

Sheffield Schools Forum Constitution and Membership

1. Constitution 2023/24

1.1 Introduction

The Sheffield Schools Forum is established by virtue of Section 47A of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 (as amended by the Education Act 2002). It also operates under the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012, which set out the legal parameters for Schools Forums and which came into force on 1st October 2012.

The Constitution will be reviewed annually, usually at the June Forum meeting.

2. Purpose/Role of Forum

2.1 The Forum shall provide a formal channel of communication between Sheffield City Council (SCC) and Sheffield schools and will serve as a mechanism for consultation on such matters concerning the funding of schools.

2.2 It will also promote working practices which seek to deliver best value in all aspects of schools funding between SCC and schools and on behalf of schools.

It will work with schools to broker and provide support to achieve best value for those schools, particularly with regard to business services and procurement.

2.3 The Forum shall be consulted on any proposed changes to SCC's school funding formula. Consultation will allow sufficient time for views expressed to be taken into account in determination of the funding formula and in the initial determination of the schools' budget share before the beginning of the financial year.

2.4 In addition, there will be annual consultation with the Schools Forum in respect of Financial issues relating to:

- Special Educational Needs.
- Pupil Referral Units (PRU).
- Early Years Provision.
- Administration arrangements for the allocation of central government grants.

- 2.5 The Forum has decision-making responsibility for:
- Movement of up to 0.5% from the Schools Block to other blocks.
 - Carry forward of deficit on central expenditure to the next year to be funded from the schools' budget.
 - Any brought forward deficit on de-delegated services which is to be met by the overall schools' budget.
 - De-delegation for mainstream schools.
 - General duties for maintained schools.
 - Growth Funding (Planning/Ad-hoc).
- 2.6 In addition, the Forum gives a view on:
- Contracts to be paid out of the schools' budget.
 - Minimum Funding Guarantee.
- 2.7 The Forum will, as soon as reasonably possible, inform governing bodies of maintained schools of all consultations carried out under the above provisions.
- 2.8 The Forum shall only make decisions on SCC's proposals where the law gives the Forum responsibility for making those decisions.

3. Membership

- 3.1 The Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012 lay out parameters within which the Local Authority must determine the Forum's membership. Membership will be reviewed annually, usually in June to ensure it is fully representative of different school sectors and in proportion to the number of children allocated to each sector.
- 3.2 All newly elected members will be offered an induction into the role and functions of the Forum.
- 3.3 In line with the [Schools Forum: Operational and Good Practice Guide](#) (DfE, March 2015, updated March 2021), non-school members may only constitute 1/3 of the Schools Forum total membership. Currently non-school members of the Sheffield Schools Forum include representation from trade unions, faith schools, Learn Sheffield, the 16-19 sector and early years private, voluntary and independent (PVI) providers.

3.4 Based on the number of pupils as of the October 2022 Census, the proposed membership from September 2023 from all schools is:

	Pupil Numbers	Proportion	Representatives
Primary maintained	20,068	27%	4
Secondary maintained	1,141	2%	1
Academies (including special)	53,779	71%	7
Sub-total	74,988	100%	12
Special (maintained)	1,389	-	2
Pupil Referral Unit	250	-	1
Total	76,627		14

3.5 Nominations for the maintained school representatives above will need to be through Sheffield’s Primary, Secondary and Governors’ Partnership forums. Primary and secondary school members will be elected by the relevant sub-group representatives.

3.6 Based on previous discussion at the Forum, it is encouraged that representation should be evenly split between head teachers and governors where possible. In case of an odd number of representatives, the additional representative should be a head teacher.

3.7 Academy proprietors will need to nominate academy representatives and whilst not mandatory, the Forum recommends a balanced representation of head teachers and governors, as for maintained schools in 3.6, and that primary and secondary academies are represented in proportion to the number of pupils in each sector, to ensure representation from both phases as appropriate.

Academy proprietors will need to have a transparent voting process in place to agree membership.

3.8 The **schools’ membership** should include representation from the following sectors:

- Special Schools (including representation of special academies).
- Nursery Schools

- Pupil Referral Unit

In addition, **non-school members** are represented by one member from each of the following sectors:

- Early Years Private, Voluntary and Independent Sector (PVI's)
- The 16-19 Sector
- Faith Schools
- Trade unions
- Learn Sheffield

Other attendees include representation from the Local Authority, including the Co-Chairs for the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee.

3.9 If a member is unable to attend a Forum meeting, they may nominate a substitute to attend and vote (where appropriate), in their place. The member who is unable to attend must contact SCC prior to the meeting to inform them of their nominated substitute.

4. Voting Rights

4.1 Each member will be entitled to vote but will be subject to the following restrictions:

- Only school members and PVI representatives may vote on issues affecting the funding formula.
- Voting for items of de-delegation will be limited to the specific primary and secondary schools' members.

5. Elected Members

5.1 The Co-Chairs for the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee have the right to attend meetings but will not have any voting rights.

6. Term of Office

6.1 All members will be appointed for a maximum of four years. There are no restrictions on the number of terms a member can serve.

6.2 SCC may end the appointment of any Forum member before the expiry of their membership if the member concerned ceases to hold the office by virtue of which he/she became eligible for appointment to the Forum.

7. Chair and Vice Chair/s

7.1 The Forum shall elect a Chair and Vice Chairs from amongst its members. The term of office will be for a maximum two-year period. There are no restrictions on the number of terms a member can serve.

7.2 The Chair will retain the right to vote but will not have a second or casting vote.

7.3 SCC will arrange for any administrative duties to be carried out.

8. Restrictions

8.1 While the Local Authority cannot appoint members, the following people may speak and contribute at meetings of the Forum:

- The Chief Financial Officer.
- An observer appointed by the Secretary of State.
- An elected member - it is recommended as good practice that executive members with responsibility for education/children's services attend the Schools Forum, contribute to the discussion and receive first-hand the views of the Forum.
- The Director of Children's Services or representative.
- Officers providing financial and technical advice to the Schools Forum.
- Presenters (restricted to the paper they are presenting).
- The Executive Member with responsibility for resources.

9. Operational Understanding

The purpose of the operational understanding is to define the expectations of, and responsibilities of the Local Authority and Schools Forum members in undertaking the business of the Schools Forum.

9.1 Local Authority

The Local Authority will:

- Ensure that reports and other documents to be discussed at Forum meetings are published in advance of meetings, and that minutes of the meetings are distributed accordingly.
- Ensure that all Forum meetings are supported by appropriate Senior Officers relevant to the items to be discussed at the meeting.
- Publish reports, other relevant documents and minutes of meetings on the Council's website.
- Ensure that the Forum is informed of any proposed changes in legislation that will impact upon the work of the Forum.
- Provide appropriate training and induction to new Forum members to ensure they are able to effectively discharge their responsibilities.
- Ensure that in presenting formal budget proposals for approval that the meeting allows sufficient time for discussion of proposals.
- Keep the Forum informed of strategic developments and service issues which may result in a request for additional funding where the financial impact would fail to be met from the Schools Budget.

- Facilitate and support workshops and working groups necessary to support both the consultative and decision-making responsibilities of the Forum.

9.2 Schools Forum Members

Schools Forum members will:

- Ensure that they adhere to principles laid down by SCC to govern conduct.
- Ensure that any personal interest in any item for discussion at Forum meetings is declared at the beginning of all meetings. Personal interest is deemed to be a discussion or decision that affects an individual school and not a decision that has an equal application for all or specific group(s) of schools.
- Ensure that they are representative of, and present the views of, their elective/nominating group at meetings.
- Ensure that all reports and other papers tabled at meetings are reviewed prior to each meeting.
- Consider the needs of the whole educational community rather than advancing issues pertaining to a particular school phase or an individual school.
- Gather views and provide feedback to elective/nominated groups in advance of and after School Forum meetings.
- Be responsible to their elective groups for the feedback of items discussed at, and decisions taken by, the Schools Forum.
- Identify any training requirements to the Local Authority to inform the Forum induction and training programme.
- Consider nominations, within their representative group, for the Chair and Vice Chair prior to the elections to this position

10. Meetings

10.1 Frequency

Sheffield Schools Forum will meet on a minimum of four occasions per year. Other meetings above the minimum will be arranged at the request of the Forum. The Schools Forums (England, Coronavirus Amendment) Regulations 2020 make permanent provisions to enable Schools Forum meetings to be held remotely if required.

10.2 Quorum

The Schools Forum must have a quorum of 40% of the total number of Forum members being present at each meeting. If a meeting is inquorate, it may proceed and give its views to SCC, but it cannot make decisions. There is no provision requiring at least one member from each of the sectors to be present.

10.3 Conduct

The conduct of meetings will follow the rules/standing orders which are appropriate to the Council as a whole.

10.4 Agenda

The Chair of the Forum shall consult with the LA's lead officer to draw up the agenda for the next meeting. Additional items may be added to the agenda where the request comes from a minimum of two Forum members.

10.5 Decisions

The Forum shall, as soon as reasonably possible, inform the governing bodies of all schools maintained by SCC, of all recommendations made to the Local Authority in relation to issues on which the Forum has been consulted.

10.6 Code of Conduct

The conduct of members at meetings will follow the principles laid down by SCC to govern the conduct of the Council's Elected Members.

Members shall declare at the commencement of each meeting, whether they have any personal or individual school interest in the business to be undertaken at Forum and abstain from any subsequent voting process.

Personal interest is deemed to be a decision that affects an individual school, and not a decision that has an equal application for all or a specific group of schools.

10.7 Members' Expenses

Under the terms of the Regulations, the Local Education Authority is required to pay the reasonable expenses of members of the Forum, incurred in connection with attendance at meetings of the Forum. Details of the reimbursement of expenses and expenses claim forms may be obtained from the Chair to the Forum.

Sheffield Schools Forum

Role of Chair

Member of, Elected by and Reports to: Sheffield Schools Forum

Term of Office: Elected biennially

Nomination

The Forum shall elect a Chair and Vice Chair from amongst its members. This will be done on a biennial basis.

Aim

- To provide effective, practical, unbiased and strategic leadership to the Schools Forum (Schools Forum).
- To enable the Schools Forum to provide high quality decision-making, advice and recommendations to SCC and other stakeholders as appropriate.
- To support the achievement of excellent outcomes for children and young people in Sheffield by ensuring the effective and efficient use of resources and high-quality services through partnerships with all stakeholders.

Key Areas of Responsibility

- Promote working practices between the LA and schools and on behalf of schools which seek to deliver best value in all aspects of school funding.
- Ensure the achievement of a partnership between all providers funded by the Dedicated Schools' Grant, Officers and Elected Members to deliver the shared vision for Children's Services in Sheffield.
- Decision-making in the key areas of:
 - Schools and Early Years Funding Formula.
 - Contracts for supplies and services to schools.
 - Financial issues related to the Dedicated Schools Grant.
 - Support decision-making through the use of evidence-based practice and engagement with children and young people, their families and providers of services to them e.g. schools.
- Issue high quality advice to elected members, officers and stakeholders.
- Set, monitor and review the direction, performance and outputs of the Schools Forum Schools Forum and the impacts of decisions made.
- Chair Schools Forum meetings, preparing for such meetings by requesting, researching and studying papers, and providing a constructive and purposeful style in taking Schools Forum members through their agendas.
- Maintain within the Schools Forum the broad-based culture of change and collaboration which meets the challenge of ensuring high standards of achievement in all provision with a focus upon learning for all children and young people within Sheffield, especially the most vulnerable.

- Bring strong communication, a calm objectivity and experience to the Schools Forum's discourse, which seeks to engage all members of the Schools Forum to achieve consensus in decisions, recommendations and advice offered.
- Effectively promote the interests of the Schools Forum, engaging with and responding to national and local consultations, developing communication channels, maintaining good relations, particularly with key stakeholders within Sheffield and relevant external organisations.

Workload and Remuneration/Expenses

- The work of the Chair will normally be undertaken over 15-18 days per annum to ensure that the Chair has sufficient knowledge and information to carry out the role effectively.
- These days will be split in the following proportion during the year:
 - Up to six days meetings of the Schools Forum.
 - Up to six days planning and preparing for Schools Forum meetings (in line with the number of meetings).
 - Up to six days field visits.
- The Chair will not receive remuneration but can claim for any associated expenses incurred.

Sheffield Schools Forum

Role of Vice Chair

Member of, Elected by and Reports to: Sheffield Schools Forum

Supports: Chair

Term of Office: Elected biennially

Nomination

The Forum shall elect a Chair and Vice Chair from amongst its members. This will be done on a biennial basis.

Aim

- The Vice Chair discharges the duties of the Chair as required in the Chair's absence. The Vice Chair supports the activities of the Chair including sharing responsibilities as appropriate.

Key Areas of Specific Responsibility

- Works with the Chair to assist in developing the agendas for Schools Forum meetings.
- Assists the Chair by taking on responsibility as necessary for communication with members.
- Supports and challenges the Chair in all his/her responsibilities to ensure organisational priorities and governance concerns are addressed in the most effective and efficient manner.
- Represents the Schools Forum, especially at events at which the Chair cannot attend.
- Advises the Chair on appointing volunteers to working or task and finish groups.
- Other duties as delegated by the Chair.