

**Minutes of a meeting of the Medway Schools' Forum**  
**Held on 13 January 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)
Maintained Primary	Governor	Barbara Fincham (BF)
		Sharon McDermott
Special Academy	Headteacher	(SMcD)
Primary Headteacher		Karen Norman (KN)

**In Attendance:** Pauline Maddison (Interim Assistant Director) (PM),  
Maria Beaney (Finance Business Partner – Education Finance) (MB),  
Martin Daniels (Education Finance) (MD); Rose Gardner (Note Taker)

**Apologies** received from Barbara Peacock, Jacqui Moore, Ian Chappell,  
Caron Johnson, Karen Joy, Councillor Mike O'Brien.

**1. Minutes of meeting held on the 5 October 2015 and matters arising.**

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

**2. Schools' Forum Election Update**

This report provided details on the recent School Forum elections and the Chair welcomed the new members to the forum.

**3. Schools Block 2015-2016 Centrally Retained Forecast**

This report provided details on the forecast outturn position for the 2015-16 centrally retained budgets agreed by the Forum.

Special attention was drawn to section 2.3 of the report which explained that whilst it appears these budgets are overspending by £58,000 due to a budget transfer not yet actioned, this overspend would be reduced by £55,000 by the end of the year.

The Schools' Forum agreed to note the report.

#### **4. The Key – Online Support for School Leaders and Governors**

This report provided details on how the online support for school leaders and governors (the KEY) would be funded from 2016-17 onwards.

Medway Schools and Academies have benefited from The Key for Schools Leaders and The Key for School Governors for the past four years. In the past this service has been funded from DSG reserves, however due to low levels of reserves this is no longer viable.

Therefore it's proposed this service continues, but schools and academies which want to use this service must now purchase it through the Medway Education Services (SLA Online) portal. Medway have negotiated a discount if schools and academies purchase both packages. Other indicative prices were outlined for schools with various roll numbers and packages.

The Schools' Forum agreed to the proposal.

#### **5. Traded Services 2016-17**

This report provided details on the services which would be traded with schools in 2016-17 highlighting:

- The need to ensure all services are achieving full cost recovery.
- The three new services introduced in 2015-16.
- The one new service introduced for 2016-17.
- The three service name changes, and,
- The two services withdrawn for 2016-17.

Some School Forum members were disappointed with the withdrawal of the Learning Support Service and the Onside counselling service as they believed these services were needed within schools.

It was explained how in previous years, the Onside service was a de-delegated item with an option for academies to buy into the service, whilst the LSS was a fully traded service. It was agreed by the Schools' Forum last year, that the Onside service would be a fully traded service from 2016-17 like the LSS with all schools having the option to buy into these services. The LA decided to withdraw these services as there was not sufficient interest in purchasing these services in 2016-17.

Pauline Maddison explained that educational psychologists could signpost schools to other counselling services offered by the local authority.

It was proposed that the Schools' Forum would help support the decision making process for the local authority in regards to the future of traded services. After some discussion, it was agreed that the best way forward was for this processes would be through e-mail.

The Schools' Forum agreed to note the position of the 2016-17 traded services and to help support the Council's decision making process.

## **6. Additional Cost for Processing School Appeals**

This report provided details and feedback on the governments School Appeals consultation. The outcome of which was that from 2016-17 local authorities can start to charge schools and academies for schools admission appeals.

Medway will now consult with all schools about charging for school admission appeals asking the following questions: –

- How should Medway charge for Schools Admission Appeals?
- Should Medway invoice schools directly or treat it as a de-delegated item and top slice the funding?

A consultation outcome report will be presented to the Schools' Forum for their consideration.

The Schools' Forum agreed to the proposal and noted the report.

## **7. School Improvement Strategy Update (Verbal)**

Pauline Maddison briefed the Schools' Forum regarding the progress on the recruitment and retention funding set aside by the Schools Forum, highlighting:

- 1) Recruitment and Retention
  - Negotiations with Canterbury Christchurch have now concluded.
  - 50 places will be evaluated over the next two years.
  - £90,000 has been set aside for R&R.
  - There is a planned recruitment fair in March 2016.
- 2) School Improvement
  - There is an Accelerating Learning Programme in place including KS, KS2 and Phonics.
  - Beanstalk programme is now in many schools.
  - NLE and LLE Council paying from own resources

A more detailed report will be presented at the next Schools' Forum meeting.

## **8. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2016-17**

This report provided details of the dedicated schools grant for 2016-17 and in particular highlighted:

- The initial 2016-17 DSG allocation of £214.514m before academy recoupment.
- The basic funding unit costs remain at 2015-16 funding levels.
- The additional £0.494m high needs funding allocated to Medway for 2016-17.
- The approved £2m budget transfer between the schools block and the high needs block.

It was proposed that the £2m budget transfer should be reduced to £1.5m as a result of the additional high needs funding awarded. However as the 2014-15 high needs budget was overspent by £0.750m after the £2m transfer, it was agreed to keep the budget transfer at £2m.

The Schools' Forum agreed to note the report.

## **9. School and Academy Funding Formula 2016-17**

This report provided details of the Schools and Academy Funding Formula for 2016-2017 and in particular highlighted:

- The initial available school block (SB) funding of £164.346m.
- The approved £2m budget transfer between the school block and the high needs block.
- The 11 funding factors which would be used in the funding formula as outlined in appendix 2.
- That 80% of funding would be distributed through the basic entitlement factor and 93% of funding would be distributed through pupil lead factors.
- That no sparsity payments would be made to Medway schools in 2016-17.

It was proposed that a report would be presented to the next Schools' Forum outlining the need for the local authority to create a falling rolls and contingency fund, to be funded from the schools block of the DSG.

It was reported that several schools had contacted the EFA or the LA to confirm they have incorrectly completed their census returns. It was explained how incorrect census returns can have an impact on school funding. Kim Gunn agreed to raise this issue at the next secondary heads meeting, and Maria Beaney agreed to raise the issue at the next school finance officer and governor training.

The Schools' Forum approved the 2016-17 Schools and Academy Funding Formula outlined in section 3 of the report.

## **10.AOB**

The chair Peter Martin requested, a report is presented to the next Schools Forum in order to update members on the progress made in delivering the relocation of Abbey Court School, and in particular the £2million contribution the Schools' Forum made to the scheme.

## **11. Dates of Future Meetings**

4 July 2016 – 4.00pm – 6.00pm – Training Room Warren Wood Primary Academy Arethusa Road Rochester