

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **SCHOOLS FORUM** held on **WEDNESDAY, 13TH SEPTEMBER, 2023** at 6.00 pm in Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE

MEMBERS OF THE FORUM PRESENT

Jules Belton, St Mary & St Pancras Primary
Rob Earrey, Fitzjohns Primary School
Katy Forsdyke, Christ Church School (Hampstead)
John Hayes, Gospel Oak Primary School
Perina Holness, Thomas Coram Centre
Bob House, Camden School for Girls
Deborah Issacs, Edith Neville Primary, Richard Cobden Primary, Primrose Hill Primary
Nicholas John, Acland Burghley School
Vijita Patel, Swiss Cottage School
Colin Reader, Kentish Town School
Daniel Silverstone, Parliament Hill

MEMBERS OF THE FORUM ABSENT

Jen Allan, Eleanor Palmer Primary School
Alan Chesters, Acland Burghley School
James Hadley, Haverstock School

ALSO PRESENT

Councillor Marcus Boyland, Cabinet Member for the Best Start for Children and Families
Vikram Hansrani, Director of Education Commissioning and Inclusion
Nick Smith, Head of Education Commission & School Organisation
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

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Proposed by Daniel Silverstone and seconded by John Hayes, Katy Forsdyke was elected as the Chair of Schools Forum for the duration of the 2023-24 academic year.

Proposed by Katy Forsdyke and seconded by John Hayes, Daniel Silverstone was elected as the Vice-Chair of Schools Forum for the duration of the 2023-24 academic year.

2. SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP LIST

The Chair welcomed, on behalf of the Forum, the new headteacher representative Jules Belton from St Mary and St Pancras Primary.

RESOLVED -

THAT the membership list be noted.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Jen Allan, Alan Chesters and James Hadley.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

There were no declarations.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Broadcast of the meeting

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

RESOLVED -

THAT the minutes of the last meeting held on 6 June 2023 be approved as a correct record.

7. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Head of Education Commissioning and School Organisation updated the Forum on training opportunities for Schools Forum members. Upon request, individual or group training sessions were on offer to members to cover the statutory functions of Schools Forum, which would include detailing areas where the views of the Forum were advisory or consultative. Officers agreed to circulate Schools Forum Department for Education (DfE) guidance documents.

Action By - Head of Education Commissioning and School Organisation

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In response to members, the Head of Education Commissioning and School Organisation explained that there were statutory points in the year where Schools Forum were consulted upon and timelines of consultation of the funding formulas, which were reflected in report recommendations. At request of the Forum, officers agreed to include a forward plan within the agenda from the next meeting which indicated any statutory obligations of the Forum.

Action By - Head of Education Commissioning and School Organisation

RESOLVED -

THAT the terms of reference be noted.

8. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no urgent business.

9. FUNDING UPDATE AND SCHOOLS FUNDING CONSULTATION: 2024/25

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

The Team Leader Schools and Designated Schools Grant (DSG) presented the report which updated the Forum on the on the national funding position following the latest July 2023 Education Schools Funding Agency (ESFA) technical updates and guidance on schools funding for 2024/25; estimates of the possible impacts on resources up to and beyond 2023/24; the draft consultation document seeking the views of schools and other interested parties about any changes to the school funding arrangements for 2024/25; and the current budget pressures and the position regarding any possible draw down or addition to DSG reserves following the uplifted DSG allocations for 2024/25 announced in July 2023.

The Chair thanked officers for the report and invited questions and comments from the Forum. The following was discussed:

- In relation to sections 5.1-5.5, teacher pay increase, it was confirmed that the uplift was expected to be embedded into funding following the initial two years.
- In relation to the ESFA requirement of local authorities to move their local funding formular 10% closer to the NFF per year, a member asked how close Camden's formula was currently to the NFF. In response, it was confirmed that there were c.20 local authorities who were reasonably far from the NFF, but Camden was not significantly far and getting closer.
- In relation to the differences between the NFF and the local funding formular, it was confirmed that Camden's primary focus was toward deprivation factors, rather than low attainment, which was higher in Camden than nationally and therefore a priority.

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- In relation to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), it was confirmed that officers were not aware of any updates on the horizon that would affect Schools Forum considerations.
- Forum members stated that Appendix 1, the draft consultation document seeking the views of schools and other interested parties about any changes to the school funding arrangements for 2024/25, should be tabled at the Headteachers Consultative Forum to encourage more responses.

RESOLVED –

THAT 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; and
- c) comment on the draft 2024/25 budget consultation document prior to circulation to schools and other relevant parties, as described in sections 9 and set out in Appendix 1.

10. SCHOOLS FORUM HIGH NEEDS BLOCK SUB-GROUP: RECOMMENDED TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Education Commissioning and Inclusion

The Director of Education Commissioning and Inclusion presented the report which set out proposals and a terms of reference for a HNB sub-group of the Schools Forum. The purpose of the sub-group would be to allow more in-depth consideration of the use of the HNB in partnership with the local authority and to bring high level recommendations back to the Schools Forum. The sub-group would be a time limited task and finish group, to be completed by the end of the 2023/24 academic year.

The Chair thanked officers for the report and invited questions and comments from the Forum.

In relation to section 2.2, membership, the following was discussed:

- Members queried the membership of the sub-group, noting that the success of the Exceptional Needs Grant (ENG) development was the input of headteachers and people who worked in schools, with elected Member oversight; the ENG success was related to schools not being handed a structure which did not fit on the ground by those who did not work in schools. In response, it was stated that the intention was for Schools Forum members to sit on the sub-group with the ability to co-opt others in the space.
- Members noted that the sub-group would benefit from an Early Years, post-16 settings, and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENDCO)

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representatives. They further stated that membership depended on what aims the sub-group wanted to achieve.

- It was noted by members that the financial knowledge and overview of Schools Forum members voice was valuable to the purpose of the sub-group.
- Members suggested to discuss the membership of the HNB sub-group to the Headteachers Consultative Forum.

A members noted that in their view the terms of reference did not reflect the HNB underspend enough, which was the route of concern of the Forum in the run-up to commissioning a sub-group. The purpose of the sub-group needed to be clean in that money should reach children in need. In response, officers stated that the first session would set out the funding position and discuss how to use the surplus.

RESOLVED -

THAT Schools Forum agree the terms of reference.

11. SCHOOL MEALS DELIVERY IN SCHOOLS

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

The Head of Education Commissioning and School Organisation introduced the report which set out the Council's current position with regard to the future of school meals delivery and the range of options available to the Council. The main details of the report were within the Part II appendix due to the sensitivity of the negotiation and business affairs.

The Forum passed the following resolution to enter private session at 6.45pm:

RESOLVED –

THAT the press and public be excluded from the proceedings of the Schools Forum during consideration of the respective item on the agenda on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, that were members of the public to be present, there would be disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Specifically - Publicity in respect of item 11 would be likely to lead to the disclosure of exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the authority holding that information) in accordance with paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Part II

Officers outlined the Council's current position on the schools' meals delivery contract options and the Forum commented and asked questions of clarification of future options.

Part I

The meeting returned to public session at 7.00pm.

RESOLVED -

THAT Schools Forum note the current position and the timeline of activity over the next period, as set out in the Part I report and Part II appendix.

12. FUTURE MEETING DATES

The following meeting dates for the 2023-24 academic year were noted:

- 1 November 2023
- 5 December 2023
- 6 February 2024
- 4 June 2024

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no urgent business.

The meeting ended at 7.05 pm.

CHAIR

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MINUTES END