

Draft Minutes of the KIRKLEES SCHOOLS FORUM meeting Friday 14th December 2012 10:00am at the Deighton Centre

Present:

Julie Helm	Nursery School Heads (1)
Michelle Lee [Chair], Diana Wilson	Primary School Heads (7)
	Middle School Heads (1)
Kevin Higgins, Chris Sylge, Melanie Williams	High School Heads (3)
	Special School Heads (1)
John McNally (vice-Chair)	Academy Heads (2)
Martin Ridge	Pupil Referral Units (1)
	Kirklees Governors (1)
Jo Bailey-Taylor (NASUWT), Gillian Collins (ATL), Sarah Ellis (Pre-School Learning Alliance), Howard Roberts (NUT)	Non-school members (5)
John Edwards (Asst Director for Learning) Warwick Firmin (School Funding Strategy Manager) [Clerk] David Gearing (Financial Delegation Manager); [Minute Clerk]	Officers in Support
Cllr Cath Harris	Observers

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Kath Benetis (KPH), Mike Cook (Academies), Richard Dodd (KPH), Angela Farmer (Finance & Performance), Carole Hardern (Group Finance Manager), Gary Johnson (KMSH), Kyrstie Joslin (KPH), Catherine Lockwood (KPH), Cllr Peter O'Neill (observer), Simon Sloan (KPH), David Smith (Director of Resources) and Richard Ware (KSSH).

2. Minutes of the Schools Forum meeting 26th October

The minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting.

3. Matters arising from the Schools Forum meeting 26th October

No matters were raised.

4. Update on submission to Education Funding Agency (EFA)

As agreed, the formula factors and their draft values as listed at minute 7.2 of the 26th October meeting formed the basis of Kirklees' pro forma submission to the EFA on the 31st October. A summary of the actual submission is included amongst today's agenda papers. There had to be relatively minor increases to the Age-Weighted Pupil Unit values caused by the extraction of pupils in resourced provisions from the other pupil-based funding factors. The revised base AWPU values together with the additions to the AWPU's for newly-delegated items and subsequent de-delegations for maintained schools are all included within the summary.

Following the submission the EFA came back with two technical queries which were easily resolved. However, the EFA has also required the authority to alter the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) phasing method that was submitted. The new regulations do not permit separate phasing arrangements for primary and for secondary schools. Accordingly, a revised submission has been sent which operates just one phasing calculation across all schools. Although the funding formula itself still maintains the agreed primary to secondary ratio of 1:1.2533 in terms of funding allocated per pupil on the bottom line, the revised phasing

calculation (as modelled) temporarily changes the ratio to 1:1.2611. The numbers will be different again when the live allocation for 2013-14 is calculated.

A further amendment will need to be made following Kirklees High School Heads' (maintained schools only) decision not to de-delegate the Public / Union Duties allocation for secondary schools.

5. Update on EFA data set and DSG for 2013-14 funding round

The authority has recently received the EFA's new data set for Kirklees which is based on October 2012 school census data. This data set has to be used as the basis for making the Schools Block Funding Formula allocations for the next funding year.

An analysis was circulated which compares the modelled formula allocation (based on the October 2011 data set) with the same formula factor values now applied to the October 2012 data set.

- Overall there is a rise in pupil numbers between data sets by almost 600 pupils.
- The deprivation, looked-after children and English as an additional language factors all see an increase in the numbers of identified pupils.
- There are offsetting savings in the low prior attainment and pupil mobility factors together with reorganisation-related savings in the business rates and lump sum factors.
- On the bottom line, the new data applied to the submitted draft factor values costs just over £1m more. This should be reflected in Kirklees' 2013-14 Dedicated Schools Grant settlement.

An announcement on the 2013-14 DSG is now expected on Wednesday next week. Once the figure is known, officers will start to determine the 2013-14 Budget Share allocations.

The Schools Forum was asked for a steer on how to adjust the Formula should the settlement deliver either spare funds or insufficient funds to meet the projected £1m increase: -

It was agreed that any adjustment which is necessary to balance off the Schools Block account should be made against the Age-Weighted Pupil Unit values.

6. Draft Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

An Equality Impact Assessment document has been prepared to highlight the potential impacts, both positive and negative, of the School Funding Reform changes upon the various equality groups (age, disability, race, gender etc). The EIA process raises potential issues to demonstrate that they have been considered. The Public Sector Equality duty requires decision-makers to show that they have knowingly taken into account the impacts of their decisions and that the process has been properly recorded.

The EIA is a working document which will be updated going forward. Any comments about the EIA and/or suggestions for inclusion are to go to W Firmin, Clerk to the Schools Forum. The EIA will be part of the Funding Reform documentation considered by Cabinet and Council next month.

7. Feedback from school leader briefings / seminars

Four two-hour briefing sessions for head teachers, governors and administrators were held last week. A similar session for special schools will be held next Monday. A list is being compiled of people / schools who missed the briefing sessions and who have asked for a further session(s) to be laid on. If there is sufficient demand there may be a further date arranged in the new year. There was some feedback from Schools Forum members who had been able to attend the

seminars that the presentations had been excellent, with some interesting questions asked by attendees and a welcome chance to ask detailed questions of officers as they moved among the audience. There was a request that congratulations to the officers involved should be minuted by the Schools Forum. Officers remain concerned that some schools may have not yet engaged with the coming Funding Reform changes. Schools Forum members were asked to let officers know if they hear of any schools having problems understanding the new funding arrangements.

8. SEN funding and High Needs Block

The meeting considered a briefing paper about the new funding arrangements for learners with Special Educational Needs. Work is continuing to shape the new systems. There is a briefing session for special school heads, governors and administrators on Monday 17th December.

The briefing paper explains the principles which underpin the new SEN funding arrangements, particularly in terms of the assumption that the Schools Block funding formula transfers the responsibility to schools for addressing most levels of additional educational need (except where the individual child's needs are assessed to cost more than £6,000 + the relevant Age-Weighted Pupil Unit. In these cases the school will be allocated top-up funding to the assessed amount via the High Needs funding block). The SEN funding transferred to the new Schools Block formula has been allocated, along with other budget elements, via the Low Prior Attainment factor. LPA is the best available proxy measure for SEN, although it is by no means perfect as some types of SEN difficulty do not correlate to low attainment.

Work is ongoing to determine a structure for the top-up payments from the High Needs block. This will inevitably entail a slimming-down of the current SEN banding system (which has around 90 possible permutations) to meet the requirements for simplicity and transparency. Only the top-up element of funding will follow the child in future.

Work is also continuing with Specialist providers – special schools, resourced provisions in mainstream schools, alternative provisions and pupil referral units / services – to sort out the details of the new Place-Plus approach to funding within the High Needs block. All specialist providers will receive basic place funding for an agreed number of planned places (£10k per place for special schools and resourced provisions, £8k per place for PRUs and alternative provisions) with top-up funding provided based upon the assessed needs of the individual student filling the place. Unfilled places will not attract this Plus element of the top-up funding.

A question was asked about contingency and SEN funding. There are two aspects to “contingency” regarding High Needs. The first is a recommendation that schools look to create a SEN contingency within their budget plans. When the responsibility passes to schools for meeting (up to) the first £6,000 of a pupil's additional needs it would seem sensible, where possible, to create contingent provision to be able to address the costs of future SEN admissions. Secondly, the High Needs block has its own contingency provision to be able to allocate additional top-up funding (for needs greater than the sum of AWPU and £6,000) to schools for new SEN children where appropriate. As with any central contingency provision it is possible that demand could outstrip available resources and cause an over-spend situation.

It was asked when schools would be informed about the new system of SEN top-up funding levels. SEN funding will be an agenda item at the next Schools Forum briefing meeting. The new arrangements will also need to be discussed at the Learning Board – the idea of a joint meeting with Schools Forum was suggested. The discussions need to focus on the wider issues of SEN accountability in addition to understanding the mechanics of the new funding systems.

9. School Funding Reform: timeline for decision making

Cabinet will consider the school funding changes on Tuesday 15th January 2013. The report goes to full Council the following day. The papers for these meetings have to be published by 8th January. The 2013-14 Schools Block funding pro forma has to be submitted to the EFA by the end of Friday 18th January. There is a Schools Forum briefing meeting set for that morning.

10. Report and recommendations to decision makers

The meeting was asked to focus upon the Schools Block factor values and weightings that were submitted in draft to the Education Funding Agency at the end of October. Members were asked if any changes needed to be considered as a result of developments since the submission date (see agenda paper 4). Apart from an adjustment to the level of de-delegation from secondary schools made necessary by Kirklees High School Heads' recent decision to not de-delegate their share of the Public / Union Duties allocation, the Schools Forum confirmed its agreement with the stated factors and values. These recommendations will now be incorporated into the report to Cabinet and full Council.

11. Future meetings of the Kirklees Schools Forum 2012-13

- **15th March 2013**
- **12th July 2013**

12. Any other business

No other items were raised.