

## **Schools Forum**

**27th November 2018**

### **Schools Forum – Good Practice Self-Assessment**

#### **Introduction**

1. In September 2018 EFA released an update on the Schools Forum Operational and Good Practice Guide.
2. The guide draws on the experience and knowledge of schools forum members, local authority officers and members and the Department and its partners and is designed to provide local authority officers and school forum elected members with advice and information on good practice in relation to the operation of schools forum.
3. Schools Forum last undertook a review in May 2017.
4. The Forum asked officers, in the first instance, to complete the self-assessment toolkit and requested that it be brought to the next meeting for consideration.

#### **Next steps**

5. Members are asked to comment.
6. All areas where there is deemed to be a weakness will be reviewed by the Chair, Finance Manager and the Secretary to the Forum with the intention of making the necessary improvements.

David New  
Senior Finance Manager



## Schools forum self-assessment toolkit

This toolkit provides local authority officers and elected members with a framework for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of their schools forum. The toolkit is designed as a set of questions which can be considered by individuals or the forum as a whole.

Question	Yes / No	Notes
1. Are meeting dates set in well advance and details (including time and venue) published in an accessible manner to enable interested parties to plan their attendance?	Yes	A programme of work and meeting dates for the academic year ahead are agreed at the July meeting in the preceding academic year.
2. Are meetings timed to coincide with key dates? (e.g. reporting of funding formula)	Yes	Meetings are timetabled to fit with the expected cycle of decisions / consideration. Where necessary in special circumstances they maybe flexed to manage essential business.
3. Are meetings held in an accessible venue to enable observers to attend easily?	Yes	Meeting are held in the Education Centre @ Stockton Sixth Form College
4. Is there a dedicated website link for schools forum, is it current and regularly updated?	Yes	Egenda on the Stockton Borough Council website
5. Are the agenda and papers publicly available on the authority's website at least 6 working days in advance of the meeting?	Yes	They are also emailed to members. Occasionally the odd paper is late.
6. Are the papers published as a single document, so that users can download easily?	No	Attachments easy to download and best sent separately
7. If papers are tabled at the meeting,	Yes	Papers are published in advance of the

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are they published on the website promptly after the meeting?		meeting and extremely rare for paper to be table, where this occurred they would be added to the website page.
8. Are draft minutes published a reasonable time (e.g. within 2-3 weeks) after the meeting, rather than waiting until the following meeting?	No	Minutes are available one week before the subsequent meeting.
9. Are the minutes clear and unambiguous, with sufficient detail to illustrate the discussions, without reporting verbatim every point made?	Yes	
10. Is the constitution clear and appropriate? Including eg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a clear process for ensuring proportional representation</li> <li>- the process for electing members and their tenure</li> <li>- the timescale for review is clearly set out</li> <li>- the process for dealing with repetitive non attenders</li> </ul>	Mainly	The Schools Forum Operating Procedure was last updated in September 2013 so would benefit from Review
11. Is there an induction pack or training programme available for new members?	Partially	Induction Pack in place but needs updating. In the past training has been delivered.
12. Is the election process clear and transparent? i.e. representatives are elected only by the group they are representing, whether phase-specific for maintained schools, or by the proprietors of academies for academy members.	Yes	There is a clear process for election of members which is referenced in the Schools Forum Operating Procedure.
13. Do the papers contain clear recommendations and indicate in a consistent manner whether the item is for information, consultation or decision?	Yes	All reports presented have a summary at the end of the paper identifying what Schools Forum is being asked to do.
14. Is it clear to observers who attendees at the forum are representing? (eg by use of name plates, indicating sector)	Yes	All members have name plates indicating their name and role.
15. Does the chair manage the meeting	Yes	

Question	Yes / No	Notes
well, ensuring that all are able to contribute to the agenda items, that no bias towards any sector is evident and that no single person or organisation is able to dominate the discussion?		
16. Is there inclusive participation in discussions for all phases and types of members?	Yes	
17. Do members actively canvass views and objectively represent their whole peer group at the forum and provide feed back after meetings?		Comments are particularly sought from members on this point
18. Where votes are required, is it clear who is eligible to vote for different items?	Yes	Facilitated by point 14.
19. Where votes are required, are the arrangements for recording the votes clear and unambiguous?	Yes	The Secretary to the Forum records the vote and members are given a “point in time” support when a vote is taken including what is being voted for and who is eligible to vote.
20. Is there a system in place for a decision if votes are tied?	Yes	Arrangements referenced in the Schools Forum Operating Procedure
21. Is the operational & good practice guide used to regularly review the forum’s adherence to good practice?	Yes	Last reviewed May 2017