

## COUNTY Consultative Committee (Governors): Spring Term 2022

### SUMMARY REPORT

Meeting: County Consultative Committee (Governors)

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Venue: Microsoft Teams

Present: Cllrs Bob Standley (Chair), Colin Belsey, Roy Galley, Philip Scott, Alan Shuttleworth.

Also invited Jessica Stubbings, Clare Cornford, Samuel Leonard - ESCC Officers  
Karen Marr, Denise Kong, Monica Whitehead, Stuart Ford –  
Members of the East Sussex Governor Forum (ESGF).

Apologies: Cllr Phil Scott

Item	Decisions and Outcomes	Action
1.	<b>Minutes of previous County Consultative Committee Meeting – 13 October 2021</b>  The minutes were noted as a true record.	
2.	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>  Apologies accepted for Cllr Scott.	
3.	<b>Disclosure of Interests</b>  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.  No interests were declared.	
4.	<b>Urgent Items</b> None	
5.	<b>Academies Update (standing item)</b>  JS gave the Committee an update on the academisation of the following schools since the last meeting in October 2021: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• January 2022 - Northiam CE Primary School and Hurst Green CE Primary School &amp; Nursery converted to the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust (DCAT).</li><li>• February 2022 – Telscombe Cliffs Primary School and Peacehaven Heights Primary School converted to the STEP Academy Trust.</li><li>• Uplands are looking to convert to the Beacon Academy Trust later in the year.</li></ul> Upcoming proposed conversions are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ditchling (St Margaret's) CE Primary and Nursery School are consulting to join the Hurst Education Trust.</li><li>• Chyngton Primary School are consulting with Seaford Head School to join the Seaford Learning Trust.</li></ul> KM asked if anymore academisations are in the pipeline. JS responded by saying there are none currently, though the White Paper due in the spring may give a stronger steer towards	

	<p>academisation. Cllr Standley agreed that the White Paper may impact the rate of academisation.</p>	
6.	<p><b>Local Authority Governor Appointments and Governor Vacancy Update</b></p> <p>The County Consultative Committee noted the report they received prior to the meeting from CC on behalf of Governor Services and the East Sussex Governors Forum (ESGF).</p> <p>CC detailed some of the highlights from the report including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Authority governor vacancy rate is at 9.3% with further governors due to be approved. This is below the vacancy rate of all East Sussex governor types, which sits at 15.9%.</li> <li>159 new governors and associate members since 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021</li> <li>101 expressions of interest to become a governor have come in since the launch of a more localised recruitment campaign in January 2020.</li> <li>Since 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021, 1390 training, briefing, and networking places have been accessed by governors in over 78 sessions. These sessions also covering a variety of relevant themes.</li> </ul> <p>CC also reported that there has been welcome interest in a new push for Local Support Governor applications, where governors volunteer to offer their experience to schools in need.</p> <p>Cllr Standley asked if working from home has helped with governor engagement. CC answered that it has helped. KM agreed with CC and added that a blended approach has made governance more accessible.</p> <p>KM asked about the 4 schools with 25% vacancy rate, saying that is a concern. CC responded by saying that the Governor and Clerking Service (GCS) are working with the schools, with the situations at these schools more complicated than most. KM offered her support if needed.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Round up from Governors about Covid and Post Covid</b></p> <p>Cllr Standley asked how schools were coping with covid and the post covid challenges. KM answered that schools are generally coping well, but there is concern over 3 or 4 bouts of covid that have put schools under severe pressure. Reception classes appear to be the most disadvantaged, with speech and language difficulties the most common problem. This has added to the pressure on schools.</p> <p>MW reported that staff absences has put a strain on schools, with the headteacher having to manage these situations on top of all their other duties. SF also added that staff absence is crippling schools and their budget. Wellbeing is also a big concern for staff due to the pressures. Staff resignations have consequently become an issue due to the pressures. JS echoed the comments and added that headteachers report that the cost of supply cover is large. Energy costs also having 150% increases is having a huge impact. School leaders and staff are clearly under pressure.</p> <p>KM noted a lower absence to due non covid issues at her school, which is a positive.</p> <p>Cllr Standley asked how we are monitoring the budget issues around energy. JS says that the regional school commissioner's office has been contacted to raise this as an issue.</p> <p>KM raised the issue of covid recovery and tutoring intervention. There is a concern over the National Tutoring Programme (NTP). Schools with NTP credits need to be supported. Cllr Standley noted this.</p>	
8.	<p><b>School attendance – do we need to improve it and if so, how would we?</b></p>	

	<p>Cllr Standley said that school attendance has been an issue the Local Authority (LA) are always looking at, and that attendance campaigns have been widespread. Cllr Standley asked the East Sussex Governor Forum (ESGF) where schools are with their attendance numbers. KM answered that there is a constant push for attendance drives, and governors would welcome any support to keep this push going. MW noted that there is worry from older students about coming in for their exams after such a disturbance to their routines.</p> <p>Cllr Galley asked about the evidence of home education and is there an issue with this. JS responded that there has been an increase in the home educated pupils. This is an area of concern as the contact with these children is more difficult. This is a national issue. JS will circulate a national report about elected home educated pupils to the group. Cllr Standley noted his concern that not all parents are good teachers and there are limited powers from the Local Authority to monitor those children. JS added that there may soon be a national register of home educated pupils to help monitor them. Cllr Galley asked what support is given to home schooled. JS answered that the Council offers some support but that this is limited due to our current statutory role.</p> <p>JS updated on attendance. There is concern about increasing rates of attendance and we are monitoring the data. We have been able to provide additional funding to schools across the County through Contain Outbreak Management Funding and the Hastings Opportunity Area (HOA) has also helped Hastings schools. A campaign will also be going out to highlight the positive stories of being in school. The Department of Education are also looking at attendance issues and are investigating these themselves.</p> <p>Cllr Standley finished the topic by saying this issue needs to be looked at closely in the coming months.</p>	
9.	<p><b>ESGF Update for Councillors:</b></p> <p>KM reported the current Local Area Forums (LAFs) were around school to school support, and the relationship with the Education Improvement Partnerships (EIPs) and Primary/Secondary Boards. Some concerns from governors are around how can they let teachers go to other schools when the pressures are so huge at their own schools.</p> <p>The ESGF have been meeting regularly and the Chairs network raised issues over energy costs and budget concerns. Mental Health is also an issue for students. There are also concerns over the support from ESBAS. A report back from the EIP in Eastbourne noted that the support from ESBAS over exclusions had a positive impact. However, the money to buy into this support may not be there for most schools. JS noted that there had been staffing issues in ESBAS due to the increase in demand for their support. KM responded by asking for good practice to be shared about how ESBAS works best in collaboration with the support already in place at the school.</p> <p>DK asks about ESBAS funding and how much impact councillors have over this. Cllr Standley responded by saying Councillors have total control, but sometimes there is not enough money to spread everywhere. Cllr Shuttleworth responded by asking the ESGF to communicate if there are any specific areas that can make a big difference, where governors would want to see extra support. JS also added that the Councillors have been helping target key pressure points with extra funding.</p> <p>Cllr Galley raised the issue of Religious Education (RE). The advisor of RE is due to release a new syllabus for schools. The aim is to modernise the RE program and Cllr Galley would like governors to be made aware of this. Cllr Galley asked if training would be welcome for governors. CC responded by saying sessions are already planned for next term. KM asked Cllr Galley if a list of questions could be made available for governors to</p>	

	<p>ask at their meetings. Cllr Galley is happy with this and that governors are taking this issue seriously. Cllr Belsey added that the suggestion by KM is excellent, and the take up by governors already is positive.</p> <p>DK asks if the EIP budgets are set by the Council, JS responds that this is set by Councillors each year as part of the overall budget setting.</p>	
10.	<p><b>Governor Local Area Forums – feedback, attendance, and future forums</b></p> <p>Cllr Standley asks about the LAFs and the numbers. CC responded by saying that the numbers are positive. KM and Cllr Standley asked how many schools are being reached through the forums and what are the schools doing who have no attendees. JS would like school attendance on forums added to the report for next time, to see which schools' information is not being reached.</p>	
11.	<p><b>Any other items previously notified under agenda item 4</b></p>	
12.	<p><b>Dates of Future Meetings</b></p> <p>TBC</p>	