

## **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 21 Members made up of 12 school members and 5 non school members and 4 Academy representatives 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 Governors  
1 Upper School Headteachers  
1 Upper School Governors  
1 Special School Headteacher  
1 Academy Lower School Representative  
1 Academy Middle School Representative  
2 Academy Upper School Representatives  
1 PRU representative

#### **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

#### **Observer (non-voting)**

- the Council's Executive Member for Children's Services

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 (Headteachers 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 Executive Member for Children's Services will be invited to attend meetings of the Forum as an observer.
  - The following Officers are eligible to attend and speak at Forum meetings:-
    - Director of Children's Services or their representative
    - Chief Finance Officer or their representative
    - Persons invited by the Forum to present financial or technical advice
    - A presenter of a report.
  - Council officers will support meetings of the Forum.
5. The quorum for the Forum is 9 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.

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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 £3,000 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 authority must consult the Schools Forum on the Terms of any proposed contracts for supplies and services (being a contract paid or to be paid out of the Authority'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 at least one month prior to the issue of Invitation to Tender.

#### Consultation on financial issues

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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 4 meetings per year in accordance with the Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012, however there will usually be 5 meetings per year.

18. Working groups to discuss specific issues and to produce draft advice and decisions for the Forum to consider, may be set up with the Forum's agreement.

19. The Regulations provide that a Schools Forum may determine its own voting procedures, as detailed in 20 below, save that:-

• voting on the funding formula is limited to the specific members and PVI representatives

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• voting on de-delegation will be limited to the specific primary and secondary (middle and upper) phase of school members.

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20. 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.

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21. Where an urgent proposal needs to be considered in advance of a meeting, the Forum may be consulted via post or e-mail.

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22. The Constitution and Terms of Reference of the Forum will be reviewed annually.

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23. 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

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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.

January 2013