

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

8:00 – 12:00, 22 April 2016

John Wigan Room, Oakwood House, Maidstone ME16 8AE

**Present:** John Dennis (Chairperson), Phil Sayer (Vice Chairperson), David Stanley, Michael Blanning, Robert Masters, Roland Gooding, Neil Willis, Richard Powell, Alison Hook (substitute for Rosemary Joyce), Louise Burgess, John Bird, Jenny King, Janice Brooke, Lynda Downes, Roger Gough (Member), Patrick Leeson, Ian Hamilton (Clerk), Alison Coppiters, Ben Cooper, Mike Smith, Claire Morey (Observer), Tony Doran (item 4 only), Stephanie Holt and Natalie Harris (Item 7 only) and Sally Lees (item 8 only)

**Apologies:** Malcolm Goddard, Alan Barham, Julia Campbell, Tracey McCartney, Simon Pleace

1.	<p><b>Minutes of the SFF meeting held on 20 November 2015</b></p> <p>The minutes from the SFF meeting on the 20 November 2015 were ratified as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p><b>Matters arising</b></p> <p>Item 2b Terms of reference review of the SFF and its sub-groups – Further work on reviewing the terms of reference was delayed as the Schools' National Funding Consultation launched on the 7 March noted that the future role of the SFF would be clarified in due course. When further information is provided on its future role the terms of reference will be reviewed in order to comply with future responsibilities.</p> <p>Item 5 Vulnerable Secondary Schools – In light of the Schools National Funding Consultation and the intended implementation of a national funding formula, members of the SFF felt that it would not be productive to pursue the EFA any further on this item. It was clearly not the direction of travel of the EFA to increase local discretion; in fact the direction of travel is more likely to be to remove all local discretion and decision making powers.</p> <p>Item 6 Review of Kent's Funding Formula - The outcome of this item at the meeting on the 20 November was for schools to do individual case studies, so that there would be evidence to support different types of schools with funding pressures specific to them. Although the Schools National Funding Consultation may have changed the direction of travel since the SFF's last meeting, it was still felt that it would be a useful exercise for case studies to be carried out, as this would be good evidence in respect of the second stage of the consultation. The second stage of the consultation will detail the funding rates, and the Forum's expectation is that this should be supported by a clear rationale behind the calculation of the rate. Evidence based case studies could be used as an objective measure that compared the case study with the detailed calculation of the rate.</p>	
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	<p>Members of the SFF were asked to volunteer an interest if they would like to participate in a case study.</p> <p>Item 11 – The disapplication of the Minimum Funding Guarantee was applied to one school, Royal Harbour Academy as part of the schools budget calculation process.</p> <p>SFF membership update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is with great sadness that it is recorded the death of Richard Hitchin who passed away early in January. His opinion was always to be heard and valued, he will be missed by members of the SFF</li> <li>- Simon Foulkes (representing – Diocese) has now moved to a different role outside of the Diocese. Members of the SFF would like to thank Simon for his valuable input into SFF matters during his period of membership.</li> <li>- Adrian Cottrell (representing Post 16) recently left Canterbury College. Members of the SFF would like to thank Adrian for his valuable input into SFF matters during his period of membership.</li> <li>- Julia Campbell's (representing non-selective) last meeting is the 22 April. Members of the SFF would like to thank Julia for her valuable input into SFF matters during her period of membership.</li> <li>- Tracey McCartney from Halstead Nursery was appointed as the new Early Years representative.</li> <li>- Roland Gooding (RG) (representing Special Schools) will not be standing for re-election to the SFF and therefore the 22 April is his last meeting. SFF members and Local Authority (LA) officers thanked RG for his significant input and his commitment made over the years to the running of the SFF, in particular during his time as chairperson.</li> </ul> <p>Members of the SFF were notified that former member Andy Blundell was presented with an MBE in the Queens New Year honours list. Members of the SFF congratulated him on receiving this honour.</p>	All
2.	<p><b>Update White Paper “Education Excellence Everywhere”</b></p> <p>Patrick Leeson (PL) provided a verbal update to the SFF on the governments recently launched White Paper. The focal point of the discussion was the government commitment to direct all schools to become academies by 2022.</p> <p>SFF members strongly rejected this directive and in order to demonstrate their feelings John Dennis agreed to write a letter to the Secretary of State for Education expressing the Forums views on the white paper.</p>	John Dennis

	<p>The SFF wanted it to be understood that they did not oppose the academisation of schools, but did oppose the forced academisation of all schools for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Firstly, the SFF think the evidence base for enforcing academisation is not nearly strong enough to have made it the only organisational model. Being an academy is not in itself a guarantee of school improvement. Kent has a strong track record of schools and academies working in collaboration to improve standards and pupil attainment. The SFF has supported such a programme which has seen the proportion of schools &amp; academies in Kent judged by Ofsted to be Good or Outstanding increase at a far higher rate than the national average. The evidence from here is that becoming an academy is neither a necessary nor a sufficient precursor of school improvement.</li> <li>- Second the SFF think that the link between a school and its community is a vital one for maintaining trust and cooperation. When large MATs without a natural geographic focus are responsible for a school we think an important bond, not least of local accountability, is broken. We think that almost all schools in Kent value the accountability that comes from working with parents and others in the local community. Large, geographically dispersed MATs run the risk of encouraging feelings that "our" schools no longer belong to "us".</li> <li>- Third, the SFF feel that it would have been very brave to embark on this course when the risks of the organisational upheaval were so high. In Kent the majority of Secondary schools are academies but only a minority of primary schools have sought that status. We have many outstanding maintained primary schools and can see every reason to support their clearly successful approach rather than foist on them a status that they have not yet sought with all the additional work necessary to achieve it.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3.</b></p>	<p><b>Update National Funding Formula Consultation</b></p> <p>The government announced some time ago that that they would be launching a Schools National Funding Consultation at the beginning of March 2016. As expected the consultation was launched on the 7<sup>th</sup> March, however what was not expected was the short time scale to respond (by the 17<sup>th</sup> April) and that the consultation would be in two phases. The first would be the principles and the second the detailed calculation.</p> <p>In the expectation of the consultation being launched in March the SFF had re-scheduled its meeting provisionally arranged for the 6<sup>th</sup> March to the 22<sup>nd</sup></p>	

	<p>April so that the LA and SFF could do a joint response to the consultation.</p> <p>Due to the brief consultation period a meeting was arranged at short notice on the 4<sup>th</sup> April and all members of the SFF were invited. There was a good turnout of SFF members at the meeting and subsequently two separate, but similar responses were produced on behalf the SFF and the LA. Both of these responses were submitted to the EFA on the 15 April.</p> <p>PL provided a short verbal update on the main points of the funding consultation. The contents of this update is summarised in the <a href="#">KELSI e-bulletin on the 12 April 2016 link if possible.</a></p>	
4.	<p><b>Virtual Schools Kent – update – Looked After Children Pupil Premium</b></p> <p>Tony Doran (TD) gave a presentation to members of the SFF, to view the presentation click on this link Item <a href="#">4 Presentation –SFF Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) Update.</a></p> <p>An integral part of the presentation was an update on how funding for PP+ would be allocated to schools in 2016-17.</p> <p>Early in spring the Virtual Schools Kent (VSK) consulted with schools regarding the future methodology for distributing PP+ funding. The consensus of responses from Head Teachers was for the funding to be deployed in two parts.</p> <p>1.£900 allocation per Child in Care (CiC) paid in 3 termly instalments of £300</p> <p>2. Application process via electronic Personal Education Plan (ePEP) for additional funding (no ceiling) based on evidenced needs.</p> <p><a href="#">Schools will be notified of the allocation process for 2016-17 after the policy document has been ratified by KCC Members. The expectation is that this will be communicated to schools in May.</a></p>	Tony Doran
5.	<p><b>Update on the 2016-17 School Budget Calculation</b></p> <p>Ian Hamilton (IH) presented this item to members of the SFF. To view the presentation click on this link Item <a href="#">5 Presentation – Update School Budgets 2016-17.</a></p> <p>In summary the presentation provided an overview of the DSG headroom that was generated as part of the school budget calculation for 2016-17, that took place in January.</p>	
6.	<p><b>Allocation of the 2016-17 DSG headroom and provisional 2015-16 DSG Outturn</b></p>	

	<p>In the absence of Simon Pleace, IH presented this item to members of the SFF. To view the presentation click on this link <a href="#">Item 6 – Presentation – Allocation of 2016-17 headroom and provisional 2015-16 DSG outturn.</a></p> <p>In summary the presentation explained how the DSG headroom identified in item 5 is going to be allocated in 2016-17. At the SFF meeting on the 20 November members of the SFF agreed a broad set of principles for its distribution.</p> <p>Item 4 from the meeting on 20 November estimated that there would be a shortfall in the High Needs block of around £10.3m in 2016-17. <b>Members of the SFF agreed that the identified headroom from the schools block of £4.7m would be transferred to the High Needs block to help offset the estimated pressure of £10.3m.</b></p> <p>At the time of the SFF meeting, KCC were still in the process of closing their end of year accounts for the financial year 2015-16 and provisionally had estimated a DSG uncommitted roll-forward of £1.3m.</p> <p><b>Members of the SFF requested that a detailed update would be provided at the next SFF meeting on the 8 July. This update would include the final DSG roll-forward amount, a detailed statement of how the amount had been arrived at and an update on high needs pressures following on from the presentation provided to the SFF at its meeting on the 20 November 2016.</b></p>	Simon Pleace
7.	<p><b>Kent School Games</b></p> <p>Stephanie Holt and Natalie Harris presented their paper to the SFF. The presentation was well received by the group.</p> <p>In summary, continuation of DSG funding to support sports in schools was being requested. The focus of this funding will be to support the Kent school games. The request was for £50k of funding each year for the next three years, starting in 2017-18, in order to maintain the current substance of the games. From 2020-21 funding had been factored in from another source as part of the Unit's medium term financial plan to maintain the games at its current level.</p> <p><b>Members of the SFF unanimously agreed their request for one off funding of £150k for the period 2017-18 to 2019-20.</b></p> <p><b>Condition of funding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Members of the SFF already acknowledged the high level of participation in the games, however they would like to see participation increase further. Making school governors aware of the merits of the games could be one way of doing this. The SFF therefore requested that the profile of the games is raised with school governors and a</b></li> </ul>	

possible way of doing this is by communicating this through the Governor magazine issued in April and September.

- The SFF would like a report to be presented annually over the next three years which provided data showing changes from the picture in the report submitted at this meeting. The SFF would then reserve the right to withhold or reduce future funding if the comparative data should demonstrate a material decline in outcomes.

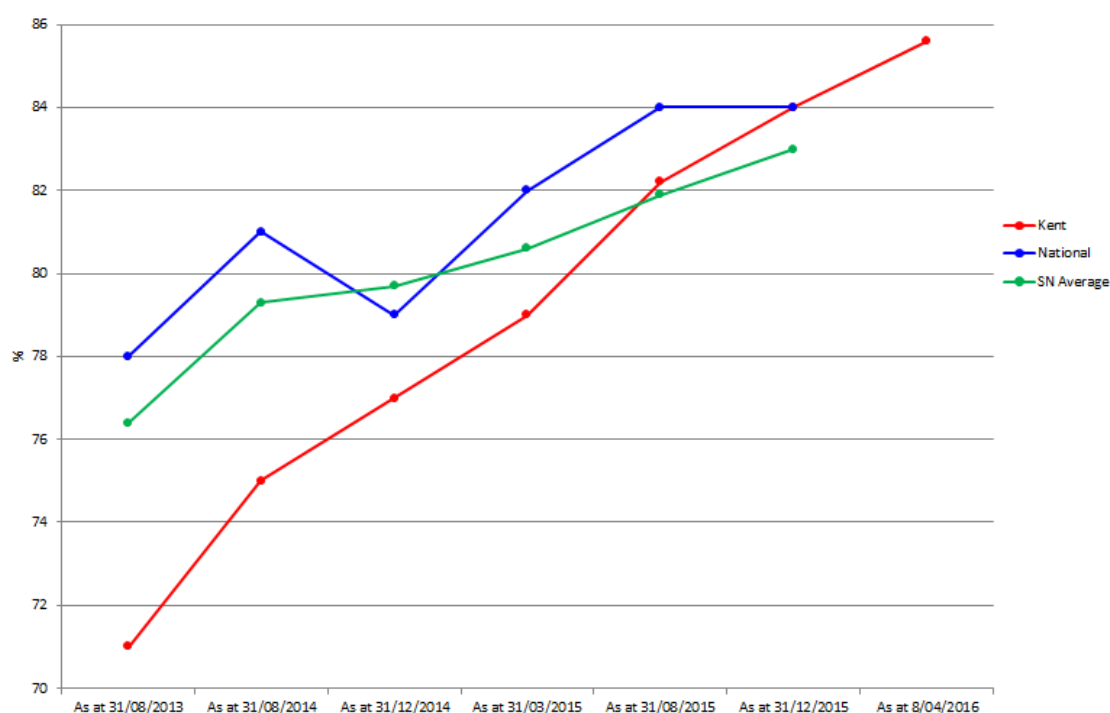
## 8. Collaboration Funding Update

Patrick Leeson (PL) presented this paper to the SFF. PL thanked the SFF for the funding that had been allocated to Collaborations over the years as it had been a major contributing factor to improvement in school standards across the county. Evidence of this is in the paper accompanying this item, the following paragraph and graph are extracts from the paper that highlight this improvement.

Overall, the latest Ofsted data (April 2016) for Kent shows that 85.6% of schools are rated good or better, compared to nationally 84% nationally. This includes 19.3% of schools judged to be outstanding and 66.2 judged to be good.

The graph below shows the significant progression of Ofsted judgements for schools in Kent since the 31 August 2013

Percentage of schools with good or better Ofsted judgements  
(Kent v National v Statistical Neighbour (SN) Average)



	<p>Sally Lees (SL) supported PL in presenting this item. SL is the chairperson of the Kent Association for Headteachers (KAH). SL also thanked the SFF for the funding that had been allocated to collaborations over the years and noted that the funding invested had achieved greater outputs than the sum invested. This was down to the basic concept of collaboration and if the funding had not been available initially it would have been a lot more difficult to start and then grow the collaborations. SL highlighted the recent announcement by the government in its White Paper that all schools would be academies by 2022 and to achieve this aim Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) would be the vehicle to achieve this. A major challenge is setting up enough good quality MATs to meet this deadline and a way to help facilitate this process would be further development of collaborations.</p> <p>On the basis that this funding has been a contributing factor to Kent achieving 85.6% Good and Outstanding schools and the need to ensure that good quality MATs are formed, a request was made to the SFF for collaboration funding in order to help facilitate the MAT process and more importantly Kent's continued drive to increase the number of Good and Outstanding schools.</p> <p>Members of the SFF unanimously agreed that £1.2m of one off DSG rolled forward from 2015-16 should be used for this purpose.</p>	
9.	<p><b>Balance Control Mechanism (BCM)</b></p> <p>Siobhan Cheeseman (SC) updated the SFF on the schools that had reserves in excess of their BCM limit. (For information the limits are 5% for secondary schools and 8% for primary schools.) A more detailed report on school reserves will be presented to the SFF at its meeting scheduled for the 8 July.</p> <p>In 2015-16 the LA had reviewed its process for monitoring the BCM and the new criteria had been regularly communicated to schools. SC informed SFF members of the schools that had breached the threshold and then requested clarification from the SFF on what action should now be taken. The schools that needed to be reviewed were those that had exceeded their BCM limit by more than £50k.</p> <p>Members of the SFF recommended that the following action should be taken.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A panel should be set up to review each case individually. The panel would consist of members of the Delegated Formula Funding Group (DFFG) and LA officers and would be chaired by Ben Cooper.</li> <li>2. The panel review would be either: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) A review of documents submitted by the school and a recommendation made by Schools Financial Services (SFS) on further action to be taken.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	

	<p>b) Or, where the case is less straightforward or more problematic, an invitation would be given to the school to appear before the panel and present their case explaining why they had exceeded the BCM limit.</p> <p>The panel's findings and recommendations would then be presented for information to the SFF at its meeting on the 8 July .</p>	
10.	<p><b>SFF – Membership, Pending Elections and change in the size of Group Representation</b></p> <p>IH presented this paper to members of the SFF and members of the SFF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Noted the changes in section 2</li> <li>- Ratified the election timetables in sections 3 and 4</li> </ul> <p>To access the contents of this paper click on this link <a href="#">paper item 10</a></p>	
11.	<p>Any Other Business (AOB)</p> <p>There was no AOB.</p>	
	<p>Scheduled future meetings dates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 8 July – Marriott Hotel – Tudor Park - 8:15 to 12:00</li> </ul>	