

## Schools Forum

13 March 2007

### Staff Side Associations: request for representation on the Schools Forum

**Members of the Schools Forum are requested to make a decision on the request outlined in this paper**

1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to inform members of the Forum of a request that has been received for representation on the Forum and to seek advice from the Forum on whether or not a change to the constitution and membership is desired.

2. Background

The role and responsibilities of the Schools Forum were changed in April 2006. In preparation for the change, a new constitution and a revised membership was adopted by the Schools Forum in Walsall. The constitution was drawn up by a working group of the Forum in the light of the Schools Forum Regulations (2005) and advice from the DFES Good Practice Guide. The Forum's revised membership does not include any representation from staff side associations.

At a recent meeting of Walsall's Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) staff side associations requested that the Forum reconsider the constitution and reform it to allow for staff side members to sit on the Schools Forum as non-school members.

3. Current Membership of the Schools Forum

The Constitution currently records membership of the Schools Forum as follows:

Membership of the Schools Forum is specified within the Schools Forum regulations 2005. Within these guidelines, the LEA has determined the membership as shown below:-

**Schools Members**

- 4 primary head teachers to be appointed through the primary forum;
- 4 secondary head teachers to be appointed through the secondary forum;
- 1 special school head teacher to be appointed through primary forum;
- 1 nursery head teacher;
- 1 Early Years Development Child Care partnership rep;

4 primary governors  
 4 secondary governors;  
 1 special school governor.  
 (Nominated substitutes to formally take part in meetings in their absence)

### **Non-School Members**

1 Church of England diocesan representative;  
 1 Catholic diocesan representative;

### **Observers**

1 City Academy representative (non-voting);  
 1 LSC representative (non-voting);  
 1 Pupil Referral Unit rep (non-voting);  
 Cabinet Portfolio holder for Children's Services

#### **4. Comment**

Whilst it is not compulsory, it is not unusual for staff side associations to be represented on a Schools Forum. Indeed, Paragraph 1.28 of the *Good Practice Guide* notes that trade unions and staff side associations normally provide most of the non-school representatives attending Forum meetings. As the Forum's business concerns the financing of schools and the provision of services under Central Expenditure from the Dedicated Schools Grant, the staff side associations have a legitimate interest in policy and decision-making. Consideration needs to be given to the level of representation. The JNC includes associations that represent teaching and non-teaching staff. Workforce reform has brought about increased diversity in school staffing so the Forum would need to take this diversity into account, should Forum membership be extended to staff side associations.

#### **5. Decision**

Members of the Forum are requested to indicate whether they wish to :

- (a) Maintain the constitution as it currently stands, allowing no staff-side membership
- (b) Extend one non-school place to be appointed by the JNC
- (c) Extend two non-school places so that teaching and non-teaching associations can have a voting seat on the Forum
- (d) Co-opt two JNC members as non-voting observers to the Schools Forum



