

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 follows from the report presented to the July meeting and provides a further update on Schools Forum membership. As there a number of new members attending the Forum for the first time, this report also reminds members of the Forum's statutory powers and highlights how the Forum makes resolutions and takes decisions.

Date (s) of any Previous Discussion at the Forum

Bradford Schools Forum's Conduct of Meetings document and membership arrangements are subject to annual review. These were most recently presented and reviewed on 7 July 2021 (Document MZ).

Background / Context

Whilst there is scope for local practice, schools forums in every local authority are governed by national Regulations, which provide a structure for membership and also a 'minimum standard' in matters relating to meeting frequency, meeting accessibility and decision making.

The DfE publishes good practice guidance for Local Authorities and for Schools Forum members to follow.

Most recently presented to the 7 July 2021 Schools Forum meeting, the Authority has a 'conduct of meetings and procedures' document, which is annually reviewed and which explains in more detail our Forum's membership arrangements, how meetings are organised and accessed and other matters, including those relating to the Forum's decision making.

Details of the Item for Consideration

Following on from the 7 July report, Appendix 1 now presents the full current membership of Bradford's Schools Forum at September 2021. This membership list is published on the Forum's website.

We would like to welcome to the Schools Forum the members newly taking their positions at this meeting. The Authority will shortly invite members to an induction. As there a number of new members attending the Forum for the first time, and as we are at the beginning of the 2022/23 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and formula funding consultation and decision making cycle, it is helpful to remind all members of the Forum's statutory powers and how these relate to the Local Authority's powers. These are summarised by the DfE in its good practice guidance, presented at Appendix 2.

It is also helpful to highlight, from our own conduct of meetings document, how the Forum makes its recommendations and takes decisions. Referring to section 5:

- 5.1 Only Maintained Schools and Academy members, and the representative of PVI providers, can vote on matters relating to formula funding. Decisions will be recorded by voting. Non Schools members can participate in discussions on formula funding but do not have voting rights, with the exception of the representative of PVI providers, who does have voting rights when decisions on formula funding are taken.
- 5.2 Decisions on "de-delegation" of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for services, contingencies and for other permitted activities, from the Schools Block in respect of maintained primary and secondary schools, must be made on a phase by phase basis, with the Maintained Schools member representatives from primary and secondary taking separate decisions only for their own phases. Decisions will be recorded by voting. Other Schools and Academies members, and Non Schools members, including the representative of PVI providers, can participate in discussions on de-delegation, but these members do not have voting rights.
- 5.3 Decisions on retaining funding for statutory duties relating to maintained schools must be taken only by maintained primary, secondary, special and PRU members. Decisions will be recorded by voting. Other members can participate in discussions on these matters, but they do not have voting rights.

Details of the Item for Consideration

5.4 The minutes of meetings will record the outcomes of any voting.

5.5 All other decisions relating to the allocation of the DSG, and to other school finance matters tabled at the Forum, including on recommendations that are made by the Forum's sub-groups, will be taken by all members on the basis of reaching consensus, wherever possible. Voting (to determine a majority view) will be used where consensus is not achieved.

In practice (referring to provisions 5.1 and 5.5, which is the majority of the Forum's business), it has been most common for Bradford's Schools Forum to make its recommendations and to take decisions, on DSG allocation and formula funding matters where phase-led voting is not specifically required e.g. for de-delegated funds, via achieving consensus rather than by voting. This practice has come from a long-standing guiding principle of our Schools Forum, which is that members represent their sectors, acting as conduits for the collection of feedback from, and for the expression of views of, their sectors, combining together for the benefit of the Bradford District and for Bradford's whole community of schools, academies and providers.

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

No direct implications.

Recommendations

Recommended – The Schools Forum is asked to consider and to note the information provided.

List of Supporting Appendices / Papers (where applicable)

Appendix 1 – Schools Forum Membership composition September 2021

Appendix 2 – The Forum's powers and duties (extracted from the DfE's good practice guide)

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