

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**SCHOOLS FORUM****6th October 2015****Report of the Strategic Director for Children & Younger Adults****Schools Forum Meetings – Future Arrangements****1. Purpose of the Report**

To ask the Schools Forum to consider the future arrangements for meetings

2. Information and Analysis

- 2.1** Schools Forum meetings have traditionally been held at County Hall in Matlock, usually starting at 6pm and aiming to finish at around 8pm. In recent years, the meetings have been held on a 'rota' of days, i.e. Monday evening through to Thursday evening.

With the establishment of a new Schools Forum, it is timely to reconsider these arrangements. Members of the new Forum have therefore been given the opportunity to submit their views on a number of options in respect of:

- The timing of meetings
- The venue for meetings
- The day(s) that meetings are held; and
- Whether or not holding an informal 30 minute pre-Schools Forum meeting to discuss issues with colleagues, enable points of clarification to be raised, etc. would be useful.

Further comments and suggestions were welcomed.

A summary of the responses **as at 25 September 2015** is attached as Appendix 1. As the closing date for responses is not until 2nd October, an updated Appendix 1 will be tabled at the meeting if any further responses are received.

- 2.2** Statistically, the preference would appear to be for day time meetings held in Matlock on a rota of days. There was also strong support for the establishment of informal pre-meetings.

Unfortunately the issue of daytime car parking and room availability at County Hall is something that needs to be considered. Therefore, in light of the responses, one possible solution is as follows:

- The early autumn (October and November) and summer (June) meetings continue to be held during the evening at County Hall, Matlock.
- The late autumn (December) and winter (February) meetings are held during the day, in Matlock, but at a venue to be determined.

The December and February meetings have an important role in the budget allocation process and hence the potential to require a longer meeting. In addition, these particular meeting dates are at the greatest risk of being affected by adverse weather conditions.

All meetings would be held on a rota of days.

Please note that, regardless of the outcome of discussions at the 6th October meeting, the next Schools Forum meeting has already been arranged for **Monday 9th November 2015 at 6pm at County Hall.**

3. Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: prevention of crime & disorder, equality of opportunity, human resources, legal & human rights, environmental, financial, health, property and transport considerations.

4. Background Papers

Emailed and paper questionnaire responses

5. Officer's Recommendations

The Schools Forum is asked to:

- i. Agree the proposal set out in 2.2 above;
or
- ii. Determine an alternative option;
- iii. Determine whether or not to establish informal pre-School Forum meetings; and
- iv. Agree to leave matters of detail for discussion between the Chair and the LA.

IAN JOHNSON
Strategic Director for Children & Younger Adults

QUESTIONNAIRE RE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETINGS

APPENDIX 1

Responses: 19 of 33 57.6%

Q1: What time of day would you prefer Schools Forum meetings to take place?

(Previous practice: all meetings have taken place in the evening)

	Strongly Prefer	Prefer	Don't Mind	Don't Prefer	Strongly Don't Prefer	No Response	Total		Prefer or Higher	Don't Mind	Don't Prefer or Lower	Don't Mind or Higher
(a) Daytime (am)	3	6	3	3	1	3	19		56.3%	18.8%	25.0%	75.0%
(b) Daytime (pm)	5	5	3	2	1	3	19	☹	62.5%	18.8%	18.8%	81.3%
(c) Twilight (e.g. 4pm to 6pm)	2	6	7	3	0	1	19		44.4%	38.9%	16.7%	83.3%
(d) Evening (6pm to 8pm)	2	0	7	2	4	4	19		13.3%	46.7%	40.0%	60.0%

Comments:

Sometimes child care issues would make attending in an evening difficult.

I am happy to attend at any of the chosen times. Experience of travelling to Matlock late on winter evenings is sometimes difficult.

Most important to get the dates, times and locations agreed and I will get to those I can

Maximum:

62.5%

83.3%

OF THOSE WHO RESPONDED:

Q2: Where would you prefer Schools Forum meetings to be held?

(Previous practice: all meetings have taken place at County Hall)

	Strongly Prefer	Prefer	Don't Mind	Don't Prefer	Strongly Don't Prefer	No Response	Total		Prefer or Higher	Don't Mind	Don't Prefer or Lower	Don't Mind or Higher
(a) Matlock (County Hall)	3	7	7	0	1	1	19	☹	55.6%	38.9%	5.6%	94.4%
(b) A 'rota' of locations around the County	1	3	7	1	3	4	19		26.7%	46.7%	26.7%	73.3%

Comments:

Rotation may encourage more people to attend

Whilst travel is an issue for some members, my experience of constantly moving meeting venues is that it causes considerable stress for all concerned in finding, parking etc.

Consideration should be given to the geographical locations of those attending and then a central point chosen; if Matlock is the most central point then this is the most appropriate location.

I would be happy to arrange for Heritage High School to be used as one of the venues if the rota is put into place.

Don't mind travelling to even this out for one and all but will not travel to the deepest corners of the County at night in the winter...what about expenses for travel?

Maximum:

55.6%

94.4%

OF THOSE WHO RESPONDED:

Q3: On what day of the week would you prefer Schools Forum meetings to be held?

(Previous practice: meetings have been rotated through Monday to Thursday)

	Strongly Prefer	Prefer	Don't Mind	Don't Prefer	Strongly Don't Prefer	No Response	Total		Prefer or Higher	Don't Mind	Don't Prefer or Lower	Don't Mind or Higher
(a) Monday	1	0	4	5	2	7	19		8.3%	33.3%	58.3%	41.7%
(b) Tuesday	1	0	9	2	0	7	19		8.3%	75.0%	16.7%	83.3%
(c) Wednesday	0	1	8	1	1	8	19		9.1%	72.7%	18.2%	81.8%
(d) Thursday	0	2	7	0	2	8	19		18.2%	63.6%	18.2%	81.8%
(e) A 'rota' of the above	1	9	6	2	0	1	19	☹	55.6%	33.3%	11.1%	88.9%

Comments:

Unless the meetings are to be held during the morning, Mondays are difficult for me since our Governing Body meetings always fall on a Monday

Maximum:

55.6%

88.9%

OF THOSE WHO RESPONDED:

Q4: Would it be helpful to have an informal 30 minute pre-Schools Forum meeting to discuss issues with colleagues, enable points of clarification to be raised , etc.?

(Previous practice: N/A, this would be a new development)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total		Agree or Higher	Don't Mind	Disagree or Lower	
	2	9	6	1	0	1	19		61.1%	33.3%	5.6%	94.4%

Comments:

As this has not happened before and, I am new to the forum, it may be worth while trying this approach

Until I start attending the meetings to identify how they will be delivered, issues, content etc. not sure about this.

I think that this would give some time for people to do some 'catching up' which may then ensure that the meeting is not prolonged with issues that perhaps may not need to be discussed in the forum.

Although we should be prepared before we attend a meeting, some of the issues are difficult and a chance to clarify more informally would be appreciated .

OF THOSE WHO RESPONDED:

Q5: General comments

Meetings are well documented and well organised. The only difficulty is tiredness at the end of a long day!

Good luck finding a perfect solution!