

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

8:00 – 12:30, 13 December 2013

John Wigan Room, Oakwood House, Oakwood Park, Maidstone, Kent ME16 8AE

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, Jo Southby, Neil Willis, Louise Burgess, Rosemary Joyce, John Bird, Mike Smith, Rev Simon Foulkes, Adrian Cottrell, Roger Gough (Member), Patrick Leeson, Keith Abbott, Simon Pleace, Ian Hamilton (Clerk), Julie Ely (items 1 to 7 only), Ian Mc Vicar (IM) (Department for Education)

Apologies: Sue Rogers, Christine Fordham, Alan Barham, Panna Nagar, Malcolm Goddard

	<p>Introduction</p> <p>The scheduling of agenda items was revised in order for there to be maximum attendance and participation for items 1 to 9. Therefore minutes of the previous meeting were taken at item 10.</p> <p>The Chairperson of the SFF welcomed the new post 16 representative Adrian Cottrell (Vice Principal -Finance and Corporate Services) from Canterbury FE College to the SFF as it was his first meeting. The Chairperson also welcomed Ian McVicar from the Department for Education (DfE) who was attending the meeting as an observer.</p>	
1.	<p>Overview of Dedicated School Grant (DSG) 2014-15 to 2017-18</p> <p>Keith Abbott (KA) and Simon Pleace (SP) did a joint presentation to the group on the 2014-15 financial year pressures and savings in the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), a copy of these slides are shown on the SFF section of the Kent Education Learning and Skill Information (KELSI) website.</p> <p>The deadline for issuing budgets to mainstream Local Authority (LA) schools is the 28 February 2014. The Department for Education (DfE) notifies LAs of its DSG settlement for 2014-15 late in December 2013, this information includes the final Schools Block settlement, the indicative High Needs Block funding (which is updated at the end of March 2014) and Early Years block funding that is updated in July 2014.</p> <p>LAs have to submit a pro-forma to the EFA by the 21 January 2014 with details of the calculated 2014-15 budgets for all LA schools and Recoupment Academies.</p> <p>A significant challenge that LAs now face is to calculate school budgets without knowing the final High Needs funding settlement. Due to the</p>	

	<p>uncertainty around the High Needs funding settlement, which is not finalised until late March, LAs need to take a view on the allocation of any headroom generated from the schools block prior to knowing the overall DSG budget.</p> <p>The purpose of the presentation was to provide SFF members with a good understanding of the current DSG position. This was to enable them to recommend to the LA the principles that should be applied to allocate any headroom that is generated from the schools block as part of the schools budget calculation process.</p> <p>When making a recommendation SFF members were asked to take into consideration items 2 to 5 from the agenda. Item 6 details the recommendations of the group after considering the information in items 1 to 5.</p> <p>The net pressure on the DSG for 2014-15 has been estimated at just under £6m.</p> <p>One of the identified pressures is Kent Scheme pay progression. Members of the SFF raised their concerns around the implications this has for schools. The publication by KCC of the Total Contribution Pay (TCP) % ratings last year caused problems in schools as the pay grade profiles in schools and the LA were different.</p> <p>SFF members requested for it to be documented that schools can set their own total contribution pay percentages applicable to their local budget circumstances. Members also requested for it to be noted that schools are put in a difficult position as staff expectations are raised due to the TCP percentages being published by the LA.</p>	
2.	<p>Special Education Needs (SEN) Pressures</p> <p>SFF members noted the following points as requested in the paper.</p> <p>a) The current financial years (2013-14) pressures on the independent non maintained special schools (£3.5m) and FE colleges budgets (£0.06m)</p> <p>b) The planned medium term increase in ASD and BESD need type places in Special School and Resource Provision.</p> <p>c) The planned medium term reduction in independent non maintained special schools</p> <p>d) The range of pressures from the full year effect on the FE College budget from the current financial years funded places.</p>	

3.	<p>A new process for defining eligibility for High Needs funding in mainstream settings - £ 6,000 threshold</p> <p>SFF members noted the following points as requested in the paper.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The new methodology will <u>not</u> be introduced in 2014-15. There will be a delay in the implementation until further detailed development and moderation of the new system is undertaken, and more accurate assessment of the likely cost is determined b) The LA will update the Forum during 2014-15 on its progress with further testing/sampling on a greater number of schools c) The LA will speak to DfE colleagues about the possibility of transferring schools' notional SEN budgets to the High Needs block. 	
4.	<p>Special Schools Observation and Assessment Nursery (OAN) Funding</p> <p>SFF members ratified the recommendation from the paper that OAN provisions will be funded by means of a lump sum from 2014-15 as detailed in appendix 1.</p>	
5.	<p>Funding Arrangements for pupils in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and Alternative Provision</p> <p>SFF members noted the LA plan documented in the paper for PRU budgets in 2014-15</p>	
6.	<p>Recommendations – DSG Budget Pressures and Savings 2014-18</p> <p>After giving careful consideration to the information presented to SFF members in items 1 to 5, the relevant members of the SFF recommended that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The estimated cost of the teachers' pay award of £3.092m would be treated as an unfunded pressure that schools and academies would have to absorb from within their existing budgets. 2) That any headroom generated from the school block after calculating school budgets for 2014-15 would be transferred to High Needs block. 	

	<p>3) If there is a material funding gap between the High Needs block and its liabilities after the High Needs DSG settlement in March an adjustment will be considered in 2015-16 to school funding rates to meet the shortfall. Such action will be discussed with the Forum at the appropriate time (if it arises).</p>	
7.	<p>De-delegation for 2014-15</p> <p>All SFF maintained primary and secondary school representatives unanimously voted to de-delegate the following budgets for 2014-15:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Schools in financial difficulty (DFFG) –primary and secondary – rate per pupil £1.06 - Schools in financial difficulty (Targeted Intervention)- primary rate per pupil £17.75 – secondary rate per pupil £8.39. - Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility –primary and secondary – rate per pupil £0.57 - County Wide SiMS Licence –primary and secondary – rate per pupil £3.63 - Supply Cover Schools Personnel Services –primary and secondary – rate per pupil £0.80 <p>For information the de-delegation of Supply Cover for Trade Union duties (primary and secondary – rate per pupil £1.85) was agreed at the SFF meeting on the 13 July 2013</p>	
8.	<p>Policy Growth Funding – 2014-15</p> <p>SFF members ratified the following recommendation from the paper ;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The continuation of the 2013-14 Growth Policy for 2014-15 - The updating of the policy to include protection for school amalgamations (para 2.1) - The updating of the policy to include funding for new “Basic Need” Academies and Free Schools (para 2.2) - The updating of the policy for Recoupment Academies re-organisation funding and rising roll funding for the period April to August (paras 2.3 to 2.4) 	

	<p>- That the growth budget will remain at £6m for 2014-15</p> <p>Details of the of the 2013-14 growth budget expenditure will be presented to the SFF at its next meeting on the 21 March</p>	Ian Hamilton
9	<p>Minutes and matters arising from the SFF meeting 12 July 2013</p> <p>Minutes of the meeting held on the 12 July 2013 were ratified as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p>	
10	<p>10. Sub - Group feed back</p> <p>a) Delegated Formula Funding Group (DFFG) – No feedback as a meeting has not taken place since the 12 July 2013</p> <p>b) Schools Capital Group (SCG) – Feedback provided by Phil Sayer from meetings held on 25 September and 11 December. To access the minutes to these meeting click on this link minutes SCG</p> <p>c) Early Years Sub Group (EYSG)- No feedback as a meeting has not taken place since the 12 July 2013</p>	
11	<p>Review of non- delegated DSG budgets</p> <p>The SFF Executive held two meetings on the 30 September and the 26 November to review the centrally retained DSG budgets identified at the SFF meeting on the 12 July.</p> <p>Overall the Executive were satisfied with the answers to the questions raised and recommended that no changes to those centrally retained DSG budget allocations should be made for 2014-15</p>	
12.	<p>Partnership Working Between Schools</p> <p>Members of the SFF noted the collaborative working arrangements between Schools Financial Services and Education Quality and Standards.</p>	
13	<p>DSG – Notification 2013-14</p>	

	In accordance with DfE requirements, members of the SFF noted the current 2013-14 DSG allocation of £1,012,884,000 (before academy recoupment).	
14	<p>AOB</p> <p>Living Wage Update - Simon Pleace. On the 11 October an email was circulated to members of the SFF to seek their views on whether KCC should adopt the living wage. It has been decided that KCC will not currently adopt the living wage however KCC will acknowledge the principles and make informed decisions accordingly.</p> <p>IM was asked if he could provide an update on the implementation of the government's announcement that all pupils in year groups R to 2 will have an entitlement to a free school meal from September 2014. Unfortunately there was no update on the information already available and it was not known when full guidance was going to be issued by the DfE.</p>	