

EAST SUSSEX SCHOOLS' FORUM

MINUTES of a meeting of the Schools' Forum held remotely with Microsoft Teams on 17 November 2023

PRESENT

Primary

Richard Blakeley (Harlands Primary)

Laura Cooper (St John's CE School)

Vicky Anderson (Catsfield CEP School)

Primary Governors

Debra Vice Holt (Oak Tree Federation)

Peter Hughes (South Malling Primary School)

Secondary

Emily Winslade (Priory School)

Secondary Governors

Academies

James Freeston (King Offa Primary Academy) **Chair**

Gavin Bailey (Swale Academy Trust)

Kelly Johnson (UoBAT)

Zoe James (MARK Education Trust)

Sally Hill (Aquinas Trust)

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)

ESCC representatives

Cllr Bob Standley (Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability)

Alison Jeffery (Director Children's services)

Elizabeth Funge Assistant Director Education

Honor Green (BSD Finance)

Nathan Caine (HofEd SEND & Safeguarding)

Edward Beale (Acting Finance Manager - Childrens Services)

Sarah Rice (Finance Manager - Schools)

Kirsten Coe (Schools Funding Manager - Acting)

Gary Langford (Senior Manager - School Organisation and Admissions)

Rachel King (Clerk)

1. **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES (Note)**

The chair welcomed all and thanked everyone for their attendance. Also welcoming new members, Emily Winslade, Sally Hill, Vicky Anderson, and Zoe James. Honor Green introduced herself to the group as she succeeds Sian Hedger as Head of Finance - Children's Services and Schools Finance.

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

No apologies.

2. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 15 September 2023 (Approval)**

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

3. **MATTER ARISING AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (Discussion)**

3.1 Matters arising - none.
Declarations of interest - none.

4. **Growth Fund/ Falling Rolls Fund (Approval)**

4.1 Members were given an update on spend in the 2023/24 financial year and were asked for approval for funding in the 2024/25 financial year. Members were asked to vote to approve an allocation of £1,038,400 for the 2024/25 Growth Fund.

4.2 All members were asked to vote, and results are as follows.

4.3

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

5.0 **DSG - Central School Services Block (CSSB) 2024/25 (Approval)**

5.1 Members were provided an update on the CSSB allocations for 2024/25. Schools Forum were asked to note and approve the proposals.

5.2 All members were asked to vote, and results are as follows.

5.3

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

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 High Needs Top Up Funding working group.

Members were given an update on High Needs Funding to schools. Members were asked to come forward as Schools' Forum representatives to set up a working group to look at proposals, budgets, and allocations on HNB for next year 2024/25. Richard Preece is the Special Schools rep on the Forum, but the group require representatives from mainstream schools as well. More information and detail will be brought to the January meeting. The following members volunteered to be a part of the working group.

Vicky Anderson
Zoe James
Debra Vice-Holt
Emily Winslade
Kelly Johnson
Laura Cooper
Sally Hill

7.2 Verbal Update - Schools Finance

Members were given updates around schools' finance and funding. The error in the 2024/25 funding rates announced by the DfE. Tools that are sent out to schools have been revised and adjusted numbers sent out to schools. Making a lesser increase rather than a reduction. Impact to schools will vary.

Pay awards are going through this month to be paid in November. Information sent to schools to account for that. Grant funding to cover 3% of teachers pay award. Slight timing difference in that grant income has been paid out but the back pay will come through in November.

Teachers' pension 2024/25 5% increase to employers' contribution. DfE have indicated there will be additional funding to cover that.

Maintained schools having roll out of a new finance system. Project is going well and schools responding positively to new software.

7.3 A request was made for a forward plan for Schools' Forum to consult and get views in advance of voting for some items. It was agreed to provide a forward plan for year ahead, to give main headline topics, as some are standard and to indicate where voting is needed.

ACTION: Forward plan to be circulated to Schools' Forum members.

It was also requested that Schools' Forum papers are sent out more than a week in advance if possible.

Meeting concluded at 09:09 am

Next meeting - Friday 12 January 2023 08:30am. To be held on Microsoft Teams