

Surrey Schools Forum

Minutes of Meeting

Friday 28 September 2018 1pm at NASUWT, Send

Approved by the Forum at its meeting on 11 December 2018

Present

School and academy members:

Rhona Barnfield (Chair)	Howard of Effingham School	Academy member
Kate Keane (Vice Chair)	Ewell Grove Infant and Nursery School	Primary Head
Donna Harwood- Duffy	Dorking Nursery School	Nursery school head
Katie Aldred	Bagshot Infant School	Primary head
Joanne Hastings	Ottershaw CE Infant and Junior Schools	Primary Head (items 1-4 (part))
Clare McConnell	Bisley CE (A) Primary	Primary head
Tess Trewinnard	Wonersh and Shamley Grn	Primary head
Jo Luhman	Kings International College	Secondary head (substitute)
Geoffrey Hackett	Stepgates Community Pri	Primary Governor
Eric Peacock	Thorpe C of E Primary	Primary Governor
David Barter	Winston Churchill School	Secondary governor (substitute)
Annette Crozier	Manor Mead and Walton Leigh Schools	Special sch governor (items 1-4)
David Euridge	Reigate Valley and other PRUs	PRU member
Matthew Armstrong-Harris	Rodborough	Academy member
Ben Bartlett	Hinchley Wood School	Academy member
Kate Carriett	George Abbot School	Academy member
Elaine Cooper	Horsell Village School	Academy member
Stephanie Gibson	Tandridge Learning Trust	Academy member
Ian Hylan	Tomlinscote School	Academy member (substitute)
James Malley	Therfield School	Academy member
Nicky Mann	Wallace Fields Infant	Academy member
Tim Stokes	Carwarden House Community School	Special academy member

Non school members

Sian Bath	Private, voluntary & independent nursery providers	
Joe Dunne	RC Diocese of Arundel and Brighton	
Alex Tear	Guildford Diocese (C of E)	
Tamsin Honeybourne	Teaching union member of Education Joint Cttee	
Nick Trier	Teaching union member of Education Joint Cttee	
Jayne Dickinson	East Surrey College	Post 16 provider
Andrea Collings	Family Voice Surrey (items 1-4)	

Local Authority Officers

Liz Mills (LM)	Director–Education, Lifelong Learning & Culture
Lynn McGrady (LMcG)	Head of Finance for Schools (clerk to Forum)
David Green (DG)	Senior Principal Accountant (Schools Funding)

1 Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from:

Fred Greaves	Oakwood School	Secondary governor
Sir Andrew Carter	South Farnham Primary	Academy member
Ruth Murton	Thamesmead School	Academy member
Seb Sales	Connaught Junior School	Academy member

The Chair welcomed new members (Tim Stokes and Nicky Mann), returning member (Elaine Cooper) and substitutes (David Barter and Alex Tear).

2 Declarations of interest

Tamsin Honeybourne and Nick Trier (item 4 (union reps));
David Euridge Item 4 (potential behaviour support provider);
Andrea Collings (item 8);
James Malley (item 8, school in the same MAT as the Warwick).

3 Minutes and matters arising from previous meeting (11 July 2018)

Accuracy

Page 7, final para of item 4 should read “there was a consensus that supported the need to transfer £5.9m underspend to offset the high needs block overspend carried forward from 2017/18, and agreement to the principles of transformation proposed”.

Item 4 (SEND): page 7:

LM confirmed that the £5.9m transfer from schools and early years underspends to the high needs block had now been implemented.
The Chair agreed that there had been a consensus in support of this at the last meeting.

Item 4a Funding for school to school support school improvement offer

Kate Keane argued that the £5.9m transfer to high needs was excessive and that £100,000 of this could have been used instead to support the universal school improvement offer, on the basis that some of that work supported inclusion and SEND. Funding was required for infrastructure, such as a website, to support the universal offer.

LM advised that the LA had agreed to fund 1 day a week of support for the development of the universal offer for each phase and to pay the launch costs (a total estimated cost of £64,000), but that she had been clear that the LA had no other cash funding available, although the LA might be able to assist with other resources eg staff and IT. There were ongoing discussions as to whether “de-delegated” school improvement funds could be redirected in the present year. Within that budget a sum had originally been intended to support LA costs in brokering support, but in fact the LA was not planning to use any of the funding in that way and the whole budget had been set aside to fund support for individual maintained primary schools. Not all of this had yet been spent so some of it could be redirected. It was estimated that £250,000 remained to be spent, but we are only part way through the year and the budget is usually fully committed. The budget might support 7-8 schools per annum.

The Chair advised that interim leadership funding was only given to schools which could not afford to pay for it and that schools with surplus balances were expected to use them.

Schools Forum had not discussed the universal offer when considering “de-delegation” in November 2017 because it was not then being developed.

LMcG suggested that part of the 2018/19 school improvement budget could be diverted to the universal offer. This could be agreed in principle now, and a decision on how much to divert could be taken at a later date.

Primary maintained schools’ representatives supported widening the scope of the existing “de-delegated” school improvement budget in 2018/19 to include the school to school universal offer.

4 Schools Funding consultation

LMcG circulated a summary of the responses. There had been 198 responses, including late responses, and all had been included.

The Chair expressed the Forum’s thanks for the Finance team’s work in circulating the consultation and collating the responses to tight deadlines.

LM noted some recent letters to Dave Hill and herself expressing concerns over the credibility and transparency of the consultation process. She was concerned at these and was always available to discuss such concerns. She recognised that this year’s process hadn’t worked for everyone. DfE guidance on 2019/20 funding had not been published until the end of term (24 July). It was the role of the LA to make proposals to all schools and of the Forum to consider the consultation responses. Otherwise there was a risk that the Forum could be seen as a small group with too much influence over the LA’s proposals, rather than forming an independent view on those proposals. She appreciated members’ frustration that they had not seen proposals in advance of publication, but this had to be seen in the context of the overall timescales and the need for individual schools to be given indications of the impact of individual proposals.

LM suggested that, in future, consideration might be given to a Schools Forum meeting in late August/early September, to allow technical details to be explained before wider circulation. LA officers were willing to support such a meeting. Increasingly technical discussions would be required in a challenging financial environment.

One member suggested that prompt publication of “frequently asked questions” from such a meeting would be useful. LM noted that there was a risk of these questions skewing the consultation if they reflected the concerns of a small group.

The Chair noted that the autumn 2018 consultation document had been longer than in previous years and had included more complex proposals, which some colleagues had found challenging. Colleagues relied on Schools Forum reps for guidance.

The Vice Chair argued that some of the issues in the consultation paper were not issues which were usually discussed by Schools Forum as part of the annual cycle (eg schools' balances), and that some of those not previously discussed were local choices rather than the result of DfE action. Schools did not expect the LA to make such proposals over the summer holidays. LM responded that increasingly difficult issues were now having to be considered. There had been transparency over these issues through the consultation.

Another member supported the proposal for a Schools Forum meeting in early September. This would allow Schools Forum members to seek clarification of proposals.

LM suggested that use of standardised model responses may limit individual schools' thinking. It was important that the consultation collected individual schools' views in order to inform Schools Forum discussions.

LMcG reported that the DfE needed more specific evidence on the causes of high needs block pressures; anything which schools could provide would be useful.

Specific consultation paper proposals

Section B and Q1-3: General principles of SEND transformation

LMcG noted broad support for the general principles.

Proposal C2 (Q4) Increased threshold for additional SEN funding

This proposal had had little support in the consultation. LMcG noted that while DfE recognised the challenge faced by many individual LAs over SEND costs, LAs should be reviewing areas where they clearly spend more than comparable LAs. This was an area where Surrey was a relatively high spender and thus might attract DfE interest.

The additional funding was high needs funding ie outside the NFF, so the proposal would have no impact on the NFF.

Currently the estimated cost was £2.1m and the LA sought evidence of the difference it made in schools.

The Chair recognised the rationale for the proposal but argued that any reduction should be delayed until September 2019 in order to avoid the need for staffing changes during the current academic year.

LM noted that the additional SEN funding was linked directly to the number of EHCPs and thus could drive applications for EHCPs and thus increase pressure on the high needs budget. It was not about wider inclusivity. Members noted that some schools might manage SEN in different ways (ie with less need for EHCPs).

Members suggested that

- schools should be asked to provide evidence of impact on individual children;
- Some academic work had been done on savings and benefits of early intervention, which might be useful.

LMcG confirmed that the Forum was being asked for a recommendation not a decision. That recommendation could not be deferred to the next meeting.

The Forum considered two proposals:

- a) A reduction in additional SEN funding from April 2019;
- b) A reduction in additional SEN funding from September 2019.

There was no support for either proposal.

Proposal C3 (Q5-8) Controls on maintained schools' surplus (revenue) balances

LMcG recalled that a previous government had implemented mandatory controls on surplus balances, although only small sums had been recovered because of the exceptions allowed. Surrey had not continued such controls once they ceased to be mandatory, and more recently, seeing them as unfair when they applied to maintained schools only.

However, in March 2018 258 maintained schools had held a total of £40m, in surplus balances (mostly in primary schools), and the council was in an unprecedented financial situation. Around 12 schools had maintained very high balances over time. The lead Cabinet member had written to these individually in 2017. Five of them had shown increased balances in the following year.

Any funds recovered would be used to support the high needs block.

The principle of controls had been supported by mainstream schools by 56-54, but two of the supporters had stated that they only supported if it also applied to academies, which was legally impossible. There had been more support for implementation from March 2020 than for implementation from March 2019.

One member expressed surprise that there were no direct discussions between the LA and governors of schools which maintained high balances over an extended period. He argued that such discussions should be held before controls were considered. LMcG advised that schools with surplus balances exceeding 15% were required to advise the LA of the purposes for which balances were held, although the resources available for further scrutiny were limited.

Another member argued that surplus funds from lettings should be excluded from any controls. This could be considered if they could be separately identified, although it was also noted that such income was derived from the use of public assets.

Members also thought the proposal raised equalities issues.

A decision to introduce controls on balances was a decision for maintained school members on Schools Forum only.

A proposal that controls on balances should be introduced, with an exception for locally generated income, was rejected by maintained schools representatives by 9-3, on a show of hands.

Therefore consultation questions 6-9 were not discussed.

Proposal C3 Q10 Changes to element 2 SEN funding for mainstream sixth forms

The proposal was to move funding of high needs SEN places in mainstream sixth forms onto a lagged actual pupil number basis, in line with other mainstream sixth form funding. This had been generally supported by schools.

The Forum supported the proposal to move level 2 SEN funding in mainstream sixth forms onto a lagged pupil number basis.

Proposal C5 and Q11 Amendments to the reporting of schools' surplus balances

LM noted that DSG was now much more important in the council's overall budget process than previously. Continued rolling forward of the high needs block overspend was unsustainable. The transformation plan aimed for sustainability within three years, through more early intervention and more in house provision, but the overspends until then had to be funded somehow. In particular, budget planning did not allow for the remaining £15m overspend in the current year (reduced from £30m). The LA needed to have other reserves to offset this sum.

The LA was seeking support from the Forum for the principle of using £15m from maintained schools' balances (which totalled around £40m) temporarily to offset the £15m shortfall. The LA would then repay this sum over several years and simultaneously make the investments described in the transformation proposals. The repayment profile had been clarified previously. No decision to use schools' balances in this way had yet been made, but even if it was, if every school wanted to spend all of their balances, they could still do so, and the Cabinet report would make clear that the funding still belonged to individual maintained schools.

If the LA could not do this it would mean drawing further on its reserves (although those reserves still exceeded £15m). The ability to spread this sum over several years would be helpful.

Members expressed concerns that the proposed accounting treatment might make the pressures less visible to DfE, and that they should be visible. Such deficits were mirrored in many other LAs. LM responded that a balance was needed between visibility and viability.

One member asked whether the £15m could be secured against specific capital assets (it can't).

The proposal was an issue on which all Forum members could vote because it related to the whole of the system and to the transformation agenda.

The Forum voted by 16-1 (with 9 abstentions) AGAINST the proposal to use £15m from maintained schools' balances to offset the high needs DSG deficit.

Proposal C6 and Q12 Changes to the definition of the notional SEN budget
LMcG advised that this was a technical change, which did not affect the size of the total notional SEN budget. As we moved towards the NFF, more funding was distributed on low prior attainment and less on deprivation. The proposed changes to the notional SEN budget reflected movement towards the NFF.

The Forum supported the proposed changes to the definition of the notional SEN budget

Proposal D2 (part) and Q13 The level of the minimum funding guarantee
LMcG noted that in 2018/19 the DfE had funded LAs for a minimum funding guarantee level of 0.5% per pupil but had not initially allowed LAs to fund schools for a minimum funding guarantee of 0.5%. Nationally a number of LAs had applied to use a 0.5% guarantee in 2018/19 although Surrey had not. The DfE had eventually changed the rules for 2018/19 but too late for Surrey's consultation.

In 2019/20 the DfE was allowing a minimum funding guarantee of up to 0.5% per pupil and the LA thought it right to consult schools on 0.5% because schools had not had the opportunity to consider that option previously. Officers had no strong views whether a minimum funding guarantee of 0% or 0.5% was preferable.

One member commented that a higher minimum funding guarantee meant that schools which were overfunded compared to the NFF benefited at the expense of other schools.¹

The Forum supported a minimum funding guarantee level of 0%

Q14 Proposal to transfer £3.1m to the high needs block

LMcG referred to concerns, expressed in the consultation responses, about the implementation of the Minimum Per Pupil level (MPPL) if funding was transferred to the high needs block.

The MPPL had been introduced in 2018/19 and the DfE funding level had been increased to £3,500 (primary) and £4,800 (secondary) for 2019/20. The LA could choose to apply the MPPL in full or in part or not at all. Most schools would receive this level of funding through the normal workings of the formula, but for some schools it meant additional funding. These schools were then exempt from ceiling deductions.

The schools which benefited from the MPPL "top up" were typically large schools (because the lump sum was worth less per pupil to larger schools) with low levels of additional need. 33% of secondary schools received MPPL

¹ Although some continuing support for such schools is built into the DfE NFF itself, albeit based on the 2017/18 baseline rather than the previous year

but only 7% of primary schools. All of the schools receiving MPPL were in the lowest 50% for deprivation² and for low prior attainment.

The LA had proposed to apply the MPPL in full unless £3.1m was transferred to high needs. In that scenario, a reduction of £31 per pupil from the full MPPL had been proposed, to widen the number of schools contributing to the high needs transfer. There had been significant opposition to the proposal not to implement the MPPL in full but, if the MPPL were not reduced, the lowest need schools would not contribute towards the £3m transfer, and a very low ceiling would have been required (0.4-0.7%), protecting the lowest need schools at the expense of higher need schools, and also transferring funding from the primary sector to secondary. Under the proposals, the £3.1m transfer would be found both by reducing the MPPL level and reducing the ceiling on gainers. The underlying formula factors were the same for all options. Schools which were below the ceiling on all options would not be affected.

Members argued that the £5.9m year end transfer from school and LA blocks to high needs (discussed at the 11 July meeting) should be added to the £25m transfers shown in Annex 1 of the consultation paper, making a total of £31m transferred over the last five years.

Members also expressed concern that:

- Schools' budgets were under pressure from increased pension contributions and from teachers' pay increases which were not fully funded;
- They could not see any impact of the transfers of funding in previous years;
- Many children were not receiving provision.

The Chair noted that the SEND reforms had led to huge growth in the number of EHCPs nationally.

LM reminded the Forum that nationally the growth in demand had far exceeded the growth in funding.

The Forum REJECTED the proposed transfer of £3.1m from schools NFF block to the high needs block by 17 votes to 5 (with 2 abstentions).

LM advised that in 2018/19 a number of LAs had appealed to the DfE against a refusal by their Schools Forums to transfer funding to the high needs block. Surrey had not appealed in 2018/19, but the council might choose to appeal.

Q15 was not discussed, as the Forum had already opposed a transfer and the MFG had been agreed at 0%.

Proposal D3 Growing schools funding and falling rolls funding (Q16-19)

LMcG explained that the DfE was moving to a formula for funding pupil number growth in schools (which included falling rolls funding). Under this formula, Surrey could lose £3m in 2019/20 compared to its current spending on growth and falling rolls.

² As measured by free school meals

Proposed reductions in vacancy funding and in falling rolls funding had had majority support. However, there had been a contradiction between schools' support for Q17 (the proposal that there should be no further reductions in growth funding other than in vacancy funding) and opposition to Q19a (that, if necessary, NFF funding should be transferred to maintain the level of growth funding).

DG advised that there were technical difficulties in reducing growth funding other than vacancy funding:

- New schools and schools extending age range had to be funded using average pupil numbers in the funding formula, thus there was no option to vary their pupil funding rates;
- Where an academy was subject to expansion, the DfE reserved the right to fund growth (at the expense of the LA) where the LA declined;
- There were equity issues if bulge classes and longer term growth were funded at different rates.

The Forum agreed the proposed reductions in vacancy funding (Q16) and in falling rolls funding (Q18).

The Forum asked officers to identify, and to bring back to the Forum, any potential options for reducing the growth budget with minimal impact on schools.

“De-delegation” (Proposal D4)

Behaviour support (Q20a)

There had been majority support from primary schools for continued “de-delegation”.

LM noted that Kerry Randle had attended the July meeting to discuss remodelling of the service. She agreed that under the hard NFF it was not expected that “de-delegation” would be allowed.

David Euridge argued that “de-delegation” denied schools the opportunity to choose to buy from other providers. In particular primary PRUs could, and wished to, offer early intervention services.

Other points made in discussion included:

- Schools should be given the autonomy to choose –if people liked the service they would buy it;
- “De-delegation” provided an element of “insurance” which supported the most needy schools;
- There was a need for an evidence base to demonstrate effectiveness.

LM advised that the service aimed to provide much more targeted support in future and to provide early help in schools and homes. In Hampshire the service was commissioned through PRUs.

The Chair proposed that at its next meeting the Forum should consider evidence from Kerry Randle on other models of provision, including those used in other authorities and successful traded models used elsewhere.

Action for LM/KR

LM advised that the service had done some work on traded models. “De-delegated” services formed only a minority part of the specialist teaching service’s work. There was already a traded offer but takeup by schools was low. Some schools were not in a position to buy back. If “de-delegation” ceased she could not guarantee that a traded service would be available.

CAPITA SIMS Licences (Q20b)

This was supported without further discussion.

Teacher association facility time (Q20c)

LMcG noted that there had been majority support from maintained primary schools in the consultation, but a mixed outcome in secondary schools. Secondary maintained schools’ representatives rejected the continued de-delegation of facilities time.

Existing buyback schemes could be extended to cover maintained secondary schools if required.

Other special staff costs (Q20(d))

This supported costs such as jury service and suspensions. “De-delegation” was supported without further discussion.

Free school meals eligibility checking (Q20e)

“De-delegation” was supported without discussion.

Primary school specific contingency (Q20f)

LMcG reminded the Forum that although this contingency had been little used, it was needed to provide for events which might be significant for individual schools. Underspends had been ringfenced and returned to maintained primary schools.

Additional school improvement (Q20g)

The Vice Chair proposed that this category should be widened to include funding for the universal offer and that a split between interim leadership and universal offer should be agreed at the next meeting. The Chair noted that this, together with proposal D6 (Q24), potentially meant two sources of funding for the universal offer, and suggested that if there was an underspend it should go back to the sector. This issue could be discussed at a future meeting.

Travellers (Q20h)

LM reminded the Forum that travellers formed a vulnerable group, with a disproportionately high number of home educated pupils and a high incidence of SEN.

The Vice Chair queried the difference between quoted per pupil rates between this and other services, to be resolved outside the meeting. **Action for DG**

One member noted that traveller liaison officers did a good job in getting children into school and there were a large number of travellers in Surrey, often in pockets.

Secondary colleagues thought the service should be traded³.

Members sought further information on the number of pupils and schools supported by the service. **Action LM**

The Chair suggested that further discussion was needed in advance of a decision on “de-delegation” for 2020/21.

LM agreed that the issue would be included on the December agenda.

Representatives of maintained primary schools agreed, without a vote unless otherwise stated, “de-delegation” of

- Behaviour support services;
- Teacher association facility time;
- Primary school specific contingency;
- Funding for additional school improvement;
- Funding for travellers (by 5 votes to 1).

Representatives of maintained primary and secondary schools separately agreed “de-delegation” of

- CAPITA SIMS licences;
- Other special staff costs;
- Free school meals eligibility checking.

Representatives of maintained secondary schools rejected continued “de-delegation” of

- Teacher association facility time

Proposal D5 Primary school specific contingency (Q21)

LMcG explained that the contingency had generally been underspent and therefore the LA proposed to refund part of the surplus to primary schools.

DG explained that the proposed basis of refund reflected the origin of the sums being refunded (the oldest sums were refunded first)

Academies which had been maintained schools in 2016/17-2017/18 would receive a share of the refund.

The Forum supported the proposed refund of surplus school specific contingency to primary schools.

Proposal D6 School led universal offer (Q22-24)

The Forum was reminded that funding could only be de-delegated from maintained primary and secondary schools. There had been a majority in favour among maintained primary schools, but a majority opposed to “de-delegation” in maintained secondary schools.

Representatives of maintained primary schools agreed de-delegation for the universal offer.

Representatives of maintained secondary schools REJECTED “de-delegation” for the universal offer.

³ As indeed it already is, for the secondary sector and for academies

5 Early years funding consultation

FO circulated a summary of the responses to the early years funding consultation. There had been a total of 169 responses (a large increase on last year's 78). He reminded the Forum that no increase was expected in the DfE hourly funding rate from 2018/19 to 2019/20 but that, by reducing the contingency, the LA had proposed to increase the hourly rate for providers and also to increase additional needs funding.

There were five proposals and there had been significant support (over 70%) for all of the proposals. They had also been supported by the Early Years phase council. Those opposing the proposed basic hourly rate had generally argued that it should be higher.

The consultation had been run alongside the schools funding consultation and the results shown were for both maintained and PVI sectors.

The proposed centrally retained budget (5% of the whole) required the approval of Schools Forum. This would be used on key services to support the sector and children, including a new inclusion fund for two year olds. The PVI rep asked for more detail of how the overall funding was broken down to provide the hourly rate. She would hold a separate meeting to look at further detail and discuss in the early years phase council, as some members had asked questions.

The Forum approved the proposed central retention of 5% of early years 3-4 year old funding, by a clear majority on a show of hands

6 High needs places

DG advised that the DfE had issued its high needs funding guidance for 2019/20 earlier that week. Guidance on the process for seeking variations to the number of SEN places in academies and FE providers was expected in early October, with a deadline of 16 November for submission to ESFA. This deadline meant that it would not be possible to bring proposals to the next meeting of Forum, so if members wanted to see provider level proposals it would have to be a written consultation. The Forum's role was to be consulted.

Officers would circulate proposals to Forum members, aiming to give them a week to comment. LM advised that the LA aimed to expand state maintained provision.

7 Local formula funding issues (MFG variations and average pupil numbers)

DG sought the Forum's views on a number of technical issues which required the approval of the DfE, and on which the DfE would want to know the Forum's views.

Exclusions from the minimum funding guarantee/ceiling and MPPL calculation

This meant that the identified sums would be paid to schools on MPPL over and above the MPPL calculation, and would be ignored in the calculation of minimum funding guarantee and ceiling

DG proposed that the following should be excluded, because they were not funded from NFF funds

- Recycled contingency;
- Delegated funding for confederations and school improvement.

This means that 2018/19 allocations would not be preserved by MFG, and that 2019/20 allocations would be over and above MFG –and that all would be ignored when calculating MPPL.

The following were to be excluded from the minimum funding guarantee and ceiling only

- One off transitional funding in 2018/19 for Scott Broadwood school;
- Any adjustments to rent funding (not yet known).

Use of average pupil numbers to fund schools which were losing bulge classes

Dg reminded the Forum that when a bulge class left, the LA usually funded it for the summer term only in the year it left, but DfE permission was required not to fund the class for the whole year. A table was provided of schools in that position in 2019/20. All had been contacted, one had argued that the deduction was unfair because of its specific circumstances, a few others had confirmed understanding.

Use of average pupil numbers for schools adding year groups

A list of such schools had been provided. DG explained that Schools Forum had to be informed of these but DfE did not need to approve use of average pupil numbers to fund these schools.

The Forum supported the proposals for variations in minimum funding guarantee/MPPL and the proposed use of average pupil numbers, as set out in the paper.

8 Growing schools fund-request for vacancy funding by Merstham Park School

DG explained that Merstham Park School had opened in September 2018 and due to a combination of circumstances had opened with only 76 pupils, whereas the DfE considered that the minimum viable number for a secondary free school was 120. GLF and the DfE had formally asked that the LA considered funding vacancies up to 120 in the first year and LA officers recommended providing such funding for the first year only. Circumstances had included the need to expand other local schools early because of delayed opening of Merstham Park School. Three possible funding scenarios were described in the paper.

LM confirmed that the places in the school were needed and that the new school and the two other local schools which had expanded were all expected to fill quite quickly.

Forum members were not minded to support the proposal.

Members feared that a precedent was being set and saw this as a risk which a multi academy trust takes when promoting a free school. They also sought evidence as to whether the school could realistically have budgeted for fewer than 120 pupils, what costs had been incurred and what the academy trust's balances were (although one member noted that any MAT subsidy of this school would be at the expense of other schools, as the MAT had no external sponsor).

Officers would seek further information and share with Forum members, who would aim to make a decision before the next meeting. **Action for LMcG/DG**

9 Schools forum issues

Items for next meeting (11 December 2018 at NASUWT, Woking)

To include central services levy.

Election of Chair and vice Chair

Nominations for Chair and Vice Chair to be sent to LMcG. The current Chair and Vice Chair were willing to stand again.

Dates of 2019 meetings were circulated. LMcG would consider whether the proposed meeting on 27 September 2019 could be moved.

Updated Schools Forum guidance from DfE

DfE had updated their published guidance. A summary of the Forum's responsibilities was circulated. The full set was on gov.uk with a link from Surrey's Schools Forum website.

10 Any other business (if agreed by Chair in advance)

There was no other business.

Meeting ended 4.40pm

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 11 December 2018 1pm at NASUWT, Send