

Surrey Schools Forum Minutes of Meeting

Wednesday 11 May 2022 1.00pm Virtual Meeting on TEAMS

Approved by members at the meeting on 28 June 2022

Present

Chair

Rhona Barnfield Howard of Effingham School Academy member

Joint Vice Chairs

Kate Keane Ewell Grove Primary Primary Head

Justin Price Freemantles School Special school head

Other school and academy members:

Donna Harwood-Duffy Dorking Nursery Maintained nursery head

Katie Aldred Bagshot Infant Primary head

Susan Chrysanthou Furzefield Primary Primary head

Clare McConnell Bisley CE Primary Primary Head

Paul Jackson NW secondary PRU PRU representative

Geoffrey Hackett Burpham Primary Primary governor

Steph Neale St Pauls Catholic Primary Primary governor

Fred Greaves Oakwood School Secondary governor

Lisa Kent Manor Mead and Walton Leigh Schools (sp5BT/F1 12 Tf1 0 0 1 464.98

David Euridge	Reigate Valley/Wey Valley (AP academy member)
Christine Ricketts	Post 16 provider
Matthew Rixson	Guildford Diocese (Church of England)
Joe Dunne	Arundel and Brighton Diocese (RC)

2 Declarations of interest (where not self-evident)

The Chair reminded members to continue to keep the register up to date. The Chair reminded members that she was CEO of an academy trust which included three special academies (relevant to item 10).

3a Minutes of previous meeting on 14 January 2022

Learning Partnerships MAT.

There were no matters arising

3b Notes of workshop meeting 25 March 2022

The notes were agreed as accurate. There were no matters arising.

4 Final school and early years funding decisions for 2022/23

DG summarised decisions on 2022/23 funding rates for schools and early years providers taken after the 14 January meeting.

The ceiling on gains in the mainstream formula had been set at 3.90% (slightly lower than the 3.92% previously reported).

Of the 17p increase in the DfE 3 /4 year old funding rate, 9p had been added to the basic rate and the equivalent of 8p/hr had been added into the intervention fund. This did not mean that any specific funding rate within the intervention fund would increase by 8p/hour.

Members expressed concern at the late confirmation of the early years funding rates, which had caused difficulties for PVI providers in particular. They asked that rates could be confirmed earlier in future. LM noted that the LA needed to strike a balance between timely notification of funding rates and managing the risk of setting rates based on incomplete information.

Members also questioned the basis of the hourly rate for 2 year olds being lower than that provided by the DfE. They suggested that not all of the funding for two year olds was being passed through to providers, as had been proposed in the autumn consultation. DG explained that Surrey funded providers for more two year old hours (based on termly counts) than the DfE funded Surrey for (based on January census only). Therefore Surrey could not afford to fund providers at the hourly rate. Historically, in funding providers at the DfE hourly rate, Surrey had overspent on two year olds annually, and Surrey was not allowed to plan to do this. Surrey was still planning to pass on the whole of the funding to providers, and was not proposing to spend any centrally.

Officers were asked to provide a simple explanation of the setting of the two year old rates for providers. Carol Savedra would be asked to do this. **Action: DG to contact Carol Savedra**

High needs block

LL advised that the high needs block overspend had been £200,000 higher than the December forecast (and the safety valve estimate) and £11m higher than the original budget, due largely to the full year effect of additional placements and placement changes. £26m of cost containment measures had been delivered by working together.

LM commented that the LA had had stretch targets, including moving children back from out of county placements into local placements with a package of support. Local placements made monitoring safeguarding issues much easier, but the changes required the agreement of families. The schools community had supported change (eg new specialist places) and there had been much progress on transition to adulthood eg apprenticeships and other employment routes. The capital programme would also drive better value, reducing the need to use independent placements, with their much higher unit costs.

Not all cost containment targets had been met. In particular, placement breakdown was an issue, particularly during the year, which frequently led to new placements in the independent sector, which had cost £7m in 2021/22. There was a need to work more closely with schools to maintain placements. The LA may have overestimated possible project.

emphasis on developing early help and early intervention, including specialist teaching, changing some expectations and changing the way we worked with partners. For example, an EHCP should not be necessary in order to secure speech and language therapy, and an EHCP was often seen by partner organisations as needed for children with trauma or mental health needs, where often it was not appropriate.

One member requested the number of children in each category of placement, suggesting that this would emphasise the need for change. **Action for LL to supply**

Another member requested details of the percentage overspend in each of the listed categories. **Action for LL to supply.**

The Inclusion Innovation group was being reconvened and would look particularly at supporting professionals to understand placement breakdown.

Increased spending on FE colleges, apprenticeships and preparation for adulthood had meant savings in NMI placements. A rigorous approach had been adopted to requests for cost increases by NMI providers, and more attention was being given to recovering funding where pupils were not attending NMI provision. There had also been a significant increase in income from health, and the need for health contributions was automatically considered for pupils in bands S5, 6 and 7 in special schools. Pupils with continuing health needs should not have those needs fully supported through education funding and health bodies needed to be aware of continuing health needs which would need to be supported once the EHCP ended.

One member noted that sometimes NMI placements could be good value for children with very complex needs, even though they were expensive.

LM suggested that more work may be needed to increase awareness of the

6 Update on DFE funding consultations

a) Hard or direct NFF consultation

DG summarised the potential impact on Surrey of the DfE decisions following the hard NFF consultation:

Formula funding for looked after children would have to cease (£150,992 in 2022/23) Pupil premium plus for looked after children would remain unchanged

Lump sums in the Surrey formula were currently above the NFF and thus would need to be reduced. The actual reduction required would depend on

Members requested further details of the likely reduction. (In 2022/23 the proposed 10% reduction in the difference between Surrey lump sum and NFF would have meant a £290 reduction in the primary lump sum and a £948 reduction in the secondary lump sum, but both would have been partly offset by increased basic entitlement funding and the total funding delegated to schools as a whole would not have been reduced)

DfE would standardise funding of growth and of split sites to an extent to be determined.

DfE was proposing to standardise the way in which notional SEN funding was defined (but had set no timescale for this)efined M5 2 Tm0 p GFF and thus

There was a clause in the safety valve agreement which allowed either side to revisit it in the case of substantial national changes.

Members suggested that the Forum should consider whether maintaining MPPL was a point of principle, but also how to protect the most vulnerable schools.

Members asked that the 1% contribution be distributed in such a way as to reduce the impact on those schools facing the greater risks, eg energy costs and recruitment challenges, and on deprived schools. DG noted that discrimination between schools was only possible where it could be based on formula factors. Members noted that information on surplus balances might be useful but was incomplete because many schools were academies. The Chair suggested that any proposal to the Secretary of State needed to be simple if it was to have a chance of being approved.

Members asked how other LAs had implemented block transfers and whether they had varied MPPL. LM was happy to ask.

Implementation of the special schools review had required the agreement of all special schools. Agreement was needed on what level of support would be needed for mainstream changes, as the number of schools was much larger and it would be unlikely that all (356) mainstream schools would support. For example, would majority support be binding on all, or would dual systems be

The Chair noted that the government had not been fast in providing details of financial support for LAs for Ukrainians and that some schools were finding it difficult to accept Ukrainian refugees. She urged all colleagues and all schools to work together effectively to help as there was a moral imperative to help. LM noted that there was a countywide group working on the issue, and that the number of children being offered places varied across the county.

One member suggested that de-delegation of funding could provide a pool of expertise to assist. LM noted a demand for other services eg ESOL courses in colleges.

10 Special schools inflation funding proposals for 2022/23

EG noted that LAs were expected to set funding levels for special schools locally, supporting the schools but also managing their high needs block deficits. The LA had written to special schools proposing a 2.5% increase (costing £1.6m). He recognised that the current climate was challenging, but the LA could not increase the HNB deficit in order to raise special school funding.

0 g0 G5(e)lacetet climt0.00-h6(e)-kd4(n)-3(d)wn L

implementation of the SEND banding review. The LA saw special schools as part of the solution, but all parts of the high needs budget had to work together.

The Chair noted the challenges of setting special s constraints of the high needs block.

11 Schools Forum business

Date of next meeting Tuesday 28 June 2022

To include:

Items for autumn consultation paper

Update from EG on mainstream banding working group

Update on inclusion innovation fund

Please contact DG with any other suggestions.

A decision on whether to hold a real meeting would be taken nearer the time.

12 Any other business

None

Meeting ended 3.30pm

Date of next meeting Tuesday 28 June 2022 1pm, virtual