



NORTH YORKSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

Date of meeting:	Thursday, 23 November 2023
Title of report:	Facilities de-delegation Trade Unions and LA joint report
Type of report: Delete as required	For decision
Executive summary: Including reason for submission	<p>This report seeks approval for continued de-delegation of funds to support local trade union facilities arrangements.</p> <p>It follows on from reports in November 2021, May 2022, and November 2022 outlining work underway to model increases to the traded Trade Union Facilities Time charges in order to provide sufficient 'release' time for locally elected representatives.</p> <p>However, due to challenges in the unions securing local representatives in North Yorkshire this year, no increase to per pupil rates is being proposed for next year. This will also have the positive impact of mitigating the impact of future planned increases.</p>
Budget / Risk implications:	None – no increase in costs proposed but support for continued de-delegation is sought.
Recommendations:	<p>To:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - continue to support the principle of de-delegation of funds for maintained schools - Agree to maintain the 2023-24 per pupil charge of £3.44 on the basis that this will mitigate the impact of future increases whilst moving towards the industry standard goal of 0.2fte release per 200 members.
Voting requirements:	LA maintained schools only
Appendices: To be attached	N/A
Report originator and contact details:	Mairi Reed, Principal HR Adviser



NORTH YORKSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

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Presenting officer: If not the originator	A representative of the teaching unions supported by Mairi Reed, Principal HR Adviser

NORTH YORKSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

23 November 2023 - Item 2.7

Facilities de-delegation

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for the continued de-delegation of funds for the 2024-25 financial year to support local trade union facilities arrangements.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In summary, previous reports have set out the current challenge to address the inequity of release time and insufficient funds to support adequate release time in North Yorkshire. We know that NYC has a comparatively low release time ratio as compared with other Authorities.
- 2.2. It has previously been agreed that the current arrangements for Unison would continue for de-delegated funds, with a contribution to corporate facilities arrangements (with provision made for cost of living increases). Otherwise, it was agreed that work would continue on financial modelling in order to work towards an incremental plan for increases and to 'level the playing field' to address any current inequity in release time for recognised teaching unions. This work would be undertaken in recognition of the fact that, each year Schools' Forum would still need to be asked to continue to support de-delegation and approve any proposed increase in costs for that particular year.
- 2.3 LA officers have continued to work with trade unions representatives on a regular basis with support from finance and agreed a set of principles to be observed in the financial modelling. As a reminder these are:
- **Principle 1** – cap on reimbursement at UPR3 plus on costs
 - **Principle 2** - Maximum increase in costs to schools to be capped at 0.50p, per pupil including inflationary increases.
 - **Principle 3** – inclusion of 'handover days' where representatives change.
- 2.4 This work has been making good headway and unions have seen an increase in the proportionate allocated release time available to them, on the basis of declared membership numbers in North Yorkshire.
- 2.5 Unfortunately, for a number of reasons, the last few months have seen an unprecedented challenge across a large proportion of NYC's in securing elected representatives. Following resignations from duties, some of the recognised unions have had lower representatives than expected, or in some cases no representatives to claim against their allocation and therefore, lower reimbursements made this financial year. All unions are acutely aware of this challenge and NYC are in active discussion with all about the importance of securing sufficient representatives. All are hopeful of securing increased time during this academic year with one recently securing additional time from January 2024. This involves discussion with schools about timetabling and allowing for release time but at least some of the release, although expected in coming months, cannot be facilitated at this time.

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- 2.6 This means that, although an increase in funds is being incrementally achieved, as planned, this year the unions have been unable to make full use of those funds to proportionately increase representatives resulting in a projected surplus balance of £92k. As referenced above, there are plans in place to increase the release time over the course of the next few months and so we can anticipate this surplus being significantly reduced by March 2024.
- 2.7 Clearly, with a surplus balance, it has been appropriate to review the planned incremental increases and, rather than propose an increase as previously planned, it is suggested that the price per pupil remains static this year. This has the additional advantage of mitigating the impact of planned future increases in line with previous forecasting, to achieve the industry standard of 0.2fte release per 200 members.
- 2.8 This will need to be monitored closely as clearly it will not be appropriate for a surplus to accumulate over time. However, the current balance is a prudent balance that avoids significant fluctuations in the coming years.

3.0 ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 Given the current rate of inflation being just over 6% and school finding increases being in the region of 1.9%, we can predict a rise in the restructuring / redundancy activity in schools as we go into the next financial year. Maintaining the stability of de-delegated facilities time for maintained schools will be important in ensuring that this predicted increased activity is appropriately supported by recognised unions.
- 3.2 With the continued trend for conversions to Academy status, the change to a model based on a formula protects against uncertainty as the amount of facility time for LMS will decrease commensurate with the number of union members in the schools leaving the local authority to become academies.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Schools' Forum is asked to:

- continue to support the principle of de-delegation of funds for maintained schools
- agree to maintain the 2023-24 per pupil charge of £3.44 for 2024-25 on the basis that this will mitigate the impact of future increases whilst moving towards the industry standard goal of 0.2fte release per 200 members.

STUART CARLTON

Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service