



Northumberland County Council

Wellbeing and Community Health Services Group

Education and Skills Service

Meeting: Formula Funding Sub Committee of the Schools Forum
Date: 04/11/2020
Time: 09.30 a.m.
Venue: Virtual Meeting

<p>Present: Mike Deane-Hall (HT Wooler First and Glendale Middle) Graeme Atkins (HT, Hadrian Learning Trust) Ben Ryder (HT, Berwick Middle) Darren Warburton (Finance Director, Bede Academy) Bruce Parvin (Education & Skills Business Manager)</p>	<p>Ben Watson (Governor, St Roberts RC First School) Graham Wilkins (Governor, St Wilfrid's RC Primary) Richard Woolhouse (NEU representative)</p>
---	---

Notes Bruce Parvin

Start time: 09.30 a.m.		Action:
1.	Welcome and Introductions	
2.	In Attendance See above.	
3.	Apologies: Ian Walker, Andrew Thelwell, Maurice Hall, Colin Pearson, Sue Aviston.	
4.	Membership and Membership Update 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>Declaration of personal or pecuniary Interest in any agenda item.</p> <p>No declaration of pecuniary interest declared by members.</p>	
6.	<p>Minutes and Matters arising from Previous Minutes:</p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting held on 14 October 2020 were agreed as a correct record, except for Richard Woolhouse, who had attended but this had not been recorded. Items covered would be addressed during the meeting.</p>	
7.	<p>Illustrative 2021/22 DSG Levels at School Level, based on 2019 Data</p> <p>BP referred to the information circulated prior to the meeting and drew members attention to the various assumptions as outlined in the notes sheet. Members were reminded that they were representing their respective phases and groups of schools, not their own specific schools.</p> <p>Given the DfE's intention to move to a National Funding Formula, where values were in line with NFF already it made sense for these to continue to do so.</p> <p>The key consideration was therefore those funding values which remained different to the NFF, and how to proceed. The 4 examples circulated therefore focussed on the different potential options around Primary and KS4 AWPU, which were currently above NFF for Northumberland, and Primary Low Primary Attainment, which remains significantly below NFF.</p> <p>The information circulated had shown the respective formula calculations for all 154 Northumberland mainstream schools (maintained and academies) for all 4 examples based on their previous October 2019 data. The amount of funding distributed was £201.8 million, which represented an 8.5% increase, though the inclusion of the Teachers Pay and Pensions Grants (TPPG) in these figures for the first time contributed significantly to this increase. FFC was reminded that actual 2021/22 allocations would be based on October 2020 school census data.</p> <p>Further information was shared with FFC showing the Schools sorted according to the % increase. What was evident is that there was a high degree of correlation between the respective examples shared,</p>	

i.e. If School A received a relatively high level of increase in option 1, they were also likely to be relatively high on the other options, this was due to some many elements now being in line with NFF or due to the impact of the Minimum Per Pupil Funding (MPPF).

Given this, further analysis was shared showing the extent to which an individual school's figure could vary within the overall funding figure of £201.8million. The school whose funding fluctuated the most showed a potential variation of 1.55% (£27,723) in their overall annual funding, while 32 schools showed no variation under any of the options. The most common reason for this was the rise in the MPPF values, as reported to the last Schools Forum meeting, which were set by the DfE and the LA had no discretion over these.

BP described this variation between the amounts as a measure of "volatility" in the respective formulas. GA commented that as the variations were relatively small, and that this term may be unhelpful, given Schools Forum's previous focus on a gradual move of NFF.

GA also asked if there was an overriding strategy towards the move to NFF.

BP outlined, that Option 1, where the gap between NCC and NFF values, was halved for 2021/22 represented a potential "two-step" strategy for moving to NFF. If we were to replicate the same approach for 2022/23, we would potentially be able to adopt NFF Values with minimal disruption.

In practice this would:

- provide a substantial increase to those schools currently underfunded in relation to Primary Low Prior Attainment;
- continue to offer an element of protection to both primary and secondary school benefitting from AWPU rates in excess of NFF; and
- result in a proposal that maintained the previously stated Northumberland position of a gradual adoption of NFF, minimising any excessive year to year variations caused by a large change in individual formula factors

GA agreed that this represented a sensible approach, in line with the previous School Forum opinion.

The opinion of each member present was requested, and all agreed with this approach, and supported it as the one to be recommended to the School Forum at the November meeting.

BP

	<p>It was therefore agreed that option 1, a two-step approach to adopting the NFF Values should form the basis of the consultation paper to go to November’s School Forum meeting.</p>	
8.	<p>Any other Business</p> <p>No other business discussed.</p>	
<p>End: 10.30 am</p> <p>Date and Time of Next Meeting: to be confirmed, it was felt that having made recommendations to the Schools Forum in relation to 21/22 funding values, the focus of work would switch to the Additional Educational Needs (AEN) Committee.</p>		

DRAFT