

# **SCHOOLS FORUM**

**Meeting date: 26 November 2019**

**From: Dan Barton  
Assistant Director – Education and Skills**

## **CUMBRIA SCHOOLS FORUM – MEMBERSHIP**

### **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 *Schools Forums must have schools members, non-schools members and academy members if there is at least one academy in the local authority area. The balance between primary, secondary and academy members should be broadly proportionate to the pupil numbers in each category.*
- 1.2 *Where a local authority maintains one or more special school the schools forum must have at least one schools member from that sector. The same applies to nursery schools and pupil referral units (PRUs).*
- 1.3 *In addition, there must be one member for special academies, including free schools, and alternative provision academies, including free schools, if such exist in the local authority area.*
- 1.4 *As schools convert to academy status the school member representation on the Schools Forum should periodically be reviewed in terms of proportionality.*

### **2.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 2.1 *Ensuring that there is full representation of all types of schools on the Schools Forum is supportive of the Council Plan outcome 'that people in Cumbria are healthy and safe'.*

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 *That the Schools Forum*
  - i) *Note that the proportionate split between maintained school representatives and academy representatives (based on pupil numbers in each sector as at May 2019) has changed and that membership of the Schools Forum will need to be adjusted to reflect the change;*

- ii) Agree that the number of school members/constituencies should increase from 23 to 24 to include the addition of special academy representative;*
- iii) Consider the options set out in paragraphs 4.11 and 4.13 regarding membership of the Forum and recommend how the membership of the Schools Forum should be adjusted; and*
- iv) Review the membership in relation to proportionality, and any other issues, again during the autumn term 2020.*

## 4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 Schools Forum Regulations 2012 requires that schools and academies should have broadly proportionate representation according to pupil numbers in each category. Local authorities are required to ensure that their Schools Forum is compliant with this requirement based on the pupil numbers in each category, and that this is updated as more conversions take place.

4.2 On 16 October 2015 the Schools Forum agreed the current membership of the Forum based on pupil numbers from the January 2015 census update. These arrangements were reviewed on 16 October 2018 and Schools Forum agreed that the proportionate split between maintained school representatives and academy representatives should remain unchanged (based on pupil numbers in each sector as at May 2018).

4.3 Currently, the Schools Forum is made up of 23 school members (10 maintained primary, 3 maintained secondary, 7 academy (6 secondary and 1 primary), 1 special, 1 nursery and 1 PRU), 6 non-school members and the lead member for Children's Services.

4.4 Other attendees who are permitted to contribute to a Schools Forum meeting are:

- An observer appointed by the Secretary of State
- The Chief Financial Officer
- Director of Children's Services or their representative (Cumbria: Executive Director – People/Assistant Director, Education and Skills)
- Officers providing financial and technical advice to schools forum
- The Executive Member for Children's Services
- Presenters (restricted to the paper they are presenting)
- The Executive Member with responsibility for resources

4.5 Based on NOR reported in the May 2019 census update (adjusted to take account of potential conversions) pupil numbers are as follows:

<b>School Type</b>	<b>Pupil Numbers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Maintained Primary	30553	75.1
Maintained Secondary	10136	24.9
<b>Maintained Total</b>	<b>40689</b>	<b>100</b>
Primary Academy	5298	21.6
Secondary Academy	19239	78.4
<b>Academy Total</b>	<b>24537</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total Pupils</b>	<b>65226</b>	

- 4.6 Currently there are 23 school constituencies, 20 representing maintained schools and academies plus 3, 1 each representing special schools, nursery schools and PRUs.
- 4.7 To maintain a membership that is broadly proportionate to the pupil numbers in each category, it is proposed that, from 1 January 2020, the split of school members should be as follows:

	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Current</b>
Maintained Schools	12	13
Academies	8	7
Special Schools	1	1
Nursery Schools	1	1
PRUs	1	1
Special Academies	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>23</b>

This is a change to the current split (as shown in the third column above). It is also proposed that number of school constituencies is increased from 23 to 24 to include a representative of special academies.

- 4.8 Schools and academies members together must make up at least two-thirds of the total membership of the Schools Forum and the balance between maintained primary, maintained secondary and academy members must be broadly proportionate to the pupil numbers in each category.
- 4.9 Membership of the Schools Forum in Cumbria has previously been organised in such way to maintain the required proportionate split based on pupil numbers whilst also trying to ensure a balanced geographical representation from across the county.

### **Maintained Schools Representation**

- 4.10 Maintained school constituencies are currently split between primary and secondary representatives. There are 9 primary and 3 secondary constituencies covering the north, west and south of the county together with a small schools constituency. The small schools constituency is currently represented by a primary head teacher.
- 4.11 It is proposed that from January 2020 there should be 12 maintained school representatives, rather than the current 13. Based on the pupil numbers set out in paragraph 4.5, the split between maintained primary and secondary representatives should be 9 primary and 3 secondary representatives.

#### Options

- i) The maintained school constituencies could remain relatively unchanged:
- 3 x North Primary }
  - 3 x West Primary } including 1 representative from a 'small' school
  - 3 x South Primary }
  - 3 x Secondary, 1 each representing north, west and south

This option would maintain a geographical split of representatives from across the county but there would no longer be a separate small schools constituency.

ii) Representation could be simplified:

9 x Primary  
3 x Secondary

This option could result in some areas of the county having more representation than others but it may make recruitment to vacancies more straight forward.

### **Academy Representatives**

4.12 Six secondary academy constituencies also cover the north, west and south of the county and there is one countywide primary constituency.

4.13 It is proposed that from January 2020 there should be 8 academy representatives, rather than the current 7. Based on the pupil numbers set out in paragraph 4.5, the split between primary and secondary academy representatives should be 2 primary and 6 secondary representatives.

### Options

i) The current academy constituencies could be adjusted:

2 x North secondary  
2 x West secondary  
2 x South secondary  
2 x Primary

This option would maintain a geographical split of representatives from across the county and also ensure that both primary and secondary academies are appropriately represented.

ii) Representation could be simplified  
8 x Academy (primary or secondary)

This option could result in some areas of the county, or phases, having more representation than others but as with option ii) above for maintained constituencies, it could simplify recruitment when vacancies arise.

### **Special Schools, Nursery Schools and PRUs**

4.14 In Cumbria, two of the five special schools now have academy status. In addition, the Cumbria Academy for Autism opened in September 2019. It is therefore proposed that from January 2020 there should be one special school, one nursery school, one PRU and one special academy representative on the Schools Forum.

4.15 This would increase the number of school constituencies from 23 to 24.

### **Schools Forum Working Groups**

4.16 The Schools Forum currently has two established working groups, the School Budgets Working Group and the SEN Working Group (formerly known as the SEN, Social Deprivation, Access and Inclusion Working Group).

- 4.17 From time to time, the Schools Forum will also establish a small task and finish or ad hoc groups to do focussed work on a specific area.
- 4.18 Each member of the full forum should also contribute to at least one of the working groups; some are members of both working groups. In January 2020, all forum members will be asked to either confirm their current working group membership or indicate which group they wish to join.

### **Attendance**

- 4.19 Regular attendance at meetings is important in ensuring that all constituencies are properly represented. Members should represent the views of their constituency as a whole.
- 4.20 If a member is unable to attend, they can, and wherever possible should, arrange for a substitute to attend on their behalf. Substitute members must be from the same constituency and can, if appropriate vote; headteachers can be represented by other senior members of staff from within their school.
- 4.21 From January 2020, attendance will be monitored and recorded so that instances of non-attendance can be reported to the Schools Forum in order to determine what action should be taken eg. should a member should be replaced? It is suggested that attendance should be reported annually and could, in future, be included as part of the annual membership update report.

### **Vacancies**

- 4.22 A list of the current membership is attached.
- 4.23 There are a number of constituencies that are not currently represented; some 'volunteers'/nominations have been suggested.
- 4.24 As the overall make-up of the Forum needs to be adjusted to maintain proportionality, it would seem appropriate to await the outcome of any discussion before confirming any new School Forum appointments.

## **5.0 OPTIONS**

- 5.1 The Schools Forum can:
- Consider the proposed adjustments to the current arrangements for membership of the Forum as set out at paragraph 4.11 option (i) and paragraph 4.13 option (i);
  - Consider the alternative proposal as set out at paragraph 4.11 option (ii) and paragraph 4.13 option (ii); or
  - Propose alternative arrangements in relation to membership of the Forum whilst maintaining an appropriate proportionate split.

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 It is important that the membership of the Schools Forum effectively reflects the profile of schools across the authority to ensure that there is not an in-built bias towards any one phase or group.

**Dan Barton**  
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*21 November 2019*

### **Accompanying Documents:**

*Schools Forum Membership – as at October 2019*

### **REPORT AUTHOR**

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