

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

SCHOOLS' FORUM

At a virtual meeting of the Schools' Forum on Wednesday, 16 February 2022 at 9.30 a.m.

PRESENT

C. Pearson (Chair, in the Chair)
Three Rivers Learning Trust

Headteacher Representatives

M. Deane-Hall, Wooler First School
A, Mead, Cramlington Hillcrest
School

N. Rodgers, James Calvert Spence
College

Governor Representatives

B. Mansfield, Newbrough Primary
School
B. Watson, St Robert's RC First
School

G. Wilkins, St Wilfrid's RC Primary
School

Academies Representatives

G. Atkins, Hadrian Learning Trust

A. Hardie, NCEA Trust

Roman Catholic Diocese – Vacant Post

Church of England Diocese – N. Threlfall

EYDCP – PVI Representative – K. Dickinson

Pupil Referral Unit Representative – Vacant Post

Trades Union Representative – Vacant Post

16 - 19 Provider of Education Representative – Vacant Post

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Ch.'s Initials.....

S. Aviston	Head of School Organisation and Resources
B. Parvin	Education and Skills Business Manager
C. Ponting	Senior Manager - Schools HR
A. Russell	Principal Accountant - Non Team Leader
D. Street	Deputy Director of Education
N. Taylor	Head of Inclusive Education and SEN Transformation
A. Todd	Democratic Services Officer

Also J. Ingram from ESFA observing.

42. MEMBERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

42.1 The Chair welcomed B. Mansfield to her first meeting of the Schools' Forum.

43. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

43.1 Apologies for absence were received from N. Brannen, B. Ryder, K. Faulkner, C. Hodgson, A. Thelwell, S. Wild, Councillor G. Renner-Thompson, Councillor R. Wearmouth, S. Barron and A. Kingham.

44. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Schools' Forum held on Wednesday, 19 January 2022, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

44.1 Matters Arising:

37.25. Regarding local authorities' hourly rates. It was clarified that Northumberland continued to be at the national minimum for the rate funded at.

45. COMMUNICATION

There had been no communication items received for consideration at this meeting.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

46. SETTING THE 2022/23 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT

46.1 B. Parvin, Education and Skills Business Manager informed the Schools' Forum of the estimated overall DSG for 2022/23 as notified to Northumberland by the

Ch.'s Initials.....

Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the proposed allocation of funds within the 4 DSG Blocks. (A copy of the report circulated has been filed with the signed minutes).

- 46.2 It was noted that the Schools' Forum had previously received reports outlining developments in relation to the National Funding Formula (NFF).
- 46.3 Transfer to High Needs Block. It was reported that after careful consideration, the additional £0.527million funding had been distributed with the formula by amending the level at which capping and scaling was applied. For 2022/23 capping was applied at 4.65% with gains above 50% being scaled back. Original proposals used 6% as the capping threshold for 2022/23 but the reduced transfer to the High Needs Block resulted in this threshold being set at 13%.
- 46.4 Disapplication Request. It was reported that following the final proposals being submitted for Beaufront First School and Seaton Delaval First School there had been communication from the ESFA which highlighted a previous disapplication request had lapsed. Therefore, a new disapplication had been submitted in respect of this, a copy of which was attached at Appendix B. Members of the Schools' Forum agreed to support this new request.
- 46.5 Extra Sparsity. It was advised that following the November 2021 Schools' Forum report on the outcomes of the DfE Sparsity consultation the final funding for schools in relation to National Funding Formula sparsity payments had now been finalised as £2.612 million.
- 46.6 Growth Fund. In line with discussions at previous meetings, a Growth Fund of £25,000 had been created for 2022/23. It was noted that further work was to be carried out by the Formula Funding Committee and it was intended to have criteria in place by April 2022.
- 46.7 Change to NNDR. It was reported that while there was no anticipated financial impact on schools, it should be noted that there were changes to the way Schools National Non-Domestic Rating (NNDR) bills were to be paid from April 2022. The final figure for distribution was therefore £205,416,986 prior to de-delegation and the Falling Rolls Fund. The estimated final de-delegated sum was £459,373, though this was subject to change as a result of any further academisation.
- 46.8 At this point the Schools' Forum:
- noted the formula funding values reflected in Table 1 for the distribution of the Schools Block DSG for 2022/23.
 - invited the Formula Funding Committee to continue specific criteria to be adopted for the Falling Rolls Fund for Northumberland.

Ch.'s Initials.....

- 46.9 Regarding the High Needs Block 2022/23 Allocation, it was advised that the indicative allocation for 2022/23 was £44,497,569 before any deductions by the ESFA, as outlined in Annex 1 of the report.
- 46.10 The detailed breakdown for services within that High Needs Block budget were detailed within Appendix B of the report. It was advised that within the budget, provision had been made to support the most inclusive schools through changing the way the notional SEN funding figures were used and calculated.
- 46.11 It was reported that there remained no national guidance as to how schools notional SEN funding figures should be calculated. However, with the additional HN funding available for 2022/23, Northumberland was keen to develop and invest in this support, which involved 2 stages: looking at how the Notional SEN figure was calculated and setting an appropriate threshold to access additional HN funding. Initial modelling on this initiative had been positive and would be shared with the High Needs Committee before being brought to Schools Forum. It had been estimated that a further £320,000 per year would be required to support the project.
- 46.12 Members welcomed the recognition of the high levels of support costs given to SEN children. It was felt that this was a positive move which in turn would help support inclusion.
- 46.13 Members felt that the rationale behind the proposal on how Northumberland was to calculate the notional SEN funding was sound and could help more schools to deliver SEN support.
- 46.14 It was suggested that the High Needs Committee, along with monitoring the notional SEN funding, could also be tasked with examining the wider mainstream bandings as top up funding itself had not changed for many years. The Chair agreed to note this for consideration at a future meeting of the High Needs Committee.
- 46.15 At this point the Schools' Forum noted the 2021/22 High Needs Block budget of £39,373,470 as set out at Appendix B.
- 46.16 The 2022/23 Early Years funding block figures and proposed hourly rates were noted.
- 46.17 The 2022/23 allocation for the Central Schools Service Block was reported and the Schools' Forum noted that the budget was to be set at £2,454,271 as detailed in Appendix D of the report. However, it was stated that the reduction in the per pupil element and a fall in pupil numbers represented an additional funding pressure for the Council in relation to this funding block. The figures would continue to be monitored.

Ch.'s Initials.....

46.18 Following on from the detailed report the Chair thanked all those involved in setting the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2022/23.

RESOLVED that the Schools' Forum notes:

- the proposal for the Schools Block formula values and the resulting 2022/23 School Budget Shares, in line with the Cabinet decision of 11 January 2022 including the delegation of the approval of the final formula values to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care & Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services and Deputy Leader of the Council in line with the principles agreed at Schools Forum on 17 November 2021;
- the request for support to the late disapplication request outlined in section 4.2;
- the 2022/23 High Needs Block Budget including the reduced final transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block; and
- the 2022/23 Central Schools Services Budget.

47. 2022 WORK PROGRAMME AND MEETING DATES

47.1 The schedule of dates had been circulated with the agenda papers and a copy filed with the signed minutes.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

48. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday, 6 July 2022 at 9:30 a.m.

CHAIR_____

DATE_____

Ch.'s Initials.....