

SCHOOLS FORUM

Schools Forum Membership Review

1. Purpose of the Report

To review the Schools Forum's membership to ensure that it reflects the current make-up of schools in the Borough.

2. Suggested Action

Members are asked to consider the number of schools that converted to academy in recent years, the number of pupils in each phase and type of school; based on these information to determine its membership. The membership should be proportionate to the number of pupils in schools with regard to type and phase of schools.

3. Supporting Information

The Local Authority determines the size, composition and terms of reference of its Schools Forum. It is good practice to undertake regular reviews of the membership to ensure it continues to proportionately represent the types of schools in the Borough. Note that the 'members' of Schools Forum are schools, not the individuals attending Schools Forum representing the schools.

Schools Forum decided at its meeting on 28 March 2018 that it was not going to change or review its membership because at the time it was expected that Schools Forums would cease to exist with the introduction of the New Funding Formula (NFF). However, this has not happened and Schools Forum has requested a review of its membership.

The current Schools Forum membership can be viewed in Appendix A. The number of pupils currently in each phase can be viewed in Appendix B.

Since the last time the membership was reviewed, a significant number of schools have converted to academies, see Appendix C. It is also expected that the number of academy schools will continue to increase in the future.

Schools Forum is required to decide if it wishes to continue with the same number of members, and if it wishes to change the number of allocated representatives to each type/phase of member. In considering this, the Forum has to take into account the statutory guidance on membership. Broadly, this means that the membership must reflect the makeup of schools in the Borough.

There are more academy schools in the Borough since the last time the membership was reviewed. Consequently, the number of academy representatives should reflect this increase.

The current total number of members is 30. This large number is undesirable as it makes meetings difficult to manage and decision making more onerous. It is recognised that a smaller number of members would be beneficial.

With the aim to reduce numbers, it is proposed that the two discretionary seats reserved for the Oxford Diocese and the Roman Catholic Diocese be removed. It is also proposed that Schools Forum membership be reduced to 22 seats (= 22 votes).

It is worth noting that the reduction in the number of seats does not preclude people from attending meetings or being asked to join Task and Finish Groups or other committees. Further, Schools Forum is a public meeting that anyone may attend to observe.

After review the Borough's proposal is as follows:

School representatives

Maintained Primary	6
Maintained Secondary	1
Academies	9 (preferably 3 primary and 6 secondary)
Special School	1
PRU	1

Non-school representatives

Early Years	1
WBC Councillor	1
WBC	1
Post 16 education	1

Total **22**

It is worth noting that seats are allocated to schools; headteachers have the discretion to appoint a school business manager or school governor to represent the school. To retain a 'good' mix of skills and experience it would be preferable to have a mixture of headteachers, school business managers and governors in the Forum.

Duration of Terms of Office

No duration is currently specified. Forum has in the past decided that it was preferable to retain the expertise of members rather than limit the duration of membership and risk losing valuable contributions. Schools Forum may wish to continue with this arrangement.

Future Schools Forum Representation

It is recommended the member representation of Schools Forum is reviewed annually, in the summer of a year, to allow any changes to align to the school academic year.

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