

CONSTITUTION OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

INTRODUCTION

- 1) The Schools Forum for Leicestershire County Council is established by virtue of Section 47A of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 (as amended by the Education Act 2002). It also operates under the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012, which set out the legal parameters for Schools Forums and which came into force on 1st October 2012.
- 2) The Schools Forum for the Authority has a legal existence but is not a corporate body. Its functions are a combination of an advisory and consultative body and a decision-making body on certain proposals presented to it by the Local Authority.
- 3) The Schools Finance (England) Regulations charge Schools Forums with taking some decisions on the Schools Budget.

FUNCTIONS

- 4) The Local Authority is required to consult the Schools Forum on the following matters:
 - a) Amendments to the schools funding formula, for which voting is restricted by the exclusion of non-schools' members except for PVI representatives.
 - b) Any proposed exclusions from the Minimum Funding Guarantee for application to the Department for Education
 - c) Any proposed contract for supplies or services being:
 - i) a contract to be paid from the Schools Budget; and
 - ii) the estimated value of which is not less than the specific threshold which applies to Leicestershire County Council in pursuance of Regulation 7(1) of the Public Services Contracts Regulations 1993 (c), or Regulation 7(2) of the Public Supply Contracts Regulations 1995(d).

Consultation on such items must take place at least one month prior to the issue of invitations to tender.
 - d) There must also be an annual consultation on financial issues relating to:
 - 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) Administration arrangements for the allocation of central government grants paid to schools via the Authority.
- 5) The Schools Forum has decision making powers in respect of the following:
- a) De-delegation for mainstream schools for prescribed services to be provided centrally:
 - a) Contingencies
 - b) Administration of free school meals
 - c) Insurance
 - d) Licences and subscriptions
 - e) Staff costs – supply cover
 - f) Support for minority ethnic pupils / under achieving groups
 - g) Behaviour support services
 - h) Library and museum services
 - b) Retention of budgets to meet central costs up to the value of the 2012/13 budget and where expenditure is committed:
 - a) Admissions
 - b) Servicing of the Schools Forum
 - c) Carbon reduction commitment
 - d) Capital expenditure funded from revenue
 - e) Contribution to combined budgets
 - f) Schools Budget centrally funded termination of employment costs
 - g) Schools Budget funded prudential borrowing costs
 - c) Authorising a reduction in the Schools Budget in order to fund a deficit arising in central expenditure carried forward from a previous funding period.
 - d) Amendments to the Scheme for Financing Schools with the exception of revisions directed by the Secretary of State
6. The Forum may be consulted on any aspect of the management of school funding and may commission work to scrutinise aspects of schools funding.

MEMBERSHIP

7. The Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012 lay out parameters within which the Local Authority determines the membership, this membership will be reviewed annually to ensure that membership is fully representative of different phases of schools. The Leicestershire County
-

Council has decided that the membership of the Leicestershire Schools Forum shall be made up as follows:

21 Schools Members – who are “elected”.

- a) Two governors of maintained primary schools
- b) Three headteachers of maintained primary schools
- c) Two governors of academy primary schools
- d) Three headteachers of academy primary schools
- e) 1 governor / headteacher of maintained nursery school
- f) Four governors of secondary academy schools
- g) Four headteachers of secondary academy schools
- h) One headteacher / governor of special maintained school
- i) One headteacher / governor of special academy school

6 Non-school Members – who are “appointed”.

- j) One representative of the Catholic Diocese
 - k) One representative of the Church of England Diocese
 - l) One representative of private, voluntary, and independent early years providers
 - m) One representative of pupil referral unit
 - n) One representative of Trade Unions
- 8) The “Schools Members” represent schools and must, to accord with the Regulations, be in some way elected. In the case of the Leicestershire Schools Forum, the following arrangements will apply:

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Category a) e), | - elected via the Association of Leicestershire Governors. |
| Category b) | - elected via the Leicestershire Association of Primary Heads |
| Category d) | - elected via the Leicestershire Association of Secondary Heads |
| Category g), h) | - elected via the Leicestershire Association of Special School Heads |
| Category c), f) | - elected via Leicestershire Academies |
| Category m) | - nominated by the pupil referral unit. |

In relation to the non-Schools members, the following arrangements will apply:

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Category i) and j) | - Appointed by the County Council on the nomination of the relevant Diocesan |
|--------------------|--|
-

	Authority.
Category k)	Appointed by the County Council on the nomination of the Childcare Sector group.
Category m)	Appointed by the County council on the nomination of the Joint Consultative Committee.

All newly elected / nominated members shall receive an induction into the role and functions of the Forum prior to taking an active involvement in the business undertaken at Forum.

VOTING RIGHTS

9. Each member will be entitled to a vote but will be subject to the following restrictions:
 - a) Only school members and PVI representatives may vote on issues affecting the funding formula
 - b) Voting for items of de-delegation will be limited to the specific primary and secondary schools' members.

EXECUTIVE/CABINET MEMBER

- 10) The Lead Member and the Cabinet Support Member for Children and Young People's Service on the County Council's Cabinet will have the right to attend meetings. He / she will be entitled to speak at the meeting but will not have any voting rights.

ATTENDANCE OF LOCAL AUTHORITY OFFICERS AT MEETINGS

- 11) Attendance at meetings and the right of officers to speak at meetings is limited to:
 - a) Director of Children's Services or their representative.
 - b) Chief Financial Officer or their representative.
 - c) Any person invited by Schools Forum to provide financial or technical advice.
 - d) Any person presenting a paper to Schools Forum but their ability to speak is limited to the paper that they are presenting.

SUBSTITUTES

- 12) Each body electing or nominating representatives will be entitled to maintain one member who is able to act as a substitute for Schools Forum Members.
-

Substitute members may attend meetings of the Leicestershire Schools Forum, Substitutes may attend meeting to accompany their elected member, in this capacity substitutes are not entitled to speak or vote at the meeting. Substitutes, when actively representing their elective group, will be entitled to speak at the meeting and have voting rights.

OBSERVORS

- 13) The secretary of State may appoint an observer to attend and speak to Schools Forum meetings. It is expected that this will be fulfilled by a representative of the Education Funding Agency (EFA).

INFORMING SCHOOLS OF MEMBERSHIP OF FORUM

- 14) The Leicestershire County Council must inform all its maintained schools of the details of any non-school members appointed to the Forum, within 1 month of such an appointment being made. As good practice, the Authority will inform all such schools of the whole membership of the Forum, and of any subsequent changes.

TERM OF OFFICE AND NON-ATTENDANCE

- 15) Members will be appointed for a maximum of 4 years.

The Local Authority may end the appointment of any Forum member before the expiry of his / her term of membership if the member concerned ceases to hold the office by virtue of which he / she became eligible for appointment to the Forum.

Where any member of the Forum is absent for three consecutive meetings, without what the Forum considers to be acceptable reasons, membership of the Forum will cease. The Clerk to the Forum will write to that member's constituent group, informing them of the cessation of the individual's membership, and asking them to elect a replacement for the position on the Forum.

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

- 16) The Leicestershire Schools Forum will meet on a minimum of four occasions per year, of which two will be in the Autumn Term of the academic year. Other meetings above the minimum will be arranged at the request of the Forum.

QUORUM

- 17) The Schools Forum must have a quorum of 40% of the total number of Forum members being present at each meeting i.e. ten members. If a meeting is inquorate, it may proceed and give its views to the Local
-

Authority, but it cannot take decisions. There is no provision requiring at least one member from each of the sectors to be present. Where substitute members are present, they shall count towards the members present to decide on whether the meeting is quorate.

ACCESS TO THE MEETING

- 18) The meetings of the Leicestershire Schools Forum will be open to the public. Access to information will be through the Schools Forum meetings section of the Leicestershire County Council website.

The attendance of observers or other persons invited by the Forum, will not be precluded, if the Forum agrees to extend that facility to representatives of other groups, or to individuals.

The decision as to whether the persons should be invited to attend will be made at the preceding meeting of the Forum, or where not practicable, by the Chair of the Forum between meetings.

It will be a matter for the Chair of the Forum to decide if such observers or invitees should be invited to address the Forum. Such persons would not have any voting rights.

CHAIR/VICE-CHAIR OF THE FORUM

- 19) The Forum shall elect a Chair and Vice Chair from amongst its members. This will be done on an annual basis, at the first meeting of the Forum held in the Autumn Term.

The term of office for Chair and Vice-Chair will not exceed 3 years.

To be elected, a candidate must receive more than half the number of votes cast. Where there are more than two candidates, and no candidate receives the required number of votes, the candidate with the least votes in the first ballot will be removed, and a second ballot held.

- 20) The Chair will retain his/her right to vote but will not have a second or casting vote.

APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUPS

- 21) The Schools Forum may establish working groups when the Forum deems them appropriate. Where such Working Groups are established:

- a) The membership will be decided by the Schools Forum.
 - b) Membership of such groups may include persons who are not themselves members of the Forum.
 - c) The Working Group will have no individual right to take decisions. All advice should be formally passed to the LA through the Schools Forum and decisions taken must be undertaken Schools Forum as a whole.
-

URGENT BUSINESS

- 22) In the event of urgent business, the Local Authority may:
- a) Call an unscheduled meeting
 - b) Communicate the issue through email to all members. Responses will be collated by the Local Authority and make recommendations to the Chair. Any decision would be reported to the next meeting of the Schools Forum together with the process taken, the role of the Chair in that decision and the reason for the urgency.

CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

- 23) The conduct of meetings will follow the rules/standing orders which are appropriate to the County Council as a whole.

CODE OF CONDUCT

- 24) The conduct of Members at meetings will follow the principles laid down by the County Council to govern the conduct of the County Councils' Elected Members as defined in Part 5A – Members' Code of Conduct of the Constitution of Leicestershire County Council (Appendix A).

Members shall declare at the commencement of each meeting, whether they have any personal, or individual school interest in the business to be undertaken at Forum and abstain from any subsequent voting process.

Personal interest is deemed to be a decision that affects an individual school, and not a decision that has an equal application for all or a specific group of schools.

OPERATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

- 25) The operational understanding defines the expectations of the LA and Forum Members in undertaking the business of the Forum as per Appendix B.

SETTING OF AGENDA

- 26) The Chair of the Forum shall consult with the LA's lead officer to draw up the agenda for the next meeting. Where a request is received from any two members of the Forum to place an item on the agenda, it shall be placed on the agenda of the next meeting.
-

DECISIONS OF THE FORUM

- 27) The Clerk to the Forum shall ensure that all such advice and decisions, if appropriate, are submitted to the Cabinet or other Committee of the County Council.

In addition, in the course of the Summer Term, a report will be submitted to the County Council's Cabinet on behalf of the Schools Forum, summarising the issues on which the Forum has been consulted in the course of that academic year, the advice given and the decisions taken.

- 28) The Forum shall, as soon as reasonably possible, via its Clerk, inform the governing bodies of all schools maintained by Leicestershire County Council, of all recommendations made to the Local Authority in relation to issues on which the Forum has been consulted.

This will be done by placing details on the Leicestershire County Council website.

MEMBERS' EXPENSES

- 29) Under the terms of the Regulations, the Local Education Authority is required to pay the reasonable expenses of members of the Forum, incurred in connection with attendance at meetings of the Forum. Details of the reimbursement of expenses and expenses claim forms may be obtained from the Clerk to the Forum.

- Supply cover
 - Travel expenses
 - Loss of earnings
 - Childcare costs – where these would not otherwise have been incurred.
-

LEICESTERSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

Leicestershire County Council has adopted ten principles to govern the code of conduct of members and co-opted members, these principles have been adopted and will be applied to the conduct of Schools Forum members.

The ten principles are:

1. Selflessness

Members should serve only the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage on any person or individual school.

2. Honesty and Integrity

Members should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned, should not behave improperly and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.

3. Objectivity

Members should take decisions on merit.

4. Accountability

Members should be accountable for their actions and the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities and should co-operate fully and honestly with any scrutiny appropriate to their role.

5. Openness

Members should be as open as possible about their actions and should be prepared to give reasons for those actions.

6. Personal Judgement

Members should take account of the views of their elective / nominating bodies to reach conclusions on the issues before them and act in accordance with those conclusions.

7. Respect for Others

Members should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. They should respect the impartiality and integrity of the Local Authority's officers.

8. Duty to Uphold the Law

Members should uphold the law, and on all occasions, act in accordance with the trust that their elective / nominating group is entitled to place in them.

9. Stewardship

Members should do whatever they are able to ensure that the Local Authority uses Dedicated Schools Grant prudently and in accordance with regulations.

10. Leadership

Members should promote and support these principles by leadership, and by example, should act in a way that secures or preserves schools' confidence.

LEICESTERSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM OPERATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

The purpose of the operational understanding is to define the expectations of, and responsibilities of the Local Authority and Schools Forum Members in undertaking the business of the Schools Forum.

Local Authority

The Local Authority will:

- 1) Ensure that reports and other documents to be discussed at Forum meetings to be published 1 week in advance of meetings and minutes within 1 week of the meeting.
- 2) Ensure that all Forum meetings will be supported by appropriate senior officers relevant to the items to be discussed at the meeting.
- 3) Provide a pre meeting briefing for the Forum Chair and Vice Chair in the week preceding the meeting.
- 4) Publish reports, other relevant documents, and minutes of meetings on the County Councils' website.
- 5) Ensure that Forum is informed of any proposed changes in legislation that will impact upon the work of the Forum.
- 6) Provide appropriate training and induction to new Forum Members and provide appropriate on-going training to Forum Members to ensure they are able to effectively discharge their responsibilities.
- 7) Ensure that in presenting formal budget proposals for approval that the meeting is a single agenda to ensure sufficient time for discussion of proposals.
- 8) Keep Forum informed of strategic developments and service issues which may result in a request for additional funding where the financial impact would fall to be met from the Schools Budget.
- 9) Facilitate and support workshops and working groups necessary to support both the consultative and decision-making responsibilities of Forum.

Schools Forum Members

Schools Forum members will:

- 1) Follow the principles as set down in the Members' Code of Conduct.
 - 2) Ensure that any personal interest in any item for discussion at Forum meetings is declared at the beginning of all meetings. Personal interest is deemed to be a discussion or decision that affects an individual school, and not a decision that has an equal application for all or specific group(s) of schools.
-

- 3) Ensure that they are representative of, and present the views, of their elective / nominating group at meetings.
 - 4) Ensure that all reports and other papers tabled at meetings are reviewed prior to each individual meeting.
 - 5) Consider the needs of the whole educational community rather than advancing issues pertaining to a particular school phase or an individual school.
 - 6) Gather views and provide feedback to individual elective / nominated groups in advance of and after School Forum meetings.
 - 7) Are responsible to their elective groups for the feedback of items discussed at, and decisions taken by, School Forum.
 - 8) Identify any training requirements to the Local Authority to inform the Forum induction and training programme.
 - 9) Ensure, through the use of substitutes, that each elective / nominating group is represented at all meetings.
 - 10) Within their representative group, consider nominations for the Chair and Vice –Chair prior to the elections to this position held annually at the first meeting of the Forum at the commencement of the academic year.
-