



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL CABINET
1 AUGUST 2006

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Constitution and Operation of Schools Forum

SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council is required to establish a Schools Forum and agree its constitution and operation.
- 1.2 Schools Forums are consultative bodies which were first established in 2003 to consider a range of matters relating to the Schools Budget.
- 1.3 New regulations set out in Schools Forum (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2005 require the Council to review the composition, constitution and procedures of Schools Forums.
- 1.4 A forum must have at least 15 members composed of 'schools members' and Councils can also have, at their discretion, 'non-schools members'. Non-schools members can number no more than 20% of the total membership of the Forum.
- 1.5 Subject to any issues raised at the meeting, I support the following recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION

2. To agree the constitution of a Schools Forum of 32 members, as outlined in the report.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3. We have operated a successful Schools Forum since 2003 and the proposals will strengthen the Forum to ensure improved commitment and attendance by members to make the important decisions they are asked to take.



Constitution and Operation of Schools Forum

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1.1 The Education Act 2002 required each Local Education Authority to establish a Schools Forum. The Council is required to consult with the Forum in relation to:
- changes in the funding formula for schools
 - the terms of any proposed contract for supplies or services which is to be paid out of the Schools Block budget (now referred to as the 'Schools Budget'.)
 - a range of financial issues relating to the Schools Budget, including the arrangements to be made for:
 - the education of pupils with special educational needs
 - the use of pupil referral units
 - early years education
 - insurance
 - free school meals.
- In addition, the Council may consult the Forum on such other matters concerning the funding of schools as it sees fit.
- 1.2 New regulations set out in the Schools Forum (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2005 require the Council to review the composition, constitution and procedures of Schools Forums.
- 1.3 A forum must have at least 15 members. No maximum size is stipulated. The Forum has to be made up largely of head teacher and governor representatives of schools, have at least 15 members composed of 'schools members' and Councils can also have, at their discretion, 'non-schools members'. Non-schools members can number no more than 20% of the total membership of the Forum. Cabinet members and Council officers cannot be appointed as schools members, neither can a Councillor or a Council officer chair the Forum.
- 1.4 Schools members represent specified phases or types of schools within the authority. Primary and secondary schools must be represented in proportion to the number of pupils in each phase. Schools Forums must also include representatives of special schools (at least one member) and nursery schools (one member).
- 1.5 We originally consulted with our existing consultative groups of head teachers and governing bodies – the Heads' Liaison Group (HLG) and the Governors'

Liaison Group (GLG) – to decide on membership of the Schools Forum and it was proposed that there would be joint membership of the two groups with additional secondary school representatives to bring the proportions into the required balance. This results in a total of 28 schools members.

1.6 It has now been suggested that members are elected for one year initially from 1 September 2006.

1.7 It has been suggested that the following groups of heads are represented as schools members:

- Primary nine members, one from each cluster of schools.
- Secondary seven members
- Nursery one member
- Special one member

Each cluster has agreed their election procedure and elected their members.

1.8 It has been suggested that the following groups of governors are represented as schools members:

- Primary five members.
- Secondary three members

All governors were invited to self nominate and a ballot would be held if nominations exceeded members. We received five nominations for Primary governor members and one nomination for Secondary governor members.

1.9 It is proposed that we have six non-schools members made up as follows:

2 trade union (1 teaching, 1 support staff)
2 diocesan authorities
2 parent governor representatives from the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Commission.

Nominations for these non-school members will be made by the relevant bodies. This would therefore gives us 26 schools members and six non-schools members, giving a total of 32 Schools Forum members.

1.10 No specific provision is made in the regulations regarding the timing and frequency of meetings of the forum. The Head of Finance advises on the financial decisions that need to be taken and dates are set for the year based on these.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

2. Having joint membership of Schools Forum and Heads' Liaison Group or Governors' Liaison Group was considered, but it was felt this was onerous for members.

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Background papers: None

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| IMPLICATIONS |
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Financial

1. The costs of the Schools Forum (which include direct servicing costs, members' expenses and apportioned overheads) are charged to the Schools Budget. These total £12,435 for 2006/7.

Legal

2. The establishment of the Schools Forum is required by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended by the Education Act 2002. The structure and functioning of a forum is governed by the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2002. New regulations set out in Schools Forum (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2005 require the Council to review the composition, constitution and procedures of Schools Forums.

Personnel

3. The Marketing and Communications Team within the Children and Young People's Department support the forum. One member of staff who already supports other consultative structures will carry out administrative tasks associated with the forum. Other officers will attend and support the forum and any sub-groups.

Equalities impact

4. None.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

5. The proposals will establish a group which makes decisions which make a significant contribution to delivering the Council's priorities:
 - Improve the quality of life in Derby's neighbourhoods
 - Encourage life long learning and achievement as a catalyst for economic growth
 - Build healthy and independent communities
 - Deliver excellent service, performance and value for money.