

The Education Network

NEWS RELEASE

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### **Education funding flaws exposed**

The Education Network (TEN) welcomes today's report from the Audit Commission on education funding, and the light it shines on some major deficiencies in the present arrangements for managing and monitoring the expenditure annually of some £24 billion of public funds.

Martin Rogers, Co-ordinator of TEN, commented:

"A number of the Commission's comments chime with recent comments and concerns of TEN's, including:

\* The capacity for action to be precipitated by a sometimes unrepresentative, and sometimes ill-informed, group of headteachers - to whom the media, and subsequently politicians, are inclined to pay too much attention

\* The tendency for government action to be prompted by perception and assertion rather than accurate information - or proper evidence

\* The requirement to achieve ever greater delegation to schools, largely under pressure from headteachers, inhibits councils' capacity to properly monitor and hold to account the performance of headteachers in this (and other) important areas of management

\* The degree to which the minimum funding guarantee (now extended in the five-year review) inhibits the extent to which local funding formulae can address disadvantage - and reduces the role of local school forums and councils in the face of action by central government.

"This report raises important issues about the role of local authorities in ensuring proper financial management of the expenditure of vast sums of public money by increasingly autonomous headteachers. They require specific and careful consideration in the context of the proposals in last week's five-year strategy. There needs to be a proper distinction between the value of headteachers' leadership role in driving educational improvement and the importance of ensuring general management ability. Not all headteachers possess the two in equal measure."

ENDS

### **Notes to Editors**

1. The Education Network (TEN) is an independent policy, research and information organisation set up to develop, promote and disseminate the role and good practice of local authorities in raising educational aspiration and achievement. Around 90 per cent of local education authorities in England and Wales subscribe to TEN.