

BRIEFING PAPER

SUBJECT: Schools Forum Constitution including Terms of Reference 2013-14
DATE: 11th September 2013
RECIPIENT: Schools Forum

SUMMARY:

This paper identifies the changes to the Southampton Schools Forum Constitution (including Terms of Reference) for 2013-14.

BACKGROUND and BRIEFING DETAILS:

1. The Department for Education's (DfE) new Schools Forum regulations came into effect on 1st October 2012, along with an Operational and Good Practice Guide for Schools Forums. The changes are detailed within this paper and have been added to the Terms of Reference.
2. The proposed changes are made in accordance with the Head of Education's delegated power 4.4.10:

Following consultation with the relevant cabinet member, the Head of legal, HR and Democratic Services and the Head of Finance and IT to amend the terms of reference and membership set for the Schools' Forum and Admissions Forum so far as may be necessary to give effect to any new Act, Regulation or Code of Practice.

KEY CHANGES:

3. An update to the new decision making powers of the Forum in respect of school funding as follows:
 - Approval to de-delegate from mainstream school budgets
 - Approval of a fund for significant pupil growth in order to support the local authority's duty for place planning
 - Approval for funding for prescribed historic commitments from the central Schools Block
 - Approval for central early years expenditure
 - Approval of a reduction in the schools budget in order to fund a deficit arising in central expenditure that is to be carried forward from a previous funding period.
4. Where a local authority maintains a pupil referral unit (PRU) there must be a separate representation on the forum who will count as a schools member, as the PRU has a delegated budget from April 2013.
5. In response to concerns that some Forum meetings are too dominated by local authority representatives, local authority participation in meetings is restricted to the Director of People, the Chief Finance Officer or their representatives, and the elected members with responsibility for Children's Services or Resources.

6. Only school members (which includes mainstream schools, Academies, special schools and PRU's) and representatives of the Private Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sector will be able to vote on the funding formulae.
7. Reference to the Central Expenditure Limit (CEL) has been removed and has been replaced with reference to the decision making powers of the Schools Forum as detailed above.
8. To make reference to the nomination of Academy representatives who are no longer restricted to principals, senior staff or governors but must be elected to the Schools Forum by the proprietor bodies.
9. As a result of schools converting to academy status there is a requirement to change the balance of representation to be broadly proportionate to pupil numbers. At the request of Southampton's Schools Forum, it is proposed to increase the membership from 20 to 24 to maintain representation from the maintained school sector.
10. Schools Forums are required to include one elected representative from post 16 education to replace the existing representative from the 14-19 partnership.
11. The Education Funding Agency (EFA) now has observer status at Schools Forum meetings to support the local process and to provide a national perspective.
12. It is incumbent on each group of Schools Forum members to ensure that they communicate with the people or organisations that they represent. Authorities will need to make sure that meeting papers are circulated sufficiently in advance of Schools Forum meetings. Communications will be set up with governor forums and early years networks.

Supporting Information:

Southampton Schools Forum Constitution (Including Terms of Reference) 2013-14

Further Information Available From:

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