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Briefing note

To: Schools Forum **Author:** Christina Ponting, NTC/ENGIE Partnership

Date: 19th December 2018

Purpose of the Paper:

Information	√
Consultation	
Decision	√

Title of Briefing: Schools Forum Self-Assessment Toolkit December 2018

Background:

In May 2017, it was recommended to Schools Forum that in accordance with EFA Guidance Forum should have in place an Action Plan (EFA Guidance 2015) noting its progress against 21 key points used to demonstrate the effectiveness of Schools Forums. Prior to this North Tyneside Schools Forum whilst meeting the majority of the good practice guidance did not have in place a record of its progress. Since this time Schools Forum has had in place an annual action plan which was last reviewed/updated in May 2018.

Current Position:

The EFA guidance continues to endorse the use of a self-assessment toolkit and the template available remains the March 2015 version (as used in May 2017 and 2018). The Schools Forum Self-Assessment Toolkit from May 2018 has subsequently been reviewed and the recommended notes. The majority of changes are formatting and minor updates but also notes progress of some of the previous actions.

Recommendations:

Schools Forum having read this report and clearly understood the information provided consider this report and note the following:

1. Note the changes presented from the 2017 to 2018 Self-Assessment Toolkit.
2. Note that the next review of the self-assessment toolkit will take place and be presented to Forum in September 2019 in line with the forward plan.

North Tyneside Schools Forum

Self-Assessment Tool Kit 2018/19



North Tyneside Council

Schools Forum Self-assessment Toolkit

This toolkit is provided by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and provides local authority officers and elected members with a framework for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of their schools forum. The toolkit is designed as a set of questions which can be considered by individuals or the forum as a whole.

Noted below is the North Tyneside Schools Forum Self-Assessment

As at December 2018 (next review date September 2019)

Question		Notes
1. Are meeting dates set in well advance and details (including time and venue) published in an accessible manner to enable interested parties to plan their attendance?		A meeting timetable is agreed in September each year for the following Academic Year and the dates are confirmed to members and published on the dedicated website. Additionally all dates are communicated electronically to all non-member Head teachers, Chair of Governors and other stakeholder groups so that awareness of the dates is known in advance of the meetings.
2. Are meetings timed to coincide with key dates? (e.g. reporting of funding formula)		4 meetings take place per year and are timetabled to fit in with the annual/ forward plan and the cycle of decisions/ considerations that need to be undertaken.
3. Are meetings held in an accessible venue to enable observers to attend easily?		<p>Meetings are held at a central location which is a public building and fully accessible for all, the room that the meeting is held in has been changed to better accommodate this.</p> <p>The dates and times of the meeting are published in advance via the website, updated to other stakeholders and the meetings are open to the public.</p> <p>Forum members are provided dates of meetings as part of their induction, this is in addition to any further support/coaching needed to access the building /papers/etc. This is also kept under review to support members and others to attend.</p>

Question		Notes
4. Is there a dedicated website link for schools forum; is it current and regularly updated?		There is a dedicated page on the North Tyneside Council website that is accessible. The website is updated before each meeting and minutes, agenda and papers are also published. In addition the most up to date/ recent reference documents issued from the ESFA or produced by Schools Forum combined with previous papers for each meeting are also published on the website.
5. Are the agenda and papers publicly available on the authority's website at least 6 working days in advance of the meeting?		Papers are published two weeks (14 calendar days) before the meeting via the website, notified to members and circulated to other Head teachers and Governors.
6. Are the papers published as a single document, so that users can download easily?		<p>Papers are published on a dedicated website which ensures that all papers relating to that meeting are grouped together and can be printed or easily access via a tablet or PC before/ during the meeting. Members have been asked their views and this is their preference as it also allows them to easily view specific papers and to refer back to previous documents.</p> <p>The papers/ website also support induction for new members as it allows previous meeting minutes, agenda's and papers to be easily accessed/ referenced.</p>
7. If papers are tabled at the meeting, are they published on the website promptly after the meeting?		See 5 above, papers are published in advance of the meeting – it is therefore the exception that papers are presented at the meeting, where this occurs the papers are added to the website immediately following the meeting.
8. Are draft minutes published a reasonable time (e.g. within 2-3 weeks) after the meeting, rather than waiting until the following meeting?		Within one weeks of the meeting actions/ deadlines are noted to various colleagues/ officers and minutes are made available at least two weeks (14 days) before the meeting and published on the website.
9. Are the minutes clear and unambiguous, with sufficient detail to illustrate the discussions, without reporting verbatim every point made?		A note of the discussion and action points is noted. See 8 above.
10. Is the constitution clear and appropriate? Including e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a clear process for ensuring proportional representation - the process for electing members and their tenure - the timescale for review is 		<p>The Constitution & Guidance is reviewed on an annual basis in line with the EFSA Good Practice Guide and other EFSA associated guidance to ensure that Schools Forum operates within current practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership is reviewed at every meeting to ensure appropriate/ proportionate representation. • An open and transparent recruitment/ appointment process is in operation when a vacancy arises and membership tenure is

Question		Notes
<p>clearly set out</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the process for dealing with repetitive non attenders 		<p>noted in the Constitution & Guidance 2018 and recorded against each member.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance is an agenda item within each meeting, deputising is accepted and there is a process in place for managing repetitive none attenders.
11. Is there an induction pack or training programme available for new members?		There is an induction programme and member support arrange at appointment. Member induction is updated regularly and periodic updates/ training is provided as required to ensure that both new and existing members are supported.
12. Is the election process clear and transparent? i.e. representatives are elected only by the group they are representing, whether phase-specific for maintained schools, or by the proprietors of academies for academy members.		There is a clear process for the election of members which is also referenced in the Constitution & Guidance.
13. Do the papers contain clear recommendations and indicate in a consistent manner whether the item is for information, consultation or decision?		<p>Papers presented have a summary at the end of the paper noting Recommendations to Schools Forum. Report templates have been altered to ensure that papers presented are noted for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information, • consultation, • decision. <p>Members are all provided with a member pack (as noted in the Constitution & Guidance) which includes reference documents on the role of Schools Forum, Schools Forum Powers & Responsibilities, Schools Forum Structure, etc. to support them in their role.</p>
14. Is it clear to observers who attendees at the forum are representing? (e.g. by use of name plates, indicating sector)		All members have name plates which indicate their name and role, they are also provided as part of their member pack and overview of the area they are representing. This not only supports observers, but also provides clarity to members and confirms what they are able to vote on where a vote is necessary
15. Does the chair manage the meeting well, ensuring that all are able to contribute to the agenda items, that no bias towards any sector is evident and that no single person or organisation is able to dominate the discussion?		<p>A Chair and Vice Chair are appointed on an annual basis, agreed by the members.</p> <p>The Chair/ Vice Chair are clear on their role and responsibilities and ensure that meetings provide opportunity for all members to equally share views and opinions.</p>

Question		Notes
16. Is there inclusive participation in discussions for all phases and types of members?		See 15 above. Additionally sub groups are formed where the need arises and each of the groups formed have the opportunity for members to participate and actively contribute.
17. Do members actively canvass views and objectively represent their whole peer group at the forum and provide feedback after meetings?		<p>The Forum membership is set up to support members being able to canvass/discuss the matters in hand with the colleagues they are representing in their locality/ network meetings.</p> <p>From December 2018 all Head teachers who are not a member of Schools Forum are to be invited to attend the meeting as observers to better support their representatives and to increase a broader understanding collectively of Schools Forum business.</p> <p>A Network Group for Governor representatives has been established since May 2018 and further work throughout the 2018/2019 Academic Year will be undertaken to strengthen this including a wider Governors update planned for the Spring Term 2019.</p>
18. Where votes are required, is it clear who is eligible to vote for different items?		See 14 above.
19. Where votes are required, are the arrangements for recording the votes clear and unambiguous?		<p>Members are clear on voting arrangements and all members with effect from December 2018 are issued with a members pack (as noted in the Constitution & Guidance 2018) which clearly indicates what they are able to vote on for their role on Schools Forum.</p> <p>This is explained to all new members at induction.</p> <p>Members are also provided with further guidance on how voting operates periodically and members continue to be given 'point-in-time' support as/ when a vote is required.</p>
20. Is there a system in place for a decision if votes are tied?		<p>If there is a tied vote members are asked if they wish to reconsider their vote or to receive further information to allow them to reflect on their original vote. Dependent upon the views of the member's further information may be presented within the meeting or may be deferred for receipt of additional information.</p> <p>If a vote remains tied the status quo is maintained, this is also referenced in the Constitution & Guidance 2018.</p>
21. Is the operational & good practice guide used to regularly review the forum's adherence to good practice?		This is one of a number of documents hosted on the Forum website, used to inform the Constitution & Guidance and member induction. Additionally, all members receive a copy of the documents noted with the Constitution & Guidance as they are appointed onto Forum and

Question		Notes
		annually as noted in the Constitution & Guidance.

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