

# THE KIRKLEES SCHOOLS FORUM

## meeting held on **Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2013**

### 9:00am at the Deighton Centre

**Present:**

	Nursery School Heads (1)
Kath Benetis, Michelle Lee [Chair], Diana Wilson	Primary School Heads (7)
	Middle School Heads (1)
Melanie Williams	High School Heads (3)
	Special School Heads (1)
Mike Cook, John McNally (vice-Chair)	Academy Heads (2)
	Pupil Referral Units (1)
	Kirklees Governors (1)
Jo Bailey-Taylor (NASUWT), Gillian Collins (ATL), Hazel Danson (NUT)	Non-school members (5)
Warwick Firmin (School Funding Strategy Manager) [Clerk] David Gearing (Financial Delegation Manager); [Minute Clerk]	Officers in Support
Cllr Peter O'Neill	Observers

#### **1. Membership of the Kirklees Schools Forum**

Membership of Kirklees Schools Forum for the academic year 2012/13 was listed at the start of today's agenda papers. It was noted that Julie Helm is to step down from the role of Nursery Schools representative to the Forum. Her replacement in the role will be Kirsten Luff. [See related discussions under agenda items 7 and 11 below].

#### **2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from Pat Colling (Kirklees Governors), Cllr Cath Harris, Julie Helm (Kirklees Nursery School Heads), Kevin Higgins (KSHS) and David Smith (Director of Resources).

#### **3. Minutes of the Schools Forum meeting 26<sup>th</sup> April**

The minutes were agreed to be a true record of the meeting.

#### **4. Matters arising from the Schools Forum meeting 26<sup>th</sup> April**

No matters were raised.

#### **5. 2012-13 DSG final outturn**

The meeting confirmed and agreed the recommendations contained in the summary 2012-13 outturn report: -

### 5.1 Rollover approvals as follows...

<u>Budget</u>	£
Early Years contingency	98,700
High Needs (ICAN, autism outreach and Portex)	51,600
High Needs – Sensory Impairment	61,000
Primary Pupil Referral Unit	46,100
High Needs – Independent School Fees	170,700
Swimming Service traded account	40,100
Sickness absence insurance schemes (ring-fenced)	46,100
PPP2 contract annuity	23,000
Provision for High Needs top-up allocations	400,000
School Contingency (re school reorganisation / demand for school places)	1,692,600
<b>Total rollover</b>	<b>£2,629,900</b>

**5.2 The former teachers pay grant** A balance of £1,746,700 is showing within the former teachers pay grant account at the close of 2012-13. The recommendation is to transfer £400,000 of this total to the High Needs block to fund in-year top-up increases for new SEN children. The remaining **£1,346,700** will be distributed to primary, middle, secondary schools and academies using the 2013-14 Age-Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) funding picture. This will be carried out in the Autumn.

**5.3 Education Funding Agency (EFA) post-16 teachers pay grant** The local authority has received the final instalment of Education Funding Agency (EFA) post-16 teachers pay grant in the amount of **£106,426**. It is recommended that this sum is allocated to relevant schools and academies based on the number of students in their sixth form provision.

### 6. School funding reform: arrangements and changes for 2014-15

The meeting papers included a summary briefing paper on the changes being made to school funding arrangements from April 2014. The main issues that will affect local arrangements in Kirklees are: -

- **Low Prior Attainment** – the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile data for the primary sector will reflect new methodology but the more radical change lies with the secondary LPA data. The LPA definition here is to be widened from the current failure to achieve Level 4 in both English and Maths to one where pupils failing to achieve Level 4 in English **OR** Maths are identified. This brings a lot more children into the secondary data set so consideration will need to be given to how to revise the unit values used in the LPA funding distribution.
- **Pupil Mobility Factor** – the EFA has introduced a 10% threshold for the operation of this factor in future. Funding will only be able to be directed for those pupils in excess of this threshold point. A decision needs to be made about how, if at all, this factor will operate within the local formula given the smaller set of schools and pupils that will still be eligible following application of the threshold.
- **(New) Sparsity Factor** - a new funding factor has been made available in response to the difficulties experienced by some authorities in providing sustainable funding to small rural schools. The factor can only be applied in schools of limited size – fewer than 150 on roll for primary schools and fewer than 600 on roll for secondary schools. The EFA has measured for all pupils the distance from where they live to their second nearest school. Small primary

schools with an average travelling distance for their pupils to their second nearest school (as the crow flies) in excess of two miles would be eligible for sparsity support funding. For secondary schools the average distance would have to exceed three miles. The maximum value for a sparsity allocation is set at £100,000. We need to assess whether any local schools qualify and, if so, whether an allocation under this factor would be appropriate.

- **Lump Sum** – the lump sum maximum value is to be reduced from £200,000 to £175,000. Authorities will be able to set differential lump sum values between the primary and secondary sectors. We need to determine whether there is any general benefit to doing this. For schools which “amalgamate” the new merged school will be able to retain 85% of the previous individual lump sum value for the next full financial year after the merger. (There may be further tapering of this amount for subsequent years as well).
- **Schools with falling rolls** – authorities will be able to hold back some Dedicated Schools Grant funding to create a fund to support schools suffering a temporary fall in their roll number but where demographic changes will mean that their spare places will be required in the near future. The fund could allocate financial support to keep the school open and viable in the short term. It can, however, only be given to those schools that have a good or outstanding Ofsted rating. Clear criteria to govern allocations would need to be agreed with Forum if it was decided to create such a fund.
- **Schools Forum representation** – the Schools Forum will need to have an elected representative from an institution (other than a school or academy) which provides education beyond age 16 (but may also provide education for 14-16 year olds). This replaces the requirement to have representation from the 14-19 Partnership.
- **High Needs funding** – the EFA has decided not to introduce a specific high needs formula factor into the Schools Block formula. The issue here concerns schools with disproportionate numbers of SEN children where there could be a mismatch between the school’s notional SEN budget allocation and the high cost of addressing SEN needs in the school. Authorities will continue to be able to use their high needs funding block to direct additional support funding to such schools. The EFA says that there should be a formula basis to underpin any such allocations, one that minimises any ‘perverse incentives’ to increase the number of SEN children on roll. Details of local arrangements will be gathered via the EFA funding pro forma.

## 7. 2013-14 Schools Forum representation

A question was raised about whether there could be an ASCL (Association of School & College Leaders) representative on the Schools Forum. According to the Schools Forum regulations it is possible to have up to one third of overall Schools Forum membership being non-school members. The difficulty with expanding membership to accommodate another professional association is that even-handedness would dictate that other associations, such as NAHT (National Association of Head Teachers), SHA (Secondary Heads Association) and UNISON, should also be afforded representation. It has previously been the collective view that expansion of the Schools Forum’s membership would make meetings unwieldy and inefficient. The head teachers sitting on the Schools Forum are often also members of professional bodies and can also claim to represent staff employed in schools.

Each of the phase groups was then asked to state their chosen preference for the ratio of primary to secondary to academy representation to apply from the start of the next academic year. Each group declared 6:2:2 as their preferred option, mainly because it is easier to secure regular attendance from a lower number of representatives.

Agreed; - to adopt a 'main' school membership ratio of six primary representatives, two maintained high school representatives and two academy representatives to start academic year 2013/14. The number of non-school members will remain unchanged.

## 8. 2013-14 Schools Forum calendar

The latest version (v4) of the Schools Forum's meetings calendar for academic year 2013-14 was circulated for discussion. Two scenarios were presented to handle Forum business in the first half of the coming Autumn term when the major part of the consultation on school funding arrangements will need to take place in time for the required pro forma return to reach the EFA by 31<sup>st</sup> October. Both scenarios adhere to the usual pattern of Forum consultation, with Forum briefing meetings to consider the issues first followed by phase group meetings to gauge feedback about the proposals. Both suggest a need for three briefing meetings and one public Forum meeting before October half-term. An added complication is the apparent need for some form of political approval of the draft schools block formula before submission to the EFA. This means that, in order to hit the nearest Cabinet meeting date of 22<sup>nd</sup> October, Forum needs to have completed its work by the end of Friday 11<sup>th</sup> October. [Similarly, the Schools Forum meeting in public scheduled for 13<sup>th</sup> December is the one where confirmatory recommendations need to be made about the exact values to be used in the 2014-15 Schools Block formula. This then fits in with a Cabinet meeting date prior to final submission to the EFA by 21<sup>st</sup> January 2014].

Head teacher preferred not to hold a Schools Forum meeting in the first week of the new term and suggested that the number of other meetings next term were placing demands on head teacher time. It was suggested that a different approach is taken to the consultation round with officers first briefing phase group meetings (in week commencing 9<sup>th</sup> September) about the issues and Forum reps then reporting feedback from these meetings to a Forum briefing meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> September. That meeting can then further debate issues and request any additional information before a second round of engagement with phase groups before a public Forum meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> October. This approach to the consultation and the underpinning pattern of meetings was agreed.

Relevant officers intend to meet at the earliest opportunity to map out what needs to be done to meet each particular EFA deadline and to prioritise the work to be done over the Summer in readiness for the meetings in early September.

## 9. Excess balances 2012-13

The meeting considered a final report from the Excess Balance sub-group on the 2012-13 process. The second meeting of the sub-group had looked at evidence provided by the remaining four schools who had not managed to meet the response deadline for the first meeting. The sub-group concluded that all 17 schools have now provided sufficient evidence for their whole balance figures to be carried forward untouched into 2013-14. The main purposes that the balances are to be used for were issues stemming from reorganisation, building projects and as contingent provision against falling numbers on roll and against funding reductions resulting from the new school funding formula.

It was commented that the excess balance protocols have been very successful in reducing the number of schools posting excess positions at year end. Schools are very focussed upon their position relative to the excess balance threshold as the year end approaches.

Schools Forum accepted the recommendations of the Excess Balance sub-Group.

**10. Future meetings of the Kirklees Schools Forum 2013-14**

- 20<sup>th</sup> September 2013 – briefing
- 11<sup>th</sup> October - public meeting
- 22<sup>nd</sup> November – briefing
- 13<sup>th</sup> December - public meeting
- 24<sup>th</sup> January 2014 – briefing
- 21<sup>st</sup> February – briefing
- 28<sup>th</sup> March – public meeting
- 9<sup>th</sup> May – briefing
- 13<sup>th</sup> June – briefing
- 11<sup>th</sup> July - public meeting

**11. Any other business****11.1 Feedback from a meeting of small primary schools**

Notes from a recent meeting of small primary schools will be placed, for information, on the Schools Forum section of the Council's website. For the purposes of the meeting, a small school was defined as having less than half a class per year group, ie fewer than 105 on roll. The purpose of the meeting was to review the impact of the new school funding arrangements upon this group of schools and to consider available strategies to make small school provision more sustainable.

**11.2 Final meeting today for some Schools Forum representatives**

A vote of thanks was given to those Schools Forum members whose time on the Forum comes to an end after today's meeting – Kath Benetis (KPH) who is retiring at the end of term, Julie Helm who is relinquishing representation of local Nursery Schools and Richard Ware (KSSH) who is also retiring at the end of August. All three are long-standing members of Kirklees Schools Forum and the Forum wished to place on record its appreciation of their hard work and dedication throughout their terms of office.