

Wiltshire Council

Schools Forum

13 October 2011

Subject: Schools Forum Constitution, memberships and arrangements

Purpose of Report

1. To clarify the current constitution of the Wiltshire Schools Forum, its membership and the composition of its sub-groups.
2. To bring the Schools Forum in line with best practice arrangements as per Department for Education (DfE) guidance.
3. To review the operation and make-up of the Schools Forum in light of the development of Wiltshire governor groups and changes to Academy status by a proportion of Wiltshire Schools.

Background

4. The Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2010 (Statutory Instrument No 344/2010) revokes and replaces the Schools Forum (England) Regulations (2002), as amended, with a few changes principally relating to the membership of Schools Forums.
5. The regulations are made under Section 47A and 138(7) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.
6. The Schools Forum constitution was amended by delegated decision in September 2010, following changes approved at the July meeting of the group.
7. A number of Schools Forum members have expressed a wish to re-examine the decision-making processes and composition of the forum in light of the growing number of schools in Wiltshire which have, or intend to convert to Academy status.
8. Wiltshire has 11 academies to date, 10 secondary schools and one primary. Within that 11 there are two traditional academies: Wellington and Sarum. These were part of the previous Government's strategy for raising standards. These two academies have sponsors, Wellington College and Wiltshire Council, the Salisbury Diocese, Bryanston Independent School and Bath Spa University respectively. The others are converter academies. At first these schools could convert if outstanding at their last Ofsted inspection, then if good and now any school providing it has another higher performing school in support. Wiltshire has four further

secondaries, six primaries and one special school actively moving towards academy status in the near future. Most other schools are asking questions about converting and assessing the situation before acting. In total, 22 schools out of 236 in Wiltshire – 9% are currently actively pursuing conversion to an academy. Schools can convert to an academy at the start of any month; they do not have to wait for a new term or academic year.

Membership and Composition

9. Since the changes to the constitution of the Schools Forum and the regulations governing it, the membership of the Forum has been clarified and stabilised as follows:

Type		Nominated by	Postholder
Schools Members	Teachers	4 x primary headteachers	PHF Mr N Baker (Chairman) Mrs Julia Bird Mrs J Finney Mrs C Williamson
		3 x secondary headteachers	WASSH Mr C Dark Mr M Watson Mrs Carol Grant
		1 x Special school headteacher	WASSH Mrs I Lancaster-Gaye
		1 x Academies Rep.	Academy Schools in Wiltshire Mr David Cowley
	Governors	2 x primary governors	<i>Wiltshire Governors Association</i> John Foster (primary) Ann Ferries (primary) (Vice-Chairman)
		1 x secondary governor	<i>Wiltshire Governors Association</i> Vacancy (secondary)
		1 x governor for special needs	<i>Wiltshire Governors Association</i> Vacancy (SEN)
Non-School Members	Early Years PVI Sector representative	Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership Mr J Proctor	
	Teacher representative	Joint Consultative Committee Mr J Hawkins	
	Diocesan Representative	Dioceses Mrs Anne Davey	

	Representative of maintained schools with nursery classes	Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership	Michael Keeling
	14 – 19 representative	13-19 Strategy group	Tina Pagett
Observers	Parent Partnership representative	Ask	Miss S Lund
	3 x parent governor representatives	Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee	Neal Owen, Rosheen Ryan,
	Cabinet members: Education and Youth Children and Families	Leader of the Council	Cllr Alan Macrae Cllr Lionel Grundy

10. 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.
11. 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.
12. The Schools Forum must have at least 15 members
13. In accordance with best practice, where a relevant nominating group such as a headteachers’ association exists, it is used to provide nominations to the panel.
14. The recent development of both the Wiltshire Governors’ Association and the Wiltshire Special Schools Governors Group promises to provide such a nominating group for the governors posts in future.
15. Since 2010 the forum must include at least one representative expressly representing the Academies sector, to be nominated by the Academies within Wiltshire.
16. Currently the representatives nominated by WASSH comprise head teachers from maintained schools and Academies. The good practice document states that the composition of Schools Forum should be constructed in such a way that ensures that any potential schools member holding a single office/position (head teacher or governor) can represent only one group or sub-group. Head teachers of academies nominated by WASSH are therefore representing secondary schools as a whole.
17. Schools Forum may need to consider the balance of membership between academies and maintained schools, particularly within the secondary sector. Currently funding for academies is linked to the local authority funding formula, albeit on a lagged basis, and therefore decisions made by the forum do affect funding received by all schools in Wiltshire. Should the funding regimes for academies and maintained schools become less

closely linked then it may be more difficult for head teachers of academies to be nominated by WASSH to Schools Forum.

Working Groups and sub-Groups

18. There are the following four working groups which feed recommendations to the main meetings of the Forum:

SEN Working Group 2011-12

Mark Brotherton	Wiltshire Council
Bruce Douglas	Staverton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Phil Cooch	Wiltshire Council
Julia Cramp	Wiltshire Council
John Hawkins	Union Rep
Judith Finney	Dilton Marsh Church of England Primary School
Karina Kulawik	Wiltshire Council
Julie Masurier	Wiltshire Council
Phil Beaumont	Downland School
Sarah O'Donnell	Westwood-with-Iford
Elizabeth Williams	Wiltshire Council

Schools Funding Work Group 2011-12

Simon Burke	Wiltshire Council
Carol Grant	Pewsey Vale
Chris Dark	Matravers School
Phil Cooch	Wiltshire Council
Julia Cramp	Wiltshire Council
Mrs C Williamson	Mere School
John Hawkins	Union Rep
John Kimberly	Bitham Brook Primary School
Judith Finney	Dilton Marsh Church of England Primary School
M Watson	Lavington School
Neil Baker	Christchurch Primary School
T Gilson	Malmesbury School
Phil Cooke	Larkrise School
Elizabeth Williams	Wiltshire Council

Early Years Reference Group

Name	Position / Provider
Rosemary Collard	Owner, Snapdragons Day Nursery
Mark Cawley	Manager/owner, New Road Nursery, Chippenham
Alan Butler	Learning Curve Day Nursery, Wootton Bassett

Fiona Webb	Director, Sunny Days Children's Nursery, Calne
Mike Fairbeard	Little Fir Tree Nursery, YMCA
Ted Hatala	St Josephs Nursery, Devizes
Lucy Waterman	Curriculum Coordinator, Rub a Dub Preschool, Derry Hill
Andrea Gray	Smiley Faces Amesbury
John Proctor	Owner, South Hills School
<i>Vacancy</i>	
Jane Cross	Springboard DSC, Chippenham
Lorraine Cope	Accredited childminder, Childminders
Michael Keeling	Headteacher, King's Park Primary School, Melksham
Janet Stanford	Clarendon Infant School, Tidworth
Phil Cooch	Wiltshire Council
Simon Burke	Wiltshire Council
Sarah Clover	Wiltshire Council

19. These appointments should be confirmed by the main schools forum, yearly and a full list of working group memberships will be made available and kept updated on a regular basis.
20. The SEN Working Group currently has no representative from the secondary sector. Schools Forum is asked to consider whether this group should continue, and therefore request that WASSH should nominate a representative, or whether the group could be combined with the Schools Funding Working Group.

Logistics, Openness and Access

21. The Schools Forum - Terms of Reference stipulate that the Agenda must be published and circulated a minimum of 3 clear working days before the date of the meeting.
22. However in keeping with the rules for other committees of the council we will endeavour to send the agenda 5 clear working days in advance of the meeting to ensure that members of the committee have sufficient time to read the items and prepare as necessary. In calculating the 5 clear days, we exclude the date of the meeting, date of despatch and any intervening weekend and bank holidays.
23. The agenda, minutes and report papers are publicly accessible through the 'Committees, Meetings, Councillors' area of the Wiltshire website and distributed directly to schools via the WISEnet website.
24. School Forum meetings should start from the presumption that there is no reason not to allow access but certain information can be restricted in line with the current Council procedures.
25. Sensitive information and reports can be restricted as discussions of the school forum can be governed in accordance with the Part 1 and 2 distinctions currently used by Wiltshire Council under Local Government

Act 1972 Schedule 12A), as inserted by Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

26. A briefing takes place in the morning before each Schools Forum. This varies in length and usually begins at 11am or 11:30am. It is closed to the public.

Quorum and voting procedure

27. 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.
28. Each voting member has one vote and Decisions will be made by a simple majority vote on each proposal. A recorded vote can be undertaken if requested by a simple majority of the Forum.
29. There may be certain instances, for example when considering the configuration of the central services budget, or the implementation of traded services where there may be potential conflicts of interest, arising from the academy status of some Schools Forum members' schools.
30. The forum should consider when and how such cases will occur, and if so whether to set in place a formal procedure for dealing with these issues. This could take the form of a formal process note which sets out the procedure for Academies representatives leaving the room when certain matters are discussed. Alternatively the forum may decide to rely on the existing conventions regarding declarations of interest, and members own judgement to decide when they should withdraw.
31. The Forum may remit matters for discussion and research to sub-committees or working groups. However, any resulting advice formally passed to the LA must be considered and approved by the Forum as a whole.

Environmental and climate change considerations

32. None.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

33. The Forum 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.

Financial Implications

34. None

Legal Implications

35. This report focuses on the Schools Forum regulations and the associated

constitution of the Wiltshire Schools Forum.

Proposals

36. To note the logistical arrangements for the Schools Forum outlined in the report.
37. To note the membership and method of nomination for each Schools Forum sub-group.
38. To adjust the terms of reference and constitution of the Schools Forum to show the Wiltshire Governors' Association as the nominating group for any future vacancies for Primary and Secondary School governors on the forum. These are currently 3 voting positions of this type.
39. To adjust the terms of reference and constitution of the Schools Forum to show the Wiltshire Special Schools' Governors' Group as the nominating group for any future vacancies for SEN Governors on the forum. There is currently one voting position of this type.
40. That Schools Forum considers whether the SEN working group should continue, and therefore request that WASSH should nominate a representative, or whether the group could be combined with the Schools Funding Working Group.
41. That Schools Forum discusses how to deal with any issues arising from the increasing number of schools who are opting to become academies, and determine an agreed procedure for dealing with future conflicts of interest.

*Reason for Proposal

42. To bring the Schools Forum in line with best practice arrangements as per Department for Education (DfE) guidance and relevant legislation.
43. To clarify the membership of the Schools Forum and sub-groups, and to adjust as considered necessary.
44. To clarify the future status of Academy representatives on the Schools Forum and ensure the Schools Forum is well prepared for changes that will impact upon its role and function over the next three to four years.

Carolyn Godfrey

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(August 2011)

Background Papers

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

None

Appendices

1. Wiltshire Schools Forum - Terms of Reference
 2. Schools Forums: Powers and Responsibilities 2011-12 – DfE 2011
 3. Schools Forums: Operational and Good Practice Guidance
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