

EAST SUSSEX SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES of a meeting of the East Sussex Schools Forum held at Remote, via Microsoft Teams on 16 September 2022.

PRESENT

Secondary

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

Helen Key (Chailey School)

Secondary Governors

Monica Whitehead (Claverham Community College)

Secondary Academy

Phil Matthews (Hailsham Community College Academy Trust)

Tom Scully (University of Brighton Academies Trust)

Primary

Richard Blakeley (Harlands Primary)

Gemma White (The Bluebell Federation)

Laura Cooper (St John's CE School)

Primary Governors

Katherine Rabson Stark (South Ashdown Schools Federation)

Debra Vice Holt (Oak Tree Federation)

Primary Academy

James Freeston (King Offa Primary Academy)

Special Schools

Julie Campion (Grove Park School Crowborough)

Special Academy

Richard Preece (Saxon Mount and Torfield)

Jo Foulkes (SABDEN Multi Academy Trust)

Non School Members

Joanna Sanchez (Diocese of Arundel and Brighton)

Jon Gilbert (Diocese of Chichester)

Observers

Cllr Maples

Patrick Grant – DfE Representative

ESCC representatives

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)

Elizabeth Funge (Assistant Director Education)

Edward Beale (Schools Funding Manager)

Sarah Rice (Schools Finance Manager)

Rachel King (Clerk)

9. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

9.1 The chair welcomed all and thanked everyone for their attendance. A warm welcome was given to new members. Gemma White and Laura Cooper, representing headteachers in maintained primary schools and Debra Vice Holt, representing governors in the primary phase. Cllr Wendy Maples joined for the second time as an observer. In addition, Patrick Grant, from the DfE attended as an observer also.

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

9.3 Apologies received from:

- Mark Whiffin (Head of Finance)
- Kirsten Coe (Schools Finance Team Lead)
- Phil Clarke (Trade Union Representative)
- Gavin Bailey (Swale Academy Trust)

10. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 1 JULY 2022

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

11. MATTERS ARISING AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

11.1 There were no matters arising or declarations of interest.

12. FUNDING FOR UKRAINE PUPILS

12.1 Forum members were given an overview of the funding for school for Ukrainian pupils, setting out the proposals for allocating funding to schools for children arriving under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.

Key points:

- The local authority (LA) has opted not to retain any of the funds but instead pass all funds received onto the relevant schools/academies
- LA is now receiving funds in two instalments, September (now received) 25% of funding and October remaining 75% of funding
- Funding available for children arriving after May 31 2022 will be on a pro rata basis

Action: members requested more information on free school meals for Ukrainian pupils. It was confirmed that more information would be sent out, to schools, when known.

13. DE-DELEGATION 2023/24

13.1 Forum members to be advised which budgets were de-delegated by schools in 2022/23 and seek approval on de-delegated budgets for 2023/24. Primary and secondary maintained school forum members were asked to vote which services should be provided centrally by the authority for 2023/24.

| | Primary Phase (5 members) | | Secondary Phase (3 Members) | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| | No. of 'Yes' | No. of 'No' | No. of 'Yes' | No. of 'No' |
| Contingency | 5 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| Administration of FSM | 5 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Jury Service and Union Duties | 5 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Behaviour Support Services | 5 | 0 | 0 | 3 |

14. IMPACT OF RISING COSTS ON SCHOOL BUDGETS

14.1 An illustrative overview of the impact of increasing cost pressures compared to additional funding received across ESCC schools for 2022/23 was presented to forum members. Information provided was approximate and included some assumptions and extrapolations, with the aim of providing an overview context for ESCC. The illustration was based on maintained schools' data only as this is the only detailed cost information is available to officers. As both maintained schools and academies are funded on the same basis and experience similar cost pressures this could reasonably be extrapolated to reflect the impact across all. Forum members were reminded that specific impacts for individual schools would vary and schools had been sent updated guidance on how to adjust plans for the latest pay award announcements so schools could assess individual impacts. Key points made were:

- For 2022/23 ESCC received a 3% increase in funding, for maintained schools this equates to approximately £4.5M (maintained schools accounting for 47% of the total funding awarded to schools and academies in ESCC). A further £4.5m was awarded to maintained schools in the supplementary grant.
- Against this funding the following estimated cost increases will impact in this financial year
- Pay Awards £8m (£3.5m of this additional cost should be included in current plans, an additional £4.5m is the estimated impact of pay awards announced in July in excess of budgeted levels)
- Social Care Levy £1.5m (already included in budgets)
- Energy £2.3m (£1.8m increase already included in budgets, a further £0.5m impact estimated).
- General Inflation £1.5m
- In summary, for maintained schools, against an increased income in the region of £9m, additional costs of £13.3m are estimated. Schools' original submitted budget plans are estimated to have accounted for all of the income increase and £6.8m of the additional cost. A further £6.5m additional cost increases are expected to impact this financial year on top of those already accounted for in budgets. The impact of these increases are compounded in future years.

14.2 Discussion amongst members confirmed the financial pressures and forecasts at individual schools and trusts were in line with the illustration presented with several members expressing their concern and the general feeling was that of unprecedented pressure on schools' finances.

14.3 A question was asked if the social care levy increase is reversed would funding be adjusted. No information/announcement was available to answer this at this time.

14.4 Acknowledgement was made regarding the support schools had received around budgeting and adjustments required in response to announcements. Concern was expressed about the impact of the timing of pay award announcements which caused significant additional workload and stress to school staff and significant impact to current year financial plans.

Action: The Chair/ESCC finance to co-ordinate a letter which will be sent to the government/DfE. This is to highlight the requirement for more appropriate timings of announcements, such as pay increases, due to the impact they have on schools' budgets. This was supported by forum members and ESCC officers.

15. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

15.1 Forum members were then asked to nominate a Chair and Vice chair for Schools' Forum.

15.2 It was agreed by members as follows:
Chair – Hugh Hennebry
Vice chair/s – Jo Foulkes and James Freeston

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

16.1 A farewell from forum members to Tom Scully. Thanks were given to him for his time and commitment to schools' forum.

Meeting concluded at 09:29 am

Next meeting – Friday 18 November 2022 08:30am. Location - Microsoft Teams