

Schools' Funding Forum (SFF)

Draft Summary Minutes

9.00am – 1.00pm on the 10th May 2024

Invicta Chamber of Commerce, Ashford

Item No	Item	Actions
1	<p><u>Welcome and Introductions</u> All members introduced themselves and apologies were given. The Chair announced that he would be stepping down from the Schools Funding Forum from the Summer and therefore there would be a vacancy for the role of Chair.</p>	
2	<p><u>Minutes and matters arising</u> The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a true record.</p>	
3	<p><u>General update on outturn and DSG</u> Karen Stone gave a verbal update on outturn figures for 2023/24 and explained these were in draft at the moment and had not been finalised. A question was asked about the expectation of payments from DfE Safety Valve for 2024/25. £5m has already been received and KCC expects a further £9m. The Forum discussed whether on the next presentation there could be a forecast of future years to see the profile up to March 2028 as part of Safety Valve programme, to see if KCC is on track. It was asked how realistic it is to meet those timescales and this is something that is currently being reviewed. Action - KS to bring back benchmarking data to show a comparison with other local authorities. A comparison with Essex may be useful as they have a similar number of children but are not overspending. This could be reviewed as part of the High Needs subgroup. It was also felt that comparisons were needed against other local authorities who have a selective school system, although the main driver of EHCPs seems to be within the primary school sector, where the highest levels of High Needs spending is made. The Forum also discussed the significant number of children placed in Kent from other counties and the impact of those numbers on Kent. There was further discussion around the need for change in the sector and all schools taking collective responsibility for this.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">KS</p>
4	<p><u>Scheme for Financing Schools - Consultation on Procurement and Gifts and Hospitality</u> Jody Catterall-James gave a presentation on the findings from this consultation. The Forum agreed with the changes to the Procurement Section 2.10 of the Scheme for Financing Schools. The Forum discussed the proposed addition to the Scheme in relation to Gifts and Hospitality and the comments received as part of the consultation.</p>	

	Action – proposed wording on the changes to the Scheme in relation for Gifts and Hospitality to be reviewed in light of comments received and to be taken to the next DFFG meeting for their consideration before being taken back to the Funding Forum.	JCJ
5	<p><u>High Needs Funding subgroup update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Years review • STLS <p>Neerasha Singh updated members on the discussion from the High Needs Funding subgroup held on 2nd May 2024. There was a request for more members to join the High Needs Funding subgroup, in particular from Special Schools.</p>	
6	<p><u>Localities update</u></p> <p>Siobhan Price presented on Localities in relation to a Cabinet Committee report (item 8a) - Agenda for Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on Thursday, 16th May, 2024, 2.00 pm (kent.gov.uk).</p> <p>There was discussion around how PRUs and AP fits into the model. This is planned to be picked up later in the transition process.</p> <p>There was also discussion around how the clusters would work and while work has been undertaken on how best to cluster schools together the work on the detail of cluster operation continues.</p>	
7	<p><u>Special School Review</u></p> <p>Alison Farmer presented on the Special School review in relation to a Cabinet Committee report (item 8b) - Agenda for Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on Thursday, 16th May, 2024, 2.00 pm (kent.gov.uk)</p> <p>There was encouragement for all schools to attend the Area Workshops, which are being held as follows:</p> <p>North – 21st May South – 24th May East – 4th June West – 7th June</p>	
8	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services to Schools This is currently going through our internal governance procedures and will be brought back for discussion at a later date. This is led by David Adams – Area Education Officer North. • Possible implication of taxing independent schools KCC is VAT registered and will therefore not impact from a financial perspective but may impact on EHCP requests. 	