

Minutes of a meeting of the Medway Schools' Forum
Held on 4 July 2016- 4pm
Training Room Warren Wood Primary Academy Arethusa Road
Rochester Kent ME1 2UR

Members present:

Chair		Peter Martin (PVM)
Primary (Academy) (Vice-Chair)	Principal	Karen White (KW)
Secondary LA Maintained	Governor	Clive Mailing (CM)
Secondary Academy	Principal	Kim Gunn (KG)
Teacher Associations		Julie Harris (JH)
Early Years		Suzanne Piggott (SP)
Primary	Headteacher	Steve Geary (SG)
Roman Catholic Diocese		Kathy Sexton (KS)
Special Academy	Headteacher	Sharon McDermott (SMcD)
Primary Headteacher		Karen Norman (KN)
Special Maintained	Headteacher	Karen Joy (KJ)

In Attendance: Pauline Maddison (Interim Assistant Director) (PM), Maria Beaney (Finance Business Partner – Education Finance) (MB), Jacqui Moore (Head of School Services Commissioning) (JM), Chris McKenzie (Head of Performance and Strategic Planning), Rose Gardner (Note Taker)

Apologies received from Barbara Peacock, Ian Chappell, Caron Johnson, Councillor Mike O'Brien, Barbara Fincham

1. Minutes of meeting held on the 13 January 2016 and matters arising.

Item 6 – Consultation report on Schools admission appeals. This will be covered in today's agenda

Item 9 – Completion of PLASC – KG raised the issue at Secondary Heads. MB confirmed that heads are invited to Management Information meetings and will arrange for the link to be sent out. MB confirmed she raised the fact that incorrect census returns can have an impact on school funding at the Bursar Meeting and training is being arranged. There is a Bursar meeting in September.

The Schools' Forum agreed the minutes and the Chair signed them off.

2. The Expansion of Abbey Court Special School - Update

CMcK attended for this item and a report was circulated with the Agenda.

CMcK updated the Schools' Forum and the following noted.

- £2m was allocated from the Schools' Forum for the project
- The project is progressing well
- As Leadbitters were not able to deliver the full project to budget, the project was retendered and Neilcotts are now delivering the project. Completion is due December 2016 and the building will be ready for occupation by Easter 2017.
- The EFA have agreed to the revised timetable. Completion will free up the current Abbey Court (Rainham) site.
- Discussions have taken place with the EFA regarding Medway's need for additional Free School provision.
- Abbey Court is on track now for Easter 2017 opening, providing an additional 68 primary phase school places. The provision of additional primary age places will lead to demand for additional secondary places in the future, and this will be considered as part of our ongoing pupil place planning.
- KG stated that there is a risk that the provision of additional primary places will eventually result in additional demand for secondary places, which will mean that pupils may have to go out of area. CMcK responded that the need for secondary provision will be considered as part of our ongoing pupil place planning. CMcK clarified that Abbey Court's application for Foundation Status will not impact on the building programme.
- CMcK stated that one option for the use of the Abbey Court Rainham site is for the development of primary provision for Rivermead, however Rivermead are now looking at putting in a bid to become a Free School
- CMcK confirmed that the Abbey Court Rainham site will continue to be used for Education use when it is vacated
- Free School money is capped and the EFA have received a significant number of bids so far. Far more bids than the number of schools that the EFA are hoping to create.
- CMcK confirmed that the application for Foundation status by Abbey Court School will not effect this project.

3. Fair Access – Year 11 Placement Funding 2016-2017 – Will Adams

Report was circulated with the Agenda

JM briefed the Schools' forum on the report.

A programme for the placement of Year 11 pupils in Medway Secondary schools with the participation of The Will Adams Centre was run last year. The agreement included funding to support the administration and quality assurance costs for one year.

The programme has continued to be a success throughout this academic year and 43 students have been placed through this programme.

JM updated the Schools' Forum stating that an e-mail had been sent out requesting the Schools' Forum to vote on their agreement to provide continued funding for this programme to allow for the continued delivery and success in the placement of Year 11 students for the academic year 2016/2017.

The closing date for the voting was 10 June 2016 and 11 members agreed with the proposal to continue this programme and 3 members did not vote.

A request was made from a member of the Schools' Forum for more rigorous monitoring of outcomes for next time.

KG expressed that she felt this was an excellent programme and that Yr10 and Yr11 students can be placed in schools within a couple of weeks of the Fair Access Panel meeting.

PM confirmed that Medway is looking at a trial fair access arrangement in one consortium for a programme for Primary (all ages).

The Schools' Forum duly ratified the decision to continue the funding for 2016/2017 for this programme.

4. 2015-2016 Dedicated Schools Grant Final Expenditure and Reserves

Report circulated with the Agenda

MB briefed the Schools' Forum on the report.

Table 1 of the report showed the DSG reserve position

- £107.4m received
- £1.7m overspent
- Early years block £426,000 overspend
- High Needs block £1.3m overspend
- DSG reserves are £300,000 as at 31 March 2016.
- School Reserves as at 31 March 2016 are £5.4m

MB tabled an Appendix A which showed school by school reserves and stated that these were reconciled figures.

MB confirmed that 8 schools became academies and £1.5m reserves had transferred to the new academy.

The maximum revenue carry forward is 8% of total income plus £20,000. If the school forum want to consider changing the 8%+ £20,000 formula – all schools have to be consulted before the formula can be changed.

The level of school reserves has remained consistently high over the past couple of years. The Schools Forum have requested a report which outlines

schools outcomes against the level of reserves available to see if there is a link between low achieving schools and high reserves.

PM recommended that it should link to value for money on results – Schools Forum to look at results in September. Report will be coming back to Schools' Forum in September.

The feeling from the Schools' Forum was that the school is not putting money back into their children.

Schools' Forum duly noted the final DSG outturn for 2015-16 and the position on Schools' balances for 2015-16.

5. 2016-2017 Dedicated School Grant Budget Allocation

Report circulated with the Agenda.

MB briefed the Schools' Forum on the report.

MB confirmed that the DSG has been top sliced for academies recoupment and is subject to change throughout the year as more maintained schools convert to academies.

The Schools' Forum duly noted the £102.71m allocation and the deployment of the local authority's 2016-2017 DSG allocation.

6. 2016-2017 Funding Formula Changes

Report circulated with the Agenda

MB briefed the Schools' Forum on the report.

Medway's Local Funding Formula was approved by the Schools' Forum at the 13 January 2016 meeting and was submitted to the Government on time.

The maintained schools were notified of their Individual School Budget (ISB) for 2016-2017 by Medway on the 29 February 2016 in line with statutory guidance and the EFA notifies academies of their ISB.

The Authority Proforma Tool (APT) sets the schools and academies budgets based on Medway's local funding formula and decisions approved by the Schools' Forum. However after all schools were notified of the ISB errors were subsequently found. Due to the high volumes of these errors Secretary of State approval was required to change the ISB allocations for all schools and academies.

Table 1 showed the schools affected by the APT error. The Schools' Forum ratified the decision taken by Medway Council and Secretary of State to adjust the Schools Funding Formula in year and to deduct the overspend of £24,913 from the 2017-2018 DSG allocation.

The Schools' Forum approved the in year increase in rates funding distributed to the 6 Schools and Academies shown in Table 2 of the report. This increase in funding will result in an overspend for the Schools Block Dedicated Schools Grant of £63,539 which will be recovered from the 2017-2018 DSG allocation.

The Schools' Forum subsequently requested that the Rates adjustments were corrected for all schools and academies and not just the 6 schools shown in table 2 and the costs of these adjusts will be deducted from the 2017-2018 DSG allocation.

7. 2017-2018 National Funding Formula

Report circulated with the Agenda

MB briefed the Schools' Forum on the report.

The Government are consulting on a new national funding formula which is underpinned by their 7 key principles:

- A funding system that supports opportunity
- A funding system that is fair
- A funding system that is efficient
- A funding system that gets the funding straight to schools
- A funding system that is transparent
- A funding system that is simple
- A funding system that is predictable

The first stage of the consultation was open between 7 March 2016 to 17 April 2016.

One of the main proposals was to remove the mobility funding factor as most of the 152 local authorities don't use this factor. However Medway does and it distributes £0.5m to 26 schools across Medway.

Another was to have four blocks of funding instead of three – Schools Block, High Needs Block, Early Years and the new Schools Block LA retained.

The new stage 2 consultation was expected to be published at the end of June/July 2016. This has not been received yet.

The Schools' Forum duly noted the report.

8. 2017-2018 Contingency (Verbal)

It was proposed at the last meeting of the Schools' Forum that a report would be presented to the Schools' Forum outlining the need for the local authority to create a falling rolls and contingency fund.

However this report has been held until the next Schools Forum because neither the new funding formula consultation outcome response nor the government's 2017-2018 DSG guidelines have been published. MB did confirm the proposals would cost no more than 0.5% of the SB DSG allocation.

9. 2017-2018 Growth Fund (Verbal)

MB outlined the current policy in regards to growth funding and explained why she was concerned about the £55,000 which is paid for each new class opened for a maximum of 7 years per school i.e. one school could receive up to £385,000 to open new classes over a 7 year period plus the in-year pupil count PAN increases which are increased in year..

A report will be presented at the next Schools Forum meeting outlining the proposal to only by £55,000 for the first new class in the first year.

10. School Improvement

Report circulated with the Agenda

PM briefed the Schools' Forum on the report.

PM stated that a Value for money and outcome report will be coming to the September 2016 meeting of the Schools' Forum.

PM informed the Schools' Forum of the following:

- more will be spent on Recruitment and Retention.
- Beanstalk have own QA system and this needs to be aligned.
- £32,000 of the Schools' Forum money will be used for Action Research Leadership programme with Canterbury Christchurch – 2 cohorts of 25 starting in Autumn 2016. Resource to be spent by the end of this financial year. Lots of applications currently.

11. Traded Services 2017-2018

Report circulated with the Agenda

JM briefed the Schools' Forum on the report stating that it is the intention that all services currently traded will continue to be traded in 2017/18.

In order to improve the buyback experience for academies, investigations are underway to create more opportunities for a September buyback period to start in September 2017. In addition, it is intended that more advantage will be taken of multi year and rolling contracts to reduce the pressure on a 'single buyback period' and to give more stability over services and pricing.

The Schools' Forum noted the intended position on Traded Services for 2017/18.

Schools' Forum were asked to give their views on any additional services they would like to see added to the offer or any they felt should be decommissioned and responded as follows:-

- No services were suggested for decommissioning
- There was a discussion in relation to CAMHS related services and gaps perceived by schools. This is an area for potential investigation for services to be traded.

KW will e-mail PM an e-mail she had received, which she believed was from someone within the Council regarding CAMHS.

12. Dates of Future Meetings

Date	Time	Venue
13 September 2016 (Tuesday)	4.00pm – 6.00pm	Cedar Primary Academy Cedar Road Strood
17 October 2016 (Monday)	4.00pm – 6.00pm	Cedar Primary Academy Cedar Road Strood
9 January 2017 (Monday)	4.00pm – 6.00pm	Training Room Warren Wood Primary Academy Arethusa Road Rochester Kent ME1 2UR
10 July 2017(Monday)	4.00pm – 6.00pm	Training Room Warren Wood Primary Academy Arethusa Road Rochester Kent ME1 2UR