

SUBJECT:	Schools' Funding Forum Self-Assessment Tool
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SUMMARY OF REPORT:	
To introduce the Schools' Funding Forum (SFF) to the Department of Education (DFE) self-assessment tool to assess the possible strengths and weaknesses of the operation of the Forum. For members of the SFF to identify areas where further improvements could be made.	
FOR:	Information and Recommendation

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Department of Education (DFE) have published a number of documents setting out detailed information for local authorities, schools forum members and members of the public around the requirements of running effective school forum meetings. This includes information on both:
- The constitutional and organisational requirements for Schools' forum
 - Good practice recommendations and information on how to comply with the regulations.
- 1.2 The Local Authority has recently been contacted by the DFE asking for various documents to evidence Kent's adherence to the SFF regulations. This included membership details, copies of minutes and links to public facing website.

2. Self-Assessment Toolkit

- 2.1 A self-assessment toolkit has also been designed by the DFE to aid individual Schools' Forum to identify strengths and possible weaknesses in the operation of their Forum. There is no requirement for the Forum to submit their return to the Department of Education but it is to be used by the Forum as a way of identifying any possible areas of improvement (if required).
- 2.2 The toolkit consists of 21 questions. This has been completed on behalf of this Forum by the Schools Funding Forum Clerk (Robin Goldsmith) and Finance Manager (Karen Stone) and draft answers can be found in the following table (appendix 1).

3. Recommendations

3.1 The Forum are asked to:

1. Review the draft answers and agree they are a true reflection of the current/recent operation of the Schools' Forum;
2. Consider whether any actions are required for those where "no" was answered.
3. Gain views from the Forum on the answer to question 17

4. Other Supporting Information.

4.1 DFE guidance on the operational of Schools Funding Forum can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-forums-operational-and-good-practice-guide-2015>

4.2 The majority of documents referenced in the toolkit can be on the The Kent Schools Funding Forum website <https://www.kelsi.org.uk/school-finance/funding-and-procurement/schools-funding-forum/schools-funding-forum-meetings>



Appendix 1: 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.

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?	Yes	Meetings will now be book as a rolling program a year in advance.
2. Are meetings timed to coincide with key dates? (e.g. reporting of funding formula)	Yes	
3. Are meetings held in an accessible venue to enable observers to attend easily?	Yes	
4. Is there a dedicated website link for schools forum, is it current and regularly updated?	Yes	
5. Are the agenda and papers publicly available on the authority's website at least 6 working days in advance of the meeting?	Yes	
6. Are the papers published as a single document, so that users can download easily?	No	Currently files are zipped into one file with individual documents held within.
7. If papers are tabled at the meeting, are they published on the website promptly after the meeting?	Yes	
8. Are draft minutes published a reasonable time (e.g. within 2-3 weeks) after the meeting, rather than waiting until the following meeting?	No	Minutes are agreed with the chair prior to publication which has not always been achieved within 2-3 weeks. DFE guidance suggests we should be publishing draft minutes within 5 working days.

Question	Yes / No	Notes
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 eg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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	
11. Is there an induction pack or training programme available for new members?	No	<p>A visit is offered and all key documents including Kent specific guidance on the running of the schools funding forum is available on the website.</p> <p>These documents do need to be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they are up-to-date.</p> <p>Could this area be improved further?</p>
12. Is the election process clear and transparent? i.e. 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	
14. Is it clear to observers who attendees at the forum are representing? (eg by use of name plates, indicating sector)	No	
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	

Question	Yes / No	Notes
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 feed back after meetings?		To be discussed at the Forum
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?	No	There are no standard procedures in place for a tied vote.
21. Is the operational & good practice guide used to regularly review the forum's adherence to good practice?	Yes	We adhere to our local policy and would refer to DFE guidance as and when updates are provided.

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