

Agenda Item: 12

Meeting: Schools Forum

Date: 29 June 2009

Subject: Schools Forum Membership

Report of: Assistant Director Learning and School Support

Summary: The report (a) reminds members of the expiry of their current term of office on 31 August 2009 and the need for the Council to seek nominations to the Forum for a new three-year term; and (b) proposes extending members' current terms of office until 31 December 2009, to enable the required nomination and election process to take place during the autumn term.

Contact Officer: Rob Mills, Committee Services Manager

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. That the Forum notes the Council's intention:**
 - (a) to seek fresh nominations for membership of the Schools Forum for a new term beginning 1 January 2010 and expiring on either 31 August 2012 or 31 December 2012; and**
 - (b) meanwhile to extend members' current terms of office until 31 December 2009 to enable the required nomination and election process to take place during the autumn term 2009.**

1. The Schools Forum was appointed in November 2008 in accordance with the membership structure set out in the Forum's constitution and terms of reference, as approved by the Executive of the then Shadow Central Bedfordshire Council. To ensure as much continuity of experience as possible, nominations were invited direct from those members of the former Bedfordshire Schools Forum who represented schools in Central Bedfordshire. Where there were vacancies, nominations were invited either by open invitation to the schools themselves, or from representatives of the different schools groups. As none of the vacant places was contested, no election process was required and all places were filled in time for the Forum's first meeting in December.
2. Given that the Forum was established as part of the transition process to the new unitary authority, all appointments were made initially until 31 August 2009, on the basis that nominations would then be invited for election for a full three-year term, in compliance with the relevant regulations and the government's best practice guidance. The current membership is attached.

3. In view of the impending summer holidays, we propose to follow a fresh nomination process during the autumn term for the Forum's membership, which will entail seeking nominations for all the 'schools members' (head teachers and governors) from each of the schools in the particular group. If any of the places are contested, an election process will be required, based on best practice. As before, nominations will be invited from the relevant bodies for the 'non-schools members'. The aim will be to confirm the new appointments at the earliest opportunity, although the timing of this will depend on whether any of the places are contested.
4. As the current appointments have been notified as expiring on 31 August 2009, we propose to extend the term of office of all members who wish to continue until 31 December 2009, to allow time for completion of the process. New terms of office will then run from 1 January 2010. The Forum may have a view on whether it would be better that they expire on 31 December 2012, or earlier on 31 August 2012 before the start of the new school year.
5. The only exception will be the appointment of Councillor Mrs Anita Lewis, appointed last November as a governor representing middle schools, who is now the Council's Portfolio Holder for Children's Services. The Portfolio Holder may attend the Forum's meetings as an observer but cannot be a voting member. This position will remain vacant until filled in the autumn.