

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 on the Schools Forum's membership and composition. This report also presents the annual update of the Forum's Conduct of Meeting and Procedures document (Appendix 2). Forum Members are asked to consider and to approve Appendix 2.

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 supported arrangements for the 2020/ 2021 academic year at the meeting held on 8 July 2020.

Background / Context

Within good practice guidance, the DfE has stressed to authorities how essential it is that Forum membership arrangements keep pace with the changing landscape, in particular the conversion of maintained schools to academy status. The Authority 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 or sector, whilst continuing to ensure stability of membership and effective decision making. There are other requirements set by the DfE, in place to ensure that those affected by the Authority's formula funding and DSG spending decisions are effectively represented. Appendix 3 provides a helpful summary of these requirements and of how representation is to be determined.

Details of the Item for Consideration

Appendix 1 summarises the current membership and composition of Bradford's Schools Forum.

The Authority's calculation, presented in July last year, indicated that we were 'on the cusp' of needing to transfer 2 maintained school membership positions to the academy sector, depending on the number of conversions that actually took place during 2020/21, in order for our composition to remain in line with pupil numbers. We indicated that this would mean the transfer of 1 primary and 1 secondary membership. As the volume of academy conversions did take place as predicted, our Forum membership composition has now been adjusted for 2021/22 to transfer 2 maintained school governor memberships to academies memberships.

The membership composition at Appendix 1 is presented following the recent processes completed so far for the recruitment to vacant membership positions for September 2021. The Authority emailed members in May (when notifying of the cancellation of the May meeting) to inform and update on this work. The positions highlighted in green are filled for September 2021 and, at the time of writing this report, are only subject to confirmation with the identified candidates. There are still a small number of vacant positions to be filled (highlighted in blue) and work is continuing on these - the Local Authority will continue to seek to fill existing vacancies and also to manage memberships as set out in the agreed Conduct of Meetings document. This document, refreshed for 2021/22, is presented at Appendix 2. For arrangements going forward, in particular, the Local Authority wishes to talk further to the academies sector about how they collectively can operate their own Forum membership arrangements in line with the DfE's expectations.

In presenting the membership list at Appendix 1, we wish to highlight / explain the following:

- For 2021/22, the total number of Forum memberships has been increased from 35 to 36, with an additional membership position added to the representation of maintained primary school headteachers. This is an addition for 2021/22 only. The Authority will remove this, returning the total number of memberships to 35, for 2022/23, using the annual refresh process that takes place following the completion of terms of office. This position has been added to ensure that we continue to build and sustain experience and capacity, recognising that the terms of office of a number of maintained school headteacher members ends in July 2022. Although existing members are permitted to seek re-election, there is potential for loss of expertise at this point. The split of primary and secondary maintained school headteacher memberships remains in line with pupil numbers (85% of pupil numbers are in the primary phase, which means 7 of 8 membership positions to the primary phase retains this). Following our recent vacancy work, where all headteachers of maintained primary schools have been invited to put themselves forward, we have received two nominations and it feel sensible to use this position help sustain the effectiveness of the Forum going forward. The split of mainstream primary and secondary memberships,

Details of the Item for Consideration

between maintained schools and academies, is not unduly distorted by this addition. We predict (and inclusive of estimated future conversions) that 67% of mainstream primary and secondary pupils will be on roll in academies at the end of the 2021/22 academic year. Within our Forum membership composition for 2021/22, there are 21 memberships held representing mainstream maintained schools and academies, of which 13 (62%) are held by academies members.

- The end dates of 'terms of office' are now recorded in Appendix 1, where applicable. Members in place at April 2021 have an end date of July 2022. Terms of office are for 2 years, as stated in our procedures document (Appendix 2). An annual refresh / recruitment exercise will take place, next in summer 2022 for all memberships where the terms of office ends in July 2022. Incumbent members are permitted to seek re-election subject to the restrictions set out in Appendix 2.
- We wish to do some more work on the identification and co-ordination of substitute membership positions and we will discuss this with the Schools Forum in autumn.
- As a matter of course, we wish to highlight to Members (especially new members) the provision within Appendix 2 at 12.4, and to stress the importance of attendance and apologies, "Membership of the Forum will lapse if a member fails to attend 4 consecutive Forum meetings, unless the Forum agrees that there have been extenuating circumstances, which have prevented attendance."
- The Forum's Conduct of Meetings and Procedural matters document (Appendix 2) is subject to annual refresh. We have made some amendments this year, and have also added further detailed information on membership processes, in line with the DfE's national good practice guidance. We would advise that members read this document in full and give their feedback to the meeting.
- We expect to have a number of new members at September 2021. The Authority will provide some induction training (remotely). Existing members will also be invited to this training.
- Subject to the outcomes of agenda item 6, Appendix may be revised to include a protocol for the management of remote meetings.

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

No direct implications

Recommendations

Recommended –

- (1) The Schools Forum is asked to consider and to note the information provided.**
- (2) The Forum is asked to approve Appendix 2 (Forum Conduct of Meetings and Procedures) for the 2021/22 academic year.**

List of Supporting Appendices / Papers (where applicable)

Appendix 1 – Schools Forum Membership composition July 2021
Appendix 2 – Conduct of Meeting & Procedural Matters 2021/22
Appendix 3 – DfE's Schools Forum composition guidance (helpful reference)

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