

EAST SUSSEX SCHOOLS' FORUM

MINUTES of a meeting of the Schools' Forum held remotely with Microsoft Teams on 19 November 2021

PRESENT

Hugh Hennebry - **Chair** (Uckfield College)
Gavin Bailey (Swale Academy Trust)
Richard Blakeley (Harlands Primary)
Phil Clarke (Trade Union Representative)
Jon Gilbert (Diocese of Chichester)
Jane Johnson (Newick CE Primary)
Helen Key (Chailey School)
Phil Matthews (Hailsham Community College Academy Trust)
Kate Owbridge (Ashdown Primary)
Richard Preece (Saxon Mount and Torfield)
Sarah Pringle (Seahaven Academy)
Joanna Sanchez (Diocese of Arundel and Brighton)
Tom Scully (University of Brighton Academies Trust)
Susan Thompson (Ditchling Primary)
Monica Whitehead (Claverham Community College)

Cllr Bob Standley (Lead Member for Education and Inclusion,
Special Educational Needs and Disability)
Alison Jeffery (Director Children's Services)
Nathan Caine (Head of ISEND)
Mark Whiffin (Head of Finance)
Edward Beale (Schools Funding Manager)
Sarah Rice (Finance Manager – Schools)
Kirsten Coe (Schools Finance Team Lead)
Martin Kelly (Strategy Manager, Apprenticeship Levy)
Kim Larkin (Apprentice Programme Coordinator)
Rachel King (Clerk)

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Hugh welcomed all and thanked everyone for their attendance. It was confirmed the meeting was quorate, recognising the apologies below.
- 1.2 Apologies received from:
 - Geoffrey Lucas (Etchingham CE Primary School) unable to join

- James Freeston (King Offa Primary Academy)
- Jo Foulkes (Sabden Multi Academy Trust)

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 17 SEPTEMBER 2021

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

3. MATTER ARISING AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

3.1 There were no matters arising or declaration of interests

4. GROWTH FUND/FALLING ROLLS FUND (Approval)

4.1 Forum members were advised on spend in the 2021/22 financial year and were asked to seek approval for funding for 2022/23 financial year.

4.2 The Forum discussed the proposal. Key points raised were.

- Members asked for clarity re formula of growth fund, pan size and eligibility
- It was noted that there is a need for a review of criteria and funding levels to ensure efficiency of the fund

4.3 All Forum members were asked to vote to approve an allocation of £724,386 for the 2022/23 Growth Fund, votes below

Number voting 'Yes'	Number voting 'No'
12	0

4.4 **ACTION:** It was proposed and agreed that a review takes place of the criteria of the fund

5. DE-DELEGATION CONTINGENCY (Information – Action from September meeting)

5.1 **ACTION:** The Chair asked if a report for the November meeting could be produced regarding the contingency fund outlining two main points

- Looking back at how the money is spent over the last 5 years
- The consideration of how that amount is calculated

5.2 The Forum were presented with the report. A discussion was held, and members were asked to note this update.

5.3 **ACTION:** For a future Schools' Forum it was requested from the Finance Team to provide some financial modelling, showing the effect of a reduction in the amount per pupil "charged"

6. DSG - CENTRAL SCHOOL SERVICES BLOCK (CSSB) (Approval)

- 6.1 The Forum were provided with an update and then asked to approve the proposals for the Central School Services Block for 2022/23.
- 6.2 All Forum members were asked to vote for the approval in relation to the funding of ongoing responsibilities and the historic commitments – votes below.

Number voting 'Yes'	Number voting 'No'
13	0

7. **APPRENTICESHIP LEVY (Information)**

- 7.1 The Forum were presented with an update on the use of the apprenticeship levy and how it could be better utilised with the support of the East Sussex County Council Apprenticeship team.
- 7.2 A discussion was held, and it was recommended to the Forum that members encourage staff and schools to meet with the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) team to discuss the best use of the levy for staff training and workforce development. It was noted that the ESCC team are open to discuss and give advice with non-maintained schools.

8. **HIGH NEEDS BLOCK (HNB) FUNDING – PREPARATION FOR 14 JANUARY 2022 SCHOOLS' FORUM (Information)**

- 8.1 In advance of the January meeting Members were provided with an overview of the current position in relation to SEND demand. A fuller discussion regarding the HNB will take place and Members were asked to prepare for this.
- 8.2 Key points to note.

- Additional pressure across statutory processes, 60% increase in demand for Education Health and Care (EHC) Needs Assessments compared to last year. Putting significant pressure on Assessment and Planning (A&P) team, resulting in diminished service to schools. Additional funding has been required to the A&P team as a result to increase capacity. However, this funding doesn't cover the main drivers for demand in relation to capacity and inclusion across the wider system.
- The East Sussex (ES) HNB settlement for 2022/23 will be increasing in April and presents the opportunity to explore improvements across SEND. Although it might be tempting to use this resource to increase specialist placements, the number of children placed in special schools across ES is already high and the increases in placements this year have not seen an impact on demand. Data was shared which showed that the number of children with EHCPs placed in mainstream schools had fallen by 369 compared to 2016. The number placed in special schools had increased by 339 over the same period. At the latest census date, there were just 17 local authorities across the country with a higher proportion of children placed in mainstream school. The level of expenditure in the INMS sector is also set to increase by £3m over the current year compared to 2020/21.

- The issue of joint working over this issue has already been identified as a priority across primary and secondary boards and it is important that the strategic use of HNB aligns with these discussions.

9. **ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR(Approval)**

- 9.1 The clerk asked for nominations from school members for the succession of Schools' Forum Chair and Vice Chair.
- 9.2 There were no nominations. Nominations were declared left open, and the election will be re visited. Any member between now and January that wished to nominate privately, were invited to email the clerk before January meeting.

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 10.1 This is the last Schools Forum for both Jane Johnson (Primary Governor Rep) and Susan Thompson (Primary Headteacher Rep). The chair thanked them both for their service.
- 10.2 The chair asked for this note from Jane to be included.

I have greatly valued the opportunity to serve on School's Forum and give a serving primary headteachers perspective on the issues discussed. In the challenging times in which we work, I am pleased to have played a small part in considerations on how the limited financial resources available can be used to best serve all the children in East Sussex. I wish you all on the forum all the best for the future

Meeting concluded at 09:46 am

Next meeting – Friday 14 January 2022 08:30am. Location TBC - Wellshurst Golf and Country Club or Microsoft Teams.