

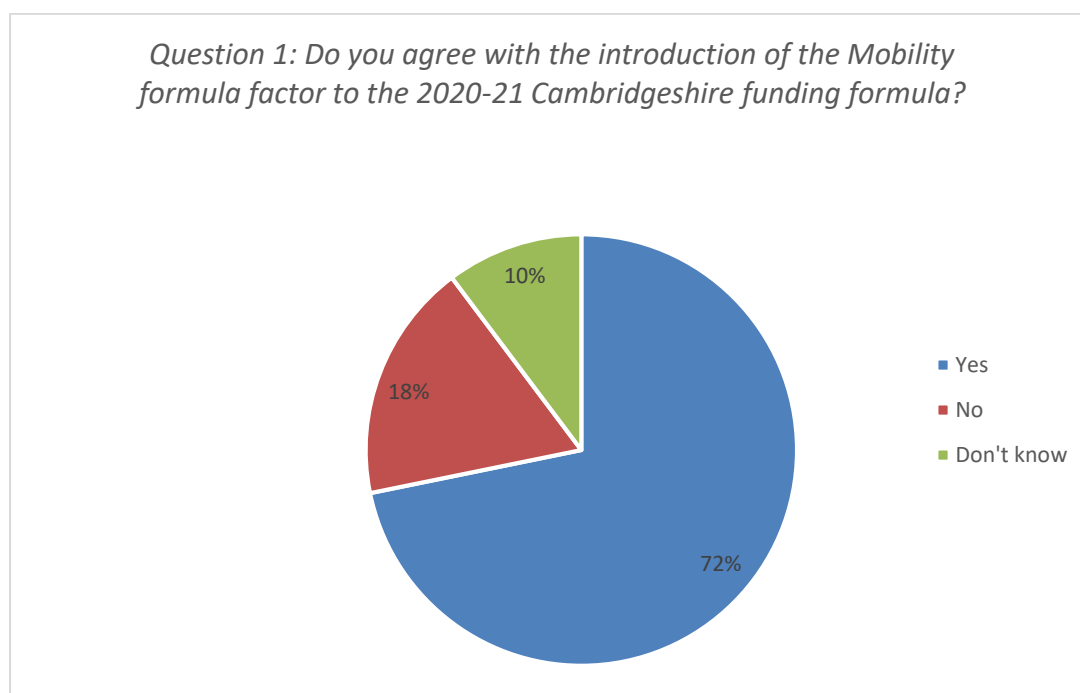
Appendix D

School Funding Consultation 2020/21 - Survey Results (as at 16th December 2019)

A total of 117 responses were received by the revised closing date of Friday 13th December. The information below analyses the responses in more detail and **Appendix 1** provides the full detail of all of the narrative responses where comments were requested.

Question 1: Do you agree with the introduction of the Mobility formula factor to the 2020-21 Cambridgeshire funding formula?

In response question 1, the vast majority (72%) agree with the introduction of the Mobility formula factor. Just over a quarter of respondents do not know or disagree with this introduction (28%).



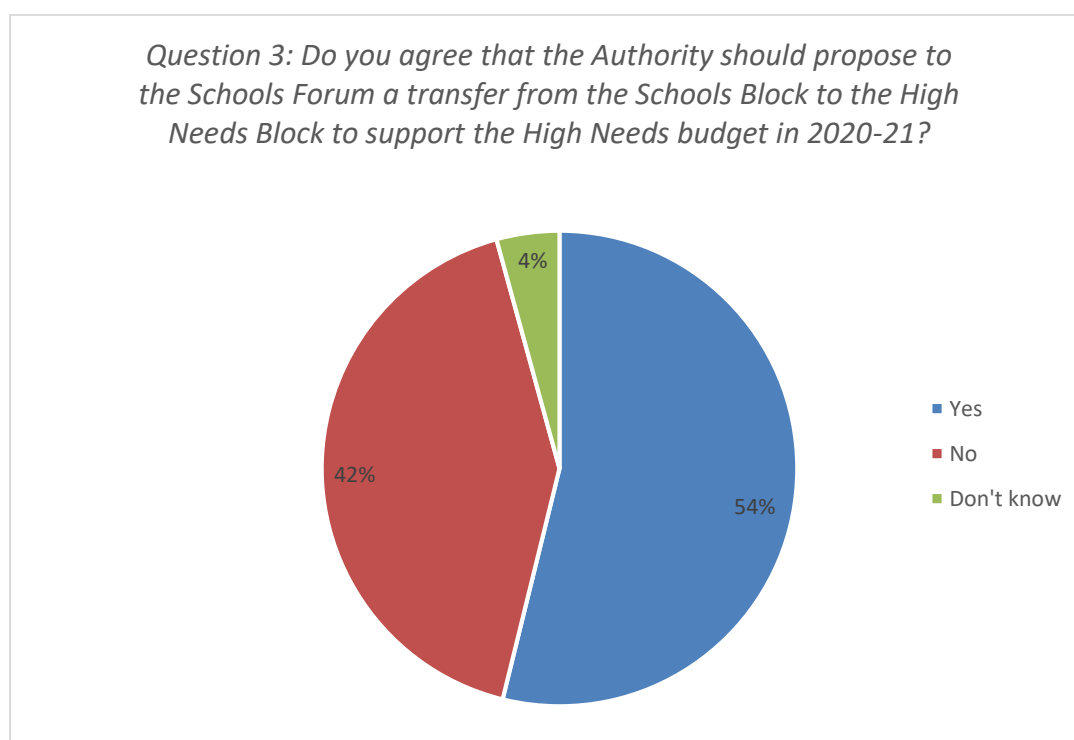
Question 2: If not, please explain why?

A number of responses stated that there was not enough information on how the mobility factor would work and the impact for individual schools. Other answers suggested a lack of understanding of the purpose of the mobility factor.

Further details were subsequently provided in the frequently asked questions document which was circulated to all schools.

Question 3 Do you agree that the Authority should propose to the Schools Forum a transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block to support the High Needs Budget in 2020-21?

In regards to question three, a narrow majority (54%) of respondents agreed with the idea that the Authority should propose to the Schools Forum a transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block to support the High Needs budget in 2020-21. However, a significant proportion of respondents disagreed with this (42%).



Question 4: Do you have an alternative proposal for how the local area should respond to the accumulated deficit on high needs, reaching a balanced position over the medium term of 3 years?

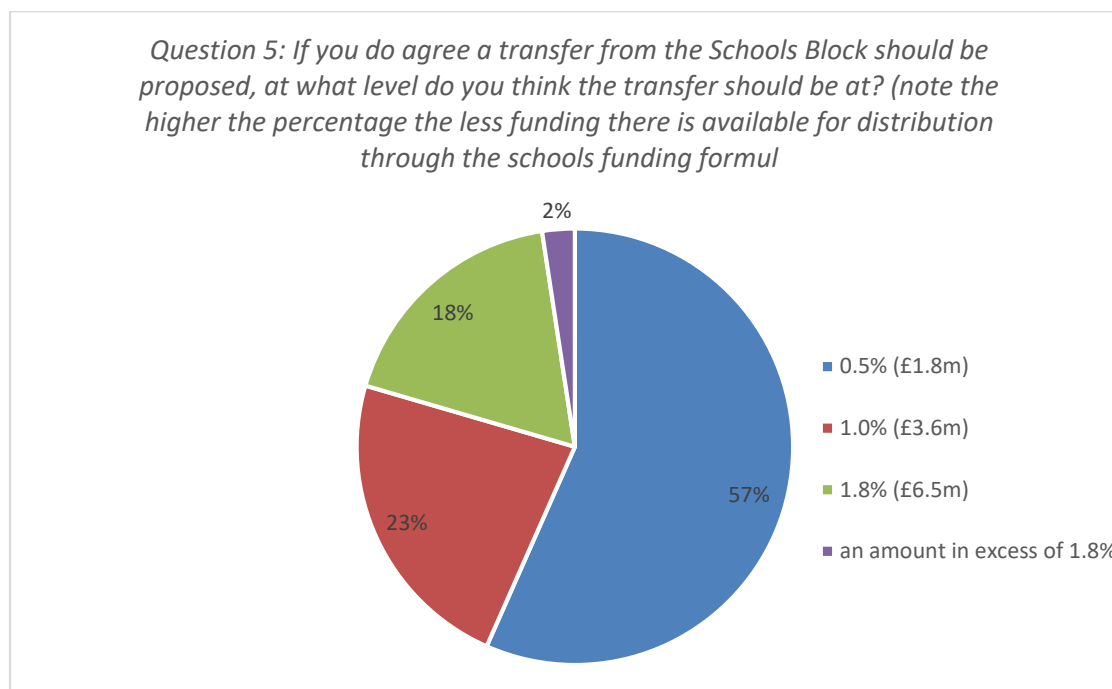
There were a wide range of responses to this question, including:

- Continued lobbying government and DfE for appropriate high needs funding levels.
- Clawback funding from schools with excessive balances.
- Review of current funding levels and/or processes for allocating funding.
- Greater controls on spend.
- Capital investment to increase capacity.
- Use of other council resources.

There were also a number of more general comments about the current pressures schools are facing and that any transfer would increase this yet further.

Alongside this there were also some comments that the workstreams being developed by the SEND recovery board need to be accelerated in order to deliver savings as soon as possible.

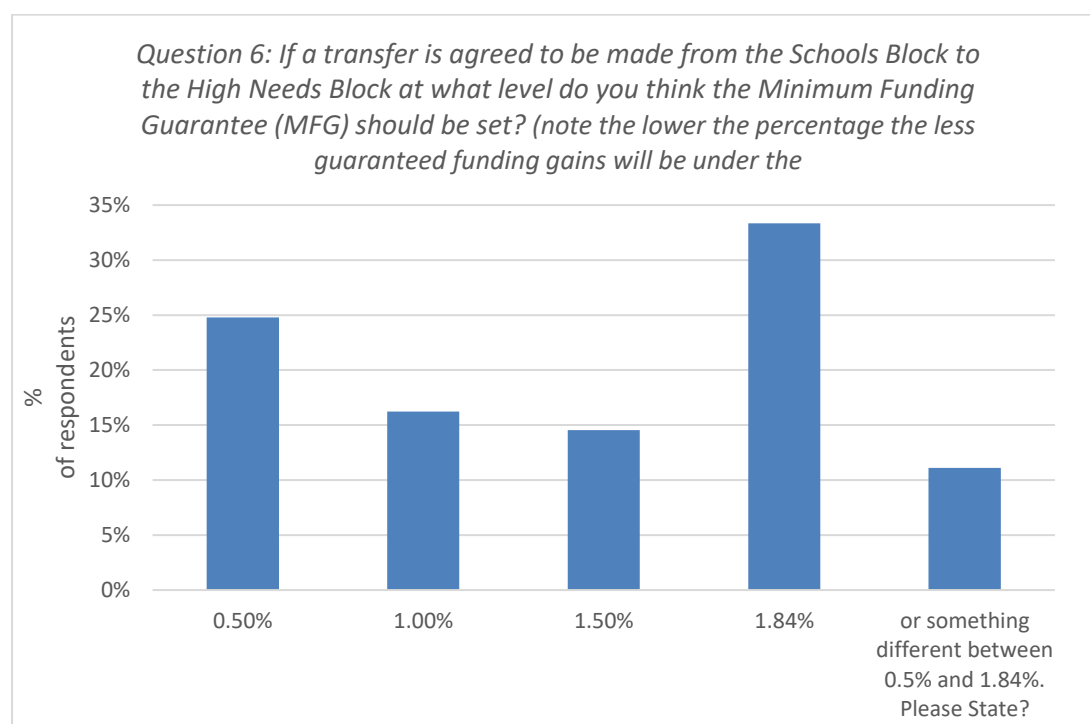
Question 5: If you do agree a transfer from the Schools Block should be proposed, at what level do you think the transfer should be at? (note: the higher the percentage the less funding there is available for distribution through the schools funding formula for Cambridgeshire)



Of the respondents who agreed that a transfer from the schools block should be proposed (57%) felt that the transfer should be at 0.5% (£1.8m). An amount in excess of 1.8% was the least favoured option with only 2% of respondents choosing this option.

Question 6: If a transfer is agreed to be made from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block at what level do you think the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) should be set? (note the lower the percentage the less guaranteed funding gains will be under the formula)

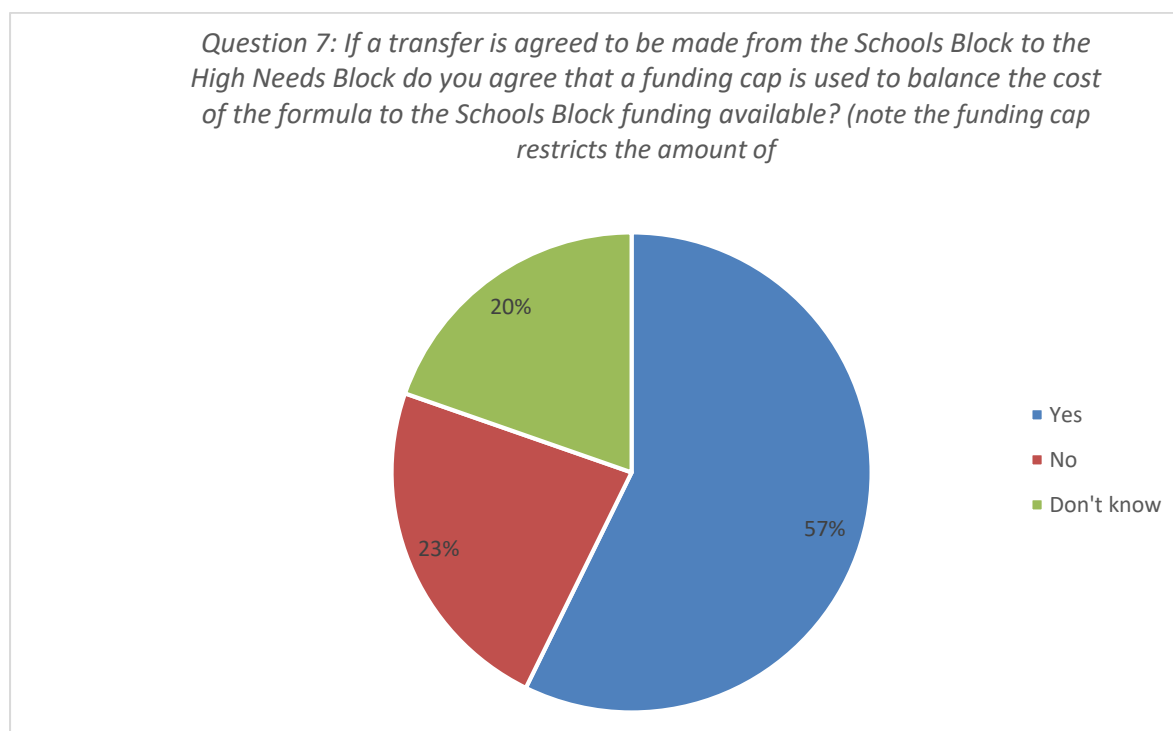
As part of question 6, respondents could either select a minimum funding guarantee (MFG) or state an alternative value between 0.5% and 1.84%. A minimum funding guarantee of 1.84% was the most popular choice amongst respondents with 33%. The second most popular choice was 0.5%, with 25% respondents selecting this level of MFG. Fewer respondents (11%) chose a different value between 0.5% and 1.84%. Though no specific value was stated amongst the comments, some felt it was not appropriate (i.e. to SEN schools) or disagreed with having the transfer in place.



Question 7: If a transfer is agreed to be made from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block do you agree that a funding cap is used to balance the cost of the formula to the Schools Block funding available?

(note the funding cap restricts the amount of any funding gains of those schools above the level at which the funding cap is set)

In regards to the funding cap being used to balance the cost of the formula to the schools block funding available, over half of respondents agreed (57%). However, almost half of respondents did not know or disagreed.



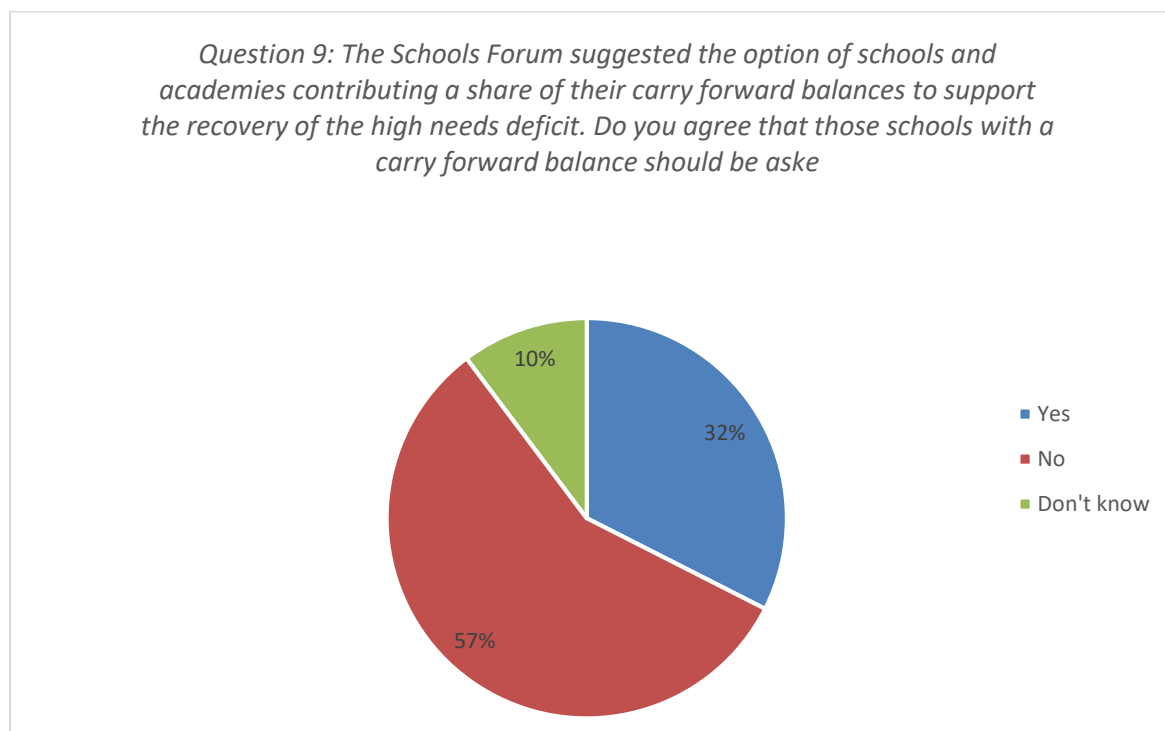
Question 8: If not the use of a funding cap, how do you think the Schools Block should be balanced, for example reducing AWPU values, reducing other factors in the funding formula, or potentially requesting approval from the Secretary of State not to apply the Minimum per Pupil Funding Levels?

A number of comments supported seeking approval from the Secretary of State to disapply the MPPL's.

Several responses supported the proposal of reducing the basic entitlement / AWPU amounts to spread any potential impact across all schools.

Although the majority of responses recognised the overall issue of affordability some did not appear to understand the interrelationship between the various factors and also the fact that the funding has been capped at a national level in previous years.

Question 9: The Schools Forum suggested the option of schools and academies contributing a share of their carry forward balances to support the recovery of the high needs deficit. Do you agree that those schools with a carry forward balance should be asked to make contribution to help repay the high needs deficit?



In response to whether or not schools with a carry forward balance should contribute to repaying the High Needs Deficit, the majority (57%) of respondents disagreed with the idea that schools with a carry forward balance should contribute.

Questions 10 & 11: If not, please explain why? If you do agree what do you think would be a reasonable contribution?

A range of responses detailed the reasons as to why schools are holding balances and how these varied due to individual school circumstances.

A number of people noted the range of balances being held and suggested that a % could be used to support the pressures, whereas others were strongly opposed to the idea.

Following discussions at Schools Forum the intention is to circulate a questionnaire to all schools requesting further information in respect of the balances being held and their intended purpose.

Question 12: Do you have any initial comments on the potential impact at individual school level of possible proposals to reduce top up funding levels for mainstream and units and to reduce Behaviour, Attendance and Inclusion Partnership funding as set out in paragraph 49 of the consultation document?

A number of responses highlighted the potential impact on the most vulnerable young people and those with the highest levels of need.

There were also a number of references to the current levels of funding being insufficient to meet need in some instances.

The potential knock on impacts of schools being unable to meet needs resulting in increased costs elsewhere was also given as an example of unintended consequences.

Others noted the potential disproportionate impact on smaller schools.

Question 13: Do you have any comments in respect of the proposal to increase the lump sum for Primary and Secondary schools to help equalise the impact on schools of the broadband costs being passed onto schools due to the reduction in the Central Schools Services Block as set out in paragraph 50 of the consultation document?

A large proportion of responses were in support of this proposal on the basis of fairness and equity across all schools.

However, some responses did not feel it was necessary and the lump sum should remain unchanged.

Appendix 1 – Detailed Text Responses:

2. Mobility Factor - If not, please explain why?

I would like more information about the possible effects upon my school and it's already dwindling budget

Staffing - the reduction in my budget will definitely further impact the ability to recruit the best staff.
I still feel that there are still too many children being educated on a 1:1 basis at a huge cost to the county mainly due to parental choice - these parents appear to have too much power.

I TRUST school forum and the LA to manage the overall Budget with integrity and have FAITH in them to do what is right for schools.

The briefing regarding changes relating to this area were unclear and somewhat ambiguous.
All I really wanted to know was would schools benefit financially or not?

The money could be better spent on High Needs

I have not been given specific information as to how this affects my school.

It is not clear how this will benefit Cambridgeshire schools.

I do not fully understand the impact on this school

The mobility formula factor should be introduced in line with the National Funding Formula (NFF).

We do not know the impact for our school as this has not been modelled. We are therefore unable to take a view.

It is vital for schools to be able to use any carry forward they have managed to establish to deal with unexpected circumstances (such as a school with a one-off lower intake in one year group).

As long as based on reliable data.

We recognise that taking children over PAN has implications for school's and puts pressures upon them. However, this could be detrimental to other school's in close proximity, who have a falling roll.

Any increases in top slicing will:

Have an impact on inclusion as we spent £30k last year on meeting the needs of specific children
Have an impact on staff recruitment and retention. We are fully staffed for the first time with suitably qualified people.
The County Council should look to other parts of the council to recover the deficit. High Needs Children (Young Adults 18 – 25) used to be funded from Social Care.
ICT requires ongoing investment to mirror the society we are educating children to be part of.
As a result we need the minimum top slice

The Governors support this but would like to add that this is due to the fact that the school sees high levels of mobility

We agree on the basis of para 28 of the proposal document which makes it clear that there would be no need to reduce other aspects of the funding formula by applying the change proposed. We have to say though that

2. Mobility Factor - If not, please explain why?

the £0.56m cost of the Mobility Factor itself does not seem as pressing as some of the other unfilled gaps in the overall proposals eg addressing financial hardships from falling rolls

Some schools have high mobility- it is a feature of the area- Cambridgeshire. As all schools are so poorly funded in Cambs, some losing out because of this change is awful.

This is difficult to assess as we haven't seen the data.

Our governors took the view that the school would be disadvantaged by the introduction of the mobility formula factor. As a result, they did not feel able to support it.

School Heads are those best placed to allocate funding in their schools.

If we have never had this funding then we are not going to miss it - could this be used as part of the High Needs block?

Though we would appreciate greater clarity on the conditions for receiving it.

There is not a penny to spare from the Schools Block. The deficit is too large to try and address in this manner and needs separate funding to reduce it. Taking any money away from the Schools Block would be detrimental to already over-stretched budgets.

We strongly support the general idea of a mobility factor in the funding formula and welcome steps towards changing the basis for it that have made it more fair. We still, however, do not have confidence that the data being used is an accurate reflection of costs of mobility faced by schools. We are surprised that only 76 primary schools would receive funding based on indicative budgets, and that the highest primary indicative allocation is greater than the highest secondary. We do not think that our school gains anything from the indicative amounts for this factor, which is not the experience of our school in a mobile part of Cambridge. Over the last three years, we have seen have seen 48 pupils enter in the Spring and Autumn terms.

Implementing the Mobility formula factor will reduce the overall Schools Block. As the potential impact of movements between blocks is yet unknown, it would seem prudent to defer this change.

No. Because as far as we can see from the projected figures we would be no better off.

Not needed before. Funding allocated here could be diverted elsewhere.

4. Do you have an alternative proposal for how the local area should respond to the accumulated deficit on high needs, reaching a balanced position over the medium term of 3 years?

No, aside from more money coming from central government

The Support that Primary schools receive in relation to high needs and alternative provision is not adequate. The delegation of funds that Secondary schools have means they have greater access to support pupils before high needs funding needs to be accessed. Until the LA finds a way to support primary schools to mitigate issues for pupils earlier (through allowing a broader range of AP provision) then we do not feel that schools should be expected to prop up a mismanaged High Needs budget. High needs spending would be

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reduced if Primary Schools had better resources / services to support children earlier, meaning more pupils could be managed and supported in school, therefore High Needs would not be in the position they find themselves in where they have such an large deficit.

No not really as it is a very complex subject that would require an in depth knowledge of how the funding has been deployed previously and why we are currently faced with a high deficit.

Despite increased transfers from the schools block over the last two years, the High Needs Block deficit has continued to increase, while services and support for schools and high needs pupils have been cut. There needs to be a clear plan to manage and reduce this deficit, which does not seem to be forthcoming. Schools that have large carry forwards should be expected to contribute more -or should have their future funding reduced -as it is difficult to make a case that the county is underfunded (even though it is) when some schools carry such large surpluses.

The education system, needs to be costed and funded correctly, rather than being patched and mended.

Schools carryforward should be looked at. This is a moral dilemma as there is too much in the school estate. Also, the schools who have a large increase in funding, predominantly the big schools, could contribute more.

DfE to provide appropriate funding to meet the high needs block

Claw back carry forwards from those schools sitting on excessively large amounts.

Yes

Strict controls must be put into place as all students are being disadvantaged e.g. budget set
I am only suggesting 1% transferred in the question below under the assurance that strict controls to manage the budget are put into place

Continue to pressurise the DfE for increased funding. Any large scale transfer would give the impression that the schools block is not under pressure and undermine the whole policy on school funding.

Whilst we agree that an increase of 1.8% is required clearly schools will not wish to see this. We believe there should be a political will to increase funding through channels such as central government or council tax etc.

No, this is an issue for council and government, not my school's. At the moment, the proposal would mean no increase in per pupil funding AGAIN, which is an unacceptable proposal for the financial health of the school. If I knew that some of HNB funding was coming to my school, I may take a different position.

0.5% feels like a good compromise between the squeeze on main school budgets and the squeeze on the high needs block - both need to be recognised and I would urge the LA to work with the DfE to get the historic element of the formula addressed so that Cambs is not doubly penalised - low overall funding and unfair high needs formula.

Continue to pressure the DfE to fund the High needs box appropriately. If a larger than 0.5% transfer is made, this will undermine the funding of schools (they have funds to spare) and undermine the pressures facing the high needs block (16% increase in funding versus a 33% increase in costs - largely driven by

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demand and our thresholds for accessing the high needs block mean that there are many that need to access it that simply don't meet that threshold)

Continue to press DOE to further fund the special needs provision across the county and not deprive existing school budget of much needed funding.

Campaign to the government that the high needs block is being under funded and it should sit outside schools funding.

We answered no to the above question as we feel that schools are paying for the increased government directive to continue funding until 25 years old.

I feel the large funding carry forwards that some schools are accruing year-on-year should be managed more efficiently by the LA. I know of some schools that have in excess of £200,000 c/fwd, mainly resulting from the over-funding of growth funding and I consider this unacceptable. I suggest financial advisers challenge schools more robustly and that the LA consider putting a cap on c/fwd. Any c/fwd must be carefully accounted for and if it is not used for the specific project in the following year then it should go back to LA funding.

I also think Cambridgeshire County Council needs to be more transparent with their investment portfolio and consider selling some of the land investments they currently hold to mitigate the current funding shortfalls across all services.

The review needs to include an overhaul of the matrix funding system.
Consider redistributing the £30,000,000 surplus in school bank accounts.

Consider Claw back of unused budget which is sitting in the coffers of many schools - why is this not being spent on children now? This would wipe off the deficit in one hit.

Welcomed statements made by Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) over recent times with regards to the necessity to direct financial resources to where the educational need is greatest. Therefore, we would welcome a more imaginative response to the reduction in the high needs deficit with the virament of funds from other non-education 'pots' held by CCC in line with the precedent set by other Local Authorities (LA) in this position.

Borrow capital to build local schools to meet high needs, so money is saved from sending children out of county.

A range of reviews have been launched and potential approaches/cost-saving measures have been shared with stakeholders. However, no recovery plan has been published with tangible milestones or actions, and little progress appears to have been made in the 12 months since a 0.5% transfer was approved. Clearly, action needs to be taken to ensure that the burden of out-of-county placements reduces further, and the local authority need to lobby harder to ensure that the HNB is funded sufficiently in 2020.

I acknowledge the inevitability of the transfer from Schools Block but do not think the we should pro-actively propose this because it is not in the interests of schools.
Schools have not had management control of the High Needs Block and are not themselves responsible for the deficit. The deficit is perhaps partly inefficiency over the years (CCC) but largely because the needs of children have grown. All schools recognise this. The issue is therefore that the national formula doesn't work for Cambridgeshire. That is a political issue and should be challenged as such. Schools might well end up paying for that deficit but shouldn't submit to that as if they are responsible or culpable. Especially to the detriment of the majority of children in schools who will be adversely affected by a reduction in school funding next year.

Assuming there is no option but to transfer from the schools block, I would prefer a modest transfer in year 1

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in the hope that increased school funding from 21-22, and perhaps some movement politically in the next year, will better mitigate the risk to schools in challenging areas facing financial difficulty.

Explore radical ways to reduce out of county provision

Examine costs of current provision and look to ways to reduce this. For example is there a high cost to transporting children out of county to specialist provision. This is not money well spent on adding value to the child. Provision locally in Cambs and support for schools to keep children in local schools should be in place.

Since there are funds available in local schools existing balances, these should be used first. Funds should be moved from schools that have an excess first.

Repurposing of other assets held within the County Council including accumulated land holdings.
Reclamation of excessive carry forwards/school balances in schools within the local area.

We do not feel that all the options have been modelled for their impact on our school.

It would be possible to draw funds from other parts of the County Council. The observation by County Councillors that there is £ 35 million surplus in schools is in conflict with the Council long established process of devolution of responsibility. The surplus in our school is to meet the needs of the current cohort as they go through the school with the lowest number of pupils on roll that the school has ever had.

Support for the Higher Needs Block for those over school age should come from the Social Care budget and not from schools, as this risks entrenching further High Needs requirements in the future.

Please ensure that the impact on small Primary Schools with a high proportion of special education needs is considered and that they do not lose out more than the larger Primaries or Secondaries.

Some money should be transferred back but I feel it shouldn't be the percentage suggested.

Someone has also suggested that Schools surpluses could be used in the form of some sort of loan.

Funding could be allocated to school's where they are prepared to set up additional SEND provision. This would assist some struggling school's in terms of their budgets, together with their local community. It would also reduce the pressures upon Special School settings, which are currently full.

No I do not, but my gut feeling is that removing funding from already overstretched schools will eventually only make the pressures on the High Needs Block worse.

This budget has been managed by the LA who have overseen the overspend. We need to either transfer funding from other parts of the county budget or go back to the ESFA to say that it is not manageable.

The County Council should look to other parts of the council to recover the deficit.

As most agree, the level of funding for schools as a whole is simply not enough to meet the needs of all learners. Transferring money from the Schools Block to High Needs risks partially hiding this fact and could be read as implicit consent from schools that they agree that this is how the shortfall in funding is best addresses. The decision for any such transfer should be pushed as close to the level of those who are

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forcing this situation as possible, i.e. the government. The transfer may happen in any case, but I believe the best option is to refuse to transfer funds and campaign for adequate funding for High Needs from central government.

This is really tricky and I am unable to propose any alternatives that do not cost more money in the short-medium term. I would like to see more early intervention support for schools with additional local places in high need specialist provision. The intention of these would be that intensive specialist early support will, for some children, enable a successful return to mainstream education.

Thoughts on the next question - it would have been really useful to be able to clarify answers to all questions in this survey.

Having looked in detail at the effect of different levels of funding on a variety of schools, I am unsure what level would be best. Clearly it is best for the high needs budget if the 1.8% figure is used (although I do not recall seeing anything to explain why this was chosen as the maximum). However, the effect of this on schools is far from equitable. I have only looked at data for primary schools, and it is clear that schools with less than one form entry will lose disproportionately from a higher transfer. They are also most vulnerable to changes in pupil numbers from year to year. I think the Schools Forum should consider the impact of this – would setting the level at 1.8% mean that one or more small schools would be forced to close and what would the cost of this be to the community and Cambridgeshire County Council? Larger schools with higher than average levels of deprivation are also impacted, but this impact will be lessened as they may also be getting more money back from the high needs block.

The Council should look to other areas of the budget to cover these needs. For example, Young Adults requirements could come from the Social Care budgets. If these sources do not cover the requirements, the Council should look to issuing bonds or other financial instruments to raise the cash required - central government would struggle to politically allow a council to actually default.

I would propose a review of Education funding through the substantial building programmes across Cambridgeshire to maximise the income from smaller developments that currently do not contribute. I appreciate that there will be challenges but it certainly appears that there is money in the private sector that is not being secured for Education. Whether for capital projects or revenue programmes the impact would be to provide funding into the Education system and offset other expenditure streams. Our own school has attracted no funding through two developments - 26 and 44 houses yet a local business (Dog Hotel) received just under quarter of a million. Happy to discuss in more detail this case study.

School funding allocated to Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC), in recent years, has consistently resulted in CCC per pupil minimum funding levels being within the lowest 10% of those awarded to local authorities, across the country. There should be further representations to Government to identify the issues affecting Cambridgeshire more favourably. The funding deficit for SEND should not rely on schools cutting resources already under pressure. Governors are concerned that the school would be transferring money for debt relief not for the benefit of high needs pupils. Governors would support an increase in the High Needs Block if it corresponded to an increase in high needs provision. The present proposal feels as though the school would be sending its money into a black hole of debt and that will reappear year after year.

Apply to Government for additional funding

I think the highest factor suggest is just not affordable for our school, without the formula it will already be too much of a reduction to cover - if funding is highlighted to increase in future years delay until then or alternatively explore minimum funding. I am surprised at the variation of funding per child in each school within Cambridgeshire - I support moving towards a minimum of £5,00 per student, going forward I would possibly look at freezing the higher amounts and reallocating.

4. Do you have an alternative proposal for how the local area should respond to the accumulated deficit on high needs, reaching a balanced position over the medium term of 3 years?

Continue to challenge the inadequate funding which has created the deficit. I cannot see how a balanced position will be reached if the root of the issue remains.

Open Book Accounting

From what appeared to be a reasonable proposal in terms of clearing this deficit the impact on secondary school budgets in Cambridgeshire is unacceptable. Schools in the highest needs areas appear to be the most impacted by this proposal. Our School fairs quite well under the proposal but we cannot accept any detriment to the schools of our colleagues and the impact this will have on their education provision. If there is no alternative solution then we would accept a minimal transfer (0.5%) with a staged approach depending on school context to protect the most vulnerable schools and their budgets.

In Q3, you have our agreement that a transfer seems necessary for the apparently underfunded High Needs budget in 2020-21 and as such we agree with the 0.5% transfer as a maximum - a lower figure is outside the proposals! Our alternative proposal would be to recycle unused surplus balances held in schools - see below in Q11. You do not ask for any comments about the impact for our individual school of the increase in contribution from 0.5% to 1.8%. The impact for our school will be in the region of half a teacher. The Council has a responsibility for our teachers which may well need to be recognised in contribution to redundancy costs. Yes - society has a responsibility to look after its more vulnerable members and we applaud previous recognition of that by taking funds from across Council's budgets in the past to meet High Needs - which may in due course mean reductions for, say, Housing budgets. But the Council also has a responsibility which is not recognised in this consultation even though we all know the massive percentage of a school's funds that go towards staffing.

Continue to lobby the DfE and make your case for the chronic underfunding of the High Needs Block in light of Cambridgeshire's unique growth.

Cambridgeshire County Council should appeal to the government that there is insufficient funding for education to be able to meet the needs of pupils.

Extend the term of 3 years so that schools are not so adversely affected

Greater action to the DfE to get a fairer portion for Cambs.

There are pockets of immense wealth in Cambs- there should be a greater expectation and determination to source additional funding from the pockets of wealth such as in the associated universities and research parks that make astonishing amounts.

A guided busway from Babraham research park is proposed- great for their employees, - what about supporting the pupils with complex needs. Can a levy be imposed? Can it be investigated?

The amount saved and contributed from school's budgets to the high needs block is insignificant. Perhaps if the LA had not taken some irresponsible decisions in previous years the High Needs Block would not be such a challenge. There are a number of schools across the county who have had significant build projects that were not needed and that money could have been channeled into those pupils and services that were far worthier.

There needs to be an urgent review of current provisions to ensure that they are still fit for purpose and cost effective.

I believe that schools with reserves over a certain threshold should be questioned by the Local Authority as to specific plans for the reserves. There seem to be many schools with over £100k reserves, when we

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struggle to break even. Whilst we are all working together fairly for the broadband to be equal, we are not all working fairly together to support schools with more challenging financial situations.

Yes – the LA should apply for disapplication from the Minimum Per Pupil Funding (MPPF) level for the coming year and allocate funding across all schools more equitably thus spreading the cost of any transfer between blocks across all schools in equal manner

We need to increase the in-county provision for the very high needs pupils. There must be more economic ways of educating adequately these pupils. I do appreciate the legal and moral requirement to provide education for all - but there does seem to be a mismatch where one child's education can cost £300,000 + and the majority are getting by on the minimum funding guarantee - less than £4000!

The solution needs to be more funding from the DofE for Special Needs

We believe that a transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block will simply result in issues occurring elsewhere in the education system in time and not resolve the issue beyond the very short term. Although we do agree that the current deficit position is an issue, we suggest increasing pressure should be placed on the DfE to update the data being used to generate the HNB funding allocation. We also propose that those schools and academies with relatively significant carry forward balances (e.g. assessed using c/f as a percentage of annual expenditure), should be reviewed and in cases where the carry forward is deemed excessive then this should be reclaimed and used to contribute to the HNB deficit. If due to consensus, or through an overriding decision by the LA this transfer from SB to HNB does go ahead, we would like to note that 0.5% should be the limit of the transfer.

Would like to see the High Needs expenditure examined to see if spending is effective and if it can be reduced. Would also like to see some savings at the Local Authority itself.

School funding is at breaking point and the solution is not to take money away. The solution is proper funding by CCC and Central Government to cover the costs that must be met by the high needs block.

Although we do not agree to the above due to the fact that our school is already stretched in terms of funding and this limits the pace of improvement that we would like to see, we recognize that the LA has no choice due to National Funding Formulas. Without understanding what the full increase in schools funding is over the same period and the governments long term plan for funding we have no other recommendations.

Central funding must be secured to rectify this position. It is not sustainable to cut an already insufficient Schools Block in an attempt to balance the internal books at County level.

Review of costs in specialist teaching team and services. We can no longer afford all these services as funding needed to be redirected to the highest needs pupils in the system.

This should be frozen till the DfE provide the funds needed

I think we're in a cyclical position - and although I have ticked 'yes', I think we can't keep looking to this as the answer. If we don't do something differently, I'm not sure its going to get better, and we will keep suggesting this solution. Perhaps we need to rethink provision as a whole - how do we improve nurture provision for children? There seems to be a part of the jigsaw missing for children in primary years at the moment, and if we get some of that right, perhaps it would reduce some of our demands.

4. Do you have an alternative proposal for how the local area should respond to the accumulated deficit on high needs, reaching a balanced position over the medium term of 3 years?

Where has the figure of 3 years come from? Can this be done over a longer timescale?
What is the local authority doing to address the deficit?

Current budgets should not be used to rectify historic mismanagement, especially as we are currently supporting a number of high needs children without any additional funding. This includes both children where we are in the process of applying for an EHCP and those where the EHCP funding does not cover the cost of providing the support needed to keep those children in school.

We could only support a transfer up to the maximum allowable by regulations of 0.5%, and then only very reluctantly. We support a very challenging group of pupils, with high underlying SEND levels and high EAL. In particular, we believe that our school supports a number of Children with challenging SEND needs but who do not have EHCPs and so no additional funding is received. We are preventing a number of children needing to go into special provision, and it is a key part of our ethos to support this children as part of the community. But being a small school we do not have the capacity to drive EHCPs and therefore funding that some bigger schools have, and we have a disproportionate amount of lower-level SEND need. We therefore require as much general funding as possible through the formula, as that is enabling us to continue to support our SEND children, even those without an EHCP, as part of the local community. If general funding is transferred to the high needs block, we are unlikely to see much of that back in additional EHCP funding and therefore it would severely jeopardise our ability to maintain the level of SEND support that we pride ourselves on, and that is of great benefit to the school system of the county.

We do recognize, though, that the high needs challenge is a problem for the whole school system, and so could support a transfer up to the amount allowable by regulations as part of a wider package of work to meet the HNB deficit, as that still allows an increase in general per pupil funding for us, whereas a transfer up to the full level proposed would wipe any increase out

The proposed transfer doesn't completely close the HNB gap, so presumably other measures are currently being considered. We would not expect a transfer to be made without a detailed plan to recover the full deficit, and have not seen this go to Schools Forum or the relevant Council committee. Without this, it is difficult to make additional suggestions, but nevertheless think it premature to propose a transfer without this additional context available to us.

Having said that, we noted at the budget briefings that top up rates were under consideration. We believe reviewing top up rates for EHCPs and for specialist units would be a fairer way to close the gap partly, as it would recognize that a lot of SEND need is met by schools from existing core budgets rather than through top-up. Some schools have the resources to dedicate to securing Plans for children in a way that smaller schools don't.

While most of the HNB funding goes to Cambridgeshire schools, a substantial value is still used to commission specialist placements at very high unit cost. We believe that a review of the appropriateness of these arrangements and the extent to which they are commissioned at best value needs to be done.

We do not agree with the proposal to transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block. However, should the LA adopt this approach we would vote for a transfer of no more than 0.5%, as this arrangement will be to the detriment of the schools with higher levels of deprivation and prior attainment funding, and devalues the funding currently received in recognition of these two factors.

Claw back from high carry forwards, including those held by academies.

6. If a transfer is agreed to be made from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block at what level do you think the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) should be set? (note the lower the percentage the less guaranteed funding gains will be under the formula)

I don't think Governor's should be asked to cover up, political policy decisions.

No transfer should be made

At a level which protects schools in challenging circumstances

School funding allocated to Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC), in recent years, has consistently resulted in CCC per pupil minimum funding levels being within the lowest 10% of those awarded to local authorities, across the country. There should be further representations to Government to identify the issues affecting Cambridgeshire more favourably. The funding deficit for SEND should not rely on schools cutting resources already under pressure. Governors are concerned that the school would be transferring money for debt relief not for the benefit of high needs pupils. Governors would support an increase in the High Needs Block if it corresponded to an increase in high needs provision. The present proposal feels as though the school would be sending its money into a black hole of debt and that will reappear year after year.

The lower figure if any

No position taken as it affects us very little and we are not clear who the winners and losers would be.

8. If not how do you think the Schools Block should be balanced, for example reducing AWPU values, reducing other factors in the funding formula, or potentially requesting approval from the Secretary of State not to apply the Minimum per Pupil Funding Levels?

More money from central government, not from schools struggling to meet rising costs with only 1.8% increase in budget

Request approval from the SoS to not apply MPPF levels.

There is a huge variation in the potential gains for schools under the formula and in a system where there are so many external pressures and constraints, a funding cap, while having an impact on some schools, seems to be the fairest way forward.

As I said in an earlier answer, we need to ensure education is funded properly with the required outcomes in mind.

Request approval from the Secretary of State not to apply the Minimum per Pupil Funding Levels

I am only suggesting a 1% transfer if:-

Strict controls to manage a set budget for the high needs block are put into place e.g. 10% reduction in the value of EHCPs awarded / budget set and worked within - there are no control measures suggested as of yet
Other income lines e.g. EOTAS are untouched

Whilst we are saying yes to a funding cap this is only on the basis of not having other factors that can seriously be considered. There is simply not enough money in the system to balance all needs.

8. If not how do you think the Schools Block should be balanced, for example reducing AWPU values, reducing other factors in the funding formula, or potentially requesting approval from the Secretary of State not to apply the Minimum per Pupil Funding Levels?

Request approval from the Secretary of State

As before, this is an issue for council and government, not my school.

Request approval to not apply minimum per pupil funding, thus allowing schools recognised as deserving greater funding, and that are driving the additional funding into Cambridgeshire, are able to benefit in the intended manner.

as a school who have 'lost' about £130K due the funding cap in the last two years, I feel it is time for us to see the benefits of the new national funding formula, so would advocate asking the Sec of State not to apply the new minimum per pupil funding levels.

We have been subject to the cap for the last two years, meaning we haven't felt the benefit of the new National Funding Formula. However, we are not unaware that this will impact on other schools who will see a reduction in their funding. This could best be addressed by provision for those school specifically from the DFE not by imposing a MFG

I feel the secretary of state should be aware and give approval if funding can't be allocated at the minimum per pupil.

Reducing other factors in the funding formula

Answer to question 6:

Should a transfer need to be made from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block, we do not agree that this transfer should happen (see section two), then the Minimum Funding Guarantee should be set as low as possible and should certainly be no higher than 0.5%. This will start to redress the historic inequities in schools funding and will allow for the movement to the NFF as soon as possible.

Answer to Question 7:

No – we do not agree that a funding cap should be used to balance the cost of the formula.

If a funding cap must be used then this should be as large as possible and certainly no lower than the 4% provided by the government in its allocation provided to CCC.

In order to ensure that funding is directed towards the need of the most vulnerable students in the county it is important that CCC should match the NFF as soon as possible.

Answer to question 8:

Altering the AWPU levels for all schools is the "fairest" method to balance the Schools Block. AWPU can be reduced if more funds are needed or increased if there is a surplus balance.

By altering the AWPU levels all schools benefit/are disadvantaged at the same rate. This again protects the funding for the counties most vulnerable students.

I would suggest that an application not to apply MPPL should be made, and the impact of only applying up to £4900 be explored. This will probably result in a more equitable range of gains made by schools and avoid a situation where the most deprived schools, and schools in the Opportunity Area, are disproportionately hit.

There is potential benefit in the SoS being made aware of the reality behind the rhetoric but it depends what kind of government we get.

Pain needs to be shared in fairest way possible as well as making extremely clear to all parties (parents, politicians etc) how funding promises are not being delivered.

8. If not how do you think the Schools Block should be balanced, for example reducing AWPU values, reducing other factors in the funding formula, or potentially requesting approval from the Secretary of State not to apply the Minimum per Pupil Funding Levels?

For too long Cambridgeshire funding has penalised schools in deprived circumstances - the proposed impact on some schools is unacceptable.

Yes - request approval to modify the Min per Pupil Funding.

I do not know. However taking more money from Schools when Cambs schools are already below national averages is not the answer.

Reducing other factors in the funding formula

We should request to the Secretary of State not to apply the minimum funding guarantee as this is a wholly divisive and unacceptable strategy.

Overall, the proposal being put forward by the schools' forum is one which is patently unfair. The costs of the overspend in the high needs budget have been created due to the provision for students across the whole county, involving all school, the LA's has been managing this budget. However, the costs are being passed on to an exclusive group of schools: the ones who meet the needs of the most disadvantaged catchments in the county.

How can it be fair for the schools' forum to be consulting on a strategy where the larger, richer, more advantaged schools receive significantly enhanced funding whilst those from disadvantaged areas lose out?

We are a school in the bottom quintile in terms of deprivation in the county, where there has been a deficit budget for the last decade (due to the debt built up when under LA control). When you take into account broadband cost + the reduction in other services, the real terms reduction in BAIP funding (year on year), be are not even breaking even over inflation.

I also note here, as there is no other space for general comment in this consultation which seems a very poor design, that it has been very disappointing that the consultation was not more transparent in the impact on individual schools and that parents have not been invited to participate. This is a time for the schools and the LA to stand together and to take a principled stand against an unworkable settlement - not for the forum to present Hobson's choice, effectively a fait accompli. As such, I cannot support this proposal in any way as the impact on the most challenged schools will increase whilst, to those who have (middle class catchment areas and full rolls), more shall be given.

All other options should be exhausted before setting a funding cap. This should include exploring options to recoup money from schools with surplus carry forwards and seeking approval from the Secretary of State given the strong arguments presented by the LA.

unable to answer as unsure if the MFG applies

There is no perfect answer to this and the Governors recognise the complexities in addressing the ongoing under-funding issue. As stated above, the school funding allocated to Cambridgeshire CC, in recent years, has consistently resulted in CCC per pupil minimum funding levels being within the lowest 10% of those awarded to local authorities, despite particular complexities in terms of mix and mobility of the schools' population in the County.

There should be further representations to Government to identify the issues affecting Cambridgeshire to achieve greater financial relief.

AWPU value reduction

Reduced AWPU

8. If not how do you think the Schools Block should be balanced, for example reducing AWPUs values, reducing other factors in the funding formula, or potentially requesting approval from the Secretary of State not to apply the Minimum per Pupil Funding Levels?

If the LA does not feel it can utilise the funding from the DfE as set out in the NFF, an application should be made to the Secretary of State over disapplication of minimum per pupil funding, in order to be transparent.

Seek approval from the Secretary of State to address deficit with the LA as opposed to seek permission to not apply the MFG. The views of Academy Trusts and Headteachers need to be expressed to the Secretary of State alongside the views of the LA about Cambridgeshire's deficit, particularly the high needs block.

The examples you have given in your consultation illustrations show the result of funding caps and a reduction in AWPUs values. We do not have the means locally to illustrate the outcome of other options. In principle, we can see that the factors used in the illustrations may well be appropriate but only at the 0.5% - extending funding reductions to all schools in the same manner is a blunt instrument and does not seem to allow any discretion for schools disproportionately affected by the overall formula. The particular factor in the funding formula that is disproportionately unfair for us is the inclusion in the formula of the Lump sum. We have already hamstrung by the reduction from £150k to £110k but with 90 children next year, the Lump Sum increases our AWPUs by $110k/90 = £1,222$. If you take the £1,222 off our different projections for AWPUs at different transfer levels, we are so far under the £3,750 that a cap seems extraordinary. You take the £110,000 out of the calculations for far larger schools and they stay well above £3750. Time and time again, the current formula discriminates against the smaller school - for instance we are far more violently exposed to changes in roll numbers which cannot be levelled out. Yet we are asked to participate in a growth fund! Growing schools need funding protection for exactly the same reason as smaller schools - we have costs which cannot always be met by the pupil-led factors. These comments are here as this consultation does not have a suitable box for 'other comments' about this proposed funding settlement

Some slight reduction in AWPUs funding if - and only if - it means that there is a more even distribution and that schools in the Fenland and those with high deprivation factors are not severely and negatively impacted.

Request from the secretary of state not to apply the MFG in a county which is seeing the most challenging schools serving the most challenging pupils with high levels of deprivation squeezed disproportionate yet again.

Application to not apply the minimum per pupil funding levels. This would mean that the reduction in funding could be shared between all schools rather than the current model in which schools with a roll of 220 or less are disproportionately affected with larger schools seeing no reduction in funding at all.

No - The funding cap currently has no impact on schools rising to MPPF so this would only impact on schools who are already above the MPPF levels - so may affect schools with highest levels of deprivation and prior attainment funding.

The costs of any transfer between blocks should be equitably shared across all schools which would suggest that the fairest way to do this is to reduce AWPUs - but this would then require disapplication of the MPPF if it were not to just adjust through MFG or cap.

CCC have provided insufficient information to judge how this will impact schools.

Approval from Secretary of State if minimum funding levels cannot be maintained. We need to consider the educational priorities of all pupils and the impact of real term reductions on improving the quality of education.

requesting approval from the Secretary of State not to apply the Minimum per Pupil Funding Levels

Our preference is a disapplication request to reduce the £3,750/£5,000 minimum funding levels. It is clearly these that are producing the perverse outcomes of the indicative budgets, rewarding larger schools often in less deprived areas at the expense of smaller schools with higher needs.

8. If not how do you think the Schools Block should be balanced, for example reducing AWPU values, reducing other factors in the funding formula, or potentially requesting approval from the Secretary of State not to apply the Minimum per Pupil Funding Levels?

This proposal is likely to most affect those schools with high levels of deprivation.
The cost of any transfer between blocks should be equitably shared across all schools, so the fairest suggestion given above seems to be the reduction of AWPU values.

10. Contribution of Carryforward - If not please explain why?

We will not have a carry forward in two years time, this will be used to meet the costs of running the school and keeping it open.

Schools with carry forwards have planned for the future and ensured that they can manage their staff and budget for 3-5 years (as all good businesses should)- penalising schools for managing a budget well will not produce long term security for the County and will encourage schools to spend more flippantly in future

Schools may well have had specific long term projects that they are working towards for several years and this feels like punishment for fiscal prudence

Because schools hold carry forwards for so many different reasons. I think that money allocated to children in certain schools should be spent on those children.

If a school has successfully planned to ensure that they have a carry forward to enable sensible financial planning then they should retain their carry forward.

These balances have been built up to enable schools to protect themselves from changing school funding policies, by reducing them in any way you take away the ability of a school to manage it's own destiny.

These balances are uneven across the county; may already have designed purposes; and may not be permitted by the ESFA.

Schools need to ensure enough carry forward for future sustainability

No - but with a rider on a % CAP is the balance could already been considered for a future year budget - possibly asking schools to explain the % higher than the CAP (although I am sure there can always be reasons cited).

Due to no control measure of a fixed budget for the high needs block have been suggested what is the assurity that a deficit position will not arise in the future?

Although our reserves are not high, I think this is a dangerous precedent that should be resisted.

Carry forward balances are very unclear in terms of what is ring fenced or not. A school that appears to hold significant balances is often holding reserves for capital etc. and other purposes which are not true surpluses. The chance of miscalculation is high.

Carry forward balances are often designated for particular purposes and this would affect the plans for continuity for individual schools

10. Contribution of Carryforward - If not please explain why?

The schools will need their surplus if per pupil funding is not increasing. My school will not have the luxury of being able to offer anything.

Carry forward are kept for reasons such as school growth and mobility where growth is not meeting growth criteria as it is not based on catchment growth

schools will have plans and reasons for their reserves, including contingency funds which are even more important when budgets are so tight. For example if our 30 yr old boilers fail, or we have a teacher on mat leave, or we have long term sickness absence, we would be looking to reserves to get us through. At the end of the day, this money belongs to the children of each school .

Reserves have been kept for specific reasons in many cases to address potentially risks for example ageing infrastructure e.g. boilers. The funding we have received is being spent on our children in our school now, with just a small (reasonable) percentage being retained to be fiscally responsible and ensure continuity of service in the face of risks known and unknown.

Each school should be allowed to give reasons for the carry forward budget and not lose this if there is a justified reason they have chosen to carry forward.

As a headteacher I would no longer save for another class or a new boiler as the money would be given back to the LA. Schools need to save for legitimate reasons but challenged should the balance become excess i.e. over 5% of annual budget.

Can we go back to time when the LA challenged us for saving too much and we had to regularly explain our carry forward.

No- we do not agree that those schools with a carry forward deficit should be asked to make a contribution to help repay the high needs deficit.

For some schools, ours included, the carry forward is keeping us afloat for the next couple of years.

Balances are held by schools and academies for a range of reasons and can vary over time. A crude exploration of published balances does not enable a meaningful evaluation of the financial health of an individual school or academy. The sector as a whole needs to ensure that adequate reserves are held in line with guidance and prudent financial planning. I have seen no figures that suggest the balances held are excessive when viewed in this way.

Reserves are not there because schools have enough money and can't think of any way of spending. Our Trust has fairly healthy overall reserves, carefully stewarded over a number of years. That reserve allowed us to 'spend' c. 500K to support a failing primary school -and that hasn't been enough.

Trusts are subject to business and charity law. We have to remain a going concern and are advised to keep one month's salary bill. 1. The Academy Trust Financial Management Good Practice Guides.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-trust-financial-management-good-practice-guides> - The one called 'Operating an Academy Trust as a going concern' includes 'However, most would find it prudent to keep at least one-month's salary cost as a revenue reserve.'

Reserves are also required for unexpected drops in school roll (surplus school places as a result of a free school opening 200 m away).

punishing good financial management! We could all rush out and spend spend spend but we look ahead and plan to support and sustain our schools!

I don't think this is a fair representation of the forum discussion. It was the hobby horse of a very small group of people. I think it is being used as a deliberately as a distraction.

10. Contribution of Carryforward - If not please explain why?

Depending on who you listen to -

the national formula is unfair and out of date, if so, it needs to change. It would appear that this happened very quickly on growth funding which contributed to issues last year.

OR - the LA has mismanaged this budget for a considerable period and failed to plan for the long term. Making schools pay for this is also unfair.

The National Audit Office has been very clear at the mess the government made regarding extending EHCPs to 25. Funding this would appear to remove most of our issues - this must be made 100% clear in every communication.

Why not set a budget to the level that the county should be funded?

Using reserves to underpin a revenue loss is a poor plan, as is taxing the prudent.

Schools who have worked hard to manage their budgets should not be penalised. Difficult decisions and changing working practices have all taken place to keep within tightening budgets. The carry forwards in many schools only allows them to manage the deficit forecasted the following year.

We have been managing our carry forward over the last four years to enable us to manage the financial impact of reduced pupil numbers. If our carry forward was removed our financial situation will be dire. We have modelled our forecast financial position and shared this with yourselves on many occasions.

Our carry forward is planned to sustain 7 classes with a reduced roll. (One class per year). As the sole school in the area we would not have places for casual admissions if there were fewer classes. To lose any of this planned expenditure for the next financial year would have a direct impact on staff morale and we have only just managed to recruit a Headteacher (3rd attempt) and a full complement of qualified teachers.

It is vital that schools retain their carry forwards to be able to respond to unexpected events - such as a one-off lower intake in one year group. Any loss of carry forward will negatively impact schools' provision for inclusion and staff-retention.

If schools have done as we have done then they will have saved the money to be able to balance budgets for the next few years. In our case we have a carry forward but this has reduced by £20k over this financial year and will continue to do so with the prospective budget we have and the additional staffing demands of the school.

This could be used as a loan.

Schools should present a plan as to how their carry forward balances are to be used.

Why should schools who have looked after and been prudent with their funding (because they have predicted future funding pressures) be penalised for acting in this careful manner? Schools with a carry forward, have often used this money to make their budgets balance and to sustain consistency for pupils and staff. Clearly, this suggestion would create huge divides between schools and in fact, what would be the incentive for looking after schools' finances? This is a ridiculous suggestion.

For some schools, especially small village schools, carry forward balances are the only way of presenting a balanced 3 year budget. If this is taken away then presumably these schools will need to close immediately? If there needs to be then perhaps there could be a collar placed on the contribution level, perhaps balances over a certain % of annual budget could be used, but any schools with a balance below that collar could keep their carry forward balances.

10. Contribution of Carryforward - If not please explain why?

As schools have to have reserves to be able to respond to emergencies. Also, a significant proportion of the reserves are donations given for certain purposes, also monies gained from the sale of assets (eg buildings) which can only be used for capital expenses.

Much more needs to be understood about why some schools have such large carryforwards and some points of principle need to be established, e.g.

1) where a school has raised a lot of money through other activities, e.g. letting the building, should this be taken off the carry forward figure

2) where parents have raised funds for the school, should this be taken off the carry forward.

If the above were not taken into consideration, it would be a big disincentive for schools to carry out activities that bring substantial additional funding into education into Cambridge.

I am sure that most schools will already have plans in place to spend any carry forward from last year's budget. If you suggest that there will be a claw back of any carry forward at the end of this financial year then schools are likely to spend to avoid this. If this spend is done on a tight time-scale, it is likely to reduce the impact of this spend on children's education. In my opinion, it would be better to have robust discussions with any schools which have a carry-forward above what might be considered sensible levels to deal with unexpected events (5-10%?), as to why this money is not being spent on children's education.

If money is taken back you may also have an increase in schools asking for bigger loans to deal with major structural issues, broken boilers etc.

Fundamentally, this punishes schools that have managed their finances well historically. If this is done, there is no incentive for individual schools to manage their budgets sensibly and I believe we will create a scenario where multiple schools will bankrupt themselves creating a much larger issue.

In my specific case, I represent a small school that suffers disproportionately from changes in roll demand. We have specifically managed our balances in order to ride through years where our pupil numbers drop without dropping below recommended staffing levels. If our balance is stripped arbitrarily as proposed then we will have to let some of those staff go, to the detriment of educational outcomes and also challenging our ability to safe guard.

money is planned to be spent on specific projects across the financial year.

We would prefer to use our limited current carry forward balance to meet identified needs at our local school level. Our in year deficit continues to be significantly decreased as we support pupils with high level needs. Annually, we support pupils who arrive without an EHCP but with complex needs. We continually redeploy our resources to ensure that we meet the needs of the pupil and as a result that the child can remain in school. Our year-in-year deficit has been significant over the last few years and this is mainly due to supporting children with high needs. Without this, pupils would be at an increased chance of temporary exclusion (leading to permanent exclusion). This would lead, therefore, to an increased cost to the Local Authority.

Normally any balances are for specific purposes, such as repairs and replacements.

I am not sure that school should be able to carry forward high balances, but taking this away will encourage schools to spend when it is not needed in an attempt to "spend it or lose it". The balances are not always a true reflection of how much cash is spare, more work would be needed to be carried out before balances are swiped.

As a school with a carry forward I know that these funds are committed and cover essential items such as replacement boilers (current estimated cost £50,000- £60,000 for each boiler) We have had to build this in to our budgeting as we have been advised that the LA is not willing or able to cover these costs. We already have two boilers reaching the end of recommended life span.

If the result of this attempt to be financially self-sufficient over recent years is to have that money taken back to address deficits in other school budgets this creates the incentive for us to be less financially prudent.

10. Contribution of Carryforward - If not please explain why?

It should be noted that at present we are running a significant in year deficit which is presently being funded by that carry forward. Without that we would be looking to reduce provision and possible redundancies. In addition there would be little equity as this could only be applied to maintained schools not academies unless all academies agreed to a similar scheme. It should also be noted that such a mechanism would simply mask the issue of inadequate funding of the High Needs block and school in Cambridgeshire generally.

Appropriate management of funds by individual schools/academies should not be used to offset management or otherwise of LA decisions surrounding the High Needs Block.

Not actually Legal and shouldnt have been in the consultation

we are a small school, if we have any carry over (which is highly unlikely) we will have done this by being really really tight with our spend. It is unfair to take this off us.

Schools that have surplus balances have worked incredibly hard and this should not be used to support other schools.

Completely agree with suggestion in Q9

We have been forensically trying to make efficiencies and prepare for longer term forecasts which projected deficits. The carry forward was to ensure we can still operate and achieve educational excellence over a five year period.

Our small carry forward has been carefully planned to ensure we have school sustainability.

In the majority of cases, the carry forward will be for planned investment or is at a level to ensure business continuity.

Schools have worked hard and budgeted carefully to create a carry forward - they should not be penalised for their frugality.

Because there might be a genuine reason a school has carried forward and is sitting on an amount. If a school has planned to develop something they might have a carry forward to complete the much needed project. Perhaps if the carry forward is more than X amount for more than 3 years then consider it.

Allocated to other things - if schools think it will be removed it will be spent inappropriately

It was given to the schools to be used by those school. If schools think they will lose it they will spend it inappropriately.

There are many reasons for carry forwards eg they may have been due to schools not knowing budgets year on year and having to plan for a potentially challenging future, not having a projected costed budget means schools have to take prudent decisions. School's are required to have a minimum amount to ensure a contingency. School's in Cambridgeshire have year on year been forced to make challenging decisions around finances and more so than other counties.

Not sure on what basis you could 'ask' , what proportion or criteria could be used and what guarantee of refund. Seems a good idea as principle but hard to implement.

10. Contribution of Carryforward - If not please explain why?

Small schools such as ourselves have varying pupil numbers from one year to the next. To illustrate this, our intake has fluctuated between 9 and 23 over the past 4 years. It is not sensibly financially viable for us not to overspend one year and fall short the next. We have a small carry forward budget which we do not spend on very essential school needs because we cannot be certain we will have the pupil numbers in the following year to maintain our school structure. Our carry forward has been able to provide us with a two-year cushion of steadily reducing expenditure, despite staff redundancies and reductions in hours, but this carry forward will completely disappear by April 2021 based on current projections. If we were asked to return some of it in April 2020, we would be forced to make further redundancies which would cost the local authority more than it would gain from us. For us, we can clearly demonstrate that our carry forward will be entirely used and has prevented a 'cliff-edge' scenario for the school. Schools in this position should not be asked to make a further contribution to help repay the high needs deficit, particularly when the proposed increase for our school is only £8 per pupil (less than £1000 overall).

No – this would serve to penalise schools who have managed balances carefully over the years, is not easy to identify committed balances, reserves held for pupil fluctuations, renewal and replacement programmes and is not a fair way of sharing the deficit.

I think it is necessary to look carefully at why there is a carry forward. My school is carrying forward an amount to iron out a dip in numbers in the short term - allowing us to continue with the same structure whilst numbers stabilize - avoiding (hopefully) redundancies one year and appointments the next. However I think there may be some schools where money is being hoarded for an unspecified rainy day in the future.

The solution should be properly funding of High Needs. This solution would penalise those schools who have taken tough staffing decisions and carefully managed their budgets within year and still have reserves. Schools with no reserves or in deficit would not have to contribute.

Plans are already in place for this.

Our carry forward has been carefully managed in order to pay for a number of issues our school needs. The governors considered the issue of contributing a share to support the high needs deficit but concluded that this was not in the best interests of our school.

Schools usually build a surplus for a particular reason, they rarely sit on a surplus for the fun of it.

This would not be legal and the question should not have formed part of the consultation.

This would penalise schools who have taken tough staffing decisions to carefully manage their budgets to retain reserves that in most cases are needed to fund costly maintenance projects. It would be unfair and reward schools who run into deficit.

There may be some schools that would quickly spend and allocate their carry forwards instead of them being moved away from their school. In our case any modest carry forwards (approx. 4%) are used to sustain the current teaching structure to avoid further mixing of year group, over sized classes and the inability to take on new pupils in a growing village and compromising our school curriculum.

Schools have huge demands ahead and prudent financial management should not be respected. A gradual introduction of a 5% for main stream schools and 8% for special school could be negotiated with a mechanism for schools and Academies to identify essential projects beyond that reserve, A school or Academy without any reserve cannot plan a three year projection which is essential for ongoing sustainability.

10. Contribution of Carryforward - If not please explain why?

We currently are saving towards expanding our provision for our out of school club - and so our carry-forward may look high - but this is because we are bringing in an income stream and saving towards something big. We shouldn't be penalised for this.

The situation we find ourselves in has resulted in a carry forward. This has been as a result of careful spending and significant staffing savings. As a result of cut backs in previous years, we now have a firm spending plan for much needed resources and whole school development. We are also using this to support with high needs ourselves.

We have a relatively small carry forward and believe that current budgets should be spent on current pupils. However, a large part of our school is Victorian and we are aware of the need for repairs and replacements in coming years. We endeavour to maintain a carry forward should there be emergencies and unforeseen circumstances. We also need to reflect that we may need funding for additional staff to support specific pupils.

Assuming that fund balances shown on academy accounts have been accumulated for any reason other than good strategic and risk management is a mistake. The funds have been accumulated for strategic purposes and are earmarked to manage specific areas of the academies operations. Requiring academies to contribute a share of their strategic reserves to support the recovery of the high needs deficit would penalise those who are managing their resources effectively, and compromise plans for things such as committed balances, pupil fluctuations, renewal and replacement programmes, etc.

Those with consistently excessively high balances should contribute. If all with a carryforward are asked to contribute it could lead to schools spending unnecessarily just to reduce their balance.

Academies that form part of MATs often consolidate individual school reserves to maximise return on interest or to smooth out other deficits across the trust. Taking these contributions would negate the opportunity to do that.

Also, reserves are often built up over a period of time to mitigate the impact of minimum capital received through DFC. Removing reserves at a time of finding uncertainty creates significant financial risk across many schools.

There are many factors which contribute to schools having a carry forward, particularly in Cambridgeshire where financial tracking has been made extremely challenging using the LA software without training over the past three years and with no telephone support for Finance Managers. Many schools have an in year deficit budget, to meet the growing needs of pupils.

11. If you do agree what do you think would be a reasonable contribution?

I would consider a 'loan' more acceptable.

minimum amount possible

I think it should be expressed as a rising percentage of the carry forward budget. If a school has a small carry forward, they don't contribute anything, if it is significant (more than 10% of their annual budget) they should contribute 2-3% of it, if it is more than 15% , a 5% contribution etc

11. If you do agree what do you think would be a reasonable contribution?

If there is an in year carryforward less than 8% this should be kept and everything else clawed back

All carry forward above 8% of main annual funding

50per cent

I think that you should reinstate the 8% CAP for Primary and the % Cap for Secondary that has been cited previously. However, perhaps there should also be a set ceiling of reserves for those with huge carried forwards unless there is particular reason (I.e. building issues).

Anything above 5% of overall budget

There used to be a limit on what schools could carry forward each year and a time limit on this as well. Schools do need to budget and plan for the future but the majority of the funding they receive should be spent on the pupils they have at the time.

Contribution should be only for schools with balances above the recommended amounts previously recognised by Cambridgeshire as being excessive and where schools do not have valid plans for their use.

Contributions should be waived if there is a clear, time limited, planned and LA agreed purpose for the carry forward balance which can then be evidenced.

See my earlier response - I think that any c/fwd in excess of £100 per pupil is excessive. Schools that have higher c/fwds should account for why the funding hasn't been spent on the provision during that year or have a specific project that they may be accruing funds for. Any such project should be completed in the next year and c/fwds should not be allowed to accrue and grow year and year. Cambridgeshire primary schools' have a weak case for additional funding / unfair funding formula when you consider the amount of c/fwd that is allowed year on year.

Anything above 8% of available funding.

I find this very difficult to answer without an idea of where the balances sit - how is it spread? We have £29m sitting in accounts not being used and a deficit of £16m - everyone hands back 50% of their C/F and this will wipe off the deficit - somewhat radical. Alternatively introduce a % cap over a number of years and claw back lower % each year?

Any school with predicted carry forward in Year 3 above 8% should be top sliced, as long as there is the option for carry forward that is being saved for a capital project, to be transferred to the capital pot.

Contribution should be one half of the current reserve held by the school, while leaving £10,000 or more in the schools reserve.

This will depend on individual schools' circumstances, why they have a carryforward and what the size of their carryforward is compared to their overall budget.

Since this is public funds, it would be reasonable for all uncommitted funds to be used.

11. If you do agree what do you think would be a reasonable contribution?

Cannot say as it will depend on the level of carry forward, size of school and budget requirements. Setting a percentage of budget unfairly benefits bigger schools and a figure is equally poor. This is something a financial funding expert should be coming up with.

For schools who have an excessive proportion of their budget as a carry forward should be looked at on a school by school basis where a universally agreed percentage is clawed back. Create a rule of a percentage that a school is not allowed to be in excess of.

It depends on how high the carry forward is. As a school that is using our small carry forward to support children with high needs and no EHCP to stay in school (through funding additional TAs to ensure children are not excluded), then i believe that all schools should do the same. We too have buildings that are falling apart - but surely we have a moral purpose to ensure all children are supported. If schools have high carry forwards (ie over eg £50,000 then they should be made to use this to support children or give it to the high needs block for those of us who are supporting these children.

No school should have more than £35,000 (ie. a school with £50,000 would surrender £15,000) We feel this figure is appropriate as it matches growth funding and roughly the cost of a median member of staff.

Reserves that are over the figure suggested by DFE as this presumably impacts the arguments about fairer funding made by Cambridgeshire Schools.

What do our statistical neighbour Local Authorities do?

A proportion of the budget depending on the school

5%

It seems extraordinarily clear to us that the budget given in Schools block is for the provision of safe relevant education for today's children and for today's teachers' wages. Any deficit built up should only have been against plans made by the authority at the time for recovery and about which we have no information whatsoever. The principle should be that old deficits should be reclaimed from unused surpluses, built up at the time the deficits were being incurred. The funding share at that time seems to have been miscalculated. It should be indefensible that today's children should suffer from an irrecoverable educational shortfall while some schools sit on balances which might already have offset those deficits. A reasonable contribution is to cover the whole deficit - over time if necessary - in this way. We agree that academy surpluses should be targets too (many may have generated those surpluses when mainstream schools?) but, if not yet possible, £12m balances and a £6.5m deficit suggests a default of c50% from each. Urgent action may need to be taken to avoid some schools wasting this opportunity through profligate short term spending

I am on the fence here, see about answer. If however the carry forward has been very high for more that x years yes I would support that . Perhaps a % of the whole budget? 10%

5% of budget should be protected as a reasonable carry forward year on year. After this any reasonable proportion which meets the objectives of the strategy.

I think you need to set a threshold - e.g. identify schools with over £50k reserves and challenge them with respect to committed funds / projects. Then a percentage of unallocated reserves could be taken - e.g. 30%.

11. If you do agree what do you think would be a reasonable contribution?

I think it should be accepted that a base amount of £40 - 50k (ie one teacher for a year) be left alone. In larger schools, a larger amount. Above this, careful scrutiny of what the carry forward is to be used for and then some clawback.

Any amounts in excess of 10% of annual expenditure (having also accounted for any commitments).

A fixed % across the piece.

25% of anything over 5% of the relevant school's ISB.

It needs to depend on how much the carry forward is and the individual circumstances of the school - but no school should be permitted to carry forward a huge unused surplus year on year. Those schools who obviously do not need all of their budget and have consistently big (£100k+??) carry forwards should return the funding to help other schools across the county. A small percentage could be removed from all carry forwards unless the school has kept funds back for a specific purpose.

Schools should not be penalised for keeping a sensible reserve (eg. 25% of annual budget). We would propose percentage of carry-forward above this level.

There should be a means for schools to justify a larger carry forward where there is a specific need such as growth or a building project.

Schools should aim to have no more than 5% of their gross budget in year-on-year carry-forward without very good reason (such as holding other funds, or saving for a capital schemes

A percentage of the balance held. Could the percentages be set in ranges of amounts held. Higher contribution for higher balances held.

12. Do you have any initial comments on the potential impact at individual school level of possible proposals to reduce top up funding levels for mainstream and units and to reduce Behaviour, Attendance and Inclusion Partnership funding as set out in paragraph 49 of the consultation document?

Staffing

Needy children suffer

The ability to deliver all the additional responsibilities being laid at the feet of schools will be impacted.

The impact on schools and children is scandalous and shameful! We should be investing in our children's future and supporting our world class health service that is the envy of the world. Not running schools and hospitals down.

Top up funding does not currently meet the true cost of providing additional support for the most vulnerable pupils. If this is reduced further, I fear that schools will be unwilling to admit children with SEND or exclusions and managed moves will increase as pupils have their actual support cut.

12. Do you have any initial comments on the potential impact at individual school level of possible proposals to reduce top up funding levels for mainstream and units and to reduce Behaviour, Attendance and Inclusion Partnership funding as set out in paragraph 49 of the consultation document?

I have not seen the consultation document, but I know from personal experience, that behavioural, attendance issues and inclusion can have a devastating impact on a persons life and I would not like to be responsible for reducing any services in these areas.

This would push the schools further into deficit because they want to retain pupils and can only do this with sufficient staff.

Impact will crucially depend on the option which the Council chooses.
The difference between the options recommended in this response , and those at the other end of the spectrum would be enormous for this individual school.

Such proposals will undermine the existing SLAs for BAIPs and challenge the guarantees and provisions in EHCPs. Ultimately, more vulnerable pupils will be at risk.

Yes, I disagree at this would hit support staff levels for non- EHCP pupils in schools where support has to go to EHCP pupils first.

St Peter's has already been significantly impacted upon. Other schools in the LA have experienced a very limited impact upon their budget. A measure of fairness needs to be arrived at.

The allocations are there for reason. We already know they do not accurately reflect the level of resource schools need to meet EHCP conditions so to alter them would exacerbate the problem.

The top up is insufficient to meet costs now. Any reduction is unwelcome and will lead to potential cuts in staff. Schools are already having to subsidise the resources centres and units.

Top up levels being reduced would be catastrophic for school budgets.
Attendance and behaviour and inclusion partnership funding is vital for excluded pupils

Will result in reduced capacity to meet targets in EHCPs and less impact on children's progress and attainment.

This would impact schools like ours with high numbers of SEN very significantly. Whilst the current top up for a child who needs full time support is currently about £10.5K, in reality a level 2 TA for 32.5 hours costs about £19K so schools are already contributing more than £6K per pupil with an EHCP. Last year in our 2 form entry school we peaked at 12 children with EHCPs - it is a huge strain on the school budget. BAIP is vital is we are to keep as many children as possible in mainstream and away from permanent exclusion which can lead to more expensive alternative provision.

Due to the por calculation of costs (inc. on-costs) the £16000 or so used to calculate the funding for a level 2 Teaching Assistant, is somewhat errant as the reality is that it costs £19000 or so. Therefore, schools are already currently effectively topping up £9000 into an EHCP that is being used to fund a 1-2-1, not the £6000 it is supposed to cost. This is effectively pushing the costs into school.

SENDSS - Access and Inclusion team are vital in ensuring that more children are kept in school and in reducing the number of permanent exclusions. This approach is also fiscally astute. By reducing the funding to these areas, they will be a reduction in support available to schools trying to be inclusive and a greater number of children requiring alternative placements or tutoring, both of which cost significantly more.

12. Do you have any initial comments on the potential impact at individual school level of possible proposals to reduce top up funding levels for mainstream and units and to reduce Behaviour, Attendance and Inclusion Partnership funding as set out in paragraph 49 of the consultation document?

The school would not be able to sustain the additional funding required if top up funding was reduced. The costs of this are already in part being allocated out of existing budget and any further amounts required would have a significant impact on other aspects of the school.

Measures to maintain attendance and inclusion reduce long term costs and present value for money from top up fees.

The schools are in a loose situation either way! A school with high needs we already pay considerable over the initial £6000 per pupil (currently this is about £10,000). It appears that the schools budget are an easy target to collect money that should have given to the high needs block in the first place. We are not in a position to say no or fund raise.

I do not currently see an impact from these services in my school so cannot comment on how this may be affected if funding levels are reduced.

the mechanism of how top up funding is allocated requires review.

This fills me with dread - when you have very challenging children with complex needs these need to be managed to benefit those children and also those children around them. £10k towards a fully funded EHCP does not touch the sides of the costs to a school. If a small primary has 4 or 5 of these children and they are expected to contribute £6k to each then that is a £30k hit on an already stretched budget - it is not sustainable. I would estimate a cost of £24k cost for each of these high needs and challenging / complex children. If there are 5 in a small school of say 120 children, even with top up funding of £50k, that leaves us with additional costs of £70k which comes out of our TA budget - leaving very little for all the other SEND children and non-send children. Any reduction will have a big negative impact on us.

If the Trust does not receive the full NFF then reducing the BAIP funding in addition will further impact on those students with the highest need.

The BAIP funding is currently used to fund the following:

- to reserve and pay for places at Octavia Alternative Provision.
- a key stage 3 internal provision entitled the Phoenix Centre,
- accelerated learning groups in year 7,
- a family worker, additional safeguarding staff,
- additional maths and English teachers to address low attainment on entry,
- a counselling service,
- external SEMH providers

With the challenges faced by schools currently in maintaining staffing levels to support children with emerging needs, reducing the top up funding and other additional funding streams will have an impact on whole school provision for all and could have a negative impact on the number of exclusions, as schools will not be able to fund additional staff to support high needs.

For our school, the impact of a 1.8% transfer would be significant. We are currently in substantial deficit as a result of the long-term structural cost pressures of emerging from a falling roll and special measures. We are an Opportunity Area school that has historically seen per-pupil funding levels among the lowest nationally. The transfer would deprive us of around £130k and, consequently, the ability to finally balance our budget and avoid further job losses/cuts to resources. The reduction to the rates of growth funding will hit us another £20k, with any potential 10% reduction to BAIP funding and SEND funding potentially losing us around another £30k. The overall impact may therefore be as high as £180k in 2020/21. This is unacceptable and would force us to make redundancies and cuts that would limit our curriculum and the support we can provide to the most vulnerable.

12. Do you have any initial comments on the potential impact at individual school level of possible proposals to reduce top up funding levels for mainstream and units and to reduce Behaviour, Attendance and Inclusion Partnership funding as set out in paragraph 49 of the consultation document?

I think the devolution of educational provision other than at school is probably worth a full review. I was part of the steering group back in c. 2008 when CCC costs were extraordinary. Devolved funding to BAIPs represented much better value for money, improving the quality of provision, allowing more preventative work to take place. Good Inclusion resulted.

The vision/shared moral purpose is much dissipated over the years, partly as an outcome of Headteacher turnover. We need a good look at what we want to do. Most schools are desperate to hang onto BAIP funding simply because it is a healthy funding stream. Much of our preventative work is now embedded in our schools and successful. Alternative provision is less successful across the county and we might not have the balance between school and external provision quite right.

I believe because of the increasing high needs in our schools at all levels of need, schools with high percentage of SEN (not EHCP) in school should be funded more than schools with low percentage SEN. Many of these SEN children are waiting or almost Qualified for EHCP's and need extra staff to handle them which other schools with low SEN do not have to fund.

This is self-evident:

Expectations are encouraged to rise from families regarding the support they will receive. Schools will have less to achieve this. Further pressure on staff in the midst of a recruitment crisis where so many families are already struggling and little support from wider services. Whenever we fail to meet expectations, huge amounts of time are spent addressing complaints and tribunals etc.

At our school it will make no difference to the projected funding received - the school is below the new MFG so must receive sufficient to bring it to this level regardless of the % transfer and any cap.

On the other hand there is a growth in the high needs presented by pupils at the school which the school will look to the LA for support in meeting these needs.

Schools have increasing numbers of pupils entering school with high needs each year. More funding is required at school level and county level to deal with this.

Without an individual impact assessment, it is difficult to consider. There needs to be an impact assessment of the changes based on school size but potentially this is a route to consider.

Decline in standards, more pressure on teaching staff and schools, reduced attainment, less support available.

Inclusion is our biggest challenge. In year admissions who have been moved from other schools or who arrive from other authorities with undiagnosed or specific needs. Last year we spent £36k on additional staffing to support inclusion. This year we are spending a similar amount. any reduction in funds for inclusion creates additional challenges in meeting the needs of the community.

This would disproportionately adversely affect our school where we are well above the National Average of children with EHCPs. We already struggle to pay the first £6k for each child's EHCP and to reduce the money we receive by 10% would be significant as all parents and carers of children with EHCPs would still expect the agreed money on their child's EHCP to be spent on them. The rest of the children's funding in school would be used for this small proportion of children and this is unreasonable to further disadvantage a small school.

It will just put additional pressures on each school.

Not overly, without knowing what the impact on individual schools is, but 10% reduction for a £1.8M saving should not be dismissed out of hand.

12. Do you have any initial comments on the potential impact at individual school level of possible proposals to reduce top up funding levels for mainstream and units and to reduce Behaviour, Attendance and Inclusion Partnership funding as set out in paragraph 49 of the consultation document?

The BAIP funding has been frozen for a number of years and, as such, has decreased in real terms values. Additionally, during this period of time, costs have spiralled and the level of need has dramatically increased. Managed moves are now less than 50% successful in the city and support services are vanishing. Even maintaining current levels presents significant problems to the most challenged schools; a further cut would mean that the whole BAIP agreement would cease to be manageable and schools would need to resort to permanent exclusions. Have the LA carried out an impact analysis on this suggestion.

Equally, cutting the top up values will simply reduce the provision for our most vulnerable children. If this happens I would expect the LA to write to all students with EHCPs and their parents to explain that provision will be cut in the next annual review.

four main specific challenges we face:

Reduced pupil numbers means we need to preserve the funds to maintain 1 x class in each year. Inclusion is a priority for us. Whilst we understand the need to contribute to the high needs block we need to retain sufficient funds to meet the needs of children who are not eligible for additional resource through Education Health Care Plans but do need additional resources: Human, Practical, Specific. Recruitment in the City of Cambridge has additional challenges because of travel patterns and house prices. Therefore we need to invest in recruitment and retention of teachers, administration, technical and support staff. ICT requires ongoing investment to mirror the society we are educating children to be part of.

It won't really achieve anything other than sending the same money round in a circle. Taking money off schools I think could well increase costs for the High Needs Block as some schools struggle all the more to fund additional support for children who do not have an EHCP. If these children end up excluded, then tuition costs will go up.

My school has also ended up taking children from other neighbouring schools having been told that their catchment school cannot afford another EHCP. This issue could get worse still. As I stated in my previous answer about transfers from the High Needs Block, this runs the risk of contributing to hiding the true state of high needs funding.

These don't seem to help significantly in the reduction of the deficit.

This proposal would disproportionately affect those schools most in need of this funding.

For smaller schools it will ultimately impact the staffing levels available to support the most vulnerable pupils. Staffing is the significant budget pressure.

Impact for Behaviour, Attendance and Inclusion Partnerships could be mitigated through shared support networks and support through Secondary / College sector and better early intervention services / Health tie in.

We would anticipate a negative effect.

Our school will be receiving the Minimum Funding Level payment and from the examples given, there will be NO impact on the school budget, irrespective of any % deduction agreed.

Our school has a very high level of Special Needs children and therefore a 1.8% figure would reduce the pressure on the High Needs budget. If a lower % figure is used, it is expected that cuts will have to be achieved in this sector which would impact on the school budget.

County Wide Response

Irrespective of the School Specific response above, it is felt that the general school's budget SHOULD NOT be used to finance High Needs expenditure and therefore a "Top Slicing" figure of 0.5% is supported.

Why reduce top up funding.

12. Do you have any initial comments on the potential impact at individual school level of possible proposals to reduce top up funding levels for mainstream and units and to reduce Behaviour, Attendance and Inclusion Partnership funding as set out in paragraph 49 of the consultation document?

I think any reduction in funding will be hard to manage.

We have had support from SEND services to reintegrate a pupil previously permanently excluded from another school. The services have tried their best to support but resources are already thin and the school has had to meet the significant costs associated with taking in vulnerable pupils as well as pupils who are at risk and are already on our role. Further reductions may lead to more exclusions and ultimately greater costs. The £1.8 million saving may well be outweighed by the cost of meeting the needs of these pupils out of school in 1:1 tuition or out of county.

EHCP funding is already below the actual costs. The notional £6000 school contribution is closer to £10,000 per pupil per year.

No

the impact will be disproportional to schools with highest level of SEND and smaller schools. The reduction in BAIP funding may make the current arrangements untenable and force a return to central County provision.

Our school has significant financial difficulties for the last five years and was banking on full application of the MFG to reduce the financial deficit. SVA has no access to PRU in Huntingdonshire and as such has been using its own resources to cope with students who would routinely be supported through BAIP funding.

We don't know what the impact of a 10% reduction in these funding levels would be for our individual school going forward. Currently, it would have no impact because our only EHCP is leaving in July. It would have an impact in future if another child with an EHCP joined our school or we apply for one successfully, because we would have to provide TA support with less funding. We are not part of a BAIP and would be unlikely to become part of one, given our catchment area. Referring back to staffing comments in Q3, we have already reduced staffing levels, which is impacting on our ability to provide support for children with low level SEN. Reducing top-up funding for children would impact on the other children even more.

Vulnerable pupils, disadvantaged pupils and high needs pupils will all be affected; schools will continue to pick up the pieces of a severely cut external service provision placing even greater pressure on what is becoming the fourth emergency service. Teachers are leaving the profession and recruitment is problematic especially in the over-priced South Cambridgeshire area. If we are also simply expected to soak up all the problems then the system will break.

I think this could result in further expenses in future, as the needs of pupils are not addressed and the challenges they present increase.

This will not affect us greatly as we have a small number of children who attract top up funding but this will affect some schools disproportionately.

more PEX

In 2017-18 a new BAIP formula was constructed, some three years late, to ensure that those in most need and serving deprived catchments would receive a fairer proportion of the budget. For many schools there was a cut in this budget and this was resisted with BAIPs agreeing that schools would not lose, or gain, more than 10% . Once again in 2017-18 those schools in most need of the additional EOTAS money did not receive what was due to them. The full formula allocation was, for the first time, allocated in 2018-19. To reverse that across all schools by a universal reduction of 10% is wrong. Firstly, there should be no reduction for those schools serving the most challenging pupils as identified through the deprivation indicator. If there is to be a reduction it should be phased in for the most deprived children across a number of years.

12. Do you have any initial comments on the potential impact at individual school level of possible proposals to reduce top up funding levels for mainstream and units and to reduce Behaviour, Attendance and Inclusion Partnership funding as set out in paragraph 49 of the consultation document?

The decision about how much, when and where to cut should be an LA decision and not be put to BAIPs who in previous years have shown little regard for the most deprived schools in what is generally an affluent county.

Reducing top up funding levels would certainly mean that only pupils with EHCPs would be supported at our school. We have already significantly cut additional support and if we needed to fund EHCPs at a higher level we would be forced to reduce the support for other pupils with learning, emotional and behaviour needs. This would have an impact both on these children, their progress and on the workload and pressures on teachers. Our school needs behaviour, attendance and inclusion support – reducing these would have less of a direct and immediate impact than reducing top up funding levels, but a longer term, deeper impact on staff expertise, support and ultimately recruitment and retention of staff.

This only serves to exacerbate the impact of the MPPF on those schools with the highest levels of deprivation and prior attainment funding as the biggest impact is likely to be on the same schools given the profile of pupils they serve. An arbitrary 10% cut is simple but may impact on pupils with greatest need.

There will be a direct impact on support for and outcomes for SEND pupils as schools are not able to close the funding gap themselves. There will be indirect impacts on staff wellbeing, retention and outcomes for other pupils.

The LA needs to be honest with SEND parents if this is the route they intend to take. The cost to a school of providing 1:1 level 2TA support is circa £20K- without any investment in CPD. A full statement is only £16K, of which the school receives £10.5K, which you are providing to reduce to circa £9.4K. Schools will be receiving less than half the cost of providing 1:1 support in funding, yet SEND parents are still being encouraged to believe that securing an EHCP means their child will receive 1:1 TA support

We believe that these services are already very stretched and there is insufficient support in the county for children with extreme behaviour. We therefore believe that there will be a significant impact at individual school level if this top up funding is reduced. The reduction in top up funding in this area will lead to increased exclusions and greater cost to the LA for those children out of education. This is therefore only a saving in the short term.

The numbers of pupils presenting with high levels of need seem to be increasing year on year. As a relatively small school the budget has become tighter and tighter and indeed last year resulted in having to make support staff redundancy. This was despite us as a school needing to put in two full time 1:1 support staff for two children who are at high risk of exclusion and present huge levels of need. Due to delays in support from SEN services and a variety of other services who we have turned to for support neither of these children generate any funding and are a huge cost to us as school. However, as a school we strive to be as inclusive as possible and have therefore stretched ourselves to ensure that these children don't end up permanently excluded and therefore contributing to the high level of expense outlined in the summary of how the higher needs block money is spent. As an Infant School where we only have the children for 3 years and it is difficult to generate the evidence required for a successful application and therefore we end up funding it out of our own budget so cutting back the top up further for the few applications we do successfully make would further impact our already challenging budget circumstances.

The impact on individual schools is too great. Schools were looking forward to some relief in view of the funding announcement. It looks like the Local Authority are taking that benefit to themselves which feels unfair at the school level.

12. Do you have any initial comments on the potential impact at individual school level of possible proposals to reduce top up funding levels for mainstream and units and to reduce Behaviour, Attendance and Inclusion Partnership funding as set out in paragraph 49 of the consultation document?

The impact will be disproportional and have greatest negative impact on the schools with the highest level of SEND and smaller schools. The reduction in BalP funding may make the current arrangements untenable and force a return to central County provision.

The impact will be to further disadvantage the children in our schools care who need the help most. Schools have almost no room to close the funding gap and will be forced to end what little targetted support they have been able to retain so far.

If this option is taken then the LA needs to be honest with SEND parents and tell them that neither the LA or Cambridgeshire schools can provide proper support for their children anymore.

This will have a significant impact to the schools funding for support for children with EHCP - already schools have to fund the first £6k. Already the SEND support from the LA both in terms of advice, guidance and in school support has in our opinion reduced over the past few years where to the point that pressures on schools is already too high and unattainable. And therefore we would strongly contest any proposal to reduce top up funding for main stream.

Concern that the Council is moving away from supporting pupil needs and providing basic services to fit in with budget planning. This is not sustainable for the overall system as the needs of pupils will increase and subsequently cost far more. The personal impact on the individual person and family of these proposals is negative and will simply reinforce the lack of commitment for social cohesion and provide the unintended consequence of discrimination and inequalities. There is likely to be more exclusions and costs involved providing statutory education. In addition more costly SENDIST tribunals and additional costs.

I would not support this as a further squeeze on general school budgets.

With regard to the partnership mentioned above -schools try their best to provide for all pupils but without support, specialist advice etc it is likely that schools will have to increase the number of exclusions simply because of the risk that some pupils pose to the education and safety of the majority of pupils. This is beyond a school leaders control and no Head teacher has a magic wand to manage what can be a critical situation - exclusion can be the only solution.

I have concerns over how this impacts on budgets. We are seeing an increase in the need to access top up funding as a result of other children with SEND and behaviour needs joining us. We have heard of situations where families of children who would need access to this funding have been suggested to look at alternative schools who 'would be better able to meet the needs' of their child. I worry that this may become more frequent practice so schools can save on their budget if the top up funding levels are reduced. Schools may also be reluctant to seek the support necessary for the child if they know there will be a bigger impact on their budget, especially if trying balance the books in an already tough climate.

We are extremely concerned by this proposal. An EHCP does not cover cost of a full time TA already, and our school budget is already stretched to support high needs in school. Schools in crisis will make more permanent exclusions, costing the county more in alternative provision and not saving money.

We also believe there is an urgent need for more specialist unit places to help high need children in Cambridge and reducing unit funding levels would make this much more difficult to develop.

A reduction in top up funding would result in a reduction in TA hours to support those children who need the higher level support, in addition to those children without EHC Plans who require daily support. This will have a negative impact on staff wellbeing.

12. Do you have any initial comments on the potential impact at individual school level of possible proposals to reduce top up funding levels for mainstream and units and to reduce Behaviour, Attendance and Inclusion Partnership funding as set out in paragraph 49 of the consultation document?

Our school has a very high proportion of children with SEND, many of which are on SEN Support. We use our best endeavours to provide outstanding support for these children, significantly more than is normally provided. Any reduction in top up funding levels will effect what we can provide from our normal resources. This shortsighted proposal would undoubtedly place further burden on the high needs block. As an RI school any reduction in funding will have an impact on our ability to make improvements and effect the quality of education we provide to our children.

It seems that schools with the highest levels of deprivation and prior attainment funding are again likely to be the most affected by any reduction in top-up funding for SEN and reducing Behaviour, Attendance and Inclusion Partnership funding. Whilst an arbitrary straight percentage cut may be simple, it is likely to impact on those pupils with the greatest need.

The impact on us as a smaller school will be considerable, resulting it being very difficult to balance the budget. As a small primary school with and outstanding OFSTED we find it increasingly hard to survive. It seems we are penalised for being a high attaining school with relatively low numbers of SEN and PP. Academic success means financial failure.

The potential impact in my school would be either the loss of a teacher and larger class sizes or two support staff. Either option would increase the high level of needs which we are currently managing, resulting in exclusion and additional costs to the high needs block.

13. Do you have any comments in respect of the proposal to increase the lump sum for Primary and Secondary schools to help equalise the impact on schools of the broadband costs being passed onto schools due to the reduction in the Central Schools Services Block as set out in paragraph 50 of the consultation document?

Yes, this has been the single most issue that has affected small schools. The reduction of £40,000 is, in effect, 8-10% of our budget. The rising costs for staff (which must be paid) and inflation are eating into our school budget and our overall increase in budget is a lowly 1.8%. Staffing costs were raised by 3% alone in 2019-20

Agree

This sounds like a reasonable proposition

I think the lump sum for primary schools, especially smaller schools should be increased to reflect the additional cost. I think the secondary school charge should be higher, given their greater band width and higher numbers of pupils and staff using the system. The increase in minimum per pupil funding is much higher for secondary schools than primary schools so I feel they could meet this additional cost without an additional lump sum payment, though I fear the NFF does not allow a variation in lump sum between primary and secondary schools.

Schools need a good quality broadband system and how that is provided, needs be agreed and funded centrally or you will find when budgets get even tighter, schools might decide to opt out. If we want a fair education system then we need to ensure that the best possible broadband is available to every pupil.

13. Do you have any comments in respect of the proposal to increase the lump sum for Primary and Secondary schools to help equalise the impact on schools of the broadband costs being passed onto schools due to the reduction in the Central Schools Services Block as set out in paragraph 50 of the consultation document?

It is unfortunate but Cambridge has been fortunate previously. The way forward will be schools looking for their own provider.

This proposal seems fair.

I think this should not happen as although it is an additional cost to the school, as it is incremental I would rather see it go towards the HNB.

This seems 'fair'

As long as the level of service is maintained, I am in agreement with this.

Is this another increase we will have to absorb as it appears this cannot be absorbed at present? Any increase is welcome but the budget overall is too tight for such a small amount to each school.

This seems a fair proposal

Anything which reduces the financial pressure on schools is good.

Happy for it to be increased via schools block

This is a fair way to meet this cost, and in stark contrast to the proposals for reducing the high needs deficit

Seems fair - we are all gaining hugely from joint procurement of broadband and it seems fair offer equality of provision to all pupils in the county.

This seemed like a very fair method of doing this and will also help protect our smaller schools and ensure parity of opportunity for our young people across the county.

Fully support this and believe the broadband provision represents value for money for all schools.

why increase the lump sum? Just pay for broadband!

Is this simply providing the money in a different guise? I struggle to see how this will result in an overall saving at LA level.

I consider the lump sum equalisation to be fair and reasonable.

I agree with this.

The trust recognise the hard work undertaken by CCC on the excellent broadband project and support the proposal to ensure that the project is delivered to plan.

It is difficult to see what choice there is but to pass this cost onto schools.

13. Do you have any comments in respect of the proposal to increase the lump sum for Primary and Secondary schools to help equalise the impact on schools of the broadband costs being passed onto schools due to the reduction in the Central Schools Services Block as set out in paragraph 50 of the consultation document?

I support the principle as outlined in paragraph 50.

I agree some scheme is necessary so that schools with a large number of pupils should pay more as they will be higher users of the broadband services. Not able to do the sums as I do not have enough data on all schools in Cambridgeshire but an alternative approach would be to levy broadband costs on a per pupil basis.

I don't think £1000 is unreasonable.

This is going to impact more on smaller schools

The full broadband costs should be covered by the DfE. This will obviously be different for each school but that would be the only equitable way to ensure every school has the same level of connectivity.

Without an individual impact assessment, it is difficult to consider. A balanced and fair approach that does not prejudice smaller or more remote schools should be considered

We do not have any information to enable us to assess the impact of this on our school. More information please.

This is another big challenge.

The LA need to run training for Governors on income generation. We are going to need to identify other sources of income rather than depend on DfE funding and the LA will need to help us with this.

This should be based on a school's AWPU so as not to further disadvantage smaller schools.

Any reduction in impact at an individual schools basis should be encouraged.

Equalising is always good.

I would also point out that the failure to provide an opportunity for free comment in this questionnaire is really very poor indeed.

Good to pool risk and equalize the costs between schools, though unclear how this will affect individual school budgets.

This would seem a fair way of doing it, but it does also move away from the LA's intent to mirror the NFF as much as possible. There would be a bigger impact on some schools in future years if this flexibility was not available.

This seems a sensible approach given the constraints.

We would strongly disagree with any proposal to increase our contribution in this area. We feel that broadband provision needs to be reconsidered within the context of central government commitments to provide nationwide coverage. As such, it may well be the case that alternative sources of funding might be forthcoming to pay for such provision. This includes, the sorts of significant capital investment described at the consultation event.

13. Do you have any comments in respect of the proposal to increase the lump sum for Primary and Secondary schools to help equalise the impact on schools of the broadband costs being passed onto schools due to the reduction in the Central Schools Services Block as set out in paragraph 50 of the consultation document?

As a small school we support the idea of increasing the lump sum as this significantly impacts on us.

Equity and fairness is important as set out by Schools Forum. For all schools this will depend on the level of high needs transfer in reality. We can budget if we see an increase in our budget but will not be able to budget if the funding is not there in the first place.

We are prepared to accept this proposal.

I agree that the impact should be equalised.

I agree that overall costs should be equalised.

Schools (maintained or academies) within Cambridgeshire should no longer have the provision of internet top-sliced from the CSSB, nor should they be required to contribute to its ongoing provision.

Leave as is

Any equalisation will help, £1000 for broadband may not be a lot for a large school but for schools with c100 pupils it is a huge amount of money to find, for context our whole year curriculum budget is £5000.

I can't find anywhere to make a general comment so I will add it here.
I accept there is a need to support the high needs block however all of the options are bad for us (even the initial budget for 20-21 without the reductions is bad c 30K deficit). It looks to me that small schools are really suffering and I urge you to look specifically at our situation.

Clearly there are bigger primaries and smaller primaries. I can't see why this needs to be linked in to the lump sum to arrange proportionate coverage of this cost and that may only further blur the increasing misuse of the lump sum. If funding is increasingly allocated per pupil then the cost of broadband should be met per pupil too. We have 90 children and say 10 staff who might use broadband and who might end up paying each £100 of a £1000 'across the board' charge; another school with 300 children and 30 staff would only each be paying £30. Not very pupil-led

I agree with this proposal.

As the increased broadband cost had not been budgeted for in schools, it seems reasonable to make this payment.

This will be essential.

I think the split between primary and secondary is not enough. The secondary schools, with so many more pupils ought to pay more. Small schools should pay less than suggested.

positive for schools

This would be a positive move, although where will the money come from.

This would be helpful for smaller schools.

13. Do you have any comments in respect of the proposal to increase the lump sum for Primary and Secondary schools to help equalise the impact on schools of the broadband costs being passed onto schools due to the reduction in the Central Schools Services Block as set out in paragraph 50 of the consultation document?

We agree that fairness and equity dictate that the overall cost should be equalised across all schools.

Seems to represent the simplest and most equitable way of addressing the additional cost

A flat charge seeks to ensure that children in rural schools are not disadvantaged because their school cannot afford prohibitive costs of high-speed broadband connection. However, there needs to be some consideration to affordability. It cannot be fair for small urban primaries with low deprivation to be paying the same charge as large urban primaries with high deprivation given the vastly different financial resources.

This would perhaps elicit a more positive response if there were more certainty at school level about what EastNet will deliver, when it will happen and if the charges feel value for money.

I think this would be important as the proposed budget was already looking difficult having had to set a deficit budget for the past two years and therefore leaving us now with no carry forward balance. As an Infants school with our maximum class size limits we are very limited on how we can deal with one smaller intake (e.g. last year's EYFS being 45 with a PAN of 60) - this then has a huge impact on our budget for 3 years despite being full in the other two year groups. An additional cost would be very difficult for us to manage.

I do not think it is necessary.

The impact of this would be negligible.

We have been informed by the LA over the last few years that this was in then pipeline and although we had not budgeted for this cost in 2020/21 we should be able to absorb this using our modest carry forward. How this will impact smaller schools working on a tighter budget is yet to be seen, but the cost does not seem inappropriate for the level of provision.

These costs perhaps need to be tapered over a three year period to assist the Council to maintain the Broadband contract.

This is helpful but probably not sustainable - it potentially leaves schools with an additional cost in the future.

This decision appears to take into consideration the fairness and equity for all schools to support the cost of this proposal so we support this notion.

We support this as a matter of solidarity.

Agree

As a rural school the quality/speed of broadband provision in the area is appalling and should not have to pay for a service we can not benefit from.

This seems the fairest way to meet the costs

If the value of the lump sum is linked to the additional cost per school, then this seems to be the fairest way of addressing the additional cost. However, to pay a fixed lump sum to all schools would not be fair.

13. Do you have any comments in respect of the proposal to increase the lump sum for Primary and Secondary schools to help equalise the impact on schools of the broadband costs being passed onto schools due to the reduction in the Central Schools Services Block as set out in paragraph 50 of the consultation document?

More and more costs are being passed down to the schools and whilst we are seen to be given extra funding there always seems to be a sting in the tail and it is taken away somewhere else.

Agreed. Broadband is a important aspect of school provision. Inequality of broadband charges between, particularly rural schools should be smoothed out where possible.