

## SCHOOLS FORUM AGENDA ITEM

For Action



For Information



**Brief Description of Item** (including the purpose / reason for presenting this for consideration by the Forum)

**This report provides an update and asks Members to review the Forum's membership composition.**

**Date (s) of any Previous Discussion at the Forum**

The Forum's Conduct of Meetings document and membership arrangements are subject to annual review. Members agreed arrangements for the 2017 calendar year at the meeting held on 21 September 2016.

**Background / Context**

Accompanying the changes in the national funding system, the Government revised the Schools Forum Regulations. These came into force on 1 October 2012. Although much of the detail on how Forums operate is still left for local decision, the revised Regulations required some significant changes, including publicly accessible meetings, for Forum papers to be published and for decisions to be taken on formula funding and on de-delegated DSG funds on a phase by phase basis. Non schools members are also not permitted to take part in decision making on formula funding.

Within good practice guidance, the DfE has stressed to authorities that it is essential that Forum membership arrangements keep pace with the changing landscape, in particular the conversion of maintained schools to academy status. The Forum must consider annually how best to provide for responsive arrangements, to ensure the Forum remains representative and to avoid any unintended bias towards any one phase, whilst continuing to ensure stability of membership.

A report was presented to the Schools Forum on 21 September (Document GF), which explained that the Schools Forum Regulations were not establish to cope with the volume and speed of transition of maintained schools to academies that is expected in Bradford over the coming months and which proposed an 'interim solution' for the academic year designed to secure effective Schools Forum membership over the critical DSG allocation period whilst also seeking to ensure that membership remains proportionate to the number of maintained schools and academies in the District. This interim solution was agreed.

There is still fluidity on the numbers of maintained schools and academies in the District. As reported in Document HN to this meeting, 39 maintained schools have converted to academy status between February 2016 and June 2017 and the Authority has immediate sight of around 30 schools, across all sectors (primary, secondary, special and alternative provision) that are planning to convert this financial year.

**Details of the Item for Consideration**

The following interim solution is in place as set out in September 2016:

- Continue existing arrangements for Non Schools Members.
- Continue existing arrangements for maintained nursery schools and maintained special schools memberships.
- Continue the maintained PRU membership. Specifically review this at the point that an academy alternative provision setting is established (the Regulations require memberships to be offered to both maintained and academy providers, meaning that we would have 2 alternative provision memberships).
- Remove the vacant maintained primary governor membership.
- Ask the current incumbents of maintained primary and secondary school memberships (headteachers and governors), whose schools transfer to academy status during the period, to continue on the Schools Forum as academy members at the point their status changes. These representatives would not take part in decisions concerning de-delegated funds if their status has changed before the 11 January 2017 meeting
- Retain all other incumbents of maintained primary and secondary (headteachers and governors) and academy memberships without change.
- Seek to recruit to the vacant maintained secondary headteacher membership (on a fixed term basis)
- Seek to recruit to the vacant maintained primary headteacher membership (on a fixed term basis).

### **Details of the Item for Consideration (continued)**

Appendix 1 summarises the membership of the Schools Forum as well as setting out what the composition of the Forum should be based on an updated calculation of the numbers (and proportionate split) of Schools and Academy Members. Please note that this report focuses on setting the composition of the Forum (the number of posts) rather than the arrangements for renewal and refresh of incumbents, which is due.

Our calculation indicates that our Schools and Academy members' composition should alter as follows to take account of academy conversions in line with pupil numbers, based on continuing an overall total of 27 Schools and Academy representatives:

- Maintained Primary - 5 memberships (12 reduced to 7)
- Maintained Secondary - 1 memberships (reduced from 3 to 2)
- Academies +5 memberships (increased from 7 to 12)
- PRU +1 membership for an academy PRU (new post)

Therefore, of the 27 Schools and Academy members, 14 should be maintained schools and 13 academies.

**The Authority proposes the following composition in order to work towards this re-alignment (the changes are summarised on the right hand side of Appendix 1).**

- **Retain the total number of Schools and Academy Members at 27.**
- **Continue existing arrangements for maintained nursery schools (2 representatives – 1 headteacher 1 governor).**
- **Continue existing arrangements for maintained special schools (2 representatives – 1 headteacher 1 governor), but keeping this under review**
- **Continue the maintained PRU membership (1 headteacher). Specifically review this at the point that an academy alternative provision setting is established (the Regulations require memberships to be offered to both maintained and academy providers, meaning that we would have 2 alternative provision memberships).**
- **Reduce the number of maintained primary school headteacher members to 5 (from 8).**
- **Reduce the number of maintained primary school governor members to 2 (from 4).**
- **Reduce the number of maintained secondary school headteacher members to 1 (from 2).**
- **Continue the existing maintained secondary school governor membership.**
- **Increase the number of academy representatives to 13 (from 7), with one new post specifically ring-fenced to be allocated at the point the Authority has an alternative provision academy.**

**If agreed, the Authority will take appropriate action to implement this composition based on the agreed established processes. Because interim arrangements have been in place, the majority of maintained memberships are due for renewal. Academy members may wish to review their processes for filling their memberships (it is for academies to decide how to fill these posts, unlike for maintained schools, where the Authority can direct).**

The Authority is not proposing at this stage to alter the composition of non-schools members. It is anticipated that this will take place as a when direction comes from the DfE on Schools Forum composition, which is expected in the light of national funding formula and the changing role of Schools Forums.

### **How does this item support the achievement of the District's Education Priorities**

The Schools Forum has a key part to play in the way that resources for education, through the DSG, are allocated. It is essential that the Forum is representative of all settings that will be affected its recommendations and decisions.

### **Implications for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) (if any)**

No direct implications

### **Recommendations**

**The Schools Forum is asked to consider the update provided and to review the proposed membership composition for 2017/18.**

**List of Supporting Appendices / Papers** (where applicable)

Appendix 1 – Schools Forum Membership June 2017

**Contact Officer** (name, telephone number and email address)

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