

SCHOOLS FORUM - 12 FEBRUARY 2015

Title of paper:	SCHOOLS FORUM SUB GROUP – TERMS OF REFERENCE
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Summary	
<p>At the Schools Forum (SF) meeting on 18 December 2014 it was agreed that the Terms of Reference for a Schools Forum Sub Group (SFSG) would be established to formalise the requirements and membership of this group.</p> <p>This report sets out those requirements and membership.</p>	
Recommendation(s):	
1	To approve the Schools Forum Sub Groups Terms of Reference as set out in Appendix A.
2	To approve the membership of the SFSG for financial year 2015/16.

1. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The recommendation will support the establishment and use of the SFSG on a more formal basis, undertaking the financial reviews required to support the development of school budgets. This group have no formal powers and are set up as a consultative group of SF.

2. BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

- 2.1 During the last few years a number of financial issues have arisen which has required a more detailed discussion with SF e.g. the implementation of the National Funding Formula; the use of the sub group in these instances has enabled:
- A detailed analysis/discussion of these issues to be undertaken;
 - The ability to undertake detailed consultation regarding budget issues;
 - A more detailed understanding of the budget to be gained by SF members and
 - Recommendations are presented back to SF that has been agreed with their representatives. This prevents SF from having to undertake lengthy detailed operational discussions ensuring that SF time is focused at more strategic educational issues.

2.2 Based on the discussions at SF on 18 December 2014, for 2015/16 SF members assigned to the SFSG will be:

- Mark Precious – Primary Academy
- Terry Smith – Primary Maintained
- Sian Hampton – Secondary Academy
- Sally Coulton – Secondary Maintained
- Janet Molyneux – Governor Maintained Primary

The representation covers the four school sectors which align to the ToR, this approach ensures that any financial discussions/recommendations incorporate the impact on all schools. The group will also include Local Authority Finance Officers and where appropriate either other officers or Head Teachers.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Not establishing a SFSG would prevent the detailed discussions required on certain budget issues to be undertaken.

4. OUTCOMES/DELIVERABLES

4.1 To ensure that SF have a detailed knowledge of some of the provide financial robustness around decisions taken by SF.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY)

5.1 The formal establishment of the Sub Group will enable detailed budget discussions to be undertaken with members of Schools Forum. This reduced group size will facilitate more robust discussions ensuring the budgets set support value for money.

5.2 **Table 1** below sets out a number of areas requiring SFSG focus for the financial year 2015/16.

TABLE 1: 2015/16 SFSG ACTIVITY LOG			
Title	Detail	Outcome	No of meetings required
1. Benchmarking review	To undertake a more detailed discussion/review on specific areas of expenditure.	To provide SF with an understanding of budget allocation of the Dedicated Schools Grant compared with other authorities.	2 meetings
2. High level needs funding review.	Review of Special Education Needs (SEN) support costs and funding in mainstream schools	Review adequacy of the level and basis of funding for SEN (notional SEN budget, named pupil High Level Needs allocations and Additional Inclusion Allocations) in the context of costs being incurred by mainstream schools.	3 meetings
3. Reserves review	To discuss the latest position of the reserve balance, identify a development reserve and the process to utilise it.	To recommend to SF the allocation of the reserve to the development reserve and the decision making process to support its usage.	1 meeting
4. 2016/17 budget – Pupil Referral Unit (PRU's)	To review the top up rates applied to PRU's for 2016/17.	To ensure that SF have been consulted on in accordance with the Financial Regulations.	1 meeting
5. 2016/17 budget - High needs places for place planning	Update of Educational Funding Agency (EFA) requirements.	Ensure compliance with the Department for Education (DfE) guidance and that budgets are set in conjunction with the EFA funding.	1 meeting

Some of these meetings may be combined to reduce the frequency.

5.3 These discussions will ensure budget construction is developed in accordance with the latest Schools and Early Years Financial Regulations.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS)

6.1 There are no legal implications arising from the content of this report.

7. HR ISSUES

7.1 There are no HR implications arising from the content of this report.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 An EIA is not needed as the report does not contain proposals or financial decisions

9. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

9.1 None

10. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

10.1 Schools Forum - Statutory School Reserve 2014/15 – 18 December 2014

10.2 Schools Forum – Central Expenditure Budget 2015/16 – 18 December 2014

10.2 DfE - Schools and Early Years Financial Regulations 2014.

**Schools Forum Sub Group (SFSG)
Terms of Reference**

1 The role of the SFSG is:

- 1.1 To act as a consultative group on all financial matters relating to schools and any wider education issues referred to it by the Schools Forum (SF).

Financial matters include areas such as the school funding formula, benchmarking analysis, review of use of reserves and any other financial issues that may require consultation with the group on behalf of SF.

2 Appointment of SFSG:

- 2.1 The membership of SFSG will align to the term of office of SF which is 3 years and commenced in September 2014. The membership of the group will be agreed by SF and members can remain on the SFSG for consecutive terms.

- 2.1 The membership of the group will not exceed 6 and the representatives will need to cover Primary Maintained (if applicable), Primary Academy, Secondary Maintained (if applicable) and Secondary Academy.

- 2.2 Chair of Schools Forum will be Chair of the SFSG.

3 Meetings

- 3.1 Finance officers will arrange, attend and set the agendas in consultation with the Chair of SFSG. There will be meetings where the Finance Officers request the attendance of other Local Authority officers and Head Teachers which are deemed appropriate to facilitate discussions. This will be after consultation with the Chair of the SFSG.

- 3.2 The agenda and supporting papers will be issued at least 3 working days before the meeting. The purpose and outcomes required from the meeting will be made clear on the agenda to enable the meeting to be as efficient and effective as possible.

- 3.3 Members are required to accommodate the meetings to ensure a balanced discussion is undertaken. No substitutes will be required and meeting dates will be issued with at least 4 academic weeks notice however, there may be exceptional circumstances where this timeline is not achievable.

- 3.4 In a majority of cases the meetings will be no more than 2 hours.