MEMBERS OF THE FORUM

Councillors (2)
Councillor Dennis Doe* and Councillor Sharon Hartley

School Governors (Primary Schools) (4)
- Mark Annesley  Alexandra Infant School
- Katy Taylor  St John’s CoE Primary School
- Jeff Reardon*  Kings Oak Primary School
- Geoffrey Hilliard  Maple Infants School

Head Teachers (Primary Schools) (4)
- Lou Anderson  Castle Hill Primary School
- Rachel Nye  Tolworth Infant and Nursery School
- Pat Allan*  St Luke’s CoE Primary School
- Cathy Clarke*  Kings Oak Primary School

Head Teachers (Secondary Schools) (1)
- Rob Niedermaier-Reed*  Chessington Community College

Academies (7)
- Debbie Walls  Head Teacher, Coombe Secondary Schools
- Robert Hurley*  Governor, The Hollyfield School
- Tom Gibson  Head Teacher, The Holy Cross School
- Vanessa Ward  Head Teacher, Tiffin Girls School
- Mark Draper  Governor, Richard Challoner School
- Siobhan Lowe*  Head Teacher, Tolworth Girls School
- Vacant

Pupil Referral Units (Head or School Governor) (1)
- Sam Axbey  Head Teacher, Pupil Referral Units
- Vacant

Special School (Head or School Governor) (1)
- Fiona Dearman  Head Teacher, Surbiton Children’s Centre Nursery

Nursery School (Head or School Governor) (1)
- Mike Tweedale*  Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality), Kingston College

Local Authority 14-19 Partnership (1)
- Vacant

Private, Voluntary and Independent Provider (2)
- Grazyna Sutherland  Principal, Sutherland Day Nursery
- Derek Hayes  Operations Manager of Dicky Birds

* Absent

Anne Redparth, Head of Finance – Business Insight, Rachel Howard, Finance Strategy Capability Lead, Graham Willett, Director for Education and Paul Bettles
and Susan Woodland from the London Borough of Richmond also attended the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ALTERNATES

Apologies were received from Jeff Reardon and Siobhan Lowe.

Cllr Cunningham, Leslie Boodram (Tiffin Girls) and Jan Lovitt (Surbiton Children’s Centre) attended as observers.

Don Freeman attended as an alternate for Siobhan Lowe.

Chair welcomed Paul Bettles and Susan Woodland from the London Borough of Richmond, who were attending in their role in supporting the Schools Forum following the implementation of Achieving for Children on 1 April 2014.

Chair noted that Mike Tweedale had resigned from the Forum. Chair offered a vote of thanks for his work and support for the Schools Forum.

Chair also announced the sad news that former Chair of the Schools Forum, Michael Reading had recently passed away. Michael Reading was a long standing member of the Forum and been Chair from 2003 - 2012. The Forum noted a record of thanks for his work and contribution to the Forum, as well as sending condolences to his wife Val.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2014

The minutes of the meeting on 23 January 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. SCHOOLS BUDGET MONITORING: MONTH 10 2013/14

The report set out the schools budget monitoring position as at Month 10 which is a forecast underspend of £0.867m. There is a small improvement in the High Needs Block from the Month 9 reported position considered at the last meeting.

It was confirmed that the forecast underspend is carried forward within the ring-fenced Schools Budget and can only be used for these purposes and has been assumed to be available in setting the detailed Schools Budget for 2014/15.

It was RESOLVED that the forum note the report.
The Forum discussed the proposed late change to introduce a lump sum as an additional factor within the Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) in relation to Maintained Nursery Schools (Surbiton Children’s Centre Nursery). The consultation responses received by the local authority from Early Years providers were tabled. These indicated that of the seven responses received, six supported a) the inclusion of a lump sum as a factor and b) that the lump sum should equal the funding lost through the removal of the mainstreamed grants and ethnic minority achievement.

Forum representatives of the Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sectors raised concerns that the unexpected consultation undertaken over a short timescale had limited the responses made to the local authority from PVI providers. The Forum members had therefore stepped in to help gather more representatives views and had received eleven, all of which did not support the proposal. This reflects that in general the PVI providers indicate a lack of understanding as to the rationale for differential funding arrangements for maintained and PVI providers, and expressed a view that this creates unfairness in the funding system. Reasons given for not supporting the proposal include:

- Respondents did not fully understand the issues that they were being consulted on
- Queried why the Nursery School needs different staffing structures to PVI providers
- Commented that PVI providers often also have qualified teachers
- Felt there should be consistency and equal funding across all providers

The Forum discussion focussed on the differences between maintained nursery classes, maintained nurseries and PVI day care providers and the rationale for differing funding arrangements for each category of early years’ provider.

It was noted that Surbiton Children’s Centre Nursery is a unique provision within the borough, providing an agency function of the LA in addition to the usual provider role of other nurseries in maintained or PVI sectors. It is a centre for excellence and a LA wide resource. It was recognised as undertaking SEN outreach work, training for PVI providers, and has a minimum required qualified teacher ratio as a maintained setting and specialist unit for SEN. The Forum were advised that the proposed lump sum provides a cash equivalent of the grants that used to be allocated to the Nursery to reflect this role.

Clarification was sought whether another high quality setting could similarly receive an additional lump sum if they were to become a centre of excellence and carry out some of the same additional functions on behalf of the local authority. It was confirmed that this would not be possible as the payment of a lump sum within the formula can only be made to all providers within the same category.

In view of the number of questions raised about Early Years funding in general prompted by this late consultation it was proposed to recommend for approval to Council the lump sum for Surbiton Children’s Centre Nursery in 2014/15 only, and for the Schools Forum to form a working group to review the EYSFF for 2015/16.
review to be advised and informed by the Early Years Service and Finance teams within AfC.

Following detailed discussions, the Forum agreed to:

(i) approve a recommendation to Council to include a lump sum payment of £37,646 for 2014/15 only to the maintained nursery school, as an additional factor, as allowed for under the Schools Finance (England) Regulations 2013 covering the Early Years Single Funding Formula, and

(ii) establish a working group of the Schools Forum to undertake a review of the Early Years Single Funding Formula application across all Early Years providers for 2015/16.

6. SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS

The report detailed the changes to be made to the 2013/14 Scheme for Financing Schools to produce the 2014/15 Scheme. The changes are limited to updating it to reflect the outcome of previous consultation regarding changes to the local funding formula (Schools Block).

It was noted that the draft Scheme shown in Annex 1 also included the proposed change to the lump sum for Maintained Nursery Schools as part of the Early Years Single Funding Formula. As this formula change had not yet been determined by Council it was proposed to approve the Scheme as drafted excluding paragraph 42. It was noted that the Scheme for 2014/15 would need to be amended and returned to the Forum for approval in the event that the lump sum was approved.

The forum AGREED:

1. the Scheme for Financing Schools 2014/15 as shown in Annex 1 having deleted paragraph 42 regarding the Lump Sum for maintained nursery schools.

2. this Scheme to come into force on the 1st April 2014.

7. ACHIEVING FOR CHILDREN – SCHOOLS FORUM UPDATE

The report provided an update regarding financial support arrangements for the Schools Forum and Children’s Services more generally from 1 April 2014 following the creation of Achieving for Children (AfC).

Paul Bettles and Sue Woodland attended the forum meeting to introduce themselves and explain the finance function arrangements within AfC. It was noted that Paul and Sue are both very experienced in this area of work having provided a similar role for many years in the London Borough of Richmond. In addition there will be some continuity for Kingston as John Gayler, and June Collins school bursarial support, are TUPE transferring into AfC and will also be part of the new Schools’ Finance Team. Kingston will ensure that the transition to the new arrangements is supported with a handover of background information as appropriate.
This report provided an update to the Schools Forum with regard to amendments made to the Schools Forum regulations and a recent consultation issued by the Department for Education (DfE) on funding arrangements for 2015/16.

It was noted that there are no proposals to change local formula funding arrangements for 2015/16 and it has been confirmed that the Minimum Funding Guarantee will continue at minus 1.5% per pupil.

The DfE propose to implement a national minimum funding level per pupil for each local authority from 2015/16 as a first step towards a national fair funding arrangement in the future. The minimum funding level will be based on 5 pupil led and some school led factors (e.g. lump sum). The aim of the proposal is to ensure that funding per pupil within a Local Authority are brought up to minimum level.

It was noted that the DfE consultation indicates that RBK would not benefit from the proposal, but some local neighbouring LAs would benefit. Initial modelling by RBK officers however indicate that RBK should benefit at the LA level. The DfE have advised that they will be issuing a more detailed technical note shortly, and RBK will contact DfE regarding this apparent discrepancy.

The proposal includes the use of an Area Cost Adjustment to reflect higher staffing costs in areas such as London. This aspect of the proposal will be looked at closely as it may become a more important feature in future moves to a national funding formula.

The Forum indicated that they favoured a response being made to the consultation, and it was AGREED that a draft response be prepared by officers and circulated by email, along with the initial calculation.

9. ELECTION OF FORUM MEMBERS – MAY 2014

It was noted that Democratic Services have confirmed that the majority of forum members remain in office until July 2014, so the next meeting in June is within the current tenure. The Chair reminded all constituent groups that they would need to seek nominations and if necessary hold elections to confirm the new membership of the forum for July 2014.

10. DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The dates for future meetings have been confirmed as;

- Wednesday 25 June 2014, 7.00pm, King Charles Centre, Surbiton
- Wednesday 22 October 2014, 7.00pm, King Charles Centre, Surbiton (TBC)