

# The KIRKLEES SCHOOLS FORUM

(Schools Funding Consultative Group)  
meeting held on **Friday 27th February 2009**  
9:30am at the Chestnut Centre

**Item  
2**  
24.04.09

## Present

Julie Helm	Nursery School Heads (1)
Graham Altoft, Jenny Chamberlain, Carol Crossland, Michelle Lee (vice-chair 2008/09), Gill Goodswen, Diana Wilson	Primary School Heads (6)
Caroline Thompson	Middle School Heads (1)
Toby Eastaugh, Christine Spencer (Chair 2008-09), Janet Tolley	High School Heads (4)
	Special School Heads (1)
Pat Colling (Kirklees Governors Association), Gillian Collins (ATL), Sarah Ellis (pre-School Learning Alliance), Howard Roberts (NUT)	Non-school members (6)
Angela Farmer (Senior Finance Officer (Resources & Support)) Warwick Firmin (School Funding Strategy Manager, R&S); Clerk David Gearing (Financial Delegation Manager, R&S); Minute Clerk	Kirklees Children & Young People Service Officers in Support
	Observers

## 1. Apologies for Absence

Mark Ayres (Resources & Support), Kath Benetis (KPH observer), Julie Bowdidge (Learning Service), Jackie Eames (KSHS) and Philip Gibbins (KSSH)

## 2. Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February

The minutes were agreed to be a true record of the meeting.

## 3. Matters arising from meeting 6 February

### 3.1 Westfields Pupil Referral Unit funding [minute 5.1.1 of the 6 February meeting]

Further clarification was requested at the last meeting over how the "pupil retention grant" income which is passed through to Westfields PRU relates to the budget and expenditure figures presented in the report to the Schools Forum. A copy of an explanatory e-mail sent out to Schools Forum members was circulated. The KS4 provision detailed in the report is paid from PRG income not base budget provision. The PRU budget problem identified relates wholly to the original KS3 activity at Westfields. The other two areas of activity are self-sufficient in funding/income terms. The same funding problem would have been apparent had the report not included the PEER and KS4 activity. Accordingly, the decision reached at the last Schools Forum meeting was confirmed.

### 3.2 Updated 2009-10 DSG Strategy position [minute 5.4 of 6 February]

A final version of the 2009-10 DSG Budget Strategy paper was circulated to the meeting showing the £631k gap position reached last time. Also distributed was an updated school-by-school illustration of the main funding changes for 2009-10 (increase to the Personalised Learning budget, change to the Additional Pupil Needs formula with £0.5m top-sliced from Age-Weighted Pupil Units to help the change and the replacement method for allocation of the SEN New Approaches pot). Also appended was a note of the Claremont Service funding allocation to those schools which did not buy the service during 2008-09 together with a note of temporary phased support for those schools already losing overall from the funding changes already mentioned.

### **3.3 Insurance Cover Scheme refund [minute 7 of 6 February]**

Clarification was sought about what had been agreed with the balances accrued within the absence insurance cover schemes. The 2007-08 underspend has been rolled forward into financial year 2008-09 and will be redistributed amongst member schools in 2009-10. The projected underspend against the 2008-09 scheme will need to be considered by the Schools Forum alongside the finalised position of the wider retained DSG budget which is expected to show an overall deficit this time. It will most likely be the June Schools Forum meeting before a decision can be made.

### **3.4 Outstanding Standards Fund issues [minute 8.1 of 6 February]**

Assurances were sought that School Standards Fund allocations for 2009-10 will be allocated to schools as soon as possible. The Schools Forum does not want a repeat of the delays in the allocation of Extended Schools funding seen in 2008-09.

It was noted that the Making Good Progress Grant is actually a central Standards Fund – it goes to identified schools in terms of support hours. It is understood that KS2 provision in 33 schools will be allocated 10 hours of one-to-one tuition. A paper summarising how the Grant will be used was requested.

The Extended Schools funding has hitherto been released upon submission by the school of an acceptable spending plan. It was suggested that any money nominally attached to schools which haven't submitted the requisite plan should be shared out amongst schools in their pyramid.

The distribution method for School Music Grant has also to be decided for 2009-10. A proposal paper to move the allocation away from a simple block distribution is to be considered by KPH before returning to the Schools Forum.

## **4. Report to all Head Teachers**

The meeting noted that a summary report on the changes agreed by Schools Forum for financial year 2009-10 had been despatched to all Head Teachers. As yet there has been limited feedback from individual schools. Constituent groups will consider the contents of the report at their next set of meetings.

## **5. Correspondence from report to all Head Teachers**

Correspondence in response to the summary report has in fact been received from two schools, one Primary and one Secondary.

The Primary school is concerned about a projected loss of £4,000 resulting from the changes made to the Formula for 2009-10. The Chair's letter in reply will refer to the phasing protection built into the replacement for New Approaches formula and to the fact that the consultation debate has now closed. The Finance Team will ensure that the school is offered support during the budget-setting process to help them address the consequences of the changes to various funding methods.

The letter from the Secondary school is quite technical in nature, mainly calling into question the validity of the measures to be employed by the new SEN Early Intervention formula. The Chair's response will give reassurance that some of the issues raised have already been considered along the path to change. Also it is the intention that Learning Service colleagues will work with those schools experiencing the larger downward shifts in funding to understand the reasons why the two methods produce such different results for certain schools. A proper explanation of the tax credit data used in the new formula will also be given to clear up any misapprehension about what the data actually identifies.

## **6. Targeted Capital Bid for Kitchens & Dining Rooms**

The DCSF has set aside £100m of unspent Targeted Capital Funds to be allocated to those authorities which submit plans to increase school lunch take-up by building or refurbishing school kitchens or improving dining areas and facilities. Conditions attached to the money state that the authority has to match the funding approved with funding from other sources, to consult and agree spending plans with their Schools Forum and to submit the bid before the end of February 2009.

The Asset Management Strategy Group, using DCSF guidance, has drawn up a proposed schedule of works which is intended to have the maximum impact on school meal uptake. Focus has been placed upon those existing facilities in greatest need of extension and refurbishment. There are currently four primary schools with only satellite kitchens where meals are not actually cooked on site. It is proposed to convert these kitchens to full on-site cooking (approx cost £100k - £150k per kitchen). Kirklees already has a rolling capital programme in place to upgrade, refurbish and improve the facilities most in need. However, only 2-3 kitchens can be undertaken annually at the moment. There are set criteria used to identify and prioritise the kitchens in question. The TCF funding would enable the refurbishment programme to be accelerated. It is proposed to include in the bid the refurbishment and upgrade of nine primary school kitchens, one middle school kitchen and one special school kitchen.

The total cost of the proposals is £1.8m which means the authority would be bidding for half this figure, £900k. The authority's half of the bargain would largely be garnered from the existing kitchen refurbishment programme funding and from contributions from the Schools' Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) allocations.

The Schools Forum noted the contents of the report. There were concerns expressed about the lateness of the paper – consideration on the very day the bid has to be submitted does not really leave scope for any adjustment to the proposals. It was asked why the Middle School was on the refurbishment list given the likelihood that the Building Schools for the Future programme will remove Middle School provision. It cannot be assumed though that a school's closure would necessarily mean that their premises are discontinued. There was also concern about the assumed DFC contribution by those schools affected, presumably, before discussions had taken place with those schools.

## **7. Agenda for next meeting**

The main items for the agenda will be an update of the 2009/10 Standards Fund picture for schools, a progress report on the Single Funding Formula for maintained and PVI (Private, Voluntary and Independent) Nursery provisions and feedback from the various constituent group meetings to be held before the next Forum meeting.

It was agreed to cancel the Forum meeting planned for Friday 3 April. Instead the next meeting will now take place on Friday 24 April to follow on from the next Single Funding Formula working party meeting earlier that week. The need for Schools Forum meeting scheduled for Friday 15 May will be determined at the 24 April meeting.

## **8. Any other business**

### **8.1 Correspondence received from UNISON**

The local UNISON office has written to the Chair to again request a formal seat on Schools Forum. This follows discussions that have taken place recently at the relevant Employee Liaison Group meeting and will be considered as part of the Schools Forum annual review of its constitution during the Summer Term. It was agreed that informal discussions should take place with UNISON representatives in advance of formal consideration of the request next term. Care will be taken to explain the nature of Schools Forum business and how it operates, to remove any misconceptions about what the Schools Forum actually does, with particular reference to the confidential and sensitive information that is discussed, particularly when funding redistribution options are being worked through.

### 8.2 DSG Budget Monitoring Report 2008-09 week 44

The projected overspend has worsened slightly since the last report, increasing from £692k to £733k. The main areas of slippage are within Independent School Fees and Central SEN Support. An £11,800 overspend, caused by additional admin costs arising from the School Workforce Census, is shown for the first time.

### 8.3 Excess Balances held by Schools

A reminder was given to the meeting about the protocols for challenging schools having “excess” balances at year end. [Excess is defined as greater than 5% of the school’s ISB budget share allocation in Secondary and Middle schools and greater than 8% in other schools]. Officers agreed to e-mail all schools to remind them of the rules and procedures so that the issue is fresh in the mind as year end approaches. The 2008-09 balance carried forward positions of all schools will be available for Forum to consider at its 15 May meeting (unless that meeting is cancelled. In that event the figures will be reported to the 5 June meeting).

### Date and Time of next meeting

Friday 24 April 2009, 9:30am to 11:30am in the

**Old Court Room, Huddersfield Town Hall**