

County Consultative Committee: Summer Term 2022

SUMMARY REPORT

Meeting: **County Consultative Committee** comprising of Councillors and East Sussex Governors' Forum (ESGF)

Date: 19th May 2022

Venue: Microsoft Teams

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

Also invited Jessica Stubbings (JS), Clare Cornford (CC), Samuel Leonard (SL) - ESCC Officers
Karen Marr (KM), Denise Kong (DK), Monica Whitehead (MW), Stuart Ford (SF), Duncan Irvine (DI), and Jenny Barnard-Langston (JBL) -
Members of the East Sussex Governor Forum (ESGF).

Apologies: Cllr Roy Galley

Item	Decisions and Outcomes	Action
1.	Minutes of previous County Consultative Committee - 10 February 2022 The minutes were noted as a true record.	
2.	Apologies for Absence Cllr Galley	
3.	Disclosure of Interests 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.	Urgent Items None	
5.	Academies Update (standing item) JS gave the Committee an update on the academisation of the following schools since the last meeting in February 2022: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Ditchling (St Margaret's) CE Primary and Nursery School has converted to The Hurst Education Trust (West Sussex), which is linked to Hurst Independent School.	

	<p>Upcoming conversions for the following schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> September 2022 - Uplands Community College are on course to join the Beacon Community College Academy Trust. September 2022 - Chyngton Primary School are also on course to join the Seaford Head Academy Trust. The Haven VA CE Methodist Primary School is currently consulting with a view to become an academy and joining the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust. 	
6.	<p>Local Authority Governor Appointments and Governor Vacancy Update</p> <p>The County Consultative Committee noted the report they received prior to the meeting from CC on behalf of Governor Services.</p> <p>CC detailed some of the highlights from the report including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a vacancy rate of 9.3%. The overall vacancy rate for all types of governors in East Sussex is currently 14.8%. 169 new governors, including Associate Members, have been appointed since 1st September 2021. 10 new LA governor appointments. <p>Cllr Standley asked about how the vacancy rate has been impacted by the effects of Covid. CC replied that we have seen an improvement due to the improved availability from people who are working from home more. Governor meetings have also become more accessible for people to attend, as governors did not always need to travel to school.</p> <p>Cllr Scott asked about how East Sussex County Council (ESCC) can encourage governors with highly sought-after skills to join governing boards in their local area. CC responded by outlining the large amounts of information available on the Governor Services web pages, which are advertised and signposted regularly.</p>	
7.	<p>Round up from Governors about Covid and Post Covid</p> <p>Cllr Standley asked the ESGF for their feedback on how Covid has affected their schools. MW and JBL both pointed out that school refusal is still an issue in schools.</p> <p>SF informed the Committee that staff retention is very poor since Covid began and he is concerned about staff levels come September. Cllr Standley asked if the flow is within East Sussex or from county to county. SF responded that is not clear and is quite mixed.</p> <p>Cllr Scott asked about long covid and the provision for students who have extended effects of Covid. JBL responded to say that the main issues with long Covid are with staff, but not so much with pupils.</p>	

8.	<p>Green and White Paper Update</p> <p>JS gave the Committee a brief overview of the White and Green Papers that have been released by the Department of Education (DfE).</p> <p>JS first went through the White Paper: Opportunity for all, which was published in March, and is a policy that sets out what the DfE aims to achieve in the next 7-10 years. The DfE’s mission by 2030 is that 90% of all children will leave primary school reaching expected standards in reading, writing and maths. For secondary schools, the aim is for the average GCSE grade in English and Maths to increase from 4.5 to 5 by 2030. JS continued, giving an overview of the White paper’s 4 chapters:</p> <p>Chapter 1: An excellent teacher for every child - Focusses on raising the quality of teachers by creating 500,000 teacher training and development opportunities and increasing the starting salary of teachers to £30,000.</p> <p>Chapter 2: Delivering high standards of curriculum, behaviour, and attendance - This includes creating a new curriculum body, longer average school week, new systems for attendance, and a register for children not in school.</p> <p>Chapter 3: Targeted support for every child that needs it - Aims to help any child that falls behind in English and Maths by offering extra support. This can come in many different forms, such as high-quality teaching and tutoring, additional support for SEND pupils, and targeted support for disadvantaged pupils via pupil premium funding.</p> <p>Chapter 4: A stronger and fairer school system - By 2030 all children are to be taught in a family of schools or Multi Academy Trust (MAT). All trusts should have local governance arrangements and the Local Authority (LA) will have new powers. The LA will be able to establish their own trusts where there are no strong trusts in the area. 24 Priority Investment Areas are to be supported and Hastings has been identified as one of these.</p> <p>JS added that the Director of Children’s Services Alison Jeffery has written to all schools to assure them that ESCC is keen to work with all schools and meet the needs of all learners. JS said that she believes this will be a new landscape for schools in East Sussex and it is the time to begin conversations with schools about their future. JS also informed the group that another letter from Alison Jeffery will go out to schools very soon.</p> <p>JS summarised that this White Paper is very significant and there are lots of announcements which need to be considered in more detail. JS warned that this is a period of transition and school leaders will need to be supported. Cllr Standley would like more information on the idea of the LA ‘establishing’ MATs, but not running them. Cllr Standley also asked about the future of Church Schools and deprived areas that are not getting the same funding help as</p>	

Hastings. JS clarified that East Sussex is identified as an Education Investment Area and the Dioceses are in contact with ESCC over the future direction for Church Schools.

Cllr Scott thanked JS for her update and asked how the Priority Investment Area funding will work and how will it be spent. JS responded that the only details on funding are in the White Paper and there are no details or breakdown of how much funding is available or how it can be spent.

MW asked about students who are not below the LA threshold of under 85% attendance, but still need support. MW adds that another agency brought in by her school helps follow up pupils in low 90's attendance. JS responded by saying the attendance is a key area and ESCC will continue to support as best it can.

Cllr Shuttleworth asked about the Joint Boards producing a letter that gives an overview of their thoughts on the White Paper. CC will send a copy of those letters to the CCC group. Cllr Shuttleworth also noted that LA schools perform well and questioned why LA's can establish MATs, but not run them. Cllr Standley responded to say he believes the aim of the LA is to be a regulator rather than a dominant force in running the MATs.

JBL thanked JS and detailed how governors are trying to build relations with councillors. She says that small schools should now be looking at their own futures and planning of where their future lies. JBL said that schools should be encouraged to be outward facing and begin to reach out to partners ahead of time and be proactive.

Green Paper: JS gave an overview of details regarding the Green Paper to the Committee.

JS began by stating that the SEND Green Paper is out for consultation which will end in July. JS said that it builds on a previous review of SEND which found that SEND children often leave school far behind their peers and their experiences of school are often not positive. JS added that the report also found there is no consistency in the provision of SEND and it often comes down to each individual school. JS then listed several aims that the review is targeting:

- A change to Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCP) and a template that makes the system more consistent.
- Excellent provision, from early-years to adulthood. Including high standards of teaching and curriculum tailored to meet the needs of SEN pupils.
- There will be a focus on the partners and their responsibility within SEND. Clearer roles are to be defined to make accountability easier.

JS finished by saying that after the consultation, more information will become available.

CC

	<p>Cllr Standley pointed out a SEND White Paper will come with more details on what we can expect. JBL asked if the LA will respond to the consultation, Cllr Standley confirmed that they will.</p>	
9.	<p>Religious Education Update</p> <p>Cllr Standley asked the Committee to note the report on Religious Education in the County raised by Cllr Galley in his absence.</p>	
10.	<p>ESGF Verbal Update for Councillors to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment - what can be done to attract more teachers and support staff to East Sussex. • Mental Health - the knock-on effects e.g., rise in complaints and loss of staff and governors • SEND - the impact on already tight resources and lack of available places • Effective governance - the right people around the table for the right reasons. <p>JBL began with the topic of recruitment and pointed out difficulties with headteacher recruitment. JBL said there is a lot of movement, which has left schools in some difficulty.</p> <p>Cllr Standley mentioned the concern over mental health and hopes that the summer break will give both teachers and pupils a chance to recharge.</p> <p>Cllr Scott asked about recruitment and if the issue is countywide. JS confirms that the issue is mainly countywide, except for headteacher roles which are more difficult to fill in rural areas. JS also noted concern over younger headteacher's leaving after their experiences of COVID, which was a stressful period for many.</p> <p>JBL noted that there is an issue with governing board recruitment around diversity. JBL also said that governing boards now need to focus on using the good governors they have, by implementing succession plans in governing boards. JBL went on to say that although there are many governors that are highly skilled, they are not always stepping into Chair or Vice Chair roles on their governing boards.</p> <p>SF raised the budget topic and is very concerned at the future of school budgets amidst the ongoing energy crisis. SF's maintained school is now on a very tight budget that can easily be turned into a deficit. SF asked what the LA can do for schools that may slip into a deficit. JS responded to say that the school finance team are the ones to contact if a school slips into financial difficulty. Cllr Scott agreed with SF and is concerned with the impact of the current issues around energy prices and inflation. Cllr Belsey also agreed with SF and is equally concerned with the future of school budgets.</p>	
11.	<p>Governor Local Area Forums - feedback, attendance, and future forums.</p>	

	<p>CC reported that the last round of forums was around system leadership. The turnout was not as high as previous forums, but the feedback was positive. Cllr Standley asked about schools that do not attend training or the forums and his concern about certain schools that attend zero training. CC replied that training history is looked at by Governor Services and governors are regularly reminded of training opportunities.</p> <p>CC finished by stating the next round of forums will take place next week and will look at a range of topics - including the Schools White Paper.</p>	
12.	<p>County Consultative Committee (Governors) meeting format for 2022-23</p> <p>Cllr Standley said that he is in favour of the current format and is happy for the meetings to remain online rather than face to face. The Committee agreed that the current format works well.</p>	
13.	<p>Any other items previously notified under agenda item 4</p> <p>No items</p>	