

10 JULY SPEECH

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1: HUB RESPONSIBILITIES

Music hubs were created in order to unify music provision not to dissipate it. ACE states that Music Education Hubs work to “create joined-up music provision, respond to local need and fulfil the objectives of the hub as set out in the National Plan for Music Education.” The music hub has a duty to deliver these objectives, and is judged on them as a condition of the grant of around which brings in £1.2m till 2020.

Instrumental teachers are at the core of these responsibilities.

Core role 1: to ensure that every child has the opportunity to learn a musical instrument through whole class opportunities. Who delivers this currently? Our instrumental teachers.

Core role 2: Provide opportunities to play in ensembles. We do this to great success (if any of you were at the South Downs Youth Orchestra concert last week you will agree)? Our instrumental teachers.

Core role 3: To ensure clear, progression routes are available and affordable to all young people. This means ensuring children can learn a musical instrument. It's what our instrumental teachers do. It is also the bridge between whole class and ensemble opportunities.

Core role 4 is about ensuring all children have opportunities to sing. I'd like to point out that the children taught by our instrumental teachers currently populate our choirs as well.

There are also extension roles. These were largely delivered by frontline management. They include CPD, visits to schools and access to large scale and high quality musical experiences. However, this tier of middle management has been cut from 4 to 2 leaving little or no room for these to continue at the high level of quality they previously achieved.

Another role is the provision of an instrumental loan service with discounts for those on low income. Again no consideration for how this will be managed without any employed instrumental teachers was given before deciding to consult on losing them.

ESCC will need to carefully oversee the delivery of the core roles during the next two years and in planning must ensure there is enough capacity in the organisation to deliver and to deliver well. How they will uphold the standards in the services they intend to keep without instrumental teachers employed by the organisation responsible for the funding is seriously doubted by many.

2: FUNDING

We are told by ESCC that savings of £220 were required. This figure comprises the loss of the Direct Services Grant of £150 - we are told this is due to a change in the regulations for the way this is distributed but no explanation for why the music service's portion, previously agreed by Schools Forum was cut. Added to this is £30K to pay for a head of service on 2.5 days a week to which they have added an extra sum £40K for the social mobility agenda.

However, social mobility is already at core of what the instrumental service provides. It provides for children from rurally isolated communities and those from low income families to access music education. The Save East Sussex Music website and Facebook page contain many testimonies from many ex-students who themselves have become socially mobile because of their instrumental lessons. Social mobility is not an added

extra, it is our heart-blood, it should be and is already embedded and strong in everything we do. The instrumental service allows all children in schools and many not in schools settings to access lessons through subsidising fees. There are questions to be asked about who will receive this £40K be able to access this fund and whether subsidies will be as widely or easily available as they are currently which have not been addressed.

So what's the bottom line? Of the £220K the service have already managed to find £202K of savings. Surely this small deficit of £18 is not enough reason to allow 70 redundancies.

3: SOLUTIONS

Alternative plans have been proposed. We are grateful that the public pressure of the campaign has forced ESCC to properly consider other plans such as a merger or alternative structure and welcome these. The unions hope that ESCC will consult early should legal or HR issues arise in order that they can be solved. We know the alternative plans work in other counties so why should they not work here.

In order to remain within the remit of the council or for a merger or trust to work, it may be necessary for the service to prove it can run efficiently for at least one year. A further year will at least be required to passport out of the council's control should the council still wish to remove the service.

4: CONCLUSION

I urge councillors in the following to debate to consider that ESCC should dismiss proposals to close the instrumental service and instead provide support to allow a period of at least two years for alternative plans to be considered to ensure that the instrumental service remains within the control of the music hub's other functions.