

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

**8:00 – 12:00, 28 November 2014**

**Russell Hotel, 136 Boxley Road, Maidstone, ME14 2AE**

**Present:** John Dennis (Chairperson), Phil Sayer (Vice Chairperson), Michael Blanning, Janice Brooke, Jenny King, Alison Coppitters, Ben Cooper, Lynda Downes, Julia Campbell, Robert Masters, Roland Gooding, Neil Willis, Louise Burgess, Alan Barham, Adrian Cottrell, Roger Gough (Member), Patrick Leeson, Keith Abbott, Simon Pleace, Ian Hamilton (Clerk), Julie Ely and Diana Robinson for item 5 only

**Apologies:** Malcolm Goddard, Christine Fordham, John Bird, Mike Smith, Rev Simon Foulkes and Richard Hitchin.

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| 1. | <p><b>Minutes and matters arising from the SFF meeting 23 May 2014</b></p> <p>The minutes from the SFF meeting on the 23 May 2014 were ratified as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p><b>Matters arising</b></p> <p>A point for noting is that the running order of the agenda items was changed slightly, so that item 5 was moved forward and taken before item 4. The reason for this was that the information in item 5 was relevant to the SFF recommendation for the distribution of any DSG headroom.</p> <p><b>Membership of the SFF</b></p> <p>SFF members were notified of two resignations; Panna Nagar representing Maintained Nursery Schools and Jo Southby representing Pupil Referral Units (PRUs). Panna has had to stand down due to her busy workload, but would like to possibly be a member of the SFF again in the future, if workload permits.</p> <p>From January 2015 the Department for Education (DfE) will make it a requirement to have a Special Academy/Free School on the SFF. There is only one Special Academy/Free School in the Local Authority (LA), this is Milestone Special Academy which is part of the Leigh Academy Trust. Neil Willis who is a SFF member representing academies on behalf of the Leigh Academy Trust has agreed that he will now take up this new position of Special Academy/Free School representative on the SFF.</p> <p>Elections for the PRU representative (vacated by Jo Southby) and the Academy representative (vacated by Neil Willis) will take place during the months of February and March. There will not be an election for a Maintained Nursery School as there is only one school in the LA and the reason for non-representation has been explained earlier in these</p> |  |
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|    | minutes.   |  |
| 2. | <p><b>Sub- Group feedback</b></p> <p>Schools Capital Group (SCG) – Phil Sayer (PS) provided verbal feedback from the meetings held on the 11 June and 24 September. To access the minutes from the two meetings click on this link: <a href="#">minutes SCG</a>. The SCG membership is currently four members short. PS asked SFF members to see if they were any willing volunteers to join the SCG, or if members knew of any parties that would like to sit on the group. Details of any volunteers should in the first instance be given to PS who will then pass onto the clerk of the SCG.</p>   |  |
| 3. | <p><b>Facing the Challenge</b></p> <p>Keith Abbott (KA) gave a brief overview to the members of the SFF in respect of the sequence of events and the stage the LA is at in respect of implementing <i>Facing the Challenge</i> the KCC programme of change which is not just about saving money, but about thinking very differently about how it delivers services and making the most of every penny spent.</p> <p>In particular, the discussion focussed on EduKent and where they were in the process to determine how this service would be delivered in the future. It is anticipated that the conclusion to this process (how this will be delivered and by who) will be completed by the end of March 2015.</p>  |  |
| 4. | <p><b>Medium Term Financial Plan 2015-16 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Headroom</b></p> <p>KA and Simon Pleace (SP) gave a joint presentation to the group. To access the presentation click on <a href="#">Item 4 mtfp DSG Headroom</a>. In summary the presentation looked at the pressures and savings in relation to any DSG headroom generated from the schools budget calculation process. At this point in time in the school budget calculation process, the majority of items are estimates and therefore the exact amount of DSG headroom can only be estimated. The purpose of the presentation was to get an agreement in principle from SFF members on the priorities for distribution of any available DSG headroom for 2015-16.</p> <p>Members of the SFF agreed in principle that any DSG headroom would be allocated as follows (items are listed in priority order);</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To fund PFI indexation (£300k)</li> <li>2. To fund shortfall (if any) in the high needs settlement</li> </ol> |  |

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|    | <p>3. Distribute any remaining balance to all phases of schools, AP provision and EY settings by a general equal % uplift in AWPUs.</p>   |  |
| 5. | <p><b>Proposed changes to high needs funding.</b></p> <p>SP provided SFF members with a presentation on the proposed changes to high needs funding in mainstream schools.</p> <p>Members of the SFF were specifically asked to comment on the proposal to fund the estimated £10m increase in costs of High Needs from a realignment of funding from the schools delegated budgets.</p> <p>A member of the SFF made the suggestion that the use of DSG headroom should be considered instead of transferring the whole amount from the notional SEN budgets of schools.</p> <p>Members of the SFF unanimously recommended that headroom should not be used for two main reasons;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) It may take a number of years to accumulate a budget of £10m from headroom and we needed to comply with DfE guidelines from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015.</li> <li>2) In effect all that is happening is that SEN funding is being targeted in a different way, to take funding from any headroom would have the impact of increasing the overall amount of funding targeted at SEN from Kent's DSG. Currently we are above the national average when it comes to percentage of DSG spent on High Needs.</li> </ol> <p>Members of the SFF specifically recommended funding the estimated £10m increase in costs of High Needs from a realignment of funding from the schools delegated budgets.</p> <p>The final decision on this will be made after the schools consultation has closed on the 19 December. The recommendation from the SFF will be considered as part of the LA decision making process along with all responses to the consultation.</p> |  |
| 6. | <p><b>Update Collaboration Funding</b></p> <p>It was the intention of the LA to bring a report to the SFF detailing the progress that had been made by schools in achieving higher attainment resulting from the investment of one off DSG. This report was also to contain details of how the funding agreed at the SFF meeting on the 23 May (£2m) had been allocated in each KAH district, including details of</p>  |  |

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|    | <p>any match funding.</p> <p>Unfortunately due to some districts not providing the necessary information by the required deadline, it was not possible to produce a report for the SFF as intended. PL apologised on behalf of the LA to members of the SFF for not producing the report for the meeting and <b>confirmed that it would be ready for the next SFF meeting on the 6 March.</b></p> <p>PL provided the SFF with a short verbal update on the positive outcome of collaboration within the county.</p>   | PL |
| 7. | <p><b>DfE Consultations</b></p> <p>SP presented the paper “Fairer schools funding – Arrangements for 2015 – 2016” to the SFF. The last SFF meeting was on the 23 May over six months ago, and SP had circulated a summary report in September to members of the SFF in order to keep them updated on pertinent issues. The purpose of this paper was to again highlight the events that had taken place in the preceding 6 months so that members of the SFF had an opportunity to raise any questions on the subjects.</p> <p>The DfE have launched a consultation titled SEND funding: longer term changes (call for evidence) on the 13 November 2014 that closes on the 27 February 2015. SP gave a brief overview of the contents of the consultation and recommended that the LA and SFF should do a joint response. Members of the SFF supported this approach and it was agreed that this document would be circulated to members prior to submission to the DfE on the 27 February 2015.</p> |    |
| 8. | <p><b>Update on schools in deficits</b></p> <p>KA presented the paper to the group and members of the SFF noted the content of the report. As it was a confidential report members of the SFF were requested to dispose of their copies of the report after the meeting had concluded.</p>  |    |
| 9. | <p><b>Growth Policy for 2015-16</b></p> <p><b>Members of the SFF unanimously approved Kent’s Growth Policy for 2015-16. To access details of the policy, click on this link: <a href="#">Growth Policy 2015-16</a>.</b></p>   |    |

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|     | <p>The key changes from last year's policy are as follow;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Rising Roll will continue to be part of our Growth Policy but will only be applied to basic need schools and academies.</li> <li>2 As a result of the removal of rising roll funding for non-basic needs schools, the overall growth fund budget for 2015-16 can be reduced by £1m to £5m.</li> <li>3 Academies may not receive rising roll funding for the period April 15 to August 15.</li> <li>4 There is now potential for amalgamating schools to extend the period of protection for the loss of lump sum funding.</li> </ol> <p>Members of the SFF requested for it to be noted in the minutes that they were very disappointed with Education Funding Agency (EFA) for not allowing rising roll to be applied to non-basic need schools and academies. It was the view of the group that this was a necessary instrument to provide resources to schools with rising roll that would not receive this funding due to lagged funding system.</p> <p>In respect of 3 above the LA have submitted an exceptional case to the EFA to request the continuation of rising roll funding for academies for the period April 15 to August 15.</p> |  |
| 10. | <p><b>Changes to the “Scheme for Financing Schools”</b></p> <p>Maintained schools and PRU SFF members unanimously approved the amended version of the Scheme for financing schools detailed on appendix 1 to the report.</p>   |  |
| 11. | <p><b>De-delegation for 2015-16</b></p> <p>The Primary and Secondary School SFF members of the maintained schools unanimously voted for the de-delegation of the following as detailed in paragraph 3.1 to this report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Schools in financial difficulty (DFFG)</li> <li>- Schools in financial difficulty (Targeted Intervention)</li> <li>- Free School Meal eligibility.</li> </ul>   |  |

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|     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- County wide SiMS licence.</li> <li>- Supply Cover – Trade Union duties.</li> <li>- Supply Cover – Schools Personnel Services.</li> </ul> |  |
| 12. | <b>2014-15 DSG settlement</b><br><br>Members of the Schools' Funding Forum noted the current DSG allocation of £1,039.173m (before academy recoupment).                           |  |
|     | <b>AOB</b><br><br>There was no AOB  |  |