

# **Surrey Schools Forum Draft Minutes of Meeting**

**Tuesday 2 July 2024 1pm**

## **1 Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence**

Apologies had been received from:

Jo Vigar	Charlwood Primary School	Maintained primary governor
Keith Willsher	Buckland Primary School	Maintained primary governor
Chris Hamilton	Portesbery School	Maintained special sc govnr
Sarah Kober	Lumen Learning Trust	Academy member
Kerry Oakley	Carrington School	Academy member
Sue Wardlow	Greensand MAT	Academy member
John Winter	Weydon MAT	Academy member
Sarah Porter	Private, voluntary and independent nurseries	
Folasadi Afolabi	Unions: Education Joint Committee	
James Kibble	Arundel and Brighton Diocese	
Claire Poole	Family Voice Surrey	

## **2 Election of Chair and Vice-Chairs**

Jack Mayhew had been nominated unopposed to continue as Chair and Justin Price had been nominated unopposed to continue as a Vice-Chair, so both were declared elected unopposed. Jo Hastings had been nominated by three members as a Vice-Chair. It was noted that all three nominations were late, but no objections were raised to the lateness and thus she was also declared elected unopposed.

## **3 Declarations of interest for this meeting and register**

Elaine Cooper declared an interest in item 7a (CEO of Multi academy trust which included potential beneficiaries).

## **4 Minutes of previous meeting (14 May 2024)**

### **Accuracy**

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as accurate.

### **Matters arising (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)**

DG noted that there had been an error in the DSG deficit and safety valve table shared at the last meeting. A corrected version would be circulated.

## **5 Update on DFE funding announcements, if any**

DG confirmed that there were none to report.

## **6 High needs block update, including safety valve, NMI usage and capital programme**

JK shared a summary

which Surrey had signed up to nine conditions between 2022-28, alongside challenging cost containment targets, contributions of £8m per year from school

budgets and contributions from the council and the DfE. Each condition had a specific action plan and associated risks.

Strengthened early intervention and support offer for schools and education settings, with additional council resources of £1.7m per year to increase capacity in the single point of access (L-SPA) and STIPS service.

Review and strengthen SEN decision-making processes (via an end to end review of those processes)

Develop strategies to support mainstream schools to support children with social, emotional and mental health needs (e.g. by providing 24 nurture hubs in mainstream schools and nurture training to 100 schools),

Deliver an expanded



breakdown of places. The Chairman noted the critical importance of the capital programme.

The main risks were seen as loss of additional funding if targets were not met, inflation, and staff recruitment and retention, both in schools and for LA based services eg education psychologists.

## **7 Proposals for 2025/26 schools funding consultation**

The Chairman reminded members that they were being asked to consider whether the proposals for consultation were the right ones and whether they would provide the Forum with sufficient information to make recommendations at the October meeting.

### **a) Notional SEN funding and additional funding for schools where the incidence of SEN is high relative to their additional needs funding**

The proposal considered how to find a formulaic way of distributing additional funding to schools with disproportionately high incidence of SEN, such that the funding was £10,000 per EHCP. DfE guidance was that where such funding was allocated it should generally be formulaic.

The paper considered in particular:

- \* whether and how additional support should recognise the impact on infant schools of the time taken to secure EHCPs at key stage 1,
- \*

**b) Falling rolls funding**

MS reminded the Forum that falling rolls funding was only allowed to support schools with temporary falls in roll, where an increase in pupils was expected within the next few years. This is not a solution to longer term falls in roll. The Service has completed data modelling based on a five-year period from October 2021/October 2022 (hence to October 2027) which showed 14 planning areas where falls in roll might be temporary, and 22 schools which might benefit (depending on the method used). Annual costs varied between £182k-£810k depending on the method. The Forum was asked to express a view on how additional funding might be provided. Members asked how reliable the forecasts were. Officers noted that estimates from the District and Borough Councils detailing the levels of housing growth could be unreliable, due to the uncertainty over when housing would actually be built on specific sites. This is something the Service is addressing with the District and Borough Councils, however, estimates for the next three years were little affected by future housing growth and were generally more reliable.

Members asked for the detailed information, including the equalities impact assessment, to be in annexes.

The Chair agreed that providing additional information would help schools to understand.

**c) Transfer to high needs block, Minimum funding guarantee, ceiling and other**

**e) Other suggestions**

The Forum had no other suggestions for inclusion in the autumn consultation



these groups would be entitled to 30 funded hours/week, and at that point a change in overall demand and family behaviour was anticipated, as the hours offered would make it more feasible for parents to work. There is a need to support the sector in meeting the expected additional demand for 2025.

The number of Surrey parents with valid access codes for the two year old working parent entitlement so far had exceeded Surrey and DFE projections. Most of these were just moving from parent funded to state funded entitlements. The early years sector in Surrey were happy that the expected demand could be met. So far, validation of codes for the 9 month offer were below expectations, but there were still two months to go.

In 2024/25, funding from DFE for the newly entitled groups will be provided based on termly counts (thus removing the termly variation risk). No decision has yet been made on the basis for future years. From 2025/26 LAs will have to set their hourly rates for providers within eight weeks of being advised by DfE of their own funding rates. This would give the sector greater confidence to plan, but it would mean the LA setting provider rates before it had the necessary census data to estimate its own income.

There was no trend data to indicate how takeup of the new entitlements would develop, so in 2025/26 it was proposed to retain the same key principles of funding:

- Run a consultation separately from the schools consultation, running for four weeks and then reporting to Schools Forum

- Propose to retain 5% of funding from each sector to support central services

- Maintain early intervention fund at 1% of funding for children aged 9 months-2 years, 3% for two year olds and 5% for three and four year olds. The lower levels of EIF for younger children reflected the higher basic staffing ratios for those children.

Early years pupil premium and disabled access fund rates would continue to be set by DfE. No changes were proposed to Surrey deprivation supplements (£2.81/hr for three and four year olds, £1/hr for younger children).

Central funding would be focused on support for safeguarding and quality, and on providing support to ensure that providers recognised the different development needs of children under three, as OFSTED might not inspect new provision for up to three years. EIF would now be available from 9 months and support to the sector would be needed to manage that.

It was proposed that maintained nursery school supplementary grant would be distributed on the same principles as in 2024/25.

Free school meal funding rates would continue to be linked to school funding rates, for eligible children in state provision accessing funded entitlement before and after the lunch period.

The Chair noted that the proposals were similar to 2024/25.

The maintained nursery rep noted the low response rate from the huge PVI provider sector to last year's consultation (see data below) and asked what could be done to raise their level of understanding and participation. The network meetings would come too late in the term. A webinar (or 2) could be held. She also noted that the earlier publication of funding rates, in 2024/25, had been appreciated by the sector.

Members asked whether EIF takeup data was used to support planning for SEND demand, suggesting that children on the highest levels of EIF funding (or with a EHCP aged 2) were generally likely to require specialist placements at year R. They suggested that it could be used to help in planning to meet future demand. JB advised that

EHCP plans once they are finalised. However, EIF data in general was used to inform the SEND key stage transfer process, as well as other early years data. She