

Staffordshire Schools Forum

Information pack for prospective members

This brief information pack is intended to provide you with an overview of the role of the Schools Forum, how it operates within Staffordshire and links to further background information.

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The constitution of the Schools Forum can be found on the Staffordshire Learning Net at:

<http://education.staffordshire.gov.uk/SchoolAdministration/SchoolForum/>

[http://moderngov.staffordshire.gov.uk/documents/s146563/
FinalSchoolsForumConstitutionMarch2021.pdf](http://moderngov.staffordshire.gov.uk/documents/s146563/FinalSchoolsForumConstitutionMarch2021.pdf)

Section 1 – Overview of the Staffordshire Schools Forum

Every local authority is required to maintain a Schools Forum to represent the views of its schools on a range of issues. The majority of the business of the Forum relates to funding and other arrangements for schools, early years and 14-19 education. The Forum has a number of decision making and consultative roles which are broadly set out in Section 2.

Staffordshire's Schools Forum has 31 members, with 22 schools' members and 9 non-schools members. In addition there are a number of official observers including elected members, and a number of local authority officers who support the business of the Forum. The structure of membership was changed during 2012 to ensure all different types of school were present in the membership, given the different effects the funding reforms had on different types of school. Section 3 includes a list of members and who they represent.

The Forum meets four times per year, depending on the workload. The meetings are usually held in Stafford during an afternoon. Agendas and papers are emailed and posted to members and are available on the Schools Forum website a week before each meeting.

Schools are provided with the details of their representative on the Schools Forum.

The governance and procedures of the Forum are set out in the Constitution, some of which is determined by regulations issued by Government. The Constitution for Staffordshire's Schools Forum can be found at

<http://moderngov.staffordshire.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=510>

A large part of the business of the Forum relates to the Schools Budget, a broad outline of which is described below.

Schools Budget

The Schools Budget is defined through regulations issued by Government each year and covers both funding allocated to individual schools and funding retained by the local authority to pay for certain functions and activities permitted through the regulations. The majority of these are items of expenditure on behalf of schools which are not paid for out of their own budgets – for instance maternity pay costs and premises insurances. In addition the central Schools Budget funds payments to private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector providers of early years education (formerly referred to as Nursery Education Grant). Each year the local authority prepares a Section 251 budget statement which sets out its planned expenditure from the Schools Budget and this is submitted to DfE and published on the website (see Section 4 for links). There is also a Section 251 Outturn Statement that records actual spending at the end of each financial year.

Since 2013-14 the structure and funding framework for the Schools Budget has changed significantly as a result of the Government's school funding reforms. The Schools Forum has additional responsibilities including making some decisions on behalf of all schools over those costs that are funded centrally on behalf of schools and those that are delegated for schools to meet individually. Overall the funding for the former Schools Budget is called the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The DSG funds the central expenditure for schools, early years, high needs and the amounts allocated to individual schools (Individual Schools Budgets – ISB).

As part of the funding reforms the Government introduced a number of restrictions which are nationally defined by the regulations but some of which can be varied locally in agreement with the Forum. The Forum plays a critical role in both the funding formula which determines the level of budget each school receives and what is funded centrally. The medium-term future is likely to bring further changes to school funding arrangements and the Schools Forum will be a key group in developing and implementing the changes in Staffordshire.

Future work of the Schools Forum will include:

- Making any necessary adjustments to the funding formula in response to any changes the government may choose to introduce
- work associated with the Government's commitment to introduce a fairer national funding formula.

Section 2 - Summary of Responsibilities

The following table sets out the main areas of business for the Schools Forum, and indicates the Local Authority, Forum and DfE roles for each.

Function	Local Authority	Schools Forum	DfE
Change to school funding formula	Proposes and decides	Must be consulted.	None
Contracts	Propose prior to invitation to tender, the terms of any proposed contract	Gives a view	None
Financial Issues relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> arrangements for pupils with SEND; arrangements for use of PRU and EOTAS; arrangements for early years provision; administrative arrangements for the allocation of central govt grants; 	Consult annually	Gives a view and informs the governing bodies of all consultations carried out in lines 1, 2 & 3	None
De-delegation for mainstream schools for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> contingencies administration of free school meals insurance licences/subscriptions staff costs - supply cover support for minority ethnic pupils/underachieving groups behaviour support services library and museum services additional school improvement services 	Proposes	Maintained Primary and secondary school member representatives will decide for their phase.	Will adjudicate where Forum does not agree LA proposal
Central spend on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> funding for significant pre-16 pupil growth equal pay back-pay places in independent schools for non-SEN pupils early years expenditure 	Proposes	Decides	Adjudicates where Forum does not agree LA proposal
Central spend on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> admissions servicing of schools forum contribution to combined budgets schools budget funded prudential borrowing costs 	Proposes up to the value committed in 2012/13 and where expenditure has already been committed	Decides for each line	Adjudicates where Forum does not agree LA proposal
Education Functions (formerly Education Services Grant, ESG)	Proposes	Decides (All schools including Academies decide on funding for duties retained by the LA, for general duties only the maintained schools decide)	Adjudicates where Forum does not agree LA proposal
Movements between DSG blocks of funding. The schools block will be ring-fenced from 2018 to 2019, but local authorities will retain limited flexibility to transfer up to 0.5% of their schools block funding into another block.	Proposes	Decides	Adjudicates where Forum does not agree LA proposal
Carry forward a deficit on central expenditure to the next year to be funded from the schools budget	Proposes	Decides	Adjudicates where Forum does not agree LA proposal

Function	Local Authority	Schools Forum	DfE
Scheme of financial management changes	Proposes and consults GB and Head of every School	Approves	Adjudicates where Forum does not agree LA proposal
Membership : length of office of members	Decides	None (but good practice would suggest that they gave a view)	None
Membership: appointment of Schools and Academies Members	Appoints those elected by members of the relevant sub groups. Facilitates election where required and appoints member if there is a tie or the election does not take place by a date set by the LA	None	None
Membership: Non Schools Members	Seeks nominations from the relevant bodies then appoints	None (but good practice would suggest that they gave a view)	None
Voting Procedures	None	Determine voting procedures	None
Chair of Forum	Facilitates	Elects <i>(may not be an elected member of the council or officer)</i>	None

Section 3 – Membership (March 2021)

Representing:		Name	Election date
Nursery	All maintained nursery schools	Sara Bailey	May 2021
Primary	All Maintained Primary	Les McDowall	May 2023
Primary	All maintained primary	Kelly Mitchell	May 2025
Primary	All maintained primary	Jenni Westley	May 2023
Primary	All maintained primary	Vicki Lewis	May 2023
Primary Heads Forum		Claire Evans	n/a
Secondary (maintained)	All secondary maintained schools	Alun Harding	May 2021 (Note 2)
Secondary Heads Forum		Jane Rutherford	n/a
Special schools	All maintained special schools	Kim Price	May 2021
Special schools	All academy special schools	Alison Parr	May 2023
Pupil Referral Units	Maintained pupil referral units	Kirsty Rogers	May 2021
Pupil Referral Units	Academy pupil referral units	Richard Redgate	May 2023
Middle (Note 1)	All middle schools	Chris Wright	n/a
Secondary Academy	All secondary academies	Wendy Whelan	May 2021
Secondary Academy	All secondary academies	Nicky Crookshank	May 2021
Secondary Academy	All secondary academies	Julie Rudge	May 2023
Secondary Academy	All secondary academies	Philip Tapp	May 2023
Secondary Academy	All secondary academies	Andrew Shaw	May 2025
Primary Academy	All primary academies	Liz Threlkeld	May 2021
Primary Academy	All primary academies	Anne Tapp	May 2023
Primary Academy	All primary academies	Richard Lane	May 2021
Primary Academy	All primary academies	Keith Hollins	May 2023
Primary Academy	All primary academies	Abigail Rourke	May 2023
Primary Academy	All primary academies	Kevin Allbutt	May 2021 (Note 2)

Note 1: The Middle Schools representative is nominated by the Middle Schools Forum, and although the current representative is from an academy, their Forum agreed his nomination as a representative of all middle schools.

Note 2: Until their current term of office expires in 2021, in accordance with the Constitution.

Non-Schools Members (9 members)

Representing:	Name	Election date
Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education	Claire Shaw	May 2024
Birmingham Diocesan Schools Commission	Vacancy	
Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee	Vacancy	n/a
PVI (Early Years)	Philip Siddell	May 2021
PVI (Early Years)	Vacancy	
16-19 Education	Karen Dobson	May 2021
16-19 Education	Vacancy	
Schools' Consultative Groups	Steve Barr	May 2021
Schools' Consultative Groups	Judy Wyman	May 2023

Official positions:

Role:	Name	
Chair of the Forum	Richard Redgate	Academy Pupil Referral Units
Vice-Chair of the Forum	Steve Barr	Schools' Consultative Groups
Clerk to the Forum	Julie Roberts	LA officer, Member & Democratic Services

Section 4 – Links to further information

The Staffordshire Schools Forum has a section on the main Staffordshire County Council website which contains the current constitution, membership list and previous agenda papers.

<http://moderngov.staffordshire.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=510>

The DfE's website has a number of useful documents including the regulations governing Schools Forums, best practice guides, responsibilities and links to other items of interest to Schools Forums:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/financialmanagement/schoolsrevenuefunding/schoolsforums>

Staffordshire Section 251 Statements

<http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/finstats/FinancialStatements.aspx>