

EAST SUSSEX SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES of a meeting of the East Sussex Schools Forum held at Wellhurst Golf and Country Club on 20 September 2019.

PRESENT

Richard Thomas (Pevensey & Westham Primary)
Jane Johnson (Newick CE Primary)
Monica Whitehead (Claverham Community College)
James Freeston (King Offa Primary Academy)
Phil Matthews (Hailsham Community College Academy Trust)
Joanna Sanchez (Diocese of Arundel and Brighton)
Hugh Hennebry - Chair (Uckfield College)
Sarah Pringle (Seahaven Academy)
Geoffry Lucas (Etchingham CE Primary School)
Vicky Richards (St Mark's CEP School)
Phil Clarke (Trade Union Representative)
Kate Owbridge (Ashdown Primary)
Lizzie Field (Park Mead Primary)
Helen Key (Chailey School)
Frank Stanford (Sabden Multi Academy Trust)

Richard Preece (Saxon Mount and Torfield)
Mandy Watson (Diocese of Chichester)
Richard Blakeley (Harlands Primary School)
Cllr Bob Standley (Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability)
Stuart Gallimore (Director Children's Services)
Mark Whiffin (Head of Finance)
Fiona Wright (Assistant Director Education & ISEND)
Edward Beale (Schools Funding Manager)
Sarah Rice (Finance Manager – Schools)
Nathan Caine (Head of ISEND)
Kirsten Coe (Principal Finance Officer)

Amanda Altenhoven (Clerk)

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Hugh welcomed all and thanked everyone for their attendance. He confirmed the meeting was quorate, recognising the apologies (below). Hugh noted that Richard Blakeley is now Headteacher at Harlands Primary School.

- 1.2 Apologies received from:
- Andrew Ferguson (Rye Academy)
 - Debbie Gilbert (Burwash CEP School)

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- 2.1 The Minutes for 12 July were signed off by the Chair as a true record.

3 MATTERS ARISING AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- 3.1 There were no declarations of interest and there were no matters arising.

4 FUNDING FORMULA UPDATE

4.1 Ed gave an update on the funding formula and the proposals that the funding formula working group (FFWG) were putting forward for consultation. He continued with a progress update from the May 2019 and June 2019 meetings.

4.2 Ed also explained that the Term time only staff (TTO) matter was looked at by the working group in September, which was an item raised at the July Schools Forum meeting. He further explained the various proposals for consultation that the working group had looked at.

4.3 Geoffrey advised that at the July meeting he raised concern regarding the lump sum level and was concerned about the impact on rural primary schools. He confirmed he had raised the issue with his local MP as had previously been discussed. Geoffrey reiterated his concern that the lump sum under the NFF was too low for rural primary schools, and raised a query regarding the intention of the FFWG to reduce the lump sum within the local formula.

4.4 Ed explained that the lump sum changes had been modelled and considered at length by the group. The primary lump sum being proposed is still higher than under the NFF levels. Ed also commented that the working group must consider the impact across all schools. Jane commented that the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) would help protect schools and the proposal to increase the MFG to a slightly higher level, if funding levels permit, was included to that end.

- 4.5 It was then advised by Ed that schools would now be consulted on the proposals.

5 CENTRAL SERVICES BLOCK APPROVAL 2020/21

5.1 Sarah gave an update regarding the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) referring to the paper tabled. Sarah explained that Schools Forum were required to approve the spending plans for the CSSB. Sarah reminded the forum of the savings that had been identified in recent years that had resulted in one-off distributions of additional funds to schools.

5.2 Sarah confirmed that, in line with plans outlined last year, further savings had been identified for 2020/21. Sarah highlighted that it was proposed that these identified savings (£1.8m) were allocated to cover backpay liabilities on behalf of schools and academies arising from the term time only (TTO) staff pay amendment issue that had arisen during 2019.

5.3 Sarah also highlighted the level of uncertainty in the amount of funding that would be received within the CSSB in 2020/21 and drew members' attention to the further proposal to

allocate up to a further £2m to address pension liabilities associated with the TTO amendments, if the CSSB funding confirmed is in excess of the level expected as laid out in the paper.

5.4 Vicky Richards asked if there was an insurance policy for the £1.8m to be used for the TTO payments, which has been identified in the CCSB. Sarah advised that there was not. It was then asked regarding TTO which schools would be affected, and it was noted that this was across the board. Sarah went on to briefly explain the TTO payments issue. Fiona then further explained the TTO back-pay and which years would be affected and then further explained how the pensions were affected.

5.5 Hugh commented on point 4.2 within the paper and wanted to minute his thanks to ESCC. He also commented that the working group had considered the proposal and thought it would be best to have a collective approach to the issue. Hugh went on to comment regarding the tables within the paper and asked if these items are no longer being funded. Fiona advised that as well as reviewing how these areas would be delivered, the elected members were also keen to have these commitments continued to be funded from council resources. She therefore advised that these services would be able to continue, albeit potentially in a different way.

5.6 Monica raised concern as to whether enough information was known on the TTO issue for a vote to be taken today. Fiona went on to explain that the meeting yesterday with trade unions had been very positive and a decision was required in order to give clarity to the process and move forward and make further arrangements.

5.7 Voting then took place to request approval for the use of CSSB funding for 2020/21 as detailed line by line in the paper.

Voting Summary for the On-going responsibilities and the Historic Commitments:
Voting was for all forum members.

Number of Yes	Number of No
17	0

6 SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS UPDATE

6.1 Sarah explained the paper, outlining the purpose of the Scheme. She advised that there had been some changes to the current statutory guidance which needed to be incorporated and some amendments had been included to reflect current practices in certain areas. Any change to the scheme needed to be approved at schools forum level, hence the need for this vote. There were no questions asked regarding the changes and updates to the scheme.

Voting Summary:
Approval relates to maintained school reps only.

Number of Yes	Number of No
11	0

7 DE-DELEGATION APPROVAL 2020/21

7.1 Sarah explained the first part of the paper which related to the delegation of amounts for contingency, Administration of Free School Meals and Jury service. Sarah explained that these would be familiar to members and the details of these services remained the same as last year.

The Local Authority requires School Forum approval for a number of services to be de-delegated for 2020/21.

7.3 It was explained that voting was for maintained schools only. It was asked if there was further clarification needed on any of these elements and no one needed further clarification.

Voting Summary:

(School Members only - Specifically maintained school representatives)

	Primary Phase		Secondary Phase	
	Number of Yes	Number of No	Number of Yes	Number of No
Contingency	7	0	3	0
Admin of FSM	7	0	3	0
Jury Service	7	0	3	0

7.4 Nathan then gave an update regarding EALs and the Behaviour Support Service (ESBAS).

7.5 Nathan advised that the LA took a clear steer on the development of new models for the EALs service from extensive consultations with schools, including Schools' Forum, over the course of 14 months and thanked the forum for engaging in the various consultations over that period. Engagement across the board had been significant and the service has been at the forefront of creating/developing revised models based on staff views on what was needed to improve outcomes for children with EALs across the county.

7.6 The attention of Schools' Forum members was drawn to the financial appraisal for Model 3, which set out the agreed model for delivery from April 2020 and the key components of the support that would be offered to schools. In order for this model to be viable, the Local Authority would need a commitment of £440K per year, for a 2-year period, in order to continue to run EALs. It was further explained that, if schools did not agree to de-delegate sufficient funding to meet the minimum required commitment at Schools' Forum, then the service will then go out to individual schools with a view of securing the minimum level of funding on an individual basis. If insufficient funding is committed from maintained schools by 28 September, the service will start consultation for closing the service from 01 April 2020.

7.7 Hugh questioned the different options on the vote and Nathan went on to explain that the options presented in the letter were in line with previous discussions at Schools' Forum. It was then commented that the members did not have enough information to vote today for both themselves and their colleagues. Discussion ensued around the voting, the information provided in advance and the opportunity for voting on different options rather than just one option.

7.8 Fiona commented that the paper clearly sets out how much funding is needed in order to keep the service open. She then went on to explain the de-delegation figures. Further explanation was given to the figures in table 3.4 and the different requirements from each primary, secondary and academies. Nathan confirmed that academies had committed £33k by the deadline which meant that a vote from primary maintained schools to de-delegate 100% of the funding would, therefore, mean that the service is viable from April 2020. Hugh went on to make sure that all members were clear on what they are voting on. Jane wanted to have the votes from individual schools sent to the forum members before this voting today for clarity and so that all schools fully understood the percentages that they were voting on. Phil asked that an email is sent to members clarifying what the vote means for all schools, explaining the various percentages from each primary, secondary and the academies. It was noted that the voting timescales were clear in the letter that had been sent to all schools and that it was not possible to require responses from all maintained schools in advance as any follow up actions would be dependent on the vote.

7.9 It was agreed that the constitution of Schools' Forum only allowed for a vote to be taken to de-delegate or not on a 10% basis, so this is what would be voted on. It was agreed that Nathan and Hugh would send an email to all Headteachers to confirm the outcome of the vote. Hugh went on to explain that he would write to secondary schools re a series of options and clarify that commitments from individual schools needed to be in by the 28 September. Fiona made it clear that the service would only be accessible between April 2020 and March 2022 to those schools that buy in by the 28.09.19.

7.10 Nathan advised the members that out of 20 academies who made returns, (out of 53 academies in total) 5 have committed and 15 have said no commitment.

7.11 Nathan then moved on to explain that ESBAS has reduced over the years. There is continued and growing significant concern across all schools regarding how we support young people who present with, in particular, social, emotional and mental health difficulties. ESBAS is the only service that supports children in this area and, ever since the central resource has reduced, there has been no improvement in exclusions or outcomes for this group of children. There have been other reductions in the funding for ESBAS and the LA has looked at how these could be mitigated; there is no scope for further reductions and so if funding is not de-delegated there would have to be a review on what the service would be able to deliver in the future across behaviour and attendance. Voting then took place on de-delegating EALs for two years and ESBAS for 2020/21.

	Primary Phase		Secondary Phase	
	Number of Yes	Number of No	Number of Yes	Number of No
EALs	7	0	0	3
Behaviour Support Service	7	0	0	3

8 AOB

8.1 It was noted that Anna Robinson has stepped down from Forum. Hugh asked if Sarah and Phil could find another Academy representative member for the forum as there are now two vacancies for Academies.

8.2 Draft items for next meeting:

- Growth Funding and Falling Rolls approval
- Funding Formula and Consultation Update

Meeting concluded at 9.27am

Next meeting - Friday, 22 November 2019, at 0830 hours at Wellshurst Golf Club