ROYAL BOROUGH OF KINGSTON UPON THAMES

KINGSTON SCHOOLS FORUM: THE FUNDING CONSULTATATIVE GROUP

21 JUNE 2016

7:00pm – 8:41pm

MEMBERS OF THE FORUM

Councillors (2)
Councillor Chris Hayes (left meeting at 7.30pm)
Councillor Diane White *

School Governors (Primary Schools) (4)
Geoffrey Hilliard Maple Infants School
Vacant
Vacant
Vacant

Head Teachers (Primary Schools) (4)
Rachel Nye Tolworth Infant and Nursery School
Sarah Creegan Ellingham Primary School
Rob Meakin Lovelace Primary*
Vacant
Vacant

Head or School Governor (Secondary School) (1)
Ash Ali Chessington Community College

Academies (7)
Debbie Walls Head Teacher, Coombe Secondary Schools
Tom Gibson Head Teacher, The Holy Cross School*
Lou Anderson Head Teacher, Castle Hill Primary School
Mark Draper Governor, Richard Challoner School
Mike Gascoigne Head Teacher, Tiffin School
Siobhan Lowe, Head Teacher Tolworth Girls School

Pupil Referral Units (1)
Sam Axbey Head Teacher Pupil Referral Units

Head or School Governor (Special School) (1)
Vacant

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

Local Authority 14-19 Partnership (1)
Mike Tweedale Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality), Kingston College*

Private, Voluntary and Independent Provider (2)
Clare Cozens Acacia Pre-School*
Michelle Akintoye Castle Stars Day Nursery*

* Absent
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55. Introductions & Apologies

The Forum was informed that there would be two new Councillors attending in year 2016/17; Councillor Chris Hayes and Councillor Diane White. The Forum welcomed Councillor Chris Hayes. Councillor Diane White sent her apologies. Apologies were also received from Ian Keary and Mike Tweedale. Scott Peasay attended in place of Mike Tweedale.

56. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

57. Minutes of last meeting (Attached)

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 26 January 2016 were approved as an accurate record and the Chairman authorised to sign them.

58. Dedicated Schools Grant – 2015/16 Provisional Outturn & Appendix B 2016/17 Settlement including Section 251 Budget Statement (Paper Attached)

Paul Bettles from Achieving for Children (AfC) introduced the agenda item. He asked Forum to note that the estimated overall Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2015/16 would overspend by £2.486 million compared with a projected overspend of £2.444m as reported to the Forum in January 2016. He added that there were large pressures on the Special Education Needs (SEN) budget. The provisional DSG overspend of £2.486m was offset by applying the previous year’s DSG carry forward of £0.830m which left a balance of £1.656m to be carried forward into the 2016/17 financial year.

He added that the early assessment of the projected outturn for the 2016/17 DSG, based on data available to 31 May 2016 indicates an overspend of £3.503m but this is subject to change. The funding model for the DSG cashflow forecast is being updated. It was also explained to the Forum that there is a Department for Education (DfE)/ Education Funding Agency (EFA) consultation exercise on the future of school funding and a second consultation would also be published by DfE in due course.

The Forum asked whether the overspend was budgeted for and what was the penalty for overspend. Officer said it wasn’t known how the Government would respond. The Forum asked why there was funding to Behaviour Support services in Primary schools but not Secondary. Officers said this was historical and had always been the case. They added that it would be de-delegated in 2017.

It was RESOLVED that the Forum:

• Noted the provisional DSG expenditure outturn for the 2015/16 financial year;

• Noted the Section 251 Budget Statement for the 2016/17 financial year and latest settlement;

• Noted planned distribution of the Growth Fund for the 2016/17 financial year;
Simon James from AfC began by explaining that the overspend on the DSG-funded SEN budgets for 2015/16 was projected to be £1.389m. This was £0.344m less than previously reported. It was added that the most significant overspends relate to placements in independent special schools and SEN ‘Top-Up’ payments for pupils in Kingston and out-of-borough placements. He added that Fair Share and the commissioning of extra places helped to reduce the overspend. Mr James said that pupils with Communication and Interaction Needs comprise the most costly group, incurring over 62.3% of the cost of all placements but added that new in-house placements could lead to potentially high levels of cost savings. The Forum was also informed that there was less overspend on in Year SEN Top Ups then projected and the budget for post 16 SEN pupils overspent by just under £8,000 during 2015/16 rather than the previously projected £42,264.

Mr James outlined the proposals by which AfC would increase the provision of special schools, overnight respite care and residential school provision in Kingston and Richmond as outlined in the joint Kingston and Richmond Schools Forum on 29 February 2016. It was projected that once full, the new capacity would save at least £4.3m compared to the independent/non-maintained market. It was added that savings projections are dependent upon the EFA delivering schools. The Forum asked Mr James whether there was a risk that having this capacity in an Academy/Free School setting would be more expensive. Mr James said that there would be an agreed banding structure of need and children who fell outside this structure couldn’t be placed. It was added that Academies can charge what they wish within reason but AfC and Kingston and Richmond Councils would continue to work with them eg. Top-up rates. The Forum asked what would happen if some of the bigger chains bought places. Officers said that high needs schools would need to work together professionally. The Regional Commissioner would ensure that MATS were monitored and would intervene to ensure that they acted equitably where appropriate.

Mr James said that parents of children with the highest and most expensive need would be encouraged to consider the local provision. The Forum discussed why need was continually increasing. Reasons given were better identification, more inclusion and medical interventions meaning that children were surviving with more complex conditions.

Mr James said that Kingston SEN numbers were within the national average although numbers are increasing. He added that one factor was that the Kingston had a good reputation of meeting needs locally.

It was RESOLVED that the Forum:

- noted the outturn for SEN expenditure for the 2015/16 financial year (Section 4), the proposed SEN budgets for the 2016/17 financial year and the preliminary assessment of budget pressures to the end of the 2016/17 financial year as detailed in Section 5;
- noted the progress on the strategic approach to delivering cost efficiencies within the high needs block as detailed in Sections 6 to 8.
Scott Gardner presented to the Kingston Forum on the National Funding Formula (NFF). Mr Gardner outlined to Schools Forum proposals for a schools National Funding Formula (NFF). He explained that there was a consultation on the structure of the funding system which would move to a school-level ('hard') national funding formula from 2019. The ‘hard’ national funding formula would determine local authorities’ schools block allocations in 2017-18 and 2018-19, but leave them to set formulae locally (a ‘soft’ formula).

The proposed formula is factored into four building blocks: per pupil costs, additional needs, school costs and an area cost adjustment; the latter two are new. Mr Gardner explained how the NFF factors vary from local formula factors such as a new ‘growth factor’. He added that it was proposed to phase in the NFF by putting in place a national Minimum Funding Guarantee, funded through a national cap on gains.

Mr Craig further explained reform in High needs funding. It was explained that the rationale followed the conclusion of research from the Isos Partnership which consulted that further changes to high needs funding should be made including a distribution of high needs funding from central to local government that is more formula-driven and improvements at a local level. He explained that this will continue to be allocated funding via the ‘Place plus’ methodology. Under the existing methodology, the number on roll of a school is adjusted down by the number of unit/provision places as these places are funded via place plus and receive a base allocation of £10k before top-up. This £10k consists of two parts; £6k (equivalent to the initial £6k a school contributes to a statement/EHCP) and £4k (government pseudo-pupil funding rate). The proposal will see the £4k withdrawn from the base funding of a unit. He added that the DfE say that this is compensated by the pupil being funded via the standard schools funding formula. A question was asked about the effect on Kingston’s schools. Officer said it was difficult to say although it is possible that the north of England could gain more than London and the South East.

It was added that officers would have a better idea on the NFF after the second DfE/EFA consultation due in September and an update would be brought to the Schools Forum. Schools Forum were informed that in 2017/18 the DfE have proposed that de-delegation will not be permitted so some services will have to be provided through SLA’s if they are to continue. As the Admissions Services is one of these, Matthew Paul from AfC outlined the role of the Admissions Team including its statutory and non-statutory functions. The non-statutory elements SLA will be brought to Schools Forum in September for feedback. The Headteacher of the Virtual School, Suzanne Parrot, explained the duties and services of the Virtual School which champions the education of Children in Care and also highlighted successes and challenges. It was highlighted that ‘Historical Commitments' were currently being considered by the DfE. Once a reply from the DfE was received, the Schools Forum would have to endorse the agreement for them to continue.

61. Forum Update

Schools Forum was informed that the outstanding budget for the NASUWT representative would be accrued from 2015/16 to 2016/17 and a Human Resources SLA would be devised.

There are vacancies on the Forum and members were encouraged to promote the Forum to any of their contacts who may be interested, there are three primary school governor vacancies and one special school vacancy.
62. Date of next meetings; venue King Charles Centre, Surbiton
19.00 – 21.00

• 27 September 2016 - King Charles Centre, Surbiton 19.00 – 21.00
• 22 November 2016 - King Charles Centre, Surbiton 19.00 – 21.00

Signed…………………………………………………….Date…………………
Chair