

<b>LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN</b>	<b>WARDS: ALL</b>
<b>REPORT TITLE</b> Funding Update and Schools Funding Consultation: 2024/25	
<b>REPORT OF</b> Head of Education Commissioning and School Organisation	
<b>FOR SUBMISSION TO</b> Schools Forum	<b>DATE</b> 1 November 2023
<b>SUMMARY OF REPORT</b>  <p>This report provides an overview of responses from primary and secondary schools in relation to proposals regarding the local funding formula for schools for 2024/25. These proposals were reported to the forum at its September’s meeting. These proposals recommended, subject to any statutory national funding formula (NFF) requirements, no significant change to the formula and forum was favourable to the proposals presented. Forum agreed the proposal subject to any significant objections from schools during the consultation period and that the responses should be reported back at Forum’s next meeting. There were no significant number of requests from schools to change the agreed approach during the consultation period. There was no significant number of response to the general comments question as detailed in section 2 below. However, any current and future comments will be passed on to the appropriate service for consideration and response.</p> <p>The Forum is now asked to confirm its earlier approval of the September 2023 consultation document.</p> <p><b>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</b></p> <p>The following documents have been used in the preparation of this report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operational Guide Pre-16 schools funding: local authority guidance for 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK (<a href="http://www.gov.uk">www.gov.uk</a>)</li> <li>• Schools block funding formulae 2023 to 2024: Analysis of local authorities’ schools block funding formulae - GOV.UK</li> <li>• <a href="https://publishing.service.gov.uk">NFF schools block technical note (publishing.service.gov.uk)</a></li> <li>• Allowable factor value ranges_2024/25</li> <li>• P re-16 schools funding: local authority guidance for 2024 to 2025</li> </ul> <p><b>Contact Officer:</b></p> <p>Victor Saunders, Schools Budget Financial Advisor  5 Pancras Square, N1C 4AG  020 7974 5254 / E-mail: <a href="mailto:victor.saunders@camden.gov.uk">victor.saunders@camden.gov.uk</a></p>	

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Schools Forum is asked to:

- a) Confirm its acceptance of the formula proposals set out in the consultation report following the positive endorsement from the level of response and those schools that responded;
- b) Provide any additional comments on the proposals; and
- c) Note any additional Schools funding information.



Signed by:

Nick Smith, Head of Education Commissioning & School Organisation

Dated: 23 October 2023

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report formally presents the outcomes of the consultation regarding the proposed local schools funding formula to apply in 2024/25. The single proposal was that subject to any statutory requirements from the Education Schools Funding Agency (ESFA) there should be no change to the local formula for 2024/25. This was discussed and agreed by Schools Forum ahead of circulation of the proposal subject to any significant objections raised by schools during the consultation period. The consultation document was issued to schools on the 14<sup>th</sup> September with a closing date for responses of 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023. Responses from schools are summarised in this report together with any additional information that has become available since the last meeting of the forum. The level of responses to a continuation of previously considered approach by LB Camden was not anticipated to be high. Responses were received from 2 schools, which represents a 4% overall response rate. This is not unusual considering the context of the low impact nature of the proposals for no change and the continuation of a previously agreed approach.
- 1.2 Members of the forum will be aware from previous reports and the governments December 2016 consultation on the national funding formula for schools outlining government's determination to introduce national funding formula that would ultimately lead to a redistribution of funding across the country. Its first steps were introduced in 2012 and have involved the following stages:
  - Separating the dedicated schools grant into three blocks – schools, high needs and early years
  - restricting the factors that could be used to determine the funding needs of individual primary and secondary schools in order to reflect their cohort of pupils

- implementing a place led funding system for pupils with special educational needs
- introduction of individual schools NFF budgets as the basis for calculating an aggregated DSG Schools block for distribution by Councils

1.3 To comply with the above changes, over those years the authority, in consultation with the forum and all schools, has simplified its formula in preparation for the complete implementation of the national formula. Following significant changes to the formula some years ago, which addressed the major outstanding areas where Camden's formula differed significantly from the overall averages per factor for other Councils in England, no further changes were proposed this year.

1.4 The authority has no current proposal to change the funding formula prior to the deadline set by the government for reporting any changes into the national monitoring system. In making this decision, the authority has continued to follow the advice of the schools forum as far as possible.

## **2. Adjustment to Local funding formula for primary/secondary schools Responses from schools**

2.1 The consultation requested the views of schools on the following proposal:

- That there should be no changes to the local formula for 2024/25 beyond the statutory requirements of the ESFA

2.2 The questions are reproduced at Appendix 1 together with the number of schools supporting each option. Only one question was included in the consultation covering the specific area set out below:

- (a) **That there should be no changes to the local formula for 2024/25 beyond the statutory requirements of the ESFA**

2.3 This item will not require application to EFA for approval.

2.4 Responses from schools are summarised below to show the response to each option:

**Question 1:** Do you agree that there should be no changes to the local formula for 2024/25 beyond the statutory requirements of the ESFA ? :

Of the 2 Respondents

- 50% of respondent secondary schools (total 1) supported the proposal that there should be no changes to the local formula for 2024/25
- 50% of respondent secondary schools (total 1) supported the proposal disagreeing that there should be no changes to the local formula for 2024/25

- 2.5 The overall response from respondent schools showed that 50% (1 school) supported or had no further view on the proposal and 50% and (1 school) disagreed and had comments detailed below. Given this response from those schools that responded combined with the low level of total responses being taken as the general overall endorsement the authority is recommending approval.
- 2.6 The decision that there should be no changes to the local formula for 2024/25 will have no impact on the draft 2024/25 budgets that were indicated in the September forum report.

**Question 2:** Are there any changes that you would like to make to any of the proposals? Do you have any comments relating to the funding formula for primary and secondary schools?

- 2.7 There was only 1 commented response summarised below;

The respondent feels that “schools with below average levels of pupil deprivation have been disproportionately hit over several years by LBC’s historic strategy regarding the allocation of the budget for deprivation. They believe that this has left such schools with weaker reserves compared to others in the borough. It proposes that LBC should request permission to make adjustments to the deprivation-driven payments so that this perceived imbalance can be reversed for their school.

- 2.8 Any future comments will be passed on to the appropriate service for consideration and comment to the respondents.

**End of Report**