



Haringey Council

The Children and Young People's Service

Report to Haringey Schools Forum – 24 May 2012

Agenda Item

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Report Status

For information/note
For consultation & views
For decision

Report Title: Membership and Voting arrangements for the Schools Forum

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Purpose: To members of the re-election process and changes to the membership of the Forum.

Recommendations:

1. That the Clerk commence the re-election process with a view to the new membership being in place for September 2012.
2. That the membership and constitution be changed in accordance with the anticipated Schools Forum regulations by:-
 - a) the removal of the place allocated to a Councillor
 - b) an amendment to the constitution to only permit school members and the Private, Voluntary and Independent Early Years Settings to vote on the funding formula.

1. Term of office for Forum Members.

- 1.1 The current three year period of office for Forum Members comes to an end in September 2012.
- 1.2 In accordance with the Constitution, a re- election process will commence following this meeting. The Clerk will write to the nominating organisations inviting nominations for appointment to the Forum.
- 1.3 The newly elected Forum will take office from September 2012.

2. Method of Election

- 2.1 The process for election to the places according to the Constitution is that each nominating organisation will be responsible for determining the method by which they elect and/or nominate their representatives, substitutes and for the filling of any vacancies that may arise. The Local Authority can offer guidance to assist with this process.
- 2.2 Substitute members are acceptable and have the same speaking and voting rights as the member for whom they are substituting. Substitutes can only be made by the nominating organization, and not by the Forum Member, and must qualify for the membership category of the person they are substituting for. Substitute nominations, including standing substitutes, can be made at any time; however, the Clerk must be notified by the nominating organization of substitutions with at least 3 working days notice before any meeting, in order that attendance and voting rights are given.
- 2.3 Each nominating organisation must notify the Clerk in writing of the method by which they have chosen to elect their representatives and of any subsequent changes to this process. Any differing approaches to fill, for example, a single vacancy, must be separately identified. The authority will consider whether the process notified constitutes a 'fair process' in the spirit of the work of the Forum and will notify any organization if it disagrees with the process proposed setting out those changes that it considers necessary.

3. DfE - Future Changes to Schools Forum

- 3.1 The DfE's School funding reform: Next steps towards a fairer system proposes to make some changes to Schools Forum arrangements to ensure that they operate transparently and fairly with representations from all sectors.
 - 3.1.1 It is considered that in order for local decision making to operate in a consistently fair and effective way and in consultation with schools there needs to be greater confidence in Schools Forums. Headteachers, principals. Parents and others need to know that

funding decisions are open to scrutiny and challenge and are considered in depth by those most affected.

- 3.1.2 The DfE will make some changes to Schools Forum arrangements so they are in place to support decision making in 2013/14. The changes will ensure Schools Forum discussions are more focussed, that decisions are more transparent and that those most affected have a greater say. No powers will be made at this stage.
- 3.1.3 Although the regulations have not yet been published it is expected that the following will be effective from September 2012:-
- a) remove the requirement to have a minimum of 15 people on a Forum:
 - b) Limit the number of other authority attendees from participating in meetings unless they are a lead Member, Director of Children's Services (or their representative) or are providing specific financial or technical advice (including presenting a paper to the Forum)
 - c) Confine the voting arrangements to allow only school members and providers from the private, voluntary and independent sector to vote on the funding formula. At present all members of the Forum are entitled to a single vote with decisions carried by upon a majority vote.
 - d) Require Forums to hold public meetings- as is the case with other council meetings.
- 3.1.4 In addition the DfE will give the EFA observer status at Forum meetings. This will enable the EFA to support the local process and to provide a national perspective. The EFA representative would not be required to attend every meeting but could be available if members thought it helpful or if there were any concerns about the running of the Forum.
- 3.1.5 In the longer term the DfE have indicated that they may consider making further changes that will support fairness and transparency in the operation of Schools Forum. These might include:-
- a) setting a maximum cap on the number of members:
 - b) significantly slimming down (or removal) of non schools members and
 - c) Requiring an independent secretariat to service Schools Forums.

4. Recommendations

1. That the Clerk commence the re-election process with a view to the new membership being in place for September 2012.

2. That the membership and constitution be changed in accordance with the anticipated schools Forum regulations by:-
 - c) the removal of the place allocated to a Councillor
 - d) an amendment to the constitution to only permit school members and the Private, Voluntary and Independent Early Years Settings to vote on the funding formula.