

Amendment to the Membership Structure of the Schools Forum - Special School Representation

Schools Forum Date	14 November 2019
Type of Decision	For decision
Background Documents	Schools Forum Constitution (Attached at Annex A)
Authors	Joanne Bolton, Clerk to the Schools Forum
Purpose of Report	To inform the Schools Forum of the request from the Gloucestershire Association of Special School Headteachers to increase the Special Schools representation on the Schools Forum. To seek the Forum's approval to increase the Special Schools representation on the Schools Forum.
Key Recommendations	Recommendation 1: To note the request from the Gloucestershire Association of Special School Headteachers to increase the Special Schools representation on the Schools Forum. Recommendation 2: To approve the increase to the Special Schools representation on the Schools Forum, and for the headteacher and governor sub-groups to be represented by one member of a maintained school and one member of an academy as outlined below: Special School Headteachers: 2 (one academy representative and one maintained representative) Special School Governors: 2 (one academy representative and one maintained representative)
Resource Implications	N/A

The Gloucestershire Association of Special School Headteachers has requested that the Special Schools representation on Gloucestershire Schools Forum be increased.

The current Special Schools representation on the Schools Forum is:
Special School Headteacher - 1
Special School Governor -1

The current sub-groups of headteachers and governors in the Primary and Secondary membership phases on the Schools Forum are represented by members of both maintained and academy schools. However, there is currently no separation between academy and maintained representation within the Special Schools membership phase.

Consequently, in order to increase the Special Schools representation on the Forum, and align it with the Primary and Secondary membership, it is proposed that the membership structure of the Schools Forum be amended to include one additional

Special School Governor; and one additional Special School Headteacher. The headteacher and governor sub-groups will then be represented by one member of a maintained school and one member of an academy.

The current Special Schools representatives are:
Clare Steel – Special School Headteacher (maintained)
Kate Hawkins – Special School Governor (academy)

Therefore an election will be undertaken for:
1 Special School Headteacher (academy)
1 Special School Governor (maintained).

Recommendation 1: To note the request from the Gloucestershire Association of Special School Headteachers to increase the Special Schools representation on the Schools Forum.

Recommendation 2: To approve the increase to the Special Schools representation on the Schools Forum, and for the headteacher and governor sub-groups to be represented by one member of a maintained school and one member of an academy as outlined below:

Special School Headteachers:	2 (one academy representative and one maintained representative)
Special School Governors:	2 (one academy representative and one maintained representative)

GLOUCESTERSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM CONSTITUTION

The Gloucestershire Schools Forum has been set up under the requirements of Section 47A of the School Standards & Framework Act 1998, and the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012.

The Forum must meet at least four times a year. All Forum meetings must be held in public.

The Forum is not a committee of the council and therefore sits outside the legislation relating to council committees.

1. Membership

1.1 The membership of the Forum is as follows and accords with the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012: -

School members:

Primary School Heads	4
Primary School Governors	4
Secondary School Heads	4
Secondary School Governors	4
Special School Head	1
Special School Governor	1
Pupil Referral Units	1

Non-School members:

Diocesan Representatives	2
Post 16 Representative	1
PVI providers/early years	2
Trade Union Representative	1
Community Representative - (Chair of the Schools Forum)	1

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It is important to note that regulations (2012) require that: -

- a) there must be at least one Academy member on a Schools Forum where there are Academies in the local authority's area
- b) at least one member must be a representative of the governing bodies of maintained schools, and
- c) at least one member must be a representative of the head teachers of maintained schools.

The Gloucestershire Schools Forum have agreed that Forum representation will be proportionate to the number of Academies and Maintained Schools in each sector.

Forum members have a term of office of four years. A Forum member remains in office until: -

- (a) the member's term of office expires;
- (b) the member ceases to hold the office by virtue of which the member became eligible for election, selection or appointment to the forum;
- (c) the member resigns from the forum by giving notice in writing to the authority; or
- (d) in the case of a non-schools member, the member is replaced by the authority, at the request of the body which the member represents, by another person nominated by that body

(e) whichever comes first.

1.2 Substitutes

All groups of Forum members (secondary, special and primary school head teachers and governors) should nominate sufficient substitutes. This is necessary to ensure each elected Forum member can identify a substitute to enable meetings to be quorate. The election procedure must seek substitutes in addition to Forum members.

1.3 Observers

The Regulations provide that the Secretary of State can appoint an observer to attend and speak at Schools Forum meetings, e.g. a representative from the Education Funding Agency (EFA). This allows a conduit for national policy to be discussed at a local level and provide access for Schools Forums to an additional support mechanism, e.g. where there are highly complex issues to resolve.

1.4 Local Authority Cabinet Members

Cabinet members with responsibility for education/children's or resources of the authority are able to attend meetings of the Forum (although there is no requirement). This enables the Cabinet Member to hear first hand the views of the Forum, and at the discretion of the Chair, to contribute to the discussion.

2. Powers and Responsibilities

The functions of the Forum and the local authority are described at Annex 1.

3. Management of Meetings

3.1 Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Forum will be elected for a two year term of office, at the meeting in April or the nearest following date if no meeting takes place in April. An elected member or officer may not be the chair or vice-chair.

3.2 Quorum

The Forum shall be quorate if at least 40% of the total membership is present at the meeting.

An inquorate meeting can respond to authority consultation, and give views to the authority. It is good practice for the authority to take account of these views although it is not legally obliged to do so.

3.3 Voting procedure

Any matter will be decided by a simple majority of those members present in the room and voting, save that voting on

- The funding formula is limited to schools members and PVI representatives, and
- De-delegation is limited to the specific primary and secondary phase of schools members.

Chair's casting vote

If there are equal numbers of votes for and against, the chair will have a second or casting vote.

Method of voting

The chair will take the vote by show of hands, or, if there is no disagreement, by the consent of the meeting.

3.4 Members of the Public

Meetings of the Forum are open to members of the public.

The Forum's agenda will include an item relating to questions from members of the public. The Forum asks that written questions are submitted to the Clerk to the Forum 3 clear working days before the date of the meeting. These questions will be provided with a written answer.

Questions can be asked on the day of the meeting but an answer cannot be guaranteed on the day.

3.5 Local Authority Officers

Only specific officers who can speak at meetings of the Schools Forum are eligible to attend. These officers are:-

- Director of Children's Services or their representative
- Chief Financial Officer or their representative
- Any person invited by Schools Forum to provide financial or technical advice
- Any person presenting a paper to Schools Forum but their ability to speak is limited to the paper that they are presenting.

3.6 Confidential Business

The Chair may require that an item of business is considered by the Forum in private and may therefore exclude the Press and Public. Any such items will normally be taken at the end of the agenda.

3.7 Declarations of Interest

Members of the Forum must declare an interest on any agenda item where the outcome may give them *or their establishment* a direct pecuniary advantage or avoid a disadvantage.

4. Working Groups

If required the Forum may set up (time limited) working groups of members to discuss specific issues and to produce draft advice and decisions for the Forum itself to consider.

The Forum may not delegate actual decisions or the finalisation of advice to a working group, as this may have the effect of excluding legitimate points of view.

Working group notes/and or outcome reports must be formally received at Forum meetings.

4.1 Strategic Planning Sub-Group

This sub-group is in place to develop and oversee the Forum's strategic priorities, evaluate the impact of government and LA policy and to advise the Forum on any issues of major significance to all schools.

The notes/outcome reports from the sub-group must be formally received at Forum meetings.

5. Standards

Forum members will treat each other and officers of the Local Authority with dignity and respect. In exceptional circumstances and, having issued a suitable warning, the chair may exclude an individual from the meeting.

6. Agenda Papers

Agendas will normally be dispatched at least 5 working days prior to the meeting and will be distributed electronically and made available in paper form.

7. Access to Information

Any Forum member may request information that is not of a confidential nature. At the discretion of the chair, such requests will be met. Any such information will be copied to the chair who may direct that all other Forum members should receive the same information.

8. Communication outside meetings

Where an issue occurs outside the meeting round that requires urgent attention, the chair will seek a view from all members and communicate this to the Local Authority via the clerk to the Forum.

9. Reimbursement of Expenses

Travelling Expenses

Forum members may claim travel expenses (current rate is 45p per mile) on submission of the appropriate claim form.

Chargeable costs

Where a Headteacher has a teaching responsibility and has to organise supply cover in order to attend a Forum meeting, the cost of that supply may be reclaimed from the Local Authority. Where a member has to incur child care or other costs specifically to attend a Forum meeting, the cost of care may be reclaimed from the local authority.