

Oxfordshire County Council
Schools Forum – 4 February 2019
Schools Funding Formula 2019-20 – Update on Authority Proforma Tool
(APT)

Settings		Sector	
Academies	✓	Foundation Stage	
Maintained Schools	✓	Primary	✓
PVI Nurseries		Secondary	✓
Special Schools		Special	
Local Authority	✓	16+	
Schools Forum	✓	High Needs	

1. Item for Information

2. Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to update Schools Forum on the schools funding formula models for 2019-20, following agreement of the approach at the Schools Forum meeting on 14 January 2019. This includes updating on the submission of the funding template (Authority Proforma Tool - APT) to the Department for Education's (DfE).
- 2.2 A verbal update will be provided at the meeting on any feedback received from the DfE as they review the submitted funding model. A response is also awaited from the DfE on the disapplication request to transfer funding from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Schools block to High Needs and an update will be provided if a decision from the Secretary of State is received. Should confirmation of the submitted APT be received from the DfE, the agreed budget summary proforma will be circulated as an additional annex to this report.

3. Information for Schools Forum

- 3.1 At the Schools Forum meeting on 14 January 2019, Schools Forum reviewed two funding models, which represented the position with full NFF formula factor values (Model 1) and the position if the Secretary of State approves the disapplication request to transfer funding from the DSG Schools block to High Needs (Model 2). The agreed principle was to implement the National Funding Formula (NFF) for 2019-20 as closely as possible within the constraints of overall funding. Annex 2 shows the NFF unit rates, including the application of the Area Cost Adjustment (ACA) for Oxfordshire. These NFF full unit rates, were endorsed by Schools Forum for the funding formula for Model 1, and to be adjusted for affordability for Model 2 if the disapplication request was approved.

- 3.2 Schools Forum was informed that further checks were continuing at individual school level and minor adjustments were made prior to submission of the APT.
- 3.3 The DfE confirmed that only one version of the APT should be submitted and they advised that Local Authorities (LAs) should assume that any outstanding disapplication requests have not been approved when submitting the APT. Consequently, Model 1, without the assumption of an approved disapplication request, was submitted. The original deadline for submission was 21 January 2019. However, the DfE had technical difficulties with their portal for receiving the APTs and this was not resolved until 22 January. A revised deadline of 22 January was issued by the DfE and the Model 1 APT was submitted on time.
- 3.4 The Model 1 APT submitted was that endorsed at Schools Forum on 14 January. The minor adjustments following further checking did not change the bottom line of the overall funding model. The submitted Model 1 APT is shown at Annex 1 with the full NFF unit rates. The submitted APT also indicated that c£600k was agreed by Schools Forum for transfer to High Needs at the Schools Forum meeting on 14 January 2019, with this scenario.
- 3.5 Following submission, the DfE undertake extensive checks and will refer any queries back to the LA. The figures in Model 1 (Annex 1) therefore remain provisional until all DfE checks have been completed and any required adjustments made. A verbal update on progress will be provided at the Schools Forum meeting on 4 February
- 3.6 If the Secretary of State was minded to approve the LA's disapplication request to transfer funding from the Schools block to High Needs, a second APT (re Model 2) would be submitted to the DfE and the checking process would recommence. The original disapplication request of £1.8m, would be offset by the £600K already identified in Model 1, meaning that an additional £1.2m would be transferred from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block re Model 2. In the papers for the Schools Forum meeting on 14 January, the reduction in funding for this scenario was achieved by reducing the Lump Sum formula factor. Schools Forum asked that alternative approaches were reviewed to identify if a more equitable approach (particularly in relation to smaller schools) could be identified, if possible. Modelling to date has not achieved a more equitable approach for all schools, largely because of the knock-on effects of the protections within the funding formula. Other than the Lump Sum approach, other methodologies gave greater inequalities with some schools being significantly impacted.
- 3.7 Schools Forum is asked to note that formal approval of the APT by the ESFA is awaited, along with the outcome of the disapplication request.
- 3.8 Schools Forum is asked to note that school budget shares will be published on the intranet as soon as possible, following approval of the APT by the DfE. The official deadline for publication is 28 February 2019. Schools' budgets have previously been released earlier than this in Oxfordshire, but it is noted that the process has the potential to take longer if an additional APT needs to

be submitted (re Model 2) if the Secretary of State approved the disapplication request. Once schools' budgets are finalised and published, an accompanying letter will also be sent to schools.

4. Implementation of the National Funding Formula

Schools Forum is asked to note that the Model 1 APT submitted to the DfE included the full values of the National Funding Formula, including the ACA for Oxfordshire, as outlined at Annex 2. If there are no significant changes following the ESFA checking process, Oxfordshire would have implemented the national funding formula factors in full within the submitted Model 1 APT.

5. Financial and Staff Implications - centrally and for schools

This paper already deals with the financial implications of the funding formula for 2019-20, so no further comment is made.

6. Equal Opportunities Implications and Impact on Equality Groups

The funding models proposed follow the NFF priorities, which directs funding to the needs of vulnerable pupils and aligns with the Council's aims of raising attainment, narrowing the attainment gap and safeguarding children.

7. Conclusions

This paper updates Schools Forum regarding the 2019-20 funding model (APT) submitted to the DfE and further updates will be provided at the Schools Forum meeting on 4 February. A response is also awaited from the DfE on the disapplication request to transfer funding from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Schools block to High Needs and an update will be provided if a decision from the Secretary of State is received.

8. Contact Details of Lead Officer/Author

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