



North Tyneside Council

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Briefing note

To: Schools Forum

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Purpose of the Paper:

Information	√
Consultation	
Decision	√

Title of Briefing: Meetings & Forward Plan Proposed Changes – September 2018

Background:

In January 2018, Schools Forum received a report on the above and agreed to review both the operation/timing of meetings and the forward plan. All members were asked to work with LA officers (and partners) and the Chair of the Schools Forum to look at this, subsequently 2 Schools Forum members – 1 x Secondary and 1 x Primary agreed to be part of this process.

Current Position:

On an annual basis Schools Forum determine both the number of meetings and the meeting dates for the following Academic Year, current dates have been arranged up to the end of June 2018. The Schools Forum Constitution the subsequent EFA guidance (September 2017) notes that Schools Forums should meet at least 4 times per annum. The North Tyneside Schools Forum meets 8 times per annum.

In addition, Schools Forum has established a forward plan to support with its effective operation; the purpose of the forward plan is to note carried forward and periodic items that Forum need to consider over a 12 month period in addition to being able to manage its day-to-day business.

Both documents (meeting dates and forward plan) are made available to all members and are used to inform planning and support for members.

Future Position:

Meetings – frequent, duration and dates – it is proposed to revert to 4 full meetings per annum and one update meeting. It is believed that this will support members on an individual basis with reviewing papers, etc., to discuss matters with the schools/ organisations they are representing and to allow members to have more time to be able to support others to be better informed and consider the content of papers, etc.

From September 2018 (or before if members were agreeable), meetings will therefore operate as follows:

- days may to allow for effective planning and time for member to receive and consider papers - this was particularly evident in January 2017 and is expected for January 2018 where term time and operational dates are not well aligned.

- Time will be extended from 12.30 pm (12 noon for lunch for members) until to 3.00 pm to allow sufficient time for the meeting business to take place and decisions to be made, etc. This extension allows a similar amount of time to be allocated over the year for Forum business.
- 4 full meetings will take place in:
 - September – potentially towards the end of the month
 - December – potentially towards the beginning of the month
 - Late March/ early April – ideally before the end of the Easter term
 - Late June/early July – dependent upon break for Summer
- there will be one additional meeting in January of each year following from the December meeting and working to EFA reporting deadlines. This may not be a full meeting – although will still operate from 12.30, it is anticipated that this will be an update meeting following on from decisions made in December.

Forward Plan: the plan will be aligned with the proposal noted above regarding meetings. A suggested template was presented to Schools Forum in January 2018 as follows:

Example:

Date	Item	Notes:	Lead
13 Sept 2017	Annual Review of Schools Forum Constitution to include:	It is recommended to Forum that it review its Constitution on an annual basis to ensure that it continues to support the work that Forum undertake and to take into consideration any updates which have been provided at a national level. To support this there are a number of key actions which need to be undertaken	JG (CP)
	a) Election of Chair		
	b) Election of the Vice Chair		JG (EA)
	c) Declaration of Interest – all members		
	d) Members Attendance	Schools Forum to review the existing policy in place and to determine if they wish to operate within existing arrangements or request that these are reviewed.	JG (EA)
	e) Notification to all Schools/Governors membership		JG (EA)
	School Balances at 31st March 2017 – excess surplus balances policy		
	2017/18 school budgets to include deficit agreements	Update from the Head of Finance/ S151 Officer on the current balances position in maintained schools. Additional am update will also be provided noting recommendations from the sub group members.	
	NFF 2018/19 to include:	Update on the National Funding Formula (NFF) from the Head of Finance/S151 Officer and what they may mean for schools, this will be dependent upon updates being available nationally.	
	a) -Early Years		
	b) -High Needs		
	c) -Schools		

It is proposed that with effect from September 2018 (or before if members were agreeable), that Schools Forum forward plan be aligned to the above template and members provided with more detail regarding each item on the forward plan. In addition a number of items are currently presented on the forward plan on a very regular basis – these items will be reviewed to ensure that they contribute to the effective operation. Member will be presented with a revised forward plan for September 2018 accordingly.

Recommendations:

1. Schools Forum having read this report and clearly understanding the information provided consider this report and note the following:

2. Agree to the changes to the formal meetings from 8 to 4 per annum and the time duration changing from 12.30 to 3.00 pm.
3. Accept that the days that the meetings take place may vary.
4. Accept that the forward plan will be aligned to reflect the changes in meeting dates and the revised template be implemented following a review of all previous items noted as being on the forward plan.
5. Agree to an additional meeting being scheduled to provide for an update between decisions made at the December meeting and the January deadlines for reporting to EFA. It is also accepted in agreeing to this that the January meeting will be an update/ presentation and therefore papers may not be provided in advance for this meeting.
6. Publication of minutes will operate within an agreed schedule and in addition a list of actions agreed at each meeting will also be provided for members, the actions log/ notes of the meeting will be published within 5 working days of the meeting and the minutes published at an agreed date thereafter taking reference from EFA guidance¹.
7. Members to accept that in changing to the revisions an updated publication schedule will also be established to support members with their role and discussion with schools/ organisations they are representing².
8. The Constitution, Members Handbook and Action Plan will be updated/ aligned to for September 2018 to reflect these changes.

¹ Notes or minutes of each schools forum meeting should be produced and put on the website as soon after the meeting as possible to enable members and others to see the outcome of any discussions and decisions and, or votes. It's good practice to formally agree the accuracy of the note and minutes at a subsequent meeting but the publication of the draft minutes should not be delayed as a result and we'd recommend no later than five days following the meeting. EFA Guidance – September 2017

² It's good practice for the schools forum and local authority to agree a standard for papers. It's usual for papers to be dispatched at least one week prior to the meeting at which they will be discussed to allow members to consider them and if necessary canvass views from the group they are representing. Papers should be published on the local authority's website at this time to enable representations to be made to schools forum members. EFA Guidance – September 2017