BEXLEY SCHOOLS FORUM
MINUTES OF MEETING
HELD AT CIVIC OFFICES, BEXLEYHEATH
ON 23 NOVEMBER 2011 AT 2PM

PRESENT:

Mr A Abernethy
Ms E Alton
Ms A Chamberlain
Mr I Collins
Mr R Dore
Miss M Flack
Cllr J Fuller
Mr D Friend
Mr M Hannon
Mrs L Horsman
Mr R Kelly
Mrs J Pemberton
Mr B Price MBE
Mr J Smoker
Mrs P Slonecki
Mr A Stringer

IN ATTENDANCE:

Sue Ashton	Schools Funding Manager
Geoff Wilkins	Head of Finance (Education & Social Care)
Adrian Williams	Interim Deputy Director (Planning & Resources)

Item	Agenda Item	Action
1	**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sandra Bauer, Sybil Camsey, James Hunt, Katie Perrior, Mrs Blaylock, Mark Charters, Mr S Fletcher, Mrs J Keelan, Mr T Linnett, Mr T Perrin and Mrs R Webdale.	Clerk
2	**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** There were none reported	
3	**SCHOOLS FORUM** 3.1 **Annual Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman** It was reported that Mr Ian Collins and Mr David Friend had been nominated for the role of Chairman and that Mrs Corrine Botten Mr Andy Stringer had been nominated for the role of Vice-Chairman. Members were invited to vote by secret ballot. **RESOLVED:** That **Chairman** – Mr Ian Collins was voted and accepted the position of Chairman; and **Vice-Chairman** – Mr Andy Stringer was voted and accepted the position	

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	of Vice-Chairman	
4	**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2011** **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of 21 September 2011 were agreed as a correct record of that meeting.	
5	**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES** Under item 11, members asked if all children referred to under this item had all been offered places. Members were advised that they had all been offered places, as of the week before last, but was still waiting to hear from nine families in the Sidcup. Members were advised that Bexley had been awarded £7M basic needs funding by government to help keep pace with the increasing demand for places in schools. In response to a question about the borough's travel plans, officers replied that Bexley now had for the first time a number of reception aged pupils travelling more than 2 miles to school and confirmed that free bus passes had been offered to parents who needed help with their travelling costs. Looking ahead under Item 7, members agreed to form a small constitutional working group which would review amongst other things, its membership and the potential impact the new Education Bill could present for the Forum. It would hold its first meeting sometime in the New Year and it was agreed that members should be given the opportunity to submit their nominations for the working group (teachers through their HT representatives) and that all members of the School's Forum be given the opportunity to put forward their views.	Clerk
6	**FORUM SUB GROUPS** **Funding and Contingency Working Group – Minutes of the meeting of 7 November 2011- Received for Information** It was reported that the Funding and Contingency Working Group (FCWG) considered a full and long agenda at its meeting, which was well attended. Members were advised that all the recommendations to consult on were firm recommendations to the Forum. At its last meeting the group requested scenarios on several potential changes to the funding formula from April 2012, which would be considered by the Forum under Item 7 of the agenda report. Members attention was also drawn to the negotiations with Cleve Park School to convert to academy status and how their deficit would be resolved were now nearing conclusion and would be of no cost to the DSG . Discussions over St Augustine's day care centre were ongoing with the Diocese and legal teams. Members were also advised that AET were now making payments to cover Bexleyheath School's deficit One member reported that she had only very recently been made aware that she was a member of the FCWG and expressed her disappointment at not being notified sooner of this meeting because there had been a number of SEN items on the agenda that she would have liked to have commented on. Officers gave their apologies and confirmed that her details would be added to the distribution list.	Sue Ashton

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7	**2012-13 Bexley Funding Formula Consultation:** Members were advised that the FCWG had discussed possible changes to Bexley's funding formula at their last meeting, with a view to simplifying it by reducing duplication caused by the introduction of the Pupil Premium. The overall aim of this was to reduce the number of factors from 20 to 5, which officers confirmed would bring them in line with future proposals. It was also reported that Bexley would consult with schools and academies in the first week of December and would report back on this consultation at 1st February's meeting for a decision.	
7a	**School Budget Share** Members of the Schools Forum were asked to consider the following FCWG recommendations: **1.** It was noted that some schools still maintained a gifted and talented register and officers confirmed they would take this data into consideration at January's census.**- AGREED** **2.** Whilst members expressed their concern at the impact the changes proposed could have on schools/academies with high turn over of pupils, they agreed with FCWG's recommendation that it would be beneficial to seek schools and academies views via consultation **- AGREED** **3.** Members agreed to consult on removing the school meals basic utility and production kitchen formula factors and add to core funding **- AGREED** **4.** Members agreed that Voluntary Aided schools should also be consulted on changing the eligibility of the formula factor.**– AGREED** **5.** Members agreed to consult on mainstream integration units formula factor for special schools and allocate per place **– AGREED** **6.** Officers reported that SPM was an historical factor of just under £9,000 and was warded to special schools that had more than one type of need or more than one school phase. Some members considered that this proposal would result in more losers than winners and moved to defer this item in favour of it being considered as part of a much wider review of SEN budgets, but was lost on a vote of 9/3 in support of consulting on this proposal now **– AGREED**	
7b	**Funding for Resourced Provisions** It was reported that there are currently 20 Bexley mainstream schools and academies with SEN resourced provisions and each school had received a management fee and a certain amount per place based on bandings of need. Members were also advised that the value given to each banding was historic and whilst there was no information available on the original assumptions for these values, it was noted that the position for the 2011-12 financial years was available in Appendix A. During their discussion some members expressed concern over the proposed contact ratios were considered significantly different to what was available to them now and for the purpose of the consultation requested that SEN contact ratios be amended to a ratio of 1:8-10 as opposed to a ratio of just 1:10, which	

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	would make it easier for schools to reorganise different levels of need. Officers indicated that more concise tables would be circulated with the final consultation**– AGREED**	
7c	**Early Years Single Funding Formula** It was reported that the Early Years Funding Group were planning to consult with funded early years settings over the proposals and a final decision on what to consult on would be taken at the end of November. During their discussion members recommended that both supplements be added to the base rate and agreed that the SEN Primary Group's views should also be sought on this proposal – **AGREED**	Judith Pemberton
8.	**Pupil Premium Update** It was reported fro information that the DfE had confirmed the total funding available for the Pupil Premium would double the funding currently available for pupils from low income families from April 2012 due to increasing primary numbers nationally and the proposal to widen the criteria for eligibility to an ever 3 or ever 6 measure. Members were also advised that all Local Authorities' were only responsible for funding pupils who were residents of their borough. Members noted that revisions to the new Schools Admissions Code would widen the categories for looked after children but officers reported that it was too early for them to comment on how this would affect funding. **Reported for information**	
9	**Schools Funding Reforms (Verbal Update)** Members received an oral update on the Schools Funding Reform. which included the following: 1. a share of the Schools Contingency Budget should go to Academies 2. there would be no new decision making powers for the Schools Forum 3. the Local Authority could retain budget for central services if agreed by the Schools Forum to commence April 2012/13. 4. Local Authority should calculate funding to ensure the correct share is allocated to schools – but this would be decided first with the Education Funding Agency. Officers indicated that more information could be obtained from Fiscal Studies impact analysis report on the national funding reforms and that members could expect an update on funding sometime in the New Year. **Reported for information only**	Sue Ashton
10.	**Schools Finance Regulations** The contents of the report was noted by members. **Reported for information only**	
11.	**Schools With Deficit Budgets**	

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	In response to a question, officers replied that the Local Authority did not give financial support to schools in deficit but could give advice if it was needed. **Reported for information only**	
12.	**AOB** There was no other business reported.	
13.	**Date of Next Meeting** It was reported that the next meeting of the Schools Forum would be held on Wednesday, 1 February 2012, 2-4pm, Public Gallery, Civic Offices, Bexleyheath	Clerk

The meeting closed at 3.35 pm

Signed:…… Date: 1st February 2012