

1. Background

Every Local Authority is required by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 as amended to have a Schools Forum for its area. The constitution, conduct of meetings, functions and role of the Forum are determined by the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012 and the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2013.

2. Role of the Schools Forum

The Leeds Schools Forum is a statutory body established in 2003 by Leeds City Council with a decision making, consultative and advisory role. Members of Schools Forum can only exercise their powers in relation to proposals put forward by the local authority, they do not have any powers to initiate proposals.

2.1 DECISION MAKING

Schools Forum will agree:

2.1.1 Central Services Expenditure

Expenditure for the purposes detailed below can be retained centrally under continuing commitments . This expenditure must not exceed allocations for the previous year without separate approval from the Secretary of State.

- (a) Pupil admission systems;
- (b) Expenses of the Schools Forum;
- (c) Prudential borrowing;
- (d) Termination of employment costs;
- (e) Combined services;

Schools Forum also determines the level and use of any carry forward DSG balance (surplus or deficit).

2.1.2 Central Schools Expenditure

Expenditure detailed below can be retained centrally for:

- (a) Growth Fund to meet the requirements for basic need and infant class size regulations;
- (b) Falling Rolls Fund for surplus places in outstanding/good schools where a population bulge is expected in 2-3 years;
- (c) Equal pay arrears (where they have not been accounted for under 2.1.1);
- (d) Fees paid to independent schools for non-SEN pupils;
- (e) Early Years.

2.1.3 De-delegation

Schools Forum can determine to remove items from school budget shares (de-delegation) and pay for them centrally, for maintained primary and secondary schools only, as follows:

- (a) Education of pupils with behavioural difficulties for the purpose of avoiding exclusion;
- (b) Determining eligibility of pupils for free school meals;
- (c) Maternity/adoption leave;
- (d) Trade Union duties;
- (e) Jury/magistrates/reserve service;
- (f) Suspended employees;
- (g) School museum service;
- (h) School library service;
- (i) Licences;
- (j) Schools specific contingency/schools in financial difficulty;
- (k) Improving the performance of under-performing ethnic minority groups;
- (l) Meeting the specific needs of bilingual pupils;

The school budget shares for academies, SILCs and PRUs cannot be de-delegated by Schools Forum but those institutions can opt to buy-back the services above from the local authority where those services are offered.

2.1.4 Scheme for Financing Schools

Schools Forum approves the local Scheme for Financing Schools which sets out the financial management arrangements for maintained schools.

2.2 CONSULTATIVE AND ADVISORY

The local authority will consult Schools Forum and request advice where appropriate on:

2.2.1 School Funding Formula

Any proposed changes to the School Funding Formula for maintained schools, academies, SILCs and pupil referral units prior to the start of the funding period. This will include any proposed changes in relation to the formula factors, criteria taken into account, and the methods, principles and rules adopted. This consultation is required under Regulation 10(2) of the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2013.

2.2.2 Consultation on contracts

At least one month prior to the issue of invitations to tender, the local authority must consult Schools Forum on the terms of any proposed contract for supplies or services (being a contract to be paid out of the schools budget) where the estimated value of the proposed contract is not less than the threshold which applies to the authority for that proposed contract pursuant to regulation 8 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006(b).

2.2.3 Consultation on financial issues

The local authority must consult Schools Forum annually in respect of the following functions within the schools budget:

- (a) Arrangements for the education of pupils with special educational needs;
- (b) Arrangements for the use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school;
- (c) Arrangements for early years provision;
- (d) Administrative arrangements for the allocation of central government grants paid to schools;
- (e) Any proposal put forward to the DfE for exclusion from the minimum funding guarantee.

2.2.4 Consultation on other matters

The authority may consult the forum on such additional matters concerning the funding of schools as they see fit. Schools Forum must inform the governing bodies of maintained schools as soon as it reasonably can, of any consultation carried out under 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 above.

3. Membership of Schools Forum

3.1 The Leeds Schools Forum shall consist of 35 members and comprise representatives from maintained schools, academies, pupil referral units and the non-school sector. Primary schools, Secondary schools and academies should be broadly proportionately represented with regard to the total number of pupils registered with them.

3.1.1 Schools members

Each representative group will be responsible for the method by which they elect and nominate representatives but should take full account of the DfE guidance upon the election and nomination of schools members. Senior members of school staff are defined as principal, head teacher, deputy head teacher, bursar or other person responsible for financial management within the school.

Head teachers (11 members) comprising:

- 7 Primary representatives
- 3 Secondary representatives
- 1 SILC representative

Governors (11 members) comprising:

- 6 Primary representatives
- 4 Secondary representatives
- 1 SILC representative

3.1.2 Academies (6 members)

To be elected by the Governing Bodies of the Leeds academies.

3.1.3 Pupil Referral Units (1 member)

To be elected by the PRU Management Committee.

3.1.4 Non-school representatives (6 members)

Not more than one third of the total membership may be appointed as non-schools members and are nominated by:

- 1 16-19 provider
- 2 PVI providers
- 1 Leeds Catholic Diocesan Commission
- 1 Diocese of Ripon and Leeds
- 1 Joint Consultative Committee – school based staff

Election only applies to the 16-19 representative who should be elected by all 16-19 providers. However, the local authority can appoint if no election takes place by the required date or in the event of a tie.

3.1.5 Amendments to membership through growth in number of academies

The representation of academies should be broadly in line with the number of pupils attending academies. The representation under 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 above will be reviewed and amended based on the January PLASC each year to provide the representation in Annex 1. Serving School representatives may serve out their term of office subject to the tenure provisions in section 4, and the total size of the Schools Forum could therefore increase in this period.

3.2 Restrictions on membership

3.2.1 Elected members of the City Council who hold an executive role (a lead member/portfolio holder) are barred from being either a schools (as a governor) member or a non-schools member.

3.2.2 Relevant officers employed by the local authority are also barred from being members of Schools Forum. Relevant officers are defined as:

- (a) The Director of Children's Services;
- (b) Any officer employed or engaged to work under the management of the Director of Children's Services;
- (c) Any officer whose work involves providing advice on school funding.

4. **Tenure of members**

4.1 Persons appointed to be members shall hold office for a period of 3 years and be subject to the provisions set out below. Any member of Schools Forum can nominate a substitute to attend in their absence by giving written notice in advance of the meeting to the Clerk.

Where a vacancy arises the local authority shall appoint a replacement elected by the members of the relevant group or sub group nominated in accordance with the set procedure for such nominations

Where an election for a schools or academy member does not take place by the date set by the local authority, or an election results in a tie between two or more candidates, the local authority will make the appointment instead.

4.2 A Forum member shall remain in office until (whichever comes first):

- (a) The member's term of office expires;
- (b) The member ceases to hold the office by virtue of which the member became eligible for election, selection or appointment;
- (c) The member resigns by giving notice in writing to the Clerk;
- (d) In the case of a non-schools member, the member is replaced by the authority, at the request of the body which the member represents or by another person nominated by that body;

4.3 The local authority must maintain a written record (Annex 2) of the composition of the Schools Forum which includes:

- (a) The number of schools members and by group elected;
- (b) The number of academy members;

- (c) The number of non-schools members, terms of office, how chosen and who they represent.

5. Declaration of Interests

Members of Schools Forum shall declare a personal interest in any individual proposal which directly affects them (e.g. if the proposal concerns the school at which they are a governor or at which their children attend). If the personal interest is pecuniary or could be viewed as prejudicial, the member should withdraw from the discussion and take no part in the decision. Where it is clear that a decision in which a member of the Forum has such an interest is likely to arise at a particular meeting, the member concerned may wish to invite a substitute to attend that meeting.

6. Indemnification

The local authority shall indemnify members of Schools Forum against reasonable legal costs and expenses arising from decisions or recommendations made in good faith.

7. Meetings and proceedings of Schools Forum

7.1. Frequency and Quorum

Schools Forum must meet at least 4 times per year, the meetings must be public and shall be quorate if at least 40% of the total membership (excluding vacancies) is present at the meeting (i.e. 14 members based on present membership).

7.2 Attendance

The following people may speak at the meeting (even though they are not members):

- (a) The Director of Children's Services (or their representative);
- (b) The Chief Finance Officer (or their representative);
- (c) The elected Lead Member for Children's Services;
- (d) The elected Lead Member for Resources;
- (e) Any person invited to provide financial or technical advice;
- (f) Any person presenting a paper (their right to speak is restricted to that paper);
- (g) The Secretary of State's appointed observer.

7.3 Election of Chair and Vice Chair

The members of Schools Forum shall elect a Chair and Vice Chair from among their number and determine their terms of office. An elected member or officer of the local authority who is a member of Schools Forum may not hold the office of Chair or Vice Chair. The Leeds Schools Forum has a local arrangement whereby the position of Chair alternates between a head teacher and a governor in successive years.

7.4 Agenda, venue, meeting dates and publication

7.4.1 The Clerk will convene a meeting of Schools Forum by giving a minimum of 7 working days' notice of meetings and notify members of the venue.

7.4.2 The date of the meeting will be given to the Clerk at a previous meeting or on the direction of the Chair or Vice Chair.

7.4.3 The Chair must decide upon the agenda following consultation with Forum members. The agenda will be circulated by the Clerk prior to the meeting.

7.4.4 The agenda papers and minutes will be published on the local authority's website following approval by the Chair.

7.5 Voting arrangements

7.5.1 The members of Schools Forum shall determine their own voting arrangements. Decisions whereby a vote by category is not required shall be taken by a majority vote of all members present. In the event of a tie, the Chair will hold the casting vote.

7.5.2 Non-schools members (other than early years members) must not vote on matters relating to the school funding formula.

7.5.3 Where a vote by category is required (for De-delegation, see 2.1.3) then:

- (a) Only maintained primary school members are able to vote on de-delegation for primary schools; and
- (b) Only maintained secondary school members are able to vote on de-delegation for secondary schools.

7.6 Expenses

The local authority must pay the expenses of Schools Forum and charge those expenses to the schools budget. All reasonable expenses reimbursed to members for their attendance at meetings of Schools Forum must also be charged to the schools budget

8. Public Statements

Public Statements on behalf of Schools Forum may only be made by the Chair or Vice Chair either with the approval of the Forum or without such approval having regard to the importance of expediency.

9. Working Groups

Schools Forum may set up working groups from its members to discuss specific issues and to produce draft advice for all members to consider.

Revised School and Academy Membership as numbers change

Academy Representation

%ge of pupils attending Academies	Number of Academy Representatives
Over 4%	1
8%	2
11%	3
15%	4
18%	5
22%	6
25%	7
29%	8
33%	9
36%	10
40%	11
43%	12
47%	13
50%	14
54%	15
58%	16
61%	17
65%	18
68%	19
72%	20
75%	21
79%	22
83%	23
86%	24
90%	25
93%	26
97%	27
100%	28

Secondary Representation

%ge of Secondary pupils attending Secondary Academies	Number of Secondary School Governors	Number of Secondary School Headteachers
Over 9%	5	6
17%	5	5
25%	5	4
34%	4	4
42%	4	3
50%	3	3
59%	2	3
67%	2	2
75%	1	2
84%	1	1
92%	1	1
100%	0	0

Primary Representation

%ge of Primary pupils attending Primary Academies	Number of Primary School Governors	Number of Primary School Headteachers
Over 8%	6	7
15%	6	6
22%	5	6
29%	5	5
36%	5	4
43%	4	4
50%	3	4
58%	3	3
65%	3	2
72%	2	2
79%	1	2
86%	1	1
93%	1	1
100%	0	0

Special Representation

%ge of Special School pupils attending Academies	Number of Special School Governors	Number of Special School Headteachers
less than 100%	1	1
100%	0	0