

## **Schools Forum**

**7<sup>th</sup> March 2013**

### **Schools Forum – Constitution and Election Process for 2013-14**

This report relates to both maintained and academy schools

#### **Recommendation**

The Schools Forum is recommended to:

1. Note the proposed changes to the Warwickshire Schools Forum membership for 2013/14
2. Agree to the number of head teacher and governor representatives in the maintained school sector membership
3. Extend the term of office to 2 years of members other than the primary and secondary sector representatives
4. Confirm that the current members, excluding those representing the primary and secondary sectors, are willing to stand for a further 12 months
5. Agree to the inclusion of a Trade Union representative as a non-schools member
6. Current Schools Forum members to nominate themselves for re-election, if required
7. Agree that the Local Authority should facilitate the elections on behalf of the academy representatives
8. Comment on the suggested process for elections to the Schools Forum for 2013/14

#### **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 The Schools Forum Terms of Reference were updated in March 2012 to take account of the requirement to have academy representation on the Schools Forum.

1.2 The Terms of Reference were also changed to state that the term of membership would be 12 months. This would allow for the Forum membership to be updated as the status of schools changed.

1.3 The next elections are therefore required during the next 2 months ready for the May meeting.

## 2.0 School Members

2.1 Membership of the Schools Forum is broken down into Schools Members and Non School Members. The current Schools membership is as follows:

Table 1

	Number of pupils (Jan 2012 census)	% of pupils	Number of Schools Forum reps for 2012/13
Primary Maintained	39,225	57.4%	11
Primary Academy		-	0
Secondary Maintained	12,725	18.6%	4
Secondary Academy	16,305	24%	5
Nursery	-	-	1
Special Schools	-	-	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>68,255</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>22</b>

2.2 As of April 2013, it is expected that the breakdown of pupils will be as follows:

Table 2

	Number of pupils (Oct 20102 census)	% of pupils	Proposed Number of Schools Forum reps for 2013/14
Primary Maintained	37,556	54.7%	11
Primary Academy	2,331	3.4%	1
Secondary Maintained	11,211	16.3%	3
Secondary Academy	17,559	25.6%	5
Nursery			1
Special Schools			1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>68,657</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>22</b>

2.3 Table 2 indicates that there needs to be a change in the number of representatives; there should be one less secondary maintained and an additional academy member, due to the development of primary academies.

2.4 The DfE has published a document "Schools Forum: Operational and Good Practice Guide". This is attached as Appendix A. It states that academy representation does not need to be sector specific; there is not therefore a requirement that members should be made up of representatives from a primary and 5 secondary schools. Regardless of pupil numbers in the primary and special school sectors, there should be at least one representative of these on the Forum.

2.5 Whilst table 2 above notes the number of representatives for each sector, Warwickshire historically has had both head teacher and governors in each group. The DfE Good Practice Guide notes that “it is good practice for Schools Forums to aim for a membership structure based on an equal proportion of head teachers and governors”. As such, it is recommended that a 50/50 split is retained, where possible.

2.6 Table 3 shows the potential split of head teacher and governors.

Table 3

	Proposed Number of Schools Forum reps for 2013/14	Head teacher	Governor
Primary Maintained	11	5 or 6	5 or 6
Secondary Maintained	3	1 or 2	1 or 2
Academy	6	3	3
	20	10	10

2.7 The Schools Forum is requested to agree the split of governors or head teachers in the maintained sectors.

### 3.0 Non School Members

3.1 The current Schools Forum non schools membership is as follows:

	Number of Schools Forum reps
PVI Sector	1
Church of England Diocese	1
Catholic Church Diocese	1
14-19 Partnership	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>

3.2 The DfE Good Practice Guide notes that not all terms of office need to be the same for all members. There is a trade-off between reflecting the make-up of the schooling landscape and consistency in the membership of the Schools Forum. The Forum is recommended to consider a change to the Schools Forum Terms of Reference to include a 2 year term of office for members other than those representing the primary and secondary schools. This would mean that there would be consistency in the membership of the areas that are not expected to be affected by academy conversion in 2013/14; nursery schools, special schools and non-schools members.

3.3 However, there would also need to be agreement from these current Forum members that they are willing to continue their memberships for a further 12 months.

3.4 Alternatively, should it be the decision of the Forum to re-elect these members, as was the case last year, the Local Authority will appoint representatives from the PVI and the Diocese and the nursery and special schools will be asked to nominate new representation.

3.5 At the last Schools Forum, the introduction of a Trade Union representative as a non-schools member of the Forum was discussed. Whilst there was support for this, there was also a request that other groups were considered for inclusion. Having spoken to 20 other Local Authorities, 2 have SEN representatives and 2 have school business managers whilst 11 have Trade Union members.

3.6 The Schools Forum is therefore asked for comments regarding the Local Authority amending its Terms of Reference to include a Trade Union representative as a non-schools member. The various Trade Unions in Warwickshire would be asked to nominate such a member, with the post in place for the May meeting.

#### **4.0 Voting arrangements:**

4.1 The first stage of the voting process will be to generate nominations to be a Schools Forum member. Current members are requested to contact Sara Haslam to nominate themselves for 2013/14. An announcement will be made at the Head Teacher Business Meetings and to the Governor Steering Group in March to promote the process. An email will then be sent to all schools with a nomination form attached.

4.2 Last year the Local Authority facilitated the nomination and election of academy representatives. The current academy representatives are requested to confirm whether this assistance will be required again this year.

4.3 Last year the actual voting was undertaken at the Head Teacher Business meetings but this was then dependent on attendance on the day. As such, this year it is suggested that the process is carried out electronically.

4.4 In order that the new arrangements are in place for the May meeting, the following timescales will be worked towards:

March 15th	Nomination Forms emailed to all schools and chair of governors
April 26th	Voting finalised and new members informed.
May 16 <sup>th</sup>	Schools Forum with new membership

4.5 The nomination and elections of governors will be discussed and confirmed with the Democratic Services team.

## 5.0 Role of the Schools Forum

5.1 As a means of re-iteration, the role of the Schools Forum, following the legislative changes introduced last October, attached at Appendix B is a summary of the key areas of responsibility and decision making.

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