



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.

Slough Schools Forum Review July 2015			
Question	Yes / No	Notes	Proposed area for review
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	Meeting dates are set annually at the end of the academic year for the following academic year. Dates are included in the Work Programme published for each meeting. SBC website lists meeting dates to the end of the academic year.	
2. Are meetings timed to coincide with key dates? (e.g. reporting of funding formula)	Yes	SBC Finance Officer advises on key dates and prepares a draft set of dates.	
3. Are meetings held in an accessible venue to enable observers to attend easily?	Yes	Yes. The meetings are held in a school / conference centre. The school has good car parking.	
4. Is there a dedicated website link for schools forum, is it current and	In part	Although there is no separate website for Schools Forum, Schools Forum	See also 17 below

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regularly updated?		papers are all on the SBC website within Council meetings' information. In addition, key information is included in the overall 'School governance, management and finance' section of SBC site (e.g. the Scheme for Financing Schools, Key Decisions Log and links to meeting dates and papers). These are all kept updated.	<i>Comment received:</i> <i>Worth communicating with school leaders and Governors from time to time to remind them that published on the SBC web site.</i>
5. Are the agenda and papers publicly available on the authority's website at least 6 working days in advance of the meeting?	No	Papers are always available prior to the meeting and the link to the SBC website circulated. However, this is not always 6 days in advance of the meeting.	From September 2015, ensure that papers are published at least 6 working days in advance of the meeting date. <i>Comment received: good idea</i>
6. Are the papers published as a single document, so that users can download easily?	Yes	Published as single pdf file with agenda frontsheet also available separately.	
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?	Yes in part	Draft minutes are always published prior to the next meeting. This is not always within 2-3 weeks of the meeting though this is the aim.	From July 2015, ensure that draft minutes are published within 3 weeks of the meeting. <i>Comment received: good idea</i>

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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 a. a clear process for ensuring proportional representation b. the process for electing members and their tenure c. the timescale for review is clearly set out d. the process for dealing with repetitive non attenders	Yes	The Schools Forum Constitution has been reviewed to ensure that it is compliant with the most recent financial regulations and, where necessary, more detail has been included.	
11. Is there an induction pack or training programme available for new members?	Yes	Induction training is provided for new members.	
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	See Constitution	
13. Do the papers contain clear recommendations and indicate in a consistent manner whether the item	Yes	Papers are presented in SBC Council meeting format.	

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is for information, consultation or decision?			
14. Is it clear to observers who attendees at the forum are representing? (eg by use of name plates, indicating sector)	In part	Introductions are always done.	To provide name plates including e.g. sector, name of school, academy or organisation. <i>Comment received: good idea for new members and visitors</i>
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	This is the aim.	What are Forum members' views? <i>Comment received: Chair fulfils this requirement well</i>
16. Is there inclusive participation in discussions for all phases and types of members?	Yes	This is the aim of the meeting.	What are Forum members' views? <i>Comment received: Everyone attending has an opportunity to contribute but it may be useful to ask from time to time, and for particular issues, for a balance of comment from all phase groups rather than relying on phase groups to come forward automatically</i>
17. Do members actively canvass views and objectively represent their whole peer group at the forum and provide	Yes in part	This is certainly in place for both the Headteachers' phase groups. It is also done by individual governors to their	What are Forum members' views? Introduce a brief 'Impact report' after

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feed back after meetings?		own governing bodies. It is more difficult for governors as there is no overall governors' association in Slough. The Chair occasionally attends Chairs of Governors' meetings by invitation.	each meeting: Chair and Vice-Chair to provide a brief outline of key decisions and issues from each meeting and draw attention to relevant minutes. this will be circulated to all Schools Forum members and to schools within a month of each meeting. <i>Comment received: good idea</i>
18. Where votes are required, is it clear who is eligible to vote for different items?	Yes	This is always clarified e.g. as part of an LA paper or verbally by the Chair. The Constitution also refers to this.	
19. Where votes are required, are the arrangements for recording the votes clear and unambiguous?	Yes	Where necessary, votes are recorded by the Clerk.	
20. Is there a system in place for a decision if votes are tied?	Yes	Yes, the Chair has a second or casting vote (see Constitution).	
21. Is the operational & good practice guide used to regularly review the forum's adherence to good practice?	Yes		The Schools Forum Constitution has been updated in light of the most recent guidance March 2015. The Constitution is reviewed at least every three years and sooner should changes in regulations or DfE guidance warrant this.