

Title of meeting:	Schools Forum
Date of meeting:	18 December 2013
Subject:	School Forum Constitution
Report from:	Julian Wooster, Director of Children's and Adults Services
Report by:	Richard Webb, Finance Manager for Children's Services
Wards affected:	All Wards
Key decision:	No
Full Council decision:	No

1. Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to seek Schools Forum approval of the revised constitution attached at Appendix 1. The amendments to the constitution reflect the changes announced by the Government in June 2013, as part of the 2014-15 continued school funding changes, together with the expected good practice contained within the 'School Forums: operational and good practice guide – for local authorities and members of Schools Forum', published by the DfE in October 2013.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Schools Forum approve the revised constitution attached at Appendix 1.

3. Background

- 3.1. In October 2013, Schools Forum approved the current constitution, which was amended to reflect the changes introduced as part of the governments implementation of the new school funding arrangements.
- 3.2. The Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012, which came into force on 1st October 2012, set out how the membership of schools forums should be constituted, the requirements relating to the meetings of the schools forum and their proceedings and financial issues on which forums must be consulted.

3.3. This proposals contained within this report, are intended to update the Schools Forum constitution, to reflect the changes announced by the Government in June 2013, as part of the 2014-15 continued school funding changes, together with the expected good practice contained within the ‘*School Forums: operational and good practice guide – for local authorities and members of Schools Forum*’, published by the DfE in October 2013.

4. Proposed Changes

4.1. The membership structure is required to be reviewed regularly to ensure appropriate representation is maintained; particularly where there is a change in the number of academies in the city.

4.2. Whilst there is no specified maximum or minimum size required for a Schools Forum, it is recommended that the membership should kept to a reasonable size. Currently there are 24 membership positions and the changes proposed below, will increase the membership number by 1 to a total of 25.

School Members

4.3. The School and Academy 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 must be broadly proportionate to the pupil numbers in each category.

4.4. Since the last constitution was approved by Schools Forum, there have been 7 Academy conversions, (2 Special School, 1 Secondary School and 4 Primary Schools). The table below summarises the pupil numbers across the categories as at 1st December:

Category	Number on Roll*	%
Maintained Primary	12,881	55
Maintained Secondary	7,233	31
Maintained Special	267	1
Academies	2,935	13
TOTAL	23,212	100

* Primary and Secondary pupil numbers are based on the October 12 census, whilst Special Schools are based on the agreed funded places as at April 13.

4.5. It is therefore proposed that the Academy representatives are increased from 1 to 2 members. There are no proposed changes to the other categories of School Members at this time, however if the number of Academy conversions increases over the coming year, then maintained school representatives may need to be reduced to maintain the proportionate representation.

4.6. A maintained school member must stand down from membership of Schools Forum if their school converts to Academy status, as the member will no longer occupy the office by which he or she became eligible for election.

4.7. The constitution has been updated to clarify that Academy Members must be elected by the proprietor bodies within the Local Authority area. Academy Members are not restricted to principals, senior staff or governors as they are there to represent the proprietor bodies. The proprietors will also determine their election processes.

Non-School Members

4.8. Non School Members may number no more than a third of a Schools Forum total membership.

4.9. In June 2013, The DfE published the '2014-15 Revenue Funding Arrangements – Operational Information for Local Authorities'. Within this document it was announced that Schools Forums will be required to include one elected representative from an institution (other than a school or academy) providing education to 16-19 years old, and that this will replace the requirement for a representative from the 14-19 partnership.

4.10. The providers from which the 16-19 representative must be elected from includes: Further Education (FE) and sixth form colleges and other institutions that specialise in special education needs (SEN) and learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) provision, where 20% or more of their students reside in the local authority area.

4.11. The attached constitution has been updated to reflect these requirements. The 14-19 Partnership position is currently vacant.

Voting Procedures

4.12. The voting procedures have also been updated to clarify the voting arrangements in respect of the items that can be removed from maintained schools budget shares (i.e. items that can be de-delegated).

5. Reasons for recommendations

The changes proposed within this paper are required to ensure that operation of the Schools Forum in Portsmouth is compliant with the relevant regulations and good practice guidance issued by the Department for Education.

In particular it is necessary to regularly review the Schools Forum membership to ensure that it appropriate representation is made, particularly where there is a change in the number of Academies in the city.

6. Equality impact assessment (EIA)

This report does not require an Equality impact Assessment as the proposal does not have any impact upon a particular equalities group.

7. Head of Legal Services’ comments

The proposed revised constitution reflects the requirements of the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

8. Head of Finance’s comments

There are no financial implications contained within this report.

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 Signed by:

Appendices:

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
2014-15 Revenue Funding Arrangements: Operational Information for Local Authorities, June 2013	DfE Website
Schools Forums: operational and good practice guide – for local authorities and members of Schools Forums, October 2013	DfE Website
The Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012	www.opsi.gov.uk

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

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 Signed by: