

HALTON SCHOOLS FORUM

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Halton Schools Forum shall be guided by 'The Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012' which lays down the statutory functions of the Forum, explains the regulations with regards to membership, and provides information of the meetings and proceedings of Schools Forum.

Membership

1. The Halton Schools Forum will consist of 19 Members made up of 16 School and Academy Members and 3 non-school Members, made up as follows:

Schools Members

- 7 Primary representatives
- 5 Secondary representatives
- 1 All-through representative
- 1 Special School representative
- 1 Nursery School representative
- 1 Pupil Referral Units representative

Non School Members

- 1 Private, Voluntary or Independent (PVI) Sector Provider
- 1 Local Authority 14-19 partnership Officer
- 1 Local Authority Learning & Achievement Officer

Observers

The following are entitled to attend and speak at meetings of the Schools Forum, but are not Members and have no voting rights:

- The Elected Member of the Authority who has the Education and Children's Portfolio of the Council;
- The Elected Member of the Authority who has the Resources Portfolio of the Council;
- An Education Funding Agency (EFA) representative;
- Director of Children and Young People's Services of the Council or their nominated representative;
- Chief Finance Officer of the Council or their nominated representative;
- Any person presenting a paper or other item to the Forum that is on the agenda, but that person's right to speak shall be limited to matters related to the item that the person is presenting.

2. The term of office for Forum Members will be four years from the date of appointment/election, at which time elections will take place for school and academy members and nominations will be sought for the non-school members.

3. Should a resignation be tendered from the Forum, an election (or nominations where appropriate) will be held for the vacancy which will ensure that the representational balance is maintained or improved. Each representative group will be responsible for the method by which they elect and nominate school and academy member representatives.
4. The academy members on the Forum represent the governing bodies of the academies situated in Halton, so do not necessarily have to be a principal or a governor. It is for the governing bodies of the academies to elect their own members for nomination on to the Forum.
5. A member ceases to be a member of the Schools Forum if:
 - He or she resigns from the Schools Forum by giving notice in writing;
 - He or she no longer occupies the office by which he or she became eligible for election, selection or appointment to the Forum, eg., a schools member must stand down if their school converts to an Academy;
 - He or she ceases to be a governor of a community primary school in the authority;
 - A non-schools member is replaced by the Authority at the request of the body which the member represents.
6. The Council will maintain a written record of the composition of the Schools Forum including the method by which representatives are elected or nominated and the date of their retirement from the Forum.

Meetings and Procedures of the Schools Forum

7. There will be a minimum of four meetings per school year.
8. The Forum will elect a Chair from amongst its own members and that term of office shall be two years. Elected Members and Officers' of the Authority may not hold the post of Chair or Vice Chair. At any meeting where both the Chair and Vice-Chair are absent, the Forum shall elect, from those voting members present, a person to take the Chair for that meeting only.
9. The meetings of the Forum will be open to the public. Exceptionally, the Chair of the Forum may determine that part of a meeting (or an agenda item) will be held in private (Part II). Prior to making any such determination, the chair must take legal advice and the determination must be in accordance with this legal advice. If an item is taken as Part II the Forum members will be expected to be diligent in the appropriate care of related materials and maintain confidentiality of the item.
10. Participation by local authority members and officers will be limited to a Lead Member for Education and Children's Services, a Lead Member for Resources, the Director of Children of Young People's Services (or their representative), the Chief Finance Officer (or their representative) or officers who are providing specific financial or technical advice to Schools Forum. Other individuals will be able to participate where they are presenting a report, but their participation must be limited to their specific agenda item.
11. The meetings are quorate if at least 40% of the total membership (excluding vacancies) is present at the meeting. This excludes observers.

12. Meetings of the Forum will be scheduled on the calendar of meetings for the year ahead beginning in the May, and will be listed on the Council website. Agendas and supporting documentation will be published on the Council website at least 7 clear working days prior to the meeting date. Schools Forum members will access agendas via the website and will be prompted via an email alert once the agenda has been published.
13. The Council shall appoint a Clerk for the Schools' Forum who shall be in attendance at each meeting of the Forum and will take minutes. The Clerk will also prepare and send out agendas to members and receive all apologies for absences and record absences without notice.
14. The Clerk will place the **agreed** minutes of the meetings on the Council's website and they will also be included on the schools' bulletins' when available.
15. Each group of Schools Members will agree two named substitutes and provide this information to the Clerk. The Clerk should be advised of the attendance of a substitute in advance of the meeting and the Agenda for the meeting could be emailed to named substitutes in this instance.
16. Notices of appointments, nominations, substitutes, resignations and similar membership information relating to the membership of the Forum must be given to the Clerk in writing.
17. Where an urgent item/proposal needs to be considered in advance of a meeting, the Forum may be consulted via email.
18. For decision making purposes, each Forum member will be entitled to one vote on all matters put to the vote, other than matters relating to the funding formula in which case only schools members (mainstream schools, academies, special schools and PRUs) and representatives of the PVI sector will be able to vote. In the case of an equal number of votes for and against a proposal, the Chair shall have a second or casting vote.
19. The Schools Forum may convene various task and finish sub groups to look at specific topics for discussion and consultation and to report back with outcomes and recommendations. The membership of any sub group is to be agreed by Schools Forum.

Items for Forum Discussion

The Forum will discuss and be consulted upon the following matters:-

20. Consultation of School Funding Formula
 - a) The Council shall consult the Forum on 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 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, and the financial effect of any such change.

- b) Consultation shall take place in sufficient time to allow the views expressed to be taken into account in the determination of the Council's formula and in the initial determination of schools' budget shares before the beginning of the financial year.

21. Consultation on Contracts

The Council shall 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 Council's schools budget where the estimated value of the proposed contract is not less than the threshold which applies to the authority for that proposed contract, pursuant to regulation 8 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006.

22. Consultation of Financial Issues

The Council shall consult the Forum annually in respect of its 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) prospective revisions to the authority's scheme for the financing of schools; and
- e) administrative arrangements for the allocation of central government grants paid to schools via the authority.

23. Consultation on Other Matters

The Council may consult the Forum on such other matters concerning the funding of schools as they see fit.

The Forum shall also have the following powers:

- a) to agree to the level of school specific contingency at the beginning of each year;
- b) to agree arrangements for combining elements of the centrally retained Schools Budget with elements of other Council and other agencies' budgets to create a combined children's services budget, in circumstances where there is a clear benefit for schools and pupils in doing so;
- c) **in exceptional circumstances only:** to recommend changes to the Council's funding formula subject to approval by the Education Funding Agency.