

**COMPOSITION OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM: UPDATE**

**To:** Cambridgeshire Schools Forum

**Date:** 16<sup>th</sup> December 2015

**From:** Kathrin John, *Clerk to Schools Forum,*

**1.0 PURPOSE**

1.1. At the meeting of the Cambridgeshire Schools Forum on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2015, the Forum received a report on the need to review its composition in order to comply with the requirements of The Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012 ("The regulations") and the Schools Forum and Operational Good Practice Guide.

1.2 This report provides an update on developments since the last meeting.

**2.0 BACKGROUND AND UPDATE**

2.1 At the last meeting, the Forum noted amendments required to its membership to achieve compliance with the regulations. An update on progress is provided below.

2.2. Schools Members: Maintained sector

The Forum noted that there are currently two vacancies for maintained primary head teachers. The Chair of Cambridgeshire Primary Heads group (CPH) is making arrangements for elections to fill these vacancies.

The Forum also agreed to maintain one place for a maintained secondary school head teacher and officers will be contacting the relevant schools with regard to this vacancy.

2.3 Academies Members: Special Schools and Alternative Provision

The Forum agreed to increase the size of the "Academies members" category by two to include 1 academy special school representative and 1 academy alternative provision representative. Officers are currently awaiting details of the appropriate contact at the alternative provision school. With regard to the special school representative, officers understand that a further special school is likely to convert to academy status early in the New Year and therefore suggest it would be appropriate to delay contacting the relevant schools with regard to the vacancy until this has happened.

2.4 Election of Academies Members

The Forum noted the need to review arrangements for election of academies members given the requirements of the regulations for academies members to be elected by the academy proprietors. Officers, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Forum, were authorised to consult with

representatives of the academies and the Governor Advisory Group on how election of academies members might best be achieved for the Cambridgeshire Schools Forum.

Mark Woods, a representative of CSH on the Forum has kindly started a discussion with academy proprietors to ensure they are all aware of the role of the Forum and their responsibility for appointing representatives. Mark has spoken with Dr Tim Coulson, Regional Schools Commissioner for East of England and has also flagged up the issue at the most recent meeting of the Academy Trust Chairs. How the decisions taken at the Forum affect the funding of academies and how to achieve timely communication to ensure the views of all proprietors are represented have been agreed as topics for a developed discussion at a future meeting of the Trust Chairs. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman have offered to attend to support Mark in explaining the work of the Forum.

The issue was also considered at the meeting of the Governor Advisory Group (GAG) on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2015. GAG concurred that, under the current arrangements, governors are able to bring a wider view and a degree of balance to the work of the Forum, noting that those elected to the Forum are not strictly aligned to a sector and are broadly representative of the phases and on a geographical basis. GAG felt it would be detrimental to the Forum to lose the experience and expertise of governors going forward; that the academy proprietors should be encouraged to recognise the balance and independence that governors can bring to the work of the Schools Forum and should be invited to provide some assurance that academy governors will be included amongst the academy members on the Forum. GAG also considered that academy governor representatives should be elected cross phase and that representation should be broadly proportionate to pupil numbers. During discussion, GAG concluded that it might also be opportune, at the appropriate time, to reflect on its own constitution with a view to widening the scope for representation by those involved in governing academies and trusts, recognising the benefits that membership of GAG can bring, including networking with peers and exchanging best practice. GAG intends to revisit the question of election of academy governors at the appropriate time as the debate develops.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**The Forum is recommended to note the update.**

Source Document	Available at:
<b>Schools forums: operational and good practice guide March 2015</b>  <i>Education Funding Agency, March 2015</i>	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417661/Schools_forums_good_practice_guide.pdf">https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417661/Schools_forums_good_practice_guide.pdf</a>
<b>The Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012</b>	<a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/2261/content/s/made">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/2261/content/s/made</a>