

Schools Forum May 17th 2012

Potential Future Changes to the Schools Forum

This report is relevant to both maintained and academy schools

Recommendation

1. It is recommended that the current membership of the Schools Forum in Warwickshire remains stable until May 2013
2. That the Forum notes the expected changes to the Schools Forum Regulations that may impact on the voting membership and processes of the Schools Forum from September 2012

1.0 Introduction

1.1 At the Schools Forum in March, it was agreed to amend the constitution of the Warwickshire Schools Forum. The voting membership for the next 12 months is as follows:

- Five Primary Headteachers, two Maintained Secondary Headteachers, 3 Academy Secondary Headteachers, 1 Special School Headteacher and 1 Nursery School Headteacher
- 10 Governor Members which will include two academy representatives, 2 maintained secondary schools and 6 maintained primary schools.
- A representative of each of the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church appointed by the Local Authority, a Private, Voluntary and Independent member and a representative of Local Authority 14-19 partnerships

1.2 The revised Terms of Reference is attached at Appendix A.

2.0 Key Issues

2.1 As part of the schools funding reforms mentioned elsewhere on the agenda, the government is also proposing to amend the regulations regarding Schools Forum. They want to ensure that the Forum is focused, making transparent decisions in relation to funding for 2013-14 and that those most affected by these decisions have a greater say.

2.2 For 2013-14, the Schools Forum Regulations will be amended as follows:

- Remove the requirement to have a minimum of 15 people on the Forum
- Limit the number of Local Authority attendees

- Confine voting arrangements to allow only school members and providers from the PVI to vote on the funding formula
- Require Local Authorities to publish Forum papers, minutes and decisions promptly on their websites, and
- Require Forums to be held as public meetings, as is the case of council meetings

2.3 The EFA will also have an observer status and will be available, should there be any concerns regarding the work of the Forum.

2.4 In the longer term, the regulations may change further to include:

- Setting a maximum number of members
- Slimming down or removal of non school members
- Requiring an independent secretariat to service the schools Forum

2.5 The Schools Forum reforms are aimed at ensuring that those making decisions regarding schools funding in September are representative of the types of schools in which pupils are educated. As there is not expected to be a significant number of schools converting to academy status before September 2012 in Warwickshire and there is a need for some degree of stability in the voting membership, it is not proposed to amend the membership in the Schools Forum until May 2013.

2.6 Whilst the publication of the revised Schools Forum Regulations are awaited, the Forum should note that the voting membership may need to change in September. The venue and advertisement of the Schools Forum meetings may also need to change to ensure that there is public awareness and opportunity to attend.

Background papers

Department for Education publication: Consultation on schools funding reform: Next steps towards a fairer system. March 26th 2012

	Name	Contact Details
Report Author(s)	Sara Haslam	sarahaslam@warwickshire.gov.uk
Head of Service	John Betts and Mark Gore	johnbetts@warwickshire.gov.uk and markgore@warwickshire.gov.uk
Strategic Director	David Carter and Wendy Fabbro	davidcarter@warwickshire.gov.uk and wendyfabbro@warwickshire.gov.uk
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Heather Timms	Cllrtimms@warwickshire.gov.uk