

## DRAFT MINUTES- MEETING OF THE SCHOOLS' FUNDING FORUM (SFF)

8:00 – 12:30, 21 March 2014

**Russell Hotel, 136 Boxley Road, Maidstone, ME14 2AE**

**Present:** John Dennis (Chairperson), Michael Blanning, Phil Sayer (Vice Chairperson), Janice Brooke, Richard Hitchin, Jenny King, Malcolm Goddard, Ben Cooper, Lynda Downes, Julia Campbell, Robert Masters, Roland Gooding, Neil Willis, Louise Burgess, Rosemary Joyce, Alan Barham, Christine Fordham, Mike Smith, Adrian Cottrell, Roger Gough (Member), Patrick Leeson, Keith Abbott, Simon Pleace, Ian Hamilton (Clerk), Danny O'Donovan and Stephanie Holt (Item 3 only), Malcolm Thomas (Item 5 only)

**Apologies:** Sue Rogers, Panna Nagar, Alison Coppitters, Jo Southby, John Bird, Rev Simon Foulkes

1.	<p><b>Minutes and matters arising from the SFF meeting 13 December 2014.</b></p> <p>The minutes from the SFF meeting on the 13 December 2014 were ratified as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p><b>Matters arising</b></p> <p>Ian McVicar (IM) from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) attended the last SFF meeting on the 13 December as an EFA observer. IM provided the following feedback to the meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) His observation of the Forum was overwhelmingly positive.</li><li>2) The group was very collaborative and was quite prepared to challenge the Local Authority (LA) over issues that really mattered to the members, such as the way pay increases should be handled next year.</li></ol> <p>Forum elections - There are two places representing Local Authority (LA) Primary Schools up for election on the SFF. As at the date of the SFF meeting the election process was still in the nomination stage. One nomination received to fill one of the vacancies was from a non-teaching member of staff who was on their schools senior management team. The SFF over the years has been explicit in determining school representation on the group to be a headteacher and not a senior non-teaching member of staff.</p> <p>The Department for Education SFF regulations detail that an eligible representative is a Head Teacher or Head teacher's representative (a senior member of staff). For LA representatives the guidance is not prescriptive and is open to interpretation, therefore the SFF could chose to retain its current position of Head Teachers only or they could broaden</p>	
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	<p>the criteria in line with academies who are unable to specify only teaching representatives.</p> <p>SFF members representing Primary schools agreed to retain the current criteria which only allowed Head Teachers to stand and for a paper to be presented to the group at the next SFF meeting to discuss the future eligible representation in respect of broadening the criteria to include non-teaching senior school members of staff.</p> <p>The date of the next SFF meeting was confirmed as the 23 May due to the incorrect date of the 16 May being included on the meeting's agenda, which was circulated to members of the SFF.</p>	
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Sub Group Feedback</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Delegated Formula Funding Group (DFFG) – No feedback as a meeting has not taken place since the 13 December 2013</li> <li>b) Schools Capital Group (SCG) – No feedback as a meeting has not taken place since the 13 December 2013</li> <li>c) Early Years Sub Group (EYSG)- No feedback as a meeting has not taken place since the 13 December 2013</li> </ul>	
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>INSPIRE Update</b></p> <p>The presentation included the paper circulated to the group and an overview of the INSPIRE website. Members of the SFF commended the contents and layout of the website.</p> <p>The membership of the SFF unanimously supported the request for further funding of £200,000 to be allocated from the DSG to support the continuation of the programme. However due to the late notification by the DfE of the High Needs Funding settlement and year end reconciliation of the 2013-14 Schools Contingency budget (early May ) to confirm any unspent DSG, the SFF were not in a position to guarantee the funding until it was confirmed sufficient funds were available to do so.</p> <p>As it is a matter of urgency for INSPIRE to receive confirmation of funding in order to secure the booking of some popular services, members of the SFF agreed to delegate the responsibility to the SFF Executive so that the decision to allocate £200,000 could be taken prior to the next SFF meeting on the 23 May. <a href="#">As soon as the final DSG position for 2013-14 is known, a meeting with the SFF Executive will be arranged in order to</a></p>	Ian Hamilton

	<p>provide notification if funding is available for the continuation of the INSPIRE programme.</p> <p>Patrick Leeson thanked Danny O'Donovan and Stephanie Holt (SH) for their dedication in making INSPIRE the success that it is and acknowledged that Danny's good reputation had been fundamental in attaining greater outcomes than the quantifiable resources invested in the project.</p> <p>Part of the paper circulated refers to the Queen's Baton Relay which precedes the opening of the Glasgow Commonwealth Games in July. Due to the success and impact of the INSPIRE programme Kent has been awarded one of the high profile legs of the baton relay. <a href="#">Details of the route to be taken for Queens Baton Relay on June 5 will be circulated to SFF members in due course</a></p>	<p>(IH)</p> <p>SH and IH</p>
4.	<p><b>Update on school budgets and National Funding Formula (including update on 2013-14 growth fund)</b></p> <p>This item was made up of two presentations from Simon Pleace (SP). The slides used in the presentation can be viewed on the SFF website on KELSI.</p> <p>Malcolm Goddard made a request for a piece of work to be carried out that compared school/academy funding between LAs. During the Autumn of 2013 the DfE published a detailed breakdown of each school/academy formula budget for 2013-14, it is anticipated that the same information will be published in 2014-15 and an analysis of this data will then be carried and presented to the SFF in due course.</p> <p>Main focus of the presentation was given to the long awaited announcement on the National Schools Funding Formula and the accompanying consultation. The announcement made by the DfE on the 13 March did not live up to expectation and was an anti-climax. In summary any move, no matter how small, towards a fairer distribution method for allocating the DSG is welcomed. However the Coalition government have provided an additional one-off pot of £350 million (1.3% of the National DSG) in 2015-16 to be distributed amongst the least fairly funded LAs. Kent does not gain any additional funding from the DfE proposed method of distribution, whilst some other LA's who have traditionally been much better funded than Kent are gaining.</p> <p>The DfE have categorically stated that the use of minimum funding levels to allocate extra funding in 2015-16 is <u>not</u> the same as a national fair funding formula. The introduction of a national fair funding formula will not take place until the government has set spending plans over a longer period of time, allowing them to give schools and LAs more certainty about how the formula will affect them over a number of years. The introduction of a national funding formula will not take place until at least</p>	

	<p>2016-17.</p> <p>Members of the SFF supported the LA view that the proposition on which the DfE is consulting involves a crude averaging-up which takes no account of the local circumstances on which a needs-based school funding formula should be based. Members of the SFF also felt it would be appropriate to have joint submission to the consultation on behalf of the LA and SFF.</p> <p>It was therefore agreed that the LA would compile a response and then circulate to SFF members for their approval prior to the submission to the DfE on the 30 April.</p>	
5.	<p><b>Virtual School Kent (VSK) - Looked after Children (LAC)</b></p> <p>Malcom Thomas gave a presentation to the group on the work of VSK. The slides used in the presentation can be viewed on SFF website on KELSI.</p> <p>Members of the SFF requested some further information when available in respect of slide 5 which was a summary of Attainment and Progress over the period 2007-08 to 2012-13. The further information requested is the analysis for 2013-14.</p> <p>A topical point that was not included in the slides but discussed at the meeting was the recent announcement by the DfE in respect of the distribution of LAC Pupil Premium (PP). From April 2014 LAC PP would initially go to the LAs Virtual Schools Team and the funding would then be passed on to the school/academy based on the assessed individual need of the pupil. As this announcement had been made at short notice for the financial 2014-15, the VSK team were still in the process of setting up the appropriate administration system to facilitate this change and would be communicating the process to schools and academies in due course.</p>	IH
6.	<p><b>Infant Free School Meals</b></p> <p>Members of the SFF were requested to note the content of the report and the challenges in implementing this new government policy. The SFF supported the LA's preferred option for distribution of the Infant Meals Capital funding which was for Kent County Council to determine how and where the funding is used using a number of objective school based criteria.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Free entitlement 2 Year Olds</b></p>	

	<p>Members of the SFF noted</p> <p>a) The content of the paper and in particular the LA's decision to increase the flat funding rate from £4.85 to £4.94 per hour from the 1 April 2014.</p> <p>Members of the SFF approved</p> <p>b) The retention of £500k from the total allocation of £17.7m to cover the additional administration and training costs associated with the next stages of early year's education for two year olds in Kent.</p>	
8.	<p><b>Collaboration / Partnership Update on funding allocations</b></p> <p>Members of the SFF acknowledged the table circulated detailing the distribution of collaboration funding. A full update on Collaborations will be provided to the SFF at its next meeting on the 23 May.</p>	
9.	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>The was no AOB</p>	