

Briefing note

To: Schools Forum

Author: Christina Ponting, ENGIE

Date: 10 January 2018

Title of Briefing: Review of Schools Forum constitution including membership

Background

In December 2014 a report was presented to Schools Forum noting a revised membership of the Forum. It was also noted that the membership would be kept under review and this would occur as part of the Schools Forum Constitution review. This was undertaken in May 2017 and it was noted at that time that no changes were necessary. In the December 2017 Schools Forum it was noted that due to a status change of one school on the 1st January 2018, Schools Forum would need to review its membership to determine if there was a need for any changes.

Table 2 taken from the May 2014 report (attached at Appendix A) notes that the membership of Schools Forum is currently based on:

	Pupil count	%	Current Number of reps	%	Proposal Number of reps	%
Based on pupil no						
Primary/First	13,997	55%	9	53%	10	53%
Middle/Secondary	9,074	36%	7	41%	7	37%
Academies	2,442	10%	1	6%	2	11%
	25,513	100%	17	100%	19	100%

Current Position

Unvalidated pupil data at the October 2017 (*) census date notes:

- Nursery/Primary/First -16,410
- Middle/Secondary – 10,295
- Special – 549 (including PRU 591)
- Academies – 3,044

Total: 30,298 (including PRU 30,340)

(*as at 18th December 2017)

The change of the status of one secondary school (Seaton Burn to North Gosforth Academy on the 1st January 2018) moves 502 pupils from being in a maintained school to an Academy.

The role of a Schools Forum Member.

As previously noted, whilst there are a number of different 'category' of member within Schools Forum the individual 'post holder' is not in the role to represent their individual school or organisation. Each post holder is required to represent their sector or locality and this applies equally to all roles.

For Academies within North Tyneside (as at 31st December 2017) whilst the majority of pupils are within one Secondary and one all-through Academy there is also a Primary Academy who is also represented via these post holders. With effect from 1st January 2018 the 4th Academy is also to be included as part of this collective grouping.

Recommendations:

There are a number of factors/ options to be considered in relation to the number of sector/ organisations representatives. It is therefore recommended that:

1. a small subgroup of current schools forum members meet and review the various options (including updates pupil numbers) in-line with current EFA guidance.
2. In undertaking this review validated pupil numbers are used and all groupings of student numbers are considered and that this is reflected in any future guidance.
3. an update report is brought back to schools forum in March 2018, (it is noted that if this changes the current membership this will defer the review of the constitution - as any changes would need to be reflected in a subsequent constitution update).
4. clarity on role and sector/ organisations representation is clearly noted in any future updates and added to the constitution (and/or member guidance) as necessary.
5. all members (including Academies) confirm that they have in place a network/ communications group so that they are able to represent their sector/ category (from 1st January 2018 this will include all 4 Academies locally).

If agreed, where members wish to be part of this subgroup to review membership they are to notify this to Christina Ponting, Senior Manager – Schools HR by the 20th January 2018.

Briefing note

To: Schools Forum **Author:** Jon Ritchie, Cofely Finance

Date: 10 December 2014

Title of Briefing: Review of Schools Forum constitution including membership

Background

The previous Schools Forum meeting agreed to form a sub-group to look at updates to the Constitution, including the number of members of the Schools Forum. This report summarises the outcome of that sub-group's considerations and makes recommendations as to taking the matter forward.

Main findings

Di Donkin, Collette Bland, Peter Thorp and Adrian Smith volunteered to participate on sub-group; Peter had to send apologies but contributed to discussions remotely. David Baldwin also made a contribution in his position as Chair of Schools Forum.

The Constitution was last updated in the Spring of 2013, being approved by Cabinet in March 2013. Since then there have been some changes to the Education Funding Agency (EFA) Regulations and guidance, as well as changes to the distribution of pupils across our schools.

Appendix A includes a "clean" copy of the proposed Constitution. Appendix B includes the track changes version so that all changes can be identified (showing both additions and deletions, although it is acknowledged that the version can look quite confusing).

The main change discussed by the sub-group was around the composition of membership. The last review of the membership allocated places based on the pupil numbers in 2012. Since then, the creation of the Kings Priory Academy has increased the proportion of pupils in that school type (for information, Academies are not sub-divided by phase for the purposes of membership proportions).

The latest complete set of pupil information at the time of writing is the October 2013 census data. The Guidance states that the allocation of school members should be broadly proportionate to the distribution of pupils. This data (based on Reception to

Year 11) demonstrated that the proportion was slightly out of kilter, summarised in the table below.

Table 1

	Pupil count	%	Current Number of reps	%
Based on pupil no				
Primary/First	13,997	55%	9	53%
Middle/Secondary	9,074	36%	7	41%
Academies	2,442	10%	1	6%
	25,513	100%	17	100%

In order to realign the proportions, there were various methods that satisfied the EFA requirements. One option was to reduce the number of members; reducing this to 11 allowed the distribution to be met but was discounted by the sub-group as it was felt that the Forum would be too small, e.g. for quorate purposes, and would require the removal of current members.

Redistributing one of the Middle/Secondary places to the Academy group would broadly meet requirements, but again concern was raised about the impression that could be reached around the removal of a member from the Middle/Secondary phase.

The preferred method was to add an additional member to both the Primary/First and Academy groups. The sub-group felt that this would also increase resilience within the membership in terms of numbers of participants in meetings. This new distribution is shown in Section 3 of the Constitution and Table 2 shows the comparison with current pupil numbers and the current membership.

Table 2

	Pupil count	%	Current Number of reps	%	Proposal Number of reps	%
Based on pupil no						
Primary/First	13,997	55%	9	53%	10	53%
Middle/Secondary	9,074	36%	7	41%	7	37%
Academies	2,442	10%	1	6%	2	11%
	25,513	100%	17	100%	19	100%

The sub-group has also proposed changes to the distribution within the Primary/First and Middle/Secondary phases. To ensure that schools are represented across the borough, each of the four localities should have two representatives. For the Whitley Bay locality, there should be one head each from a Primary School and a First School.

For the Middle/Secondary group, there should be one Secondary head teacher from each locality plus one head from a Middle School (meaning the Whitley Bay locality takes the additional/fifth member place).

Governor representatives can come from any locality.

The election of each member will be determined from each school group, although the Local Authority can assist in the practicalities as required.

Proposals are also included to increase the number of non-school members. This would include a specific place for a Trades Union representative and two representatives from the two Trusts in the borough.

Changes are also proposed to section 14 which consider observers. These changes mean that it is no longer necessary to name specific participants, for example the Bursar Group, as attendance at the meeting is open to all. The Chair of the Schools Forum can invite observers to speak at the meeting, so no formal membership category is considered necessary.

For ease of reference, the EFA operational guidance can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/251521/2013_Schools_Forum_Operational_Guide.pdf In particular, pages 3-8 summarise the different powers and responsibilities of each group.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the changes to the Constitution as set out in Appendix A are approved by the Schools Forum. These changes would then be taken to Cabinet for approval.

It is further proposed that the number and distribution of members be held constant for a period of three years before this is revisited again, unless the Schools Forum feel it is necessary to amend in the intervening period, for example due to a material change in pupil distribution.

If the changes are agreed, it is proposed that the change to membership would take place incrementally (as vacancies arise) rather than having an overall re-election.