

# Surrey Schools Forum Minutes of Meeting

**Tuesday 10 January 2023 12.30pm Virtual Meeting on TEAMS**

Approved by members at their meeting on 12 May 2023.

## **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 school                      Maintained nursery sch rep

Katie Aldred                              Bagshot Infant School                      Primary Head

Clare McConnell                      Bisley Primary School                      Primary Head

Zoe Johnson-Walker      The Winston Churchill School      Secondary Head

Paul Jackson                              NW secondary PRU                      PRU representative

Geoffrey Hackett                      Burpham Primary                      Primary governor

Steph Neale

Matthew Rixson Guildford Diocese (Church of England)

Joe Dunne Arundel and Brighton Diocese (RC)

\*not present for items 1-3

### **Local Authority Officers**

Liz Mills (LM) Director–Education and Lifelong Learning

Jane Edwards Assistant Director-Education

Eamonn Gilbert Assistant Director-Commissioning

Daniel Peattie Strategic Finance Business Partner

Sarah Bryan Deputy Strategic Finance Business Partner

David Green (DG) Senior Finance Business Partner (Schools Funding)

Paul Smith and Emma Lucas of HR attended to present item 3.

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

Apologies had been received from:

Karyn Hing Westfield School Academy member

Christine Ricketts Post 16 provider

Claire Poole Family Voice Surrey

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

The Chair reminded members that “Members of schools forum should take a strategic view (and) consider the needs of the whole of the educational community, rather than using their position on a schools forum to advance their own sectional or specific interests” and that members were here to consider the interests of all Surrey children.

The Chair thanked those members who had completed the register of interests.

Jack Mayhew declared an interest in item 6 (growth fund). Justin Price declared an interest in the early intervention fund issue in item 5, as his school received funding from the early intervention fund for providing the STEPS programme to early years providers.

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## **3 Surrey support staff pay proposals 2023/24.**

LM noted that the Forum was seeing the paper before Corporate Leadership Team had considered the proposals (which they were doing later that afternoon).

Paul Smith advised that unions had submitted a pay claim for a 12% increase, plus other benefits. Affordability would be a key issue. However, in order to meet the Real Living Wage, an increase of 7-8% was needed on grades PS1/2, and some adjustments to PS3-4 (where most school support staff were) would be necessary to maintain some differentials between grades. The council was committed to matching



headteachers alone. It was also important that different categories of schools were represented.

Academies which had agreed to mirror Surrey pay would be affected by the real living wage increase. One member noted that all academies were hiring in the same market place, and suggested that few academies paid less than Surrey Pay. The member also asked what proportion of Surrey pay staff were in schools.

#### **4 Minutes of previous meeting (8 December 2022)**

##### **Accuracy**

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as accurate.

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

Training offer for headteachers who were not Schools Forum members:  
This was still work in progress

Chair to consult co-Chairs of secondary phase council over how to raise interest in the annual funding consultation:  
The Chair had asked for views and was awaiting a response.

Mainstream SEN banding consultation:  
This should be live by the end of the week. There had been no significant changes to proposals since the December meeting,

#### **5 Update on final 2023/24 DSG settlement including high needs block update and CSSB funding**

DFE had issued the final DSG settlement for 2023/24 on 16 December 2022.

##### **Schools block**

This had been updated for pupil numbers, plus a £1m increase in growth fund based on updated pupil numbers. Detailed proposals for the schools block were covered in items 6 and 7.

There would also be a mainstream schools additional grant which would be worth around £27m to Surrey mainstream schools, and which would distribute the additional funding from the autumn statement. DFE will set allocations for individual schools. The grant would not cover nursery provision or sixth forms. The former schools supplementary grant had only covered health and social care levy costs for state nursery providers and sixth forms, and these costs were no longer being incurred.

##### **Central schools services block**

There was an increase of £0.064m due to increased pupil numbers.

£17,000 of the increase was needed to cover copyright licensing costs increasing by more than expected. It was proposed that the remaining £47,000 was spent on EYES system support and increased funding for inclusion officers, adding to the additional £191,000 allocated thus at the December meeting.

### **High needs block**

£8.7m additional funding had been allocated from the autumn statement, plus an additional £0.9m for pupil numbers, which are always updated at this point.

Within the High Needs block in 2023/24 LAs are required to allocate additional sums to special schools and PRUs at 3.4% of average 2022/23 (top up and place) funding per place x the number of places. This is separate from place and top up funding. We can apply to disapply in cases of gross anomaly on a school by school basis, and we are looking at that, but we could only apply in case of anomaly or outlier. Officers are still looking at the details.

The special schools MFG continues separately, as previously announced, at an increase of 3% over two years, which means a minimum increase of 0.5% for Surrey, as 2.5% was provided in 2022/23. DfE does not apply the minimum funding guarantee to pupil referral units.

Therefore the LA would need to set inflation increases for special schools at a minimum of 3.9%.

Officers could not confirm whether the 3.4% increase would form part of the base for 2024/25.

Members suggested that the special schools sector started 2023/24 with a shortfall of 2% due to the additional costs of the 2022/23 support staff pay increase being funded only by a one off allocation.

### **Early years block**

The DfE had increased hourly rates to Surrey by 4.87% for 3-4 year olds and by 9.92% for 2 year olds. The increases reflected changes in the national early years funding formula following the DfE's summer consultation, which had been quite beneficial to Surrey. The actual total grant will be updated based on Jan 2023 and Jan 2024 censuses.

The quoted increases were the increases in DfE funding of Surrey. Surrey would need to set its provider rates having regard to affordability.

In October Surrey had proposed to increase the basic hourly rate for three year olds by the DfE increase plus 6p, subject to affordability to be estimated based on the Jan 2023 census data. Officers were now proposing that 3p should instead be used to increase the level of the Early Intervention Fund, where demand was still growing (eg 887 children supported in autumn 2022 compared to 620 in autumn 2021). This would increase the value of the fund by £400,000. Officers proposed a separate mini-consultation with the sector, as the proposal had not been included in the autumn consultation.

The final decision was an LA decision, for the Director, but it was proposed that the Chair and Vice-Chairs of Schools Forum and the early years representatives would be consulted before the decision was made.



- \* noted the updated DSG allocations and the updated high needs block position;
- \* agreed the proposed use of the additional CSSB funding for EYES support and inclusion officers to monitor children missing education (by consensus);
- \* supported the proposals for early years funding (by consensus),
- \* supported consulting the early years sector on a further increase in the Early Intervention Fund, equivalent to 3p of the hourly rate (by consensus).

The Forum did not (and was not asked to) express a view as to whether or not they supported the proposed increase in the early intervention fund.

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funding could be reached by the end of January 2023, but proposals needed to be discussed by the relevant headteacher working groups.