

Date: 05 October 2023	Item 5	Type of report: For Discussion / Decision
Report title: Review of Schools Forum membership		
Author name Tim Gibson		and contact details: Aron.Brown@southwark.gov.uk
Officer to present the report: Aron Brown and Clerk		

Executive Summary

This item is to review the existing membership and make up of the Southwark Schools Forum and makes recommendations about implementing changes to the membership.

Schools Forum Actions

- i) That the current membership be noted and that the existing members be reappointed to the Forum.
- ii) That the Schools Forum agree to amend the membership structure as proposed in paragraph 2.3 to 2.5.
- iii) That the Clerk (and officers) continue to take steps to fill the current vacancies across maintained and other categories.
- iv) That the Academy schools take steps to fill their vacancies on the Forum and to contact the Clerk if they require assistance in doing this.
- v) That the council write to those members that have recently resigned from the Forum to thank them for their service on behalf of the Forum and the Council.

1 The Existing Southwark Schools Forum Membership

1.1 The current composition of the Schools Forum is shown below as well as the existing representative (where the place is filled) or previous representative where the representative has recently resigned.

2 Review of the existing membership and proposed Amendments

2.1 The DfE's [Schools Forum Operational and good practice guide](#) contains the following relating to membership:

14. The Schools Forums Regulations provide a framework for the appointment of members, but allow a considerable degree of discretion in order to accommodate local priorities and practice. A quick guide to the structure of the schools forums is available.

- 15. There is no maximum or minimum size of a schools forum. Authorities will wish to take various issues into account in deciding the actual size, including the need to have full representation for various types of school, and the local authority’s policy on representation of non-schools members. However, care should be taken to keep the schools forum to a reasonable size to ensure that it does not become too unwieldy.

- 16. Types of member: schools forums must have 'schools members', ‘academies member(s)’ if there is at least one academy in the local authority’s area and 'non-schools members'. Schools and academies members together must number at least two-thirds of the total membership of the schools forum and the balance between maintained primary, maintained secondary and academies members must be broadly proportionate to the pupil numbers in each category, so the structure of Forum should be regularly reviewed, we would suggest good practice is to review the membership as a standing agenda item at each meeting. Academies members must represent mainstream academies and, if there are any in the local authority area, special academies and alternative provision academies. There is no requirement for academies members to represent specific primary and secondary phases, but it may be encouraged to ensure representation remains broadly proportionate to pupil numbers. Academy members must be separately elected and designated from maintained school representatives.

- 17. Schools forum members will need the skills and competencies to manage Forum business (as detailed in school forum powers and responsibilities) and to take a strategic view across the whole education estate whilst acting as representative of the group that has elected them. Furthermore, they should be easily contactable and pro-active in raising the profile of issues and communicating decisions, and the reasons behind them, effectively. Good practice for schools forums would be to offer training to new or existing members who may benefit from this.

2.2 The current breakdown of pupils in mainstream schools (Reception to year 11) are shown below:

	Maintained	Academy	Totals
Primary	14,550	6,142	20,692
Secondary	1,399	14,740	16,139
Total	15,949	20,882	36,831

This is based on October 2022 census.

It should also be noted that academy orders have been received for a further 4 schools to join multi-academy trusts which means that these numbers are likely to change further over the coming year.

2.3 Based on the above pupil numbers it is recommended that a further 2 places be allocated to academy representatives in order to bring the membership more in line with the current split of pupils.

2.4 It is further recommended that the Diocesan Boards representative be reclassified as an “Other” representative rather than as a “maintained school” representative. This will mean that this place could be allocated to any representative that the Diocesan schools choose whether they are from maintained, academy or another representative of the Diocesan Boards. It will also help to further rebalance the membership between maintained, academies and other.

2.5 If agreed, the revised make-up of the schools forum would thus be as follows:

CATEGORY	CONSTITUENCY	NAME OF EXISTING MEMBER IF APPLICABLE
Maintained Primary	Primary School Headteacher (RC)	Janice Babb
Maintained Primary	Primary School Headteacher (Com)	Susannah Bellingham
Maintained Primary	Primary School Headteacher CofE	Vacant
Maintained Primary	Primary School Headteacher (Com)	Vacant
Maintained Primary	Primary School Governor (Com)	Vacant
Maintained Primary	Primary School Governor (VA)	Vacant
Maintained Secondary	Secondary School Headteacher	Catherine May
Academy Mainstream		Steve Morrison
Academy Mainstream		Vacant
Academy Mainstream		Declan Jones
Academy Mainstream		James Wilson
Academy Mainstream		Vacant
Academy Mainstream		new
Academy Mainstream		new
Maintained Special	Special School Headteacher	Heidi Tully
Maintained Nursery	Nursery School Headteacher	Helen Rowe
EY's PVI		Nicola Howard
Special Academy		Steph Lea
Maintained PRU		Yomi Adewoye
16-19 Providers		Vacant
Other	FE SEN	Vacant
Other	Diocesan Boards	Pia Longman, Assistant Director of Education, Southwark Diocesan Board of Education
Other	Trade Unions	Betty Joseph

Total number = 23

2.6 It is recommended that the Clerk and officers continue to get nominations and take steps to fill the current vacancies across maintained and other categories. It is further recommended that the Academy schools allocate and fill their vacancies on the Forum and to contact the Clerk if they require assistance in doing this.