

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

8:00 – 12:00, 9 December 2016

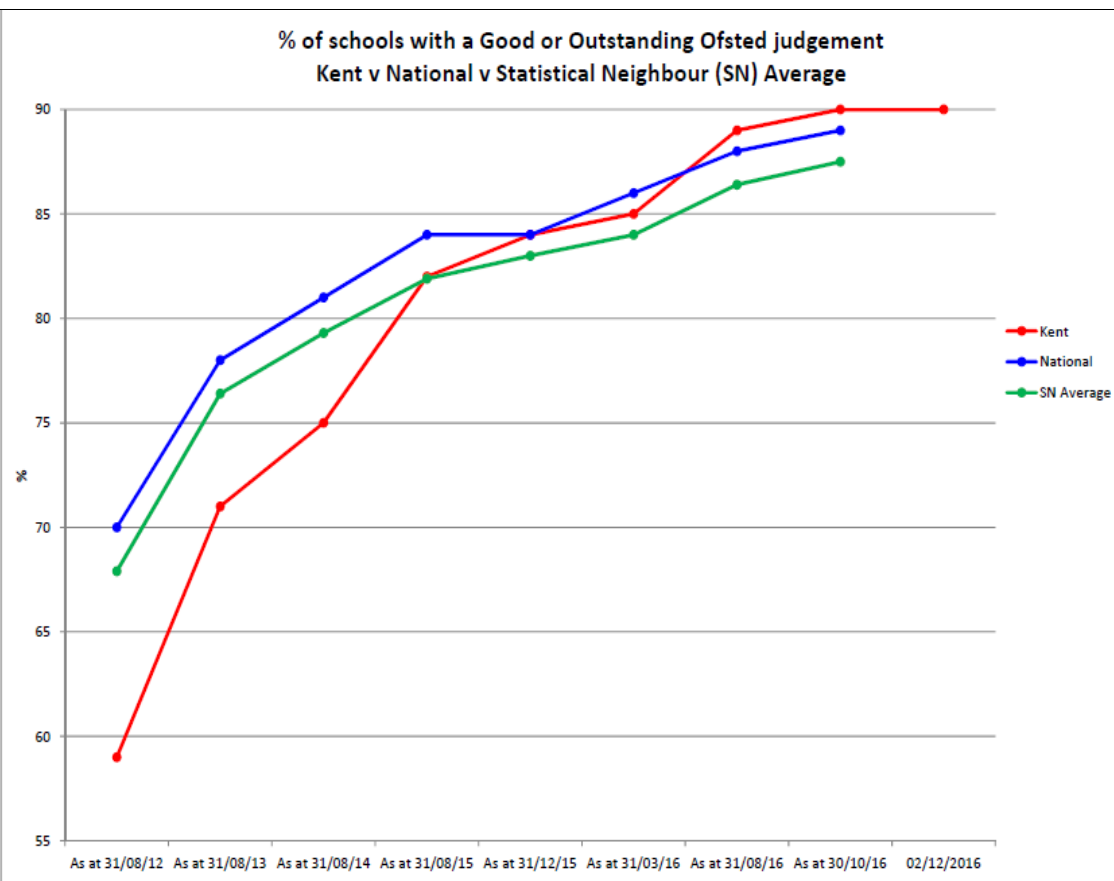
Oak Room, Oakwood House, Oakwood Park, Maidstone, Kent ME16 8AE

Present: John Dennis (Chairperson), Phil Sayer (Vice Chairperson), Janice Brooke, David Stanley, David Whitehead, Alison Coppitters, Lynda Downes, Ben Cooper, Mikala Jeffrey, David Anderson (substitute for Robert Masters), Peggy Murphy, Michael Blanning, Richard Powel, Louise Burgess, Alison Hook (substitute for Rosemary Joyce), John Bird, Ceranne Litton, Michael Powis, Andrew Fowler, Neil Willis, Mike Smith, Roger Gough (Member), Patrick Leeson, Simon Pleace, Ian Hamilton (Clerk), Louise Langley (item 2 only), Julie Ely (items 2,3,4,5 and 6), Keith Abbott (item 5 only).

Apologies: Alex Tear, Tracey McCartney.

1.	<p>Minutes of the SFF meeting held on 16 September 2016</p> <p>The minutes from the SFF meeting on the 16 September were ratified as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p>	
2.	<p>Update on the progress of implementing the £6k high needs threshold</p> <p>Item 2a was a presentation from Louise Langley which can be viewed via the following link: Item 2a Presentation High Needs update 6k process.</p> <p>Members of the SFF were grateful for the update but requested that a further update is provided at the scheduled SFF meeting on the 30 June covering the same areas in the presentation.</p> <p>In addition to the core areas covered in the presentation, two further questions were raised</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) To provide an analysis of the progress of children under the new process, ideally the information would be comparable to information from the high needs funding process prior to April 2013.2) To provide feedback analysis on parental perception of the new process that targets funding on the individual need of the pupil. <p>Ian Hamilton presented item 2b which was an update on the new process from a financial perspective. In summary there had been a significant increase in high needs pupil numbers since the last report to the SFF on the 8 July. The forecast spend for 2016-17 was now £20.877m which is an overspend £2.834 against a budget of £18.043m. The £2.834 m overspend is going to be covered from the one off Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) reserve.</p>	

	<p>The LA and the SFF had two major questions regarding the significant recent growth, which were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Will we see further growth and at what point will pupil numbers plateau? 2) How will the related pressure on the high needs budget be met? <p>Item 6 includes a proposal to meet the funding pressure for 2017-18, however it should be noted that the one off DSG reserve to meet in year overspends is almost fully utilised.</p>	
3.	<p>SEND strategy</p> <p>Julie Ely presented this item to members of the SFF, and her presentation can be viewed via the following link: Item 3 SEND update.</p> <p>Members of the SFF raised two main points :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the presentation did not include empirical data to support the direction of travel in the strategy. The reason why this data was not included was that the presentation provided an overview of the strategy and that the full base line data is included in the full strategy document. To access this document click on this link and select item 7: Cabinet Report 26 June 2017. 2. It was highlighted that a prominent point of the strategy was the growth in Specialist Resource Provisions (SRP). A member of the SFF who has an SRP at his school, felt that in the community of schools SRPs did not have a high profile or an influential voice. This point was acknowledged and Patrick Leeson (PL) requested that Julie Ely looks into increasing profile and powers of influence and feeds this back to both himself and the SFF. 	Julie Ely
4	<p>Update latest Ofsted judgements</p> <p>PL provided the SFF with latest update on Ofsted judgements for schools in Kent. Below is a graph illustrating that Kent has 90% good and outstanding schools compared to the national average of 89%.</p>	



The detailed contents of PLs update is detailed in an e-bulletin circulated to schools on the 6th December. To access this document, click on this link, [Ofsted update](#).

5 Kent Commissioning Plan

Keith Abbott presented this item to members of the SFF, to access the presentation click on this link [Item 5 Kent Commissioning Plan 2017-21](#).

Currently any new schools are only built under the government's expansion of free schools programme. On one hand this is helpful for the LA as this programme is funded by Central Government, however on the other hand it can be problematic as there may be slippage in the build completion date and alternative arrangements may need to be made to accommodate pupil numbers in the interim period.

A member of the SFF asked if this would continue after the Government's quota for free schools had been met. To date no announcements have been made, however if the responsibility is returned to the LA, it potentially could come with a funding pressure. If the historic process for the Free Schools programme is replicated where the Government made a contribution towards the building of the school through the basic need programme, the LA had to fund the balance. But on a positive note the building of the school will be managed at a local level and will help to meet proposed construction

	<p>deadlines.</p> <p>Members of the SFF found this item very useful in helping to understand the commissioning pressures for the LA and requested for a regular update. It was agreed that the next update would take place at the SFF meeting on the 30 June as this would coincide with half yearly report on the commissioning plan.</p>	Keith Abbott
6	<p>2017-18 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)</p> <p>This item was the main business of meeting and the paper was presented to members of the SFF by Simon Pleace.</p> <p>Actions resulting from the contents of the paper:</p> <p>Schools Block funding pressures</p> <p>a) Members of the SFF recommended that the funding rates for Deprivation/IDACI are adjusted in the 2017-18 school funding formula in order to avoid a £1.6m budget pressure.</p> <p>b) Members of the SFF recommended that £2.5m from the schools block headroom should be used to increase Kent's growth fund to meet the pressure of additional school places in 2017-18.</p> <p>c) Members of the SFF recommended that £0.8m from the schools block headroom should be used meet estimated pressure on schools rates bills in 2017-18.</p> <p>d) Members of the SFF recommended that £0.2m from the schools block headroom should be used to meet the estimated cost of an exceptional premises factor for school rentals in 2017-18.</p> <p>e) Members of the SFF recommended that £0.3m from the schools block headroom should be used to meet the unavoidable contractual price increase arising from our Schools PFI contracts.</p> <p>Retention of DSG to meet the cost of statutory services.</p> <p>f) Members of the SFF approved that the LA could centrally retain the new DSG funding (formerly known as retained ESG) and continue spending it on the statutory services that it has to provide.</p> <p>High Needs Block funding pressures</p> <p>Table 3 in paragraph 12.2 reports that the LA has High Needs funding pressure of at least £8.8m for 2017-18.</p>	

	<p>Members of the SFF noted that any growth funding for high needs included in the LA DSG high needs funding settlement for 2017-18 would be used to help meet the budget pressure of at least £8.8m.</p> <p>g) Members of the SFF recommended the reduction of Primary School Prior Attainment (PA) funding rates by an overall total of £5m and for this sum to be transferred from the schools block to the high needs block to fund the pressure of High Needs pupils in mainstream school.</p> <p>The paper seeks SFF members' views on reducing the cost of notional SEN top up by £2m, this is made up of a combination of increasing the phase 1 threshold from 3% to 10% and increasing the phase 2 threshold from 20% to 30%.</p> <p>h) After a lengthy debate the SFF recommended that only £1.8m should be removed for the notional SEN top up funding pot. Phase one should remain as 10% as recommended however any shaving should be reflected in the phase 2 threshold and the 30% threshold should be reduced to reflect the £0.2m reduction.</p> <p>It should be noted that members of the SFF agreed the following actions to meet the estimated cost pressure for high needs of £8.8m, £3m DSG high needs block growth funding, £5m reduction of Primary School PA funding rate and £1.8m LA notional SEN top up. The overall total of £9.8m exceeds the estimated total High Needs pressure of £8.8m by £1m. The rationale for doing this is that there is a small contingency of £1m in 2017-18 for additional high needs funding pressures.</p> <p>SP also provided Forum members with an update on the DfE's response to the Early Years funding consultation which was published on the 1 December.</p> <p>The DfE have set a challenging deadline of the 1st April 2017 for implementation of the new Early Years funding formula. Before formula factors and funding rates can be presented to the SFF for its consideration a local consultation with providers must be carried out.</p> <p>It is the intention of the LA to run this consultation during January and then present the findings and recommendations to the SFF. As the next scheduled SFF meeting is on the 28 April, a supplementary meeting will be arranged for the 10 February. It was agreed that this meeting will have the full powers of SFF to make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform on changes to the Early Years local funding formula.</p>	
7	<p>Apprenticeship Levy update</p> <p>Simon Pleace presented this paper to the SFF and members of the SFF noted the contents of the paper.</p>	

	It was agreed that a communication would be sent to all schools and academies to raise awareness of the Levy in the New Year.	Simon Pleace																												
8	Historic Commitments – new DfE requirement SP presented this paper to the SFF and members of the SFF approved the continued use of the £6.983 centrally DSG budget (known as historic commitments) in accordance with the School financial regulations and EFA guidance.																													
9	Growth Policy- 2017-18 Members of the SFF ratified that the sum of £7.5m would be allocated for growth funding in 2017-18 and that the policy would remain the same as 2016-17.																													
10	Disapplication Process The SFF have to agree any disapplication requests made to the EFA. As part of the 2017-18 schools budget calculation the LA had already submitted a number of disapplication's which are subject to Forum approval. Members of the SFF agreed the following applications for disapplication of the Minimum Funding Guarantee: 1) To dis-applying the MFG in relation to PFI charges for certain schools. 2) To dis-apply the MFG calculation in respect of 5447 St Georges 3) Rentals																													
11	De-delegation Process LA primary and secondary SFF members agreed to continue to de-delegate for 2017-18 the following budgets at the funding rates specified below <table><tr><td>2017-18 De-delegation rates (£p per pupil)</td><td>Primary</td><td>Secondary</td><td>Special</td></tr><tr><td>Schools in Financial Difficulty (DFFG)</td><td>£1.06</td><td>£1.06</td><td>£0</td></tr><tr><td>Schools in Financial Difficulty (Targeted Intervention)</td><td>£17.75</td><td>£8.39</td><td>£16.95</td></tr><tr><td>Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility</td><td>£0.57</td><td>£0.57</td><td>£0.57</td></tr><tr><td>County wide SiMS Licence</td><td>£3.63</td><td>£3.63</td><td>£3.63</td></tr><tr><td>Supply Cover - Trade Union Duties</td><td>£1.85</td><td>£1.85</td><td>£1.85</td></tr><tr><td>Supply Cover – SPS</td><td>£0.80</td><td>£0.80</td><td>£0.80</td></tr></table>	2017-18 De-delegation rates (£p per pupil)	Primary	Secondary	Special	Schools in Financial Difficulty (DFFG)	£1.06	£1.06	£0	Schools in Financial Difficulty (Targeted Intervention)	£17.75	£8.39	£16.95	Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility	£0.57	£0.57	£0.57	County wide SiMS Licence	£3.63	£3.63	£3.63	Supply Cover - Trade Union Duties	£1.85	£1.85	£1.85	Supply Cover – SPS	£0.80	£0.80	£0.80	
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12	<p>High Needs and Central retained funding methodology</p> <p>The SFF were informed by SP that there had been no changes to the methodology in the operation of High Needs funding in 2017-18 (compared to 2016-17) and that there were also no changes to the centrally retained DSG budgets. The Forum therefore continue to approve the relevant budgets.</p>													
	<p>AOB</p> <p>Michael Powis requested that a report is provided to the SFF at its next meeting providing an analysis of costs for release staff for union duties.</p>	Simon Pleace												
	<p>SFF meetings – Academic Year September 2017 to August 2017</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date</th><th>Timings</th><th>Venue</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>10 February</td><td>8:00 to 11:00</td><td>Hilton Maidstone</td></tr> <tr> <td>28 April 2017</td><td>8:00 to 12:00</td><td>Oakwood House</td></tr> <tr> <td>30 June 2017</td><td>8:00 to 12:00</td><td>Oakwood House</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Date	Timings	Venue	10 February	8:00 to 11:00	Hilton Maidstone	28 April 2017	8:00 to 12:00	Oakwood House	30 June 2017	8:00 to 12:00	Oakwood House	
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