

SCHOOLS FORUM

WEDNESDAY, 4 DECEMBER 2024 AT 6.00 PM
COMMITTEE ROOM 2, TOWN HALL, JUDD STREET, LONDON WC1H 9JE

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SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Izzy Jones, Alison Lowton and Jemima Wade

Issued on: Friday, 29 November 2024

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ENDS

SCHOOLS FORUM 4 DECEMBER 2024

AGENDA

1. SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP LIST

(Pages
7 - 8)

To note the Schools Forum membership list and any updates.

2. APOLOGIES

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

5. MINUTES

(Pages
9 - 18)

To consider and approve the minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2024.

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

7. SCHOOL FUNDING 2025/26

(Pages
19 - 44)

Report of the Director of Education and Inclusion.

At the recent November meeting, forum was presented with the results of the consultation document sent to schools relating to the local funding arrangements for 2025/26. There were no major objections raised from the consultation and forum confirmed its agreement of the funding formula to be used for the distribution of funds to schools for 2025/26.

Following the 30 October 2024 Budget and the most recent 6 November Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) policy document announcement, this report estimates the funding effects of that information on the current school individual NFF budgets and seeks schools forum's agreement on the amount of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) de-delegation for next year.

Due to the understandable delay by the ESFA following the recent change in government the individual schools figures are at this stage only estimated figures using the cash uplifts to the National Funding Formula (NFF) factors provided by the ESFA for 2025/26. These do not currently include a general inflation uplift rate for 2025/26 Schools block as it has not yet been confirmed.

Final actual individual school budgets for 2025/26 will be released to schools pending update of ESFA data (with the recent October 2024 census data) and its application to the local Camden schools' formula using the Authority Planning Tool (APT) which is expected in late December 2024.

The report also summarises forecasts of the 2024/25 High Needs (HN) DSG outturn, future budgets requirements and planned DSG spending as outlined in the earlier High Needs Report to forum and also outlines current and future cost pressures on schools and high needs budgets to be used in budget planning.

This report was completed prior to any further announcements by the ESFA regarding schools national funding formula proposals. Officers will provide an oral update to the forum on any intervening development in schools' funding at the meeting.

8. SCHOOL MEALS DELIVERY IN SCHOOLS

(Pages
45 - 48)

Report of the Director of Education and Inclusion.

At its meeting of 11 September 2024, an update was presented to the Schools Forum on the procurement of the new school meals contract. The current contract with Cater Link is due to expire on 31st March 2024. A further update is now available.

Following a successful tendering process, tenders were received on 10th September 2024 for a new service that is due to commence on 1st April 2025 for a period of three years, with option for two extensions of one year each, with a total estimated aggregate value of £24m. The new contract will include an option to break after two years (April 2027), which will allow the Council to move to an in-house arrangement, if possible.

The purpose of this briefing is to update Schools Forum on the outcome of the tender, which will then proceed to consideration of award by the Executive Director, Children and Learning following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families in line with the procurement strategy agreed by the Cabinet on 5 June 2024.

9. WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKER

(Pages 49 -
56)

Report of the Director of Education and Inclusion.

This report sets out the work plan for the Schools Forum for the remainder of the 2024/25 school year (Appendix 1) and provides an update on actions requested at previous meetings (Appendix 2).

10. FUTURE MEETING DATES

To note the remaining meeting dates of the academic year:

- Wednesday, 5 February 2025
- Wednesday, 4 June 2025

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

AGENDA ENDS

The date of the next meeting will be Wednesday, 5 February 2025 at 6.00 pm in Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE.