

Meeting:	Schools Forum
Meeting date:	Friday 19 October 2018
Title of report:	Work programme 2018/19 and dates for future meetings
Report by:	Clerk to Herefordshire Schools Forum

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision.

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

To confirm scheduled dates for meetings of the Schools Forum during 2018/19 municipal year and to consider the Forum's work programme for that period.

The schools forum needs to develop a manageable work programme to ensure that it operates efficiently and has sufficient information and time to properly consider the issues placed before it. A clear work programme will ensure that members of the forum and presenting officers know the pieces of work to be considered at each meeting and can prepare appropriately. It will also help to ensure that decisions are made at the appropriate time to meet external deadlines set by the Department for Education and others.

Recommendation(s)

- (a) the work programme for the schools forum for 2018/19 at appendix A be considered and the forum advises of any amendments it wishes to make; and**
- (b) the dates for meetings of the schools forum during 2018/19 be confirmed.**

Alternative options

1. The forum could choose not to establish a work programme for 2018/19 and rely on items being presented on an ad hoc basis for consideration at each meeting. This is not recommended as it could lead to the workload being spread unevenly across the year and to decisions not being taken in time to meet internal and external deadlines.

Key considerations

2. It is for the schools forum to determine its work programme to reflect the priorities and challenges of Herefordshire schools and settings. The forum needs to ensure that it fulfils its statutory role in relation to the implementation of the national schools funding formula and provides timely advice to the Local Authority on issues relating to the management of the schools budget.
3. In considering its work programme, the forum should be mindful of the key milestones during the financial and academic year and the decisions that surround these. Fixed deadlines, particularly those set externally by the Department for Education and others, must be taken into account.
4. In addition to the statutory items it is required to be consulted on, the forum may wish to undertake or be requested to undertake research and consultation on issues relating to the management of schools budgets including:
 - a. the national schools funding formulas;
 - b. ways for schools to use funds more effectively or efficiently;
 - c. arrangements for the education of pupils with special educational needs;
 - d. arrangements for the use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school; and
 - e. arrangements for early years education.

Any such pieces of work should have a clearly defined remit and desired outcome and be appropriately resourced.

5. The budget working group is a permanent advisory sub-group of the forum which provides additional consideration of, and recommendations regarding, key budgetary options and related issues. In addition to the standard budgetary items the forum may refer other items for consideration by the budget working group or establish specific task and finish groups as it deems necessary. Items referred to any sub-group of the forum should be added to the work programme with a clear indication of when the sub-group is expected to report back to the forum.
6. The schools forum is required to meet at least four times a year. It is proposed that at least one meeting is set for each term. At its meeting of 23 March 2018 the forum agreed that a meeting be scheduled for 7 December 2018. There being no business presently identified for the meeting of 7 December 2018 it is proposed that this meeting be cancelled, unless the schools forum identifies additional items to be considered.
7. Proposed dates are as follows, each to start at 9:30am unless otherwise agreed:

Friday 25 January 2019
Friday 15 March 2019
Friday 14 June 2019

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

Equality duty

9. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
10. The Equality Act 2010 established a positive obligation on local authorities to promote equality and to reduce discrimination in relation to any of the nine 'protected characteristics' (age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; marriage and civil partnership; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation). In particular, the council must have 'due regard' to the public sector equality duty when taking any decisions on service changes.
 11. Any potential detrimental impact on vulnerable pupils will be managed by school governing bodies prioritising vulnerable pupils within the school's grant income.

Resource Implications

12. A budget of £12,000 has been allocated for administering the schools forum and associated activities for the 2018/19 financial year. This is funded from the dedicated schools grant received from central government and includes a modest budget for the commissioning of expert advice and reviews.

Legal implications

13. The schools forum is established by virtue of S74A of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (as amended by the Education Act 2002). The Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012 prescribe the functions of the forum and the duties of the local authority to consult with the forum on school funding issues. The Education Funding Agency provides a summary of powers and responsibilities of schools forums which includes decisions it can make on proposals put forward by the local authority.

Risk management

14. Approval of the recommendations will help to ensure that the forum fulfils its statutory functions and that the council complies with its statutory duty to consult the forum as specified in the regulations. Failure to approve the recommendations (or suitable alternatives) may lead to the forum not having adequate time and information to make

recommendations, which would require the council to make decisions in the absence of guidance from the schools forum. This could lead to action by the DfE or decisions being taken which are not in the best interests of, or supported by, schools and settings.

Consultees

15. The work programme is a live document which takes account of regulatory requirements and external deadlines. Changes and additions are reported to the forum via a regular item on the agenda of the meeting.

Appendices

Appendix A - Work programme 2018/19

Background papers

None identified