

SCHOOLS FORUM

Meeting date: 21 October 2020

**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 *Schools Forum to*
 - i) *Note the contents of the report and the proportionate split between maintained school representatives and academy representatives, based on pupil numbers in each sector as at January 2020;*
 - ii) *Agree that the number of school members/constituencies should remain unchanged at 24, and that constituencies continue to be represented as set out in paragraphs 4.11 and 4.12; and*

iii) Review the membership in relation to proportionality, and any other issues, again during the autumn term 2021.

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 26 November 2019, Schools Forum agreed the current membership of the Forum based on pupil numbers reported in the May 2019 census update. Forum noted that the proportionate split between maintained school representatives and academy representatives had changed. Membership of the Schools Forum was therefore adjusted to maintain a membership that remained proportionate and in line with pupil numbers in maintained primary and secondary schools and academies.

4.3 The Schools Forum is made up of 24 school members (9 maintained primary, 3 maintained secondary, 8 academy (6 secondary and 2 primary), 1 special, 1 special academy, 1 nursery and 1 PRU) and 6 non-school members.

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 (Schools and Learning)
- Presenters (restricted to the paper they are presenting)
- The Executive Member with responsibility for resources

4.5 Based on NOR reported in the January 2020 census update (adjusted to take account of potential conversions) pupil numbers are as follows:

School Type	Pupil Numbers	Percentage
Maintained Primary	29762	74.5
Maintained Secondary	10186	25.5
Maintained Total	39948	100
Primary Academy	5912	23.1
Secondary Academy	19679	76.9
Academy Total	25591	100
Total Pupils	65539	

4.6 Currently there are 24 school constituencies, 20 representing maintained schools and academies plus 4, 1 each representing special schools, special academies, 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 2021, the split of school members should remain unchanged, as follows:

Maintained Schools	12
Academies	8
Special Schools	1
Nursery Schools	1
PRUs	1
Special Academies	1
Total	24

Although there has been a slight change in the proportionate pupil numbers in each category, it is not sufficient enough to recommend a change to the current composition of the Schools Forum.

- 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.
- 4.10 At the meeting of the Schools Forum in November 2019 it was agreed that a largely geographical split of members (maintained schools and academies) across the county should be maintained.
- 4.11 The maintained school constituencies to be represented as follows:

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

- 4.12 The academy constituencies to be represented as follows:

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

- 4.13 Should Schools Forum agree that the split of school members should remain unchanged, it is proposed that representation continue as set out in paragraphs 4.11 and 4.12 above.

Schools Forum Working Groups

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

- 4.15 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.
- 4.16 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 2021, all forum members will be asked to either confirm their current working group membership or indicate which group they wish to join.

Attendance

- 4.17 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.
- 4.18 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.
- 4.19 At the meeting on held on 26 November 2019, Schools Forum agreed that attendance at meetings should be monitored and recorded so that instances of non-attendance could be reported to the Schools Forum in order to determine what action should be taken.
- 4.20 A copy of the record of attendance at meetings is attached, for information. In view of the unusual circumstances of 2020, it is suggested that no action be taken at this stage but that attendance should continue to be monitored and recorded so that issues of non-attendance can be reported back to Forum for decisions to be taken as appropriate.

Vacancies

- 4.21 A list of the current membership is attached.
- 4.22 There are a number of constituencies that are not currently represented. A letter will be sent to all schools via the School Portal to notify them about Forum representatives and current vacancies.

5.0 OPTIONS

- 5.1 The Schools Forum can:
- Agree that the Schools Forum membership should remain unchanged and that members continue to represent geographical areas.
 - 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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19 October 2020

Accompanying Documents:

Schools Forum – Attendance Record

Schools Forum Membership – as at October 2020

REPORT AUTHOR

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