



Title of report: Herefordshire Schools Forum Constitution Review 2025

Decision maker: Corporate Director - Children & Young People

Decision date: Wednesday 6 August 2025

Report by: Clerk to Herefordshire Schools Forum / Democratic Services Officer

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To adopt the revised constitution of Herefordshire Schools Forum.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) the Herefordshire Schools Forum be reduced to 25 members by the removal of a vacant seat for maintained primary schools;
- b) 1 seat be transferred from maintained primary schools to academies to ensure proportionality on the forum and budget working group;
- c) the revised constitution of the Herefordshire Schools Forum and all appendices, as set out at appendix 1 to the report, be adopted; and
- d) all future decisions relating to the membership of the forum be delegated to the Service Director, Education, Skills and Learning.

Alternative options

- 1 The current constitution of the Herefordshire Schools Forum could be retained. This is not recommended as the constitution is not reflective of current practice and would benefit from additional clarity.
- 2 A seat could be retained for maintained primary schools. This is not recommended - following a recruitment drive for volunteers to fill vacancies on the forum a vacancy remained for a maintained primary headteacher and therefore there is evidence that there is not the uptake to fill the vacancies on the Forum.
- 3 Proportionality in respect of the forum and budget working group could be disregarded. This option is not recommended as it is preferable for the effective functioning of the Forum and budget working group that the different types of schools in Herefordshire are fairly represented.

Key considerations

- 4 The constitution of the Herefordshire Schools Forum as updated in July 2017 has been reviewed to confirm that it remains compliant with legislation and guidance and to identify any areas for improvement, particularly regarding arrangements for remote participation.
- 5 The constitution has also been reviewed against current standard practices for the operation of council committees. Although the Schools Forum is not a committee of the council it is common for councils to run the forum along similar lines, and this is recognised in guidance as a legitimate approach.
- 6 The review concluded that the constitution complied with all current legislation. However, the review did identify some points where the constitution could be strengthened to clarify arrangements for the operation of the Forum, taking on board the good practice highlighted in guidance produced by the Department for Education.
- 7 Summary of proposed changes to constitution:
 - a. Functions of the Forum
Appendix A has been introduced which clearly sets out the powers and responsibilities of the Schools Forum.
 - b. Membership
The number of seats allocated to each category of members were removed and included at Appendix B in order for a technical change to be made to the constitution each time the annual review of proportionality was conducted and required a change.
 - c. Tenure of Office
Following the review and consultation with members, the term of office for members would be adjusted to a four-year term.
 - d. Location of meetings
An addition to the constitution to take in to account the regulations around remote meetings.
 - e. Other changes
All other changes are typographical corrections, simplification or to ensure compliance with the council's style guide.

Community impact

- 8 The items considered and decisions made by the Forum should have regard to what matters to schools and settings in Herefordshire and how the Forum can best contribute to managing the current changing and challenging financial circumstances.
- 9 The updated constitution will ensure that the membership of the Schools Forum continues to reflect the range of types of school and setting across Herefordshire and that all groups have the opportunity to shape the decisions of the Forum.

Environmental Impact

- 10 Whilst this is a decision on back-office functions and will have minimal environmental impacts, consideration has been made to minimise waste and resource use in line with the Council's Environmental Policy.

Equality duty

- 11 The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to consider how it can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations and demonstrate that it is paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.
- 12 The mandatory equality impact screening checklist has been completed for this decision, and it has been found to have low impact for equality. This checklist can be found at appendix 2.

Resource implications

- 13 There are no identified resource implications with approval of the recommendations contained in this report.

Legal implications

- 14 The Schools Forum is established under section 47A of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The current regulations pertaining to the operation and management of Schools Forums are set out in The Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012.
- 15 The Education Funding Agency (EFA) and Department for Education (DfE) set out guidance on the operation of Schools Forums in March 2015 which was last updated in March 2021. This document also gives examples of good practice from a range of Schools Forums and the Department for Education. It is not designed to be prescriptive except where it refers directly to the Schools Forum Regulations 2012.
- 16 The council must ensure that the Schools Forum for their area is constituted in accordance with the regulations and is responsible for determining the size and composition of the Forum, and the members' terms of office.

Risk management

There are no identified risks associated with approval of the recommendations contained in this report. If the constitution is not updated there is a risk that the Forum will not operate efficiently.

Consultees

- 17 The draft revised constitution and appendices were circulated to all members of the Herefordshire Schools Forum on 3 June 2025 for comments. Seven responses were received, two of which made suggestions on changes or improvements to the draft. Further changes were made to the revised constitution to reflect the feedback received.
- 18 The amended draft revised constitution at appendix 1 was discussed and endorsed by the Herefordshire Schools Forum at its meeting on 11 July 2025.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Updated Herefordshire Schools Forum Constitution

Appendix 2 – Equality Checklist

Background papers

None identified.

Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Governance	John Coleman	Date 01/08/2025
Finance	Karen Morris	Date 21/07/2025
Legal	Sean O'Connor	Date 21/07/2025
Communications	Michala Lee	Date 29/07/2025
Equality Duty	Harriet Yellin	Date 21/07/2025
Procurement	Nena Beric	Date 21/07/2025
Risk	Amanda Sherrard	Date 05/08/2025
Approved by	Liz Farr / Tina Russell	Date 06/08/2025