

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

16:15 – 17:15, 26 February 2020

Sessions House, County Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XQ

Present: John Dennis (Chairperson), Mark Tomkins (Vice Chairperson), Phil Sayer, Ben Cooper, David Anderson, Mark Seymour, David Whitehead, Jenny Ashley-Jones, Louise Burgess, David Meades, Neil Willis, Robyn Ford, David Gleed, Michael Powis, Richard Long (Cabinet Member), Matt Dunkley (Corporate Director), Keith Abbott (Director), Simon Pleace, Karen Stone, Robin Goldsmith (Clerk).

Apologies: David Stanley, Tracy Thomas, Annabel Lilley, Mike Smith, Tracey McCartney, Céranne Litton, Lynda Downes, Sue Beauchamp, Sue Birchall.

1.	<p>Welcomes and Introductions</p> <p>The Chairperson welcomed Robyn Ford representing diocese to the meeting.</p> <p>The Chairperson thanked the members who could attend this emergency meeting.</p>	
2	<p>Options to Finalise the 2020-21 School Budgets</p> <p>Simon Pleace presented this item for SFF and the paper can be found here.</p> <p>Following the recommendations by the Schools' Funding Forum on 29th November 2019, the Cabinet Member for Education & Skills took the decision to change the Local Funding Formula (LFF) and recognise the following areas of local concern from 1 April 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1% transfer to high needs block• Maintain higher lump sum for primary schools (£120,000)• Creation of a falling roll fund• Mirror the 2020-21 NFF rates apart from the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Minimum Per Pupil Level (MPPL) set at £50 less- Ever6FSM set at £236 less for Primary and £224 less for Secondary schools- Defer the introduction of the Mobility factor <p>In order to achieve the above, two disapplication's were submitted to the DFE. On the 11th February the DFE confirmed the approval of the 1% transfer to high needs however the disapplication to lower the MPPL was declined. Kent decided to appeal the decision and a letter signed jointly by Matt Dunkley and John Dennis was sent to the DFE on 18th February. This appeal has also been declined.</p> <p>The value to increase the MPPL rates to the NFF is approximately £4m. Since the meeting on the 29th November the Growth Fund for Kent has been confirmed</p>	

	<p>along with expenditure commitments. It is estimated there will be capacity in this grant to use a further £1m towards the £4m needed. The remaining £3m will need to be met by changing the existing rates. Kent presented the following options and provided tables to show the impact of each one:</p> <p>Option 1a: Reduce the rates for AEN factors Option 1b: Reduce the rate of the Basic Entitlement factor Option 2a: Defer Falling Rolls fund and reduce the rates for AEN factors Option 2b: Defer Falling Rolls fund and reduce the rate of the Basic Entitlement factor</p> <p>A discussion took place and the following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lowering the Basic Entitlement factor was not consulted on. - Falling rolls would have less impact on the number of schools however the schools impacted would be greater. - It was difficult to come up with a Falling Rolls policy and some members felt this was still not a fair formula. - If there was no Falling Rolls fund one member knows of two schools that would have to close. - The cost of closing a school is expensive to the public purse. - Could there be a way of funding just these two schools? This would be unlikely. - Basic Entitlement would spread the impact to most schools. - Reducing AEN factors goes against inclusion. - When a hard NFF is introduced, the DFE will need to provide extra funding for a Falling Rolls fund to meet its objectives. - Even though we are reducing some rates from the agreement in November every school will still be seeing an increase in their formula budget. <p>The Forum members agreed that the fairest option would be 1b by reducing the rate of the Basic Entitlement factor. Even though this was not consulted on, it was agreed the Forum members were a fair representation of schools.</p> <p>A clear communication would need to be distributed with the key messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budgets are increasing - MPPL's are fully funded - Low prior attainment is fully funded - Falling Rolls Fund has been introduced 	
	<p>SFF meetings - Period March 2020 to December 2020 Update – cancelled or rearranged</p>	