

## **THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN**

At a meeting of the **SCHOOLS FORUM** held on **TUESDAY, 13TH SEPTEMBER, 2022** at 6.00 pm in Committee Room 2, Crowndale Centre, 218 Eversholt Street, London, NW1 1BD

### **MEMBERS OF THE FORUM PRESENT**

Katy Forsdyke, Christ Church School, Hampstead (Chair)  
Jen Allan, Eleanor Palmer School  
Claire Burns, Emmanuel School  
Alan Chesters, Acland Burghley School  
Rob Earrey, Fitzjohns Primary School  
John Hayes, Gospel Oak Primary School  
Perina Holness, Thomas Coram Centre  
Nicholas John, Acland Burghley School  
Colin Reader, Kentish Town School  
Daniel Silverstone, Parliament Hill School  
Vijita Patel, Swiss Cottage School  
Luca Salice, Brecknock and Torriano Schools Federation

### **MEMBERS OF THE FORUM ABSENT**

Jane Hindle (Vice-Chair), Camden School for Girls

### **ALSO PRESENT**

Councillor Marcus Boyland, Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families  
Nick Smith, Head of Education Commission & School Organisation  
Pauline Maddison, Interim Director of Education Commissioning  
Joe Lynch Paul Tanton, Schools Financial Advisor  
Victor Saunders, Schools Budget Financial Advisor  
Sharon Scott, Interim Head of SEN and Inclusive Intervention Services

**The minutes should be read in conjunction with the agenda for the meeting. They are subject to approval and signature at the next meeting of the Schools Forum and any corrections approved at that meeting will be recorded in those minutes.**

### **MINUTES**

#### **ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Proposed by Alan Chesters and seconded by Colin Reader, Katy Forsdyke was elected as the Chair of Schools Forum for the duration of the 2022-23 academic year.

The election of Vice-Chair was deferred to the next meeting.

**RESOLVED**

THAT Katy Forsdyke be appointed at Chair of the Schools Forum for academic year 2022/23.

**1. GUIDANCE ON HYBRID MEETINGS**

**RESOLVED**

THAT the guidance be noted.

**2. SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP LIST**

**RESOLVED**

THAT the membership list be noted.

**3. APOLOGIES**

Apologies had been received from Jane Hindle.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA**

There were no declarations.

**5. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair announced the following:

“In addition to the rights by law that the public and press have to record this meeting, I would like to remind everyone that this meeting is being broadcast live by the Council to the Internet and can be viewed on our website for six months after the meeting. After that time, webcasts are archived and can be made available upon request.

If you have asked to address the meeting, you are deemed to be consenting to being filmed and to the use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. If you are addressing the Committee your contribution will be recorded and broadcast.”

## **6. MINUTES**

The following corrections were raised:

- Colin Reader representing Kentish Town School.
- Nicholas John being listed as present.
- Item 8, point 4, the year of final decision being taken 2022.

## **RESOLVED**

THAT the minutes of the last meeting held on 7 June 2022, as amended, be approved as a correct record.

## **7. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

There was no urgent business.

## **8. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Head of Education Commission & School Organisation introduced the paper. He proposed the following amendment for the terms of reference (in relation to the membership on section 2.2): that the Education School Funding Agency (ESFA) representative was not required to be invited to each meeting as a standing invite, however they would be entitled to attend as an observer when required. In addition, he made the following points:

- He confirmed the document from the Department for Education (DfE) on guidance, procedure and good governance for a Schools Forum would be circulated to Members;

### **Action By - Head of Education Commission & School Organisation**

- In relation to the function of the forum, he noted that Schools forum was a statutory consultative body on the schools funding formula. Camden's Schools Forum took a maximal approach in the areas it covered beyond the statutory requirements, to additionally consider contracts and a wide range of information on schools finance issues. If the Forum decided, it had the power to narrow the terms of reference; and that
- Any new members would be offered individual training and introductory session to the Schools Forum.

## **RESOLVED**

THAT the proposed changes to the terms of reference be agreed.

## **9. FUNDING UPDATE AND SCHOOLS FUNDING CONSULTATION 2023/24**

Consideration to a report of the Head of Education Commissioning and School Organisation.

The Schools Budget Financial Advisor introduced the report. In addition to the report, he outlined the following:

- Because Camden historically received higher funding than other authorities, they would be receiving the minimum uplift of 0.5%.
- The government directive was for local funding formulas to mirror the national funding formula (NFF) and that any differences must be reduced by 10% each year.
- There were funding pressures on schools going forward due to the comparatively meagre funding increase; which would be further exacerbated by the proposed teacher salary increases, energy cost increases and general inflation. It was anticipated that the government would address the pressure on schools and that additional funding was needed.

The Chair thanked the Schools Budget Financial Advisor for the report and opened the Forum to comments and questions:

- In relation to the differences between the local and national funding formulars, a Member asked what were the areas that showed the most difference and would be affected by the 10% yearly reductions policy. In response, it was confirmed it was the funding per pupil on a key stage weighted basis. The local formula for each stage was significantly higher than the NFF. It was confirmed they were modelling the affects of the changes.
- It was clarified that 6.1b meant that the SEN teams were advised to spend new money sustainably and to make those decisions with the school and stakeholders.
- In relation to the finance rating score cards recently sent to headteachers, a Member asked how many schools had been ranked as 'Red'. It was agreed this information would be shared with the Forum following the meeting.

### **Action By - Schools Financial Advisor**

- In relation to the finance rating score cards recently sent to headteachers, it was agreed that more information of the direction of travel of schools ratings would be shared at the next meeting. In relation to the direction of travel, it was confirmed that the Forum had been provided separately with the outturn position of schools. Prior to the pandemic 51% of schools showed an in-year deficit, but very few showing overall deficit. During the pandemic schools balances had slightly improved. Now the direction of travel was that more schools would increasingly be hit with pressure on their finances which the Council was positioning itself to respond to.

**Action By - Schools Financial Advisor**

- A Member stated they would like a financial advisor from the ESFA to meet with schools and advise them on how to manage budgets more effectively. It was confirmed they had been contacted and the Council was awaiting a response.
- In relation to support staff pay awards on section 5.9, a Member asked for an update on the pension back funding for support staff. It was confirmed that a response was still outstanding on this matter. It was raised that local financial pressures should be clear, to enable better strategic financial planning with that in consideration. An answer would be pursued and updated to the Forum.

**Action By - Schools Financial Advisor**

- In relation to section 5.11, It was confirmed that a support staff pay award had not yet been agreed.
- In relation to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) in section 6.1e, it was confirmed that the Council may introduce an MTFS saving of up to £250k to its commissioning budget for Camden Learning services. There was no other MTFS savings which affected schools. This saving would be phased over the period 2022/23-2024/25, until the next commission, which Camden Learning were aware of.
- It was confirmed that the Forum would be provided on the pension back funding for 2022/23 using figures on the pension contribution up until September 2022.

**Action By - Schools Financial Advisor**

**RESOLVED**

THAT the Schools Forum

- a) Note the developments regarding the planned implementation of the national funding formula, as set out in sections 1 to 4.
- b) Note the current pressures on schools budgets and the support being provided by the Council in sections 5 to 8. The timetable for consultation on the local funding formula is outlined in section 9.
- c) Comment on the draft 2023/24 budget consultation document prior to circulation to schools and other relevant parties, as described in sections 9 and set out in Appendix 1.

**10. CAMDEN'S EDUCATION STRATEGY - UPDATE**

Consideration to a report of the Head of Education Commissioning and School Organisation, who presented the update with the Interim Director of Education Commissioning.

## *Schools Forum - Tuesday, 13th September, 2022*

In addition to the report, in relation to the new planning data from the Greater London Authority (GLA) to be sent to schools in advance of standards meetings, on section 4.2, it was highlighted that the data would also be reported to the Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee on 14 November. The data would include a consolidated position on the new information on future admissions. An insight to those trends was that the end of summer 2022 data forecasted a precipitous decline, which caused concern for the Council. The negative trends were a result of the impact of Brexit, Covid and migratory effects from those factors. However, those figures were higher than the Local Government Association (LGO) forecast, therefore a view was taken there was potential for a stabilisation in the decline in school roll. Previous action the Council took put them in a good position to address the issue going forward and would be using a system of collaboration in response to the White Paper.

The Interim Director of Education Commissioning gave the following updates:

- Since the last meeting, the Education Strategy Implementation Board was in the process of being set up and would be led by DAME Christine Gilbert. The first meeting was in October and the progress of the schools planning element of the Board could be reported back to the Forum.
- In relation to the White Paper on section 3.3, it was added that the steering group would report into an executive group, which included the Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families, Executive Director Supporting People and DAME Christine Gilbert. The groups would consider the proposals as they progressed and would ensure the options were right for Camden schools, whether academy trusts were the right direction and that partners were working to strengthen Camden as a collective together under the umbrella of Camden Learning. The executive group aimed to ensure schools were prepared for any range of changes from or to government and were collectively resilient. This work was specifically in relation to maintained schools, however work was taking place in parallel with the diocese and faith schools.

### **RESOLVED**

THAT the report be noted.

### **11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

There was no urgent business.

## **12. FUTURE MEETING DATES**

The following meeting dates for the 2022-23 academic year were noted:

- 1 November 2022
- 6 December 2022
- 7 February 2023
- 6 June 2023

The meeting ended at 6.48 pm.

### **CHAIR**

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**MINUTES END**