

REVISED CONSTITUTION FOR SCHOOLS FORUM

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PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

SCHOOLS FORUM

7 JULY 2009

Schools Affected: All

Purpose

1. For consideration and decision making

Financial Implication

2. The Constitution sets out how Schools Forum will operate and how it will fulfil its remit to represent schools' views on matters relating to the Schools Budget, as well as taking decisions on specific financial areas. It is an important group influencing the use of resources to support children and young people in Herefordshire.

Background

3. Schools Forum of 2 February 2009 resolved that
 - (i) the development steps for the revision of the terms of reference of the Schools Forum as set out in the report be approved: and
 - (ii) the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and other Forum Members be circulated with the draft revised terms of reference for comment prior to being submitted to the Forum for consideration.
4. The attached draft Constitution has been produced as a result of these actions and is intended to improve the timeliness and quality of the work of the Forum, as well as reaffirming the purpose of the forum, the powers and duties, membership and relationships with other groups that make decisions and provide views.
5. At Schools Forum of 2 June 2009 members of the Forum were asked to go back to their respective groups to gather feedback on the proposed constitution.

Issues or Risks

6. During the preparation of the draft Constitution the following areas were highlighted as particular issues for Schools Forum to discuss:
 - The draft Constitution itself, including the suggestions for Membership and managing Forum business,

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- The size of Schools Forum and the need for representation across the breadth of the schools community. Also the number of members necessary to guarantee a quorate Forum that represents the different aspects of Herefordshire,
- What representation means, how the Forum feeds back to schools, how the Forum represents all schools and settings and what this means for individual Forum members,
- The experience of Forum members in relation to financial matters and the length of term for Forum members, vice chair and chair. Also the expectation on members of the Schools Forum, including possibly presenting items,
- Feedback from Council on decisions that have been taken on issues that Schools Forum have given a view,
- Membership of Schools Forum, with a proposal that at least one schools Business Manager should be a member of the Forum.

7. The following feedback has been received:

Re. Early Years representation. The area of early years' educational provision (in the context of the Early Years Foundation Curriculum) is currently represented on the Schools Forum by two representatives of the Early Years and Extended Services (EYES) Forum covering voluntary, private, independent providers and childminders, and a representative covering nursery classes in schools. The representatives report to and from the EYES Forum. EYES forum provided the following data specifying the representatives' constituencies of providers and children served:

~ 41 Private providers serving 2065 children;

~ 74 Voluntary providers serving 2267 children

~ 134 Childminders serving 647 children,

~ 6 independent providers serving approximately 131 children,

~ 13 Nursery classes with places for 494 children.

The largest constituencies both in terms of providers and also children served, are within the above first three categories. EYES Forum believe that adequate representation to serve all the providers and children would not be met by reducing the current number of early years members of the Schools Forum. The EYES Forum members and providers strongly wish the current representation to be maintained.

Re. 14- 19 representation. . Currently there are two members representing 14-19. The proposal is to reduce this to 1, which is not supported by the 14-19 Strategy Manager who believes that one representative cannot represent all secondary schools, specials and PRUs as well as the four colleges and training provider association (approximately 8 organisations) and cover the breadth of the 14-19 learning offer from Diplomas, A Levels, GCSEs and Apprenticeships.

An alternative has been proposed that instead of having two 14-19 representatives one would be covered by a secondary school, and could be part of that allocation,

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and the remaining 14-19 role could be converted to be a post-16 provider role. This would ensure that there would always be schools and either colleges or training providers represented.

Re. HASH representation. The group has proposed that it be responsible for setting the term of office for its representatives.

Recommendations

That Schools Forum considers the responses from the membership and agrees on any alterations to the draft Constitution before approving it and adopting it for September 2009. This includes:

- Revised agenda and forward planning which also ties into other school meetings
- Confirming membership through the different organisations, to be facilitated by Democratic Services
- Improving the quality of information received by Schools Forum, as well as the timeliness of the information.

Background Papers

Terms of Reference paper to Schools Forum 2 February 2009

Further information on the subject of this report is available from