

Oxfordshire County Council School Organisation Stakeholder Group

Terms of reference

The terms of reference below reflect the decisions taken by the County Council Cabinet (17 July 2007) in recognition of its duty as 'Decision-maker' on school organisation matters. They were revised in November 2012 in the light of changes to legislation related to school organisation arrangements. The Academies Act 2010 changed the processes under which new schools are created, and in response the School Organisation Stakeholder Group took on a new role in providing feedback to the Cabinet Member for Education on proposals for Free Schools and other academies. The 2011 Education Act removed the requirement on Local Authorities to convene an Admissions Forum, and in June 2012 it was decided to subsume the role of the Admissions Forum within the School Organisation Stakeholder Group.

The Group will meet formally on a termly basis (i.e. three times a year). There may be additional meetings of the whole Group or a nominated sub-group where members may be asked to meet at short notice to consider a statutory proposal, or other additional matters which need to be considered outside of the annual meeting timetable.

The key activities of the Group are to:

- Discuss overall strategic development in context of Local Authorities' statutory duties.
- Discuss developing options relating to school organisation.
- Comment on statutory information and any written comments and objections as part of the statutory process.
- Discuss proposals submitted for Free Schools, University Technical Colleges and other academies.
- Provide advice on processes to identify sponsors for new academies which are required to meet population growth.
- Consider how well existing and proposed admissions arrangements serve the interest of children and parents within the area of the Local Authority.
- Monitor applications and admissions patterns on an annual basis.

The following principles apply:

- The group is advisory. Members of the group provide knowledge and expertise rather than being representative. As an advisory group any voting through seconded proposals by individual members will be to confirm comments and views rather than a formal recommendation to decision makers.

- Verbal representations by relevant parties will not be heard at this meeting but at a separate decision-making meeting held by the County Council.
- Members will be named appointments by groups indicated above but can send substitutes who will also be nominated as formal substitute and sent copies of the papers.
- The Chair will be a non-Cabinet Member of the County Council, elected by the Group annually (usually at its summer meeting).
- The meeting will be serviced by relevant officers who will also be responsible for setting agendas and producing relevant papers in liaison with the Chair.
- It will be for the County Council decision makers to take note of any comments. A record of the meeting may be submitted to the Schools' Adjudicator should a decision be appealed against.

Membership

Membership of the Group will consist of:

- Non-Cabinet County Council Members: to reflect current representative practice: 2 Liberal Democrat Green Alliance; 2 Conservative Independent Alliance; and 1 Labour & Co-operative Party.
- 1 Member from each of 5 local District/City authorities.
- Catholic and Anglican Diocese (1 each with 1 Catholic Diocese representing the other).
- 5 governors/academy trustees to include 2 primary, 2 secondary, 1 special, nominated from OGA
- 3 headteachers, 1 each nominated from OSSHTA, OASSH and OPPHTA

This would provide a membership of 20 plus Cabinet Member responsible for Education (observer with no voting rights) and officers. Each group as outlined would have one vote, but each group's vote and reasons would be recorded.

Last updated July 2021.