

<b>Committee:</b>	Schools Forum
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	5 May 2016
<b>Title:</b>	Schools Forum Development – project update 2
<b>Author:</b>	Helen Carter
<b>Decision making / consultative / information:</b>	Consultative (to recommend decision to the local authority)

**What is the Forum being asked to decide?**

1. Forum is asked to recommend a model for the size and composition of Forum to the Local Authority.
2. Forum is asked to agree which of the three methodological approaches for determining the Forum size and composition they wish to adopt.
3. Forum is asked to recommend one of the sub-options from within the chosen approach.

**Reason for recommendation**

4. The Local Authority is ultimately responsible for setting the size and structure of Forum. However, it is recognised that the current composition is not broadly proportionate, and seeks a recommendation for a model that is acceptable to existing Forum members.
5. It is recommended that Forum makes a recommendation at this meeting, so that any necessary changes can be put in place ahead of the start of the academic year 2016/17. Where possible, changes would take effect from the next Forum meeting but where elections are needed, these should take place as soon as possible with members appointed to Forum immediately upon election.

**Alternative options**

6. There could be no change to the current structure and composition of Forum.
7. Forum could suggest alternative approaches for the size and composition of Forum.

**Who will be affected by this decision?**

8. This will directly affect all Forum members and the officer who supports the Forum. Indirectly this could affect all schools in Suffolk.

## Main body of the Report

9. Thanks are due to Forum members and other stakeholders who have completed the survey questionnaire and the members of the Forum Development working group. All of these contributions have been extremely useful to inform the development of this paper.
10. This paper presents options for the structure and size of Forum, ensuring that there is a structure in place that ensures appropriate representation for members ahead of budget setting in October.
11. These models have been developed through workshops and discussions with the Schools Forum Development working group.
12. All of the models presented are compliant with the requirements of the existing Regulations.
13. A short summary of themes emerging from the ongoing survey activity is provided at the end of the paper.

## Representation and voting

14. There is a requirement for Schools Forum membership to be “broadly proportionate” but there is no clear definition of this. There are two guidelines in the regulations that make direct reference to this:
15. “**Subject to** [having at least one representative of any maintained secondary, special, nursery and PRU in the authority] primary schools, secondary schools and Academies **must** be broadly proportionately represented on the forum, having regard to the total number of pupils registered at them”.
16. “An authority **may** determine that the number of members representing schools in a particular school category must be broadly proportionate to the total number of schools in that category when compared with the total number of schools”.
17. Due to the requirements in the regulations for there to be at least one representative for each category of membership, and the number of categories of membership are greater in the maintained schools sector than the academies sector, it is not possible to achieve absolute parity of voting representation with a “one person, one vote system”, even if the absolute number of representatives for schools and academies members on Forum is aligned more closely to pupil numbers.
18. DfE Schools Forum guidance states the importance of having representation of all groups where there are pupils, even where these are in a minority.
19. Under a “one member, one vote” system, those categories with a very small number of pupils have a much greater weight, and those with the largest proportion of pupils have less proportionate representation overall. In particular this affects maintained primary schools, and to a lesser extent, mainstream academies.

20. Furthermore, the Early Years PVI sector has voting rights on some items, and so the calculation of proportionality between sectors changes in these instances.
21. Votes could be weighted so that the influence of members is “broadly proportionate” to pupil numbers. In cases where the PVI sector is included in the vote, it is proposed that the number of pupils represented by this sector be included in the total number of pupils (10,371 this term).
22. This system would reduce the influence of small groups on Forum.

## **Funding reforms**

23. It is recognised that the funding reform consultation and changes to the role of the local authority in managing schools will have a substantial impact on the role of schools forums. However the consultation states that it sees “a continuing role for schools forums in 2017-18 and 2018-19 in carrying out their current role of advising on the schools budget and the local formula, and making decisions about what spending can be held centrally in relation to schools”. It is therefore important that Forum is structured in a way that will enable to this to occur effectively and fairly in Suffolk.

## **Composition and size of Forum**

24. The tables below set out some potential models of Forum membership. These are based on discussions with the working group on possible structures, whilst adhering to the requirements in the Regulations for representation of provision in Suffolk. Forum is asked to decide on the number and allocation of schools and academies places only. Non-school members should be appointed by the local authority, but these can only comprise 1/3 of all places on Forum, and so the number of schools and academies places in the chosen model will determine the maximum size of Forum.
25. Three broad approaches are set out below, with worked examples for different scenarios.
26. Some of the key benefits and potential limitations are given below each model. These may not be exhaustive but are intended to support decision making on the most appropriate model to adopt for Forum.
27. Only 16-19 providers and early years PVI providers have been included in the non-school members as these are required by the Regulations. Other types of non-school member are determined by the local authority, and it is expected that this will be reviewed once there is an agreed model for Forum and the number of places available is known.

## Approach 1:

28. This would only be suitable if there is weighted voting.

29. Option 1a: The minimum size of Forum with a weighted voting system is 10 places, assuming one representative for each membership category in Suffolk as required by the Regulations, and a maximum size of 12 if all non-school places were filled:

Membership category	Represented groups	Pupil numbers	Places
	<b>Total</b>		<b>12</b>
	<b>Sub total – all schools &amp; academies</b>	<b>100,071</b>	<b>8</b>
Schools members	<b>LA maintained:</b>	<b>55,960</b>	<b>5</b>
	Primary Schools	42,859	1
	Secondary Schools	12,168	1
	Special Schools	412	1
	Nursery Schools	90	1
	PRUs	431	1
Academies members	<b>Academies:</b>	<b>44,111</b>	<b>3</b>
	Mainstream academies, including free schools, UTCs and Studio Schools	43,569	1
	Special academies, including free schools	542	1
	Alternative provision academies, including free schools	TBC	1
Non-school members	<b>Non-school:</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>4</b>
	16-19 providers	N/A	1
	Early years Private, Voluntary and Independent providers	10,371	1
	Maximum additional number of non-school places available	N/A	2

Benefits	Other considerations
Small Forum size	Complicated voting system
	No parity of Heads and Governors in maintained sector
	No area basis for membership
	Difficult for one person to seek and reflect the views of all providers they represent
	Voting influence is disproportionate by larger groups

Option 1b: Following existing custom and practice of having a Head and Governor representative for each schools member group representative would lead to a minimum Forum size of 15 members:

Membership category	Represented groups	Pupil numbers	Places
	<b>Total</b>		<b>19</b>
	<b>Sub total – all schools &amp; academies</b>	<b>100,071</b>	<b>13</b>
Schools members	<b>LA maintained:</b>	<b>55,960</b>	<b>10</b>
	Primary Schools	42,859	2
	Secondary Schools	12,168	2
	Special Schools	412	2
	Nursery Schools	90	2
	PRUs	431	2
Academies members	<b>Academies:</b>	<b>44,111</b>	<b>3</b>
	Mainstream academies, including free schools, UTCs and Studio Schools	43,569	1
	Special academies, including free schools	542	1
	Alternative provision academies, including free schools	TBC	1
Non-school members	<b>Non-school:</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>6</b>
	16-19 providers	N/A	1
	Early years Private, Voluntary and Independent providers	10,371	1
	Maximum additional number of non-school places available	N/A	4

Benefits	Other considerations
Small Forum size	Complicated voting system
Has parity of Heads and Governors in maintained sector	Not enough members to allow an area basis for membership
Multiple places for categories in the maintained sector allows for a “split” vote	Difficult for one person to seek and reflect the views of all providers they represent
	Voting influence is disproportionate by larger groups

Option 1c: If all membership categories required by the Regulations were allocated two representatives, there would be a minimum Forum size of 20 places:

Membership category	Represented groups	Pupil numbers	Places
	<b>Total</b>		<b>22</b>
	<b>Sub total – all schools &amp; academies</b>	<b>100,071</b>	<b>16</b>
Schools members	<b>LA maintained:</b>	<b>55,960</b>	<b>10</b>
	Primary Schools	42,859	2
	Secondary Schools	12,168	2
	Special Schools	412	2
	Nursery Schools	90	2
	PRUs	431	2
Academies members	<b>Academies:</b>	<b>44,111</b>	<b>6</b>
	Mainstream academies, including free schools, UTCs and Studio Schools	43,569	2
	Special academies, including free schools	542	2
	Alternative provision academies, including free schools	TBC	2
Non-school members	<b>Non-school:</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>6</b>
	16-19 providers	N/A	2
	Early years Private, Voluntary and Independent providers	1,0371	2
	Maximum additional number of non-school places available	N/A	2

Benefits	Other considerations
Small Forum size	Complicated voting system
Has parity of Heads and Governors in maintained sector and allows diversity of representatives in the Academies sector	Not enough members to allow an area basis for membership
Multiple places allows for a “split” vote within each represented group	Voting influence is disproportionate by larger groups

## Approach 2:

30. This approach considers pupil numbers within each membership category and allocates places accordingly, although very small categories must be represented individually. This could be combined with weighted voting, or could follow the existing “one member, one vote” system. Some example models for this membership are shown below.

31. Option 2a assumes one place for every group up to 10% of pupils, and 1 place added for every additional 10% of pupils:

Membership category	Represented groups	Pupil numbers	% of total	Places
	<b>Total</b>			<b>21</b>
	<b>Sub total - all schools &amp; academies</b>	<b>100,071</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>14</b>
Schools members	<b>LA maintained:</b>	<b>55,960</b>	<b>55.90%</b>	<b>8</b>
	Primary Schools	42,859	42.80%	4
	Secondary Schools	12,168	12.20%	1
	Special Schools	412	0.40%	1
	Nursery Schools	90	0.10%	1
	PRUs	431	0.40%	1
Academies members	<b>Academies:</b>	<b>44,111</b>	<b>44.10%</b>	<b>6</b>
	Mainstream academies, including free schools, UTCs and Studio Schools	43,569	43.50%	4
	Special academies, including free schools	542	0.50%	1
	Alternative provision academies, including free schools	TBC	TBC	1
Non-school members	<b>Non-school:</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>7</b>
	16-19 providers	N/A	N/A	1
	Early years Private, Voluntary and Independent providers	10,371	N/A	1
	Maximum additional number of non-school places available	N/A	N/A	5

Benefits	Other considerations
Allows a simple “one member, one vote”	Does not create parity between the maintained and academy sector
Similar to the existing model and so would create relatively little disruption to implement	Voting influence is not closely correlated with pupil numbers
Settings with similar numbers of pupils have the same number of representatives	The influence of secondary maintained schools is the same as much smaller providers
It is straightforward to agree the number of places on Forum and each group can predict the number of places it is likely to have in the future based on expected pupil numbers	Only allows parity between Heads and Governors in the primary maintained sector, and equivalent if desired, in the mainstream academy sector

Option 2b: A scale could be applied for allocating places which give more weight to smaller groups:

Scale A	Places
0-5%	1
5.1-10%	2
10.1-20%	3
20.1-30%	4
30.1-50%	5
50.1-70%	6

Membership category	Represented groups	Pupil numbers	% of total	Places
	<b>Total</b>			<b>27</b>
	<b>Sub total - All schools &amp; academies</b>	<b>100,071</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>18</b>
Schools members	<b>LA maintained:</b>	<b>55,960</b>	<b>55.90%</b>	<b>11</b>
	Primary Schools	42,859	42.80%	5
	Secondary Schools	12,168	12.20%	3
	Special Schools	412	0.40%	1
	Nursery Schools	90	0.10%	1
	PRUs	431	0.40%	1
Academies members	<b>Academies:</b>	<b>44,111</b>	<b>44.10%</b>	<b>7</b>
	Mainstream academies, including free schools, UTCs and Studio Schools	43,569	43.50%	5
	Special academies, including free schools	542	0.50%	1
	Alternative provision academies, including free schools	TBC	TBC	1
Non-school members	<b>Non-school:</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>9</b>
	16-19 providers	N/A	N/A	1
	Early years Private, Voluntary and Independent providers	10,371	N/A	1
	Maximum additional number of non-school places available	N/A	N/A	7

Benefits	Other considerations
Allows a simple "one member, one vote"	Does not create parity between the maintained and academy sector
Similar to the existing model and so would create relatively little disruption to implement	Voting influence is not closely correlated with pupil numbers
Settings with similar numbers of pupils have the same number of representatives	Smaller groups at the lower end of each band gain significantly increased representation by exceeding each threshold compared to larger groups
It is straightforward to agree the number of places on Forum and predict the number of future places based on expected pupil numbers	
Allows parity between Heads and Governors in the maintained sector	

Option 2c: An alternative scale:

Scale B	Places
0-5%	1
5.1-15%	2
15.1-35%	3
35.1-65%	4

Membership category	Represented groups	Pupil numbers	% of total	Places
	<b>Total</b>			<b>22</b>
	<b>Sub total - All schools &amp; academies</b>	<b>100,071</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>15</b>
Schools members	<b>LA maintained:</b>	<b>55,960</b>	<b>55.90%</b>	<b>9</b>
	Primary Schools	42,859	42.80%	4
	Secondary Schools	12,168	12.20%	2
	Special Schools	412	0.40%	1
	Nursery Schools	90	0.10%	1
	PRUs	431	0.40%	1
Academies members	<b>Academies:</b>	<b>44,111</b>	<b>44.10%</b>	<b>6</b>
	Mainstream academies, including free schools, UTCs and Studio Schools	43,569	43.50%	4
	Special academies, including free schools	542	0.50%	1
	Alternative provision academies, including free schools	TBC	TBC	1
Non-school members	<b>Non-school:</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>7</b>
	16-19 providers	N/A	N/A	1
	Early years Private, Voluntary and Independent providers	10,371	N/A	1
	Maximum additional number of non-school places available under each scenario	N/A	N/A	5

Benefits	Other considerations
Allows a simple “one member, one vote”	Does not create parity between the maintained and academy sector
Similar to the existing model and so would create relatively little disruption to implement	Voting influence is not closely correlated with pupil numbers
Settings with similar numbers of pupils have the same number of representatives	
It is straightforward to agree the number of places on Forum and each group can predict the number of places it is likely to have in the future based on expected pupil numbers	
Allows parity between Heads and Governors in the maintained sector	

### Approach 3:

32. This could be combined with weighted voting, or could follow the existing “one member, one vote” system. It assumes a given number of places are allocated to schools and academies, and three examples (Options 3a, 3b and 3c) are presented in the table below.

33. There is some discretion in allocating places once every group represented with providers in Suffolk has been given one place, as required by the Regulations. At present, this would only need to apply to the schools primary and secondary groups, and so the total number of places available to be allocated across both categories is shown.

Membership category	Represented groups	Pupil numbers	3a	3b	3c
	<b>Total</b>		<b>21</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>27</b>
	<b>Sub total - all schools &amp; academies</b>	<b>100,071</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>
Schools members	<b>LA maintained:</b>	<b>55,960</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
	Primary Schools	42,859	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
	Secondary Schools	12,168			
	Special Schools	412	1	1	1
	Nursery Schools	90	1	1	1
	PRUs	431	1	1	1
Academies members	<b>Academies:</b>	<b>44,111</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
	Mainstream academies, including free schools, UTCs and Studio Schools	43,569	4	5	6
	Special academies, including free schools	542	1	1	1
	Alternative provision academies, including free schools	TBC	1	1	1
Non-school members	<b>Non-school:</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
	16-19 providers	N/A	1	1	1
	Early years Private, Voluntary and Independent providers	10,371	1	1	1
	Maximum additional number of non-school places available under each scenario	N/A	5	6	7

Benefits	Other considerations
Allows a simple “one member, one vote”	Does not create parity between the maintained and academy sector
Allows parity between Heads and Governors in the maintained sector (if an even number of total places is selected)	Voting influence is not closely correlated with pupil numbers
Can select and restrict or expand the total size of Forum easily	Needs negotiation around allocating the number of places between primary and secondary schools in the maintained sector

## Survey update

34. The prominent theme in the response from Forum members relates to communication.
35. The current format of papers is generally seen as good, but should indicate who can vote on any decisions. It has been suggested that topics are often dealt with in isolation though, and the potential impact of any decision on other groups of children and young people/funding blocks is not always made clear enough.
36. A common suggestion was that links to all papers (including the minutes) should be sent out to Heads and Chairs as soon as these are published on the website. Some have also asked for a short digest of key points from Forum meetings be created which can be circulated widely and reproduced in bulletins such as The Knowledge to support sharing information and raising awareness of the work of Forum.
37. There appears to be broad support for having working groups, but members suggest that the structure and composition of these may need to be revised.
38. The Local Authority acknowledges the points that have been raised, particularly regarding communication, which has also been identified elsewhere including the January 2015 Ofsted inspection. In response, a weekly bulletin for schools is being created, and details of Schools Forum will be included in this. The same content can be used by other groups such as The Knowledge for governors, and the consultative group for Early Years PVI providers.
39. It is proposed that the composition and structure of working groups is reviewed once the structure and size of Schools Forum is agreed, alongside a review of the way Forum undertakes consultation and engagement.
40. There will also be further analysis of themes from the surveys in the next report, including those received from other stakeholders.