

**SCHOOL FUNDING 2025-26:
RECOMMENDATION FOR THE SCHOOLS LOCAL FUNDING FORMULA.****Purpose of the Report**

1. To inform the Schools Forum of the responses from schools and academies to the Authority's local funding formula consultation.
2. To seek agreement of the recommendation for the 2025-26 local funding formula for mainstream schools and academies to be presented to the Local Authority's Members.

Information and Advice

3. The formal consultation on the proposals for mainstream schools and academies was held from 20th November to 4th December 2024.
4. In order to agree the recommendation for the local funding formula, Schools Forum members will need to vote on the proposals, in consideration with the financial models and responses to the consultation.
5. Forum members are reminded that, in accordance with the Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012, only the following members are allowed to participate in a vote regarding the local funding formula:
 - Schools (Primary, Secondary and Special)
 - Academies
 - Governors
 - Private, Voluntary and Independent providers

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

Consultation responses

6. A total of 81 (79 in 2023) responses were received to the Schools consultation which was a response rate of 24.0%
7. A full analysis of the responses received, along with the comments for each question are attached as **Appendix A**.
8. The responses to the questions on the LA's proposals are summarised below.

Consultation Proposals

9. All proposals requiring a decision for 2025-26 are outlined in paragraphs 11 to 17 below.
10. Prior to each proposal; reference will be made to the consultation responses and comments received, at **Appendix A**, for consideration by the Forum.

Schools Local Funding Formula

11. Question one was: *If it is not affordable to fund all schools and academies at National Funding Formula levels, how should mitigation be actioned. Please select one of the two models?*

<i>Model</i>	<i>Preference</i>
<i>1 – Reduce formula factors</i>	
<i>2 – Introduce a gains cap</i>	

12. 42 of the 81 respondents (52%) preferred option 1 with 39 (48%) preferring option 2. **School forum are invited to vote on which is their preferred model.**
13. The consultation also asked for additional comments on the models. These are listed in **Appendix A**.

De-delegation of funding for maintained primary and secondary schools

14. As outlined in the consultation document, there are five services that the local authority wishes to continue to operate centrally, funded through de-delegation of budget from maintained schools.
15. Of the 81 responses; 42 were from maintained schools. The consultation responses showed that the majority of maintained school respondents felt that all five of the services should be centrally operated and funded by de-delegation. For detailed responses please refer to **Appendix A**.
16. The decision on whether to de-delegate funding for these services is made by the members of the Forum who represent the maintained primary and secondary sector. As de-delegation decisions can differ between the sectors, separate votes will need to take place.
17. A vote is required by primary and secondary phase of **maintained school members** on the following services and rates:

Question 2 (to be answered by maintained schools only)

Do you agree to the de-delegation of the following in 2025-26?

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

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

	Primary per pupil de-delegation	Secondary per pupil de-delegation
Free school meal eligibility assessment	£0.70	£0.70
Support to underperforming ethnic minority groups and bilingual learners	£8.21	£8.21
Contingency for primary crisis communications	£0.92	£0.00
Trade Union Facilities	£2.21	£2.21
School Improvement	£14.37	£14.37

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Schools Forum

- 1) Notes the content of the report; and
- 2) Undertakes the votes required to recommend the schools local funding formula for 2025-26. The schools local funding formula will be discussed at a Cabinet Member Briefing meeting in January 2025, with final approval by 22 January 2025. The funding formula will be submitted to the DfE on 22 January 2025.

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