

REPORT TO: School Forum

DATE: 29 January 2013

REPORTING OFFICER: Operational Director - Children's Organisation and Provision

SUBJECT: Membership and Role of School Forum

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update to the Board on the membership and role of the School Forum following the Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) **The revised membership of the School Forum is noted;**
(2) **The revised role of the School Forum is noted.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 National regulations govern the composition, constitution and procedures of School Forums.
- 3.2 It is a matter for each authority to determine the size of their School Forum however the size must allow full representation for the different types of schools and for representation of non-school members. School Forums must have 'school members' and academy members if there are academies within the authority. In addition, the membership can include 'non-schools' membership. Schools and Academy members together must number at least two thirds of the total membership of the Schools Forum. The balance between primary, secondary and academies members must be broadly proportionate to the pupils in each category.
- 3.3 The membership of the Halton School Forum has now been agreed and revised in line with the above requirements and is attached as Appendix 1 to this document.
- 3.4 In addition, School Forum are expected to ensure that the Executive Board are aware of its view on specific issues in particular those that relate to the Schools Budget and individual budget shares. It has therefore been agreed that the Executive lead for Children Services attends the School Forum meeting to contribute to the discussion and receive the views of the School Forum.
- 3.5 As a School Forum has both a consultative and decision making role for certain proposals on the use of public money at local level it is a

requirement that the meetings are open to the public and that papers, agenda and minutes are publicly available.

3.6 The current regulations state that the local authority must consult the School Forum annually on a range of school budget functions. These include:

- Amendments to the school funding formula, for which the voting is restricted by the exclusion of non-school members except for the representative from the Early Years Private Voluntary and Independent Sector;
- Arrangements for the education of pupils with special educational needs;
- Arrangements for the use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school;
- Arrangements for early years provision; and
- Administrative arrangements for the allocation of central government grants paid to the schools via the local authority.

3.7 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.

3.8 Schools Forum also have decision making powers in relation to the following:-

- De-delegation from mainstream school budgets for prescribed services to be provided centrally – approval is required by each phase of members;
- To create a fund for significant pupil growth in order to support the local authority's duty for place planning and agree the criteria for maintained schools and academies to access this fund;
- Funding 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 2012/2013 are permitted.
- Funding for central early years expenditure, which will include checking eligibility of pupils for an early years place and/or free school meals; and
- 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.

3.9 In each of the above cases the local authority can appeal to the DFE if the School Forum rejects its proposals. In addition, for 2013/2014 the authority will need to discuss any proposals to vary the Minimum

Funding Guarantee (MFG) with the Schools Forum. These will also need to be agreed with the Secretary of State. The attached Table in Appendix 2 shows the revised powers and responsibilities for 2013/2014.

4.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
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DfE School Funding Reform: Arrangements for 2013-14 (June 2012)

EFA Consultation on the Schools Finance regulations 2013 and additional grant conditions for the Dedicated Schools Grant (July 2012)

DFE Schools Forums: Operational and Good Practice Guide September 2012

Ann McIntyre – Operational Director Childrens Organisation and Provision
Rutland House, Runcorn, WA7 2GW