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| Members: | **Position** | **Voting** | **Attendance** |
| Jane Shields | Primary Maintained Headteacher | Voting | Present |
| Karen Joy | Special Maintained Headteacher | Voting | Apologies |
| Karen Bennett | PRU Maintained Headteacher | Voting | Retrospective apologies |
| Tim Williams | Primary Academy Headteacher | Voting | Apologies |
| Cathy Reid | Secondary Academy Headteacher | Voting | Apologies |
| Paul Jackson | Special/PRU Academy Headteacher | Voting | Present |
| Stephen Avis | CFO Multi Academy Trust | Voting | Apologies |
| Richard Warnham | Governor Primary Maintained | Voting | Present |
| Barbara Fincham | Governor Primary Academy | Voting | Present |
| Clive Mailing | Governor Secondary Maintained | Voting | Present |
| Peter Martin – Chair | Governor Secondary Academy | Voting | Present |
| Vacancy | Governor Secondary, Special and PRU | Voting | N/A |
| Vacancy | Early Years Representative | Non-voting | N/A |
| Vacancy | 16-19 Provider Representative | Non-voting | N/A |
| Kirstin Barker | C of E Diocese Representative | Voting | Present |
| Clare Redmond | RC Diocese Representative | Voting | Present |
| Vacancy | Teaching Unions Representative | Non-voting | Absent |
| Stuart Gardener | CFO Multi Academy Trust | Voting | Present |
| In attendance: |  |  |  |
| Chris Kiernan | Assistant Director of Education and SEND LA. |  | Present |
| Maria Beaney | Finance Business partner LA. |  | N/A |
| Martin Daniels | Finance LA |  | Present |
| Lee-Anne Farach | Director of People - Children and Adults' Services LA |  | Present |
| Sarah Phillipson | Clerk. |  | Present |

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| No. | Agenda Point. | Discussion. |
| 1. | **Apologies.** | Apologies were given from Steve Avis, Karen Joy, Cathy Reid and Maria Beaney, and these were accepted. Karen Bennett sent her apologies retrospectively. |
| 2. | **Nominate and vote for Chair and Vice-Chair for the next year.** | Mr Peter Martin was nominated for the Chairs role.  Mr Clive Mailing was nominated for the vice-chair role.  **Decision -** The School's forum members voted and agreed on Mr Peter Martin to be the chair and Mr Clive Mailing to be the vice-chair of the school's forum. |
| 3 | **Declarations of Interest.** | No Changes to the previously shared declarations. |
| 4 | **Minutes from the previous meeting.** | **Accuracy**  All minutes were agreed as an accurate representation of the meeting.  **Matters arising.**  *Action - Clerk to try to contact Julia Harris via the trade union. COMPLETED* |
| 5 | **Update from the High Needs Sub Group – Chris Kieman** | Action clerk to set up a meeting for the High need's subgroup within the next two months.  CK updated the forum on the high needs funding deficit recovery plan, explaining that when the plan was drafted, it compared the percentage of EHCP in Medway to the national figure; however, the national figure is increasing, so this comparison is no longer valid. Medway is at a lower level currently on its new trend than National. When the figures were re-evaluated, there was no decrease in the EHCP costs over the next seven to eight years. This is increasing the overspend resulting in the 2027/8 breakeven point moving to 2029/30. This with all the assumptions in place.  The DfE has released a paper outlining future funding increases for the high needs block. This agrees on funding of £20 million over four years to four LAs within London and £10 million over four years to another single authority (Stoke on Trent). This was following recovery plans deemed acceptable by the DfE.  The LA met on 9th April with DfE; this paper noted above was not discussed. Medway's recovery plan was discussed, and the LAs chief finance officer challenged the DfE regarding the overspend being significant due mostly to the 2014 act and the ECHP age groups raising. (19-25) and the percentage of pupils with ECHPS increasing.  The DfE noted they had supported some LA but not all. Medway challenged as to why they had not been supported, with their significant overspend. It was explained that Medway compared to the other 131 authorities, is 22nd at a 34% overspend against the budget. However, in 3 years, this percentage will increase to 45% and will raise Medway further up the list. This means Medway will be returning to the DfE to ask again for additional funding. CK explained that he also would take this case to the MPs briefing and ask for support in parliament. He advised he was optimistic that funding would be achieved.  CK requested that the High needs subgroup meets within the next month to discuss the plan's details.  Action - Clerk to set up a meeting for the High need's subgroup within the next two months. COMPLETED. |
| 6. | **School Forum Governance Review –**  **Martin Daniels.** | The School Forum Governance Review document was shared, and comments were invited from the members.  It was noted that item 9.2 - *By the end of May 2019, the following information will be updated on the website."*  It was agreed that this item could be deleted as it is no longer relevant as the website is up to date.  **Decision – Schools forum members noted School Forum Governance Review document** |
| 7. | **DSG Reserve Outturn – Verbal update - Maria Beaney.** | Defer to the next meeting. |
| 8. | **Schools 2020-2021 Outturn and Reserves Report – Martin Daniels.** | MD presented the schools 2020-2021 Outturn and Reserves Reportexplaining that this is completed annually once the account has been closed in 2021.  He further noted that the Medway Scheme for Financing Schools outlines the maximum carry forward reserves for any maintained schools as follows:   * Revenue - 8% of their total yearly grant income (I01, I02, I03, I05 and I08). * Capital – a school must spend their annual Devolved Formula Capital Funding (DFC) and any brought forward balances within three years.   As of 31st March 2021, 25 maintained schools with revenue reserve balances totalling £3.237m, increasing £1.141m or 54% from the previous year.  As of 31st March 2021, the capital reserve balances at the end of the 2020-21 financial year were £0.533m, reducing £0.029m from the previous year.  One school converted to academy status during the year, Oaklands School.  There are two schools currently shown as in deficit, Crest Infants and St John Fisher. 5 schools will be/are working closely with the Schools Finance Team to address potential deficits which may arise in 2021-22 or are already in an agreed deficit recovery plan.  Ten schools had higher than permitted revenue reserves totaling £0.287m, and one school has higher than permitted capital reserves. These are highlighted in green, and each school must provide a brief explanation of why they are above the maximum limit in section 3.  The Schools Forum was asked to note the schools' balances for 2020-21 and vote on whether to claw back funding on the ten schools that were over the maximum carry forward limits. |
|  |  | **Q - If it is agreed to claw this funding back, where will it go?**  A - It will return to the schools' block funding for next year.  **Q – Can it be used to support the high needs deficit?**  A - It could only be used for the schools to delegate or top slice, but not for the LA to use on the High needs.  CK noted the schools named all have reasons for the high reserves shown in the confidential appendix. All are well managed in their accounts and are using the money for the children. None are excessive. They are only maintained schools as Trusts balances are not considered but are part of the context of the areas.  A member noted that all schools are aware and understand the policy on claw backs, but several schools have been noted in prior years as having higher than allowed reserves. Each year they present a case for not returning the funding. The amount of money received each year should be spent on those children in school that year and not held onto continually.  CK noted that he agreed on this and suggested that the LA write to the schools stated in the report and outline that funding must be spent for the children in school for that year. Continuous requests would be addressed.  A member noted that he has spoken to fellow CEOs, and they are fundamentally against any claw back, as schools should be able to spend their funding in the way they feel is most appropriate.  Members noted that it had been an exceptional year and agreed with the measured response described above.  A member noted that item 2.1 – "*As at 31st March 2021, there were 27 maintained schools with revenue reserve balances totalling £3.237m; which is an increase of £1.141m or 54% from the previous year "*was factually incorrect as two of those schools are in deficit.  CK noted that this is a matter of statutory requirement to ensure schools do not hold excessive balances.  **Decision –** Schools forum members **noted** the schools' balances for 2020-21 as per section 2.6 above.  **Decision –** The school forum members voted **not** to enact the revenue claw back for those schools that were over the maximum carry forward limits, as noted above.  **Decision –** Schools forum members voted **not** to enact the capital claw back for those schools who were over the maximum carry forward limits, as noted above. |
| 9 | **Schools Forum Policy Review -**  **Martin Daniels.** | Medway Schools for Financing Schools Policy  No changes made, except the funding examples.  **Decision -** the Schools Forum voted and agreed to ratify the Medway Scheme for Financing Schools policy scheme for the next financial year. Only maintained school members were eligible to vote.  The Growth Fund Policy  MD explained that there were no changes other than the dates and funding examples.  **Decision -** The Schools Forum voted and approved the Schools Growth Fund Policy; all members were eligible to vote.  The Schools in Financial Difficulty due to Pan Class Sizes Policy  It was noted that The Schools in Financial Difficulty policy was first introduced in 2018 after a year of discussion and amendments to the policy by members. The policy was reviewed and updated in May 2020 and must be reviewed every year.MD explained there were no changes other than the dates and funding examples.  **Q – Regarding the 2/3rd level example outlined in the policy, could this be clarified better as it is confusing and unclear that this is the maximum figure?**  A – This can be addressed. The examples could be reviewed; however, it is key not to lock schools into too-tight criteria as every case is different. CK noted considerable discussions taken before the schools place their business cases before the schools forum.  **Q – Where does the money come to support the schools?**  A- There is an allocation in the growth fund and the school's block and is top sliced, from both academy and maintained schools.  A member noted that she agreed that this funding should not be locked in as schools and academies work very closely with the LA to achieve their budgets. However, the wording is difficult to understand, and this could be reducing the availability of the funding. The wording of the policy requires rewriting around the examples figures.  CK explained that the document is widely published, and he is not aware of any issues from schools not being aware of it. All policies are online.  It was agreed that the changes made would be shared with a small subgroup made up of those members who have spoken on this matter.  Another member noted that this policy had been reviewed on several occasions. It was important to be clear on how it works and who can claim for it. It must be fair. It is also key that place planning is correct as this has been the cause of historical claims from schools. CK stated that the local authority has been working hard to ensure the place planning is correct, but locally there will always be slight changes. |
|  |  | **Decision –** The Schools Forum voted and approved the Schools in Financial Difficulty due to Pan Class Sizes Policy subject to the rewording of the examples stated. |
| 10 | **Funding Support Business Cases – Martin Daniels and Chris Kieman** | See confidential minutes. |
| 11 | **The Forward Plan 2021-22.** | No changes to make other than deferred items from this meeting. |
| 12 | **AOB – note membership vacancies** | All members noted membership vacancies.  Any other questions:  **Q – Is there going to be a percentage increase in the education setting funding from the high needs funding block as other LAs had increased their top-up rates?**  A – There is not the money to do this?  **Q – Can minutes and agendas can be shared with other schools and academies?**  A – Yes, they are public documents and will be on the websites. (Except the confidential items). |

Meeting ended at 15.36.

Signed by Chair ……………………………………………………………………….……. Date: ………………………………

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| **ACTIONS** | **RESP** |
| Action - Clerk to set up a meeting for the High need's subgroup within the next two months. COMPLETED. | Clerk |
| Action - Clerk to ensure any funding cases are recorded and brought for considerations for each meeting involving business cases. | Clerk |