

DRAFT

Document A: Steering Group Terms of Reference exemplar

The conduct of the statutory consultation of the school communities is delegated by Cabinet to the schools. The governing bodies of the two schools should ensure that an appropriate Steering Group is established and empowered to undertake the necessary detailed work so that the governing bodies can make their recommendations to Cabinet. The governing bodies need to set the strategic timeline for the statutory consultation that the Steering Group will follow.

The Steering Group should be representative of the key constituent groups of both schools, while being a manageable size to be able to work effectively. Key constituent groups should include parents, teaching staff, non-teaching staff, and governing bodies. The membership of the Steering Group does not need to be drawn exclusively from governors of the two governing bodies. Council officers will attend Steering Group meetings to advise and assist the work of the group.

The two governing bodies will notify the Director of Schools and Children's Development of the proposed membership of the Steering Group. The Director of Schools and Children's Development needs to be satisfied and have confidence that the membership is appropriate for the task, and to ensure relevant officer involvement.

Role of the Steering Group

The role of the Steering Group is to:

- prepare consultation documents, including a proposal evaluation that considers the implications for the schools of amalgamation
- plan and lead the statutory consultation
- report to the governing bodies on the outcome of the consultation

Chair of the Steering Group

The Chair of the Steering Group will be decided by the group. The Chair will be responsible for ensuring the effective working of the group, and for ensuring good communications to the school community about the work of the group and the consultation.

Representatives

It is important that the representatives of the constituent groups are empowered to participate and contribute to the work and decision making of the Steering Group. Members of the group are responsible for ensuring that the work of the group and the consultation processes take place to agreed timescales.

Confidentiality

To encourage full participation, views expressed within Steering Group meetings are to be kept strictly confidential. Members of the Steering Group will:

- maintain a clear focus on the best interests of children at both schools
- keep an open mind
- respect the contributions of all members of the group
- not divulge or discuss individual contributions or discussion details outside the meetings

Meeting records

An action record will be made of each meeting, and will be made publicly available.

Communications

The Steering Group will manage the information flow in a clear way, so that the message is agreed by the group and is conveyed in a consistent way to constituent groups. It is recognised that representatives of constituent groups need to be able to report back after meetings, and they may communicate agreed key action points pending the publication of the meeting record.

The Steering Group will decide the communications to be made to the school community including staff, governors and parents. Neither school governing body is to undertake communications regarding the consultation during this period.