

# **HEREFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP AND CONSTITUTION**

## **1. Introduction**

The Schools Forum is established by virtue of 47A of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (as amended by the Education Act 2002) and the School Finance (England) Regulations 2006.

## **2. Function**

The Schools Forum will have several main functions as listed below, but may also consult on other items that the Local Authority deems appropriate. Details are defined in the Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2002 and School Finance (England) Regulations 2006 as well as guidance issued by the Department for Education Skills, subsequently updated under the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF), including the School Finance Regulations 2008.

## **3. Purpose of the Forum**

Regulations prescribe three main functions on which the Local Authority must consult the forum as follows:

- a. On changes to the schools funding formula
- b. On the terms of contracts to be let by the Local Authority for services to schools, paid from the schools budget. (Subject to a de-minimis level)
- c. On issues relating to the management of the Schools Budget, including:
  - arrangements for the education of pupils with special educational needs
  - arrangements for the use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school
  - arrangements for early years education
  - insurance arrangements
  - prospective revisions to the Local Authority's financing scheme for the financing of schools
  - administration of central government grants to schools
  - arrangements for free school meals

The Local Authority will consult the Forum on Local Authority Budget Issues.

## **4. Powers and Duties**

The schools forum is an advisory body, established to represent schools views to the Local Authority. In addition, the forum has decision-making powers in specific areas, as follows:

- Approving increases to the DCSF prescribed limits on centrally managed expenditure
- Formula changes during multi-year funding periods (in exceptional and limited circumstances)
- To agree the level of school specific contingency held

- Approving minor amendments to the Minimum Funding Guarantee – in limited circumstances (eg to remove anomalies), provided no more than 50% of pupils in schools are affected.
- To agree arrangements for combining elements of the centrally managed budget with elements of other services where there are resulting benefits for schools and pupils.

## **5. Membership**

The Herefordshire Schools Forum will have 26 members elected as follows:

School members:

- 6 Primary Schools Head teacher representatives
- 1 Primary School Governor representative
- 5 Secondary School Head teacher representatives
- 1 Secondary School Governor representative
- 1 Special School Head teacher representative
- 1 Special School Governor representative
- 1 School with a Nursery representative
- 1 Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) Management Committee representative
- 1 Business Manager representative

Non School members:

- 2 Diocesan Representatives
- 2 Trade Union representatives, 1 Primary School and 1 Secondary School
- 2 Early Years representatives
- 2 14-19 Partnership representatives

26 Total Forum members

The members with observer status are as follows:

- Cabinet Member for Children's Services
- Cabinet Member for ICT, Education and Achievement.
- Children's Services Scrutiny Committee Chairman

## **6. Tenure of Office**

Each member will have a three-year term of office (unless they become Chair or Vice Chair). In the event that a member of the forum ceases to hold the office, the term of office ceases and another appointment must be made. The replacement will serve the remainder of the term.

## **7. Quorum and Substitutes**

The Forum shall not be quorate if less than 40% of the total membership is present at the meeting. Members unable to attend should therefore arrange cover from nominated substitutes, appointed in compliance with the arrangements below.

Substitutes are to be nominated in the same way as members. Democratic Services should be notified of the names of all substitutes.

Head teachers can be represented by senior school staff including principals, deputy Head teachers, bursars or other persons responsible for financial management of the school.

## **8. Election Arrangements School Members**

School members of the forum must be nominated via a process “determined by the constituents represented by members of that group”.

## **9. Primary Head Teacher Members**

Six Head teacher representatives (plus substitutes) to be appointed following expressions of interest and an election procedure concluded at the appropriate primary Heads meeting to which all primary Heads in that given area are invited.

To ensure appropriate representation within the primary phase, the following overriding criteria are established:

At least 1 primary head member must represent community schools

At least 1 primary head member must represent voluntary controlled/voluntary aided/foundation schools

There must be at least 2 members representing a school less than 105 pupils.

There must be at least 1 member representing a school more than 105 pupils.

## **10. Secondary Head Teacher Members**

Five High School head teacher representatives (plus substitutes) must be appointed via an election procedure concluded at the Herefordshire Association of Secondary Heads (HASH) meeting to which all secondary heads are invited. HASH will set the term of office for their representatives within the maximum term set out in paragraph 6.

The following overriding criteria must be applied:

At least 1 secondary head member must represent community schools

At least 1 secondary head member must represent voluntary controlled/voluntary aided/foundation schools

At least 1 head must represent 11-16 schools

At least 1 head must represent 11-18 schools

## **11. Head teacher of a school with a Nursery**

The member (plus a substitute) should be elected by the heads of the Herefordshire maintained schools with nurseries.

## **12. Special School Head teacher members**

One special school head (plus a substitute) will be elected by the special schools head teachers at a meeting to which all special school head teachers are invited.

### **13. Governor Members**

Three Governors (plus substitutes) must be appointed via an election procedure concluded at the Herefordshire Association of Governors (HAGs) meeting to which all governor representatives are invited (irrespective of whether they are members of HAG as follows:

Primary Governor:  
Secondary Governor  
Special School Governor

A maximum of one member from any one governing body may sit on the forum.

The representatives must also be the chair of their school governing body finance committee or equivalent.

A Head teacher may not sit as a governor representative.

The HAGs should seek to ensure an appropriate geographical and size of school representation.

### **14. PRU representative**

The forum member (plus a substitute) should be appointed by the Management Committee of the Pupil Referral Service.

### **15. Non School Members**

Diocesan representation (plus substitutes) should be one from each faith, membership to be secured through the Standing Advisory Council Religious Education.

Trade Union representatives will report back to the Teaching Union meeting, thereby representing all unions. The representative should be appointed via an election procedure concluded at the Teaching Unions meeting.

Early Years representatives (plus substitutes) should be appointed via the Early Years Steering Group and should represent the independent and voluntary sector, rather than school nursery provision.

The representatives from the 14-19 consortium (plus substitutes) should be appointed via an election concluded by the 14-19 consortium.

### **16. Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

The Chair and Vice-Chair must be elected from the Forum's own members. The Chair and Vice-Chair will hold these positions for a maximum of two years. This extends the period of membership of Schools Forum beyond the period set out in 4.3. The Chair and Vice Chair should represent different sectors of the school community.

When the Chair and Vice-Chair are not present, the meeting can elect a Chair for that meeting only.

## **17. Declarations of Interest**

It is recognised that all Schools Group members will have an interest in at least one school. It is important that members should declare if the item under discussion could make a material difference to that school, or where they may have a personal or prejudicial interest. Notwithstanding this, a member may continue contributing to the discussion, but should not take any part in any decision made concerning that particular proposal which uniquely changes funding for their particular school/schools. (An advice note concerning declarations of interest is attached at Annex 2).

## **18. Managing the Business**

The following operational timescales and procedures are required to ensure that Schools Forum operates efficiently and has sufficient information and time to consider the issues.

## **19. Frequency of Meetings**

Schools Forum should meet at least six times a year including the following months:

September  
November  
January  
February  
March  
June

Dates must be set annually for the forthcoming year.

## **20. Forward Plan and Agenda Setting**

A forward plan must be established and reviewed by the Forum on an annual basis, usually in February of each year. The following should be considered through the annual cycle:

February – programme of work for the following financial year  
June outline proposals covering the areas of work contained in section 2  
September – details of work set out in June  
November – sign off of work to be consulted with all schools, in time to inform budget setting and Cabinet decision making in February

Agenda must be agreed by the Assistant Director, Improvement and Inclusion in consultation with the Chair of Schools Forum one week after the last forum meeting. Democratic Services will provide the resource to facilitate the forum, including organising and sending out agenda and papers, Minutes and action sheets.

A common format for all reports must be followed, using the attached template, Annexe 1.

Papers for Schools Forum must be circulated seven working days before the Schools Forum date. They are required to be signed off by Herefordshire Council's Head of Finance, Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Democratic, Head of Risk Management and the Assistant Director, Improvement and Inclusion prior to circulation.

Briefing meetings for the Chair must take place at least three working days before each Schools Forum meeting.

Minutes and an action sheet from each Schools Forum meeting must be circulated seven working days after the Schools Forum meeting as draft, and the Minutes will be formally considered and confirmed at the following Schools Forum meeting.

## **21. Decision Making**

Schools Forum is an important body within the financial and service planning activities of Herefordshire Council, the Herefordshire Partnership and Children's Trust. As set out in section 2, Schools Forum is primarily a consultative body, with some decision making responsibilities. The Local Authority will take the views of Schools Forum into account before finalising arrangements on which the Forum has been consulted, at a Directorate Leadership Team and Lead Member, Cabinet and Council level.

Recommendations to the Council should normally be made through consensus. Majority voting should be used to decide any issues, with each representative casting one vote. The Chairman will have the casting vote in the event of a tie.

In the event of an urgent decision being required an email will be sent to all Schools Forum members fully explaining the issue on which a decision is required. Forum members will be required to submit their response via email to the date required. No decision will formally be made until a quorate number of responses has been received by the Assistant Director, Improvement and Inclusion. This process will be administered by Democratic Services.

Schools Forum should receive feedback on the decisions made by Herefordshire Council that have taken into account Schools Forum views as part of any consultation process. The Chair of Schools Forum can invite Council Members to provide feedback at Schools Forum meetings.

## **22. Working Groups**

Herefordshire Children and Young Peoples Directorate (CYPD) and schools should try to make use of existing working groups wherever possible, to minimise duplication and use existing expertise. In order to support and advise the work of the Schools Forum existing working groups can be approached to provide information on related activities. The Forum can also, if required, set up working groups for specific tasks. Such groups could be time-limited and would need to establish clear remits, appropriate membership and operating principles.

- (i) The full Schools Forum remains the decision making body for the responsibilities covered in section 3. Working groups and other groups will provide information, advice and options.
- (ii) Current Schools Forum Working Groups:
  - (a) **Budget Review Working Group:** This group is established as a permanent advisory sub-group of the full Schools Forum. Importantly it reports to Schools Forum (SF), and is not itself a decision-making body.

Remit:

To provide additional support and time to consider information and data in order to inform the development of key budgetary options, recommendations and decisions relating to Dedicated Schools Grant.

Membership:

Identified members of SF including Chair and Deputy CYPD Assistant Director, Improvement and Inclusion  
Finance officers

Operating principles:

To assess financial information prior to presentation to Schools Forum  
To consider implications of any financial proposal  
To draft papers for submission to full Schools Forum meetings  
To provide considered information and advice to support the work of the full Schools Forum.

(iii) Working groups that could support the work of Schools Forum:

The following working groups have been established to develop strategy for key priority areas and to ensure effective management and implementation of delivery. The financial element of this responsibility provides information to Schools Forum and supports SF processes.

(a) **Funding for Inclusion Group:** This group was established to develop a strategy for the delegation of Additional Needs funding direct to schools and settings.

Remit:

To design models for delegation of Additional Needs funding.  
To draft proposals for CYPD DLT, Schools Forum and Cabinet consideration.  
To carry out thorough consultation.  
To monitor implementation.  
To monitor and review impact.

Membership:

This group has a large membership consisting of school representatives, stakeholders, CYPD officers and Finance officers.

Operating principles:

To assess information on delegated funding models  
To analyse Herefordshire requirements  
To analyse data on finance  
To analyse range of Additional Needs and pupil numbers  
To report back to all key decision making bodies  
To be accountable for model implementation  
To be responsible for monitoring of effectiveness.

(iv) Other such groups include:

**Service Level Agreement Group**  
**Early Years and Extended Services**  
**Connexions Working Group**  
**Joint Agency Management Group**  
**Children's Trust Management and Outcome Groups**

Schools Forum and CYPD aim to make the most of existing groups, rather than create new ones. The above list will develop and change according to work requirements.

AGENDA ITEM NO. ???

## HEADING

REPORT BY

**SCHOOLS FORUM**

**19 MARCH 2009**

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### **Schools Affected**

#### **Purpose**

*Choose one of the following:*

*for information*

*to update on progress*

*to highlight issues and agree next steps*

*for consideration and decision making*

#### **Financial Implication**

#### **Background**

*Including links to legislation, national and local initiatives, Herefordshire's Children and Young People's Plan*

#### **Issues or Risks**

#### **Recommendations**

#### **Background Papers**



**ADVICE NOTES CONCERNING DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There are many instances where a decision on an issue will have an effect on all schools, be it on a pro rata basis, and as such members would not declare an interest. Where a decision on an issue 'uniquely' affects one particular school, at which the member is, for example, the headteacher of that school, or where the head teacher's children attend, then it would be appropriate for an interest to be declared.

In considering the declaration of an interest, a Member of the Forum should apply the following test: would a member of the public, knowing the facts of the situation, reasonably think that the member might be influenced by the interest?

A prejudicial interest would include the situation whereby a proposal uniquely affects either a school at which they are a head teacher/governor or which their children attend.

Any member who requires advice/guidance concerning declarations of interest or any other issue concerning the Forum should contact the Clerk in the first instance on telephone number 01432 383408.