Brighton & Hove Schools Forum
Terms of Reference

The terms of reference and procedures for the City of Brighton & Hove Schools Forum meet the requirements of legislation, are consistent with guidance issued by the Department for Education and are based on consultation with Headteachers, governors and other relevant groups.

This paper covers:

1. The Terms of Reference: Role and Function
2. Membership and Procedures
3. Management Arrangements
4. Reporting Procedures
5. Evaluation and Review

1. Terms of Reference: Role and Function

1.1 The role of the Schools Forum is to take decisions and to advise the Corporate Director of Children’s Services.

1.2 The Schools Forum makes decisions on the level of de-delegation of services (Exception 1) and also decides on centrally retained services (Exceptions 2, 3 and 4) as well as the Growth Fund. Should the Schools Forum not agree to a Local Authority proposal the Department for Education can be asked to adjudicate.

1.3 The Schools Forum is the approving body for Local Authority proposals to change its Scheme of Financial Management following the LA’s consultation with all governing bodies and headteachers within the Local Authority. Should the Forum not approve the Local Authority proposal the Department for Education can be asked to adjudicate.

1.4 The Schools Forum must be consulted about formula changes (including redistributions) that are proposed and, after consultation, decided by the Local Authority.

1.5 The Schools Forum is asked to give a view when the Local Authority proposes the terms of any proposed contract prior to an invitation to tender. The Schools Forum is also asked to give a view when the Local Authority proposes any exclusions from the Minimum Funding Guarantee, although the decisions for these are taken by the Department for Education.
1.6 The Local Authority will consult annually regarding formula change, contracts and a variety of financial issues relating to: arrangements for pupils with SEN; arrangements for use of PRU and EOTAS/Alternative Provision; arrangements for early years education; administrative arrangements for the allocation of central government grants. The Schools Forum will be asked for their views and will inform governing bodies of the relevant consultations being carried out.

1.7 The function of the Schools Forum is to receive and consider information on matters related to the funding of schools and services to schools, to consult those whom the members have been elected to represent and on this basis, provide advice to the Corporate Director of Children’s Services. The information may come from the Local Authority, from the Department for Education, from the strategic partnership boards or another source. The Schools Forum will disseminate to schools and other relevant bodies its findings, decisions and a summary of the advice which it provided.

1.8 A summary grid of the School Forum’s powers and responsibilities is attached to this document.

2. Membership and Procedures

2.1 Membership (Reviewed December 2016)

School Members (14)

Governors of Primary Schools 3
Headteachers of Primary Schools or their representatives 3
Governors of Secondary Schools 2
Headteachers of Secondary Schools or their representatives 2
Governors of Special Schools 1
Headteachers of Special Schools or their representatives 1
Headteachers of Nursery Schools or their representatives 1
Headteachers of PRU or representative 1

Academy Member (1)
Academies’ Representative 1

Non School Members (5)
PVI Representative 1
Representative of the Anglican Diocese 1
Representative of the Roman Catholic Diocese 1
Representative of the Teachers’ Trade Unions 1
Representative of 16-19 Institutions 1
Observers (4)
- Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership 1
- Non-Teaching Trade Union Representative 1
- Schools Business Forum Representative 1
- EFA Representative 1

2.2 Period of Membership

The Local Authority appoints and determines the length of office for schools members and seeks nominations from relevant bodies and appoints non school members. This process is carried out with advice from the Schools Forum and it has been agreed that Members will serve on the Schools Forum for a term of four years.

The maximum number of consecutive terms of membership is three. The Schools Forum seeks to achieve a rolling programme of reappointment to achieve a level of continuity of membership.

Membership may be terminated by the LA in advance of the full term if the Member ceases to act in the capacity in which she/he was appointed or misses three consecutive meetings.

In the event of any membership terminating, a selection process to replace the individual member will be instituted on the same basis as the regular selection process.

2.3 Substitutes

Members of the Schools Forum may nominate a substitute from the same sector to attend a meeting in their absence. The substitute will have full voting rights where relevant.

2.4 Quorum

The Schools Forum will be quorate if at least 40% of the total membership (not counting vacancies) is present at a meeting. Membership includes substitutes for the purposes of establishing a quorum.

Procedures

2.5 Election of Chair and Vice Chair
The Chair of the Schools Forum will be drawn from schools members only. She/he will be elected by a simple majority vote of members at a quorate meeting. The Vice Chair will be elected by the same process.

Elections for Chair will be held every two years.

In the absence of both Chair and Vice Chair at any quorate meeting, the members will elect a chair for the meeting, drawn from the whole membership present.

2.6 Voting

Where voting is appropriate, other than for the election of Chair and Vice Chair (see above) the voting arrangements allow only schools and academy members and providers from the private, voluntary and independent sector to vote on the funding formula and only representatives of maintained schools to vote on changes to the Scheme for Financing Schools. Other members have a vote on all other issues. Each member has one vote. In the event of a tie the motion will fall.

Where the Schools Forum has overseen a formal consultation process, responses should be quantified and the results published to schools as well as to the Local Authority and the Department for Education.

3. Management Arrangements

3.1 The Local Authority is responsible for the administrative arrangements for the Schools Forum.

The Local Authority will:

- Put Agenda, Papers and Minutes on the Council Website (with the exception of Confidential Papers)
- Call meetings to be held in public
- Clerk and record meetings
- Disseminate the results of meetings to schools and relevant organisations and inform them of the action taken by the LA in response to Schools Forum advice
- Manage the claims for, and payment of, expenses
- Provide a report by each year on the costs of the Schools Forum’s work
- Limit the number of other local authority attendees from participating in meetings unless they are a Lead Member, a Director of Children’s Services (or their representative) or are providing specific financial or technical advice (including presenting a paper to the Schools Forum)
• Share the proportion of school population represented by members, including diocesan representatives, at each meeting

3.2 Costs

The costs of the Schools Forum will be charged to the Schools Budget.

3.3 Expenses

The scheme for the payment of expenses will be consistent with schemes for similar bodies in the Local Authority.

3.4 Meetings Schedule

Meetings of the Schools Forum will be held at least four times a year. One meeting must be scheduled to enable the Schools Forum to advise the Director of Children’s Services on changes to the formula in good time for the budget allocation process, normally in the Autumn Term.

Extraordinary meetings may be called at the request of four voting members of the Schools Forum.

Meetings will be held at 4 p.m., normally at Hove Town Hall. Meetings will be scheduled for a financial year and papers will be despatched to members 5 working days before each scheduled meeting.

These meeting arrangements may be changed by a quorate meeting of the Schools Forum, with the Chair or Vice Chair in the Chair.

Meetings of the Schools Forum will be open unless closed under standard council confidentiality procedures.

Meetings must not exceed 2.5 hours except by a majority vote of members at a quorate meeting, for that meeting only. Agenda items uncompleted may be carried forward to the next scheduled meeting.

3.5 Declarations of Interest

Schools Forum members must annually declare any interests for a register; interests pertinent to a specific agenda item at a meeting must be declared at the start of each meeting and the member will be advised on whether it is appropriate to withdraw or abstain from voting.

3.6 Sub – Groups
The Schools Forum may act as an umbrella organisation for consultation in the Local Authority and may establish sub-groups or adopt existing sub-groups. The Schools Forum will agree terms of reference and specify membership arrangements. Sub-groups will be required to report to a quorate meeting of the Schools Forum before any findings are published. Only the Schools Forum may commend the findings to the Local Authority.

4 Reporting Procedures

- Agenda, papers and minutes to be published on the website (with the exception of confidential papers)
- Draft minutes to be agreed by Chair and sent out to Schools Forum members as soon as possible after each meeting.

5 Evaluation and Review

The efficiency and effectiveness of the Schools Forum will be kept under review. If procedures need to be revised in the interests of efficiency, proposals for change can be put to a quorate meeting of the Schools Forum. The Schools Forum will make recommendations to the Director of Children’s Services for changes in procedure which he will consider and adopt or give reasons for declining to adopt.

Evaluation of the effectiveness of the Schools Forum as a consultative and advisory body will be made by survey of the constituencies electing or appointing its members. A positive evaluation would show that:

- Headteachers and governors believe that they are fully informed about school financing issues
- Headteachers and governors believe that their views have been taken into account although the advice formulated and decisions taken may not be their preferred option
- That headteachers, governors and other bodies in membership of the Schools Forum or invited as observers perceive themselves to be in partnership with the Local Authority in managing the educational resource to meet the stated priorities of the City.

- That the Schools Forum is seen as an economical and efficient means of managing consultation, which reduces rather than increases the bureaucratic burden.

Agreed March 2017