

Central
Bedfordshire
Council
Priory House
Monks Walk
Chicksands,
Shefford SG17 5TQ



**TO EACH MEMBER OF THE
CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM**

20 January 2010

Dear Member

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM - MONDAY 25 JANUARY 2010

Further to the Agenda and papers for the above meeting, previously circulated, please find attached the following report that was marked 'as to follow':-

16. Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum Membership

Also attached is a summary of the agenda items.

Should you have any queries regarding the above please contact Sandra Hobbs on Tel: 0300 300 5257.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Sandra Hobbs'.

Sandra Hobbs
Democratic Services Officer
email: sandra.hobbs@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

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Meeting: School Admissions Forum
Date: 25 January 2010
Subject: Schools Forum Membership
Report of: Anita Lewis, Portfolio Holder for Children, Families and Learning
Summary: The report proposes to recommend amending the terms of reference of the Schools Forum to recognise that where a representative is Chairman of the Forum, there is a need for another person from the same class of representatives to sit on the Forum for the duration of the Chairman's term of office. It also suggests a process to enable minor membership amendments to the Schools Forum's terms of reference to be made without recourse to the Executive, so long as the Forum has first approved them.

Advising Officer: Edwina Grant, Director of Children, Families and Learning
Contact Officer: Mel Peaston, Interim Committee Services Manager
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Executive
Key Decision No
**Reason for urgency/
exemption from call-in
(if appropriate)** Not applicable

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The report sets out a proposal which supports the Council's priority regarding educating, protecting and providing opportunities for children and young people.

Financial:

Financial implications are minimal involving only seeking the nomination of an additional representative who would then attend meetings of the Schools Forum.

Legal:

There are no legal implications to the proposal.

Risk Management:

There are no risk management implications.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

There are no staffing implications.

Equalities/Human Rights:

The proposal contained in the report seeks to ensure that all groups on the School Forum are able to be fully represented.

Community Safety:

There are no community safety implications.

Sustainability:

There are no sustainability implications

Summary of Overview and Scrutiny Comments:

- This matter has not been considered by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Schools Forum agrees:-

- 1. To RECOMMEND to the Executive amendment of the Schools Forum Terms of Reference as follows:**
 - (a) Insert a new item 6 after item 4 and re-number the matters which follow;**
 - (b) New item 6 to read as follows: an additional person from the class of membership from which the Chairman is drawn may be appointed for the duration of the Chairman's term of office.**
- 2. To RECOMMEND to the Executive delegation to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Director of Children, Families and Learning, minor amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Schools Forum relating to membership after they have been approved by the Forum itself.**

Reason for Recommendation):

This proposal is in recognition of the special position of the Chairman whose duty to expedite the business of meetings may conflict with their representational role. It would also enable minor amendments to the membership arrangements which the Forum had already agreed to be actioned, without the delay of submitting a recommendation for the Executive to consider.

Executive Summary

1. Currently the Terms of Reference of the Schools Forum (attached at Appendix A) provide for the number of representatives from various classes of representation, for example Lower School Headteachers, Lower School Governors, etc.
2. The terms of reference also provide for a Chairman and Vice-Chairman, each to be appointed annually.
3. A primary duty of the Chairman is to expedite the business of the meeting. This may conflict with their wish to represent the interest of their class of representation.
4. In view of this possibility it is proposed that provision be made in the Terms of Reference for an additional person to be appointed from the same class of representation as the Chairman. That person would be appointed for the duration of the period until the next Chairman was appointed.
5. This would enable full representation of all classes of representatives at the meeting.
6. In practical terms, this would mean that after the appointment of the Chairman each year a further representative would be sought to be a member of the Schools Forum. This person would come from the same class of representation from which the Chairman was drawn. The person would remain on the Forum until the end of the Chairman's term of office.
7. The Chairman holds office for a year but may be re-appointed by the Forum. In this event the person who was appointed for the duration of the Chairman's term of office could remain on the Forum for a further year.

Terms of Reference

8. The Executive agreed at its meeting on 12 May, 2009 when it approved the School Admissions Forum's terms of reference that the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and the Director of Children, Families and Learning, be given delegated power to approve any minor amendments to the Admissions Forum's membership arrangements where these have been recommended by the Forum itself.

9. There is no such delegation in place for the Schools Forum. A similar delegation by the Executive for the Schools Forum would enable minor amendments to be made to its membership arrangements without need for consideration by the Executive.
9. The Forum may therefore wish to recommend to the Executive that such a delegation be put in place.

Conclusion and Next Steps

10. If the Forum agrees to the proposals detailed above, any future minor amendments to the membership aspects of the Forum's Terms of Reference agreed by the Forum could be put in place once the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Director of Children, Families and Learning, had exercised her delegated power to approve them.
11. The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and is in support of the proposal.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum: Terms of Reference

Background Papers: (open to public inspection)

none

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

**CONSTITUTION
and
TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Definitions

The Forum = the Schools Forum for the area covered by Central Bedfordshire Council

The Council = Central Bedfordshire Council in its role as Local Education Authority

1. The Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum (the Forum) will consist of 17 Members made up of 12 school Members and 5 non school Members made up as follows:-

School Members (12)

- 2 Lower School Headteachers
- 2 Lower School Governors
- 1 Nursery School Headteacher
- 2 Middle School Headteachers
- 1 Middle School Governor
- 2 Upper School Headteachers
- 1 Upper School Governor
- 1 Special School Headteacher

Non School Members (5)

- 1 Roman Catholic Diocese Representative
- 1 Church of England Diocese Representative
- 1 Private, Voluntary or Independent sector Provider Representative
- 1 local authority 14-19 partnership Representative
- 1 Trades Union Representative

Observers (non-voting)

- The Council's Executive Member for Education (see 4. below)
- A representative of the Learning and Skills Council
- A representative of the governing bodies of any academies as and when they are established.

2. Forum Members will stand for three years at which time elections will take place for school Members and nominations will be sought for the non-school Members. Should a resignation be tendered from the Forum, an election will be held for the vacancy which will ensure that the representational balance is maintained. Each representative group (Head Teachers and Governors by phase) will be responsible for the method by which they elect and nominate school Member representatives.
3. The Council will maintain a written record of the composition of the Schools Forum including the method by which representatives are elected or nominated. The Council will inform all schools of the membership of the Forum and will provide details of any non-school Member appointed to the Forum within one month of appointment. This will be carried out when constituting the Forum and after the appointment of any new or replacement Member.
4. Elected Members who hold an executive role within the Council and officers who have a role in strategic resource management of the authority are unable to be Members of the Forum (these restrictions do not apply to officers employed as teachers or who work for, and those who directly manage, a service which provides education to individual children and/or advice to schools on learning and behavioural matters). Despite these restrictions, officers and Members may attend and speak at Forum meetings. The Council's Executive Member for Education will be invited to attend meetings of the Forum as an observer. Council officers will support meetings of the Forum.
5. The quorum for the Forum is 7 Members.
6. Substitute Members will be allowed only after approval by the Forum.
7. The meetings of the Forum will be open to the public.
8. Members of the Forum are required to make declarations of interest on appointment and when, for example, the Forum is considering matters relating to contracts.
9. Meetings of the Forum will be called allowing at least two weeks notice. Supporting papers will be sent out at least five days before the meeting.
10. 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. Meetings will be recorded for the purposes of the accuracy of the minutes only.
11. All schools and associated groups will be provided with the minutes of all meetings of the Forum and of action taken by the Council on Forum advice.

12. Claiming of expenses for Forum Members will be in accordance with the Forum expenses policy document and claims will be made on the specific claim forms and duly authorised.
13. A budget of £10,000 will be available for each financial year for costs associated with the operation of the Forum e.g. hiring a venue, expenses and clerking costs. This will be a charge against the Council's Local Schools Budget and retained centrally. The level of the budget will be reviewed annually.

Items for Forum Discussion

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

Consultation on School funding formula

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.

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.

Consultation on Contracts

The Council shall, at least one month prior to the issue of invitations to tender, 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 Authority's schools budget where either

- a) the estimated value of the proposed public services contract is not less than the specific threshold which applies to the authority in pursuance of Regulation 7(1) of the Public Services Contracts Regulations 1993; or
- b) the estimated value of the proposed public supply contract is not less than the specific threshold which applies to the authority in pursuance of Regulation 7 (2) of the Public Supply Contracts Regulations 1995.

Consultation on 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 education;
- d) arrangements for insurance
- e) prospective revisions to the authority's scheme for the financing of schools;
- f) administrative arrangements for the allocation of central government grants paid to schools via the authority; and
- g) arrangements for free school meals

Consultation on other matters

The Council shall consult the Forum on arrangements for

- a) the mainstreaming of Teachers' pay grants into the Council's school funding formula; and
- b) updating non-AWPU data within the multi-year budget cycle.

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

15. The Forum shall also have the following powers:

- a) to agree minor changes to the operation of the minimum funding guarantee, where the outcome would otherwise be anomalous, and where not more than 20% of the Authority's schools are affected. Changes affecting more than 20% of schools will have to be approved by the Secretary of State;
- b) to agree to the level of school specific contingency at the beginning of each year;
- c) 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;
- d) in exceptional circumstances only:

- i. to agree an increase in the amount of expenditure the Council can retain from its Schools Budget above that allowed for in the regulations;
 - ii. to agree an increase in centrally retained expenditure within the Schools Budget once a multi-year funding period has begun; and
 - iii. to agree changes to the Council's funding formula once it has been announced prior to the start of a multi-year funding period.
16. Should a judgment be necessary on whether a matter falls within the remit of the Forum, for example whether an item has financial implications, the Council's Head of Service for Finance and Head of Service for Learning and Schools and the Chair of the Forum shall jointly make the necessary determination.
17. There will be a minimum of 3 meetings per year.
18. For decision-making purposes each Forum member will be entitled to 1 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. Where an urgent proposal needs to be considered in advance of a meeting, the Forum may be consulted via post or e-mail.
20. The Constitution and Terms of Reference of the Forum will be reviewed annually.
21. A Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected by the Forum from its voting membership annually or at the first meeting following any resignation. A voting Member who is also an elected Member or officer of the Council may not be elected 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.

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