



# Northumberland County Council

## Wellbeing and Community Health Services Group

Education and Skills Service

Meeting: Formula Funding Sub Committee of the Schools Forum  
Date: 14/10/2020  
Time: 10.00pm  
Venue: Virtual Meeting

<p><b>Present:</b> <b>Ian Walker (Chair)</b> (Gov The Duchess High) <b>Mike Deane-Hall</b> (HT Wooler First and Glendale Middle) <b>Graeme Atkins</b> (HR , Hadrian Learning Trust) <b>Ben Ryder</b> (HT Berwick Middle) <b>Darren Warburton</b> (Finance Director, Bede Academy)  <b>Bruce Parvin</b> (Education &amp; Skills Business Manager)</p>	<p><b>Ben Watson</b> (Governor, St Roberts RC First School) <b>Colin Pearson</b> (Trustee, Three Rivers Learning Trust) <b>Graham Wilkins</b> (St Wilfrid's RC Primary) <b>Mike Hodgson</b> (Governor, Harbottle CE First School) <b>Richard Woolhouse</b> (NEU representative)</p>
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Notes Bruce Parvin

Start time: 10.00 a.m.		Action:
1.	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>	
2.	<b>In Attendance</b>  See above.	
3.	<b>Apologies:</b>  Andrew Thelwell, Maurice Hall, Sue Aviston.	
4.	<b>Membership and Membership Update</b>  No further update. We remained underrepresented for Primary, it was hoped that when an advert was circulated for Schools Forum representatives that may address this.	

5.	<p><b>Declaration of personal or pecuniary Interest in any agenda item.</b></p> <p>No declaration of pecuniary interest declared by members.</p>	
6.	<p><b>Minutes of the previous meeting/Matters arising from Previous Minutes:</b></p> <p>BP confirmed that the minutes of the last meeting, held on 05 November 2019 were tabled at Schools Forum.</p> <p>All agreed minutes to be a true record of the meeting.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Formula Funding Committee Terms of Reference and Current Membership</b></p> <p>The Terms of Reference for the Committee were agreed. A Thelwell/ D Warburton were added to membership. GA commented that the work of the FFC tended to focus on objectives 3,4 and 5 and was not aware of much work being undertaken by the FFC in relation to School Budgets and Best Value. BP said the is was a valid observation for the FFC, but the work at Schools Forum sometimes covered aspects of this, for example the DSG monitoring reports or review of School Balances. It was agreed that further work could be investigated in the Spring and Summer terms, according to the capacity and availability of the Committee.</p>	BP
8.	<p><b>2020/21 School Block Funding Review</b></p> <p>A copy of the ESFA 2020/21 Schools Block Funding Analysis and accompanying data had previous been circulated to Committee Members. The ESFA analysis emphasised the increasing movement towards NFF by LAs. This also reflected the Northumberland position of steady progression towards NFF values. While the majority of Northumberland’s values were in line with NFF, some differences remained at Primary and KS4 AWPU, Free School Meals and Primary Low Prior Attainment.</p> <p>The data that accompanied the analysis had also been circulated, and while this was largely in the format as published by the ESFA, an extra sheet had been inserted highlighting key values for the 12 NE authorities, and Cumbria, as our neighbouring authority.</p> <p>While generally the majority of authorities were in line with NFF Values, there was still variations at an individual authority level. The example of North Tyneside was briefly discussed, were AWPU values were maintained at a level above both NFF and</p>	

	<p>Northumberland's values, but currently FSM rates were £225, half the NFF figure of £450.</p> <p><b>The information was discussed and noted, as background to the process of setting funding formula values for Northumberland for 2021/22</b></p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p><b>National Funding Formula 2021/22 Update</b></p> <p>BP circulated an updated NFF report, which had previously been taken to Schools Forum at the 30 September meeting. The report had been updated to include the 2021/22 NFF Values, and also showed the impact of the inclusion of Teachers Pay and Pension Grants into the Schools Block formula.</p> <p>It was emphasised that the objectives for this meeting was to explore in principle the approach to be taken in relation to setting the formula values for Northumberland for 2021/22.</p> <p>This would include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the balance between protecting AWPU levels in excess of NFF and improving the Primary Low Prior Attainment figure;</li> <li>• Whether we continue to use Capping and Scaling;</li> <li>• What is the appropriate level for the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) which dictates the minimum level of increase in per pupil funding;</li> <li>• Do we continue to fund the exceptional Sparsity funding - the Government has increased sparsity funding but for this year is using the same methodology while it researches using distance "by road" measures;</li> </ul> <p>Illustrations are at this point provided at a authority level showing the various relative distribution of funds between AWPU, Deprivation etc.</p> <p>Information at an individual school level had specifically not been provided for that reason, but would be provided to the subsequent meeting to examine the impact of potential scenarios at an individual School level - with the caveats that this would be using the previous year's data at this stage.</p>	
<p>10</p>	<p><b>Illustrative 2021/22 DSG Levels at LA Level</b></p> <p>GA asked about the information subsequently distributed via email, suggesting the example 3 was in principle the best option as is provided more funding to Schools than examples 1 and 2. BP said that example 3 was the only potential option table to the meeting, the</p>	

	<p>other examples and been provided to show the potential financial costs of potential adjustments.</p> <p>NFF had also been provided as an illustrative example, again it would not currently be possible to fully adopted this because of the protection built in to the Authority Pro-Forma Tool (APT) distribution mechanism, as areas which had previously benefitted from values above AWPU would continue to be protected by the Minimum Funding Guarantee. A balance needed to be struck, progressing figures towards NFF, particularly where these were below (e.g Primary Low Prior Attainment) while ensuring overall affordability.</p> <p>This included the extent to which we wished to continue to use mechanisms such as the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) and Capping and Scaling. BP commented that the use of capping and scaling had caused confusion for some headteacher, as it appears as negative MFG on their funding statements. CP commented that this was worth it if it led to a fairer distribution of funds for all schools.</p> <p><b>It was agreed that the general overall approach of a gradual progression to NFF, as previously agreed by the Schools Forum remained appropriate, but progress needed to be made to close the gap in relation to Primary Low Prior Attainment. Specific individual school figures would be provided to the next meeting as examples could prove helpful for School Forum members.</b></p>	<p>BP</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p><b>Any other Business</b></p> <p>No other business discussed.</p>	
<p><b>End: 11.40am</b></p> <p><b>Date and Time of Next Meeting: the date of the next meeting was agreed as Wednesday 04 November. It was requested that we start at 9.30 and this was agreed.</b></p>		