

WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL
EDUCATION AND SKILLS FORUM

A meeting of the Education & Skills Forum (E&SF) was held at 6.00 p.m. on Wednesday 22nd June, 2016 at County Hall Chichester

Present:

Mark Betts (Sub)	Kay Haffenden	Sian Rees-Jones
David Boreham	David Herson	Grahame Robson
Therese Brook	Prof Seamus Higson	Eddie Rodriguez
Dean Clegg	Vicki Illingworth	John Thompson
Tracey Clift	Kerry Jones	Peter Woodman (Chair)
Caroline Dickinson	Ken Lloyd	Richard Yelland
James Everett	Mark McCadden	
Mike Garlick	Howard Oyns	

Officers in attendance:

Sue Bryan – Clerk	Jackie Lincoln	Jon Philpot
Kevin Carter	Jay Mercer	Project Officer-WSGfL
Jeanmarie Long	Annie Mciver	

Observers:

Christine Field – Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing
John Newman – ATL
Anne Barker - ATL

Apologies for absence were received from:

Sally Bromley	Colin Granlund	Simon Liley
Debbie Carter	Michael Ferry	Chris Miles
Clare Collins	Helen Fletcher-Reilly	
Shelley Dutson	Gill Leadbetter-Simms	

CHAIR'S BRIEFING

207. Peter Woodman (PW), acted as Chair for the meeting as due to train cancellations Clare Collins was unable to make the meeting. The Chair advised that Jay Mercer would be leaving WSCC in July to take up an assignment with Dorset County Council, Jay was thanked for his contribution to education services. Deborah Myers who works for Babcocks, providing school improvement services in Surrey, had been offered the appointment of Director of Education and Skills from September 2016.

208. Although Chris Miles (Teaching Staff) had sent her apologies, the Chair recorded thanks to her as this would have been her last meeting. Jackie Baker will be replacing Chris from 1st September.

209. The Chair welcomed Christine Field, standing in for the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills. Howard Oyns (maintained primary governor representative) had been elected to serve for a further 3 year term of office. Following the ballot for academies with primary aged pupils, Clare Collins had been re-elected to serve for a further 3 year period, Helen Woods (TKAT) had

been elected to serve for a 3 year period and Neil Small (The Mill Primary Academy) had agreed to be the named substitute representative for academies with primary aged pupils.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

210. There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTES

211. It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 17th March, 2016 were a correct record and that they be signed by the Chair.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

212. There were no matters arising.

UPDATE PRESENTATION BY DIRECTOR OF FAMILY OPERATIONS ABOUT 'IN SCHOOL, READY TO LEARN'

213. Annie McIver (AM), Director of Family Operations used a PowerPoint presentation to talk through the 'In Education Ready to Learn' developments. Challenges for schools and settings included readiness for school for vulnerable groups, attendance, behaviour management, exclusions and timely appropriate support.

214. The aim was for a culture with shared values and goals with a commitment to a whole family approach and understanding the impact of family environment on children's behaviour. AM highlighted the action taken to date:

- Vulnerable Children's Sub-Group looking at statistics on exclusions and analysis of children's journeys and NEETs;
- Future consultation on Alternative Provision;
- Development of early years vulnerability audit; conversations with each EY setting, Embedded Signs of Safety; and Refreshed Continuum of Need launched;
- Workshop with Education, Early Help, Early Years and Youth Services staff;
- The redesign of Integrated Prevention and Early Help 0-15 service commenced and community hubs model being designed;
- Proposed appointment of Senior Adviser Inclusion
- Proposal to draft early help offer for schools.

215. Next steps include consultation with stakeholders on the development of the Prevention and Early Help 25 community hub models. A report on design principles would go to Cabinet in September 2016 followed by detailed reports in December 2016 with implementation from April 2017. Schools would be consulted on the development of the draft early help offer to promote 'In Education, Ready to Learn' in June/July 2016 and this would be trialled from September 2016.

216. Discussions included:

- Early Years – with cessation of the Good Level of Development (GLD) measure what measures would be used? Jackie Lincoln (JL) Interim Principal Manager, Early Childhood advised that the requirement to publish

GLD is changing and agreement would be sought with schools as to which measures of progress to use.

- Hub around the Child seemed similar to the Team around the Child. What about capacity? With less funding this inevitably meant less resource. It is frustrating for schools when they need help now and it's not available.
 - AM responded that, currently, the LA was not making the best use of people, for example since multi agency case conferences are people heavy requiring travel to venues, the aim would be to do more through technology to make more efficient use of time;
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- Will areas of greater need to be encouraged to be involved in the first instance?
 - AM responded that it wasn't set in stone which areas would be part of the pilot. At this stage 'volunteers' were being sought.
- The utmost importance of focussed monitoring, evaluation and impact of all the developments.

UPDATE PRESENTATION BY INTERIM DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS

217. Jay Mercer (JM) Interim Director of Education, referred to the PowerPoint slides which highlighted progress since the launch of the Policy Agreement for Education In West Sussex 2015 – 2019. This included:

- the setting up of the Education & Skills Forum and its Sub-Groups;
- the SEND strategy;
- School Improvement Strategy and Boards;
- final age of transfer review;
- FE Review;
- Adult education inspection and follow-up
- school turnaround and improvement.

218. JM advised that there was still work to be done around the local School Improvement Boards, specifically around teaching schools and embedding the Multi Academy Trusts (MATs), the implementation of the SEND strategy and the development of an Alternative Provision strategy. Other areas for future work were:

NEETs, traineeships and apprenticeships, Early Help, particularly the team around the setting, School improvement and traded services and new schools and places.

219. Discussions included:

- What conversations was Local Authority having with the MATs? Academy reps asked if there was anything they could do to help the conversation. JM agreed that great value was to be added by ensuring key players were involved in engaging with MATs. It would be helpful to think about how MATs might proactively engage with the School Improvement Boards.

220. JM also referred to other issues which would affect the future. These were:

Progress 8 and KS2 results;
FPN Supreme Court case;

Implementation of the White Paper Educational Excellence Everywhere;
New duty to promote achievement of adopted children;
New HMCI who no teaching/schools background;
Ofsted Inspection – SEND & LASI;
Apprenticeship Levy
Economy (Brexit vote) – more public sector savings?

DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (DSG) OUTTURN 2015/16

221. Nigel Street (NS), Service Finance Manager referred to the report on the end of year DSG outturn.

222. At the January E&SF meeting, an end of year underspending of £0.400m was projected. The final outturn was an underspending of £1.797m. NS drew attention to para 2.1 of the report. He highlighted the lower than expected take up of free nursery places for eligible three and four years olds. With remaining balance of £3.397m from previous years, the total DSG reserve was £5.194m at 31st March 2016. E&SF had previously agreed a number of commitments to be funded from DSG balances in 2016/17 (outlined at para 3.1) after which there would be an uncommitted balance of £3,232m.

223. NS highlighted the areas of volatility within the DSG. Significantly the High Needs Block was overspent by £2.1m in 2015/16. As a result of continuing high placement numbers and inflationary cost increases the budget would be overspent by a further £2.2m in 16/17. Whilst this could be accommodated from the DSG balances during 16/17, it is not sustainable and action was required to manage spending within available budgets. Early Years was the other area of volatility. Due to the timing of academic and financial years in 2016/17 there would be 39 weeks' of costs rather than the usual 38. The potential additional cost was £0.780m but due to overall volatility in numbers it was not proposed that an allocation be made at this stage.

224. The uncommitted balance would provide the necessary cushion against the potential costs during 2016/17. An update report will be brought to E&SF in October 2016.

225. Discussions included:

- Whether there was anything to be learned from an underspend of £5m?

NS commented that by nature, financial planning officers had to budget for unexpected pressures. It was pointed out that the uncommitted balance of £3.232m was equivalent to 0.6% of the DSG allocation for 2016/17.

- That the INMS budget had been steadily rising and this had been highlighted for a number of years. It was frustrating that the difficult decisions were not being made. The problem was recognised, it had been discussed over and over again but there were no easy or quick solutions.
- With regards to High Needs and Early Years, it should be noted that with the potential change to the National Funding Formula, it would no longer be possible to move funding between the main funding blocks, so this could prove to be challenging in the next financial year.

226. E&SF: Noted the financial outturn for 2015/16 and noted the current balance position and the agreed commitments against the DSG balance.

SCHOOL BALANCES AS AT 31ST MARCH 2016

227. NS referred to the report which provided details of Schools' Revenue Balances at 31st March 2016. Balances at 31 March 2016 totalled £19.2m, compared with £21.4m in 2015 for equivalent schools. There were 13 schools in deficit at 31st March 2016, with a combined deficit of £261,000. 16 schools were expected to be in deficit at 31st March 2017. Work was underway with the schools to assist them in planning action to recover from the deficits. After investigations into whether any schools have excess uncommitted balances, NS confirmed there would be no 'claw backs'. He also highlighted that one of the schools that may become a sponsored academy during 2016/17 was requesting a licenced deficit budget in 2016/17. The school was taking action to reduce its expenditure. Officers were working with the school but there might be a deficit on the closure of the accounts which would be left as a charge to the LA.

228. Discussions included:

- That this report only covered maintained schools, so there was a big gap in the bigger picture of academy/free school balances.
- The reasons why schools have deficits range from a drop in pupil numbers, increased operating and staffing costs. NS confirmed that financial training sessions for schools encouraged better financial projections and planned efficiency measures to cover 'blips' in the future.

229. E&SF: Noted the work undertaken with schools in managing their budgets to avoid or recover budget deficit positions and manage the amount of school balances held.

GROWTH FUND 2016/17

230. Jeanmarie Long, (JML) Principal Manager Statutory and Strategic Compliance, referred to the report that updated E&SF on the allocation of the Growth Fund. The total Growth Fund allocated to date for 2016/17 to schools and academies was £2.3m. Funding had been allocated to 46 primary schools and 8 secondary schools that met eligibility criteria agreed by E&SF. JML advised that some schools had questioned the level of Growth Fund allocated per pupil, however there were no arrangements to adjust funding in-year outside the approved Growth Fund criteria and funding arrangements. JML also highlighted that subject to changes to Growth Fund arrangements arising from the national Stage 2 consultation on school funding, it is proposed to undertake a consultation in the autumn to review the Growth Fund pupil unit values for 2017/18. A further update would be brought to a future meeting.

231. E&SF: Noted the allocation of the Growth Fund and potential balance of £1m, and the proposed review of Growth Fund allocations subject to the next stage of national funding formula consultation.

SCHOOLS IN FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY (SiFD)

232. JML referred to the report which provided a brief update about the number of schools that have received allocations from the de-delegated Schools in Financial Difficulty budget in accordance with the specific criteria agreed by the Education and Skills Forum. 29.5% of the de-delegated budget for 2016/17 had been allocated to date. A further meeting of the SiFD panel would take place in early July. The report also alerted members to the proposed ending of de-delegation arrangements as a result of national funding changes. A further report would be brought to the October meeting.

233. E&SF: Noted the report.

REVIEW OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS FORUM

234. The Chair referred to the report which highlighted feedback from the recent review of the E&SF and Sub-Groups following the first year's cycle of meetings. Some suggestions received via the feedback had been put into a table discussion pack for representatives to consider and put forward other proposals.

235. Feedback from the table discussions included:

- Concerns that the E&SF is sometimes 'talked at' e.g. presentations for this meeting had taken an hour. Representatives would like the opportunity to have short relevant discussions on the issues.
- How the agenda is set e.g. by whom?
 - *JML responded that primarily the agenda is set for statutory Schools Forum business. Agenda planning sessions were held to which the Chair and Vice Chair of the E&SF were invited. Suggestions for agenda items could be made via Sub-Groups, through the Chair and Vice Chair and also via the Director of Education & Skills and lead officers of the E&SF.*
- Meetings should be split 50/50 between Chichester and Horsham. Billingshurst was also suggested as a possible venue. A meeting start time of 4.00 p.m. was considered too early as it was difficult for headteachers.
 - *JML responded that a 50/50 split between Chichester and Horsham could be arranged. Billingshurst would also be considered as a venue, but the facility would be paid for as opposed to free of charge at Local Authority premises.*
- Possible use of technology e.g. presentations could be recorded and put online for governors to view? E&SF meeting to be recorded?
 - *JML responded that we could look into how or if this could be achieved.*
- Is it necessary that all the papers brought to the E&SF should be 'discussed' at the meeting? E.g. those that have been through the Sub-Groups and those purely to note.
 - *JML responded that some of the papers provided updates on statutory Schools Forum business as required in regulations but this did not mean that it was necessary to discuss them.*

236. E&SF: Commented on and discussed proposals as a result of the feedback from the evaluation. There would be further discussions with the Chair and Vice Chair and other representatives to develop proposed changes from September 2016.

EARLY YEARS: UPDATE ON 30 HOURS FREE ENTITLEMENT

237. JL referred to the report which provided an updated on the 30 hour Free Entitlement policy.

238. In September 2017 WSCC would implement the government's initiative to provide 30 hours per week of free childcare for working parents of children aged 3 and 4 years in England. WSCC had been given Early Innovator status to help planning and development but also to contribute to Early Implementer success. The recent government consultation on 'Childcare free entitlement : delivery model' had been drawn to the attention of schools and Private Voluntary and Independent (PVI) providers in April 2016 to encourage individual responses.

239. Government responses to the national consultations would be monitored and included in the planning of implementation of the scheme due to commence in Sept 2017. E&SF would receive periodic updates through the planning of the 30 Hour Free Entitlement initiative.

240. E&SF: Noted that further updates will be brought to the Forum to consult regarding aspects of the delivery model.

SEND STRATEGY UPDATE FOLLOWING CONSULTATION 2015/16

241. Jon Philpot, Principal Manager (SEN & Inclusion), referred to the report which updated on the Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy which had been co-produced with education, health, early years, voluntary sector and parent representatives. A consultation on the draft Strategy had been completed. The report provided a summary of consultation responses. The Children and Young People's Services Select Committee (CYPSSC) had endorsed the decision to adopt the SEND Strategy. JP advised that the CYPSSC would be setting up a Task and Finish Group to look at issues in greater detail, but the focus of the group had not yet been agreed.

242. Discussions included:

- Less than 1 in 10 schools responded. JM asked why this was. Representatives commented it could be that schools were fed up with being consulted on issues and then nothing happening as a result of those consultations;
- The Strategy looks good on paper but how will it be implemented/delivered?
- Strategy is high on ideals and principles but how do we get there?
- How can we bridge the gap between the status quo and the change in provision in West Sussex schools?
- There was anxiety in mainstream schools about pupils on roll with complex SEND that staff did not have skills to support. It was vital that a detailed implementation plan had case studies and robust training for school staff. Schools had to be on side;

- There had to be a shift in culture in order for a holistic change, currently we are tinkering at the edges;
- Parents are worried about their children, do we really believe that this in their best interests?

243. E&SF: Noted the summary of consultation responses and the Select Committee decision to adopt the SEND Strategy.

ENTERPRISE ADVISER NETWORK IN COAST TO CAPITAL

244. E&SF: Noted the report.

PROPOSED PROCUREMENT OF E-PEP AND THE RE-PROCUREMENT OF WELFARE CALL

245. JM referred to the report which highlighted that the Virtual School was procuring an online system to facilitate the production of personal education plans that would replace paper and electronic documents. ePEP would be procured by the Virtual School and there were no cost implications for schools. Designated Teachers and other school staff who would access and use ePEP would need to participate in a short training session in early September.

246. E&SF: Noted the procurement of ePEP.

DECOMMISSIONING OF THE WEST SUSSEX GRID FOR LEARNING (WSGfL) AND THE ALTERIAN PLATFORM

247. Kevin Carter (KC) Head of Commercial Services referred to the report which outlined the decommissioning of the West Sussex Grid for Learning. WSGfL was one of the few remaining application which sits on the Alterian platform. It must be decommissioned in the very near future as it is not compliant with Public Service Network (PSN) requirements.

248. The services/functions currently provided on the WSGfL need to be transferred to replacement solution(s). 'SLA OnLine' was the preferred solution currently being considered by the Council. Work was ongoing towards a tender process leading to procurement of a replacement alternative platform to deliver a number of the key services/functions. Other content not supported by SLA Online may be moved to the WSCC website. However, a decision would not be made until further research (e.g. user testing, analytics etc.) had been carried out.

249. E&SF: Noted that a Business Case has been submitted to the Corporate Leadership Team seeking authority to decommission the WSGfL and proceed with the acquisition of proprietary product 'SLA Online'.

CHAIR

The meeting concluded at. 8.27 p.m.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 19th Oct, County Hall North, Horsham

Scene Setting 4.15-4.45 pm. (optional)

E&SF Meeting 4.45 - 6.45 p.m.

Future Meeting Dates

<u>Date</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Time</u>
Thursday 1 st Dec	Billingshurst Community & Conference Centre	4.45 p.m.

<u>2017</u>	<u>Venue*</u>	
Tues 24 th January	County Hall North, Horsham tbc	4.45 - tbc
Thurs 16 th March	tbc	4.45- tbc
June TBC	County Hall, Chichester tbc	4.45– tbc
Thurs 19 th Oct	tbc	4.45– tbc
Thurs 7 th Dec	tbc	4.45– tbc

***Venues for 2017 to be confirmed following Evaluation/Review of the E&SF**