

EAST SUSSEX SCHOOLS' FORUM

MINUTES of a meeting of the Schools' Forum held remotely with Microsoft Teams on 20 November 2020

PRESENT

Hugh Hennebry - **Chair** (Uckfield College)

Sarah Pringle (Seahaven Academy)

Kate Owbridge (Ashdown Primary)

Gavin Bailey (Swale Academy Trust)

Mandy Watson (Diocese of Chichester)

Richard Blakeley (Harlands Primary School)

Richard Preece (Saxon Mount and Torfield)

Joanna Sanchez (Diocese of Arundel and Brighton)

Phil Clarke (Trade Union Representative)

Tom Scully (University of Brighton Academies Trust)

James Freeston (King Offa Primary Academy)

Susan Thompson (Ditchling Primary)

Jo Foulkes (Sabden Multi Academy Trust)

CLlr Bob Standley (Lead Member for Education and Inclusion,
Special Educational Needs and Disability)

Stuart Gallimore (Director Children's Services)

Fiona Wright (Assistant Director Education & ISEND)

Mark Whiffin (Head of Finance)

Edward Beale (Schools Funding Manager)

Sarah Rice (Finance Manager – Schools)

Kirsten Coe (Principal Finance Officer)

Gary Langford (Place Planning manager)

Rawdon Phillips (Insurance Manager)

Rachel King (Clerk)

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1 Hugh welcomed all and thanked everyone for their attendance. An additional welcome was made to Susan Thompson who is a new representative for maintained schools, primary phase head teachers and Jo Foulkes, the new Alternative Provision representative who has replaced Frank Stanford.

It was confirmed the meeting was quorate, recognising the apologies below.

1.2 Apologies received from:

- Emily Beer (Willingdon School)
- Geoffry Lucas (Etchingam CE Primary School)
- Phil Matthews (Hailsham Community College Academy Trust)

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 The minutes for the meeting held were approved as a true record and will be signed by the Chair and scanned to Rachel King.

3 MATTERS ARISING AND DE-DELEGATED ITEMS

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

4 GROWTH FUND / FALLING ROLLS FUND

4.1 Gary Langford introduced this paper and outlined the proposals. He then requested Schools' Forum approval for funding to be used as a Growth fund. Jo Foulkes asked in terms of the new school, are we able to know which school it is? Gary answered that it was the new primary school in Hailsham. The Chair thanked Jo for her question.

This was voted on and the electronic 'hands up' used for ease of counting. Votes were as follows:

Number of Yes	Number of No
10	0

5 TO UPDATE

5.1 Fiona gave a verbal update on the current TTO position. Phil Clarke asked if GMB and UNISON had been spoken to regarding this proposal, Fiona explained that the whole process that was proposed at Schools Forum was approved by GMB and UNISON. Tom Scully asked if the amount proposed per pupil would include academies as well as maintained. Fiona said yes, all the work in this process has been with all staff in academies and maintained schools. .

This update had the broad support of Schools' Forum. Hugh also thanked East Sussex HR for managing the whole process so well.

6 CENTRAL SCHOOL SERVICES BLOCK 2021/22

6.1 Ed Beale outlined this paper that set out the line by line proposals. Like previous years, this was voting for the ongoing responsibilities and the historic commitments. Hugh thanked Ed for the clear report and then asked Schools’ Forum to vote. Results were as follows:

Number of Yes	Number of No
9	1

7 ESCC FUNDING FORMULA CONSULTATION UPDATE

7.1 Ed Beale introduced this paper. It related to the outcome of the recent ESCC Funding Formula consultation. Hugh thanked Ed and said that it was interesting that there was such a strong consensus to all be working exactly as the NFF.

8 ESCC SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS

8.1 Sarah Rice introduced this paper. There are some changes to the scheme (as indicated in the paper). The changes were approved by Schools’ Forum.

9 RPA INSURANCE UPDATE

9.1 Rawdon Phillips led on this paper and gave an insurance update. Jo Foulkes asked if there was an idea of what other schools in other counties have done, if they have gone with RPA. Rawdon said he works closely with most County Councils in the South East and as far as he is aware and, with particular reference to neighbouring counties, schools have stayed within the LA arrangement and this has not been pursued as a de-delegation item. He asked for a recommendation to be agreed on as follows:

- **agree that de-delegation for insurance is not pursued at this time**
- **note that it is recommended that ESCC schools remain within the existing ESCC Corporate insurance arrangements and do not opt to join the RPA scheme.**

It was agreed that the de-delegation for insurance is not pursued at this time and the recommendation noted. This will be revisited in September and November and then annually. In favour of the proposal (whole school forum vote):

Number of Yes	Number of No
4	1

It was raised that, as this was a de-delegation question, this should just be a vote for maintained schools and it was agreed to retake the vote with maintained schools only. Kate Owbridge stated that she believed Insurance options needed to be investigated fully, but now was not the time to take the decisions, so supported the recommendation. Susan Thompson asked what the impact on schools remaining in the ESCC insurance scheme would be if some schools joined the RPA. Rawdon explained in detail the reasons for the recommendation and explained that ESCC are legally required to go to the market for tender to ensure value for money. He raised concerns around the lack of clarity and impact on administration of the RPA would be if a large

number of maintained schools moved over to it as a group. There was also wider concerns around the impact on the insurance market for schools and longer term impact on premiums. James Freeston said they as an academy opted for RPA as it was best value for money. Gavin Bailey said he insures through Zurich which matches the RPA price. Rawdon agreed that the RPA had developed for the academy market in order to give an affordable option for academies and served it well, however maintained schools already have the corporate option that worked well for them and has the benefit of a local team administering claims on behalf of schools.

Hugh asked just maintained schools to vote in favour of the proposal:

Number of Yes	Number of No
2	0

10 AOB

- 10.1 Fiona Wright addressed the forum to say there has been a recognition in the Council that during this time schools are facing financial pressures. The services across the Council have been looking at ways to support school budgets and a number of budgets had been identified that could provide rebates to schools now rather than carrying forward underspent funds for next year's budget. These could be released before Christmas to support school planning for the final quarter of the financial year. A budget for consideration is the de-delegated contingency fund. Normally 30% of unspent contingency is distributed back to maintained schools, but given the current exceptional circumstances, 55% is being distributed to Primary Phase and 75% to the Secondary Phase and this will occur this month instead. Hugh said schools are hugely grateful for the consideration when we know that within the LA there are massive pressures dealing with the pandemic, with other accountability's and responsibilities beyond school, so thank you. Hugh asked if the detail of the budget rebates could be provided for each individual school. Fiona Wright agreed to distribute the information to all schools next week.
- 10.2 In recognition of Fiona Wright's last Schools Forum meeting, Hugh expressed his well wishes on behalf of School's Forum and all the heads over the years who have been on the forum representing schools.

Meeting concluded at 09:56 am

Next meeting – Friday 15 January 2021 08:30am. Location TBC - Wellshurst Golf and Country Club or Microsoft Teams.