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| Members: | **Position** | **Voting** | **Attendance** |
| Vacancy | Primary Maintained Headteacher | Voting |  |
| Karen Joy | Special Maintained Headteacher | Voting | Absent |
| Karen Bennett | PRU Maintained Headteacher | Voting | Present |
| Vacancy | Primary Academy Headteacher | Voting |  |
| Cathy Reid | Secondary Academy Headteacher | Voting | Present |
| Paul Jackson | Special/PRU Academy Headteacher | Voting | Present |
| Stephen Avis | CFO Multi Academy Trust | Voting | Present |
| Richard Warnham | Governor Primary Maintained | Voting | Present |
| Barbara Fincham | Governor Primary Academy | Voting | Present |
| Clive Mailing -Vice Chair | Governor Secondary Maintained | Voting | Present |
| Peter Martin – Chair | Governor Secondary Academy | Voting | Apologies |
| Vacancy | Governor Special and PRU | Voting |  |
| Hannah Cartwright | Early Years Representative | Non-voting | Apologies |
| Simon Cook | 16-19 Provider Representative | Non-voting | Apologies |
| Kirstin Barker | C of E Diocese Representative | Voting | Present |
| Clare Redmond | RC Diocese Representative | Voting | Absent |
| Vacancy | Teaching Unions Representative | Non-voting |  |
| Stuart Gardiner | CFO Multi Academy Trust | Voting | Apologies. |
| In attendance: |  |  |  |
| Celia Buxton | Assistant Director of Education and SEND LA. |  |  |
| Maria Beaney | Finance Business Partner LA. |  |  |
| Paul Clarke | Admissions Planning LA. |  |  |
| Sarah Phillipson | Clerk. |  |  |
| Martin Daniels | LA Finance. |  |  |

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| No. | Agenda Point. | Discussion. |
| **1.** | **Apologies.** | Apologies were given by Peter Martin, Tim Williams, Hannah Cartwright, Clare Redmond, Stuart Gardiner and Simon Cook; these were accepted.  The meeting was quorate.  Clive Mailing Chaired the meeting. |
| 2 | **Declarations of Interest.** | No Changes to the previously shared declaration.  It was noted that the meeting discussion would only be around the proposed principals around the funding for Year 8 bulge classes, and no specific schools would be discussed in the meeting. |
| 3 | **Year 8 Bulge class – Paul Clarke** | PC gave the Schools forum members the background regarding the Year 8 placements, noting:  The LA have a major issue around Year 8 places now, and this will continue for this year group as they progress through each year. This is particularly so for boys, as there are some spaces at Walderslade Girls. However, they are filling quickly.  This has been caused as a legacy to the DfE delay in opening the Leigh Rainham School. It was due to open in 2020, but it was postponed that year until 2021. That meant that the LA had to find over 250 additional Year 7 places for 2020, which it did through the bulge classes at the cost of £3.5m (capital), and 9 schools admitting bulge classes. This worked for the last academic year. However, this has caused schools to be overcrowded and in that year group particularly. As more pupils move into the area, this situation is only becoming exacerbated. The LA is getting a lot of in-year applications at the moment, particularly from new residents from overseas and from the London area.  Had the Leigh Academy been delivered on time for September 2020, the LA would not be in this position; the schools would have had space to admit these pupils now, and the LA would not have needed most of the previous bulge classes.  PC stated that the shortage is also likely to impact other areas, such as safeguarding issues, if a child is not in school, home to school transport increase and even possible legal issues.  PC explained that the LA are in an unprecedented position. The number of Year 8s in the area is only going to increase as the cohort progresses. He strongly expressed that an immediate solution needs to be found.  The LA is discussing options with some schools but is seeking discussion and approval from the Schools forum around funding the additional bulge classes. |
|  |  | **Q – In your place planning modelling, you mention this year, but will the same issue occur in future years, and why has it happened now?**  A - The issue has been due also to pupils coming into Medway from London, the North Kent boroughs, and overseas mobility from Afghanistan, Hong Kong and Europe. The place planning does factor this in, but it was expected for the Rainham school to take most of the additional places. (240 children) It will not be an issue for any other year groups, but the bulge cohort will move through the year groups. Working to look ahead at this.  **Q- Will this affect other year groups; does this mean the inward migrations is mostly year 8 children or is the problem due to the DfES issues with the opening of the school?**  A – There is a bit of both - the Year 8 was always the larger one. It was planned for the Rainham school to take pupils in 2020. This would have rectified the majority of the issue the LA is now facing. The LA created 270 extra places in around 9 months for Year 7, but this is now affecting the Year 8 placements.  **Q- How do we envisage this working with children who move into the peninsula or families who move across to Rainham etc. If you are suggesting putting all of the extra places into one school?**  A- It may be a case of supplying transport, or their local school may be able to take them.  **Q- If all the places are in one school is the expectation that the school will take on all of the Year 8 pupils that require a place up until their maximum of 30. This could have a very serious impact on those children that come through FAP with issues. Would it be ill-advised to set up a class of 30 children with specific issues?**  A - The process FAP for hard to place children would still apply, but most of the children would be placed as normal?  **Q – If a child comes via FAP and is hard to place and all schools are full -how do you think this process will work for these children? It could be that each FAP child comes with individual funding to support any issues the child might have.**  A - MB added that one of the funding formula conditions is that splitting the funding per child is not possible. It must remain part of the LAG funding formula. However, under the growth fund, it is possible to fund a class.  **Q – Is the assumption that the casual admissions coming to Medway which are FAP due to no spaces for them, the 30 students that are going into the year 8 bulge – then the normal process of FAP will be applied after this?**  A - Yes. |
|  |  | **Q- Have all schools eligible to do this been asked if they would be open to doing this?**  A- Yes. The LA have spoken to all CEO and Headteachers.  **Q – Regarding the 30 spaces being made, once full does this mean any additional children on that number automatically become FAP due to no available spaces? This makes more of a crush on the system.**  A - The aim is to take the pressure off, but the LA cannot know if any other children will come through the system.  **Q - In the last two months, there have been 34 children coming into Year 8. There are 8 or 9 months to go. Is there a risk that after making an extra 30 spaces will be needed and the Schools forum be in the same situation in Feb – unless there is a process of money following the children to support the school who take on these children who may have EAL needs or vulnerable children?**  A - - The additional funding is something to consider moving forward but cannot be decided with this funding. The year 8 currently held up at FAP are not children who meet the hard to place criteria. They would normally be addressed through the casual admissions.  PC added that some schools agreed to take bulge in 2020; currently, the LA are 400 over PAN in that group. It is a serious situation.  **Q - The FAP process works apart from Year 8 as the schools have already taken on additional children; this could be reviewed at a future meeting to review the process?**  A - Yes, we could.  Funding of any new class proposal. - MB  MB explained that the School funding operates on a lagged funding basis, and schools receive funding in any given year based on the pupil numbers from the year before. Growth funding is designed to provide LA and schools with funding to manage the increase in pupil numbers on roll between two October census years until the lagged funding catches up the following year.  A school's growth is funded in two ways:   * If the LA know a school will open a new class in September, it adjusts the NOR numbers as part of the funding formula. * If the LA knows it needs a new class but is unsure where it is, only a temporary bulge class, Medway holds the funding and pays on receipt of an invoice.   Both ways, along with the new class lump sums and schools in financial difficulty funding support, are funded from the growth fund element of the DSG. As part of the DSG allocation, Medway's growth fund award is c£1.8m, and the LA currently pay c£2.8m out in growth fund costs. Medway balances this overallocation by reducing the lump sum of the main funding formula calculation. The 2021-22 lump sum is currently |
|  |  | £75,400, which is the lowest in the country, and it should be at about £117,800. The LA hopes to increase the allocation in 2022-23 to c£90,000, but it could be as low as last year.  At the meeting on 13th January 2021, the Schools forum approved the retained new class growth funding support for 2021/22 of £511,400, and there was no unnamed or temporary class included as part of the allocation, which is fully spent. If a new class is agreed upon, this will create an overspend that will need to be reclaimed as part of the 2022/23 funding formula and be added to the new classes for 2022/23 as the pupils will have missed the October census deadline.  The second issue for consideration is how much and methodology the LA pays for a new secondary class. The normal £55,000 per new class methodology stated in our growth fund policy will not work for a secondary school as it is based on employing one new teacher and teaching assistant per class. The LA would need to change or ignore this policy without consultation with schools but with the Schools forum approval.  The LA could use the government's minimum funding guarantee for secondary school pupils, which is £5,415 per pupil for 2021/22 meaning a secondary school new growth class payment of £162,450 (based on 30 pupils for a full 12 months) A school asked to open a new class may not feel this is sufficient funding for one new class. This would equate to reducing the lump sum of £4,500 for both years for all schools, except PRU or special schools.  **Q - Is this a realistic sum of money to be able to employ sufficient staff?**  A- PJ/CR responded - It would need to be on a school-to-school basis and their specific staffing profiles.  Another member noted that all schools should be asked if they must have a way to do these staffing changes.  **Q - Is there a different possible approach rather than the minimum funding level? In Kent, the growth funding is determined using the AWPU rates. Could this be considered?**  A – Medway's AWPU rates are slightly different, as they are split into different Key stages. The LT looked at an average for this.  This is £4404 for Ks 3 and £4963 for Ks4. The minimum funding guarantee takes into consideration deprivation etc.  **Q - Is the £4500 reduction from the Lump Sum funding in all years or one-off?**  A- Just a one-off of £4500 for both years.  A member noted the payment has to be made, as the schools are in an unprecedented state of affairs, the HT feel they cannot accept any of the children in year 8. The LA needs to get places quickly so as not to affect the education of those children involved. |
|  |  | CB noted that the schools that will be taking on the Year 8 bulge class have not yet been agreed, as several schools are in discussion to do this.  Members noted that this agreement would be outside of the growth funding policy due to the current situation, and it will not be continued in the future. The growth funding policy stands, and this is outside of that.  **Decisions:**   * 1. The Schools forum is asked to:      1. COMMENT on this report. Completed.      2. The Schools forum voted and **AGREED** one new additional secondary school class in year 8 is required.      3. The Schools forum voted and **AGREED** to fund the new class at £162,450 based on £5,415 per pupil.      4. The Schools forum voted and **AGREED** to pro-rota the funding based on the academic year.      5. The Schools forum voted and **APPROVED** the overspend on the council retained growth fund element for 2021/22 for this new class and to be reclaimed as part of the 2022/23 funding formula.   All school members can vote, with the exception of the special school rep's s this only affects the funding formula.  It was noted that next years budget would be addressed at the next meeting under the growth funding allocation reports  CB will decide to allocate the schools to take the bulge classes. |
| 9 | **AOB –** | None. |

Meeting ended at 15.00

Signed by Vice-Chair ……………………………………………………………………….……. Date: ………………………………

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| **ACTIONS** | **REPLY** |
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