Education & Skills Funding Agency

Schools forum self-assessment toolkit

This toolkit provides local authority officers and elected members with a framework for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of their schools forum. The toolkit is designed as a set of questions which can be considered by individuals or the forum as a whole.

Self Assessment – completed by Jonathan Lewis – Service Director Education

Question	Yes / No	Notes
1. Are meeting dates set in well advance and details (including time and venue) published in an accessible manner to enable interested parties to plan their attendance?	No	This has been a challenge due to capacity and issues with supporting Covid-19. Dates have now been set for the next academic year.
2. Are meetings timed to coincide with key dates? (for example, reporting of funding formula)	Yes	Dates match the required timescales for wider reporting and budget deadlines.
3. Are meetings held in an accessible venue to enable observers to attend easily?	Yes	Proposal that all meetings remain virtual.
4. Is there a dedicated website link for schools forum, is it current and regularly updated?	Yes	This has recently been refreshed and the papers can now be found here - Peterborough Schools Forum - Learn Together (cambslearntogether.co.uk)
5. Are the agenda and papers publicly available on the authority's website at least 6 working days in advance of the meeting?	No	Timescales often slip and this will need to be addressed in the future. The clerk to Schools Forum will be taking on a wider role to support this happening.
6. Are the papers published as a single document, so that users can download easily?	No	This will be considered in future meetings.
7. If papers are tabled at the meeting, are they published on the website promptly after the meeting?	Yes	All tabled reports are uploaded after the meeting.

Question	Answer	Comments
8. Are draft minutes published a reasonable time (for example, within 2 to 3 weeks) after the meeting, rather than waiting until the following meeting?	Yes	Draft minutes are available but they are not always uploaded to the website promptly – this will be addressed going forward.
9. Are the minutes clear and unambiguous, with sufficient detail to illustrate the discussions, without reporting verbatim every point made?	Yes	
10. Is the constitution clear and appropriate? Including for example: - a clear process for ensuring proportional representation - the process for electing members and their tenure - the timescale for review is clearly set out - the process for dealing with repetitive non attenders	Yes	This is in the process of being refreshed but the currently constitution meets this requirement.
11. Is there an induction pack or training programme available for new members?	No	To be developed for new members in the autumn. Training materials are available however/
12. Is the election process clear and transparent? Representatives are elected only by the group they are representing, whether phase-specific for maintained schools, or by the proprietors of academies for academy members.	Yes	
13. Do the papers contain clear recommendations and indicate in a consistent manner whether the item is for information, consultation or decision?	Yes	This could be strengthen and the template for Forum meetings will be reviewed over the summer.
14. Is it clear to observers who attendees at the forum are representing? (for example, by use of name plates, indicating sector)	Yes	All meetings are held via zoom currently.

15. Does the chair manage the meeting well, ensuring that all are able to contribute to the agenda items, that no bias towards any sector is evident and that no single person or organisation is able to dominate the discussion?	Yes	
16. Is there inclusive participation in discussions for all phases and types of members?	Yes	
17. Do members actively canvass views and objectively represent their whole peer group at the forum and provide feedback after meetings?	Yes	This has been an area of improvement and Forum appears on heads meeting agenda but there needs to be concerted effort to move this forward. A budget consultation was held last year.
18. Where votes are required, is it clear who is eligible to vote for different items?	Yes	
19. Where votes are required, are the arrangements for recording the votes clear and unambiguous?	Yes	
20. Is there a system in place for a decision if votes are tied?	Yes	Chair has casting vote.
21. Is the operational & good practice guide used to regularly review the forum's adherence to good practice?	No	Will be considered annually as part of the review of the constitution.