

## 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 and explains how the Local Authority will now seek to refresh the Forum's membership. Members are asked to approve the proposed approach to the election of the Chair and Vice Chair for the 2023/24 academic year. This report 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 2022/ 2023 academic year at the meeting held on 18 May 2022.

### **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 that 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 composition and membership of Bradford's Schools Forum.

#### **Amendments to the Forum's Composition for the 2023/24 Academic Year**

The Authority puts forward two amendments to the School Forum's composition for the 2023/24 academic year (from September 2023), which are highlighted in Appendix 1.

- a) Our updated calculation, of the proportion of pupils on roll in maintained schools versus academies, taking account of expected conversions during 2023/24, indicates that we need to increase academies membership by 1 for the 2023/24 academic year. This will be a new membership to fill.
- b) There are 8 maintained special schools and special school academies in the Bradford District. At April 2023, 6 of these are academies and 2 are maintained schools. In these circumstances, the DfE's Schools Forum regulations require that at least one membership be available for maintained special schools as well as one be available for special school academies. Our current composition however, has 2 memberships for maintained special schools, one headteacher and one governor. The governor membership has been vacant for some time. We propose to delete the vacant maintained special school governor membership, which will reduce the total available memberships for the maintained special school sector to one. This feels to be more appropriate in the light of the number of maintained special schools that we have. In effect, with the addition of an academies membership, this deleted membership position is being transferred to the academies sector and could be filled by a representative from a special school academy (subject to the nominations and elections processes). The Authority will discuss this further with the District Achievement Partnership; the Authority has previously worked with the DAP to secure effective special school and special school academy representation. There are different options available, depending on whether the maintained special school headteacher membership position is actually taken by one of the two maintained special schools.

As a result of these two amendments, there are still 35 memberships, with 27 of these still being for schools and academies. Within the 27, 10 (reduced from 11) are now for maintained schools and 17 (increased from 16) are now for academies. There are no other changes in the Forum's composition.

In presenting Appendix 1, we also wish to highlight:

### Details of the Item for Consideration

- The split of primary and secondary maintained school memberships remains in line with pupil numbers (85% of maintained school pupils are in the primary phase, which means that having 5 of 6 maintained school membership positions allocated to the primary phase remains proportionate). As a result of the 2 amendments explained above.
- We forecast that 75% of mainstream primary and secondary pupils will be on roll in academies at the end of the 2023/24 academic year. Within our Forum membership composition, subject to the further discussions with the DAP, there are 21 memberships for mainstream maintained schools and academies, of which 15 (72%) are available to academies members.

### Renewing / Refreshing Schools & Academies Forum Membership

Appendix 1 shows the full current membership and also highlights a) where terms of office end at the end of the 2022/23 academic year and b) where the eligibility of incumbent members has changed (or is expected to change in the summer term) due to the conversion of their schools to academy status. There are 11 Schools & Academies membership positions in total that come up for renewal and a further 3 Academies membership positions that are currently vacant. In total therefore, we are looking to refresh / fill 14 Schools & Academies membership positions.

As a first step, the Authority has contacted incumbent members to ask whether they wish to put themselves forward for 're-election' for a new 2-year term of office (including those where their schools have converted to academy, to ask whether they would wish to put themselves forward for an academies membership). We will shortly publish a wider 'expressions of interest' advertisement on Bradford Schools Online, to capture nominations from eligible colleagues who are not currently members. Once we have responses, we will action and confirm membership arrangements. It may be necessary to run elections, depending on the number of nominations received for the membership positions that are available. We anticipate that an update will be presented to the July Forum meeting. The Authority is working to have refreshed membership arrangements in place for September 2023.

Within these processes, the Authority will continue to take care to avoid any cumulative loss of expertise within Forum membership, and will take this into consideration in the finalisation of membership from September.

Members will see from Appendix 1 that the Non-Schools Member positions – PVI Early Years and Further Education – are currently vacant following recent retirements. The Authority will also take steps to seek to fill these.

### Chair and Vice Chair

As well as membership, the positions of Chair and Vice Chair must be refreshed for the 2023/24 Academic Year. Appendix 2 states:

- 8.1 The Chair and Vice Chair must be a member of the Schools Forum and must be elected by the members of the Forum. Non-executive elected members of the Council and Authority Officers are not permitted to be Chair.
- 8.2 The term of office of both the Chair and Vice Chair is normally 1 calendar year running on an academic year basis September to July. Elections take place annually in July for the following academic year. In the situation where the Chair or Vice Chair resigns, or becomes ineligible for Forum membership mid-term, the Forum will be asked to elect a replacement and to decide at this point the date at which the new Chair's / Vice Chair's term of office should expire.
- 8.3 Both the Chair and Vice Chair can stand for re-election to serve consecutive terms of office.
- 8.4 The Vice Chair is not Chair Designate.
- 8.5 In situations where there is only one candidate for either the Chair or the Vice Chair, the Authority's standard practice is to appoint this candidate to the position, having first received the approval of the Schools Forum to do so.

All 27 Schools and Academy Members are eligible to put themselves forward (or put forward another member, subject to their agreement). In terms of process, we have always previously collected nominations for both the Chair and Vice Chair of the Forum by email. An election, again by email, has then been carried out when necessary (though this has not been necessary in recent years).

At this stage, we would like the Forum to agree for us to follow the usual process for the collection of nominations, by email. Subject to this agreement, an email will be sent to members, following the refresh of membership (as described above), which will take place in between this and the July Forum meeting.

**Details of the Item for Consideration**

**Conduct of Meetings and Procedures Document – Annual Refresh**

The Forum's Conduct of Meetings and Procedures Document is attached at Appendix 2. We ask members to read this document, and to give any feedback that they may have, prior to its approval.

The 2023/24 document has been amended, from the current 2022/23 versions, just in Section 3 – Membership Composition - adjusting the membership composition in line with the two amendments that are explained earlier in this report.

**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 Schools Forum is asked to approve the proposed approach to the election of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Schools Forum for the 2023/24 academic year**
- (3) The Forum is asked to approve Appendix 2 (Forum Conduct of Meetings and Procedures) for the 2023/24 academic year.**

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

Appendix 1 – Schools Forum Membership composition May 2023  
Appendix 2 – Conduct of Meeting & Procedural Matters 2023/24  
Appendix 3 – DfE's Schools Forum composition guidance (helpful reference)

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

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