

Joint Report of Strategic Director, People Group and the Strategic Director, Resources Group

Schools Forum Constitution

Recommendation

The Schools Forum is recommended to:

- Accept the proposals to change the Schools Forum Terms of Reference to increase the number of voting members from 24 to 26 from May 2012,
- Amend the representation of the Schools Forum membership to reflect the change in the make up of Warwickshire schools,
- Amend the geographical representation of the Schools Forum to reflect the number of pupils in each area
- Agree to the elections being carried out at the Head Teacher Business Meetings and the Governors Forum Steering Group in the Spring and to request that the non schools bodies arrange for either continued or new representation

1.0 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Schools Forum on the current make up of schools in Warwickshire, the latest regulations and suggest changes to the Terms of Reference of the Schools Forum as a result.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Currently there are 22 elected voting members of the Schools Forum. However there are 2 governors representing 2 schooling sectors. In effect then, there is representation of 24 members.

2.2 This membership is made up of the following:

- 8 Governors
- 1 Nursery Head Teacher
- 4 Primary Head Teachers
- 4 Secondary Head Teachers
- 1 Special School Head Teacher
- 1 Church of England Diocese representative
- 1 Catholic Church Diocese representative
- 1 Private Sector Early Years representative
- 1 14-19 representative

2.3 The current Terms of Reference for the Schools Forum were agreed in 2008. Since then the regulations have been updated under the Schools

Forums (England) Regulations 2010. This includes details of the membership and procedures relating to Schools Forum.

2.4 In terms of membership of the Forum, the regulations state the following:

- There must at least 15 members of the Forum
- Membership should be made up of school members, academy members and non-school members.
- School and academy members must together comprise at least two thirds of the forum membership
- Primary, secondary and academies must be broadly proportionately represented on the Forum, having regard to the number of pupils in them or broadly proportionate to the number of schools in a category when compared to the total number of schools maintained by the authority
- At least one schools member must be a representative of a special school
- At least one schools member must be a representative of a nursery school

2.5 In terms of “school members”, these will be head teachers and governors and must be elected by a relevant group. In terms of academy members, the governing bodies of the Academies in the authority area must elect these to the Schools Forum

2.6 Non-school members must include one or more persons representing a 14-19 partnership and early years. The Local Authority should also consider the Diocesan Board of Education, the Bishop of any Roman Catholic Diocese and representatives of any other religious character (other than Church of England or Catholic) if relevant.

2.7 In terms of procedures, the regulations state that:

- The Forum must meet at least four time a year
- The quorate is at least two fifths of the total membership
- Members of the Forum must elect a chair

2.8 With both the development of Academies and the imminent re-election of Schools Forum representatives in May, this is an ideal opportunity to review the Terms of Reference of the Schools Forum to ensure that it meets the legislative regulations.

3.0 The current position

3.1 Table 1 in appendix A shows the breakdown of Warwickshire schools (as expected by January 2012 following further academy conversions), the number of pupils in each sector and the current representation of the voting members of the Forum.

3.2 As the regulations state, if the Local Authority has nursery and special schools, there needs to be at least one representative from each of these sectors. As the number of pupils in the Nursery and Special Schools are lower than in the others, this distorts the percentage allocations. Therefore, assuming that these two representatives are included, the breakdown of the other sectors is shown in table 2 of the appendix. This table shows that the current Schools Forum membership is not representative of the number of pupils or number of schools within each sector.

4.0 Revised Schools Representation

4.1 The terms of office for the current Schools Forum members cease in May 2012. As such, this is an ideal opportunity to re-assess the number of representatives required.

4.2 As decisions made by the Schools Forum are essentially focused on children, it is preferable to use the number of pupils in each sector as the basis of representation. Based on this assumption, Appendix B shows a suggested revised make up of the Schools Forum.

4.3 The Local Authority can decide the makeup of the school representatives in terms of governors and head teachers. If an even split is assumed, then the total number of members will need to be even. Bearing in mind that, in the short to medium term, the entire secondary school phase is likely to be made up convert to academy status, the initial considerations should be regarding the number of primary schools representatives.

4.4 Keeping the number of members at around the same level as is current, this would mean that there would need to be 12 primary schools members, which gives an overall total of 20, with 4 members representing maintained secondary's and the same number representing academies.

4.5 Currently there is a geographical split of the Forum members to enable each one to both represent and report to schools within their area. There is merit in continuing this relationship to ensure that the 2-way communication remains. If the same principle of pupil numbers is used to determine the number of members in each region, then the membership should look as follows:

	Primary	Secondary
Central	4	2
East	2	1
North	4	3
South	2	2
TOTAL	12	8

5.0 Non-Schools Representation

5.1 As there have been few other changes in the schools provision apart from the development of academies, it is proposed that the type and number of non-school members remains the same; that is to retain representatives of the Church of England Diocese, Catholic Diocese, the 14-19 sector and the Early Years sector.

5.2 The current Schools Forum also consists of non-voting members. These are five elected members representing the three political parties on the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board and including the Portfolio Holder for Child Safeguarding, Early Intervention and Schools. Also included in the non-voting membership are union representatives from eight unions along with Local Authority Officers. It is not proposed that this membership is amended.

6.0 Elections

6.1 There are Head Teacher Business Meetings planned for February and it is suggested that these are used to vote for head teacher members of the Schools Forum to take up post from May onwards.

6.2 The current Forum members are requested to make it known whether they would like to be re-elected. Other head teachers and governors will also be asked to volunteer. Voting papers will then be available at the Business Meetings, linking nominations to the relevant sector and geographical area. The same nomination process can be undertaken with school governors with voting taking place at the Governors Forum Steering Group in February.

6.3 Both the Diocese, the PVI sector and the 14-19 providers can be requested to nominate either the same or alternative representatives in time for the May meeting.

6.4 Upon establishment of the updated Schools Forum, the re-election of the Chair can take place.

7.0 Future changes to the role of the Schools Forum

7.1 On a national basis, as discussed at the Forum meeting in September, the consultation issued in July by the Department for Education noted the possibility of the increased role of the Schools Forum as a decision making body rather than that of consultation. However, at a recent national school funding conference, representatives from the Department noted that there was adverse feedback to this suggestion and that further work needed to be undertaken to put forward more acceptable proposals.

7.2 It is expected that further consultation will take place in the Spring of next year.

7.3 On a local basis, whilst the secondary sector has changed with the development of academies, it may be that the primary sector will also start to change in the next few years. As such, the membership of the Schools Forum may need to be carefully monitored to ensure it retains its relevance to the structural make up of Warwickshire schools.

8.0 Conclusion

8.1 Due to the development of academies, there is a need to review the membership of the Schools Forum. With elections due in May, it is proposed that volunteers are sought to cover the sectors and areas now required to ensure membership is representative and that elections are carried out at the Head Teacher Business Meetings and Governors Forum in the Spring.

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