Appendix 2

Cheshire East Council

Our ref: RB/jf/MP98

Date: 18 January 2017

Nick Gibb MP
House of Commons
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Dear Nick

RE: NATIONAL FAIRER FUNDING

Firstly, may I thank you for the time you provided to listen to the concerns we have in relation to the consequences of the proposed National Fairer Funding consultation. All those who attended were pleased that you have committed to work with us to:

1. Calculate the minimum cost of running a school

2. To consider the anomaly caused due to the re-baselining due to the approach we have taken to supporting 'poorly' funded schools.

We are keen to have this dialogue as soon as possible with your DfE official, Angela Fairhurst, and we would appreciate contact within a week to consider these factors further.

Below are some key points that I would like to reiterate on behalf of Cheshire East Council and our schools.

1. Cheshire East schools have been historically poorly funded. This was recognised by the DfE and additional funding was previously made available. However, the National Fairer Funding will result, with current proposals, with our schools and the local authority being funded at an even lower rate.

2. We accept that someone has to be the lowest funded, but request this rate must provide the minimum level of funding needed to run a school.

We were delighted that you have agreed to consider this. I would encourage that this work considers both primary and secondary schools.

3. The impact of the re-baselining has caused an anomaly where Cheshire East education funding will reduce by a further £5.3m.

Without this readjustment SEN pupils in Cheshire East will be significantly impacted and we will not be able to meet the needs of pupils. I am sure that this is an unintended consequence and an anomaly.

Again, your agreement to consider this to ensure fairness of funding is appreciated.

A few additional facts which are important headlines to note:

- Overall Cheshire East will lose £9.3m from Education Funding
- 131 out of the 146 schools will have a significant reduction in funding

This will impact significantly on Northern Powerhouse and provision of skills required by employers. Our schools will not have the funding to enable them to deliver a broad curriculum that develops the skills required by employers.

The proposals developed by officials were based on two underpinning values;

Firstly; **'Similar school and local areas receive different levels of funding with little or no justification'**

This continues to be the case based on the current modelling of the proposed formulae. Cheshire East will receive significantly less per pupil that any other comparator authority.

Cheshire East	4179
North West	4523
Geographical Neighbours	4411
Statistical Neighbours	4270
Society County Treasurers	4322
F40	4290

We surely must be offered a level of funding as a minimum comparable with our statistical neighbours?

Secondly, **'under funded schools do not have access to the same opportunities to do the best for their children, and it is harder for them to attract the best teachers and afford the best support.'**

In Cheshire East a significant number of schools are already predicting significant deficits within 4 years. With the current proposal this is likely to occur within 2 years. For instance, one high school is now predicting a £1m deficit within 2 years. With current levels of funding schools already have difficulty recruiting, in particular, Maths, English and Science teachers.

As a consequence of the proposals schools across Cheshire East are seriously considering a number of dramatic actions as they will have no options, these include;

- There will be no Post 16 Provision in any schools.
- Curriculum will be reduced to the minimum – there will be no enhancements or skills development
- SEN children will not receive the support they need
- Pastoral staff roles will be removed putting at risk some of the most vulnerable pupils in the school
- Opening only 4 times a week with distance learning at home on the 5th day

Schools in Cheshire East are not unreasonable and are keen to work with your officials to find a way that enables the proposals to continue, but at the same time address what we firmly believe are unintended negative consequences and exceptional circumstances.

We were all very impressed at the time you provided for our meeting and how intently you listened. Schools are, however, planning a number of actions to ensure the consequences for Cheshire East remain high profile. Currently all schools are signing a letter which they plan to deliver to Parliament in early March which requires that our children have the same opportunities as children in other local areas/schools.

Finally, thank you for your time, support and agreement to consider our concerns and explore how changes can be accommodated to address these exceptional circumstances.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Rachel Bailey
Leader of the Council