

AGENDA

Meeting: Schools Forum
Place: Kennet Room - County Hall, Trowbridge
Date: Thursday 18 June 2015
Time: 1.30 pm

Briefing Arrangements:

There will be no briefing prior to the meeting.

Please direct any enquiries on this Agenda to Adam Brown, of Democratic Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, direct line 01225 718038 or email adam.brown@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications on direct lines (01225)713114/713115.

This Agenda and all the documents referred to within it are available on the Council's website at www.wiltshire.gov.uk

Membership:	Representing:
Mr Neil Baker	PHF, Christ Church CE Primary School
Mr Martin Watson	Academy, Lavington School
Mrs Aileen Bates	WGA, SEN Governor Representative
Mr Andy Bridewell	PHF - Ludgershall Castle Primary School (PHF Vice-Chair)
Ms Amanda Burnside	Post 16 provider
Ms Michelle Chilcott	Academy - South Wilts Grammar
Mrs Judith Finney	Salisbury Diocesan Board of Education
Mrs Rosemary Collard	Snapdragon Nurseries
Miss Tracy Cornelius	PHF - Kington St Michael School
Ms Jan Hatherell	Academy, Hardenhuish School
Mr John Hawkins	Teacher Representative
Mrs Sue Jiggins	WGA - Primary School Governor Representative
Mr John Proctor	Early Years Representative (PVI)
Mrs Debbie Rock	WGA - Primary School Governor
Mr Nigel Roper	Stonehenge School
Ms Ingrid Sidmouth	SEN Sector, Rowdeford School
Mr David Whewell	WGA - Secondary School representative
Mrs Catriona Williamson	PHF, Mere Primary School

RECORDING AND BROADCASTING NOTIFICATION

Wiltshire Council may record this meeting for live and/or subsequent broadcast on the Council's website at <http://www.wiltshire.public-i.tv>. At the start of the meeting, the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being recorded. The images and sound recordings may also be used for training purposes within the Council.

By entering the meeting room you are consenting to being recorded and to the use of those images and recordings for broadcasting and/or training purposes.

The meeting may also be recorded by the press or members of the public.

Any person or organisation choosing to film, record or broadcast any meeting of the Council, its Cabinet or committees is responsible for any claims or other liability resulting from them so doing and by choosing to film, record or broadcast proceedings they accept that they are required to indemnify the Council, its members and officers in relation to any such claims or liabilities.

Details of the Council's Guidance on the Recording and Webcasting of Meetings is available on the Council's website along with this agenda and available on request.

If you have any queries please contact Democratic Services using the contact details above.

AGENDA

PART I

Items to be considered whilst the meeting is open to the public

1 **Apologies and Changes of Membership**

2 **Minutes of the previous Meeting** (*Pages 5 - 14*)

To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2015 (copy attached)

3 **Declaration of Interests**

To receive any declarations of disclosable interests or dispensations granted by the Standards Committee

4 **Chairman's Announcements**

5 **Proportionality Review of the Wiltshire Schools Forum** (*Pages 15 - 52*)

Adam Brown, Democratic Services Officer, will be in attendance to present a report detailing a proportionality review of the Wiltshire Council Schools Forum.

The Schools Forum is asked to consider the following recommendation:

- To the request that the relevant Cabinet Member create two additional membership spaces for a Primary Academy and a Special Academy representative through delegated authority.

6 **Trust Board Update**

To receive a verbal update.

7 **Budget Monitoring** (*Pages 53 - 58*)

To receive budget monitoring information against the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for the financial year 2014-15 as at 31 March 2015.

The Schools Forum is asked to note the outturn position for the Dedicated Schools Budget in 2014-15.

8 **Reports from Working Groups** (*Pages 59 - 64*)

To receive minutes, reports and/or verbal updates from the following working groups:

- a) School Funding Working Group
- b) Special Educational Needs (SEN) Working Group – verbal update
- c) Early Years Reference Group

9 **High Needs Budgets 2015-16** (*Pages 65 - 66*)

Grant Davis will be in attendance to report on the proposals for the High Needs

Budgets for 2015-16 and recording of progress against the budget.

The Schools Forum will be asked to:

- Confirm that the RAG monitoring of the savings proposals be adopted for identifying the impact of the savings measures for 2015-16.
- Agree that the first tranche of ELP and Resource Base recoupment should commence from the July top up payments.
- Confirm that additional place funding should be awarded and unfilled place funding be recouped at the annual rate of £10,000 per place, awarded and recouped on a monthly basis.

10 **Any Other Business**

11 **Confirmation of dates for future meetings**

To confirm the dates of future meetings, as follows:

8th October, 2015 1.30pm - West Wiltshire Room - County Hall, Trowbridge
10th December, 2015 1.30 pm - West Wiltshire Room - County Hall, Trowbridge
14th January, 2016 1.30 pm - Kennet Room - County Hall, Trowbridge

12 **Urgent Items**

Any other items of business, which the Chairman agrees to consider as a matter of urgency.

PART II

Item(s) during consideration of which it is recommended that the public should be excluded because of the likelihood that exempt information would be disclosed

13 **Schools Management Information Systems**

SCHOOLS FORUM

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING HELD ON 12 MARCH 2015 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE.

Present:

Mr N Baker (Chairman), Mr M Watson (Vice-Chair), Mrs A Bates, Mr A Bridewell, Ms M Chilcott, Ms A Christopher, Mrs R Collard, Miss Tracy Cornelius, Ms J Hatherell, Mr J Hawkins, Mrs S Jiggins, Mr J Proctor, Mr N Roper, Ms I Sidmouth and Mrs C Williamson

Also Present

Cllr Laura Mayes

15 Apologies and Changes of Membership

Apologies were received from:

David Whewell
Debbie Rock
Amanda Burnside

Amanda Burnside was substituted by Cathy Shahrokni.

16 Minutes of the previous Meeting

Resolved

To agree and sign the minutes as a true and correct record of the meeting held on 15 January 2015.

17 Declaration of Interests

Mrs Aileen Bates declared a pecuniary interest in item 10, High Needs Block 2015-16. For this item Mrs Bates did not vote.

18 Chairman's Announcements

It was announced that item 10 High Needs Block 2015-16 would be taken before item 9 Early Years – Hourly Rate for 3&4 Year Old Free Entitlement 2015-16.

a) Cllr Laura Mayes Introduction

Cllr Mayes, Cabinet member for Children's Services, introduced herself to the Forum. Information on any issues was said to be available through her. The

Chelsea's Choice programme was up and running, most secondary schools had signed up. Discussions would be had with schools that hadn't on why they chose not to.

19 **Trust Board Update**

Susan Tanner, Head of Commissioning and Joint Planning, was in attendance to deliver a verbal update.

The new framework for school improvement services had been published. Schools could be inspected at any time. Triggers for an inspection were noted as including concerns about vulnerable learners.

Carolyn Godfrey had visited Rochdale to learn what could be done to tackle child sexual exploitation.

Ofsted would be carrying out Early-Year inspections from the 16 March 2015 onwards.

Resolved

To note the update.

20 **Budget Monitoring 2014-15**

The report presented the budget monitoring information against the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for the financial year 2014-15 as at 31st January 2015.

Since the last report a lot more detailed work had been done, especially around High Needs.

The projected overspend was £1.604million, which marked an improvement of £725,000.

The biggest improvement was within the High Needs budget. Reductions in the numbers of pupils supported financially and out of county placements were factors in the improvement.

All staff savings not included in the last report had now been taken into account. A small underspend of £0.088million in 3&4 year olds was anticipated, along with the 2 year old DSG Reserve impact.

Taking in to account adjustments the projected balance within the DSG Reserve at the end of 2014-15 is £2.516million. This would enable the projected overspend to be managed within 2014-15 and leave £0.912million to be carried forward to 2015-16. This was noted as a significant reduction to previous years, but was an improvement on the position reported at the previous meeting.

Phase 2 of spending for term-time only back pay would be in the next year. Confirmation had not been received on the £636,000 amount; the actual at P10 was £497,000.

Clarification was sought on how portionment was reached. It was explained to state how the overspend was Page 6, with an offset left of £900,000. The

reserve went back many years and had been drawn on and contributed to throughout this time. This could not be broken down into individual blocks.

Resolved

To note the budget monitoring position as of the end of January 2015.

21 Reports from Working Groups

a) School Funding Working Group

The recommendations from the working group were considered under item 9.

Resolved

To note the minutes of the School Funding Working Group.

b) Special Educational Needs Working Group

The recommendations from the working group were considered under item 10.

Resolved

To note the minutes of the SEN Working Group.

c) Early Years Reference Group

Resolved

To note the minutes of the Early Years Reference Group.

22 Schools Budget 2015-16

The Education Funding Agency (EFA) had confirmed that the funding formula was compliant for the year.

Additional funding of £5.7million had been received for the Fairer Schools Funding, and an increase in £2.1million for growth in Wiltshire pupil numbers. These both accounted for the £7.8million increase in the 2014-15 funding level.

Key Stages 1&2 had seen an increase of 832 pupils. Secondary School level had lost 341 pupils. The net increase in the county was 491 pupils.

Additional funding was spread among the Per Pupil Funding. The increases were as previously agreed by the Schools Forum.

There had been a small movement in deprivation and prior attainment. These had been funded at previous year's rates increased in line with the percentage increase applied to per pupil rates.

The minimum funding guarantee (MFG) which had received £1,611,101 funding during 2014-15, had now been reduced to £533,217. This was a reduced

reliance on the MSG from schools. The largest MFG reduction had been from £133,628 to £67,647. Schools in receipt of MFG had reduced from 77 to 27. This was noted as demonstrating a lower number of schools being reliant on the MFG to support their funding.

The largest cap had reduced from £117,442 to £53,553, and the number of schools capped in order to fund the MFG had reduced from 91 to 47. The percentage of any gain which schools had been able to retain within their funding had increased from 0.88% to 4.61%.

A question was asked over whether the deprivation had increased because there were fewer people. It was explained that there had been enough money to keep the rates the same and therefore it did not have to be scaled down.

Resolved

To note the report.

23 Early Years - Hourly Rate for 3&4 Year Old Free Entitlement 2015-16

Elizabeth Williams, Head of Finance, introduced the background to free entitlement funding for 3&4 Year Olds.

A consultation had gone out before November 2014 with two options for response: Option A – prefer to continue with differential hourly rates or Option B – prefer to have a single hourly rate for all providers.

There had been a total of 173 respondents which was broken down as follows: 78 Childminders; 1 Independent; 3 Maintained Nurseries; 54 Private; 37 Voluntary.

It was estimated that the affordable rate should be set at £3.81 per hour.

In order to implement the single hourly rate providers must be consulted on what had been done. The EFA had been asked for their advice with regards to the consultation. Reasonable notice was deemed to be around 6 months. Implementation date would be September to fit in with the new school year, this was noted as being around 6 months away.

Implementation options included a transitional approach to implement the change over two academic years with 50% of the gain or reduction being implemented in year 1. This would mean 50% of the gain/reduction being implemented from September 2015 and 100% in September 2016, or a transitional approach which would give protection to those who would lose more than a specific amount of funding.

The SFWG had recommended that this should be implemented, but on a phased basis.

Resolved

- 1. To implement a single hourly rate of £3.81 within the EYSFF for 3 & 4 year olds.**
- 2. To implement a single hourly rate no earlier than September 2015.**

3. To implement through a transitional approach with 50% of the gain/reduction being implemented from September 2015 and 100% from April 2016.

24 High Needs Block 2015-16

Elizabeth Williams presented the report which provided a summary of key pressures on the High Needs Budget (HNB) for 2015-16 and short term proposals to minimise the impact on the budget. It also gave a brief update on the progress of the SEN Strategy which aimed to identify medium and longer term proposals to address the overspend in the HNB.

The need for short-term actions during 2015-16 was brought about by the significant overspend during 2014-15. The reserves were unable to be relied upon to support the HNB during 2015-16. The strategy was explained to bring about longer term actions which would manage the HNB more effectively.

The allocation for 2015-16 was noted as being £37.12million. Wiltshire's share of the national £47million top-up was £0.420million; this figure was based on the proportion of 2-19 year olds within the population.

A large majority of the HNB was spent on places and top-ups for pupils in schools. Places and top-up values for pre-16 pupils in schools amounted to £24million, along with a further £5million budgeted for top-up payments in post school providers.

For the 2015-16 year an extra 200 places were requested. A total of 117 of these had been allocated. This information had been received at the last Schools Forum meeting; however feedback on how this decision was reached was now available. The feedback broadly stated that the money was not available and that the spaces had not been filled in 2014-15. It was felt that there was quite a lot of risk in funding money upfront as the places might not have been filled. It had since been stated by the EFA that if places were filled first then the EFA would fund them the next year.

Paragraph 19 of the report was said to contain the information not available at the last Schools Forum meeting:

"An analysis of the national position indicates that only 22% of additional places requested across the country were agreed. In the South West, applications were submitted for 721 additional places but only 159 were agreed. Wiltshire received 117 of those, 59% of places requested."

A question was asked on whether it was possible to go back and appeal places now that the process was clear. It was explained that it had been instructed that growth money should be used to fund places.

It was noted that Springfields Academy was currently consulting on a change in age range and place numbers. Any change in place numbers over and above that proposed in the report was explained to result in additional pressure on the high needs block.

It was requested to record that the EFA had been invited to the Schools Forum meetings but had not sent apologies and were not present.

Pressures for the 2015-16 year had been worked out by taking into account all the known pupils paid for, any known leavers, and known September 2015 starters. The amount of migration into the county was noted as being of an unknown level at the moment.

The budgeted place funding for pre-16 during 2015-16 was set at £11.958million assuming that an extra 3 places at Larkrise, Saint Nicholas', and Exeter House still needed to be funded. All known and planned places were built into the budget along with planning assumptions. The pre-16 places and top-up funding were discussed and the revised cost pressure in the pre-16 budget 2015-16 was noted as £1.16million.

The post-16 budget was left with a balance of £1,137,541 for the next academic year and part of the current year after known commitments had been taken off. This demonstrated a better position than the 2014-15 period. There was a £289,393 estimated shortfall for 2015-16.

A question was asked on where post-16's go if they do not attend Wiltshire College. There were a range of independent sector providers in the county, and where they went depended on their needs. Lots of work had been done to make Wiltshire College as accessible as possible. It was confirmed that the majority of students from Rowdeford progressed to Wiltshire College.

It was also noted that £420,000 had been received in growth as part of the funding settlement. Savings options totalling £1.991million were proposed in the report.

Split Site Allowance

It was noted that this situation should not happen again and that the wording of split site allowance needed to be chosen carefully.

The revenue consequences of split sites needed to be picked up before capital projects of their nature had begun. This was because they could cause significant revenue pressures within a school. A case by case basis was noted as the best form of approach.

There was agreement that a process needed to be put in place.

The Schools Forum would only grant split site allowance if it had been agreed upon in advance. It was recognised in mainstream schools that where provision was open on more than one site a split site allowance may be payable. It was noted that therefore the principle should be the same for special schools to create equity between mainstream and special schools.

It was noted that St Nicholas Special School fitted in with the SEN and Wiltshire Plan, and was therefore eligible for up to £100,000.

Savings Proposals

The Schools Forum considered the list of savings proposals put forward in the report.

The opening of Greentrees Primary School was already delayed until September 2015. A formal letter from Greentrees Chair of Governors was being waited on.

It was asked if savings principle 9 (renegotiate prices with Independent Providers) was in line with Wiltshire Council's policy of saving 10% on the voluntary sector. It was explained that these would be private providers who worked with a range of local authorities which could have different policies. It would be hard to know the actual figure which would be achieved.

For saving proposal 11 (5% Reduction to top-up funding) it was noted that Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) only related to 11d and that it was in place to limit reductions in Special School funding.

Enhanced Learning Provision cuts ranged per school from £500 to £8800. Resource base cuts per school ranged from £200 to £8000.

Savings would take place from April 2015.

It was noted that the figure estimated on the report may not be the figure saved as were unable to definitively predict what they would be. The Schools Forum would be agreeing in principle to the saving action. It was agreed that regular monitoring reports would be brought to Schools Forum to review progress against the agreed savings

Each savings principle was individually voted on.

Resolved

- 1. To note the current and projected position in relation to High Needs budgets.**
- 2. To agree that going forward a Split Site Allowance must be agreed between the school and the local authority prior to the opening of a separate site. Any split site allowance will be payable through top up rates therefore there is not an official split site allowance.**
- 3. To agree that Saint Nicholas Special School does meet the split site criteria and that it should be awarded £100,000 split site allowance per annum to be paid as an addition to the top up rate.**
- 4. To agree the following savings:**
 - a. To recycle unfilled Enhanced Learning Provision places and unused resource base places.**
 - b. To delay the opening of Greentrees Primary School until September 2016.**
 - c. To save on place funding following the closure of the resource base at The Manor School.**
 - d. To delete or hold all current DSG funded vacancies within the SEND service.**
 - e. To allow secondary schools to roll forward unspent funding for Hard to Place Pupils from 2014-15, but to top up available funding to £250,000.**
 - f. To renegotiate prices with Independent Providers based on 10% reductions from ISP/ISS package contracts and/or reduced numbers of placements with renegotiation to focus on key transition points.**

- g. To cease Transition into Primary School funding.**
- h. To reduce top up rates for named pupil allowances; enhanced learning provision; and resource bases for maintained schools and academies by 5%.**
- i. To meet the £100,000 shortfall through the Special Schools Budget, and for the budget model to be reworked to create new special school top up rates in accordance with minimum funding guarantee requirements.**

25 Schools Traded Services - Governance Arrangements

Julia Cramp, Associate Director, was in attendance to present the report proposing a change in the governance arrangements for managing the process for agreement of service levels and prices for traded services with schools.

In 2005 a proposal had been brought to the Schools Forum which recommended that a sub group be formed to look at traded services. It was now recommended that this be removed from the Schools Forum structure.

It was recommended that this sub group ceased to operate and a Schools Traded Services Stakeholder Group was established. This would include representatives from schools and other stakeholder groups, including governors.

The group would look for feedback on services and what future intentions were from sectors. There would be no decisions or consultations on prices. This group should only need to meet twice per year to enable the Council to communicate any proposed changes in a timely way.

It was asked what the maintained schools equivalent of the ESG was being used for. The ESG was being used for therapies, education welfare, and outdoor education amongst other areas.

The role of the group would be to communicate prices to schools and ensure adequate notice was given to schools of any price changes.

The additional stakeholders were explained as being up for decision depending on how engaged they wished to be in various sectors.

Resolved

- 1. To agree on the principle that there has to be adequate notice for schools to make their purchasing decisions.**
- 2. To take governance arrangements for traded services with schools out of the Schools Forum structure and to cease operation of the Schools Services Group.**
- 3. To establish a Schools Traded Services Stakeholder Group in the local authority including representatives from schools.**

26 **Confirmation of dates for future meetings**

Resolved

The future Schools Forum dates were confirmed, with the next meeting to be on 18 June 2015, 1.30 pm in Kennet Room at County Hall, Trowbridge.

27 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 1.30 - 4.15 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Adam Brown, of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718038, e-mail adam.brown@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line (01225) 713114/713115

This page is intentionally left blank

Wiltshire Council

Schools Forum

18 June 2015

Proportionality Review of the Wiltshire Schools Forum

Executive summary

Following a review of the Wiltshire Schools Forum membership and the pupil numbers on roll at schools across Wiltshire it is apparent that Primary Academies have 10.947% of pupil numbers on roll (as of October 2014). There is also one special academy within the county.

Through examining national guidance for Schools Forums it has become apparent that as a result of these findings there should be extra positions made available on the Wiltshire Schools Forum.

Proposal

That the committee:

a) Recommends to the relevant Cabinet Member that two additional membership spaces be created for a Primary Academy and a Special Academy representative through delegated authority.

Reason for proposal

As of October 2014 Primary Academies in Wiltshire have 10.947% of the pupil numbers on roll across the county and no representation on the Wiltshire Schools Forum.

National guidance for Schools Forums states that Where there is at least one school in a particular category, there must be at least one representative for that group on the forum. Currently there is one special academy within Wiltshire, but no representation on the Wiltshire Schools Forum.

Author: Adam Brown (Democratic Services Officer)

Contact details: adam.brown@wiltshire.gov.uk / 01225718038

Purpose of report

1. The report draws the attention of the Schools Forum to the current proportionality its membership. It recommends that in light of the proportionality review's findings that two extra positions on the Schools Forum should be made available. It is recommended that one position be made available for a primary academy representative, and one for a special academy representative.

Background

2. In the light of more schools converting into academies across Wiltshire a proportionality review was carried out.
3. The review aimed to examine the number of representatives on the Wiltshire Schools Forum from each educational body, including:
 - a. Primary Schools;
 - b. Secondary Schools;
 - c. Special Schools;
 - d. Special Academies;
 - e. Primary Academies;
 - f. Secondary Academies.
4. Information on pupil numbers was taken from the October 2014 numbers on roll census data (NOR).
5. The decision to change the size of the Wiltshire Schools Forum lies with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services through the delegated decision process:
 - a. Section 2.1 of the Wiltshire Schools Forum Terms of Reference:
 - b. The constitution of the Wiltshire Schools Forum has been approved by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services through the delegated decision process, and any change to the constitution will require similar approval.

Main considerations for the committee

6. From the data it was found that primary Academies have 10.947% of the total pupils on roll across Wiltshire and no representation on the Wiltshire Schools Forum.
7. Paragraph 17 of Schools Forum: Operational and Good Practice Guide (March 2015) states:
 - a. There is no maximum or minimum size of a schools forum. Authorities will wish to take various issues into account in deciding the actual size, including the need to have full representation for various types of school, and the local authority's policy on representation of non-schools members. However, care should be taken to keep the schools forum to a reasonable size to ensure that it does not become too unwieldy.
8. Paragraph 19 of Schools Forum: Operational and Good Practice Guide (March 2015) states:
 - a. the balance between maintained primary, maintained secondary and academies members must be broadly proportionate to the pupil numbers in each category
9. There is currently one special academy school within Wiltshire: Springfields Academy. Currently special academies have no representation on the Forum.
10. Schools forum: a Guide for Schools and Academies (March 2015) states:

- a. Where there is at least one school in a particular category, there must be at least one representative for that group on the forum.

Environmental impact of the proposal

11. None

Equality and diversity impact of the proposal

12. The recommendation aims to tackle the lack of representation from primary academy schools and special academies at the Wiltshire Schools Forum.

Risk assessment

13. If school categories are not represented on the Schools Forum then decisions made by the Committee may not take into enough consideration their views when deciding actions which will affect them.

Financial implications

14. None

Legal implications

15. The creation of the extra representatives for primary academies and special academies will mean that the Wiltshire Schools Forum will be adhering to the following obligations:
 - a. Schools and academies' (including free schools) representatives on the forum should be roughly proportionate to the number of pupils in each sector.
 - b. Where there is at least one school in a particular category, there must be at least one representative for that group on the forum.

Conclusion

16. That the Schools Forum recommends to the relevant Cabinet Member that two additional membership spaces be created for a primary academy and a special academy representative through delegated authority.
-

Background papers

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

Numbers on Roll (October 2014)

Appendices

Appendix 1: School Forum Proportionality Review

Appendix 2: Schools Forum: Operational and Good Practice Guide (March 2015)

Appendix 3: Wiltshire Schools Forum Terms of Reference

Schools forum: a Guide for Schools and Academies (March 2015):
<https://www.gov.uk/schools-forum-a-guide-for-schools-and-academies#further-information>

Proportionality Review of the Wiltshire Schools Forum

School Forum Proportionality

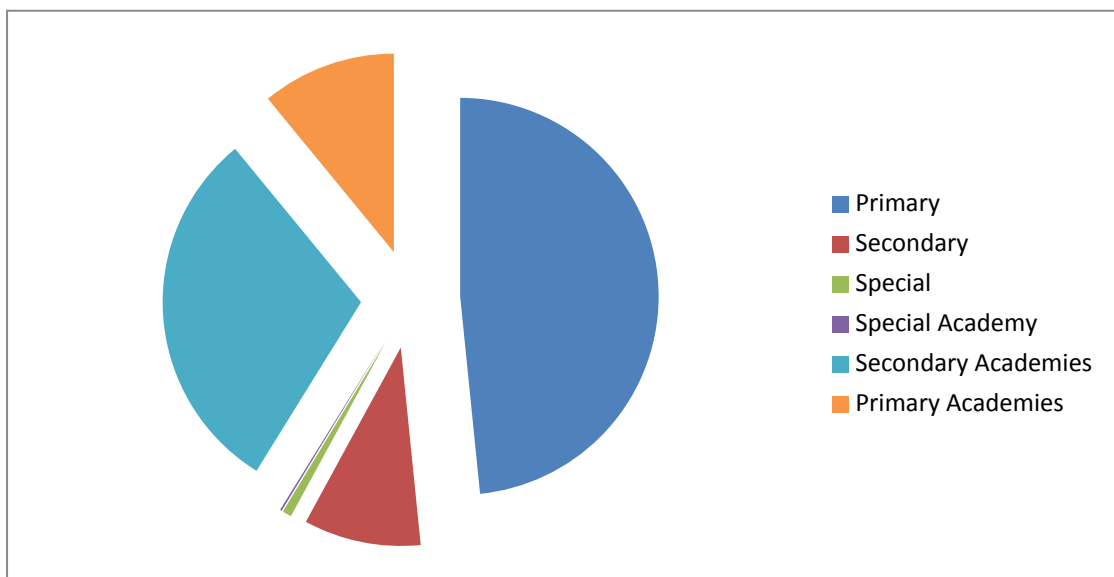
The below figures and tables aim to review the proportion of pupils on roll across Wiltshire with the number of representatives their educational institutions have on the Wiltshire Schools Forum.

The following educational institutions are reviewed: Primary Schools; Secondary Schools; Special Schools; Special Academies; Secondary Academies; and Primary Academies.

Pupil Numbers

The following are the total pupil numbers as taken from the October 2014 numbers on roll (NOR), further broken down into their percentages (see chart 1):

Primary	Secondary	Special	Special Academy	Secondary Academies	Primary Academies
29380	5790	454	90	18344	6645
					Total
					60703



Proportionality

Below is a comparison between the number of pupils at each type of school/ the percentage of the total NOR each type of school maintains/ the number of representatives they have on the Schools Forum/ and the percentage of the “School Member” representation they have on the Forum.

School Type	No. of Pupils	% of School Total	No. Forum Reps	% of Forum Membership
Primary	29380	48.400%	6	46.154%
Secondary	5790	9.538%	2	15.385%
Special	454	0.748%	2	15.385%
Special Academy	90	0.148%	0	0.000%
Secondary Academy	18344	30.219%	3	23.077%
Primary Academy	6645	10.947%	0	0.000%
Total	60703	100%	13	100%

Conclusion

These figures/proportions were worked out using the October 2014 NOR data. As all the current academy reps are from Secondary academies there is a recognised need to create an extra membership space for a primary academy representative.

The proportionality review also notes that there is currently one special academy in operation within Wiltshire. Current national guidance for Schools Forums states that where there is at least one school within a school category in existence, they must have at least one representative on the Schools Forum. As such there is a need to create an extra membership space for a special academy representative.

Schools Forum membership/representation data only includes voting members who represent school categories.

Author: Adam Brown (Democratic Services Officer)

Contact details: adam.brown@wiltshire.gov.uk / 01225718038



Education
Funding
Agency

Schools forum

Operational and good practice guide

March 2015

Contents

Introduction	4
Section 1 – schools forum regulations: constitution and procedural issues	5
Regulations	5
Schools forum powers	5
Membership	7
Term of office	7
Schools members	8
Election and nomination of schools members	9
Election and nomination of academies members	11
Non-schools members	11
Other membership issues	12
The role of executive elected members	13
Recording the composition of schools forums	13
Observers	14
Participation of local authority officers at meetings	14
Procedures	14
Public access	16
Working groups	16
Urgent business	16
Resources of the schools forum	17
Section 2 – effective schools forums	18
Introduction	18
Induction of new members	19
Training	19
Agenda setting	19
Preparation for a schools forum meeting	20
Chairing the schools forum	21
Clerking the schools forum	21
Good practice for schools forum meetings	22
Meeting notes and recording of decisions	23

Communication

23

News updates

24

Introduction

1. This guide is designed to provide local authority officers and school forum elected members with advice and information on good practice in relation to the operation of schools forums.
2. It is organised in two sections:
 - Section 1 provides information on the constitutional and organisational requirements for schools forums; and
 - Section 2 covers a number of key aspects of the operation of schools forums at local level, drawing on good practice from a number of schools forums.
3. The guide draws on the experience and knowledge of schools forum members, local authority members and officers and the Department and its partners. Other than where it is describing requirements set out in the Schools Forum Regulations 2012 it is not designed to be prescriptive – what is good practice in one schools forum may not be appropriate in another, given the diverse circumstances of local areas. However, it is hoped the guide will stimulate some debate within schools forums and contribute to their ongoing development.
4. The Department hopes that schools forums and local authorities find this guide useful. It has been the subject of consultation with a wide variety of external partners. In particular, members of the Department’s Schools and Academies Funding Group, made up of representatives from central and local government, teaching associations, unions representing support staff as well as organisations representing academies and governors, have provided valuable input and advice on the content of the guide. The Department is grateful for their assistance.
5. The Department’s website contains details of all the announcements, documents and other information relating to school funding and schools forums. This website also has a range of useful links to other sites that may be of relevance to schools forum members.
6. A short [guide to the schools forum for schools and academies](#), which may be helpful to stakeholders and the wider school family, is available on GOV.UK.
7. If you have any queries about the operation of schools forums please contact [schools forum team](#) at the Education Funding Agency

The postal address is:

Education Funding Agency
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
Westminster
London
SW1P 3BT

Section 1 – schools forum regulations: constitution and procedural issues

Regulations

8. [National regulations](#)¹ govern the composition, constitution and procedures of schools forums. Local authorities can provide schools forum members with a copy of these regulations or alternatively they can be accessed at:
9. A short [guide to the schools forum for schools and academies](#) is also available to provide a wider understanding of the work of schools forums.

Schools forum powers

10. Schools forums generally have a consultative role. However, there are situations in which they have decision-making powers. The respective roles of schools forums, local authorities and the DfE are summarised in [schools forum powers and responsibilities](#). The overarching areas on which schools forums make decisions on local authority proposals are:

- De-delegation from mainstream schools budgets (separate approval will be required by the primary and secondary phase members of schools forum), for prescribed services to be provided centrally.
- To create a fund for significant pupil growth in order to support the local authority's duty for place planning (basic need), including pre-opening and diseconomy of scale costs, and agree the criteria for maintained schools and academies to access this fund.
- To create a fund for falling rolls for good or outstanding schools if the schools' surplus capacity is likely to be needed within the next three years to meet rising pupil numbers and agree the criteria for maintained schools and academies to access this fund.
- Continued funding at existing levels for prescribed historic commitments where the effect of delegating this funding would be destabilising.
- Funding for the local authority in order to meet prescribed statutory duties placed upon it. Approval is required to confirm the amounts for each duty and no new commitments or increases in expenditure from 2013/14 are permitted unless agreed by the Secretary of State.
- Funding for central early years expenditure, which may include funding for checking eligibility of pupils for an early years place, the early years pupil premium and/or free school meals.

¹ Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012 (S.I. 2012/2261) (as amended)

- Authorising 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.
- In each of these cases, the local authority can appeal to the Secretary of State if the schools forum rejects its proposal.

11. Local Authorities should be aware that the provisions of the [Local Government Act 2000](#) restrict the delegation of local authority decisions to Cabinet, a member of Cabinet, a Committee of Cabinet or an officer of the Council, which would not include schools forums. As a result the local authority cannot delegate its decision making powers to schools forum, e.g. decisions on the funding formula.

12. Regulations state that the local authority must consult the schools forum annually in connection with various schools budget functions, namely:

- amendments to the school funding formula, for which the voting is restricted by the exclusion of non-schools members except for PVI representatives
- arrangements for the education of pupils with special educational needs in particular the places to be commissioned by the LA and schools and the arrangements for paying top-up funding
- arrangements for the use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school, in particular the places to be commissioned by the LA and schools and the arrangements for paying top-up funding
- arrangements for early years provision
- administrative arrangements for the allocation of central government grants paid to schools via the local authority

There is no specific definition of these consultation requirements over and above the wording in the regulations. It is a matter for the local authority to decide on the appropriate level of detail it needs to generate a sufficiently informed response from schools forum.

13. Consultation must also take place when a local authority is proposing a contract for supplies and services which is to be funded from the Schools Budget and is in excess of the EU procurement thresholds. The consultation must cover the terms of the contract at least one month prior to the issue of invitations to tender.

14. The schools forum has the responsibility of informing the governing bodies of all schools maintained by the local authority of the results of any consultations carried out by the local authority relating to the issues in paragraphs 12 and 13 above.

15. Local authorities will need to discuss with the schools forum any proposals that they intend to put to the Secretary of State to:

- vary the MFG,
- use exceptional factors
- vary pupil numbers
- allow additional categories of, or spending on, central budgets

- amend the sparsity factor
- vary the lump sum for amalgamating schools
- vary the protection for special schools and special academies

Proposals will then need to be approved by the Secretary of State.

Membership

16. The Schools Forums Regulations provide a framework for the appointment of members, but allow a considerable degree of discretion in order to accommodate local priorities and practice. A quick guide to the [structure of the schools forums](#) is available.

17. There is no maximum or minimum size of a schools forum. Authorities will wish to take various issues into account in deciding the actual size, including the need to have full representation for various types of school, and the local authority's policy on representation of non-schools members. However, care should be taken to keep the schools forum to a reasonable size to ensure that it does not become too unwieldy.

18. Types of member: schools forums must have 'schools members', 'academies member(s)' if there is at least one academy in the local authority's area and 'non-schools members'. Schools and academies members together must number at least two-thirds of the total membership of the schools forum and the balance between maintained primary, maintained secondary and academies members must be broadly proportionate to the pupil numbers in each category, so the structure of Forum should be regularly reviewed, e.g. annually. Academies members must represent mainstream academies and, if there are any in the LA area, special academies and alternative provision academies. There is no requirement for academies members to represent specific primary and secondary phases, but it may be encouraged to ensure representation remains broadly proportionate to pupil numbers. Academy members must be separately elected and designated from maintained school representatives.

19. Schools forum members will need the skills and competencies to manage Forum business (as detailed in [school forum powers and responsibilities](#)) and to take a strategic view across the whole education estate whilst acting as representative of the group that has elected them. Furthermore, they should be easily contactable and pro-active in raising the profile of issues and communicate decisions, and the reasons behind them, effectively.

Term of office

20. The term of office for each schools member and academies member should be stipulated by the local authority at the time of appointment. Such stipulation should follow published rules and be applied in a consistent manner between members. They need not have identical terms – there may be a case for varied terms so that there is continuity of experience rather than there being a complete change in the membership at a single

point. The term of office should not be of a length that would hinder the requirement for the structure of the schools forum to mirror the type of provision in light of the pace of academy conversions. Examples of how this may work include:

- Holding vacancies until the schools forum structure is reviewed providing that this does not mean holding vacancies for an unreasonable length of time
- Increasing the size of the schools forum temporarily to appoint additional academy members, then delete schools member posts at the end of a term of office or when a vacancy arises
- Consider continuity of service – where an academy conversion affects the school of a current schools member, would academies consider appointing that person as an academies member?

21. The length of term of office for non-schools members is at the discretion of the local authority. Schools and academies must be informed, within a month of the appointment of any non-schools member, of the name of the member and the name of the body that that member represents.

22. As well as the term of office coming to an end, a member ceases to be a member of the Schools Forum if he or she resigns from the schools forum or no longer occupies the office by which he or she became eligible for election, selection or appointment to the schools forum. For example, a secondary schools member must stand down if their school converts to an academy. A schools member representing community primary school governors who is no longer a governor of a community primary school in the relevant local authority must cease to hold office on the schools forum even if they remain a governor of a school represented by another group or sub-group. Other situations in which membership of the schools forum ends are if a member gives notice in writing to the local authority and, in the case of a non-schools member, the member is replaced by the local authority, for example at the request of the body which the member represents.

Schools members

23. Schools members represent specified phases or types of maintained schools within the local authority. As a minimum, schools forums must contain representatives of two groups of schools: primary and secondary schools, unless there are no primary or secondary schools maintained by the LA. Middle schools and all through schools are treated according to their deemed status.

24. Where a local authority maintains one or more special schools the schools forum must have at least one schools member from that sector. The same applies to nursery schools and pupil referral units (PRUs).

25. The local authority then has discretion to divide the groups referred to in paragraph 16 and 17 into one or more of the following sub-groups:

- headteachers or headteachers' representatives in each group;
- governors in each group;
- headteachers or headteachers representatives and governors in each group;
- representatives of a particular school category, e.g. voluntary aided.

26. Headteachers can be represented by other senior members of staff within their school. Governors can include interim executive members of an interim executive board. The sub-groups do not have to be of equal size – for example, there may be more representatives of headteachers of primary schools than governors of such schools, or vice versa. The membership structure of the schools forum should ensure there is sufficient representation of each type of schools member in each group to ensure that debate within the schools forum is balanced and representative. As a minimum, there must be at least one representative of headteachers and one representative of governors among the schools members.

27. Whatever the membership structure of schools members on a schools forum, the important issue is that it should reflect most effectively the profile of education provision across the local authority to ensure that there is not an in-built bias towards any one phase or group.

Election and nomination of schools members

28. The relevant group or sub-group is probably best placed to determine how their schools members should be elected.

29. It is good practice for those who draw up the scheme to ensure that a vacancy amongst a represented group would be filled by a nominee elected according to a process that has been determined by all those represented in that group, e.g. community primary school headteachers, or secondary school governors, ensuring that everyone represented has had the opportunity to stand for election and/or vote in such an election. The process must be restricted to the group in question – a headteachers phase group could only vote as a whole for headteacher members if the voting excluded academies, as academies members form a separate group.

30. It is not appropriate for a single person to be elected to represent more than one group or sub-group concurrently, i.e. if they were a governor at a primary and secondary school. They can stand for election from either group but can be appointed to represent only one of those groups.

31. The purpose of ensuring that each group or sub-group is responsible for their election process is to guarantee that there is a transparent and representative process by which members of schools forums are nominated to represent their constituents.

32. Appropriate support to each group or sub-group to manage their election processes should be offered by the clerk of a schools forum, or the committee/democratic services of a local authority. This may just include the provision of

advice but may also consist of providing administrative support in actually running the elections themselves.

33. As a minimum, we would recommend that the clerk of a schools forum make a record of the process by which the relevant schools within each group and sub-group elect their nominees to the schools forum and be able to advise the Chair of the schools forum and local authority on action that needs to be taken, where necessary, to seek new nominees.

34. In determining the process by which elections should be operated it is perfectly legitimate for a local authority to devise, in consultation with their schools forum, a model scheme for the relevant schools within a group or sub-group to consider and be invited to adopt. However, such a model scheme cannot be imposed on that body of schools: adaptations and/or alternative schemes may be adopted. A single scheme need not be adopted universally.

35. Care should be taken to ensure that every eligible member of a group or sub-group has an opportunity to be involved in the determination of their group's election process, is given the opportunity to stand for election if they choose to do so, and is involved in the election of their representative(s).

36. It would not be compliant with the regulations for the steering committee or Chair of a 'parent' group simply to make a nomination to represent their group or sub-group on a schools forum. Schools members must be elected, subject to paragraph 39 below.

37. The local authority may set a date by which the election should take place and must appoint the schools member if the election has not taken place by that date. The person appointed should be a member of the relevant group.

38. We would recommend that any scheme takes into account a number of factors:

- the process for collecting names of those wishing to stand for election;
- the timescale for notifying all constituents of the election and those standing;
- the arrangements for dispatching and receiving ballots;
- the arrangements for counting and publicising the results;
- any arrangements for unusual circumstances such as only one candidate standing in an election; and
- whether existing members can stand for re-election.

39. In the event of a tie between two or more candidates, then the local authority must appoint the schools member instead. The local authority may decide to appoint someone else rather than one of the candidates and might wish to take into account the experience or expertise of the individuals, and the balance between the different types of school represented on the schools forum.

Election and nomination of academies members

40. Academies members must be elected by the proprietor bodies of the academies in the local authority's area, and they are probably best placed to determine the process. Academies members are there to represent the proprietor bodies of academies and are, therefore, not necessarily restricted to principals, senior staff or governors. The same factors should be taken into account as for the election of schools members, set out in paragraphs 28 to 39. For the avoidance of doubt, Free Schools, University Technical Colleges and Studio Schools are classed as academies for this purpose. There is no distinction between sponsored, non-recoupment and converter academies.

41. There are three sub-groups for academy members: mainstream academies, special academies and alternative provision academies and it is for the proprietors of academies within each of these sub-groups to elect their representatives. It is not appropriate, therefore, for headteacher phase groups to determine representation unless the academy proprietors have agreed and even then the voting would need to exclude maintained school representatives. There is no requirement for academies members to be split into primary and secondary sub-groups. However, local authorities may wish to encourage academies to consider the pupil proportions across all academies when electing their representatives.

42. Where there is only one academy in a sub-group in the local authority's area, then their proprietor body must select the person who will represent them.

43. It is possible that a single person be appointed as an academies member to more than one schools forum, for example if an academy chain is located across multiple local authorities, providing they are elected on each occasion in accordance with the agreed election process for each separate schools forum.

44. As with schools members, the local authority may set a date by which the election should take place and must appoint an academies member if the election does not take place by that date, or if an election results in a tie between two or more candidates.

Non-schools members

45. Non-schools members may number no more than a third of a schools forum's total membership (excluding observers – see paragraph 58). A representative of providers of 16-19 education must be elected from those providers. This includes those in the FE sector (FE and sixth form colleges) and other post-school institutions that specialise in special education needs (SPNs), where 20% or more of their students reside in the local authority's area. As with academies the providers are probably best placed to determine the election process.

46. The local authority must appoint at least one person to represent early years providers from the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector. Early years PVI settings need to be represented because funding for the free entitlement for three and

four year olds and eligible two year olds comes from the Dedicated Schools Grant, and all settings are funded through the Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF).

47. Before appointing additional non-schools members to the schools forum, the local authority must consider whether the Church of England and Roman Catholic dioceses situated in the local authority's area; and, where there are schools or academies in the area with a different religious character, the appropriate faith group, should be represented on the schools forum. If diocesan authorities nominate members for appointment as non-schools members they may wish to consider what type of representative would be most appropriate – schools-based such as a headteacher or governor, or someone linked more generally with the diocese, e.g. a member of the education board.

48. It is also good practice for local authorities to ensure that the needs and interests of all the pupils in the local authority are adequately represented by the members of a schools forum. The interests of pupils in maintained schools can be represented by schools members. Some pupils in a local authority, however, are not in maintained schools but instead are educated in hospitals, independent special schools and non-maintained special schools. Certain types of non-schools members can play an important role in representing the interests of these groups of pupils. They can also play a role in representing the interests and views of the services that support those groups of vulnerable and at-risk pupils who nevertheless are on the roll of maintained schools, such as looked after children and children with special educational needs.

49. The purpose of non-schools members is also to bring greater breadth of discussion to schools forum meetings and ensure that stakeholders and partners other than schools are represented. Organisations which typically provide non-schools members are trades unions, professional associations and representatives of youth groups. Parent groups could also be considered. However, as there are clearly limited numbers of non-schools members able to be on a schools forum, care should be taken to ensure that an appropriate representation from wider stakeholders is achieved.

Other membership issues

50. There are three restrictions placed on who can be a non-schools member of a schools forum. The local authority cannot appoint:

- an elected member of the local authority who is appointed to the executive of that local authority (a lead member/portfolio holder) 'executive members',
- the Director of Children's Services or any officer employed or engaged to work under the management of the Director of Children's Services, and who does not directly provide education to children (or manage those who do) ('relevant officer' (a) and (b)),
- other officers with a specific role in management of and/or who advise on funding for schools ('relevant officer' part (c)).

51. Schools forums have the power to approve a limited range of proposals from their local authority: the restrictions ensure that there is no conflict of interest between the proposing body (the local authority) and the approving body (the schools forum).

52. However, non-executive elected members and those officers who are employed in their capacity as headteachers or teachers and those who directly manage a service which provides education to individual children and/or advice to schools on, for example, learning and behavioural matters are eligible to be members of schools forums.

53. In the case of non-executive elected members, they may be a schools member (by virtue of them being a school governor), an academies member or a non-schools member. As a non-schools member they may be well placed to fulfil the broader overview and scrutiny role they have within the local authority in general.

54. However, the inclusion of non-executive elected members and certain officers is not a requirement. Many schools forums do not have such members on them and it is for each local authority and schools forum to consider how best to ensure the right balance of school and non-school representation on the schools forum, taking into account their local circumstances and preferences.

The role of executive elected members

55. A schools forum needs to ensure that there are systems in place for executive members of the Council to be aware of its views on specific issues and, in particular, any decisions it takes in relation to the Schools Budget and individual budget shares.

56. Executive members with responsibility for education/children's services or resources of the local authority are able to participate in schools forum meetings. By doing so such elected members are able to contribute to the discussion and receive first-hand the views of the schools forum: it is clearly good practice for this to be the case and the regulations provide the right for executive members to attend and speak at schools forum meetings. However, there is no requirement for this to happen so at the very least there should be clear channels of communication between the schools forum and executive members. Communication may also be assisted if schools forum members attended relevant Cabinet meetings as members of the public, e.g. when the funding formula is decided.

Recording the composition of schools forums

57. Each local authority must make a written record of the composition of its schools forum detailing the numbers of schools members and by which group or sub-group they were elected, the number of academies members and the number of non-schools members, their terms of office, how they were chosen and whom they represent. This record should also indicate the term of office for schools and academies members. It

would be helpful if this were published on the schools forum website so schools and wider stakeholders can easily find who their representatives are.

Observers

58. The Regulations provide that the Secretary of State can appoint an observer to attend and speak at schools forum meetings, e.g. a representative from the Education Funding Agency (EFA). This allows a conduit for national policy to be discussed at a local level and provide access for schools forum to an additional support mechanism, e.g. where there are highly complex issues to resolve.

Participation of local authority officers at meetings

59. Only specific officers can speak at meetings of the schools forum. These officers are:

- Director of Children's Services or their representative
- Chief Financial Officer or their representative
- Any person invited by the schools forum to provide financial or technical advice
- Any person presenting a paper to the schools forum but their ability to speak is limited to the paper that they are presenting.

60. In the majority of cases schools forums are supported by a specific officer. In the course of their work, however, schools forums will be required to consider a whole range of issues and they may consider it appropriate that other officers attend for specific items of business. Where this is the case, the local authority should meet the schools forum's requests as far as possible.

Procedures

61. Many procedural matters are not prescribed in the regulations and are at the discretion either of the local authority or the schools forum itself. However, there are requirements in the regulations relating to:

- **Quorum:** A meeting is only quorate if 40% of the total membership is present (this excludes any observers, and it is 40% of the current membership excluding vacancies). If a meeting is inquorate it can proceed but it cannot legally take decisions (e.g. election of a Chair, or a decision relating to funding conferred by the funding regulations). An inquorate meeting can respond to local authority consultation, and give views to the local authority. It would normally be good practice for the local authority to take account of such 'unofficial' views, but it is not legally obliged to do so. In practice, the arrangements for meetings should be made to reduce the chance of a problem with the quorum. The quorum stipulation is in the regulations to help ensure the legitimacy of decisions;

- **Election of a Chair:** Under the Regulations, if the position of Chair falls vacant the schools forum must decide how long the term of office of the next Chair will be. This can be for any period, but the schools forum should consider carefully whether a period exceeding two years is sensible. A long period will also cause problems if the member elected as Chair has a term of office as a member which comes to an end before their term of office as Chair ends. The schools forum must elect a Chair from amongst its own members, so it is not possible to elect an independent Chair. In addition any elected member of the local authority or officer of the local authority who is a member of a schools forum may not hold the office of Chair. Schools forums can also appoint to a position of vice Chair to provide cover if the Chair is absent or the post vacant;
- **Voting procedures:** The Regulations provide that a schools forum may determine its own voting procedures save that voting on:
 - the funding formula is limited to schools members, academies members and PVI representatives
 - de-delegation will be limited to the specific primary and secondary phase of maintained schools members.
- **The powers which schools forums** have to take decisions on a range of funding matters increase the importance of clear procedures, e.g. decisions are made on a simple majority or the threshold to be met if higher. These procedures should take account of any use of working groups by the schools forum – for example a decision might be taken by voting to accept and adopt a report by a working group (see paragraph 65). As part of any voting procedure there should be clarity in the procedures for recording the outcome of a vote, and any resolutions a schools forum makes in relation to any vote taken;
- **Substitutes:** The local authority must make arrangements to enable substitutes to attend and vote (where appropriate) at schools forum meetings. This applies to schools members, academies members and non-schools members. The arrangements must be decided in consultation with schools forum members.
- **Defects and vacancies:** The Regulations provide that proceedings of the schools forum are not invalidated by defects in the election or appointment of any member, or the appointment of the Chair. Nor does the existence of any vacancy on the schools forum invalidate proceedings (see paragraph 61 on quorum).
- **Timing:** schools forums must meet at least four times a year

62. Where the regulations make no provision on a procedural matter, local discretion should be exercised. It is for the local authority to decide how far it wishes to establish rules for the schools forum to follow, in the form of standing orders. While it is entitled to do so, it is of course good practice to allow the schools forum to set its own rules so far as possible.

Public access

63. Schools forums are more than just consultative bodies. They also have an important role to play in approving certain proposals from their local authority and are therefore involved in the decision making process surrounding the use of public money at local level. As a result schools forums are required to be open to the public. Furthermore papers, agendas and minutes must be publicly available well in advance of each meeting. It is good practice that notification that the schools forum is a public meeting is included on the website and papers are published at least a week in advance. Local authorities should ensure that the websites are accessible and easy to find.

64. Some schools forums already operate very much along the lines of a local authority committee. This is perfectly legitimate and will provide a consistent framework for the running of meetings that are open to the public, and the publishing of papers and agendas well in advance of the meeting and minutes published promptly as required under Regulation 8(13) of the Schools Forum Regulations 2012.

Working groups

65. It is open to a schools forum to set up working groups of members to discuss specific issues, and to produce draft advice and decisions for the schools forum itself to consider. The groups can also include wider representation - for example, an early years reference group can represent all the different types of provider to consider the detail of the early years single funding formula. The reference group would then be able to give its considered view on the local authority's proposals to the schools forum. The schools forum should not delegate actual decisions or the finalisation of advice to a working group, as this may have the effect of excluding legitimate points of view.

Urgent business

66. It is good practice for the local authority to agree with its schools forum an urgency procedure to be followed when there is a genuine business need for a decision or formal view to be expressed by the schools forum, before the next scheduled meeting. The local authority may of course call an unscheduled meeting; but it may also wish to put in place alternative arrangements such as clearance by email correspondence or some other means. Such instances should be avoided so far as possible but are legitimate provided all members of the schools forum have an opportunity to participate, the logistics provide a reasonable opportunity for consideration and the local authority policy on data security is not compromised.

67. It is not legal for the Chair to take a decision on behalf of the schools forum, no matter how urgent the matter in question; but a schools forum may wish to put in place a procedure for the Chair to give the local authority a view on an urgent issue.

Resources of the schools forum

68. The costs of a schools forum fall in the centrally retained budget portion of the Schools Block of local authorities.

69. It is legitimate to charge the running costs of schools forums to this budget including any agreed and reasonable expenses for members attending meetings, the costs of producing and distributing papers and costs room hire and refreshments and for clerking of meetings. Beyond these costs some schools forums have a budget of their own to use for activities such as commissioning research or other reports. The [2014 School and Early Years Finance Regulations](#) provide that the level of resource devoted to running schools forums in 2015-16 is limited to 2014-15 levels unless the Secretary of State agrees an increase.

Section 2 – effective schools forums

Introduction

70. As the previous section outlined, local authorities have responsibility for establishing schools forums. They also have an ongoing responsibility to provide them with appropriate support, information and guidance in carrying out their functions and responsibilities.

71. The following outlines some aspects of what local authorities and schools forums should consider in ensuring that their schools forums are as effective as possible. The pace of academy conversions in particular means that this significant sector must be properly represented and feel that it is able to play a meaningful part in the discussions of the schools forum.

72. Central to the effectiveness or otherwise of a schools forum will be the relationship between it and its local authority. The local authority will have a significant influence on this: the support it provides; the resources it devotes and the weight it gives to the views of schools forums all contribute to the nature of the relationship. There are therefore a number of characteristics of this relationship that are particularly important:

- Partnership: Having a shared understanding of the priorities, issues and concerns of schools, academies and the local authority.
- Effective Support: The business of the schools forum is supported by the local authority in an efficient and professional manner.
- Openness: It is important that a schools forum feels it is receiving open, honest and objective advice from its local authority.
- Responsiveness: Local authorities should as far as possible be responsive to requests from their schools forums and their members. Schools forums themselves should also be aware of the resource implications of their requests.
- Strategic view: Members of schools forum should consider the needs of the whole of the educational community, rather than using their position on a schools forum to advance their own sectional or specific interests.
- Challenge and Scrutiny: schools forums may be asked to agree to proposals from their local authority that will have an effect on all schools and academies in the local area. The extent to which schools forums can scrutinise and challenge such proposals is an important aspect of their effectiveness.

73. The characteristics identified above are just some of the aspects that will contribute to an effective schools forum. The following provides more detail on some of the specific issues that local authorities and schools forums may wish to consider in thinking about their own arrangements.

Induction of new members

74. When new members join the schools forum appropriate induction materials should be provided. These might include material relating to the operation of the schools forum together with background information about the local and national school funding arrangements. Typically they might comprise:

- the constitution of the schools forum
- a list of members including contact details and their terms of office
- any locally agreed terms of reference explaining the relationship between the schools forum and the local authority
- copies of minutes of previous meetings
- the programme of schools forum meetings for the year
- the local schools forum web address

75. This Operational and Good Practice Guide, suitably supplemented by local material, should also be provided to new members on their appointment.

76. Where there is sufficient turnover of schools forum members in any particular year the local authority may wish to organise a one-off induction event to brief new members. Such an event would usefully include an outline of the role of the schools forum and the national funding arrangements for schools and local authorities. It might also include an explanation of the local funding formula and any proposals for review. The opportunity could also be taken to explain the main reporting requirements for school and local authority expenditure.

Training

77. Ideally schools forum members should be able to use some of the budget set aside for schools forum running costs for accessing relevant training activities. Some training will be provided by officers of the local authority but members may wish to attend national or regional events, the costs of which, where necessary, can be supported from the schools forum budget. Local and national bodies have a key role to play in developing the competencies of forum members.

78. Training will need to be provided in response to any changes in the role of the schools forum and national developments in respect of school funding.

Agenda setting

79. The process by which the agenda for a meeting or cycle of meetings is set is in many respects one of the key determinants of the effectiveness or otherwise of a schools forum.

80. The frequency and timing of meetings of the schools forum should be agreed in advance of each financial or academic year. In drawing up this cycle of meetings, in

consultation with the schools forum, the local authority should provide a clear overview of the key consultative and decision-making points in the school funding cycle. These will be drawn from a combination of national and local information and should inform the basic agenda items that each meeting needs to cover. For instance meetings will need to be scheduled at appropriate points to enable the schools forum to consider the outcomes of local consultations and national announcements.

81. Although the business of schools forums must be open and transparent, it is recognised that from time to time items of a confidential nature will need to be discussed. It is recommended that authorities apply the same principles that they apply to Council/Cabinet meetings when judging an item to be confidential and adopt similar practices for dealing with those reports in the meeting, e.g. placing them together at the end of the agenda.

Preparation for a schools forum meeting

82. It is vital that the schools forum is transparent, open and has clear communication lines to all of the members that are represented. This ensures the wider school family are aware of the business discussed, the impact on their setting and the reasons for the decisions.

83. The vast majority of a schools forum's business will be transacted on the basis of prepared papers. It is therefore important that these are concise, informative and produced in a timely and consistent manner. Recommendations should be clearly set out at the beginning of each report. It is also helpful if the front of the report confirms whether the report is for information or decision and who is eligible to vote where relevant.

84. It is good practice for the schools forum and local authority to agree a standard for papers. It is usual for papers to be dispatched at least one week prior to the meeting at which they will be discussed to allow members to consider them and if necessary canvass views from the group they are representing. Papers should be published on the local authority's website at this time to enable representations to be made to schools forum members.

85. Consistency in the presentation of papers also contributes to the effectiveness of meetings: it helps set the tone of meetings, facilitate the engagement of all members and signal the importance the local authority attaches to the work of the schools forum. Ideally such a standard should be agreed between the schools forum and local authority. The publishing of papers as a single pdf file is helpful as it saves time and avoids accessing multiple documents both in advance of, and during, the meeting. An Executive Summary of the reports can provide schools forum members and members of the public with an overview of the agenda and the decisions required.

86. The publishing of papers on a publicly available website well in advance of the meeting ensures that all interested parties are able to access papers. Some schools forums ensure that each represented group meets in the days immediately prior to the

schools forum meeting to ensure the agenda is discussed and schools forum members are properly briefed by the group they represent. Although on occasions it is inevitable that schools forums will receive late, or tabled reports it does create some difficulty for members as they will not have been able to seek the views of those they represent.

87. Schools forums can consider adopting a flexible arrangement for time immediately prior to the meeting. For example it could be used for training of new members, or as a drop-in session for members to ask items of clarification, or for members to meet without officers to discuss the agenda.

Chairing the schools forum

88. The Chair of a schools forum plays a key role in setting the tone, pace and overall dynamic of the schools forum. They should provide an environment within which all members are able to contribute fully to discussions and guide the schools forum to making well informed decisions.

89. The relationship between the Chair and the local authority is therefore vital. The Chair should be very clear on the substance of the agenda items, understand the issues involved and the decisions and/or actions that need to be taken in respect of School Forum business. It is good practice for there to be a pre-meeting between the senior officer of the local authority supporting the schools forum and the Chair of the schools forum to ensure that all the issues are clearly understood.

90. Equally, the Chair has the responsibility of representing the views of the schools forum back to the local authority: for instance, they should, where appropriate, take the initiative to make suggestions for improvements to the way the business is conducted, and, in exceptional cases and with support of the members of the schools forum take the view that they do not have sufficient information on which to base a decision and ask that an item is deferred until further information is available. However, in doing so, the Chair and schools forum should be fully aware of the consequences of deferral.

91. The independence of the schools forum is paramount. Enhancing the role of Chair to a paid position, rather than the reimbursement of reasonable expenses, could blur the lines of independence. Similarly, if the Chair undertakes significant work for the LA in another capacity, e.g. as an external consultant, they could be viewed as equivalent to an officer of the local authority.

92. Local authorities could consider if sharing contact details of the schools forum Chair with neighbouring authorities would be helpful for peer support and improving networking opportunities.

Clerking the schools forum

93. Clerking of a schools forum should be seen as more than just writing a note of the meeting. A good clerk provides an invaluable link between the members of the schools

forum, the Chair and the local authority. It is a role often undertaken by an employee of the local authority though we would recommend consideration is given to the use of an independent clerk.

94. Clerks should manage the logistics of the meeting in terms of ensuring dispatch of papers and producing a note from the meeting. In considering the style of meeting notes consideration should be given to making them intelligible enough for non-attendees to get a sense of the discussion as well as clearly indicating the conclusion and action agreed in relation to each agenda item. Verbatim reports of a schools forum's discussion, however, are unlikely to be very useful. Schools forums may consider whether a simple action log should be maintained by the clerk to ensure all action points agreed are followed up.

95. Beyond this a good clerk can:

- provide the route by which schools forum members can access further information and co-ordinate communication to schools forum members outside of the formal meeting cycle;
- respond to any queries about the business of the schools forum from headteachers, governors and others who are not on the schools forum themselves;
- be responsible for ensuring contact details of all members are up to date;
- maintain the list of members on the schools forum and advise on membership issues in general;
- assist with the co-ordination of nomination/election processes run by the constituent groups;
- keep the schools forum website up to date: e.g. by posting latest minutes and papers etc;
- monitor, on a regular basis, the schools forum and general Schools Funding section of the Department for Education (DfE) website or the gov.uk website; and arrange for the distribution of any relevant DfE information to schools forum members;
- if appropriate, provide technical advice in relation to the schools forum regulations and in relation to the operation of a schools forum's local constitution; and
- organise, operate and record any voting activity of the schools forum in line with the provisions of its local constitution.

96. Not all of these tasks may be able to be undertaken by the schools forum clerk. However, each one is important and there should be arrangements in place to ensure they are discharged adequately.

Good practice for schools forum meetings

97. Schools forums should ensure there is a clear debate of all agenda items. Whilst sub-group meetings are valuable in working through detailed issues, schools forums

should consider that the level of debate held at the schools forum meeting and recorded in the minutes will be the official reflection of the level of challenge and discussion on each issue.

98. The use of nameplates for schools forum members also showing which group they are representing can be helpful to members of the public and presenters of papers. In addition the use of coloured cards or coloured nameplates can be helpful when specific members of a schools forum are eligible to vote on specific items, e.g. de-delegation or changes to the funding formula.

99. Consultations with the schools forum are a key responsibility of a local authority, ranging from the funding formula to the letting of contracts. Each consultation will be different and depend on the subject being consulted on, but local authorities should consider the following factors as good practice for effective consultation:

- Plan and consult early
- Allow reasonable timescales for response (as Forum members may need to consult the groups they represent)
- An open and honest approach
- Fully inclusive
- Allow for ongoing dialogue
- Provide feedback
- Clear communications.

Meeting notes and recording of decisions

100. A vital part of the effective operation of a schools forum is to ensure that an accurate record of the meeting is taken. This must include the clear recording of votes where there are contrary views. Recommendations to, and decisions of, schools forums must be clearly set out.

101. Notes or minutes of each schools forum meeting should be produced and put on the website as soon after the meeting as possible to enable members and others to see the outcome of any discussions and decisions/votes. It is good practice to formally agree the accuracy of the note/minutes at a subsequent meeting but the publication of the draft minutes should not be delayed as a result.

102. In order to provide clarity about representation at each meeting, it is good practice for the minutes to record the group and/or subgroup that each member represents against their name.

Communication

103. Communication to the wider educational community of the discussions and debates of, and decisions made by, the schools forum is fundamental to their effective operation. The more schools and other stakeholders know about the proceedings of the

schools forum, the more their work will be an important and central part of the context of local educational funding. This is particularly important given the decision making role that the schools forum has. Local authorities should consider the operational differences between the types of stakeholders and plan their communications accordingly. For example ensuring effective communications across the PVI sector may be more difficult than with schools, who are more likely to have existing channels of communication e.g. headteacher meetings.

104. Each schools forum should therefore be clear what its channels of communication are. It is fundamental that each member of schools forum represents the views of the group or sub-group that they represent and that all those with an interest in funding work together to ensure that their views are taken into account. Therefore communications directly between members and those they represent is essential; professional associations and phase groups could be suitable channels. This will ensure that schools forum members have an ongoing dialogue with the constituents of their group or sub-group and are therefore well able to represent their views at schools forum meetings. However, the schools forum should also consider additional communication processes. These could include:

- drawing schools' attention to the fact that all its agenda, minutes and papers are publicly available on the local authority's website (this should include the publication of formula consultation documents);
- an annual report on the proceedings of the schools forum;
- attendance by the Chair, or other schools forum member, at other relevant consultative or management groups such as any capital working group; or senior management meetings of the Children's Services Department; or
- a brief email to all schools, early years providers and other stakeholders after each schools forum meeting informing them of the discussions and decisions with a link to the full papers and minutes for further information
- a schools forum newsletter can be a less formal and more interesting way of communicating forum business and raising the profile of the schools forum and its members.

News updates

105. Most, but not all, members of the schools forum will already be in receipt of regular information on school funding matters from the local authority and DfE. Other schools forum members should be copied into such information flows so that they can be kept abreast of developments between meetings.

106. Many local authorities have already established dedicated schools forum websites on which they post key information for schools forum members and other interested parties.



Education
Funding
Agency

© Crown copyright 2015

This publication (not including logos) is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

To view this licence:

visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3

email psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

write to Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU

About this publication:

enquiries www.education.gov.uk/contactus

download www.gov.uk/government/publications

Reference: EFA-00134-2015



Follow us on Twitter:
[@educationgovuk](https://twitter.com/educationgovuk)



Like us on Facebook:
facebook.com/educationgovuk

This page is intentionally left blank

WILTSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM
TERMS of REFERENCE

1. Remit

The Schools Forum is a statutory body which the LA is required to consult on the following functions:

1.1 Consultation on School Funding Formula

- (1) The relevant LA shall consult the forum on:
 - (a) Any proposed changes in relation to the factors and criteria that were taken into account, or the methods, principles and rules that have been adopted, in their formula made in accordance with regulations made under section 47 and 47ZA of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998; and
 - (b) The financial effect of any such change.
- (2) Consultation under paragraph (1) shall take place in sufficient time to allow the views expressed to be taken into account in the determination of the relevant authority's formula and in the initial determination of schools' budget shares before the beginning of the financial year.

1.2 Consultation on Contracts

- 1) The relevant authority shall at least one month prior to the issue of invitations to tender consult the forum on the terms of any proposed contract for supplies or services being a contract paid or to be paid out of the relevant authority's schools budgets where the estimated value of the proposed contract is not less than the specific threshold which applies to the relevant authority in pursuance of Regulation 8 of The Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (SI 2006 No 5).

1.3 Consultation on Financial Issues

- (1) The relevant authority shall consult the forum annually in respect of the relevant authority's functions relating to the schools budget, in connection with the following:
 - (a) The arrangements to be made for the education of pupils with special educational needs;
 - (b) Arrangements for the use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school;
 - (c) Arrangements for early years provision;

- (d) Administrative arrangements for the allocation of central government grants paid to the schools via the authority.
- (2) The relevant authority may consult the forum on such other matters concerning the funding of schools as they see fit.

2. Composition

- 2.1 The requirements for the Schools Forum were previously set out in regulations (Statutory Instrument No 344/2010, amended by 1172/2010). These regulations have been revoked and replaced by the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012 (Statutory Instrument No 2261/2012). The constitution of the Wiltshire Schools Forum has been approved by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services through the delegated decision process, and any change to the constitution will require similar approval.
- 2.2 The majority of forum members are "schools members". There are:
 - 6 elected Head teacher representatives (1 secondary, 4 primary and 1 special);
 - 3 Academy representatives; and
 - 4 elected governor representatives (1 secondary school, 2 primary schools and 1 school with special provision).

These 13 members, along with the two Early Years representatives are the only members allowed to vote on the funding formula.

There are 2 other nominated service partner representatives (1 from the Dioceses and 1 teacher representative) who both have one vote. These are the 17 voting members.

In addition to voting members there are 5 observers, 1 each from the 13-19 Strategic Partnership and ASK, 2 elected governor representatives from the Council's Children Select Committee are also invited as observers ex officio and the Education Funding Agency has observer status.

- 2.3 The Forum will appoint the same number of substitutes in respect of each voting representative group as that group holds ordinary seats on the Forum. Ordinary members may be substituted by any one of the named substitutes. Substitute members will have all the powers and duties of any ordinary member of the Forum.

3. Conduct

- 3.1 In carrying out their functions, members of the Schools Forum are expected to act in accordance with the seven principles of public life set out in the first report of the Committee on Standard in Public Life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
- 3.2 Members of the School Forum are required to declare an interest in any individual proposal or service contract which directly affects a school at which they are a governor, member of staff, or which their children attend or in which they might have a direct pecuniary interest.

4. Term of Office

- 4.1 The term of office for members of the Schools Forum shall be three years subject to their remaining eligible. A member may resign at any time and is required to leave if he or she ceases to be eligible in the capacity in which elected/nominated.
- 4.2 There is no limit on the number of terms of office to which a member may be elected or re-nominated if still eligible. Where a member is replaced, the new member serves for the remainder of the term of office.

5. Chair and Vice-Chair

- 5.1 A chair and vice-chair will be elected annually by a majority of votes cast by individual members. Where possible, the chair and vice-chair will not be drawn from the same voting group. The term of office is for one year. A chair or vice-chair will cease to hold office if they resign by giving notice to both the Chair and clerk of the Forum, or if they cease to be members of the Forum. Both the chair and vice-chair may be re-elected. Where a casual vacancy arises, there will be a vote at the next meeting of the Forum.
- 5.2 The responsibilities of the chair and vice-chair include: chairing meetings, overseeing preparation of the record of the meeting, submitting a budget for LA approval and being accountable for expenditure against that budget.

6. Quorum

- 6.1 The quorum for the Forum is 40% of voting members. A meeting may continue if inquorate, but any advice given to the LA as a result of such a meeting would not have to be taken into account by the authority.

7. Clerk to the Committee

- 7.1 The clerk will be appointed by Democratic Services at Wiltshire Council

8. Notice of Meetings

- 8.1 The clerk will ensure that meetings of the Forum are convened by giving a minimum notice of 5 working days in advance of the meetings, with a full agenda.

9. Proceedings

- 9.1 Each voting member has one vote and a majority decision is required.
- 9.2 The Forum may remit matters for discussion and research to sub-committees or working groups. However, any resulting advice formally passed to the LA shall have been approved by the Forum as a whole.
- 9.3 The Forum will meet at least 4 times per annum, in each financial year from April 2003.

10. Public Participation

- 10.1 Members of the public are able to ask questions or make a statement in relation to the responsibilities and functions of the Forum at each meeting. A maximum of 15 minutes will be allocated to this at the start of each meeting, and each question or statement should last no longer than 3 minutes.
- 10.2 Questions must be put in writing to the clerk of the Forum no later than 5 clear working days before the meeting, to allow a response to be formulated, and are limited to a maximum of 2 per person / organisation. A response will be given as either a direct oral answer or a written reply.
- 10.3 Statements must be given in writing and can be received up to 10 minutes before the start of the meeting.
- 10.4 Statements and questions must be relevant to the powers and duties of the Forum. They must not be defamatory, frivolous, offensive, vexatious, unlawful or otherwise improper. They must not name or identify individual service users, members of staff or members of partner agencies. Questions must not require the disclosure of confidential information.
- 10.5 The Chairman's ruling on rejection of a question is final.

11. Discrimination

- 11.1 The Committee has an explicit duty to have regard to the duties placed on Local Education Authorities and school governors by the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Race Relations Act 1976. The Forum will note the DfE view that the Human Rights Act 1998 applies.

12. Dissemination of the Results of Meetings

- 12.1 A copy of the minutes of the Forum meetings will be sent to all schools and will be considered by the Children's Services Select Committee and the Cabinet if necessary.

13. Consideration of Confidential Reports

- 13.1 A report will only be considered in a confidential session when it contains confidential or exempt information. That will only apply if the report contains:
 - a) Information furnished to the Council by a Government Department on terms which forbid the disclosure of the information to the public.
 - b) Information the disclosure of which to the public is prohibited by or under any law or by the order of a court
 - c) Information relating to any individual.
 - d) Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
 - e) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority).

- f) Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations and negotiations, in connection with labour relations matters.
- g) Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained.
- h) Information which reveals that the authority proposes to serve certain Notices or make certain Orders or Directions.
- i) Information relating to action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention investigation or prosecution of crime.

13.2 The intention to conduct Forum business in Confidential Session will be indicated by the inclusion of the following text within the agenda:

‘Exclusion of Public;

To consider passing a resolution, in accordance with the Wiltshire Council Schools Forum Terms of Reference, that the public be excluded during the remainder of the meeting, on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted, there would be a likelihood of disclosure to them of exempt information of the following descriptions’

13.3 The descriptions referred to above relates to the categories of confidential information listed in paragraph 13.1.

13.4 Public would relate to anyone other than members of the Schools Forum plus the Democratic Services Officer, relevant officers and Cabinet members with exceptions determined by the Chair, in consultation with the Corporate Director.

October 2014

This page is intentionally left blank

Wiltshire Council

SCHOOLS FORUM

18th June 2015

REVENUE BUDGET OUTTURN REPORT 2014-15 – DEDICATED SCHOOLS BUDGET

Purpose of the Paper

1. To report on the outturn position for the dedicated schools budget in 2014-15.

Main Considerations

Outturn 2014-15

2. Appendix 1 shows expenditure as at 31st March 2015. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) was overspent by £2.001 million at the end of the year, an increase of £0.397m compared with the forecast at the end of January 2015.
3. There are a number of movements in the variance within the overall total and the January forecast is shown on the summary for comparison. The reasons for the key variances and the movements in the last two months of the year are outlined below.

Academy Recoupment

4. The final budget for 2014-15 has been adjusted to reflect all academy recoupment through the year, including part year adjustments for in-year converting schools. This reduces the overall budget from £304.941m reported to the March meeting, to £193.168m as a final DSG allocation (prior to any adjustment for the Early Years block, see paragraph 5 below).

Early Years

5. A further budget adjustment was made after the end of the financial year to reflect the impact of the January 2015 Early Years Census. After verification of the January 2015 census data a further allocation of £0.153m was made to Wiltshire's Early Years Block, increasing the total DSG allocation for 2014-15 to £193.321m.
6. The budget for 3 & 4 year olds shows a minor overspend of £0.041m compared with the previous forecast of an overspend of £0.088m.
7. The budget for the free entitlement for 2 year olds was underspent by £0.476m which is more than previously forecast, which was an underspend of £0.299m. It has previously been agreed by Schools Forum that any underspend within this block should be used to support the Early Years provision.
8. The Early Years & Childcare team budget underspent by £0.123m in 2014-15. This underspend had been projected throughout the year and has not moved since being reported at the January 2015 position.

High Needs Budgets (0-25 SEND Service)

9. Expenditure on Independent Special School placements was significantly lower than budgeted for and this underspend had been projected through the year. The final position was an underspend of £0.586m against this budget
10. Top up budgets in schools overspent by £1.4 million, this is higher than previously forecast. In addition, the budget for Named Pupil Allowances was overspent by £0.808m and the Top up budget for post-16 was overspent by £0.692m.
11. There were small variances against the SEND service which have helped to offset some of the overspends. However, the overall position is an overspend of £2.192m, an increase of £0.166m from the projected January 2015 position.

Other Variances

12. The budget for maternity costs was overspent by £0.076m, a slight increase upon that projected throughout the year. This budget is de-delegated and held on behalf of maintained primary and secondary schools.
13. The 'term time only' back-pay is included within the 'DSG within Corporate Services' and to date the funded expenditure has been £0.472m, which was not reported in the January 2015 position. There are still some outstanding claims for the back pay and a provisional figure has been worked into the DSG Reserve position, detailed in item 15 of this report.
14. The budget for Contingency and the Growth Fund was underspent by £0.369m following a significant number of back-dated Business Rates revaluations. Revaluations can result in either an increase or a decrease in a schools rateable value, however there has been an overall net decrease in 2014-15. Any underspend is used to support expenditure related to education costs.

Utilisation of DSG Underspend

15. Any under or overspend against the Dedicated Schools Grant is to be carried forward in to the following financial year. The overspend of £2.001 million will therefore need to be funded from the earmarked DSG Reserve. The table below sets out the position of the DSG Reserve as at the end of 2014-15.

DSG Reserve	£m
Balance brought forward from 2013/14	3.502
Agreed Allocations in 2014-15 (TIPS & Hard to Place pupils)	(0.350)
2014-15 Overspend	(2.001)
Balance to carry forward to 2015-16	1.151
Potential full year cost for 'term time only' back-pay	(0.200)

16. DSG balances from previous years may be moved in to the High Needs or Early Years blocks to support spending in those areas, however Schools Forum has previously agreed in principle that each DSG block should operate in a self-contained manner.

Proposal

17. Schools Forum is asked to note the outturn position for the Dedicated Schools Budget in 2014-15.

Report Author: Grant Davis, Schools Strategic Financial Support Manager

Tel 01225 718587, e-mail grant.davis@wiltshire.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

Financial Monitoring

Service Areas	Current Budget 2014-15 £m	Outturn for Year £m	Variation for Year £m	%	Previous Projection £m	Movement £m
1 Funding Schools						
DSG Funded Expenditure - Delegated to Schools	140.255	140.255	0.000	0%	0.000	0.000
Contingency & Growth Fund	0.811	0.442	-0.369	-45%	0.000	-0.369
Total	141.067	140.698	- 0.369		-	- 0.369
2 0-25 SEND Service						
Pre-16						
Independent Special Schools	3.378	2.792	-0.586	-17%	-0.776	0.190
Named Pupil Allowances	1.226	2.035	0.808	66%	0.735	0.074
Top Up Budgets - Wiltshire Maintained Schools & Academies	9.535	10.240	0.706	7%	0.513	0.193
Top Up Budgets - Non-Wiltshire Maintained Schools & Academies	0.546	1.258	0.711	130%	0.663	0.049
Post-16						
Top Up Budgets - Post- 16 Placements	4.872	5.564	0.692	14%	1.131	-0.440
Support Services						
Specialist Provision and EY Inclusion	0.575	0.532	-0.042	-7%	0.000	-0.042
SEND Service	2.047	1.951	-0.097	-5%	-0.238	0.142
Total 0-25 SEND Service	22.180	24.372	2.192		2.026	0.166
3 Commissioning & Performance and School Effectiveness						
Schools Maternity Costs	0.836	0.912	0.076	9%	0.000	0.076
Trades Union Facilities Costs	0.050	0.046	-0.004	-7%	0.000	-0.004
SIMS & HCSS Licences	0.249	0.274	0.024	10%	0.000	0.024
Other Costs incl. Copyright Licences	0.201	0.279	0.077	39%	0.076	0.001
Strategic Planning	0.036	0.036	0.000	0%	0.000	0.000
Admissions Service	0.261	0.261	0.000	0%	0.000	0.000
Early Years Single Funding Formula - 3 & 4 yo	15.856	15.896	0.041	0%	-0.088	0.129
Early Years Single Funding Formula - 2 yo	3.310	2.834	-0.476	-14%	-0.299	-0.177
Other Early Years Support (including 2yo Trajectory funding)	0.860	0.737	-0.123	-14%	-0.123	0.000
Total Commissioning, Performance & School Effectiveness	21.658	21.274	-0.385		-0.434	0.049
4 Safeguarding						
Child Protection in Schools	0.028	0.028	0.000	0%	0.000	0.000
Total	0.028	0.028	-		-	-
5 Integrated Youth and Preventative Services						
Assisted Places Scheme	0.047	0.037	-0.010	-21%	0.000	-0.010
Ethnic Minority Achievement Service	0.322	0.282	-0.040	-12%	-0.041	0.001
Travellers Education Service	0.188	0.186	-0.002	-1%	0.000	-0.002
Alternative Provision/EOTAS	3.060	3.112	0.051	2%	0.000	0.051
Behaviour Support	0.820	0.861	0.041	5%	0.052	-0.011
Total	4.438	4.478	0.040		0.011	0.029
6 Children's Social Care						
Looked After Children Education Service	0.203	0.203	0.000	0%	0.000	0.000
Total	0.203	0.203	-		-	-
7 DSG Within Corporate Services						
Gross Expenditure	3.594	4.116	0.522	15%	0.000	0.522
Total	3.594	4.116	0.522		-	0.522
	193.168	195.169	2.001	1%	1.604	0.397

Rates revaluations

TTO Backpay

Note POSITIVE variances = OVERSPEND

-0.000

0.472 movement from reserves for TTO payment (not shown on this report as budget)

Delegated	140.255	140.255
Central	52.912	54.913
ADD 13-14 r/f	3.502	
Draw on Reserve for Schools Forum decisions - TIPS and Hard to place pupils		0.350 not shown in report above
Revised Central spend	56.414	55.263
Total	196.670	195.519

DSG Reserve 2014-15

£m

Balance c/f from 2013-14	3.502
Agreed Allocations during 14-15	(0.350) TIPS and Hard to Place Pupils
Use of Reserves to offset 14-15 overspend	(2.001)
Remaining Balance to r/f to 2015-16	1.151
Potential full year cost for TTO Back Pay??	0.200

This page is intentionally left blank

Wiltshire Council

Schools Forum
18th June 2015

Report from the School Funding Working Group

Purpose of report

1. To report on the meeting of the School Funding Working Group held on 3rd June 2015.

Main considerations for School Forum

2. The draft minutes of the meeting are attached at Appendix 1.
3. The Group considered a report on the pressures within the High Needs Block for 2015-16. The Group discussed the provision of additional place funding and recoupment of place funding and agreed to continue to fund and recoup at the rate of £10,000 per place. This funding would be applied proportionately, on a monthly basis.
4. The RAG rating document is to be presented to Schools Forum to enable monitoring of the High Needs savings to be considered. The group noted that these were savings targets but that the in-year budget would need to be monitored closely.

5. *Proposals*

That Schools Forum notes the minutes of the School Funding Working Group and the recommendation in respect of the use of the place funding at £10,000 for both additional place funding and for recoupment.

Carolyn Godfrey
Corporate Director

Report author: Grant Davis, Schools Strategic Financial Support Manager

01225 718587 grant.davis@wiltshire.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

Schools Funding Working Group

3rd June 2015, 8:30am, West Wilts Room, County Hall

Minutes

Present: Catriona Williamson, Neil Baker, Martin Watson, John Hawkins, Phil Cook, Julia Cramp, Grant Davis, Susan Tanner, (Phil McMullan & Liza Gordon for Item 6)

Apologies: Andy Bridewell, Jan Hatherell

1	Minutes from Previous Meeting The minutes from the previous meeting were discussed and agreed.	
2	Budget Monitoring 2014-15 GD presented a summary of the budget out-turn position for the schools budget for the 2014-15 financial year. The report demonstrated that there was an overall overspend on the DSG of £2.001M for the 2014-15 year. The overspend was attributed in the main to an overspend of £2.192M in the High Needs Block which was in accordance with projections presented at earlier meetings. There were savings within the High Needs Block and also from within the Schools Contingency. There was also a cost pressure stemming from the 'term time only' payments made during the year. The report also showed the impact on the DSG reserve and that it had reduced from £3.502M to £1.151M during the year but that there were still commitments in respect of outstanding 'term time only' commitments, which as yet could not be quantified, but are estimated at £0.2M	
3	Update - Early Years Final Settlement 2014-15 GD presented a paper to update the group on the final out-turn for the Early years Funding. The Early Years funding is based upon a provisional settlement with a final adjustment to reflect the outcome of the January census. The retrospective adjustment to reflect the January census will be paid in the 2015-16 year but relates to the 2014-15 year. The additional funding awarded to Wiltshire is £0.153M and has therefore increased the DSG settlement from £193.168M to £193.321M.	
4	High Needs Budgets 2015-16 GD presented a paper to update the group on the cost pressures in the High Needs budgets for 2015-16. The cost pressures are being addressed through a number of measures which had been presented to, and agreed at the March Schools Forum meeting. A RAG rated table was presented which detailed all of the savings measures and categorised the various measures. A discussion took place regarding each of the measures and their associated RAG ratings and some were amended. The RAG ratings represents a 'savings' document but will need to be considered in light of the actual budget position for 2015-16.	

	<p>The recycling of ELP places was discussed and agreed that the £10k of place funding would be recouped for each additional place and accordingly £10k is to be awarded for each additional place, on a proportionate basis. The principle had been agreed at WASSH and members had confirmed their acceptance.</p> <p>Whilst there are occasions where a pupil may move from mainstream to ELP, a school may receive the AWPU plus the place funding. However it was considered that instances of this are minimal and that working to the £10k was the most appropriate and workable solution for schools.</p> <p>There is anticipated to be a backlash from some Resource Base (RB) schools who will consider their RB not to be cost effective. Susan Tanner is writing to all RB's to establish their future plans and has had much feedback from schools.</p> <p>ST will look at each case individually with a view to ensuring that there is consistency across all RB's and if there are to be any individual decisions, then these would be presented to SFWG.</p> <p>Savings from the closure of the RB at the Manor are subject to pressure as some of the funding will be required to place these pupils.</p>	
5	<p>Schools Traded Services – Changes to Governance Arrangements</p> <p>JC presented a paper which informed the group that a number of small price increases were to be applied for three of the Right Choice services;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HR Advisory Services - HR Admin & Payroll - Accounting & Budget Support <p>A price increase of 5% for these services from September is to be applied. The average impact of this uplift in 2015-16 will be £105 per school.</p> <p>CW & NB expressed their concerns that prices were being increased prior to any of the Traded Service reviews being completed and that this was not the position which schools had been expecting. JC outlined that full reviews were being conducted and that the results would be presented back to the group. Any increases would be communicated to schools having initially been taken to the new Stakeholder group first.</p> <p>It was discussed that schools required sufficient notice of any changes to enable them to make alternative purchasing decisions if necessary.</p>	
6	<p>Buildings Pool Service</p> <p>Phil McMullan and Liza Gordon from the Property team presented a paper outlining some proposals to a change in the delivery of their service from April 2016. The current Buildings Pool Scheme is considered to be unwieldy and there are some misconceptions as to exactly what is covered by the scheme. The proposals were outlined and a number of questions were fielded. Phil and Liza were asked to attend the next PHF meeting where their proposals could be presented to a wider audience, for feedback.</p>	
7	<p>Procurement of Licence for Schools Information Management System</p> <p>A report was presented to the group outlining the current procurement options for the Capita SIMS product. The group noted the content of the report and asked that the LA continue to seek out the most economically advantageous option for schools.</p>	

8	AOB As per last year, it was discussed whether an October and a December Schools Forum meeting would be required. The group agreed that unless there were to be an announcement about a National Funding Formula, then we should move to combining the two meetings and hold it in November.	
9	Date of Next Meeting SFWG - Tuesday 20 th October 2015, 8:30am, Longleat Room, County Hall Schools Forum - Thursday 12 th November 2015, Council Chamber, County Hall	

DRAFT

This page is intentionally left blank

Wiltshire Council

SCHOOLS FORUM

18th June 2015

HIGH NEEDS BUDGETS 2015-16

Purpose of the Paper

1. To report on the proposals for the High Needs budgets for 2015-16 and recording of progress against the budget.

Main Considerations

Cost Pressures 2015-16

2. The provisional allocation of high needs funding for Wiltshire was announced for 2015-16 as £37.665 million. This included £420,000 being Wiltshire's share of the national £47m of additional top-up funding.
3. A report was presented to the March 2015 Schools Forum meeting which demonstrated that the inherent cost pressures facing the High Needs block in 2015-16 were £1.449m. Additional pressures were identified which resulted in the total cost pressures facing the High Needs block of approximately £1.9m. By allocating the additional £0.420m awarded to Wiltshire for 2015-16 against this projection, will help to reduce the cost pressures down to approximately £1.5m.
4. 'A Special Educational Needs Strategy for Wiltshire 2015-18 Consultation Document' has been produced which sets out proposals for SEN for the ensuing three years, along with savings proposals agreed with Schools Forum.

RAG Rating of Savings

5. A number of High Needs saving proposals were agreed with Schools Forum and these are detailed in Appendix 1. This table will be completed and updated during the course of the year to demonstrate the savings being achieved for each of the measures identified. The performance against each measure will be reported to future meetings of Schools Forum.

ELP & Resource Base Recycling of Places

6. The recycling of unfilled ELP and Resource Base 'place' funding is potentially the most contentious of the measures. Whilst the principle has been agreed at WASSH and Schools Forum the recycling is set to start from the payment of the July top up payments.
7. The proposal is for schools to be awarded additional place funding where they exceed their agreed number of places and would have funds recouped where their number of pupils falls below the agreed place numbers. A monthly proportion of the annual place funding of will be awarded or recouped accordingly.
8. There are occasions where a pupil may move between mainstream education and an ELP place or Resource Base, which pushes the school above its agreed number of places. In

this instance, the school would receive AWPU funding for the pupil being in mainstream, plus proportionate monthly place funding. However, where a pupil were to move from an ELP place or Resource Base into mainstream, then the school would not receive AWPU funding and also lose the place funding. Therefore there is a perceived inequity.

9. Schools Funding Working Group gave consideration to the impact of this funding and determined that such occurrences were indeed very rare and that this should not form part of the consideration regarding place funding. Agreement was confirmed that all additional place funding should be awarded at £10,000 per place, paid on a monthly basis and also that place funding of £10,000 per place should be recouped for unfilled places, on a monthly basis. Reports detailing the amounts to be recouped and additional place funding awarded are to be presented to future meetings of Schools Funding Working group and Schools Forum.

2015-16 Budget Monitoring

10. In addition to monitoring of the savings relating to the measures agreed at the March Schools Forum, the 2015-16 annual budget will also need to be monitored closely and any cost pressures reported to the ensuing Schools Forum meetings.

Proposal

11. Schools Forum is asked to note the content of the report.
12. Schools Forum is asked to confirm that the RAG monitoring of the savings proposals be adopted for identifying the impact of the savings measures for 2015-16.
13. Schools Forum is asked to agree that the first tranche of ELP and Resource Base recoupment should commence from the July top up payments.
14. Schools Forum is asked to confirm that additional place funding should be awarded and unfilled place funding be recouped at the annual rate of £10,000 per place, awarded and recouped on a monthly basis.

Report Author: Grant Davis, Schools Strategic Financial Support Manager

Tel 01225 718587

e-mail grant.davis@wiltshire.gov.uk