

TITLE OF REPORT: Schools Forum Constitution

REPORT OF: Darren Collins, Strategic Director, Resources and Digital

Purpose of the Report

1. To create a new constitution for the Schools Forum under the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012.

Background

2. Schools Forums were originally created following legislation in 2002 and their remit was to have a consultative role in relation to the local distribution of school funding.
3. The regulations have been amended several times since 2002 to give Schools Forums greater powers.
4. Gateshead's Schools Forum Constitution was last brought to Cabinet for amendment in 2014 to take account of changes to the membership of Schools Forum. Since 2014 there have been minor changes to Schools Forum requirements as prescribed by the Department for Education (DfE), but as Gateshead's School Forum was compliant with the updated regulations there was no need to formally change the constitution.
5. There are currently three vacancies on Schools Forum, which has provided the opportunity for Gateshead to review the Schools Forum Constitution. Recent developments in School Funding including the proposed move to a National Fair Funding Formula for mainstream schools, the changes in Special Educational Needs funding together with the academy program, have been taken into consideration to ensure the proposed constitution meets the needs of all our pupils in the borough.

Current Representation on Schools Forum

22 School members (at least 2/3 – of members)

6 Primary School Head teachers
2 Primary School Governors
(with no more than 2 of these 8 members from voluntary aided schools)

4 Secondary School Head teachers
1 Secondary School Governor (maintained school)
(with no more than 1 of these 5 members from voluntary aided schools)

1 Nursery School Head teacher
1 Special School Head teacher
1 Special School Governor
1 Pupil Referral Unit Head teacher

Non-school members (no greater than 1/3)

- 1 RC diocesan
- 1 Trade Union
- 1 non-executive elected member
- 1 Early Years representative
- 1 14-19 representative (must not be a school)

6. All phases of education within the borough must be represented, all types of schools must be represented and as far as practically possible all types of school should be proportionally represented, (primary, secondary, special, maintained and academy schools).
7. There are currently three vacancies on Schools Forum two for primary governors and one for the diocese representative.
8. Due to the current changes in education especially with all but one of Gateshead's mainstream secondary schools being academies Schools Forum agreed at the meeting in February 2020 to request the amendment of Gateshead's Schools Forum constitution to include a maintained secondary governor representative.

Proposed Schools Forum representatives

9. **23 proposed representative memberships are as follows: -**

School members (at least 2/3 – of members)

- 6 Primary School Head teachers
- 2 Primary School Governors
(with no more than 2 of these 8 members from voluntary aided schools)

- 4 Secondary School Head teachers
- 1 Secondary School Governor (Academy)
- 1 secondary School Governor (Maintained)
(with no more than 1 of these 6 members from voluntary aided schools)

- 1 Nursery School Head teacher
- 1 Special School Head teacher
- 1 Special School Governor
- 1 Pupil Referral Unit Head teacher

Non-school members (no greater than 1/3)

- 1 RC diocesan
- 1 Trade Union
- 1 non-executive elected member
- 1 Early Years representative
- 1 14-19 representative (must not be a school)

Recommendations

10. It is recommended that Cabinet agrees the new constitution for the Schools Forum from 1st March 2021 as set out above.

For the following reasons:

- (i) To ensure that the Council complies with its statutory requirement to constitute the Schools Forum.
- (ii) To ensure that Schools Forum has a balanced representation and that all sectors and phases of schools are represented.
- (iii) To enable recruitment of members into the vacant positions.

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Policy Context

1. The work of the Schools Forum contributes towards the Council's Thrive Agenda that puts people and families at the heart of everything we do.

Background

2. There are currently three vacancies on Schools Forum, which has provided the opportunity to review the Schools Forum Constitution. Recent developments in school funding including the proposed move to a National Fair Funding Formula for mainstream schools, the changes in Special Educational Needs funding together with the academisation agenda, have been taken into consideration to ensure the proposed constitution meets the needs of all pupils in the borough. The constitution of schools forum will be kept under review as the education landscape changes.

Consultation

3. All relevant portfolio holders and Schools Forum have been consulted on this report.

Alternative Options

4. The Schools Forum Operational and Good Practice Guide (updated June 2020) states that schools forums must have:
 - a. School members
 - b. Academy members if there is at least one academy in the local authority area
 - c. Non-school members
 - d. School and academy members must be at least two-thirds of the total membership
5. There is no overall prescriptive structure of schools forum, but the guidance states that the structure of schools forum should be broadly proportionate to pupil numbers, reflect the profile of education across the local authority and there is sufficient representation of each type of schools members to ensure that debate within the schools forum is balanced and representative.

Implications of Recommended Option

6. **Resources:**
 - a. **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Resources and Digital confirms that there are no direct financial implications arising from this report
 - b. **Human Resources Implications** – None
 - c. **Property Implications** - None
7. **Risk Management Implication** - None

8. **Equality and Diversity Implications** – The new constitution complies with Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012
9. **Crime and Disorder Implications** - None
10. **Health Implications** - None
11. **Climate Emergency and Sustainability Implications** - None
12. **Human Rights Implications** – None
13. **Ward Implications** - The proposal applies to all wards