

THE SCHOOL FINANCE GROUP

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose of the School Finance Group (SFG)

SFG provides an opportunity for school representatives to acquire an understanding of the detail of educational funding and finances. The group can take time to look at budget performance and options for change so that the Devon Education Forum (Schools Forum) can be confident in the basis upon which recommendations are made.

2. Objectives of SFG

- Consider the technical detail and briefs Schools Forum members about the discussion around statutory accountability.
- Review the education aspects of the Section 251 statement
- Monitor the Dedicated Schools Grant during the year and consider impact of any variances on future years.
- Consider the impact to the High Needs Block and provide a consultative and governance role to inform authority decision making to the DSG Management Plan. Enabling to better communicate to Schools and other Key Stakeholders.
- Consider the impact of any Government proposals and help to collate responses to Government consultations.
- Consider the detail, flag concerns and gain opinion of schools to make recommendations and challenge to the Schools Forum on financial matters impacting on schools.
- Make decisions as delegated by Schools Forum.
- Provide representation on steering groups as agreed by Schools Forum.

3. Membership

- 3 representatives of primary school headteachers, nominated by Devon SLS
- 3 representatives of secondary school headteachers, nominated by Devon SLS
- 2 representatives of special school headteachers, nominated by the LA/Special Schools group
- 3 representatives of school governors across the primary, secondary and special school phases, nominated by Devon Association of Governance (DAG)
- 1 representative for Early Years and PVI sector providers, to be nominated by Schools Forum
- 1 representative for Alternative Provision, to be nominated by Schools Forum

Other officers of the authority will be in attendance as required.

The lead Executive Member for schools may attend as an observer with a speaking entitlement.

4. Attendance

Absence at three consecutive meetings will suggest to the group that membership should be reviewed. This will be referred back to the group for consideration and action.

Members can elect a substitute. Any substitutes must be recorded in the minutes. If a member elects a substitute for three consecutive meetings this will be referred back to the group for consideration and action.

5. Chairing meetings

It is envisaged that a senior local authority officer will chair the SFG and arrange a substitute if his/her absence is unavoidable. The Chair will arrange for distribution of papers, a note-taker, and any follow-up required.

6. Conduct and frequency of meetings

- The SFG will during the summer term establish a programme of work for the next academic year within the multi-year framework.
- The SFG will meet as appropriate to its programme of work, but not less than three times a year.
- The SFG requires 50% of school representatives to attend to be quorate. It may discuss agenda and make recommendations in the absence of a quorum but this must be made plain at the following Forum so that the Forum may decide whether full discussion is needed before any formal decision is taken.
- The SFG have access to monitoring and reports 5 days prior to the next meeting.
- Reports provided to SFG are the views represented by the authority for discussion and will not be altered to reflect the views of the group. Any differing views will be represented in the papers passed on to the Forum and DCC's Executive.
- The SFG will wish to arrive at decisions by consensus, but if a vote is required different views will be represented in the papers passed on to the Forum and DCC's Executive.

7. Decisions & Outcomes

- The SFG will continue to inform and discuss decisions with the understanding that the final recommendations will continue to be a responsibility of the authority.
- The SFG members communicate issues raised with their associations' Schools Forum representation to ensure that they are well briefed and have an understanding of the issues prior to the next Schools Forum meeting.