

MEETING OF THE SCHOOLS' FUNDING FORUM
15th May 2009 at Oakwood House

Present: Nigel Blackburn (Chairperson), Ian Hobson, Alan Barham, Jane Wheatley, Heather Suggitt, Alison Coppitters, Marie Betts, Jenny King, John Bird, Barbara Letchford, Alasdair Patterson, Richard Hitchin, John Bromiley, Stephen Grix, Sue Glanville, Bernadette Gibbs, Roland Gooding, Mark Dance (Cabinet member), Christine Angell (Member), Rosalind Turner, Keith Abbott, Bob Smith, Simon Pleace, Ian Hamilton, Stephen Woods (**Item 1 only**),

Apologies: Phil Sayer (Vice Chairman), Neil Turrell, Mike Smith, Nigel Genders, Chris Atkin

1.	<p>Minutes and Matters Arising</p> <p>The Forum minutes from the 23rd January were ratified as a true and accurate account of the meeting.</p> <p>Simon Pleace notified the Forum that the outcome from Item 4a Schools in Challenging Circumstances (Forum Minutes 23rd January 2009) had been changed. Due to the turbulence that will be caused to school budgets as a result of using MOSAIC as an indicator to distribute Challenging Circumstances Funding a revised phasing of funding will now take place. Instead of phasing this over a three year period it will now be six years. In addition to this the current CSR period ends in 2010-11 and the Forum has requested that funding using Proxy indicators should be reviewed, therefore any changes to the Formula should be minimised and consideration should be given to the wider perspective. Mark Dance (Cabinet member for education) had requested this change to the initial recommendation made by the Forum.</p> <p>Since the last Forum meeting Arshad Haque representing School Governors had tendered his resignation and been replaced by Richard Hitchin. The Forum thanked Arshad for his contribution over the period of time he served on the Forum and also welcomed Richard Hitchin to Group.</p> <p>School Recruitment and Advertising Costs- Steve Wood (Recruitment and Retention Manager.</p> <p>This was an additional item to the initial agenda; the focus of the presentation was to make the group aware of an alternative option available to schools for advertising vacancies. More time is needed to review this in greater detail and the Forum subsequently felt that a more suitable platform for this would be the Secondary Forum.</p>	
2.	<p>Sub Group Feedback</p> <p>a) Forum Executive 25th February 2009 Bob Smith and Simon Pleace fed back the minutes of the Forum Executive meeting on the 25th February 2009 and those members of the Forum Executive attending the meeting ratified the minutes as a true and accurate account of the meeting.</p> <p>b) Delegated Formula Funding Group (DFFG) No DFFG meeting had taken place since the last Forum meeting; therefore no feedback was given to the group.</p>	

	<p>c) Central Costs and Specific Grants Group (CC&SGG)</p> <p>CC&SGG had considered a number of standards funding distributions at its meeting on 22nd April and made a number of proposals to the Forum for its consideration. These proposals are contained within the minutes of the CC&SGG minutes (see attached link below)</p> <p>http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/UserFiles/CW/File/Communication/Education_Forums/Central_Costs/Minutes_220409_draft.doc)</p>	
	<p>2.1 Standards Fund 1.11 Music The Forum agreed the recommendation.</p> <p>3. a.1 Standards Fund 1.8 Targeted Support for Secondary Schools The Forum was asked to consider whether the distribution of funding should include Grammar Schools. The expectation from the DCSF is that the grant should be targeted towards schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - with the largest number of pupils not achieving sufficient progress in the core subjects at the end of Key Stage 3 and / or the largest numbers of pupils who do not achieve 5 A*-C including English and mathematics; - where there are high proportions of pupils who do not progress by two levels in Key Stages 3 and 4 in the core subjects; - Where there are underperforming groups of pupils who need to close the gap between their own attainment and that of other pupils. <p>The Forum took the view that the principal of the grant was not to be applied on the basis of the whole school but on the basis of the individual pupil and some pupils attending a grammar school were within the above criteria, and could, therefore, qualify. The Forum agreed that the distribution should include Grammar schools.</p> <p>b.1 Standards Fund 1.8 Use of AfL funding The Forum agreed the recommendations.</p> <p>4.1 Standards Fund 1.6a Extended Schools Subsidy, Funding for Disadvantaged Children and Young People The Forum agreed the recommendation to distribute the 2009/10 allocation to schools in the pilot areas based on the agreed criteria. However a lengthy discussion was held by the group due to associated difficulties in targeting the money. This was not so much around who was eligible but how the expenditure would be made at a local level. In general eligible pupils would receive around £300 that would enable them to access activities from which they would otherwise be excluded due to their economic disadvantage. The individual would need to have the facility to make a payment; one possible option for the future is to provide pupils with a pre loaded purchase card. As the expectation is for Kent to receive around £5 million in 2010-11 it is important for the pilot money to go out as soon as possible, however the Forum have recommended that a working group is set up to look at the issues associated with the funding. This should include a review of how other authorities are addressing the problem. The following members of the Forum volunteered to be part of the working group Barbara Lethchford, Alan Barham and Alison Coppiters. Also the Forum suggested that a member of CFE Finance and a senior member of Staff from an LSCP should be included as well. This information will be passed onto Extended Schools Teams who will be running the working group.</p>	<p>Simon Pleace</p>

	<p>5.1 Standards Fund 1.4m TIG Making Good Progress</p> <p>A strategy group has been set up to propose a method of distribution, this group will submit a paper for consideration at the Forum meeting in September. The Forum asked for it to be noted that in future the Forum should have involvement in helping to determine the mix of the working group and groups that discuss funding distribution should not be set up without their prior knowledge.</p> <p>d) Early Years Subgroup Feed Back. Bob Smith fed back details of the meeting held on the 29th April as per report (Item 2d). Rosalind Turner commented that the outcome of the review needed to ensure that the proposals promoted and supported quality provision to secure the best outcomes for early year children in Kent.</p> <p>e) Schools Capital Group Roland Gooding fed back to the group the minutes of the meeting held on the 4th March (Link to minutes http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/UserFiles/CW/File/Communication/Education_Forum/Schools_Capital_Group/DRAFT_Meeting_Notes_4Mar09.doc) and gave an update in respect of item 4c from the last Forum meeting.</p> <p>Extract from minutes Item 4 C Forum minutes 23rd January 2009 The Forum instructed the SCG to consult with schools in respect of their recommended changes to the Landlord/Tenant responsibilities. This has now been delayed until further notice due a pending discussion with the Leader of the Council, an update on the outcome of this will be given to the Forum in due course.</p> <p>The decision taken by members was not to proceed as recommended by the Forum and to continue as per the current arrangements.</p> <p>As there was not going to be any changes to the current arrangements, and in view of the considerable dissatisfaction expressed by some schools with the current lack of clarity, the Forum requested that the SCG carry out a piece of work which clearly defined and clarified the responsibilities of schools in respect of maintaining their buildings. Recommendations from this piece of work will be presented to the Forum executive and Mr Dance in due course.</p>	Phil Sayer
3.	<p>Qualifying to Drive School Minibuses</p> <p>Bob Smith presented his report to the Group and the Forum requested that this information should now be passed onto all schools. An e-bulletin via Kent Trust Web (KTW) will now be sent out to all schools.</p>	Bob Smith
4.	<p>School Reserves and Clawback 2008-09</p> <p>Simon Pleace tabled item 4 at the meeting and gave a verbal update. The headlines were as follow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Schools' revenue reserves decreased by £15.7 million from £67.6million in 2007-08 to £51.9 million in 2008-09 - Schools' capital reserves decreased by £7.6 million from £17 million in 	

- 2007-08 to £9.4 million in 2008-09
- The number of Primary Schools with reserves greater than 16% decreased from 79 in 2007-08 to 34 in 2008-09
 - The number of Secondary Schools with reserves greater than 10% decreased from 10 in 2007-08 to 5 in 2008-09.

The Forum was pleased with the reduction in the overall level of school reserves and that the number of schools with deficits was roughly the same as in 2007-08. The initial picture would suggest that schools had taken notice of the communications given to them in respect of retaining high levels of reserves.

In 2007-08 the Forum carried out a process to review schools with excessive balances, the outcome of this was to recover around £1.5 million from 15 schools who had excessive balances.

The Forum felt it was only fair and right to carry out a similar process for schools with excessive balances at the end of 2008-09 and agreed the following time table and criteria.

8 th June	Any Primary or Special School with reserves in excess of 16% and Secondary School with reserves in excess of 10% will be sent a letter requesting evidence to support the eligibility of the balances. The letter will include notification of appeals date (if needed)
19 th June	Deadline for evidence submission from schools
22 nd – 24 th June	Officers consider evidence in relation to published criteria
26th June	Panel meets to consider evidence supplied and officer recommendations Panel to be made up of volunteers from the Forum and Senior Officers
29th June	Decisions of Panel communicated to schools. Letter sets out criteria for appeals Deadline for appeal submission 2 July
3rd July	Appeals Panel meets Appeals panel to be made up of volunteers from the Forum, volunteers will be different members of to the ones that were involved in the meetings on the 26th June
10th July	Outcomes reported to Funding Forum Schools informed of final decisions

5.	Funding the Courier Service Bob Smith presented the paper to the Forum. There is currently a shortfall in funding for the courier service, the Forum were asked if this shortfall in funding could be made up from the DSG. The Forum unanimously voted against funding the shortfall from the DSG.	
6.	Exam Fees and Career Guidance At the previous Forum meeting on the 23 rd January, Nigel Blackburn tabled a paper on the pressure to school budgets as a result of the increase to examination expenses. During the budget setting process for 2009-10 an additional amount of £3 million was identified as headroom. The Forum executive took the decision to distribute this funding at a flat rate per pupil for year groups R to Yr 11. One of the reasons for distributing the funding on this basis was the acknowledgement that examination fees had increased disproportionately to increases to funding in recent years. As funding for the increase in examination costs was taken into consideration when building schools budget no further work had been carried in this area. However, the Forum felt that it would be helpful to quantify this pressure to school budgets and requested that a paper be presented at a future Forum meeting. Nigel Blackburn volunteered the services of his examination officer.	Bob Smith
7.	Special School Review Bob Smith presented his paper to the Forum. The Forum asked for it to be noted that they recognised the quality, high standard and the good management of the process and would like to thank Bob for his work to date.	
8.	14-19 Working Group and LSC Funding. At the last Forum meeting John Ratcliffe (LSC North East Kent Partnership Director) was invited to attend future Forum meetings to give updates on LSC funding and the transfer of responsibilities of 14-19 education from the Learning Skills Council to the LA. Unfortunately John was unable to attend the meeting and therefore the update was given by Forum members who attended the 14-19 Working Group. 13 members of staff or cash equivalents will be transferred to the LA. The LSC will be managing the selection process which will take place in the near future, members of staff will formally transfer over to the LA at the beginning of April 2009, but it is hoped there will be some work shadowing arrangements in place earlier..	
9.	DSG and Section 52 The Forum approved the following items of expenditure (as detailed in the paper presented by Simon Pleace) can be accounted for against DSG and recorded in Section 52 on the appropriate budget lines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributions to combined budgets from the DSG • Termination of employment costs. 	
10.	Elections and Forum meeting date's 2009-10 The Forum agreed the following meeting dates for the 2009-10 academic year:	

	<p>Friday 25th September 2009 Friday 27th November 2009 Friday 22nd January 2010 Friday 14th May 2010 Friday 9th July 2010</p> <p>The Forum agreed the proposed time table and process for electing the following representatives groups.</p> <p>Selective Secondary Schools All Through Primary Schools between 150 and 400 pupils</p> <p>Heather Suggitt who represents Infants School informed the Forum that she would be retiring at the end of the summer. As a result of this news an election for an Infant School representative would also take place at the same time as the two elections mentioned above.</p>	
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