

BRIEFING	TO:	Schools Forum
	DATE:	19 November 2021
	LEAD OFFICER:	Ian Henderson HR Manager Assistant Chief Executive's 01709 822467
	TITLE:	Education Unions Facility Time

1. Background

- 1.1** On 17 September 2021 a report was considered by the Forum regarding the per pupil rate used to determine the charge to schools for Trade Union Facility Time buyback.
- 1.2** The total facility time able to be funded from the current buyback budget and afforded to the education unions currently equates to 1.2 FTE (6.25 days), however a total of 13 days facility time would be required to align to current union membership figures at a ratio of 1 FTE day per 1,000 members, the industry standard.
- 1.3** Benchmarking identified that Rotherham's per pupil charge at £2 was the lowest in the region, being less than half that of our nearest statistical comparator, Barnsley Council at £4.75.
- 1.4** Forum agreed to consult schools on the 3 options put forward in the report:
- Option 1**
Maintain policy of increasing the per pupil charge by the rate of inflation. It is not recommended that this approach is taken as it fails to address the insufficient facility time required for schools to be adequately supported in employee relation issues in a timely manner by the unions.
- Option 2**
Increase the per pupil charge to £4.75 from 1 April 2022. This option would provide the budget required to increase the facility time allocation to representative levels, however schools will not have budgeted for such an increase and the pressure from the current pandemic has already put on school budgets it is not recommended that this approach is taken.
- Option 3**
The per pupil charge could be increased incrementally over the next 5 years by 55p (equates to £55 per 100 pupils) over the normal inflationary price increase from 1 April 2022. This phased approach would allow schools to accommodate the increase into their medium to long term budget planning.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1** Thirty-one schools responded to the consultation with only one school opting for maintaining the current position (option 1). Twelve opting for an immediate increase to £4.75 (option 2) and eighteen opting for the incremental approach (option 3).

3. Key Actions and Timelines

3.1	Prices for the April 2022 buyback are required to be set by the end of December 2021.
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4. Recommendations

4.1	Forum is asked to note the outcome of the consultation and that option 3 will be implemented with effect from 1 April 2022.
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