

Schools and Learning Finance Team • The Parkhouse Building • Baron Way
Kingmoor Business Park • Carlisle • Cumbria • CA6 4SJ
T: 01228 227228 • F: 01228 226661 • E-mail: helen.hamilton@cumbria.gov.uk

All Cumbrian Primary and Secondary Schools and Academies

Date: 10th September 2014

Enq to: SFRConsultation@cumbria.gov.uk

For the Urgent Attention of the Headteacher

School Funding Reform Consultation 2015-16 and Application for Consideration for the Sparsity Factor

Dear Colleague

This letter accompanies 4 documents that have been emailed to you this morning. The documents and this letter have also been placed on the School Portal.

The documents relate to the School Funding Reform Consultation 2015-16 with all Cumbrian maintained primary and secondary schools and academies that begins today (**Wednesday 10th September 2014**) and ends at **5pm on Wednesday 8th October 2014**.

In March 2014, the DfE published 'Fairer Schools Funding 2015-16' which announced an additional £7.8m funding in 2015-16 for the Schools Block element of the Dedicated Schools Grant. Cumbria County Council will need to decide, in consultation with the Cumbria Schools Forum and all Cumbrian primary and secondary schools and academies how to allocate the additional funding through the Cumbria Schools Funding Formula in 2015-16. The Council will also need to consider whether there should be any further changes to the Cumbria School Funding Formula for 2015-16, including how a minor amendment to the sparsity factor will be implemented. The consultation also asks some questions about the de-delegation of budgets for maintained schools and budgets that are centrally retained by the Council.

The consultation is very important as it will affect school budgets from April 2015. Schools are encouraged to give the documents special attention, and to respond to the consultation via the online survey to ensure that as many views as possible are taken into account in the decision making process.

Three documents relate directly to the consultation document issued today:

National School Funding Reform Arrangements for 2015-16 – Consultation Document

This is the main consultation document explaining the changes and recommendations for 2015-16.

National School Funding Reform Arrangements for 2015-16 – Appendix A

The purpose of this appendix is explained in the above consultation document. The appendix shows which schools are currently eligible for the sparsity factor in the proposed funding formula.

Schools can apply to the Local Authority by **Wednesday 24th September 2014** if they believe that they should also be considered for the sparsity factor (please see paragraph below for more detailed information on this).

National School Funding Reform Arrangements for 2015-16 – Appendix B

This appendix shows the impact of the proposals in the consultation document on the Schools Block element of the funding formula. Schools are strongly encouraged to read 'Information supporting the financial modelling shown at Appendix B' from paragraph 46 onwards in the consultation document which explains how the figures have been calculated.

Application for Consideration for Eligibility for the Sparsity Factor

Alongside the above documents, a letter has also been issued to schools inviting them to apply for consideration for eligibility for the sparsity factor in the 2015-16 funding formula. Information on this is included in the letter and also in the consultation document at paragraph 21 onwards. A form attached to the letter must be completed and submitted to the Local Authority (at the address detailed on the form) by **Wednesday 24th September 2014**. Applications received after this date will not be considered.

Responding to the Consultation

Responses to the consultation must be completed via the online survey at <http://www.opinionsuite.com/cumbria/cumbria-county-council/childrens-services/afaff517>

The survey will be open from **9am on Wednesday 10th September 2014 until 5pm on Wednesday 8th October 2014**. Responses received after the deadline will not be taken into account. We kindly ask that there is only one response per school.

Next Steps

The responses to the consultation will be collated and presented to the Schools Forum, and a decision on the funding formula for 2015-16 will then be made by the Council Cabinet.

Schools will be informed of the outcome of the consultation as well as the decision by Cabinet on Friday 31st October 2014.

If there are any queries regarding the consultation or information outlined above, please email them to SFRConsultation@cumbria.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely



Helen Hamilton
Finance Manager – Schools and Learning

