



Walsall Children's Services

SCHOOLS FORUM

TUESDAY, 16TH JUNE, 2009

CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP ISSUES

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To seek approval to the variation of the Constitution on a number of membership issues.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 (a) That the re-establishment of the Forum by Walsall Council be noted;
- (b) That consideration be given to asking the current Academy representative to represent all three Academies now operating within the Borough of Walsall;
- (c) That the decision of the Forum in March, 2008 extending the term of office of Heather Lomas (Special School Head Teacher), Elaine Stringer (Nursery Head Teacher), Rhoda Poyser (Early Years Development Childcare Partnership), Vacancy (Catholic Diocese) and Marion Letts (Staff Side) to 31st March, 2011 be re-affirmed;
- (d) That consequent upon the exercise undertaken by officers in respect of Governor representatives, approval be given to extending the terms of office of Messrs. G. Deakin and M. Lee (Primary Governors) and Messrs. F. Hodgkinson and M. Barton (Secondary Governors) to 31st March, 2011;
- (e) That the respective Head Teacher Forums be requested to identify which of their current Members on the Forum will have their terms of office extended to 31st March, 2011;
- (f) That individual schools Members be invited to nominate substitutes to attend Forum meetings on their behalf, it being noted that the Primary Heads Forum has nominated Martin Atkins, St. James Primary and David Brownsword, Leamore Primary as substitute Members for their current representatives;

- (g) That it be noted that the terms of office of the following remaining Members will be as indicated below:-

<u>Member</u>	<u>Term of office</u>
Mr. M. Sweeney, Secondary School Governor	31 st March, 2010
Vacancy, Secondary School Governor	31 st March, 2010
Mr. A. Davies, Primary Governor	31 st March, 2010
Mr. E. Gee, Primary Governor	31 st March, 2010
2 Primary Head Teachers (to be identified)	31 st March, 2010
2 Secondary Head Teachers (to be identified)	31 st March, 2010

- (h) That it be noted that consequent upon (b) to (g) inclusive, officers will prepare a draft Terms of Reference and Operational Guidance document for the Forum for endorsement at a future meeting.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The Forum was originally established under the Schools Forum (England) Regulations, 2002. At that time, education services in Walsall were controlled by Education Walsall (SERCO), education services in Walsall having been taken out of control of Walsall Council, following OFSTED inspections over the 2001/2002 period. In consequence of the Schools Forum Regulations, 2005, the membership of the Forum was varied to include representation from private/voluntary/independent schools as well as observers to include the Director of Finance - City Academy, Black Country Learning and Skills Council, Pupil Referral Unit and Cabinet Portfolio holder for Children's Services. The current arrangement had been delivered solely by SERCO since the inception of the intervention contract in December, 2002. The Council invoked an extension of the contract for a further two years in July, 2006.
- 3.2 In 2008, the Council had the opportunity to exercise its statutory role and seek the best commercial and professional support for schools, children and young people of Walsall and the professional staff who work for them. The Council considered various options and chose to re-engage SERCO for a period of 12 years to continue to provide education services to the Borough of Walsall.

3.3 To regularise the situation, to ensure continuation of the Schools Forum in its original guise and to ensure compliance with the Regulations, Walsall Council needed to establish a Schools Forum as the current education authority, notwithstanding the fact that the Council had chosen SERCO to run education services on its behalf. This was done at the Council meeting on 12th January, 2009. A copy of the report and appended Constitution are attached as Appendix A.

4.0 Membership Issues

4.1 The Constitution currently provides for an Observer representative from the Director of Finance - City Academy. At the time this was initially agreed, there was only one Academy in existence in the Borough. There are now two operating academies, one in Bloxwich and one in Shelfield. A further academy, at Darlaston, will come into operation in September, 2009. The current representative is Adrian Bowater. The Forum might wish to ask Mr. Bowater if he is prepared to represent all three Academies.

4.2 The Constitution currently provides that the period of office of Head Teachers and Governors will run for four years from 1st April, 2006. The Constitution also contains a provision that the period of office was to be staggered to maintain continuity of experienced Forum Members. This was invoked by the Forum in March, 2008 when the terms of office of the following Members were extended to 31st March, 2011:-

1 Special School Head Teacher (Heather Lomas)

1 Nursery Head Teacher (Elaine Stringer)

1 Early Years Development Child Care Partnership (Rhoda Poyser)

1 Catholic Diocese representative (Vacancy)

1 Staff Side representative (Marion Letts)

2 Primary Head Teachers

2 Secondary Head Teachers

2 Primary Governors

2 Secondary Governors

4.3 The Head Teachers were to be nominated through their respective Forums and the Governors were to be identified by way of consultation with all Governors. The exercise in respect of Governors was carried out in March, 2008. A total of 1250 Primary and 415 Secondary Governors were balloted. 81 replies were received. The number of votes cast for each Governor was as follows:-

<u>Primary</u>			<u>Secondary</u>		
G. Deakin	-	41	N. Chomyk	-	18 (no longer a Member)
M. Lee	-	31	F. Hodgkinson	-	15
E. Gee	-	28	M. Barton	-	10
A. Davies	-	23	M. Sweeney	-	5

- 4.4 With regard to the exercise in respect of Head Teachers, Forum is asked to consider requesting the respective Head Teacher Forums to identify which of their current Members on the Forum will have their terms of office extended to 31st March, 2011.
- 4.5 The Forum is asked to consider re-affirming the decision of the Forum meeting in March, 2008, as detailed in Paragraph 4.2 above, and subsequently approving the extension of the terms of office of Messrs. G. Deakin, M. Lee, F. Hodgkinson and M. Barton until 31st March, 2011.
- 4.6 The Schools Forums (England) (Amendment) Regulations, 2008 introduced new Regulations requiring Local Authorities to consult the Forum on arrangements for substitutes who may attend and vote at meetings on behalf of schools Members. This matter was also debated at the meeting on 11th March, 2008 when it was agreed that with regard to substitute Members on the Forum, the respective organisations be requested to identify named substitutes for their Members. This exercise was carried out in conjunction with the exercise referred to at Paragraph 4.3 but only 4 replies were received. All but one of the substitutes nominated are existing Forum Members. To move this issue forward, Forum may wish to consider asking the schools Members to identify their own individual substitutes.
- 5.0 The Way Forward
- 5.1 Once the issues in Paragraph 4.0 above have been addressed, officers propose to draft a Terms of Reference and Operational Guidance document which will be brought back to Forum for endorsement at a later date.
- 5.2 The selection process for those Members of the Forum whose term of office expires 31st March, 2010 will commence later this year.

Clerk to the Forum.

