

COUNTY FORUM: Summer Term 2017

SUMMARY REPORT

Meeting: **County Forum Meeting** comprising of the County Consultative Committee and East Sussex Governors' Representative Group (ESGRG)

Date: 25th April 2017

Venue: St Mary's House, Eastbourne

Present: Cllr Nick Bennett (Chair) (NB), Richard Sage (RS), Stuart Ford (SF), Cllr Shuttleworth (AS), Karen Marr (KM), Denise Kong (DK), Mark Winton, Sarah Rice, Julie Dougill (JD), Matthew Jones (MJ), Claire Roberts CR), Fiona Wright (FW), Geoffry Lucas (GL), Jane McCarthy-Penman (JMP).

Apologies: Cllr Galley, Cllr Forward, Monica Whitehead, Ian Pickard, Ray Donelan

Item	Decisions and Outcomes	Action																																			
1.	Apologies for Absence Apologies were received and noted as above.																																				
2.	Declaration of Interest Disclosures by all members present of personal interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the member regards the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct.																																				
3.	Minutes of previous County Forum Meeting – 25th January 2017 The minutes were noted as a true record. The Autumn and Spring Area Meeting attendance figures were noted as below: <table><tr><th>Area</th><th colspan="2"></th><th colspan="2"></th></tr><tr><th></th><th>Total number of governors attending</th><th>Total number of schools represented</th><th>Summer 2016</th><th>Autumn 2016</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>Autumn 2016</td><td>Spring 2017</td><td>11</td><td>15</td></tr><tr><td>Eastbourne</td><td>18</td><td>21</td><td>16</td><td>19</td></tr><tr><td>Hastings/Bexhill</td><td>20</td><td>22</td><td>17</td><td>15</td></tr><tr><td>Lewes</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>13</td><td>17</td></tr><tr><td>Uckfield</td><td>21</td><td>20</td><td>57</td><td>66</td></tr></table>	Area						Total number of governors attending	Total number of schools represented	Summer 2016	Autumn 2016		Autumn 2016	Spring 2017	11	15	Eastbourne	18	21	16	19	Hastings/Bexhill	20	22	17	15	Lewes	19	20	13	17	Uckfield	21	20	57	66	
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4.	Academies Update – Fiona Wright FW said there wasn't much to update. A number of sessions have been run across the County and																																				

	<p>they have been well attended. The government's position has not changed regarding the Academy agenda. Some schools have been advised it is not being taken forward. However the direction has been well set. The debate will happen after the General Election. The Local Authority will continue the policy of working in partnership and helping schools explore the academy options.</p>	
5.	<p>Finance and Audit – Mark Winton and Sarah Rice</p> <p>The presentation focussed on issues such as “how am I going to balance my budget” and “doing more with less”. The discussion will be around change. There are a number of challenges facing schools with budgets, including staffing structures and where cuts and savings can be made. Governors need to understand the impact of these decisions.</p> <p>Many schools are forecasting deficit budgets. Schools need to balance their budgets. A deficit budget will need to have a recovery plan. There is guidance as to what is statutory and cannot be cut out. Governors need to know what questions they should be asking and this will be incorporated. The presentation will build on improvements to financial control and asking questions that challenge headteachers. The role of governors within finance and audit will be defined. Everyone needs to be able to challenge on the budget.</p> <p>CC to go out to all governors to identify and issues, questions or problems that may arise at the sessions.</p> <p>The presenters were asked if there are any difficult situations where schools get into trouble? What should be avoided? Difficult situations arise when governors are not asking questions and spending gets out of control. Another issue is where the school has a falling Rolland had not forecast it, keeping classes the same. This puts pressure on everyone and forces the school into extreme measures. There is a need to look into the future. When presented with a budget, schools need to know it is correct. There should be a 3 year plan in place. Governors will need to know what they need to check and what they can expect to see with the budget being trimmed back.</p>	
6.	<p>School Improvement Plans and Headteacher Performance Management – Claire Roberts</p> <p>It is a statutory responsibility of governing bodies in maintained schools to ensure that they set objectives for the headteacher as part of an annual appraisal. The headteacher appraisal is usually carried out by an appraisal sub/group/panel of two or three governors with an external adviser being used for advice, support and to consult with regarding appropriate objectives. As part of the Advisory Programme, schools can access a list of approved providers. If schools buy into the SLA, they can choose who delivers the Headteacher Performance Management. These people will be trained and centrally approved. If a school is Ofsted RI, then the GB must choose from a select list for a supported journey. Support will be given in the most rounded way. The panel will be aware of there role. The process will be similar for co-heads and executive heads. Targets will be similar but will be differentiated. Executive heads will have targets across both schools. The targets will be set with a time limit and not changed. All headteachers should have a safeguarding target. For underperformance, governors tend not to respond until there is a crisis such as Ofsted. There needs to be review meetings to check performance targets are being met. Within professional conversations, concerns need to be reported. The headteacher needs to be aware of any weaknesses. The advisor will be able to offer support with any concerns about performance.</p> <p>KM stated that underperformance is the hardest thing to tackle as the governor /headteacher relationship is critical. There needs to be an emphasis on in year meetings. If these are avoided it is hard to tackle underperformance. Targets need to be set so there is an expectation of what needs to be seen. Check that this is on track.</p> <p>Guidance documents are available on Czone. School plans are the key drivers. School Improvement</p>	

	<p>Plans need to be strong. They need to demonstrate milestones and targets. They need to show financial spend and performance management are on track. There needs to be precise actions and objectives along with clear success criteria. Governors need to know how they know the SIP is making a difference and judge the actions of senior leaders.</p> <p>Governors need to ensure SIPs are fit for purpose. Make sure the positive things are in there. Make sure there is background evidence. If there are increased reds, you will need to examine the priorities.</p> <p>If there is anything additional Claire needs to cover, please let her know.</p>	
7.	<p>Governor Area Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) County Forum Members received the Spring Term Area Meeting 2017 Summary Report. ii) County Forum Members were happy with the topics discussed at the Spring Area Meetings. 	
8.	<p>Suggested items for the Spring rounds of Area Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance and Audit • Headteacher Performance Management and the School Improvement Plan <p>Hot Topic Question: With the ever increasing demands on Governors, what help and support do you need to effectively carry out the role?</p>	
9.	<p>Any other Business</p> <p>DK raised about absence and term time holidays. What is East Sussex doing about absences. FW stated there was going to be a refreshed strategy that will work closely to schools. There will be a different approach in looking at understanding the challenges and identifying groups of pupils. Parental engagement has a huge impact on attendance. There is a need to look at if the right things are being done and parents are being engaged in the right way. Research has shown that a shift in attendance has an impact on attainment. This is potentially a topic for the Autumn Term Local Area Forums.</p> <p>DK also commented on the decision to continue funding the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. The ESGRG were pleased it continues to be supported by the Local Authority.</p>	
10.	<p>Dates of Future Meetings</p> <p>TBC</p>	