



# Northumberland County Council

## Agenda Item 7

Schools Forum  
17 November 2021

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### Sparsity Funding Consultation and the 2022/23 National Funding Formula

#### 1. Purpose of the Report

To provide information the Government response on the Sparsity Funding consultation exercise earlier in 2021 and the implications of this for Northumberland Schools.

The report should be considered in conjunction with the NFF update and consultation and update elsewhere on the agenda, and the associated proposals for 2022/23.

#### 2. Recommendations

Schools Forum is asked to note the information provided and the additional £719,269 estimated funding for schools in Northumberland arising from the greater investment in sparsity at a national level.

#### 3. Background

In November 2019 Schools Forum supported a disapplication request to the ESFA in relation to a change in methodology relating to the measurement of sparsity by road distances for 6 schools, rather than the “as the crow flies” method used at that stage by the ESFA. For 2020/21, this cost £141,308, allocated from the Schools Block DSG. We repeated this for 2021/22 and responded accordingly to the ESFA consultation held in March and April 2021. (A draft response was shared with the Schools Forum)

#### 4. Current position

The Government response to the consultation has now been published, a copy of which is available [HERE](#).

Key findings in the government response highlighted:

*“Strong support for the policy aim and proposals in response to this consultation has reinforced the case to increase funding for small remote schools” (page 24)*

Following the consultation, 3 key changes are being implemented from 2022-23:

- School sparsity distances are to be calculated by road journeys, replacing the previous “as the crow flies” methodology;
- The maximum amount of sparsity funding a school can receive has been increased from £45,000 to £55,000 for primaries and from £70,000 to £80,000 for all other schools.

- A distance taper threshold will also be introduced, meaning that schools that are marginally below the main average distance threshold of 2 or 3 miles (depending on phase) will now attract some additional funding, to reduce the changes of a “cliff edge” to sparsity funding.

It should be noted that individual school’s sparsity distances are available via Collect.

## **5. Financial Impact**

In its response the DfE highlight that the total allocation via the sparsity factor will increase to £95 million for 2022-23, a £53million increase on the 2021/22 figure of £42m. In terms of the impact for Northumberland, figures can only be estimated at this stage but, using the indicative consultation data, this suggested that Northumberland will receive an increase of £719,269 in 2022/23 receiving in total £2.602 million of the DfE total of £95 million. A breakdown of this is attached at Appendix A.

In comparison in 2020/21 we received only £1.175 million.

This increase consists both of schools receiving funding for the first time due to the methodology change and increases for schools currently in receipt of sparsity funding.

## **6. Summary and Conclusions**

The result of the DfE consultation on Sparsity, and the additional funding to be distributed via sparsity is beneficial to Northumberland in that it has meant we are receiving additional funding. The role of Schools Forum in supporting the original disapplication request in November 2019 is appreciated in highlighting the need to review the mechanisms by which sparsity was distributed.

**B Parvin**  
**Education and Skills Business Manager**

**01 November 2021**

## POTENTIAL CHANGES ARISING FROM SPARSITY FUNDING CHANGES 2022/23

LAESTAB	School Name	Phase	Did the school qualify for sparsity funding in the 2021-22 NFF under the 'crow flies' distance methodology? (1=Yes, 0=No)	Total sparsity allocation in the 2021-22 NFF	Sparsity factor - distance criteria and eligibility using the 'road journey' sparsity distance measure				Potential Increase in Sparsity Funding 2022-23
					Calculated sparsity distance for school, by the shortest road journey (miles)	Change in sparsity distance, by the road compared to as the crow flies (miles)	Would the school have qualified for sparsity funding under the road distance methodology? (1=Yes, 0=No)	Illustration of total sparsity allocation had the changes proposed in this consultation been in the 2021-22 NFF	
			Schools that are below the year group threshold and equal to or above the distance threshold.	Sparsity weighting multiplied by maximum sparsity value.			Schools that are below the year group threshold and equal to or above the distance threshold.	Sparsity weighting multiplied by proposed maximum sparsity values.	
				£1,883,512				£2,602,782	£719,269
9292002	Acomb First School	Primary	0	£0	2.27	0.85	1	£55,000	£55,000
9292009	Allendale Primary School	Primary	1	£25,113	5.44	1.44	1	£30,694	£5,581
9292227	Beaufront First School	Primary	0	£0	2.15	0.48	1	£38,037	£38,037
9292325	Belford Primary School	Primary	1	£43,138	7.60	1.45	1	£52,724	£9,586
9294361	Bellingham Middle School and Sports College	Middle-deemed Sec	1	£70,000	13.62	3.49	1	£80,000	£10,000
9292043	Bellingham Primary School	Primary	1	£40,374	4.78	1.13	1	£49,346	£8,972
9292044	Belsay Primary School	Primary	1	£33,525	6.61	1.81	1	£40,975	£7,450
9293046	Berwick St Mary's Church of England First School	Primary	1	£16,822	1.01	-1.40	0	£0	£-16,822
9292053	Branton Community Primary School	Primary	1	£45,000	4.82	1.04	1	£55,000	£10,000
9293355	Broomhaugh Church of England First School	Primary	1	£35,327	2.85	0.46	1	£43,178	£7,850
9292098	Broomhill First School	Primary	0	£0	2.20	0.55	1	£40,093	£40,093
9292246	Cambo First School	Primary	1	£45,000	7.19	1.14	1	£55,000	£10,000
9292035	Cambois Primary School	Primary	0	£0	2.28	1.04	1	£55,000	£55,000
9293065	Chollerton Church of England Aided First School	Primary	1	£45,000	4.56	1.74	1	£55,000	£10,000
9294802	Dr Thomlinson Church of England Middle School	Middle-deemed Sec	1	£22,153	11.31	2.85	1	£25,318	£3,165
9293403	Ellingham Church of England Aided Primary School	Primary	1	£45,000	5.11	1.18	1	£55,000	£10,000
9293408	Embleton Vincent Edwards Church of England Primary School	Primary	1	£45,000	4.49	1.21	1	£55,000	£10,000
9293095	Felton Church of England Primary School	Primary	1	£38,932	3.65	0.65	1	£47,583	£8,652
9294370	Glendale Middle School	Middle-deemed Sec	1	£70,000	13.21	1.80	1	£80,000	£10,000
9292234	Greenhaugh Primary School	Primary	1	£45,000	6.30	0.97	1	£55,000	£10,000
9293349	Greenhead Church of England Primary School	Primary	1	£45,000	3.83	0.64	1	£55,000	£10,000
9293423	Harbottle Church of England First School	Primary	1	£45,000	9.79	2.78	1	£55,000	£10,000
9294130	Haydon Bridge Community High School and Sports College	Secondary	1	£62,067	9.88	0.20	1	£70,933	£8,867
9293135	Henshaw Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	Primary	1	£45,000	4.26	0.59	1	£55,000	£10,000
9292525	Hipsburn Primary School	Primary	1	£30,521	3.33	0.87	1	£37,303	£6,782
9293447	Holy Island Church of England First School	Primary	1	£45,000	*	*	1	£55,000	£10,000
9293411	Hugh Joicey Church of England First School, Ford	Primary	1	£45,000	6.48	1.30	1	£55,000	£10,000
9293454	Humshaugh Church of England First School	Primary	0	£0	3.56	1.94	1	£55,000	£55,000
9292254	Kielder Primary School and Nursery	Primary	1	£45,000	13.95	3.39	1	£55,000	£10,000
9292105	Linton Primary School	Primary	0	£0	2.87	0.90	1	£55,000	£55,000
9293347	Longhorsley St Helen's Church of England Aided First School	Primary	1	£15,981	4.36	1.28	1	£19,533	£3,551
9293173	Longhoughton Church of England Primary School	Primary	1	£22,710	3.63	0.92	1	£27,757	£5,047
9293922	Lowick Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School	Primary	1	£45,000	5.11	0.56	1	£55,000	£10,000
9293492	Newbrough Church of England Primary School	Primary	1	£45,000	4.30	0.90	1	£55,000	£10,000
9293920	Norham St Ceolwulfs CofE Controlled First School	Primary	1	£45,000	6.39	-1.42	1	£55,000	£10,000
9292209	Otterburn Primary School	Primary	1	£45,000	8.27	2.22	1	£55,000	£10,000
9292224	Rothbury First School	Primary	1	£19,346	2.88	0.63	1	£23,645	£4,299
9292372	Scremerston First School	Primary	1	£35,327	3.14	0.65	1	£43,178	£7,850
9292207	Seahouses Primary School	Primary	1	£37,130	5.84	1.29	1	£45,381	£8,251
9292005	Shaftoe Trust Academy	Primary	1	£27,517	3.92	0.61	1	£33,632	£6,115
9292281	Shilbottle Primary School	Primary	1	£13,698	3.03	0.41	1	£16,742	£3,044
9292236	Slaley First School	Primary	1	£45,000	3.76	0.86	1	£55,000	£10,000
9292138	Stamfordham Primary School	Primary	1	£32,924	5.96	1.75	1	£40,240	£7,316
9292293	Swarland Primary School	Primary	1	£38,932	4.13	1.05	1	£47,583	£8,652
9295201	Thropton Village First School	Primary	1	£45,000	3.82	1.26	1	£55,000	£10,000
9293542	Tritlington Church of England First School	Primary	1	£45,000	3.76	1.38	1	£55,000	£10,000
9293548	Wark Church of England Primary School	Primary	1	£45,000	5.55	1.69	1	£55,000	£10,000
9293550	Warkworth Church of England Primary School	Primary	0	£0	2.13	0.67	1	£27,757	£27,757
9292070	West Woodburn First School	Primary	1	£45,000	5.47	1.63	1	£55,000	£10,000
9293560	Whalton Church of England Aided Primary School	Primary	1	£45,000	4.34	1.10	1	£55,000	£10,000
9292003	Whitfield CofE Primary School	Primary	1	£45,000	4.50	1.20	1	£55,000	£10,000
9293443	Whitley Chapel Church of England First School	Primary	1	£45,000	4.50	1.16	1	£55,000	£10,000
9293264	Whittingham Church of England Primary School	Primary	1	£34,126	6.18	1.24	1	£41,709	£7,583
9292270	Whittonstall First School	Primary	1	£37,850	3.09	0.82	1	£46,262	£8,411
9294162	Whytrig Community Middle School	Middle-deemed Sec	0	£0	2.54	0.81	1	£13,179	£13,179