

MEETING:	SCHOOLS FORUM
DATE:	19 OCTOBER 2012
TITLE OF REPORT:	MEMBERSHIP OF BUDGET WORKING GROUP
REPORT BY:	GOVERNANCE SERVICES

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To review the composition of the Budget Working Group (BWG).

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- (a) **the Forum reviews the membership of the Budget Working Group;**
- (b) **the Budget Working Group continue to operate on the basis previously agreed by the Forum as set out at paragraph 5 of the report, with small schools and special schools to be represented and with consideration also given to governor involvement;**
- (b) **there should be a minimum of one maintained school representative from the secondary sector and one academy representative from the primary school sector;**
- (c) **the factors set out at paragraph 10 are taken into consideration in making appointments to the Budget Working Group;**
- (d) **that in future membership of the Budget Working Group be reviewed in parallel with membership of the Schools Forum;**
- (e) **the Forum consider the chairmanship of the Budget Working Group; and**
- (f) **the current membership of the BWG continues in place until 31 December 2012.**

Key Points Summary

- Following changes to the Forum's membership it is suggested that it is timely for the Forum to review the membership of the BWG.

- It is suggested that representatives should be elected by HASH and the Primary Heads Forum having regard to factors set out at paragraph 10 of the report.
- It is proposed to retain a three year term of office for members of the Forum, in principle, running from 1 September. The three year term of office would, however, be subject to an annual review. This review would be aligned with the review of the membership of the Forum itself.
- It is proposed that there is a transitional period during which the existing membership continues pending confirmation by nominating bodies..
- The Forum is invited to consider whether it wishes to nominate someone at this stage as Chairman subject to the nominations to the BWG made by HASH and the Primary Schools Forum.

Alternative Options

- 1 The composition of the BWG could be varied in a number of ways.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2 To ensure that the BWG is constituted appropriately.

Introduction and Background

- 3 The Department for Education (DfE) publication Schools Forums: operational and good practice guide – September 2012 notes at paragraph 1.44: *It is open to a Schools Forum to set up working groups of members to discuss specific issues, and to produce draft advice and decisions for the Schools Forum itself to consider. The groups can also include wider representation - for example, an early years reference group can represent all the different types of provider to consider the detail of the early years single funding formula. The reference group would then be able to give its considered view on the local authority's proposals to the Schools Forum. It is not good practice for the Schools Forum to delegate actual decisions or the finalisation of advice to a working group, as this may have the effect of excluding legitimate points of view.*
- 4 The Forum has for a number of years appointed a Budget Working Group. The current terms of reference of the Group are appended. No amendments to the terms of reference are proposed.
- 5 The Forum considered a report on the role and membership of the Group in April 2010 reaching the following principal conclusions, which were accepted by the Forum:
 - a. the membership of the BWG should be transparent and representatives elected by HASH and the Primary Heads Forum
 - b. appointments should be representative of their constituent schools
 - c. appointments should be for three years subject to re-election. Existing members can continue if they are re-elected by their respective group.
 - d. agreed that continuity of membership is important as representatives gain school finance expertise

- e. small schools should be represented but it was recognised that it was difficult for Headteachers of small schools to be released from school.
- f. special schools should be represented
- g. nominated substitutes are permitted if a member couldn't attend.
- h. headteacher representatives would lead in feeding back a summary from the BWG to Schools Forum and preparing other reports.

Key Considerations

- 6 The current membership of the BWG, as described in the appendix, is 14, 11 of whom were members of the Forum prior to the membership being recast. There are now 6 current Members of the BWG who serve on the Forum. The current BWG membership comprises 5 maintained primary school representatives, 1 special school representative, 6 academy representatives (3 primary, 3 secondary) and 2 Early years providers.
- 7 It is suggested that given the recasting of the Forum's membership it is therefore timely to review the membership of the BWG.
- 8 The Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012 prescribe how the Forum itself is to be constituted. These provisions do not apply to the composition of the Budget Working Group. That is a matter for the Forum itself as the guidance from the DfE quoted above indicates.
- 9 In April 2010 the Forum agreed the membership of the BWG should be transparent and representatives should be elected by HASH and the Primary Heads Forum. There seems no reason to change that approach, with the addition of Private Voluntary and Independent Sector representatives appointed by the Early Years Forum. It is however, also proposed that consideration needs to be given to governor involvement to be considered through Herefordshire Association of Governors. The Forum is also invited to consider a proposal that there should be a minimum of one maintained school representative from the secondary sector and one academy representative from the primary school sector. It is also proposed that there should continue to be a special school representative nominated by the Herefordshire Special Heads Group.
- 10 The Authority suggests that the Forum recommends that the following factors are taken into consideration in making appointments to the BWG:
- That it would be useful to have half from Schools Forum and half not from the Forum to draw on a wider range of ideas.
 - A representative mix of schools is good but the application of strict proportionality between primary, secondary schools and academies is not required.
 - It would be helpful for there to be some continuity of membership to ensure that the expertise that has been developed is not lost (It generally takes a couple of years to gain expertise.)
 - It would be useful to have representatives from different parts of the County to draw on differing experiences across the County.
- 11 It is proposed that the BWG should remain at 12 members with 2 early years representatives.
- 12 In recasting the membership of the Forum itself it was proposed to retain a three year term of office for members of the Forum, in principle, running from 1 September. The three year term of office would, however, be subject to an annual review. This would provide flexibility to

ensure that broad proportionality of primary schools, secondary schools and academies was maintained. 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. This would provide flexibility to ensure that broad proportionality of primary schools, secondary schools and academies is maintained.

- 13 It seems appropriate to bring review of the membership of the BWG into alignment with the review of the membership of the Forum itself. This would mirror the approach of the local authority where membership of Committees is subject to an annual review.
- 14 There are two tasks the BWG needs to undertake in November/December (to consider any final adjustments to the national school funding formula (Schools Block) and to make recommendations on the use of the Dedicated Schools Grant underspend 2011/12). It is therefore proposed that there is a transitional period during which the existing membership continues pending HASH and the primary heads forum confirming representation, subject to the decisions the Forum decides to make on the BWG's composition. It would seem sensible for the new membership, as agreed by the Forum, to be in place by 1 January 2013 to finalise proposals for the High Needs and early years block budgets for 2013/14.
- 15 The Forum has itself on occasion determined the Chairmanship of the BWG. There is no requirement that the Chairman of the BWG is a member of the Forum. However, as the Chairman of the BWG has to report to the Forum on behalf of the BWG and therefore attend almost all Forum meetings there may be an advantage in the Chairman being a member of the Forum. The Forum is invited to consider whether it wishes to nominate someone at this stage as Chairman subject to the nominations to the BWG made by HASH and the Primary Schools Forum.

Community Impact

- 16 None

Equality and Human Rights

- 17 No implications

Financial Implications

- 18 None

Legal Implications

19. None

Risk Management

- 20 No implications

Consultees

- 21 None

Appendices

- Current Terms of Reference and Membership of the Budget Working Group

Background Papers

- None identified.

Current Terms of Reference and Membership of the Budget 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:

As appointed by HASH, Primary Head Teachers and Early Years Forum.

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.

Current Membership

Peter Box or Paul Whitcombe - Lord Scudamore – Primary Academy

John Docherty - Bursar John Kryle – Secondary Academy

Nicky Gilbert – Westfield – Locally Maintained Special School

Mike Goodman – QE - -Secondary Academy

Nigel Griffiths - John Kryle – Academy

Alison Jackson - Early Years Provider

Sue Jones – Clehonger - Locally maintained primary

Rose Lloyd - Early Years Provider

Tracey Kneale – Marlbrook - Locally maintained primary

Euan McGilp - St Martins - Locally maintained primary

Julie Powell - Lugwardine (Chair of BWG) – Primary Academy

Ann Pritchard – Trinity - Locally maintained primary

Steve Pugh - Hampton Dene – Locally maintained primary

Andrew Teale - St Paul's – Primary Academy