**Oxfordshire County Council**

**Schools Forum – June 2024**

**Membership and Constitution report and draft plan of meetings academic year 24/25**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Settings** | | **Sector** | |
| Academies | X | Foundation Stage | X |
| Maintained Schools | X | Primary | X |
| PVI Nurseries | X | Secondary | X |
| Special Schools | X | Special | X |
| Local Authority | X | 16+ | X |
| Schools Forum | X | High Needs |  |

**1. Items for Information:**

The composition and membership of Oxfordshire’s Schools Forum was agreed in 2018. It was then refreshed in August 2022 and in April 2023. As part of the Forum’s regular reviews, there have recently been requests for additional representation at the Forum from two discrete groups: officers, and, Oxfordshire’s Parent Carer Forum (OxPCF). This report gives the background to these requests and asks for the Schools’ Forum to consider the appropriate next steps. It further highlights the current vacancies and calls on the respective constituencies to fill those vacancies.

**2. Purpose of Report**

2.1 To consider whether additional members should be added to the Forum, in particular whether parent/carer representation from Oxfordshire Parent Carer Forum (OxPCF)would be appropriate.

2.2 To consider whether the inclusion of additional officers is warranted and appropriate.

2.3 To address the number of vacancies and to ensure a mechanism is put in place for recruitment of additional members.

**3. Recommendations**

3.1 School Forum is asked to approve:

A) the inclusion of one representative without voting rights from Oxfordshire Parent Carer Forum (OxPCF)

B) that officers are invited to the Forum in a non-speaking and non-voting capacity – accepting that they may speak on items on the agenda if the Chair calls on them to speak.

C) that the constituent groups organise an urgent recruitment exercise to address any vacancies

D) the draft plan of meetings including dates and possible agenda items (recognising that both can be changed as appropriate)

**4. Background and overview**

4.1 The constitution and membership of Oxfordshire's Schools’ Forum was refreshed in 2018 and then again in 2022 and 2023. This mirrors best practice guidance given from the Department for Education that School Forums should regularly review their composition and membership.

**Attendance by officers**

4.2 In 2021 the DfE issued further Good Practice Guidance. Paragraph 57 gives details of the officers who are able to speak at school forum meetings. These officers are:

• Director of Children’s Services or their representative

• Chief Financial Officer or their representative

• any person invited by the Schools Forum to provide financial or technical advice

• any person presenting a paper to the Schools Forum but their ability to speak is limited to the paper that they are presenting

4.3 The Deputy Director of Education is formally requesting that Oxfordshire Schools Forum allow officers from the Children, Education and Families Directorate to attend in a non-speaking, non-voting capacity as part of their professional development and to enable them to understand the rationale for decisions made by the Forum. In addition, this would enable the Chair (if they so wished) to call on officers to respond to points of clarification. The decision to invite to speak would rest with the Chair.

**Inclusion of parent/carer representatives**

4.4 Currently Schools Forum includes a number of non-schools members reflecting the broader educational landscape.

4.5 The 2021 guidance from the DfE states (in paragraph 47):

*The purpose of non-schools members is also to bring greater breadth of discussion to schools forum meetings and ensure that stakeholders and partners other than schools are represented. Organisations which typically provide nonschools members are trades unions, professional associations and representatives of youth groups.* ***Parent groups could also be considered****. However, as there are clearly limited numbers of non-schools members able to be on a schools forum, care should be taken to ensure that an appropriate representation from wider stakeholders is achieved.*

4.6 Currently there are 3 non schools members with voting rights:

* 1 X Early Years representative
* 1 X 16-19 representative (this position is currently vacant)
* 1 X Council of Oxfordshire Teachers Associations (COTO)

4.7 In addition there are 5 non schools members without voting rights:

* 4 X elected members/councillors
* 1 X School business managers

4.8 It is therefore proposed that, in line with DfE guidance, the Schools Forum agree to the inclusion of an additional non schools member without voting rights from Oxfordshire parent carer forum. This would not alter the proportionality of Schools Forum voting members (between maintainaed and academy schools) or the overall quorum for the Forum (which currently sits at 9 voting members).

**Vacancies**

4.9 Oxfordshire Schools Forum currently has the following 12 vacancies out of a membership of 22 (vacancies are defined as those who have come to the end of their term of office or current vacancies listed in the April 2023 refresh). These are:

| Constituency | With or without voting rights |
| --- | --- |
| 16-19 sector (1) | With voting rights |
| Maintained primary school representative (1 X governors) | With voting rights |
| Maintained secondary school representative (1 X headteacher) | With voting rights |
| Academy primary school representative (1 X Headteacher/Senior staff 1X governor) | With voting rights |
| Academy secondary school representative (2 X governors 2 X headteacher/senior staff) | With voting rights |
| Special school (1x governor, 1 x headteacher) | With voting rights |
| Maintained Nursery School Representative (1) | With voting rights |

4.10 Under the DfE guidance, it is the Schools Forum responsibility to organise an election for filling any vacancies. The guidance is clear:

*Schools members must be elected. (Para 34)*

And

*Academies members must be elected by the proprietor bodies of the academies in the local authority’s area, and they are probably best placed to determine the process. (Para 39)*

4.11 Therefore, it is proposed that the local authority take responsibility for the election of the 3 maintained representatives including the post 16 sector whilst the academy sector organise to fill the vacancies in their constituency. That both parties commit to having a full complement of members for the first meeting of the 24/25 academic year.

**Draft plan of meetings for academic year 24/25**

4.12 Each meeting will include the following standing items: Welcomes and apologies, and minutes and matters arising of the previous meeting and date of next meeting. In addition, the following meeting dates and agenda items are proposed.

| Proposed date (all meetings will be booked 10 to midday) | Possible agenda items |
| --- | --- |
| 17 September 2024 | Alternative provision update  Banding review  Traded services  Provisional Uplift to formula funding  Maintained schools budget submission dates 2025  National funding formula consultation  DSG announcement 2025-2026 |
| 12 November 2024 | DSG block transfer – outcome of consultation  DSG disapplications  Growth fund  Union duties  Central block  DSG balances  Place planning return – draft numbers |
| 14 January 2025 | National funding formula (DSG 2025/26)  Schools Funding formula (Authority Proforma Tool) 2025/26 (draft budgets) |
| 11 February 2025 | Update on School Funding and ApT for 2025/26  Special schools funding  DBV update  Banding update  Early years funding |
| 24 June 2025 | Membership (including vacancies)  SEND annual update |

**5. Recommendations**

5.1 Schools Forum is asked to approve:

A) the inclusion of one representative without voting rights from Oxfordshire Parent Carer Forum (OxPCF)

B) that officers are invited to the Forum in a non-speaking and non-voting capacity – accepting that they may speak on items on the agenda if the Chair is in agreement.

C) that the constituent groups organise an urgent recruitment exercise to address any vacancies.

D) the draft plan of meetings including dates and possible agenda items (recognising that both can be changed as appropriate)

**Annex A**

**Oxfordshire Schools Forum Membership: April 2023**

|  | **Number** | **How Elected** | **Name** | **Term Ends** | **Substitute** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***With Voting Rights*** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Non-School Representatives** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Early Years Representative – voluntary/private sector | 1 | Representative nominated from Early Years private, voluntary or independent providers | Louise Izzo | 13.8.2026 |  |
| 16-19 | 1 | Representative nominated by FE Colleges in Oxfordshire | **VACANT** |  |  |
| Council Oxfordshire Teacher Associations (COTO) | 1 | Representative confirmed at COTO AGM | Michelle Codrington-Rogers | 31.03.2025 | Elaine Paling/ |
| **School Representatives** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Maintained Primary School representatives** | 4 | Election |  |  |  |
| *2 Headteachers* |  |  | Sam Bartholomew | *31.01.2025* |  |
|  |  |  | Sarah Awuye | 01.08.2025 |  |
| *2 Governors* |  |  | Tom James | 01.08.2025 | Kevin Moyes |
|  |  |  | **VACANT** |  |  |
| **Maintained Secondary School Representatives** | 1 | Election |  |  |  |
| *1Headteacher/Governor* |  |  | Chris Hart/**VACANT** | 16.10.2023 | Ian Courtney |
| **Academy Primary School Representatives** | 4 | Election |  |  |  |
| *2 Headteacher/Senior Staff* |  |  | Victoria Woods | 06.11.2025 |  |
|  |  |  | **VACANT** |  |  |
| *2 Governors* |  |  | Maureen Thompson | 30.04.2026 |  |
|  |  |  | **VACANT** |  |  |
| **Academy Secondary School Representatives** | 6 | Election |  |  |  |
| *3 Headteachers/Senior Staff* |  |  | Catharine Darnton (Vice-Chair)/**VACANT** | 22.11.2023 |  |
|  |  |  | Nathan Thomas (Chair) | 31.03.2027 |  |
| *3 Governors* |  |  | Carole Thomson/**VACANT** | 01.09.2023 |  |
|  |  |  | **VACANT** |  |  |
|  |  |  | **VACANT** |  |  |
| **Pupil Referral Unit** | 1 | Representative/Advocate CLA/ PRUIS | Jacqui West | 30.04.2026 |  |
| **Special School Representatives** | 2 | Election |  |  |  |
| *1 Headteacher/Senior Staff* |  |  | Lorraine Wilson/**VACANT** | 01.06.2023 |  |
| *1 Governor* |  |  | Jeanne Lapsley/**VACANT** | 14.05.2023 |  |
| **Maintained Nursery School Representative** | 1 | Election | Natalie Wilson/**VACANT** | 01.06.2023 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***With No Voting Rights*** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Observers** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Elected Members |  | Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Young People’s Services | Councillor John Howson | - | N/A |
|  |  |  |  | - | - |
|  |  |  | Councillor Michael Waine | - | - |
|  |  |  | Councillor Andy Graham | - | - |
| Observer on behalf of School Business Managers |  |  | Jo Clarke, SBM St Aloysius School | - |  |
| **Attendees (as requested)** |  | Corporate Director of Children’s Services OCC: | Lisa Lyons | N/A | N/A |
|  |  | Dep. Director of Education OCC | Kate Reynolds | N/A | N/A |
|  |  | Head School Improvement & Learning OCC | Zaheer Ahmed | N/A | N/A |
|  |  | Head SEND, OCC | Deb Smit | N/A | N/A |
|  |  | Finance Partner, OCC | Les Oosthuizen | N/A | N/A |
| **Clerk** |  |  |  | N/A | N/A |

**Committees**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Schools and High Needs** | **Services and Contracts** |  |
| **Chair** | Maureen Thompson | Brenda Williams |  |
| **Voting Members** |  | Maureen Thompson |  |
|  | Carole Thomson | Michelle Codrington-Rogers |  |
|  | Sam Bartholomew | Sam Bartholomew |  |
|  | Lorraine Wilson | Carole Thomson |  |
|  | Jacqui West |  |  |
|  | Tristan Arnison |  |  |
|  | Jeanne Lapsley |  |  |
|  | Tom James |  |  |
| **Non-voting members** | Natalie Wilson / Sarah Steel (reps Early Years) | Jo Clarke (co-opted SBM) |  |
| **LA Officers** | Sarah Fogden / Margaret Whitaker | Sarah Fogden |  |
|  | Hayley Good (Deputy Director) |  |  |