

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

8:00 – 11:00, 8 July 2016

**Bearsted Room, Tudor Park Marriott Hotel and Country Club, Ashford Road,
Bearsted, Maidstone, ME14 4NQ**

Present: John Dennis (Chairperson), Phil Sayer (Vice Chairperson), David Stanley, Janice Brooke, David Whitehead, Alison Coppitters, Ben Cooper, Lynda Downes, Mikala Jeffrey, Robert Masters, Peggy Murphy, Michael Blanning, Richard Powell, Louise Burgess, John Bird, Ceranne Litton, Michael Powis, Neil Willis, Mike Smith, Roger Gough (Member), Patrick Leeson, Simon Pleace, Ian Hamilton (Clerk), Yvonne King, Jo Marchant (observer), Julie Ely and Louise Langley (Item 3).

Apologies: Rosemary Joyce, Tracey McCartney, Alex Tear

1.	<p>Minutes of the SFF meeting held on 22 April 2016</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>Matters arising</p> <p>SFF membership update</p> <p>Since the last SFF on the 22 April an election for the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the SFF had taken place, a number of new members had joined the SFF and three existing members had been re-elected :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- John Dennis (Chairperson) and Phil Sayer (Vice Chairperson) were re-elected for the period July 2016 to June 2017 and subsequently both accepted the invitation to continue as Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. <p>New members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- David Whitehead – Executive Headteacher – UNITAS collaboration of schools – representing Local Authority (LA) Maintained Primary Schools- Mikala Jeffrey – Business Manager – The Malling Holmesdale Federation – representing LA Maintained Non-selective Secondary Schools.- Peggy Murphy – Headteacher – Five Acre Wood Special School – representing LA Maintained Special Schools- Ceranne Litton – Headteacher – Grove Park Primary School –	
----	---	--

	<p>representing Academies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Michael Powis – Kent Catholic Schools’ Partnership – representing Academies. - Alex Tear – Diocesan Director of Education (DDE) – Rochester Diocesan Board of Education – representing the Diocese <p>Re-elected</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alison Coppitters – Headteacher – Sedley’s Church of England Primary School – representing LA Maintained Primary Schools - Robert Masters – Headteacher – The Judd School – representing LA Selective Secondary Schools. - Louise Burgess – Business Director – Brook Learning Trust – representing Academies <p>Item 6 – minutes from SFF meeting 20 November 2015– Richard Powell informed the group that he knew of an academy that would be prepared to do a case study. The taking up of this offer would now depend on the contents of the 2nd phase of the national funding consultation and also its timetable. Link to minutes 20 November 2015</p> <p>Item 2- minutes from the SFF 22 April 2016- John Dennis (JD) requested that a copy of the letter from Lord Nash (Education Minister) in response to the letter he had sent to the Secretary of State expressing the views of the SFF on the White Paper (Education Excellence Everywhere) should be circulated to members of the SFF Link to minutes 22 April 2016</p> <p>Item 4 – minutes from the SFF 22 April 2016 – An action point for this item was for Virtual School Kent to communicate to schools the funding arrangements for 2016-17. Information in relation to this was now available on KELSI, however members of the SFF were not convinced that schools were aware of this guidance. In order to increase awareness of the guidance it was agreed that a communication would be made via the schools e-bulletin. Link to minutes 22 April 2016</p>	<p>Ian Hamilton</p> <p>Patrick Leeson</p>
2.	<p>Sub Group Feedback</p> <p>2a) Delegated Formula Funding Group (DFFG)</p> <p>Ben Cooper chairperson of DFFG gave feedback to the group on the meeting that took place on the 6 May 2016. At the SFF meeting on the 22 April members of the SFF directed DFFG to administer the moderation of the Balance Control Mechanism (BCM) for schools that had exceeded the agreed threshold for 2015-16. Item 8 from the SFF minutes of the 22 April provides</p>	

	<p>clarification of the BCM threshold and process used to determine what action should be taken. Link to minutes 22 April 2016</p> <p>Members of the SFF received confidential minutes of the meeting held on the 6 May detailing the recommendations of the DFFG.</p> <p>In summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There was no recommendation to claw back any funding from schools. - As part of the process for reviewing reserves, a number of the schools had to provide detailed evidence of what the reserve had been committed on. Where schools were required to do this, they would need to provide evidence of actual expenditure within an agreed time frame against these commitments or funding would be considered for claw back. Schools Financial Services will monitor this process to ensure all are compliant with this condition. - There were concerns around how robust the financial monitoring processes are in one school, and a condition of the school not having funds clawed back was for them to buy in services that would review the robustness of their internal processes. <p>As there was not a request to clawback funding from any school, the SFF did not have to ratify any recommendation made by DFFG, however members of the SFF noted and supported the action taken by DFFG recorded in the minutes.</p> <p>Members of the SFF were requested to dispose of the confidential minutes and subsequently complied with this request.</p> <p>Schools Capital Group (SCG)</p> <p>Phil Sayer (PS) chairperson of the SCG fed back to SFF members on this item. PS initially explained his frustration of trying to arrange a meeting of the SCGs over the pre-ceding months.</p> <p>PS explained to the group that new terms of reference had been created for the group and asked for members of the SFF to review them. However due an administration error the terms of reference were not available for circulation at the meeting. It was then agreed that the terms of reference would be circulated to members after the meeting and that this item would be discussed at the next SFF meeting</p>	Ian Hamilton
3.	<p>Update on the progress of implementing the £6k high needs threshold</p> <p>Patrick Leeson (PL) provided an introduction to this item, then Louise Langley (LL) gave a presentation that provided an update on the £6k process from an SEN perspective and Ian Hamilton (IH) presented a report on the financial</p>	

	<p>aspects of the £6k process.</p> <p>a) From an SEN perspective (link to presentation)</p> <p>Member of the SFF raised the following points;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Slide four from the presentation illustrated the number of High Needs Pupils (HNP) in each year group. It was clear from this slide that there was a significant drop off in the number of HNPs between year six and year seven, the move from Primary to Secondary phase of education. Members of the SFF requested that an analysis detailing the reason for the noticeable change in numbers. - It was recognised that a mandatory requirement to access high needs funding was having an impact on secondary school applications. The mandatory requirement classified groups of more than four pupils to one teaching assistant as not being high needs. As the secondary school curriculum was not structured to deliver provision in a way that supported small groups of four pupils to one teaching assistant it reduced the likelihood of applications meeting the £6,000 threshold. In light of this SEN Officers were requested to review the process to ensure that this difference did not unfairly penalise secondary schools. - Was there any evidence that the improved targeting of funding under the new system, was actually improving the education outcomes for the High Needs Pupil (HNP). SEN Officers were requested to provide analysis to demonstrate whether this was the case. - Under the old High Needs Funding system, funding was allocated at one of the four rates dependent on the need type of the pupil. One benefit of the new system is that the funding more closely reflects the actual additional needs of the pupil. This is due to an individual costed application for each pupil and also that it is reviewed annually. An expectation of this new system was that the additional support would tail off over time. SEN Officers were requested to provide analysis to demonstrate whether this assumption was holding true and subsequent applications were of a reducing value. - A welcome outcome of the new system was that 70% of new applications were agreed where pupils did not have Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs). The 70% statistic is not in line with the general trend where numbers of EHCPs are increasing. One possible reason why the 70% does not reflect the wider issuing of EHCPs is that the new process identifies the additional SEN need of a pupil at an earlier stage, however long term applications for an EHCP will still be made. SEN Officers were requested by the SFF to monitor whether, over time, the agreed applications without an EHCP are at some point in the future accessed an EHCP. 	<p>Julie Ely and Louise Langley</p> <p>Julie Ely and Louise Langley</p> <p>Julie Ely and Louise Langley</p> <p>Julie Ely and Louise Langley</p> <p>Julie Ely and Louise Langley</p> <p>Julie Ely , Louise Langley and Ian Hamilton</p>
--	---	--

	<p>b) From a Finance Perspective (link to paper)</p> <p>IH presented this item to the SFF. The main point to note was that based on 1,714 HNPs the forecast for the year was £17.255 m. This meant there was only a remaining budget of £0.788m a relatively small increase in numbers around 70 would mean that the full budget had been utilised. The concern was therefore if the budget was exceeded, how would this pressure be funded in the future.</p> <p>Members of the SFF requested that a further update be provided at its meeting on the 9 December.</p>	
4.	<p>Update on High Needs funding and pressures (link to presentation)</p> <p>Simon Pleace (SP) presented this item to members of the SFF. In summary the presentation highlighted the continuing pressure on the Dedicated Schools Grants (DSG) High Needs Block. Schools block DSG headroom and the High Needs settlement for 2016-17 has provided sufficient funding in order to meet the pressures for 2016-17 financial year, however the funding of future pressures on the high needs block is a considerable concern. In particular the proposal made in phase 1 on the national funding consultation that ring fences the high needs block will mean that there will be no flexibility to move funding between blocks. The movement of funding between blocks in recent years has been the strategy adopted to manage pressures, in future this option will not exist.</p> <p>Patrick Leeson (PL) highlighted that the continuation in growth of independent provision was the most worrying aspect of high needs provision. This was the most costly provision and our Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) strategy had been developed to provide local authority provision that could take high needs pupils instead of placements in independent provision. LA provision had increased, however the underlying growth in high needs pupils had been greater than the places created and therefore we continue to see the growth in pupils placed in independent provision.</p> <p>(PL) informed the group that we had come to the end of our current SEND strategy where local provision had been created and in September 2016 the LA would be working on a new SEND strategy for future years.</p> <p>It was agreed that the following information would be provided to the SFF at its meeting on the 9 December.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An update on the new SEND strategy - An update on the information provided in the presentation (High Need pupil numbers and funding) - Average rates of High Needs pupils in different provisions. 	

5.	<p>2015-16 DSG Outturn (link to presentation)</p> <p>At the SFF meeting held on the 22 April (IH) in the absence of (SP) provided SFF members with an update on the 2015-16 DSG outturn, in this update the provisional roll forward amount of DSG for the financial year 2015-16 was recorded as £1.3m.</p> <p>The purpose of this presentation was to confirm the actual amount carried forward and also to provide a detailed breakdown of how this amount had been arrived at.</p>	
6.	<p>Schools Outturn (balances) (link to paper)</p> <p>Yvonne King (YK) presented this item to members of the SFF who duly noted the contents of the report.</p>	
7.	<p>Schools in Deficit (Confidential)</p> <p>YK presented this report to members of the SFF. Members of the SFF raised a number of questions that were in the main about individual schools and how the deficits had been accumulated. In all instances YK and PL were able to provide comprehensive answers to the questions. Members noted the contents of the report and its confidentiality.</p> <p>Members of the SFF were requested to dispose of the confidential papers and subsequently complied with this request.</p>	
8.	<p>National Schools Funding Position (link to presentation)</p> <p>SP presented this item to members of the SFF. The main point from the presentation was that phase 2 on the national funding consultation (the detail) had not been launched yet and the Department for Education (DfE) was tight lipped on when it would be launched or if it was going to be launched at all in light of Brexit. The implication of this is the tight time scale for implementation as time is fast running out for any changes to take effect from April 2017.</p>	
	<p>AOB</p> <p>PL provided SFF members with an update on the recent Key Stage 2 SAT result. The content of this update is detailed in the E-bulletin issued on the 6 July, to access this document click on this link E-bulletin 6 July.</p>	

	<p>Scheduled future meetings dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 16 September 2016 – Oakwood House- 8:15 to 12:00 - 9 December 2016 – Oakwood House- 8:15 to 12:00 (lunch provided after the meeting) - 28 April 2017 – Oakwood House- 8:15 to 12:00 - 30 June 2017 – Oakwood House- 8:15 to 12:00 	