

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

8:00 – 11:15, 23 May 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, Alison Coppitters, Ben Cooper, Lynda Downes, Julia Campbell, Robert Masters, Roland Gooding, Neil Willis, Louise Burgess, Alan Barham, , John Bird, Jo Southby, Mike Smith, Rev Simon Foulkes, Adrian Cottrell, Roger Gough (Member), Patrick Leeson, Keith Abbott, Simon Pleace, Ian Hamilton (Clerk), Fola Agwu from the Education Funding Agency (EFA)

Apologies: Malcolm Goddard, Sue Rogers, Panna Nagar, Rosemary Joyce, Christine Fordham

1.	<p>Minutes and matters arising from the SFF meeting 21 March 2014.</p> <p>The minutes from the SFF meeting on the 21 March 2014 were ratified as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>Matters arising</p> <p>At the SFF meeting on the 21 March, members of the SFF had unanimously supported a request from Inspire for further funding of £200k in order to continue the programme (see item 3 from the minutes). Due to not having the final financial position on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) roll forward for 2013-14, final confirmation that this funding would be allocated could not be given. SFF members are requested to note that confirmation of funding was given for the Inspire Programme prior to today's meeting (23 May). This was done at the point it was known that there was sufficient funding in the DSG roll forward.</p> <p>The Chairperson welcomed Fola Agwu (FA) from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) who was attending the meeting as an observer from the EFA to ensure that the SFF operates efficiently and transparently and that meetings are not dominated by any particular sector.</p> <p>Keith Abbott (KA) gave a brief update to item 6 Infant Free School Meals (SFF Meeting 21 March). The contents of this update is summarised in a document on Kent Education Learning and Skills Information (KELSI). You can access this document via the following link: Universal Infant Free School Meals Capital Allocation</p> <p>Simon Foulkes asked for it to be noted in the minutes that he felt it was unreasonable that Voluntary Aided schools had to contribute 10% towards the cost of any building work in relation to infant free school meal capital funding.</p>	
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2.	<p>Sub- Group feedback</p> <p>a) Delegated Formula Funding Group (DFFG) – No feedback as a meeting has not taken place since the 21 March 2014</p> <p>b) Schools Capital Group (SCG) – No feedback as a meeting has not taken place since the 21 March 2014</p> <p>c) Early Years Sub Group (EYSG)- No feedback as a meeting has not taken place since the 21 March 2014</p>	
3.	<p>SFF Membership- Various administration matters.</p> <p>SFF members noted items 5.1 a) and c) and also agreed item 5.1 b).</p> <p>In relation to item 5 d) the SFF agreed that representation for Local Authority (LA) schools' members, which consists of the following groups: Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, Special Schools, Pupil Referral Units and Nursery Schools should be broadened. Representation would now be extended to both teaching and non-teaching members of a schools senior management team.</p> <p>The group felt that the representation from these groups should include both teaching and non-teaching staff and it was discussed whether to manage this by setting a quota for teaching and non-teaching membership. It was agreed not to set a limit at this stage, however to maintain a watchful eye over the membership to ensure that the representation of non-teaching members did not end up dominating the membership.</p>	
4.	<p>Update on Collaborations</p> <p>Patrick Leeson (PL) presented the paper to the group. Members of the SFF requested some further information which PL agreed to supply.</p> <p>The information requested was ;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information detailing the reasons why 4 of the collaborations had ceased to continue. - A list of schools that had Headteacher vacancies. <p>Members of the SFF agreed that £2 m from the DSG reserve carried forward from 2013-14 should be allocated to support phase 3 of collaboration programme for the period September 2014 to August 2015.</p>	Patrick Leeson

	<p>The funding in the first instance will be allocated to the Kent Association of Headteachers (KAH). The distribution of the £2 m will then be agreed across the 4 KAH districts by KAH. It was also agreed that there would be a form of matched funding from schools/academies in the collaborations. It was not possible to have a prescriptive policy for this as the circumstances and dynamics of the collaborations were different across the county. It would therefore be left up to the individual KAH district to agree an appropriate level of match funding for each collaboration.</p> <p>As part of the reporting process provided to members of the SFF on the application of collaboration funding, the next report is to contain details of how the funding has been allocated in each KAH district including details of any match funding. The next update will take place at March's SFF meeting.</p>	
5.	<p>Update – A new process for defining eligibility for High Needs funding in mainstream schools - £6,000 threshold</p> <p>Members of the SFF ;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Noted the requirement for the LA to submit an exemption request to the Secretary of State for not fully complying with School Finance Regulations. - Noted the action plan and timetable for the working group - Agreed to the creation of a £10,000 budget from unallocated DSG to reimburse working group members for their contributions with this piece of work. <p>JD requested that Fola Agwu contacts colleagues in the EFA regarding the provision of practical examples where LAs had implemented the £6,000 threshold without using the statutory assessment process. This request was made in the context of an earlier meeting with the EFA (detailed in paragraph 3.2 from the paper) where they had agreed to provide this information.</p>	
6.	<p>2013-14 DSG unallocated budget</p> <p>Keith Abbott (KA) gave a presentation to the group, to view presentation click 2013-14 DSG unallocated budget.</p> <p>The contents of the presentation, was the continuation of earlier DSG updates provided at SFF meetings on the 11 December and 21 March and summarised how we had arrived at the 2013-14 uncommitted DSG roll forward of £4.2 m.</p> <p>From the £4.2m roll forward, the SFF recommended that £2.21m should be allocated (£2m Collaborations, £0.2m Inspire and £0.01m High Needs Working Group). As part of the presentation KA informed the group that</p>	

	there were a number of future commitments to the DSG around school closures and academy conversions. In light of this the SFF recommended that the remaining roll forward be retained for this purpose.	
7.	<p>Consultation – DfE Simplifying the administration of academies funding.</p> <p>Members of the SFF ;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Noted the contents of the paper - Agreed that the response to the SFF would be a joint response on behalf of the LA and the SFF. 	
8.	<p>2013-14 Schools Outturn.</p> <p>Members of the SFF;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Noted the 2013-14 schools outturn position - Noted the imminent review by the LA of the Balance Control Mechanism (BCM) <p>Simon Pleace (SP) presented the paper to group and brought to their attention that Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) balances were £1.6m (around 14%) at an average of £0.126m per PRU. First impression would suggest that the reserve was at a high level, however SP explained that there were extenuating circumstances for this.</p> <p>2013-14 was first year PRUs received delegation. In conjunction with this the outcome of the Alternative Curriculum review had seen the implementation of the new district model part way through the financial year, which meant that new management committees were still in there early stage of development. Also the new agreed formula for the distribution of district budgets only came into effect from April 2014, therefore the funding for 2013-14 was based on the historic distribution of PRU central budgets. This should all be taken into consideration when taking a view on the £1.6m balance and that it would be appropriate to consider the application of a BCM for PRUs after it is known what the yearend financial position is for 2014-15.</p>	
9.	<p>School Deficits 2013-14</p> <p>Members of the SFF noted the contents of the report.</p> <p>As there was confidential information in this report it had not been published on KELSI for public viewing and members of the SFF were requested to dispose of the report after the meeting.</p> <p>The Schools Financial Services (SFS) team were still in the process of collecting 3 year budget plans from schools as the closing date for</p>	

	<p>submission is the 31 May. At the next SFF a paper will be presented to the group analysing the contents of the submissions.</p> <p>Members of the SFF discussed the context in which a number of schools had fallen into deficit. One such school that received particular attention was the Chaucer School in Canterbury that would now be closing in September 2015.</p> <p>PL stated he had been involved in many schools closing and the Chaucer school, which potentially could have been one of the most problematic, had to date been the smoothest. In the region of 240 pupils from the school had been placed in surrounding schools and academies. PL asked for his gratitude to all of the schools and academies that had taken pupils to be noted and also, in particular, a thank you to the Swale Academies Trust for the professional manner and behaviour they had shown throughout their involvement in the process.</p> <p>Alan Barham who is part of the Swale Academies Trust requested that the proficient work of the LA in ensuring the continuation of each pupil's education with the minimum disruption should also to be noted.</p>	
	<p>AOB</p> <p>The following dates for future SFF meetings were agreed;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 28 November 2014 - 6 March 2015 - 22 May 2015 - 10 July 2015 <p>Members of the SFF were made aware of a DfE consultation relating to Teachers Pension Scheme. In the past the LA and SFF had submitted joint responses to consultations and members of the SFF were asked if they would like to the same this time. SFF members supported this suggestion and the draft consultation will now be circulated to members of the SFF for their consideration.</p> <p>A member of the SFF asked if anyone knew if there was any news on the teachers' pay award. In response to this question, no one was aware of the current position. LA officers agreed to investigate and update SFF members accordingly.</p>	<p>Ian Hamilton</p> <p>Ian Hamilton</p>