

SCHOOLS FORUM
13 September 2012

SCHOOLS FORUM CONSTITUTION
Director of Corporate Services

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 To advise of changes to the Schools Forum Constitution following the publication by the Secretary of State *School funding reform: next steps towards a fairer system* on 26 March 2012.

2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 In the *School funding reform: next steps towards a fairer system* there is reference to Improved Schools Forum arrangements and the need for local decision-making to operate in a consistently fair and effective way and in consultation with schools and academies. Therefore the legislation relating to Schools Forums has been reviewed and there is a proposal to revoke and replace the Schools Forums Regulations 2010.
- 2.2 For 2013-14 the following steps will be taken to amend the Schools Forums Regulations as stated below:
- i. the requirement to have a minimum of 15 people on a Forum will be removed
 - ii. other local authority attendees will be restricted from participating in meetings unless they are a relevant Lead Member, Director of Children's Services (or their representative), Chief Finance Officer (or their representative), or are providing specific financial or technical advice (including presenting a paper to the Forum) (*regulation 8(3)*).
 - iii. the voting arrangements will be restricted by allowing only schools and Academy members (and the private, voluntary and independent sector - PVI members) to vote on the funding formulae (*regulation 8(11)*). Additionally, draft regulation 8(12) covers the items we have announced which will be subject to de-delegation. These will be specified in the finance regulations and only the relevant maintained school members of the forum will be able to vote.
 - iv. local authorities will be required to publish Forum papers, minutes and decisions promptly on their websites (*regulation 8(13)*).
 - v. Forums will be required to hold public meetings, as is the case with other Council Committees (*regulation 8(1)*).
- 2.3 Education Funding Authority (EFA) observer status will be given at School Forum meetings (*regulation 8(3f)*) with the right to participate in discussions, enabling the EFA to support the local process and to provide a national perspective.
- As a result of other funding changes, there are proposals to:
1. Include Pupil Referral Units as a separate group among schools members, to reflect their receipt of delegated budgets from April 2013 (*regulation 5(2)(e)*)
 2. Remove the requirement for local authorities to consult schools forums annually about arrangements for free school meals and insurance as these are to be allocated through the formula in future (*current regulations 10(1)(d)* and *10(1)(f)*).
- 2.4 To summarise:
- Regulations 3 to 8 provide for the constitution of a schools forum, including the election of schools members, the election or selection of Academies members

and the appointment of non-schools members to the schools forum, their meetings and proceedings.

- Regulations 9 to 11 require the authority to consult their schools forum before entering into certain types of contract and annually in relation to a range of financial issues and the governing bodies of schools maintained by them to be informed of any such consultation.
- Regulations 12 and 13 require the authority to pay the expenses of their schools forum out of the schools budget and the reasonable expenses of its members.

2.5 A revised Schools Forum Constitution is attached incorporating these changes which are expected to be confirmed in October 2012. Officers will take the necessary steps to appoint a PRU representative once the new regulations come into force.

3 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

3.1 There are no issues.

4 STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

4.1 There are no issues.

Background Papers

School funding reform: next steps towards a fairer system

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