

## **SCHOOL ORGANISATION COMMITTEE – CONSTITUTION**

### **1 Groups within the School Organisation Committee**

The Buckinghamshire School Organisation Committee will comprise the following groups who will represent:

- a. The Local Education Authority
- b. Oxford Diocesan Board of -Education
- c. Northampton Diocesan Schools Committee
- d. The Further Education Funding Council
- e. Schools

Each group will have a single (collective) vote.

Where the members of a group are to vote collectively on a particular question, then, unless the group determines otherwise, the question should be determined by the majority of members of the group attending and voting and, in the event of equality of votes, the group will abstain.

#### **a. The Local Education Authority**

Seven members nominated by the Buckinghamshire Local Education Authority and who are elected members of the Local Education Authority.

#### **b. The Church of England Oxford Diocese**

Three members nominated by the Church of England Oxford Diocese.

#### **c. The Roman Catholic Northampton Diocese**

Three members nominated by the Roman Catholic Church Northampton Schools Commission .

#### **d. Learning and Skills Council**

One member nominated by the Learning and Skills Council (To vote on post 16 issues only).

#### **e. Schools**

Seven members who are members of the governing body of relevant schools. To include:

One governor from a primary school (including community, foundation and voluntary but excluding primary special schools)

One governor from a secondary school (including community, foundation and voluntary but excluding secondary special schools)

One governor from a community or foundation special school

And where at least 5% of the total number of pupils at relevant schools maintained by the Authority are pupils at schools in the following category:

Two governors of community schools (including community special schools)

One governor from a foundation school (including foundation special schools)

One governor from a voluntary school which does not have a religious character

## **2 Tenure of Members**

Members of the School Organisation Committee should hold and vacate office in accordance with their terms of appointment and shall, on ceasing to be members of the Committee, be eligible for re-appointment.

No person shall be appointed as a member for a period exceeding three years. A member may resign his or her membership at any time by giving written notice to the Secretary. A member shall vacate his or her office:

- a. if membership has to be terminated because of the proportion of pupils at the category of school represented (foundation, aided, community) has fallen below 5% of the total number of pupils at relevant schools maintained by the Authority
- b. If the member within the group nominated by the Church of England Diocese, or the Roman Catholic Schools Commission, or the Further Education Funding Council, in the opinion of the nominating body, should no longer be a member of the Committee notifies the Secretary accordingly.
- c. Where a member on the group representing the Local Education Authority ceases to be a member of the Local Education Authority
- d. Where a member of the Schools Group ceases to be a member of the governing body of a relevant school
- e. Where an individual without good reason, has failed to attend three consecutive meetings of the Committee.

## **3 Review of Membership of the Schools Group**

In February 2000 and in the February of each subsequent year, the Local Education Authority shall review the membership of the Schools Group.

Where it appears from such a review, as a result of changes in the number of pupils in the categories of schools, the composition of the Schools Group no longer complies with the requirements, the LEA shall exercise its powers to appoint members of the Committee in order to secure that the composition of the Schools Group complies with the requirements.

In order to secure that the composition of the Schools Group complies with the requirements, the LEA, by giving one month's written notice, may terminate the membership of a member of the Schools Group.

#### **4 Chairman and Vice-Chairman**

The Committee must have a Chairman and Vice-Chairman, each from separate representative groups, elected annually from its membership by the majority of individual votes cast.

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman will be elected at the first meeting of the Committee and will hold office until the next meeting which falls after the date which is a year after the meeting at which the Chairman or Vice-Chairman were originally elected.

On ceasing to hold office, the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman shall be eligible for re-election.

In the event of the casual vacancy, in the office of Chairman or Vice-Chairman the Committee shall, at their next meeting, elect one of their membership to fill that vacancy and the Member so elected shall hold office until the date of the meeting to which the Chairman or Vice-Chairman would have held office had the casual vacancy not occurred .

A Chairman or Vice-Chairman shall cease to hold office a) if he or she resigns his or her office by written notice given to the Secretary of the Committee or b) if he or she ceases to be a member of the Committee

#### **5 Secretary to the Committee**

The Committee shall appoint a person who is not a member of the Committee, but who is nominated by the Local Education Authority, to act as Secretary to the Committee.

(The Local Education Authority will nominate the Head of Legal Services (or her representative) to be the Secretary of the Committee).

The School Organisation Committee may co-opt members as required. Co-opted members will not have a vote and their remit and length of service will be specified at the time of their co-option.

#### **6 Notice of Meetings**

- 6.1** All meetings of the School Organisation Committee will be convened by the Secretary but he will comply with any direction in the matter given by the Committee in a previous meeting or given by the Chairman, (or in his absence the Vice-Chairman). The Secretary will give every member at least 7 working days notice of the date, time and venue of the meeting together with a copy of the agenda and papers for the meeting.
- 6.2** In cases of urgency the Secretary shall convene a meeting of the Committee on the direction of the Chairman, or in his absence, the Vice-Chairman.

## **7 Notification of Agenda Items**

All members may raise items for the agenda by notifying the Secretary 10 working days before the Committee meeting.

## **8 Alternates**

Any member of the Committee may nominate an alternative member to attend meetings of the Committee in his or her absence.

Such a nomination should be given in writing to the Secretary.

Where a member has nominated an alternative member, the alternative member may attend meetings and vote in place of the member. A member may only nominate an alternate member who would himself or herself be eligible to serve upon the group represented.

## **9 Sub-Groups**

The Committee may set up sub-groups, either standing or ad hoc, to carry out tasks as specified by the full Committee. All sub-groups will report back to the Committee.

## **10 Conduct of Members and Declaration of Member Interest**

In carrying out their function, members of the School Organisation Committee are expected to act in accordance with the seven principles of public life set out in the first report of the Committee of Standards of Public Life: Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership.

Members of the School Organisation Committee must declare an interest in any individual proposal which directly affects the school at which they are a governor or which their children attend or which they might have a pecuniary interest in the decision made or if they have had any prior involvement in any individual proposal.

Any member with such an interest should withdraw from the discussion and take no part in the decision reached (where it is clear that a decision in which a member has such an interest is likely to arise at a particular meeting, the member concerned may wish to nominate an alternative member to attend that meeting).

## **11 Voting**

### **11.1** The following voting arrangements must apply:

- a. Unanimity is required from all groups casting a vote for decision on School Organisation Plans and Statutory Proposals.
- b. Each individual group should reach a decision on how they will vote by a majority vote within the group. If there is no majority, then the group has to abstain from voting

- c. The group may decide to abstain from voting on a particular issue. Abstention does not constitute a vote against a proposal: thus even if a group abstains, or is not represented at a particular meeting, it is still possible for the Committee to reach a unanimous decision.

**11.2** Subject to paragraph 11.1 above any question to be decided at a meeting of the Committee shall be determined by a majority of votes of members present and voting on the question, and in the case of an equality of votes the Chairman shall have a second or casting vote.

## **12 Access by the Public**

**12.1** Meetings of the School Organisation Committee will be open to the press and public unless the Committee decide to exclude them for a particular item of business.

**12.2** Any member of the public wishing to address the Committee may do so in accordance with the attached Protocol approved by the Committee.

## **13 Timescale for the Agreement of the School Organisation Plan**

The School Organisation Committee is required to meet at least once a year to agree a School Organisation Plan. This meeting will normally take place in the Summer Term with a view to agreement on the Plan being completed prior to the start of the subsequent academic year .

Otherwise the Committee will meet as necessary in order to consider individual proposals for change. The proposals for change requiring the Committee's determination must have been voted upon within two months of the end of the period for making objections where the proposal was published by the promoters of Governing Body or within two months of the date on which the LEA sent the objections to the Committee where the proposal was published by the Authority.

## **14 Quorum**

One member from at least each of the four of the five groups specified in paragraph 1 a, b, c and e.

## **15 Indemnification of Committee Members**

Members of the School Organisation Committee are indemnified against reasonable legal costs and expenses arising from decisions or action taken in good faith.

## **16 Budget**

The School Organisation Committee will agree on the circumstances for which they might need funds.

The Chairman will submit a provision and itemised budget for approval to the Local Education Authority prior to the beginning of the financial year to which the budget applies.

## **17 Review of Constitution**

The Committee will review its constitution to ensure that it continues to meet statutory requirements and, in addition, represent the full-range of -providers within Buckinghamshire and to act appropriately as the forum for planning of school provision.