

LEAD MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND INCLUSION, SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY

DECISIONS made by the Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability, Councillor Bob Standley, on 25 March 2025 at Remote Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Councillors Field and Redstone spoke on item 6 (see minute 52)

Councillors Redstone and Shuttleworth spoke on item 7 (see minute 53)

46. DECISIONS MADE BY THE LEAD CABINET MEMBER ON 10 FEBRUARY 2025

46.1 The Lead Member approved as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2025.

47. DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

47.1 Councillor Redstone declared a personal interest as a Co-Opted Governor for The Genesis Federation (Beckley and Peasmarsh primary schools). He did not consider this to be prejudicial.

47.2 Councillor Field declared a personal interest in item 5 as a Member of the County Council's Planning Committee. She did not consider this to be prejudicial.

48. URGENT ITEMS

48.1 There were none.

49. REPORTS

49.1 Reports referred to in the minutes below are contained in the minute book.

50. HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND 2025/26

50.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Children's Services.

DECISIONS

50.2 The Lead Member RESOLVED to:

- 1) Approve the proposed plan for the use of funding from the Household Support Fund to provide support to households with children in East Sussex in 2025-26 as set out in the report; and
- 2) Delegate to the Director of Children's Services authority to implement the scheme for the Children's Services part of the Fund.

REASONS

50.3 The announcement of an extension to the Household Support Fund scheme provides an opportunity to support households with children, households with pensioners, households with a disabled person and other vulnerable households within East Sussex who are experiencing financial challenges and will be welcomed by partners.

50.4 The report sets out an overall approach to allocating the Fund in East Sussex which builds on the successful delivery of previous years and enables East Sussex County Council to ensure the Fund is administered effectively and efficiently in the forthcoming year from 1 April 2025.

51. GROVE PARK SCHOOL

51.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Children's Services.

DECISIONS

51.2 The Lead Member RESOLVED to approve the proposal to lower Grove Park School's age range from 4-19 to 2-19 and relocate its secondary phase to the school's Church Road premises to accommodate additional pupils by September 2027, contingent upon planning permission being granted for the new block by the Local Authority's Planning Committee.

REASONS

51.3 The Local Authority is proposing to reorganise Grove Park School by lowering its age range and enlarging its Church Road premises by building a new block on the site to accommodate secondary age pupils by 1 September 2027.

51.4 In accordance with the EIA 2006 and the 2013 Regulations, the Local Authority, as the responsible body, is required to determine the statutory proposal within 2 months of the end of the representation period. The Regulations set out the options the decision-maker has to consider when making a decision. The decision-maker can:

- reject the proposal
- approve the proposal without modification
- approve the proposal with modifications, or
- approve the proposal, with or without modification, subject to certain conditions being met.

51.5 Approving the proposal without modification will bring Grove Park School's primary and secondary phases together on one site, and add nursery provision. This will have several benefits for the pupils attending the school:

- The increasing pupil numbers at Grove Park School and Beacon Academy has meant that the intended integration of both cohorts of pupils is no longer practical.
- Pupils attending the secondary provision have limited access to shared spaces, such as the sports facilities and specialist rooms. A single site for primary and secondary pupils at Grove Park School would afford ownership of those facilities and the flexibility to timetable spaces with the needs of the pupils at the centre of the decision making.
- The school's budget can be used more effectively as some services could be centralised, for example, one reception area at Church Road for primary and secondary. Teaching, administration, and site staff would work across 2 sites rather than 3, leading to better utilisation and deployment of staff.
- Currently, the ability to share learning resources is limited, for example, the school has 3 Physical Education (PE) storage areas with similar resources, which on 2 sites, could more easily be shared, leading to better utilisation of learning resources.
- For regular visitors, for example therapists, being able to visit 2 sites would reduce travel time and increase the access to therapy for those pupils that need it.
- Bringing the primary and secondary phases together on one site would give pupils and their families an enhanced sense of community, belonging and identity.

51.6 In this instance, a planning application for the proposed enlargement of the Church Road premises was submitted in November 2024 and is due to be determined by the Local Authority's Planning Committee on 30 April 2025.

52. EAST SUSSEX CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY DUTY 2025

52.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Children's Services.

DECISIONS

52.2 The Lead Member RESOLVED to approve the publication of the East Sussex Childcare Sufficiency Duty 2025.

REASONS

52.3 The Council has a duty to publish a Childcare Sufficiency Duty report annually. The draft document at Appendix 1 of the report supports the Council's statutory obligation of ongoing assessment of childcare provision for children aged 0-14 years old (and up to 18 years old for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability) in East Sussex.

53. EAST SUSSEX ALL AGE AUTISM ACTION PLAN

53.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Children's Services.

DECISIONS

53.2 The Lead Member RESOLVED to approve the East Sussex All Age Autism Action plan, prior to it being launched in Autism Acceptance Week in early April 2025.

REASONS

53.3 The approach taken to develop the plan recognises the importance and value of input from people with lived experience and wider public consultation to deliver a meaningful action plan which responds to local priorities.

53.4 Since the action plan covers both children and adults, the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health considered and approved the action plan on 11 March 2025. The approved East Sussex All Age Autism Action plan will be launched in Autism Acceptance Week in early April 2025.