

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

15:00 – 17:00, 17 September 2020

Virtual Teams Meeting

Present: John Dennis (Chairperson), Phil Sayer, Ben Cooper, David Anderson, Mark Seymour, David Whitehead, Jenny Ashley-Jones, Louise Burgess, Neil Willis, Robyn Ford, David Stanley, Annabel Lilley, Céranne Litton, Sue Beauchamp, Sue Birchall, David Gleed, Anouska May, Richard Long (Cabinet Member), Matt Dunkley (Corporate Director), David Adams (Interim Director), Karen Stone, Chris Scott, Robin Goldsmith (Clerk), Simon Pleave, Ian Allwright.

Apologies: Mark Tomkins (Vice Chairperson), David Meades, Michael Powis, Tracey McCartney.

1.	<p>Welcomes and Introductions</p> <p>First order of business was to elect a chair for the forum. The Forum was happy for John Dennis to Chair this meeting, but it was noted a formal vote will need to take place before the next meeting.</p> <p>The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Action: Election of Chair to be undertaken via email before the next meeting</p>	
2.	<p>Terms of reference update / Elections to SFF</p> <p>Chris Scott presented this paper to the SFF.</p> <p>The Forum was asked to agree to the amended Kent School Funding Forum Guidance document. The current terms and conditions of the SFF does not stipulate the number of seats a single school or Academy Trust may hold. This means the same school or Academy Trust could potentially seek to hold multiple seats on the Forum which could have a possible negative effect on the overall representation of all schools and academies across the county. A change has been added to the document so only one member from a school or academy trust can be a member of the forum.</p> <p>The Forum agreed to this change however it was requested that we add a further paragraph that meetings can be held virtually as well as in person.</p> <p>On the 1st September 2020 the North West Kent Alternative Provision Service converted to academy status. This results in the need to create an appropriate seat on this forum. In addition there is also the following vacancies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">2 Maintained Primary School1 Academies and Free Schools1 LA Representative <p>The Forum agreed to the intent to fill these positions by the next meeting.</p>	

	<p>Action: SFF Terms of Reference to be updated in accordance with proposals and further amendments documented in minutes.</p> <p>Action: Seek to fill SFF vacancies by the next meeting</p>	
3.	<p>Minutes and matters arising from the SFF meetings held on the 29 November and 24 February</p> <p>Matters Arising - Minutes 29 November 2019</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investigate the financial impact on PRUs of supporting Kent pupils attending out of county schools. Currently awaiting further guidance from ESFA. Action moved to next meeting: The Forum requested that this action be completed by the next meeting. - 1% Transfer to High Needs Block. The Forum acknowledged it was too early to see the detail on how this funding would be allocated to schools and requested further detail should be brought to the next SFF meeting in March. Presented under Item 6 High Needs update. - The SFF requested further details of the use of the centrally retained Early Years at a future meeting. Action moved to next meeting: This will be presented at the next Forum meeting in conjunction with the 2021-22 Early Years Free Entitlement Funding Proposals. - Growth Policy for 2020-21, Special Schools in the overall review of classroom set up costs. Action moved to next meeting: This will be included in the next Forum meeting when the Growth policy is annually agreed. - Karen Stone to produce a paper on membership and recommended amendments to the SFF Terms of Reference. Presented under item 2 of the agenda. 	
4.	<p>Proposed changes to Term Time Only Calculation</p> <p>Ian Allwright (HR Strategy & Commissioning Manager) and Simon Pleace (Finance Strategy Manager) gave a verbal update on this item.</p> <p>The National Joint Council (NJC) issued guidance in 2019 to assist local authorities in revising some perceived issues with the annual leave calculation. Having reviewed this guidance KCC adjusted its calculation to mirror that in the NJC guidance and implemented it from 1 April 2020.</p>	

	<p>In light of the guidance and changes made by councils across the country trades unions have made claims to a number of local authorities, who aren't part of the NJC bargaining group, claiming back pay for their members.</p> <p>KCC has been contacted by the trades unions about coming to an agreement on back pay. The Authority has had a number of meetings with the unions on this matter, but no agreement has been reached to date. Negotiations are continuing. KCC also understands that the unions have contacted some academies, Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools regarding engaging on settling cases for the employees in those schools. The next meeting with the unions is on the 1 October 2020 where it is intended to discuss the latest offer pertaining to back pay with a view, if possible, to agreeing a settlement.</p> <p>In terms of funding this issue the following options could be considered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) individual schools fund from their bank accounts 2) the local authority funds from the DSG reserve 3) we look to top slice any potential headroom available within future year's schools' block allocations after fully meeting the mandatory requirements of the national funding formula. <p>The Local Authority preferred option is the use of the DSG reserve, even though it is well documented that this reserve is in deficit arising from the significant High Needs budget overspend over the last few years.</p> <p>The Forum supported the Local Authorities view that the DSG reserve should be used, and the option to top slice future DSG headroom should also be explored further. The Forum were not keen on funding these costs from individual school and academy bank accounts.</p>	
5.	<p>Schools Budget update 2021-22</p> <p>Karen Stone presented this item to the SFF. The presentation can be found here. The slides provided a reminder of the government commitment for 3 years funding since April 2020, Kent's local funding decisions last year and key changes for April 2021.</p> <p>Key changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) factor will use new 2019 data instead of 2015. • 2019 assessment data will be used as a proxy in funding formulae for the 2020 reception and year 6 cohort (following cancellation of Summer 2020 Assessments). • Teachers Pay Grant (TPG) & Teacher Pension Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG) will be transferred to the DSG and paid through the NFF. • Most NFF core factor values to increase by 3%. <p>There has been no change to consultation requirements for changes to LFF in 2021-22. The following areas for consultation were presented:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we continue to support areas of local concern or move to the full NFF? • Should we transfer funding from the schools to high needs block to fund strategies to support mainstream schools? If so at what level? • Should the falling rolls fund continue? • Should we continue to fund primary schools lump sum at the higher level? • Should we meet the NFF levels for ever6FSM? • Should we introduce the mobility factor? • Should be replicate the 3% increase for all factors? • What level should we set the MFG? <p>A discussion took place, and the forum were happy with the areas to consult on as long as there are backing information so schools can make a more informed response.</p> <p>Karen also gave an update on the increases to the High Needs block which for Kent could be around £23m for 2021-22. There has been no news on the Early Years block this is normally announced late in the Autumn term and it has been confirmed that a proportion of the Central Services block will be reduced by another 20%.</p> <p>There is a requirement to create a DSG Deficit Recovery Plan and there has been draft information from the DFE that will need to be presented at the School Forum on a termly basis.</p>	
6.	<p>High Needs update</p> <p>Karen Stone and David Adams presented this item to the SFF and the slides can be found here.</p> <p>Karen gave an update on pupil/student numbers and spend by institution type and average cost. The slides included the SEND Improvement Programme which are the key activities that impact the current spending which is linked to the SEND written statement of actions.</p> <p>David Adams gave an update on the proposals for using the £9.8m school block transfer to supporting schools with inclusive practices. The slides include activities already undertaken in developing the proposals along with a specific update on activities since the previous funding forum held in September.</p> <p>The following framework has been created to suggest how to use the inclusion fund:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive programme of training to support inclusive practice • Development of wider school and community practices to promote inclusion • Supporting transition for CYPE with SEND • Providing individual case support • Locality projects / pilots 	

	<p>The following discussions took place. A request for a copy of slides. It was mention that it is important for the SEND consultation to get out as wide as possible. There were positives on supporting transitions. Some of the funding has been committed to KAH through training. There is a county reference planning meeting on the 1st October to produce a plan of spend. The forum has requested a copy of this for the next forum.</p> <p>Action: Detailed proposals for use of 1% transfer to be shared with the Schools Funding Forum in December.</p>	
	<p>Next meeting dates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 December 2020 - Virtual meeting pm • 26 March 2021 - Venue to be confirmed 8am to 12pm • 2 July 2021 - Venue to be confirmed 8am to 12pm • 1 October 2021 - Venue to be confirmed 8am to 12pm • 3 December 2021 - Venue to be confirmed 8am to 12pm 	