Updated: 2017

**SCHOOLS FORUM - Terms of Reference**

**1. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

1.1The Schools Forum brings together key partners in the provision of education in Bath and North East Somerset, and should endeavour to support schools and other educational settings, in achieving 'best value'. To work together with schools and other educational settings and organisations to facilitate the most effective way of delivering services that are the responsibility of both schools, settings and the Local Authority (e.g. High Needs). To ensure that appropriate communication occurs to highlight issues relating to insufficient funding and its impact at a local level. The Terms of Reference for the Schools Forum are drawn from The Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012

1.2 The Schools Forum is a statutory consultative body which will be consulted by the LA on:

(i) Any proposed changes in relation to the factors and criteria that were taken into account, or the methods, principles and rules that have been adopted, in their schools funding formula and the financial effect of any such change;

(ii) On the terms of any proposed contract for supplies or services being a contract paid or to be paid out of the relevant authority’s schools budget where the estimated value of the proposed contract is not less than the specific threshold which applies to the relevant authority within Regulation 8 of the Public Contract Regulations 2006 (a);

(iii) Annually in respect of the relevant authority’s functions relating to the schools budget, in connection with the following:

1. the arrangements to be made for the education of pupils with special educational needs;
2. arrangements for the use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school;
3. arrangements for early years education;
4. prospective revisions to the relevant authority’s scheme for the financing of schools;
5. Administrative arrangements for the allocation of central government grants paid to schools via the relevant authority.

The relevant authority may consult the Forum on such other matters concerning the funding of schools as they see fit.

1.3 The Schools Forum is established by the LA under powers contained within Section 47 of the School Standards & Framework Act 1998 (as amended).

1.4 The Schools Forum has the following powers in accordance with the Statutory Instrument 228: The School Finance (England) Regulations 2008:

1. To agree proposed changes to the operation of the Minimum Funding Guarantee where it affects no more than 50% of schools. Any variations that impact on more than 50% of schools must be referred to the Secretary of State. (Part 3, Chapter 2, Regulation 25 (3)
2. To approve the level of school specific contingencies, prudential borrowing, SEN transport costs, termination of employment costs, combined services (subject to conditions set out in Part 2, Chapter 2, 5(2)). (Part 2, Chapter 2, 7(2) and Schedule 2, 36)

c) To approve exceeding the Central Expenditure Limit. (Part 2, Chapter 2, 7(2))

d) To be consulted by the LA and agree changes to the formula for financing schools. (Part 2, Chapter 2, 8 (2))

e) To approve the B&NES Scheme for Financing Schools and specify the date upon the revised Scheme is to come into force. (Part 4, Chapter 27, 2)

##### Communication – Responsibilities

The Forum is the main link between schools and the LA. It has the role of disseminating information from and to schools and governing bodies and / or Boards of Trustees, and from and to the LA.

The Forum will need to establish how and who will distribute and collect information from schools and governing bodies in relation to each item discussed at its meetings.

Effective communication to all parties is critical to the effectiveness of the Forum itself.

All minutes, decisions or recommendations of the Forum are copied to all Schools and are available from the clerk, Marie\_lane@bathnes.gov.uk

##### Accountability

The Forum has now become the decision making body for school funding issues. The Forum will also make recommendations to the LA (Executive Member or Executive) for decisions to be made, that are outside the decision making remit of the Forum.

Within the Forum, decisions may need to be voted on. Voting rules and regulations are set out below.

##### Links with Other Bodies and Plans

The Forum will consider many issues as part of its remit. It will not be expected to consider the detail on some of the issues but may establish sub groups for specific issues.

Additionally the Forum may need to liaise with other recognised bodies, in order to ensure no duplication of work or inconsistent approaches are taken to any specific issue, and also to establish an overview of the strategies and policies which impact on funding.

##### Management Arrangements

The Forum establishes its own work plan and sets the frequency of meetings. The Forum will ensure that Agendas and Papers are distributed in accordance with a set of standards and that minutes are disseminated within a reasonable time period after each meeting. The standards will follow those agreed for the People and Communities Department.

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Forum will be elected annually from the membership of the Forum at the first meeting of the Forum in the financial year. Retiring Chair and Vice Chair will be allowed to seek re-election. Members of the Forum will remain as members for 3 years, when new nominations will be sought. Current members will be allowed to seek re-election.

Members will relinquish their place on the Forum if they no longer represent the body they were elected by.

No elected Councillors will hold seats on the Forum, but will be invited to participate as observers. Observer status confers the right to speak but not vote if a vote is required.

The attendance of officers will be decided by the Strategic Director of People and Communities Department and will be dependent on the agenda. The Finance Manager and either the Director or a Divisional Director will attend all meetings.

##### Administrative Arrangements

The Forum will meet at 3.00pm with agendas time limited to 2 hours. If meetings are expected to take longer than the set time limit, the Chair will advise members at the time of the agenda distribution.

A schedule of meetings will be established at least 3 months in advance. Meetings will normally be held in Keynsham.

The Chair plus one other member can call extra-ordinary meetings.

Meetings will be held in public and they will be advertised to Headteachers and Governing bodies.

Representations will be heard from external parties by agreement in advance with the Chair. The Chair will have the final decision on who will be able to attend and make representations

The Forum will be able to invite specific persons to attend e.g. expert witnesses.

Sub – Groups of the Forum will not be open to the public.

The clerk will be appointed by the Strategic Director – People and Communities Department.

##### Voting

The quorate level for any votes that are necessary will be 6 of the membership of the Forum.

Substitutes will be allowed to attend meetings. All votes will be in an open ballot. The Chair will determine if a closed ballot will be necessary in any circumstances.

##### Expenses

Expenses will be allowed to cover travelling expenses in line with elected member rates.

Out of pocket expenses and supply cover for Head-teachers and teachers will be paid if incurred. All claim forms are to be submitted to the Education Finance Manager.