be awarded £140k for each MSOA which sees a 10% or greater reduction in the number of pupils between the October censuses. Using estimated data and the DfE's Growth and Falling Rolls calculator tool for 2024-25, the LA has estimated that Norfolk may receive £560k, although this will not be confirmed until final DSG allocations are published in December.

It was agreed at the July'23 Schools Forum meeting that the introduction of a Falling Rolls fund should be included within the LA's autumn consultation based on a presentation of forecast pupil data and following changes made by the DfE. Any such fund agreed by the LA and Schools Forum could be used to support schools that may be vulnerable where there is significant decline in pupil numbers, protecting school places where the Local Authority expects growth to return to those establishments in the future.

For 2024-25, the DfE have made changes to the requirements for Falling Rolls funds. Falling Rolls fund can only be used to provide funding where school capacity data 2022 (SCAP) shows that school places will be required in the subsequent three to five years, replacing previous guidance that funding may only be used where local planning data shows that the surplus places will be needed within the next 3 financial years.

In addition, the previous requirement that schools must be Ofsted rated 'good' or 'outstanding' to be eligible for falling rolls funding will no longer apply from the 2024-25 financial year.

The DfE guidance for 2024-25 states that LAs will continue to have discretion over whether to operate a Falling Rolls fund (it is not mandatory to have one), but if a fund is required, Schools Forum should agree the total value and the criteria for allocation.

A suggested value for a Falling Rolls fund for 2024-25 is £560k in line with the LA's estimate of funding to be received based on the DfE's calculator tool.

DfE guidance states that the criteria for allocating falling rolls funding should contain clear objective trigger points for qualification, and a clear formula for calculating allocations. Differences in allocation methodology are permitted between phases.

The DfE provides some examples of compliant criteria:

- 2022 SCAP shows that school places will be required in the subsequent 3 to 5 years (this is a mandatory requirement)
- surplus capacity exceeds a minimum number of pupils, or a percentage of the published admission number
- formula funding available to the school will not support provision of an appropriate curriculum for the existing cohort
- the school will need to make redundancies to contain spending within its formula budget

The DfE states that methodologies for distributing funding could include:

- a rate per vacant place, up to a specified maximum number of places (place value likely to be based on basic per pupil funding)
- a lump sum payment with clear parameters for calculation (for example, the estimated cost of providing an appropriate curriculum, or estimated salary costs equivalent to the number of staff who would otherwise be made redundant)

The LA has not yet produced technical modelling for Falling Rolls but this will be modelled for the consultation with schools based on:

- forecast reductions in schools' autumn pupil numbers
- forecasts from 2022 SCAP data in the subsequent 3-5 years

The autumn consultation will also include information on the pros and cons of having a Falling Rolls fund. Part of what is considered will be when falling rolls might trigger a review of provision in the area.

## **2.6 Audits**

Schools Forum requested in January'23 that the LA consider a top-slice of funding for internal audits for maintained schools, to ensure all schools undertake audits as part of good financial management. Although schools may buy this audit from a provider of their choosing, a proposal to charge maintained schools' budgets for audits will be included within the autumn consultation.<sup>2</sup>

Maintained schools are required to have a traded audit at least once every 5 years as well as a financial health check. If not, they will be automatically red RAG rated. However, they can buy this audit from a provider of their choosing. The cost

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<sup>2</sup> Previous MI sheet to schools on the current arrangements stated: "The Traded Full School Audit and health check can be purchased via SLA online, however if you wish to use another supplier to engage in the process then please let us know and we will ensure that your selected supplier has received a terms of reference so they obtain a specification for the audit."

over 5 years is c. £1,100 in audit costs and £400 in health check cost per school. The overall cost per year works out to £300 per school.

As a comparison, academies are audited every year and pay directly for these.

Internal audits come under 'responsibilities held by local authorities for maintained schools<sup>3</sup>' and can be funded from maintained schools' budgets with agreement of the maintained schools' members of Schools Forums.

Based on the latest APT data for 2023-24, there were 166 maintained schools with a total of 31,948.5 pupils. Delegation would therefore need to be approximately £1.56 per-pupil (£300 p.a. x 166 schools = £49,800, divided by 31,948.5 pupils = £1.56 per-pupil).

If a decision is taken to top-slice funding for internal audits for maintained schools then the LA will need to review the resource available to ensure that revised demand can be met.

## **2.7 Schools Block to High Needs Block Transfer**

The Local Authority are planning to consult with Norfolk schools on three main funding formula options for different levels of Schools Block to High Needs Block transfer in 2024-25.

### Summary of Options

A summary of the different options for funding schools in 2024-25 is given in the table below, followed by more detailed written explanations.

Please note:

- Indicative modelling is based on October 2022 data. No changes to pupil numbers are included. Final budgets will be issued to schools in February 2024 using October 2023 census data and may change significantly if pupil numbers or characteristics are subject to large variations in the final census data set.
- Indicative modelling presumes no change is made to Norfolk's approach to baselines and capping (i.e. it does not take account of any of the options detailed in 2.4 above).

Detailed technical papers will be issued with the consultation during October.

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<sup>3</sup> Internal audit and other tasks related to the local authority's chief finance officer's responsibilities under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 for maintained schools (Schedule 2, paragraph 61)



	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
	2024-25	2024-25	2024-25
<b>0.5% (£3.210m) of Schools Block moved to High Needs Block</b>	✓	✓	✗
<b>Additional 1% (£6.420m) moved to High Needs Block</b>	✓	✗	✗
<b>Estimated MFG protection</b>	+0.50%	+0.50%	+0.50%
<b>Estimated funding cap on gainers under NFF</b>	+4.89%	No cap	No cap
<b>Potential Unit Values increase above NFF values</b>	✗	+0.38%	+1.16%
<b>2024-25 Minimum Per-Pupil Funding Levels</b>	✓	✓	✓

Options for feedback:

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

If we transfer 1.5%, the LA’s Local First Inclusion modelling will balance, with the DSG deficit cleared in 2028-29 as per Norfolk’s ‘Safety Valve’ agreement with the DFE.

- Whichever is your school/trusts’ individual preference, we are keen to understand if you would support this option giving specific implications of the impact of a 1.5% Block transfer, and more Element 3 funding alongside collective, preventative system investment.

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

If we transferred 0.5%, the LA’s Local First Inclusion modelling will not balance by 2028-29 and this is unlikely to be acceptable to the DFE under their ‘Safety Valve’ agreement with Norfolk, but this would show some recognition from the system as a whole that too many children in Norfolk with SEND are currently being educated within specialist provision rather than in mainstream provision. This would be very likely to result in reductions being made to the planned funding and support available to mainstream schools (both SEND and non-SEND).

- Whichever is your school/trusts’ individual preference, we are keen to understand if you would support this option, giving specific implications of the impact

of a 0.5% Block transfer and, therefore, less Element 3 funding or collective, preventative investment.

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

If we made no block transfer the LA's Local First Inclusion modelling will not balance by 2028-29 and this is unlikely to be acceptable to the DFE under their 'Safety Valve' agreement with Norfolk. Whilst individual schools would retain more funds individually, there would be significantly less that could 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.

Whichever is your school/trusts' individual preference, we are keen to understand if you would support this option, giving specific implications of the impact of no Block transfer and, therefore, less Element 3 funding or collective, preventative investment.

### **All schools will be asked the following questions in the consultation:**

1. Please detail the specific implications of each option upon your school/trust.
2. Please rank your order of preferences (a) for your school/trust and (b) for the system as a whole from the 3 options.
3. If these differ, please advise why.
4. As school leaders in Norfolk, do you believe that you have a good understanding of the ambition behind, and the principles of, the council's Local First Inclusion (LFI) Programme?
5. Also, do you believe that the LFI programme of work will enable us to achieve these ambitions, in particular meeting C&YP needs more effectively whilst also ensuring that we return to a balanced and sustainable budget.
6. Is there anything else you would wish to add to support Schools Forum, the Secretary of State and LA Members in the decisions that they need to make?

## **3 Recommendations**

### **Schools Forum are asked to:**

- **Note the increase in overall DSG funding for 2024-25**
- **Consider and comment on the proposed options for the Local Authority consultation with schools for the 2024-25 mainstream schools' funding formula, including potential transfers of Schools Block funding to the High Needs Block. A list of proposals for comment is below.**

### **List of consultation proposals for comment:**

#### **Capping of gains:**

- Hard Cap (No change to current arrangements)
- MFG baseline adjustments to affected schools

- Scaling in addition to the capping of gains
- Reduction to unit values, removal of the funding cap

**Falling rolls:**

- No falling rolls fund (no change to current arrangements)
- Create a falling rolls fund, requires top-slice of Schools Block

**Audits:**

- No charge to maintained schools for audits (no change to current arrangements)
- Charge maintained schools' budgets to cover cost of audits

**Schools Block to High Needs Block transfer, based on mirroring of NFF, indicative MFG protection/Caps:**

- 0% transfer
- 0.5% transfer
- 1.5% transfer

**Officer Contact**

If you have any questions about matters contained or want to see copies of any assessments, e.g., equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

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

**Officer Name:**

Martin Brock

**Tel No:**

01603 223800

**Email address:**

[martin.brock@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:martin.brock@norfolk.gov.uk)



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.

## Appendix A - National Funding Formula

### National Funding Formula Changes for 2024-25

The DfE have announced in their guidance, [Schools operational guide: 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#), that the following changes will be made to the 2024-25 National Funding Formula:

- Introducing a new formulaic approach to allocating split sites funding in the NFF in 2024 to 2025, replacing the previous locally determined split sites factor.
- Rolling the 2023-24 Mainstream Schools Additional Grant into the NFF by:
  - adding an amount representing what schools receive through the grant into their baselines;
  - adding the value of the lump sum, basic per pupil rates and free school meals Ever 6 (FSM6) parts of the grant onto the respective factors in the NFF;
  - uplifting the minimum per pupil values by the mainstream schools additional grant's basic per-pupil values and an additional amount which represents the average amount of funding schools receive from the FSM6 and lump sum parts of the grants.
- Increasing NFF factor values (on top of the amounts added for the Mainstream Schools Additional Grant) by:
  - 2.4% to the following factors: basic entitlement, low prior attainment (LPA), FSM6, income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI), English as an additional language (EAL), mobility, sparsity and the lump sum;
  - 2.4% to the minimum per pupil levels (MPPL)
  - 1.6% to the free school meals (FSM) factor value
  - 0% on the premises factors, except for: (i) Private Finance Initiative (PFI) which has increased by Retail Prices Index excluding mortgage interest payments (RPIX) which is 10.4% for the year to April 2023 and (ii) split sites funding which has been formularised.
- Introducing, for the first time, a methodology for calculating and allocating funding for falling rolls
- Minimum Funding Guarantee - Local authorities have the freedom to set the MFG in their local formulae between +0.0% and +0.5% per pupil (no change from 2023/24)

There will be a separate pay grant for teachers' pay made to cover pay increases in 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025. Further details on the TPAG can be found at [teachers' pay additional grant: 2023 to 2024](#).

## NFF Factor Values

The DfE's NFF funding values for 2024-25, are shown below along with the current 2023-24 formula for comparison.

Funding Factor	2023-24 Formula £ NFF unit rates	2024-25 Formula £ NFF unit rates
Age Weighted Pupil Unit		
Primary	3,394	3,597
Key Stage 3	4,785	5,072
Key Stage 4	5,393	5,717
Minimum Per Pupil Funding		
Primary	4,405	4,655
Secondary	5,715	6,050
Additional Needs Funding		
Primary FSM	480	490
Secondary FSM	480	490
Primary FSM6	705	830
Secondary FSM6	1,030	1,210
Primary IDACI A	670	685
Primary IDACI B	510	520
Primary IDACI C	480	490
Primary IDACI D	440	450
Primary IDACI E	280	285
Primary IDACI F	230	235
Secondary IDACI A	930	950
Secondary IDACI B	730	750
Secondary IDACI C	680	695
Secondary IDACI D	620	635
Secondary IDACI E	445	455
Secondary IDACI F	335	345
Low Prior Attainment		
Primary LPA	1,155	1,185
Secondary LPA	1,750	1,790
EAL		
Primary EAL	580	595
Secondary EAL	1,565	1,605
Mobility		
Primary Mobility	945	970
Secondary Mobility	1,360	1,395
Lump Sum		
Primary Lump Sum	128,000	135,700
Secondary Lump Sum	128,000	135,700
Sparsity		
Primary Sparsity	56,300	57,700
Secondary Sparsity	81,900	83,900
Split Sites (NEW)		
Basic Eligibility	No NFF value	54,300
Distance Funding	No NFF value	27,100

## Progress towards a Direct National Funding Formula

Following last year's consultation on implementing the direct national funding formula, the DfE confirmed that it will continue to move forward with its plans to implement a direct NFF, whereby funding will be allocated directly to schools based on a single, national formula.

As set out in the consultation response, available here [Implementing the direct national funding formula - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/Implementing-the-direct-national-funding-formula), the DfE are taking a gradual approach to transition to avoid any unnecessary or unexpected disruption to schools. This transition towards the direct NFF began in 2023-24 and will continue in 2024-25. In particular:

- Local authorities must move their local formula factor values at least a further 10% closer to the NFF, except where local formulae are already “mirroring” the NFF. For this purpose, local factor values within 2.5% of the respective NFF values are deemed to be “mirroring” the NFF. The DfE have published the allowable factor values for 2024-25 following the tightening requirements for each local authority here: [Pre-16 schools funding: local authority guidance for 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/Pre-16-schools-funding-local-authority-guidance-for-2024-to-2025). Norfolk's allowable factor values are also provided in Appendix B of this paper.
- Local authorities must use the new national formulaic approach to split sites funding. This will replace the current local authority-led approach.
- Local authorities must use the new NFF requirements for growth funding, whereby additional classes (driven by basic need) must be funded by at least the minimum funding level set out in the funding calculation.
- Local authorities must also follow the new NFF requirements for falling rolls funding, whereby local authorities can only provide falling rolls funding to schools where school capacity survey (SCAP) data shows that school places will be required in the subsequent three to five years. The restriction that schools must be judged Good or Outstanding at their last Ofsted inspection to be eligible for funding is also being removed from 2024-25.

## Appendix B - National Funding Formula

The allowable ranges for Norfolk's Authority Proforma Tool formula in 2024-25 are shown in the table below:

Factor	24-25 NFF (£)	24-25 APT Minimum (£)	24-25 APT Maximum (£)
Primary basic entitlement	£3,597.00	£3,507.08	£3,686.93
KS3 basic entitlement	£5,072.00	£4,945.20	£5,198.80
KS4 basic entitlement	£5,717.00	£5,574.08	£5,859.93
Primary FSM	£490.00	£477.75	£502.25
Secondary FSM	£490.00	£477.75	£502.25
Primary FSM6	£830.00	£809.25	£850.75
Secondary FSM6	£1,210.00	£1,179.75	£1,240.25
Primary IDACI F	£235.00	£229.13	£240.88
Primary IDACI E	£285.00	£277.88	£292.13
Primary IDACI D	£450.00	£438.75	£461.25
Primary IDACI C	£490.00	£477.75	£502.25
Primary IDACI B	£520.00	£507.00	£533.00
Primary IDACI A	£685.00	£667.88	£702.13
Secondary IDACI F	£345.00	£336.38	£353.63
Secondary IDACI E	£455.00	£443.63	£466.38
Secondary IDACI D	£635.00	£619.13	£650.88
Secondary IDACI C	£695.00	£677.63	£712.38
Secondary IDACI B	£750.00	£731.25	£768.75
Secondary IDACI A	£950.00	£926.25	£973.75
Primary EAL3	£595.00	£580.13	£609.88
Secondary EAL3	£1,605.00	£1,564.88	£1,645.13
Primary LPA	£1,185.00	£1,155.38	£1,214.63
Secondary LPA	£1,790.00	£1,745.25	£1,834.75
Primary mobility	£970.00	£945.75	£994.25
Secondary mobility	£1,395.00	£1,360.13	£1,429.88
Primary lump sum	£135,700.00	£132,307.50	£139,092.50
Secondary lump sum	£135,700.00	£132,307.50	£139,092.50
Primary sparsity	£57,700.00	£56,257.50	£59,142.50
Secondary sparsity	£83,900.00	£81,802.50	£85,997.50
Middle-school sparsity	£83,900.00	£10,190.00	£85,997.50
All-through sparsity	£83,900.00	£10,190.00	£85,997.50
Split sites basic eligibility funding	£54,300.00	£52,942.50	£55,657.50
Split sites distance funding	£27,100.00	£26,422.50	£27,777.50

## **Appendix C – Minimum Funding Guarantee/Cap Calculation (including DfE worked example)**

Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) is a mandatory part of the funding formula which protects schools against reductions in the overall level of funding received through the pupil-led factors of the funding formula. It may also provide a minimum increase to the level of funding per-pupil depending on the level of MFG set by the LA within the DfE's allowable range. In 2024-25, LA's will be able to set the level of MFG between 0% and +0.5%. It is proposed that Norfolk should use the maximum value of +0.5% to ensure per-pupil gains for all schools.

A calculation of MFG is required for each individual school comparing per-pupil funding in the current financial year (2023-24) and in the new year being calculated (2024-25) through the funding formula.

Excluding the school-led factors of lump sum, sparsity, rates, and amalgamation protection if applicable, the remaining funding allocated to a school based on pupil-led factors cannot reduce on a per-pupil basis with the MFG set at 0% or higher. With MFG set at +0.5%, the level of per-pupil funding must increase for all schools by at least 0.5% between years. Where required, MFG funding to ensure this minimum level is met is added as a separate line into a school's budget share.

It is important to understand that whilst the level of funding per-pupil is protected via the MFG, a school's funding can still reduce in total where the number of pupils has reduced between years. Also, the MFG provides for a minimum per-pupil increase (if set above 0%), but there is no limit to the amount that a school can gain unless a funding cap is also applied.

A funding cap is necessary if the overall formula being used is not affordable within the total DSG allocation received once all funding factors have been calculated for schools and all protections have been applied. A good example of this is when a Schools Block to High Needs Block transfer is made, which reduces the overall amount of funding available to distribute to schools via the funding formula.

A cap calculation works in the same way as an MFG calculation. The minimum protection from MFG still applies, but with a cap in place there is then a restriction on the maximum level of per-pupil gains. This means that a gain that is above the cap % value set by the LA will produce a negative adjustment on the budget share to offset some of the overall gains. This will never result in a budget share that doesn't meet the MFG requirements or the Minimum Per-Pupil Levels (£4,655 per-pupil and £6,050 per-pupil in 2024-25 for primary and secondary pupils respectively).

All MFG and cap calculations are calculated and validated through the DfE's Authority Proforma Tool prior to submission of schools' budgets to the DfE.



A worked example from the DfE below shows how MFG is calculated (based on MFG of +0.5%):

Line	Description	Items and calculation	Amount
1	School budget share (SBS) 2023 to 2024 (inclusive of any MFG and capping)	N/A	£3,010,000
2	MSAG adjustment for 2023 to 2024	N/A	£90,000
3	2023 to 2024 rates	N/A	£40,000
4	Additional lump sum for schools amalgamated during 2022 to 2023	N/A	£105,000
5	2024 to 2025 lump sum	N/A	£130,000
6	2024 to 2025 sparsity value (including any additional sparsity funding for very small schools)	N/A	£25,000
7	Agreed MFG exclusions and technical adjustments	N/A	£0
8	2023 to 2024 MFG baseline (including MSAG)	$1 + 2 - (3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7)$	£2,800,000
9	Funded number on roll in 2023 to 2024	N/A	500
10	MFG baseline value per pupil	N/A	£5,600
11	MFG protected value per pupil	$10 \times 100.5\%$	£5,628
12	Formula funding 2024 to 2025 (includes rates)	N/A	£3,002,000
13	2024 to 2025 rates	N/A	£42,000
14	2024 to 2025 lump sum	N/A	£130,000
15	2024 to 2025 sparsity value (including any additional sparsity funding for very small schools)	N/A	£25,000
16	Agreed MFG exclusions and technical adjustments	N/A	£0
17	2024 to 2025 base funding	$12 - (13 + 14 + 15 + 16)$	£2,805,000
18	Funded number on roll in 2024 to 2025	N/A	500
19	2024 to 2025 base funding per pupil	17 divided by 18	£5,610
20	Guaranteed level of funding	$11 \times 18$	£2,814,000
21	MFG adjustment	$20 - 17$	£9,000
22	Final 2024 to 2025 SBS	$12 + 21$	£3,011,000

## **Appendix D – Growth Fund (compulsory change, for information)**

A growth fund is currently top-sliced from within the Schools Block of DSG with the agreement from Schools Forum, to support growing schools (both maintained and academies).

In Norfolk the agreed growth fund is used to:

- support growth in pre-16 pupil numbers to meet basic need
- support the early transfer of pupils upon a school closure
- meet the costs of new schools (pre and post-opening costs)

In addition, pupil variations are used to adjust the budgets of re-organising schools (e.g. age range changes).

The Schools Forum will be consulted on the total size of the retained growth fund and criteria for use at the November Schools Forum meeting.

For the first time in 2024-25 LA's will be required to provide growth funding where a school or academy has agreed with the local authority to provide an extra class to meet basic need in the area (either as a bulge class or as an ongoing commitment). Funding, either through the growth fund, or by adjusting pupil numbers in the APT, will need to be provided regardless of whether the additional class is within or outside of the PAN. This will be a change to the current local criteria which currently state 'the starting point for the growth must be over and above a school's/academy's current Pupil Admission Number (PAN)'.

As a minimum local authorities will have to provide funding to a level which is compliant with the following formula:

**primary growth factor value (£1,550) × number of pupils**

The primary growth factor value will be used as the minimum value for all school types.

Norfolk currently uses 7/12<sup>th</sup> of the basic entitlement value (£3,597 for primary in 24-25) for the allocation of additional classes for the period Sept-March, so the minimum allocation made would be equivalent to £2,098 per-pupil (higher for secondary pupils) and would meet the DfE's minimum value requirement. For academies, payments for growth would also continue from the LA for the following April-August (to complete the academic year), due to their lagged funding. Maintained schools' budgets would reflect the increase in funded pupils from April since the pupils would be included in the October census preceding the financial year.

The current best estimate of impact to the amount of growth funding required for 2024-25 is for an additional two classes of 30 pupils each to be allowed for, in case of additional basic growth classes that are required within PAN (in addition to those that would already meet Norfolk's 2023-24 criteria of having to go over PAN). This would add an estimated £0.126m to the growth fund requirement. The level of growth fund requested will be discussed at the November Schools Forum meeting.

## **Appendix E – New Split Sites factor (compulsory change, for information)**

In 2024-25 the DfE are introducing a national formulaic approach to split sites funding. This will replace LA's locally determined split sites formulae and will be a compulsory factor for all local authorities, ensuring that split sites funding will be allocated consistently and fairly across the country.

### Current Split Sites factor

Norfolk's current locally determined Split Sites factor provides the following funding for schools not contained within a single site, where the sites are separated by one-third of a mile (536 metres) or more by road:

Primary Schools = £42,412,

Secondary Schools = £58,222, and;

All-Through Schools = £89,780

In addition, for multiple split sites (schools with 3 or more sites all at least one-third of a mile apart), for each extra site:

1) Primary Schools = £26,474, and;

2) Secondary Schools = £58,222.

There are currently no schools in Norfolk that have multiple split sites.

### New Split Sites factor (compulsory)

The DfE's new Split Sites factor is made up of two compulsory elements:

Basic eligibility funding – schools must be allocated a lump sum payment for each of their additional eligible sites. To qualify, the additional sites must be part of the main school with the same unique reference number (URN), separated from the main school site by a public road or railway, and have a building on them that is primarily used for the education of 5–16-year-old pupils in mainstream education. It excludes playing fields, 'ancillary buildings' and buildings that are leased out full time by the school to another entity.

Distance funding - additional funding on top of the basic eligibility lump sum for schools whose eligible sites are separated by more than 100 metres (by road distance) from the main site. Allocations should be made through a tapered approach starting at 100 metres, increasing linearly up to 500 metres at which point schools should receive the maximum funding amount.

The NFF lump sum for basic eligibility is £54,300 and the NFF maximum distance funding is £27,100. Local authorities are required to set their local factor values within the 2.5% mirroring threshold of the lump sum values.

The number of additional sites that schools can receive funding for should be capped at 3 per school. If a school has more than 3 additional sites, the distance funding should be calculated based on those that are furthest away from the main site.

Any loss in funding for schools which have previously benefited from their local split site factor will be automatically protected through the MFG. This will apply to All-Through Schools in Norfolk that currently receive a higher amount through the local Split Sites factor. If a school reorganisation means that a school stops being a split site school, the LA maintains the right to amend the MFG calculation to prevent the split sites funding from being protected.

The DfE have provided illustrative modelling of the new split sites factor here: [Schools block national funding formula: split sites funding - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/schools-block-national-funding-formula-split-sites-funding)

For Norfolk, the DfE modelling shows that there are 4 schools<sup>4</sup> eligible for split sites (each having 1 additional site), all of which, depending on final checks, may also receive the full distance funding element. The funding for each would then be £54,300 + £27,100 = **£81,400** using NFF factor values.

As the current approach in Norfolk is to 'mirror' the DfE's unit rates locally, this is not something that needs to be consulted on with schools, but any funding differences between the current local Split Sites factor and the new compulsory Split Sites factor from April'24 will be shown within the technical papers issued as part of Norfolk's autumn consultation.

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<sup>4</sup> The schools eligible for Split Sites factor based on DfE modelling are: Litcham School, Icen Academy, Horsford CofE VA Primary School and The Harleston Sancroft Academy.

# Schools Forum

Item No.4b

<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Notional SEN</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>29 September 2023</b>

## Executive summary

The DfE have issued updated operational guidance for Notional SEN to LAs and this requires a proactive consideration of the proportion of funding within the Schools Block and individual school budgets.

As a reminder, 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 to inform 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 SEND.

The duty on Local Authorities is to decide, following discussions and consultation with schools and Schools Forum, what size the Notional SEN budget should be and to ensure that this is kept under review. The DfE recommend that all LAs undertake a review of their calculation for 2024-25.

NCC have set out previously to the Schools Forum that Norfolk's percentage allocation is relatively low compared to the national picture and, for 2023-24, the LA recommended that any proposed change to Notional SEN would be deferred until the initial impact of Local First Inclusion was experienced by schools. However, the LA is now of the view that a move to increase the Notional SEN funding in line with the national average over a three-year period should now be considered and assessed.

Therefore, this paper proposes a consultation with schools that will then allow Schools Forum and the LA to consider their views as to the size and methodology of Notional SEN allocations for the next financial year, and beyond.

### **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 2024-25 schools' budgets and beyond**

## **1. Context**

The DfE have issued operational guidance on the Notional SEN budget for mainstream schools for 2024-25. Local Authorities (LAs) are expected to review the size of their Notional SEN budget (also known as Element 2 SEND funding) following consultation with schools and Schools Forum.

The DfE have provided national data on Notional SEN for 2023-24, with 75% of authorities allocating between 5% and 15% of their Schools Block funding as Notional SEN. Across all authorities the average is 11.5%. In Norfolk, the percentage allocation of Notional SEN is currently 6.6%.

There is, therefore, a need to review whether Norfolk's Notional SEN budget should be brought into line with the national average and, if so, whether to do this over a three-year period.

## **2. Notional Element 2 SEN Funding**

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 SEND.

Using funds from the Schools Block of the dedicated schools grant (DSG), LAs 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 to inform 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 SEND.

Mainstream schools are expected to:

- meet the costs of special educational provision for pupils identified as having special educational needs within the definition of 'SEN Support' (i.e., those pupils with SEND but who do not require an Education Health and Care Plan) in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice (Children & Families Act 2014); 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 LA 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 SEND, as most 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 LA 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 SEND through the National Funding Formula.

Most LAs 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 include<sup>5</sup>:

- 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 SEND.

Other elements of the funding formula may also be used; for example, a proportion of the lump sum could reflect any fixed costs of making SEND provision that would apply to all local schools or diseconomies of scale relevant to small schools (Norfolk currently takes this approach as part of its Notional SEN methodology).

### **3. Why is it important?**

It has always been important to achieve consistency across the county for SEND 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 Element 3 funding has evolved through our work with schools and is linked to the concept of Notional SEN funding within national DSG guidance and the SEND Code of Practice. Therefore, with the publication of updated operational guidance for Notional SEN funding in mainstream schools from the DfE, it is right that we reflect further on Norfolk's below national average level.

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<sup>5</sup> Para 13, [The Notional SEN budget for mainstream schools: operational guide 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118242/2024-2025-mainstream-sen-budgeting-guidance.pdf)

As mentioned earlier, previous papers and discussion at Schools Forum over the past year have set out the national guidance but recommended that a move to an increase in Norfolk for the FY 2023/24 would have been premature. The impact of Local First Inclusion improvements will only start to flow to schools during autumn and spring term in the current academic year.

However, there is now an expectation that LAs that are part of the DfE ‘Safety Valve’ programme should be actively assessing all national guidance to support local plans. Therefore, a move towards the national average over a three-year period, starting in 2024/25, would reflect this requirement whilst also acknowledging the positive impact schools should increasingly experience in the coming months and years.

**4. Norfolk’s Notional SEN Budget**

Norfolk’s current Notional SEN budget is £39m, representing 6.6% 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 2023-24 Notional SEN budget:

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Total Value of Notional SEN 2023-24</b>
Total BPPE	£6,984,138
Primary IDACI	£5,328,248
Secondary IDACI	£5,724,753
Primary LPA	£9,155,126
Secondary LPA	£8,788,078
Total Lump Sum	£3,052,236
Total Notional SEN 2023/24	£39,032,578
Total Funding for Schools Block Formula	£590,916,630
Notional SEN as a % of SB funding	6.61%

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



<b>Factor</b>	<b>Factor Unit Values</b>	<b>Notional SEN within factor</b>	<b>% of factor relating to Notional SEN</b>
BPPE (Primary)	£3,394.00	£64.60	1.90%
BPPE (KS3)	£4,785.00	£64.60	1.35%
BPPE (KS4)	£5,393.00	£64.60	1.20%
IDACI Pri band F	£230.00	£212.18	92.25%
IDACI Pri band E	£280.00	£254.62	90.93%
IDACI Pri band D	£440.00	£277.34	63.03%
IDACI Pri band C	£480.00	£277.34	57.78%
IDACI Pri band B	£510.00	£277.34	54.38%
IDACI Pri band A	£670.00	£277.34	41.39%
IDACI Sec band F	£335.00	£307.66	91.84%
IDACI Sec band E	£445.00	£413.75	92.98%
IDACI Sec band D	£620.00	£423.42	68.29%
IDACI Sec band C	£680.00	£423.42	62.27%
IDACI Sec band B	£730.00	£423.42	58.00%
IDACI Sec band A	£930.00	£423.42	45.53%
Primary LPA	£1,155.00	£512.12	44.34%
Secondary LPA	£1,750.00	£774.97	44.28%
Pri Lump Sum	£128,000.00	£7,616.00	5.95%
Sec Lump Sum	£128,000.00	£7,616.00	5.95%

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.

A lack of inflation to the Notional SEN budget over the years now leaves Norfolk's percentage (6.6%) lagging significantly behind the average nationally of 11.5%, although Norfolk neither has the lowest % nor is alone in using a percentage in the

5%-7.5% range which 20 other LAs did in 2023-24 (c. 20% of all LAs were at 7.5% or under).

As a result, it is clear that Norfolk’s Notional SEN budget requires further review and, in that sense, updated guidance from the DfE is a good reminder to LAs to refresh Notional SEN calculations for 2024-25 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 2023. Section 19 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 it<sup>6</sup>.

Some 115 (75%) 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 in 23-24 is 11.5%, a slight increase from 11.3% in 2022-23. The median Notional SEN allocation is 11%. 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):

<b>Percentage</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
0%	0	0
0% to 5%	9	9
5% to 7.5%	21	22
7.5% to 10%	34	34
10% to 12.5%	39	39
12.5% to 15%	21	24
15% to 17.5%	19	16
17.5% to 20%	6	5
Above 20%	4	3

<sup>6</sup> [Schools block funding formulae 2023 to 2024: Analysis of local authorities’ schools block funding formulae - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/114111/schools_block_funding_formulae_2023_to_2024_analysis_of_local_authorities_schools_block_funding_formulae_-_gov.uk)

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

<b>Factor</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
Basic entitlement	122	138
Deprivation	153	152
English as an additional language	43	100
Looked-after children	0	9
Prior attainment	148	148
Mobility	33	96
Lump sum	31	95
Sparsity	6	3
MPPF	15	14
MFG	10	10

The deprivation is the factor most common contributing to Notional SEN with all 153 local authorities (152 in 2022-23) using it.

The majority of local authorities are also assigning a percentage of their basic entitlement and prior attainment funding into Notional SEN. As indicated in section 2 above, the DfE guidance states that they 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 SEND.

However, there is potential for unintended consequences by moving to this approach in Norfolk at the same time that we propose increasing the amount of Notional SEN by 1.5% per year for a three-year period. Essentially there is a risk that schools that have high social deprivation indicators and low prior attainment will need to demonstrate using a greater proportion of the overall school budget prior to accessing Element 3 funding and other inclusion support services. Therefore, it may be more appropriate to delay methodology changes to the second or third year of the incremental percentage change to a) ensure further Local First Inclusion improvements are embedded and b) reduce the risk of unintended consequences.

**6. Consultation**

The LA intends to carry out a consultation survey of mainstream schools for a 4-week period starting 3<sup>rd</sup> October to inform discussion at Schools Forum in November 2023.

The purpose of the consultation survey would be to raise awareness of the difference between Norfolk's level of Notional SEN funding and the national position, demonstrate the impact on schools' Notional SEN allocations based on different percentages of formula funding.

The proposed consultation survey would be based on the following:

- Consideration of maintaining the status quo for a further year, to allow time for the impact of Local First Inclusion programme to bed in further;
- An option to move towards the national average incrementally over a 3-year period, with an increase of approximately 1.5% per year

A technical paper issued as part of the consultation will provide an estimate of the impact of the different options at individual school level. Based on the indicative level of formula funding for 2024-25, the existing Notional SEN amounts per factor would need to be uplifted to give the same starting percentage of 6.61% as in 2023-24 in order to maintain the same proportion, which would give a Notional SEN total of £41.6m for 2024/25.

For illustrative purposes, an increase to 8.1% (1.5% added) for 2024-25 Notional SEN for Norfolk would be expected to increase total Notional SEN funding to around £51m (an increase of c. £12m compared to 2023-24). As a comparison against the national average proportion of formula funding, 11.5% would be in the region of £72m Notional SEN for 2024-25.

Schools will be asked to:

- Vote on the preferred options for different levels of Notional SEN allocations for 2024-25.

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 the Low Prior Attainment data for allocation 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 3<sup>rd</sup> October alongside the Fair Funding and Early Years funding consultations, 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 31st October, providing 4 weeks for this consultation.

The LA will then review the outcome of the consultation survey with Schools Forum at the November meeting where a recommendation for the LA will be sought.

Finally, the decision will be made by Norfolk County Council's Cabinet at the end of January, along with its decision on the overall mainstream 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 2024-25 schools' budgets, in particular the proposed options to be considered.**

**Officer Contact**

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

<b>Officer Name:</b>	<b>Tel No:</b>	<b>Email address:</b>
Michael Bateman	01603 307572	<a href="mailto:michael.bateman@norfolk.gov.uk">michael.bateman@norfolk.gov.uk</a>
Martin Brock	01603 223800	<a href="mailto:martin.brock@norfolk.gov.uk">martin.brock@norfolk.gov.uk</a>



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# Schools Forum

Item No. 4c

<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Early Years Funding Consultation</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>29 September 2023</b>

## Executive summary

This report sets out the proposed process for consulting on changes to the funding distribution formula for Norfolk for the Early Years Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (EY DSG) from April 2024, taking into consideration the Spring Budget announcements by the Government and the guidance the LA has received to date.

### Schools Forum are asked to:

- **Consider and comment on the proposed survey to consult on changes to Norfolk’s Early Years DSG Funding Formula**

## 1. Background and context

### 1.1 Setting the scene

The Spring Budget announced a range of measures to support early education and help parents with childcare so they can return to work more easily. This included, from April 2024, an introduction of new entitlements to enable eligible working parents in England to access, in time, up to 30 hours of funded childcare per week, for 38 weeks a year, from when their child is 9 months old to when they start school.

- From April 2024, eligible working parents of 2-year-olds can access up to 15 hours per week.
- From Sept 2024, eligible working parents of children aged 9 months up to 3-year-olds can access up to 15 hours per week.
- From Sept 2025, eligible working parents of children aged 9 months up to 3-year-olds can access up to 30 hours per week.

These changes will significantly increase the proportion of funding for children under 3 years of age.

At the same time, it was also announced that additional funding would be available to increase the amount paid to childcare providers for the existing early education entitlements and other funding streams from 1 September 2023. The increase is being paid to local authorities as an Early Years Supplement Grant (EYSG) and, as per Department for Education (DfE) expectation, has been passed on in full by NCC to providers.

The supplementary funding provided to local authorities by the EYSG is separate to the funding provided through the early years block of the DSG for the existing entitlements in the 2023 to 2024 financial year. For the main entitlements, DfE expect the funding increase to be

passed on through additional payments to providers calculated on an hourly basis. Local authorities must pass on the funding in a clear and transparent way, so that providers can understand how the funding increase has been determined. DfE expect local authorities to pay providers the same funding rate increase for the full 7-month period from September 2023 to March 2024. The funding rate increase from the EYSG cannot be reduced for providers during the 7-month period. However, if there is surplus funding available from the EYSG, local authorities could further increase the rate during this period.

Except for the EYSG, the current funded entitlements 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 base 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 claimed on behalf of families.

The EY DSG provisional allocation received by local authorities is based on census results obtained via the January school and early years census data. Early Years providers and schools offering the entitlement are required to submit data on the number of children taking up funded places, together with the number of hours. This data determines an initial allocation following the annual spending review and then is adjusted to reflect actual take up during the summer term of the subsequent financial year.

The current local formula has an hourly base rate with a combination of mandatory and optional (quality and flexible) supplements, and SEN inclusion funds (SENIF).

At least 95% of the funding received for 3- and 4-year-olds must be passed through to providers (includes base rate, supplements, lump sum for maintained nursery schools, contingency funding, and SENIF) and the total planned value of supplements paid to providers must not be more than 12%.

Compliance of the 95% pass-through requirement and 12% supplement value is monitored by DfE via the early years proforma in the annual section 251 budget return.

Each year, Schools Forum must agree any proposed central spend that the Local Authority wishes to retain. The retained funding provides a contribution to costs incurred by the local authority to fulfil statutory duties (Section 2 of the Childcare Act 2016 and sections 6, 7, 7A, 9A, 12 and 13 of the Childcare Act 2006).

The Local Authority last consulted on changes to the formula with Norfolk's Early Years providers via an online survey in Autumn 2022. Feedback from the consultation was brought back to the January 2023 Schools Forum meeting for further consideration and recommendation.

The DfE also launched a consultation at the end of the summer 2023 term to propose the funding approach for the new entitlements, extending Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) and Disability Access Fund (DAF) to all children accessing the entitlements from April 2024 and the requirements local authorities follow when setting the local formulae. The existing 3- and 4-year-old formula requirements and maintained nursery school supplement funding were considered out of scope.

## 1.2 Norfolk's Current Local Formula

The methodology changed in April 2023 in line with the recommendations of the Early Years Consultative Groups and agreed by Schools Forum on 27 January 2023 and Cabinet on 30 January. Rates received through the EYNFF have increased since 2022-23 and currently reflect the additional uplift for 2023-24.

From 1 September 2023 the formula is -

Base Rate Per hour for 2-year-old funding - **£7.49**

Base Rate Per hour for 3- and 4-year-old funding - **£4.65**

Plus, where criteria is met –

- A deprivation supplement (mandatory) of **£0.21** for children living in the 0-20% most deprived parts of the county using the IDACI index;
- A flexibility supplement (optional) of **£0.10** paid to providers who enable families to access at least 7.5 hours of funded early education for at least 2 days a week;
- A quality supplement (optional) of **£0.10** paid to Childminders with a level 3 qualification and settings working on a 1 to 8 basis with at least 1 member of staff with a level 6 qualification.

### Other early years funding rates

- Early Years Pupil Premium - **£0.66** per funded universal hour (national rate)
- Disability Access Fund - **£881.00** annual lump sum (national rate)
- Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund
  - 3- and 4-year-old – Up to **£1.50** per funded hour
  - 2-year-old – Up to **£1.30** per funded hour
- Children with complex Special Educational Needs and Disabilities inc EHCP children
  - 3- and 4-year-old – **£6.50** per hour
  - 2-year-old – **£4.80** per hour
- Quality Teachers' Pay and Pensions Grants for schools with nursery classes - **£0.24** per funded hour

The allocations for EYPP and DAF also received a September uplift and are received via the Early Years Block for allocation to providers at set rates, and as such, are not included as part of the locally determined funding formula.

## 1.3 National Updates

From 1 September the hourly rate received by Norfolk will no longer be at the minimum funding floor for both the 2- and 3- and 4-year-old allocations as the uplift was above the national average 32% and 6.3% respectively. We will still receive a comparative lower rate at £7.56/hr (32.4% increase) and £5.24/hr (6.9% increase) due to a historic low level of funding.



In July 2023, a government consultation was launched seeking views on proposed updates on the EYNFF due to the announcements made in the Spring 2023 budget.

The National consultation proposals include:

- following the same structure and weightings for the new funding formula as in the existing 3 and 4 year old formula;
- a pass through rate of 95% to be applied to each funding stream in 2024-25: the 3- and-4-year-old universal and 30 hours offer; the 2-year-old disadvantaged and working parent offers; and the 9 month to two year old offer;
- the same list of allowable supplements should be applied to every entitlement funding stream, capped at a maximum 12 percent of planned funding for that entitlement; and
- that local authorities should establish a special educational needs inclusion fund (SENIFF) for children aged 9 months to 2-years-old who are taking up the entitlements.

**Pass through rate** - As the quantum of funding in the early years block increases with the roll out of the new entitlements, the proportion of overall funding LAs will require to hold back for central spend will fall (whilst still allowing for a higher cash value to be retained, reflecting the increased central activity). DfE will therefore increase the pass through rate to 97% once the roll-out of the new entitlements is sufficiently progressed to allow this. The timing of this is under review and DfE will provide further details ahead of making any changes. Views on this change were not asked for as part of the consultation.

The results of the consultation and the Department's response are expected to be published in Autumn 2023, alongside revised Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities and Providers.

Norfolk County Council has submitted a response agreeing that the recommended approach for the EYNFF is used for the new entitlements.

## **2. Early Years Consultative Groups (Provider and Childminders)**

Both groups met on 12 September to discuss the implications of local and national policy changes and proposed consultation questions. Each representative was given opportunity to provide feedback and help inform the content of the survey. During this discussion it was clear that providers have a number of questions in relation to how the funding arrangements will work, including the actual age at which a child can start accessing the new entitlements. Alongside this it was recognised that there may be implications on the number of places available for disadvantaged 2 year olds if children are starting earlier and, therefore, taking up these places.

Comments on the survey itself included adding in a comments box to allow providers to give more detail on their concerns and any barriers to offering the new entitlements. These have been included. The face to face sessions will also allow for more detailed discussions with LA staff.

A further meeting is planned in early November to share the outcome of the survey and collate comment to enable a recommendation to be presented to Schools Forum later in the Autumn term.

### **3. Consultation on Norfolk's Local Formula**

As per the statutory requirement, it is necessary for the Local Authority to consult with Norfolk's Early Years providers following the national consultation. This will be based on the proposals for future funding arrangements as set out by DfE within the national consultation. All providers will be asked to respond via an online survey.

The local authority recognises the complexity involved in extending the entitlements and answering the survey based on the information available at this time. To assist providers to consider the implications and respond to the survey, we will be offering surgeries across the county during the consultation period. This will enable them to have a discussion with local authority staff to help inform their future business decisions and raise any queries they may have as well as discussing the survey.

We also intend to offer some online sessions for providers, particularly childminders, who are unable to attend during the times indicated.

The survey questions ask:

- Should the supplement approach for 3- and 4- year-old funding be extended to all age ranges, should we continue a different approach for different age groups or should we extend the 2-year-old funding approach with no supplements to 3- and 4-year-olds?
- Should the top slice of funding to fund local authority be equally distributed across all age ranges, or should we continue to only retain a percentage of 3- and 4- year-old funding?
- Should the former Teachers Pay and Pensions Grant funding continue to be distributed only to schools with a nursery class taught by a qualified teacher, or should all providers with a qualified early years teacher benefit from this funding, or should the funding be distributed to all providers as part of the base rate funding?
- Is the Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund enabling you to meet the needs of children and should we change the level or reach of this funding?

### **4. Conclusion & Recommendations**

**Schools Forum are asked to:**

- **Consider and comment on the proposed content of a survey to consult on changes to Norfolk's Early Years Local Funding Formula**

### **Officer Contact**

If you have any questions about matters contained or want to see copies of any assessments, e.g. equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

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

**Officer Name:**  
Jo-anne Lamb

**Tel No:**  
01603 638096

**Email address:**  
[jo-anne.lamb@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:jo-anne.lamb@norfolk.gov.uk)



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# Schools Forum

Item No.4d

<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Special Schools Funding Review</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>29 September 2023</b>

## Executive summary

Since the update to Schools Forum in July, the costs and potential funding of GCSE provision has been discussed at a special schools' Heads and Officers meeting and work continues with the residential schools to understand their costs.

The Local Authority proposes to consult with schools on changes to the special schools' funding formula during the autumn term.

The introduction of a new element recognising some additional costs of providing GCSE provision in special schools is proposed to be consulted on with all schools, alongside the mainstream schools' Fair Funding consultation, due to its potential impact on the level of DSG deficit to which the Schools Block would be contributing.

The residential element is still under review and it is anticipated that a separate consultation could be undertaken later in the autumn term for this. An estimate of the potential level of increase in costs to the DSG will be included within the consultation.

### **Schools Forum are asked to:**

- 1. Note the progress of the Special Schools Funding Review and provide any feedback to the LA or the review group with regards to the work to date and direction of future work.**
- 2. Note the LA's intention to include a proposal for meeting the costs of GCSE provision in special schools alongside the autumn consultation for mainstream schools due to its potential impact on the level of DSG deficit.**
- 3. Provide a view as to the appropriateness of a separate consultation after November's Schools Forum if there will be an impact on the total HNB (and thus DSG deficit) for 2024-25 of any proposals to change residential funding.**

## 1. Introduction

The work of the Special Schools Funding Review group will continue in the autumn term to assess the funding of residential placements. LA Officers have further meetings arranged to discuss residential provision with schools affected.

The introduction of a new element recognising some additional costs of providing GCSE provision in special schools is proposed to be consulted on with all schools alongside the mainstream schools' consultation due to its potential impact on the level of DSG deficit to which the Schools Block would be contributing.

It is proposed that any consultation required for changes to residential funding in special schools will take place at a later date due to the further work that is still required, with a recommendation from Schools Forum requested at either the November or January meeting, depending on progress.

## 2. Membership

The Special Schools Funding Review Group is made up of the following members:

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Role:</b>	<b>Representing:</b>
Amanda Fewkes	Headteacher	Fen Rivers Academy
Colin Wheelhouse	Assistant Principal	The Wherry School
Jane Stringer	Chief Finance Officer	The Wherry School
Jane Hayman	Headteacher	Fred Nicholson Special School
Keith Bates	Director of Inclusion	Broad Horizons Education Trust
Owen Jenkins	Chief Operations Officer	Broad Horizons Education Trust
Sarah Young	Headteacher	Sidestrand Hall School
Wendy Forster	School Business Manager	Sidestrand Hall School
Saul Rice	Assistant Headteacher	Duke of Lancaster
Sue Prickett	Chief Finance & Operations Officer	SENDAT
Theresa Colby	School Support Manager	Bure Park and Eaton Hall
Kim Breen	Head of Specialist SEND Provision & Funding	NCC
Lisa Roll	Finance Officer – NCC	NCC
Martin Brock	Accountant – Schools, SEN and Early Years	NCC
Ruth Lynds	Finance Officer – NCC	NCC
Sam Williams	Schools Finance Manager – NCC	NCC

The group was constituted by the LA to include representatives from ASD/SEMH special schools plus all special schools with residential provision. The group has met 4 times between March and June to consider the two areas of concern raised. A discussion took place at a special schools Heads and Officers meeting in July and further conversations have taken place with some of the schools represented at the Special Schools Funding Review group to understand their data.

## 3. GCSE Provision

An initial proposal for funding GCSE provision was discussed at a meeting of special schools Heads and Officers in July. Feedback from all special schools was requested following that meeting in order to help develop the proposal further, however, sufficient feedback has not been received to date and in order to include a proposal concurrently with the mainstream schools' consultation, the proposal will now be included without further changes made. All schools will then have a chance to provide their feedback to the consultation.

The proposal is based on the allocation of additional funding for pupils in special schools that are studying for more than 5 GCSE's at a cost of £1,626 per additional

GCSE, and is set out in Appendix A, which is a copy of a paper discussed at the Special Schools Heads and Officers meeting in July.

The estimated financial impact of implementing this proposal is approximately **£0.118m** per year, split between the following schools as follows:

School	Estimated number of qualifications attracting funding	Estimated funding (teaching element £973)	Estimated funding (exam fees, invigilation and paperwork £653 per paper)	Totals
<b>Fen Rivers</b>	20	19,460	33,303	<b>£52,763</b>
<b>Eaton Hall</b>	4	3,852	6,661	<b>£10,513</b>
<b>Bure Park</b>	0	-	-	<b>£0</b>
<b>The Wherry</b>	19	18,297	31,638	<b>£49,935</b>
<b>Duke of Lancaster</b>	2	1,926	3,330	<b>£5,256</b>
	<b>45</b>	<b>£43,535</b>	<b>£74,932</b>	<b>£118,467</b>

The options proposed to be included within the consultation are:

**Option 1** - Addition of funding for GCSE provision based on:

- a teaching element of £973 per additional GCSE, for pupils studying for more than 5 GCSE's.
- exam fees, invigilation, and paperwork at £653 per exam entered (there are more than one exam for some GCSE subjects)

This would be implemented as a new pupil characteristic with separately funded band values for the teaching element and exam element. As this characteristic has not previously been funded within the special schools' band values, and it is intended to be allocated as additional funding for the schools affected, the funding for additional GCSEs would be given in addition to any protection required for all special schools through the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG).

**Option 2** - No change to current funding arrangements

#### **4. Residential Provision**

Residential funding has not been recalculated since 2013 for the schools affected. There has been no inflation during that period.

The LA is working with Sidestrand Hall School, and the Broad Horizons Education Trust (Eaton Hall Specialist Academy and Bure Park Specialist Academy) to understand the costs of residential provision to inform any proposals for the LA to include in a separate autumn consultation.

The budgetary shortfall currently estimated by the affected schools totals **£0.969m**, split as follows:

Bure Park Specialist Academy £0.417m

Eaton Hall Academy £0.546m

Sidestrand Hall School £0.026m

### **Schools Forum are asked to:**

- 1. Note the progress of the Special Schools Funding Review and provide any feedback to the LA or the review group with regards to the work to date and direction of future work.**
- 2. Note the LA's intention to include a proposal for meeting the costs of GCSE provision in special schools alongside the autumn consultation for mainstream schools due to its potential impact on the level of DSG deficit.**
- 3. Provide a view as to the appropriateness of a separate consultation after November's Schools Forum if there will be an impact on the total HNB (and thus DSG deficit) for 2024-25 of any proposals to change residential funding.**

### **Officer Contact**

If you have any questions about matters contained or want to see copies of any assessments, e.g. equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

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

**Officer Name:**

Martin Brock

**Tel No:**

01603 223800

**Email address:**

[martin.brock@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:martin.brock@norfolk.gov.uk)



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**Appendix A - Copy of paper discussed at Special Schools Heads and Officers meeting for possible GCSE funding option**

**Special Schools Heads and Officers**

Title:	Initial GCSE Funding Option
Date of meeting:	14 July 2023

During the two previous meetings of the Special School Funding Review Group, discussion has taken place regarding the funding for provision of GCSEs in Norfolk’s Special Schools.

Whilst our top-up model was reviewed two years ago, no additional provision was given to recognise costs incurred by special schools where pupils can study and sit a high number of GCSEs i.e. greater than 5. As a result, the LA has been asked to undertake a second review.

It is accepted that each school takes the decision on how to provide for GCSEs within their own setting, and there are variations in how schools choose to do this.

It was agreed that pupils attending our ASD/ Communication and Interaction and SEMH schools are likely to be capable of accessing a mainstream style of KS4 provision, and in some schools the pupils may choose from a range of options. The number of GCSEs taken by each pupil will vary depending on ability and the curriculum offer at their school. Most of our Special schools with a mainstream ability intake are/ will be offering 5 GCSEs per pupil, and the cost of this level of provision is generally expected to be met within existing pupil funding.

We asked the relevant schools to provide us with approximate costs that they thought might be specific to GCSE provision, and from those figures we discussed ‘per pupil’ costings for those schools.

After feedback on the per pupil costings from the group, it is expected that the additional expenses that could be directly attributable to enhanced GCSE provision is the specialist teaching time, additional exam fees and invigilation time. It was acknowledged that most qualified professionals can deliver other KS4 qualifications, however GCSEs could require specialist teachers (depending on the subject on offer).

We recognise that there are pupils who may be capable of achieving a higher number of GCSEs than the anticipated five, and to support this we have provided an option whereby some additional funding might be provided.

It is assumed that a young person accesses more than 5 GCSEs when predicted attainment is level 4+ in English and maths. Where this might not be the case it would be expected that more time is spent on these core subjects.

To acknowledge the additional specialist teaching expenses for GCSEs in special schools, we have attempted to apportion the teaching costs which could be given to



schools as additional funding. We propose that this funding could be paid per pupil / per GCSE taken over and above the already anticipated number of five GCSEs.

Estimated cost of 1fte. specialist teacher (potentially covering more than one GCSE subject and based on a class of 6 pupils):

Main Pay Range level 6 with SEN 2 allowance (inc. on-costs) £58,404

<u>Specialist Teaching</u>			
Sessions / hrs formally taught in a week (6 per day)	30		
Approx sessions / hrs per week for a GCSE subject	3		
Cost of teacher for each session (over whole year)		£1,947	
3 x GCSE lessons per week (for whole year)		£5,840	
Divided by a class of 6		<u>£973</u>	per pupil / per additional exam

We have made assumptions around number of formal teaching sessions per week and the potential teaching time required for a GCSE so if this is very different, we would need to amend as necessary.

In addition, we recognise that there are other costs directly attributable to providing an above average level of GCSE provision outside of the specialist teaching. These would be covered as follows:

Exam fee		<u>£45</u>	per pupil / per additional exam
<u>Invigilation</u>			
Average number of invigilators required per exam	1.2		
Average number of hours per exam (inc breaks)	3.24		
Average hourly invigilator requirement per exam	3.89		
Scale D Teaching Assistant (£26,436 inc on costs)			
hourly rate	£13.74		
Total cost of invigilation per exam		<u>£53.42</u>	per pupil / per additional exam
<u>Paperwork</u>			
Hours required per GCSE (based on OCR qualification)	12		
Teacher hourly rate (MPR6 with on-costs)	£46.17		
Total cost of paperwork		<u>£554.03</u>	per pupil / per additional exam
<b>Total per pupil / per additional exam</b>		<b><u>£1,626</u></b>	

The total of all these elements together gives a per pupil / per exam costing of £1,626, which we propose could be funded for all pupils taking any number of GCSEs over and above the anticipated five.

As an example, a special school with 10 pupils who completed 7 GCSE's (2 above the anticipated number) could receive additional funding of £32,520.

Should this option be taken forward, we propose that the funding is split into two. Initially, we could give the teaching cost (£973 per pupil per additional exam) to enable the school to set up the additional GCSE and fund the teacher. When the pupil is entered for the exam, we would fund the remainder (£653 per pupil per exam).

This is because we have been informed that young people may study a GCSE but then not take the exam.

In order to allocate the funding, we would need to obtain data in advance from all the relevant special schools. We would need the number of pupils that are expected to take more than five GCSEs, and the number of additional exams over and above the five. The pupils will all have predicted grades of 4+ in English and maths. We will use this data to fund the initial specialist teaching element via top-ups. The second funding element for exam fees, invigilation and paperwork could be allocated retrospectively for those pupils who are entered into the GCSE exams.

Previous numbers of children achieving and sitting more than five GCSEs has been requested so that actual potential budgetary impact can be calculated and considered.

Responses to this are outstanding. Without actual potential costs impact of decisions made cannot be known. (Note: data gathered as at September'23)

This is an option to be considered by all of our special schools as any additional funding for one area of provision may limit additional funding elsewhere.

# Schools Forum

Item 4e

<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Amalgamation Protection - Disapplication</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>29 September 2023</b>

## Executive summary

The Local Authority intends to make a disapplication request for a second financial year of amalgamation protection (2024-25), for the value of 70% of two lump sums, on behalf of The Harleston Sancroft Academy.

**Schools Forum members are asked to agree the application of a second (and final) year of amalgamation protection for The Harleston Sancroft Academy, at 70% of two lump sums, for the 2024-25 financial year.**

### 1. Amalgamation Protection

The Harleston Sancroft Academy amalgamated in 2022-23. The 'Schools Revenue Funding 2023 to 2024 Operational Guide' published by the DfE for the funding of mainstream schools in the 2023-24 financial year states that where schools have amalgamated during the financial year 2022-23, or on the 1 April 2022, will retain the equivalent of 85% of the predecessor schools' lump sums for the financial year 2023-24.

The calculation for the first year of amalgamation protection funding for The Harleston Sancroft Academy, used the 2023-24 lump sum amount of £128,000. Calculation as follows:

$2 \times \text{lump sum of } \pounds 128,000 \times 85\% = \pounds 217,600$ , minus the lump sum allocated of  $\pounds 128,000 = \pounds 89,600$ .

### 2. Second Year of Protection

Local authorities may apply to the DfE for a second year of protection for schools that amalgamated during the 2023-24 financial year (having already received the first year of protection on the basis of 85% as shown above).

Applications must specify the level of protection sought, although in general the DfE would not expect the additional protection to exceed 70% of the combined lump sums. The DfE considers applications on a case-by-case basis.

In the past, all schools that have amalgamated in Norfolk have received the 70% of two lump sums for the second year of amalgamation protection, applied for by the local authority on the schools' behalf. In purely financial terms, amalgamation reduces the overall cost to the formula by the amount of one school's lump sum, and

therefore increases funding across the system and to date this has been supported through the local formula.

### **3. Application for Protection 2024-25**

Harleston CE Primary Academy and Archbishop Sancroft High School amalgamated 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022, to become The Harleston Sancroft Academy (an all-through school) and qualified for the first year of amalgamation protection in 2023-24.

The ESFA requires confirmation from Schools Forum of their continued support for the disapplication request for a second year of amalgamation protection for the school.

A second year of amalgamation protection for the school, at 70% of two lump sums, using the 2023-24 lump sum amount of £128,000, is proposed as follows:

$£128,000 \times 2 \times 70\% = £179,200$ , minus one original lump sum value of £128,000 = **£51,200 protection.**

If the second year of funding is agreed, The Harleston Sancroft Academy will receive one lump sum at the new unit value of £135,700, the amalgamation protection funding of £51,200 and split site funding of £81,400, the total of which is £268,300. If the schools had not amalgamated, they would have been allocated two lump sums totalling £271,400.

No amalgamation protection will be given to the school beyond 2024-25.

#### **Action required:**

**Schools Forum members are asked to agree the application of a second (and final) year of amalgamation protection for The Harleston Sancroft Academy, at 70% of two lump sums, for the 2024-25 financial year.**

#### **Officer Contact**

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

<b>Officer Name:</b>	<b>Tel No:</b>	<b>Email address:</b>
Samantha Williams	01603 222079	samantha.williams@norfolk.gov.uk



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# Schools Forum

Item No. 5

<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Schools Catering Group Contract Update</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>29<sup>th</sup> September 2023</b>

## Executive summary

*This report updates the Schools Forum on the activity of the Schools Catering Commissioning Group in relation to Schools Catering Group Contract arrangements for Norfolk Schools, including commissioning options, commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.*

**Schools Forum are asked to note the update and provide any feedback to the Schools Catering Commissioning Group as they continue their work.**

## Background

At the last Schools Forum meeting it was determined that going to tender for a new schools catering contract would be preferable, and that a Schools Catering Commissioning Group (SSCG) should be established to support this. The SCCG was to consist of school leader representatives in order to provide a steer and make a series of decisions on:

- Determining whether it is preferable or feasible to stick to the end March 24 timeline or seek an extension to the process to end August 24.
- Opening the contract to all schools, including academies;
- Offering the tender as one lot for the whole of Norfolk vs geographical lots;
- Building in costs of LACA membership and / or meal checking service;
- Determining the cost model of the scheme, given the likely or possible impact on different types of schools;
- Determining whether there should be a lot for repairs and maintenance;
- Determining the nature and scope of input from NCC;
- Engaging a catering consultant to advise and / or implement some or all of the procurement process;
- Producing an engagement plan for schools in order to assess (and gain) 'buy in'.

The SCCG's current role is not to performance manage the existing contract, but to assist with the review and potential procurement of a new contract. However, in the future, the group could be properly constituted to act as a representative schools body and to oversee quality assurance, commissioning and procurement.

## Update

Six school leaders, including current and previous Members of the Schools Forum, agreed to meet as the SCCG: Martin White, Sarah Shirras, Ashley Best-White, Tom Snowdon, Paul Dunning, and Georgie Howell. The first meeting took place on 19<sup>th</sup> July, followed by an email consultation in August, and a follow up meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

The group have provided the following steer:

1. **There is still an appetite to go out to procurement** for a new schools catering group contract for Norfolk to ensure best value and quality provision.
2. **NCC were asked to approach Norse for a further extension of the current contract in order to provide the best chance of a successful tender.** NCC procurement colleagues and external stakeholders agreed that the original timeline (end March 24) presented a serious risk of failure, and NCC's legal team confirmed the legal basis for extension. The SCCG advised that a year's further extension (to end March 25) would align better for maintained schools currently in the contract according to the financial year end.

*Commissioning and procurement colleagues are due to meet with Norse on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023; a verbal update will be provided in the Schools Forum meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Whilst it was assumed that terms and conditions should largely continue as they are now, the group have provided initial advice on preferences and potential changes they would like to see reflected in a further contract extension for the purposes of this discussion.*

**The new contract should include non-maintained schools going forward.**

**The new contract should be offered as one lot** for the whole of Norfolk in order to achieve best value and economy of scale. There may be an option to add optional geographical lots, but the main basis of the procurement should be one county-wide lot.

**LACA membership and / or meal checking service was regarded as unnecessary**, given the assurances we will be asking for from providers around nutrition and quality assurance and subsequent performance management measures.

**There is support for a 'per meal' pricing model from providers**, since this is common across most providers (enabling like-for-like comparison) and provides the greatest incentive to providers to deliver a quality service and focus on increasing meal take up. **However, a formula or discount system should be applied** by those administering financial arrangements to find a 'sweet spot' on pricing to ensure that it is competitive for different types of schools, e.g. small vs large schools, or those with kitchens vs. those without.

**The current lot for repairs and maintenance will not be continued in the new contract**, leaving it to schools to make their own arrangements via insurance or

otherwise. However, it should be included in the further contract extension period with Norse to provide those relevant schools sufficient time to make other arrangements.

**NCC were asked to provide commissioning and procurement functions identified at the 19<sup>th</sup> July SCCG meeting, namely:**

- a. Initial procurement and tender process
- b. Communication and engagement with schools
- c. Financial administration
- d. Ongoing performance management
- e. Contract management
- f. SCCG administration

These functions could potentially be fulfilled by another stakeholder or a third party, e.g. a consultant (see **Appendix A**), but no other option was found to be viable at this time.

**Children's Services leadership has since agreed to cover the costs of Commissioning and Procurement up until end March 2024** (including the costs of a consultant to help shape the tender) and is willing to dedicate resource going forward. However, in the same way that financial administration is included in the costs of the group contract, so future commissioning, performance management and procurement will need to be factored into the cost model (see **Appendix A**).

There were mixed feelings in the group with regards to these additional service costs. On the one hand, it could result in increased financial pressure on schools and a challenge to perceived viability. On the other hand, the revised cost model described above will remove the upfront costs schools currently pay Norse, and commissioning support should achieve a better deal, better outcomes and fewer issues for the life of the contract. Financial viability will become clear when the group finally receives quotes from providers and decides on a pricing model, at which point the SCCG will be able to make a determination. The same formula or discount system for different types of schools could potentially apply to these service costs to maximise affordability.

**Consultants will be engaged by the commissioning team to help shape the tender and evaluation process up until end March 2024.** Further consultant input beyond this point will be decided by the SCCG (indicative costs in **Appendix A**).

**Communications will be going out to schools in the current contract** following the Schools Forum Meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> September, and following a clear indication from Norse with regards to further contract extension; Sarah Shirras and Martin White have already given an initial indication of the work going on to those in Educate Norfolk's Headteachers' network. The group have advised that messaging should include:

- g. The fact that schools / school leaders are involved in the process;
- h. That it addresses concerns raised historically;

- i. That the proposed extension provides the best chance to ensure the best outcomes in the longer term;
- j. An overview of the newly reformed consultative group and its performance management role;
- k. Clear timescales and key dates;
- l. A brief overview rather than lots of detail;
- m. An emphasis on the need for engagement, with an invitation to share thoughts and get involved.



## Appendix A: Future commissioning, procurement and contract management costs

Costs listed below are fixed, so 'cost per school' is entirely indicative.

Using 100 schools as an example, indicative commissioning, procurement and contract management costs are £520 per school per annum over a 4 year period, plus the existing £200 p/a for financial administration. However, opening the group contract to non-maintained schools should increase the number of schools participating, resulting in a decrease in per-school cost over time.

It is also expected that in the new contract, provider costs will be on a per meal basis with no upfront management / balancing fee.

Activity	Estimated Cost (ICT role)	Estimated cost of a consultant	Potential cost per school (based on 100 schools)	How it will be recouped
<b>Integrated Commissioning Team (ICT) input between April and August 2023</b> <i>(0.3 – 0.4fte Commissioning Manager)</i>	£6-8k	n/a	n/a	n/a <b>NCC will cover these costs</b>
<b>Commissioning &amp; procurement process from 1/9/23 to 31/3/24</b> <i>(0.2fte Commissioning Manager and 0.2fte Commissioning Officer for 7 months)</i>	£12k	Expert input for ICT = £15 – 25k	n/a	n/a <b>NCC will cover these costs</b>
<b>Commissioning &amp; procurement process from 1/4/24 to launch of new service 31/3/25</b> <i>(Resource increasing towards launch to support mobilisation)</i>	£45k	OR £76k to manage whole process instead of ICT.	£450 NCC (£600 – 700 with consultant input TBC) OR £760 for consultant to manage whole process.	Built into cost of contracts between April 2024 – end March 2028.
<b>Performance management of 12-month extended contract with Norse</b> <i>(0.2fte Commissioning Manager and 0.2fte Commissioning Officer for 12 months)</i>	£20k	£50 per school, per month (min. of 50 schools)	£200 each for ICT OR £600 each for a consultant	Built into cost of contracts between April 2024 – end March 2028.
<b>Performance management of new contract from 1/4/25</b> <i>Year 1 £33k (higher due to mobilisation) Year 2 £20k</i>	Average cost p/a £26k	£50 per school, per month (min. of 50 schools)	£260 p/a for NCC OR £600 p/a for consultant	Built into cost of contracts between April 2024 – end March 2028.
<b>Future procurement costs</b>	£50k	n/a	£500	Built into cost of contracts between April 2024 – end March 2028.

T: Integrated Commissioning Team, NCC)

Financial year in which charges will be applied	Total Cost	Indicative cost per school p/a to NCC (based on 100 schools)	Service Provided
<b>2024-2025</b>	£20,000	£200	ICT Performance management during Norse contract extension (Norse costs will also apply)
<b>2025-2026</b>	£65,000 + £33,000	£980	Tender process including consultant fees, mobilisation and performance management costs in year 1
<b>2026-2027</b>	£20,000 + £25,000	£450	ICT BAU Performance management, plus first instalment of costs towards new procurement in 2028 (£50k total).
<b>2027-2028</b>	£20,000 + £25,000	£450	ICT BAU Performance management, plus second instalment of costs towards new procurement in 2028.
<b>Total</b>	<b>£208,000</b>	<b>£2,080, or £520 per school p/a averaged over 4 yrs.</b>	
<i>Ongoing additional financial admin costs</i>	<i>£20,000</i>	<i>+£200 p/a</i>	<i>As per current arrangement</i>

# Schools Forum

Item No.6

<b>Report title:</b>	<b>DfE Risk Protection Arrangement</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>29 September 2023</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	
<p>In Norfolk, funds to pay for insurances are fully delegated to LA maintained schools and governors are therefore free to procure where they choose. However, to date 100% of LA maintained schools have bought back the NCC insurance via the NCC Insurance Team, whereby the LA is fully assured that the cover is adequate in all areas and schools have access to appropriate advice and support mechanisms.</p>	
<p>In April 2020 the Department for Education (DfE) extended the Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) that had been provided to academies for several years to the LA maintained school sector. They believe that the RPA would offer a benefit to schools by giving them financial savings. However, it has stated that where the LA or the insurance sector offers good value for schools, the DfE is happy for schools to continue with these arrangements. Nonetheless, where schools consider that this is not the case, then schools can join the RPA.</p>	
<p>Unlike the NCC insurance that LA maintained schools currently have the advantage of, the RPA is not an insurance product; it is a risk protection arrangement (pooled fund) where all the members pay the same flat rate, regardless of risk. This means that there is no incentive on any member to reduce claims or improve security and fire protection measures and there is no indication of what may happen should the pool encounter a large number of significant claims and have a deficit of funds.</p>	
<p>In March 2023, the DfE refreshed the offer and some schools have asked the LA to look at how it now compares to NCC's insurance offer for maintained schools.</p>	
<p>The cost of the RPA for LA schools in this financial year (1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024) is to be £23 per pupil; it is believed that this will increase for the next financial year based upon the levels of claims being received.</p>	
<p>There is still some legal uncertainty on the positions regarding lease agreements, responsibility to employees and property ownership and maintenance for any LA schools that may opt into this scheme.</p>	
<b>Schools Forum are asked to:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Note the contents of the report and the proposal that the LA encourages maintained schools to remain with the current comprehensive NCC insurance arrangements at least for 2024/25, under the current 5-year NCC insurance programme.</b></li><li>• <b>Provide any feedback to the LA regarding the proposed approach, including a view as to whether further engagement of schools should be undertaken</b></li></ul>	

**ahead of June 2024 to enable the right number of schools to be built into the market engagement with insurers for the next 5-year NCC insurance programme.**

## **1. Background and Purpose**

1.1 Norfolk County Council's Insurance Team have consistently provided comprehensive insurance cover for all LA educational establishments since the inception of Locally Maintained Schools (LMS) in the early 1990s.

1.2 Initially, the cost of insurance was a separate item within schools' budget shares, which was delegated then de-delegated. This meant, in effect, that insurance was fully funded for each school by the funding model.

1.3 However, with changes to the funding formula, the funding for insurance is now fully delegated to all schools including LA maintained schools, and governors are free to procure insurance from whatever source they choose.

1.4 Norfolk's Scheme for Financing Schools, Section 10: Insurance, states:  
"If funds for insurance are delegated to any school, the Authority will require the school to demonstrate that cover relevant to an Authority's insurance interests, under a policy arranged by the Governing Body, meets the minimum standard cover set by the Authority. The Authority will have regard to the actual risks, which might reasonably be expected to arise in determining the adequacy of cover at each school."

1.5 Despite the funding changes, the LA have continued to strongly recommend that maintained schools opt to buy back into the NCC Insurance Team offering as it has, up to now, been seen as the most comprehensive and best value offer on the market. It gives all schools the peace of mind of knowing that everything that needs to be insured is covered at the correct level and at an affordable price and gives the LA the requisite assurance as per the Scheme for Financing Schools.

1.6 To date 100% of LA maintained schools have bought back the NCC insurance via the NCC Insurance Team.

1.7 The membership rules for the Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) for LA maintained schools were updated in March 2023. Information and guidance published by the DfE is available here:

[The risk protection arrangement \(RPA\) for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-risk-protection-arrangement-rpa-for-schools)

## **2. Comparison**

### **2.1 Coverage**

Attached at appendix A is a table of the insurance offered to all areas of the Council as part of the NCC insurance programme along with a comparison with

the RPA. On a like for like basis the policy schedules of both the RPA and NCC are generally to an industry standard, with similar policy wording. Excess charges are similar except Material Damage (Property and Contents cover) where the RPA excess is £250 for primary schools (£500 others) and NCC is £200 for each and every claim. The policy is comprehensive and is designed to cover perils and sudden events (i.e. not wear and tear). It works in conjunction with other LA schemes such as the Building Maintenance Partnership Pool (BMP) to offer a holistic approach to risk-management of school buildings, staff, students, visitors and other risks.

2.2 The insurance programme provides in-house claims handling on Liability and Motor, up to the excess £290K and Material Damage up to £260K. In addition the offering provides claims management up to the excess and in conjunction with the insurer on claims above the excess. The catastrophe cover (above the excess) is provided through the external insurers, Zurich Municipal for Liability and Motor and AIG for Material Damage.

2.3 Unlike the NCC insurance, RPA does not offer cover for a number of policies including Motor and Contractors All Risk (for building works above £250,000) or staff absence-related insurance, this latter being an offer provided by the LA Education teams. It is the responsibility of the school to procure and manage additional insurance in these areas and ensure that policy cover is adequate to mitigate all risks as liability will rest with the individual schools. Further, additional cover would also need to be procured and managed by the school, should it be required, for any additional specific policies on an individual basis. This will bring additional burden on already under pressure administration staff within the school to procure and manage insurance policies.

2.4 The RPA provides a form of Contractors' All Risk (Works in progress) cover subject to a limit of £250,000 for each and every loss on the property. Any works above this figure insurance will need to be procured and managed by the school where building works are being undertaken. The policy is normally in joint names, the contractor and the employer (the school). As the RPA does not provide "insurance cover" it is unable to provide a joint name policy and is unable to waive subrogation rights. The NCC insurance policy offering covers all works up to a value of £10m on each project.

2.5 The RPA does not provide Motor insurance and it will be the responsibility of the school to procure and manage suitable insurance cover that will protect the driver, the passengers, the vehicle, and all third-party injuries/damage. Currently all school vehicles are insured through the NCC Motor insurance policy and benefits from being part of a much larger mixed portfolio of vehicles bringing savings as a result of the economy of scale.

### **Claims Handling**

The RPA uses commercial claims management companies to handle all claims and they do not appear to provide claims management advice or site visits. Claims are presented through an electronic portal with little or no interaction

2.6 with the handlers. It is likely that the handling, management and supervision of claims will be the responsibility of the school staff on site, rather than the claims handling companies. Schools will clearly need to consider the potential increased administration costs in managing claims as part of the RPA, particularly around property damage and restoration of buildings.

2.7 The NCC Insurance Team is responsible for handling all classes of claim below the excess, providing operational risk management and advice on all insurance matters. They have local knowledge and provide onsite incident management support where necessary. The team works closely with insurers, legal providers and specialist experts to deliver a comprehensive, cost-effective service and includes individuals highly qualified in legal matters, property construction, motor and property and risk management.

2.8 The team provide support to staff, particularly in liability cases, where they will deal with witness evidence and investigations, taking statement, collating documentation and, if necessary, support leading up to and at Court where staff will be required to give evidence. The team have experience dealing with solicitors and barristers in such cases and are familiar with the Court procedures.

### **Risk Management**

2.9 NCC, with the help of their insurers, have proactively worked with schools over many years to improve the risks, ensuring buildings are safe, secure and pupils are safeguarded. The RPA appears to have no such risk management provision and the price per pupil does not take into consideration the level of risk at an individual school. This highlights that there is no incentive for schools to improve or effectively manage the risks they have, potentially increasing the levels of claims overall and increasing the reputational risks to the school and the LA. There is also no incentive to reduce risks to prevent losses and good risk schools are not rewarded with reduced premiums.

2.10 The RPA provides limited risk management advice through a risk management advisory company, Willis Towers Watson and their on-line portal. NPS, on behalf of NCC, along with the insurers, undertake a programme of school's surveys to help identify risks and make recommendations to improve them. The RPA undertakes such on site surveys and therefore has no way of ensuring standards are maintained or risks are improved in schools.

2.11 Willis Towers Watson indicate they can undertake such surveys although there is no indication if this is included in the price per pupil rate. DfE has suggested that if schools want to augment the limited risk management, insurance expertise and claims handling provision of the RPA they could purchase additional support from the LA insurance teams. Currently at NCC this is provided at no extra cost to schools; it forms part of the premium. A school in the RPA requiring these services will need to factor in these additional costs above the RPA rate.

## **Cost of Insurance**

2.12 The DfE has stated that it is not possible to be precise about the actual costs of insurance for LA maintained schools. Insurance premiums are calculated on a risk basis, some schools will have higher (or lower) costs than others depending upon their individual circumstances.

2.13 The premiums for schools in Norfolk are based on a number of factors including the total rebuild value of the property, the number of pupils and staff and the last 5 years claims history. None of these factors are taken into account with the RPA.

2.14 Currently the RPA is charging a premium of £23 per pupil for the policies they are offering for the 2023-24 period; it is likely that this will need to increase for future years in the face of increasing claim costs that have been reported.

2.15 The average per pupil cost for insurance in Norfolk LA maintained schools in 2023/24 is £28.13, although some schools with higher property values have seen higher rates per pupil. This excludes motor insurance but includes additional elements that are not within RPA, so is not directly comparable to RPA.

## **3. Proposal**

3.1 It is the LA's recommendation that maintained schools remain within NCC insurance arrangements, at least for 2024-25 (the final year of the current 5-year NCC insurance programme), rather than moving to RPA due to the benefits the insurance offer brings versus the potential hidden costs and uncertainties of the RPA offer.

3.2 NCC would, ideally, want to know by June 2024 if schools are expecting to leave the LA's insurance offer for 2025-26 onwards so that the market engagement with insurers reflects the true position and premiums for the organisation (including those schools remaining within the insurance offer) are appropriate to the risks.

## **4. Impact of the Proposal**

4.1 NCC, as landlord for a number of the schools, along with the landlords of other properties e.g., the Dioceses of Norwich and East Anglia etc, would need assurance that any insurance arrangements are adequate to safeguard the properties.

4.2 Additionally, where NCC are the employer of staff in schools, they would need to be assured that any staff-related insurances are adequate to safeguard governors and the employers from any claims that might arise. This would equally apply to foundation schools where the governors are the employer.

4.3 The DfE consultation report notes that there is a likely impact to Local Authorities insurance portfolios, but this cannot as yet be quantified. This

impact may include increased premiums to those schools remaining in the LA scheme as the benefits of economy of scale diminishes.

## **5. Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

- 5.1 There is currently uncertainty around the legal position of both the property owned by the LA but “insured” by another body and where ultimate responsibility would lie if there was a disagreement about reinstatement. Similarly, there is confusion around the staff; unlike an academy trust, they remain employed by the LA who remains responsible for training, health and safety, and wellbeing.
- 5.2 Because the RPA is a pooled fund and not an insurance provision, there is no legally binding contract between parties. Where NCC contracts with an insurer there is the legal right to pursue through the Courts should there be a refusal to honour a substantial claim. There is no such provision with a pooled fund; if a claim is refused, there is no appeal process.
- 5.3 2024-25 is the final year of NCC’s current 5-year insurance programme. If significant numbers of schools were to leave the LA’s insurance offer for 2024-25 then there is a risk that the remainder of the organisation, including those schools who remain within the LA’s insurance offer, will suffer additional premiums that would have been charged to those schools that have then left.

## **6. Alternative Options**

- 6.1. Schools are free to source alternative options, but this is a time-consuming administrative burden, and the school would have to satisfy the LA’s requirement that such a policy or policies meets the minimum standards required (as per the Scheme for Financing Schools).

## **7. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 As the LA, it is difficult to identify the cost implications for individual schools of remaining with the LA insurance programme versus moving to the RPA offer, due to the potential hidden costs of the RPA offer highlighted earlier in the report. Each school would need to consider both the direct cost of premiums plus the additional costs as outlined depending upon which route is chosen.
- 6.2 If a significant number of schools were to leave the insurance offer for 2024-25 (or after agreement of terms of future years’ insurance offers by NCC with their insurers), then there is a risk that NCC will suffer additional costs, including maintained schools remaining in the offer, due to the need to share premiums that would have been charged to those schools who have left. This risk would be reduced by as early notice as possible that a school is choosing to move to the RPA offer. As an example, NCC is currently negotiating terms with the current insurers for 2024-25, and so notice from schools now could result in ensuring that those terms only relate to the schools who wish to be within the programme.

7.1. **Health and Safety implications** (where appropriate)

There are potential Health & Safety implications if schools obtain insurance that does not meet the minimum standards, and this may put buildings and people at risk. This may require further investigation.

**8. Risk Implications/Assessment**

8.1. There are no other issues or risks other than those listed elsewhere in this document.

**9. Recommendations – Schools Forum are asked to:**

- 9.1.
- Note the contents of the report and the proposal that the LA encourages maintained schools to remain with the current comprehensive NCC insurance arrangements at least for 2024/25, under the current 5-year NCC insurance programme.
  - Provide any feedback to the LA regarding the proposed approach, including a view as to whether further engagement of schools should be undertaken ahead of June 2024 to enable the right number of schools to be built into the market engagement with insurers for the next 5-year NCC insurance programme.

**10. Background Papers**

- NCC v RPA insurance cover comparison
- RPA membership rules

**Officer Contact**

If you have any questions about matters contained or want to see copies of any assessments, e.g., equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

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

**Officer Name:**

Dawn Filtness

Steve Rayner

**Tel No:**

01603 228834

01603 224372

**Email address:**

[dawn.filtness@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:dawn.filtness@norfolk.gov.uk)

[steve.rayner@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:steve.rayner@norfolk.gov.uk)



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.



## Appendix A – Comparison of NCC insurance offer vs RPA

Risk Insured	Description	LA Insurance Limit	LA Insurance Deductible	RPA Limit	RPA member Retention
<b>Material Damage</b>	Loss or damage to buildings, contents, computers and stock owned by or the responsibility of the school. NCC Cover includes fine art and other cultural assets, there is no fixed limit on this and is provided up to the required sum insured.	Reinstatement value of the property or contents	£200	Reinstatement value of the property. Cover includes Terrorism to the full reinstatement value.	£250 (primary) £500 (all other members) each and every loss other than subsidence (£1,000)
<b>Business Interruption</b>	Compensation for increase in cost of working, resulting from interruption or interference with the business following a material damage loss	£10M, excluding loss of revenue	Nil	£10m any one loss, excluding loss of revenue	£250 (primary) £500 (all other members), other than subsidence (£1,000).
<b>Employers Liability</b>	All sums the school may become legally liable to pay (including claimants' costs and expenses) following death, injury or disease sustained by Employees and arising out of and in the course of their employment, including all legal costs defending a claim.	£50M	Nil	Unlimited	Nil
<b>Public Liability</b>	For all sums the school may become legally liable to pay (including claimants' costs and expenses) as damages in respect of accidental third-party injury or third-party property damage NCC cover includes all legal costs defending a claim.	£50M	Nil	Unlimited	Nil

<b>Governors' liability</b>	Governors' liability NCC cover included in Officials Indemnity cover	£50m	Nil	£10M any one loss and any one membership year	Nil
<b>Professional Indemnity</b>	All activities undertaken by the insured in accordance with their statutory powers on behalf of third-party clients, NCC cover includes all legal costs defending a claim.	£5M	Nil	Actual or alleged breach of professional duty Unlimited	£1,000 each and every loss
<b>Employee and third-party dishonesty Crime Policy (Fidelity Guarantee)</b>	Direct pecuniary loss due to the dishonesty of employees and/or theft of money by computer fraud	£10M in respect of Employee and Computer Fraud including legal costs in bringing a claim	Nil	£500,000 any one loss and any one membership year	£250 (primary) £500 (all other members) each and every loss
<b>Money</b>	Loss of money whilst in transit or elsewhere NCC cover as part of Material Damage Policy	Various, including cash on premises or in transit up to £10,000	Nil	Various, including cash on premises or in transit £5,000	£50 (primary) £100 (all other members) each and every loss
<b>Personal Accident</b>	In the event that the insured person is injured by violent, accidental, external and visible means	£1M max individual limit.	Nil		
<b>Personal Accident</b>	Compensation for accidental bodily injury to employees, governors, trustees, volunteers and pupils whilst on academy business in the UL	£1M max individual limit.	Nil	Death and capital benefits £100,000	Nil

<b>Travel UK and Overseas</b>	It covers a range of benefits resulting from Travel, including Crisis Containment Management and Medical Second Opinion Service, relating to an organised trip.				
<b>Travel UK</b>	Compensation for travel related costs including loss of baggage, cancellation, curtailment, rearrangement and change of itinerary	Baggage and money £2,500 max per person. Cancellation £5,000 max per person	£25	Baggage and money £2,000 per person. Cancellation £1,000 per person	Nil
<b>Travel Overseas (including winter sports) and personal accident</b>	Compensation for travel related costs outside of the UK including medical expenses, loss of baggage, cancellation, curtailment, rearrangement and change of itinerary.  Compensation for accidental bodily injury to employees, governors, trustees, volunteers, and pupils of the school whilst on school business outside of the UK	Medical expense £Unlimited Baggage £2,500 max per person. Cancellation £5,000 max per person	£25	Medical expenses £10M per person. Baggage £2,000 per person. Cancellation £4,000 per person (£250,000 per trip) Death and capital benefits £100,000 per person	Nil in respect of medical expenses £50 in respect of baggage  Nil in respect of cancellation
<b>Contractors All Risks</b>	Damage caused to contract work on the contract site or whilst in transit. Damage caused to the contract works in accordance with the maintenance cover during the maintenance period. Damage to private dwelling houses constructed as part of the contract for a period of 180 days;	£10M including joint names cover if required	Nil	<b>Within the MD cover</b> Subject to a limit of £250,000 each and every loss the at the property,	£250 (primary) £500 (all other members) each and every loss

	and buildings intended for commercial use constructed as part of the contract for a period of 90 days; following practical completion of the individual building or until the date it is sold, whichever is earlier.			includes all works for incorporation in respect of contract works being carried out	
<b>Legal expenses</b>	Reimbursement of legal expenses relating to employment disputes, contractual disputes, tax investigations, civil actions in relation to school expulsions			£100,000 and one loss and any one membership year	£250 (primary) £500 (all other members) each and every loss
<b>Cultural assets</b>	Loss or damage to cultural assets (including works of art) owned by or the responsibility of the school	Included in material damage cover above		£10,000 per item, maximum £250,000 any one loss of multiple cultural assets	£50 (primary) £100 (all other members)
<b>Motor</b>	Third party liability in respect of death of or bodily injury to any person and damage to property. It also covers damage to school and third-party vehicles when liability is caused by or arises out of the use of the vehicle or in connection with the loading or unloading of the vehicle. In addition, the insurer will pay Costs and Expenses, including all legal costs defending a claim.	Comprehensive	£500	Externally procured (not RPA)	

## SCHOOLS FORUM FORWARD PLAN – 2023/24 Academic Year

### I – Information & Discussion

### D- Decision

	Autumn Term			Spring Term			Summer Term	
<b>29/9/23</b> (Friday)  09:00 – 12:00	<b>September (Cranworth Room CH)</b>  Strategic Planning (inc. Local First Inclusion)  Provisional DSG Allocations for 2024/25 and Fair Funding Consultation for Mainstream Schools' Formula  Early Years Funding Consultation  Special Schools Funding Review	  <b>I</b>  <b>D</b>  <b>D</b>  <b>D</b>	<b>26/01/24</b> (Friday)  09:00 – 12:00	<b>January (Cranworth Room CH)</b>  Election of Chair/Vice Chair  Review Membership  Strategic Planning (inc. Local First Inclusion)  Proposed DSG Budget including central costs  Pupil variations 2024/25  Special Schools Residential Funding	  <b>D</b>  <b>D</b>  <b>I</b>  <b>D</b>  <b>I</b>  <b>D</b>	<b>17/05/24</b> (Friday)  09:00 – 12:00	<b>May (Cranworth Room CH)</b>  Strategic Planning (inc. Local First Inclusion)  Dedicated Schools Grant 2023/24 Outturn  Annual Audit Report (Norfolk Audit Service)	  <b>I</b>  <b>I</b>  <b>I</b>
<b>22/11/23</b> (Wednesday)  09:00 – 13:00	<b>November (Cranworth Room CH)</b>  Strategic Planning (inc. Local First Inclusion)  Early Years Block 2024/25 Funding Formula Update (inc. consultation outcomes)  Schools Block (inc. consultation outcomes and Schools Block transfer)  De-delegation/Central Schools Services Block  Special Schools Funding Consultation	  <b>I</b>  <b>D</b>  <b>D</b>  <b>D</b>  <b>D</b>	<b>13/03/24</b> (Wednesday)  09:00 – 12:00	<b>March (Cranworth Room CH)</b>  Strategic Planning (inc. Local First Inclusion)  Agree next year's plan  Final pupil variations (only if changed from January)	  <b>I</b>  <b>D</b>  <b>I</b>	<b>10/07/24</b> (Wednesday)  09:00 – 12:00	<b>July (Cranworth Room CH)</b>  Strategic Planning (inc. Local First Inclusion)  Updates on Scheme for Financing Schools (Financial Regulations)  Dedicated Schools Grant Consultation Preparation	  <b>I</b>  <b>D</b>  <b>I</b>