

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **SCHOOLS FORUM** held on **WEDNESDAY, 1ST NOVEMBER, 2023** at 6.00 pm in Remote meeting via Microsoft Teams. This meeting can be watched live at www.camden.gov.uk/webcast

MEMBERS OF THE FORUM PRESENT

Daniel Silverstone, Parliament Hill (Vice-Chair)
Jen Allan, Eleanor Palmer Primary School
Alan Chesters, Acland Burghley School
Rob Earrey, Fitzjohns Primary School
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

MEMBERS OF THE FORUM ABSENT

Jules Belton, St Mary & St Pancras Primary
Katy Forsdyke, Christ Church School (Hampstead) (Chair)
James Hadley, Haverstock School
Colin Reader, Kentish Town School

ALSO PRESENT

Councillor Marcus Boyland, Cabinet Member for the Best Start for Children and Families
Nick Smith, Head of Education Commission & School Organisation
Victor Saunders, Schools Budget Financial Advisor
Joe Lynch, Schools Financial Advisor
Paul Taunton, Finance and Commissioning Manager

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. GUIDANCE ON REMOTE 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 by Katy Forsdyke, Colin Reader and Vikram Hansrani (Director of Education Commissioning and Inclusion).

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 Part I and Part II minutes of the last meeting held on 13 September 2023 be approved as a correct record.

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

There was no urgent business.

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

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

Victor Saunders, Team Leader Schools and Designated Schools Grant, introduced the report. In addition to the paper, the following was highlighted:

- The low response (two schools) had been expected because the proposals recommended, subject to any statutory national funding formula (NFF) requirements, no significant change to the local funding formula for 2024/25 and was therefore low impact. The low level of total responses were received as a general overall endorsement of the proposal and the authority would be recommending approval.
- As part of the consultation process, officers visited the Primary Head Teacher Forum and offered a two day open invite to discuss the proposals. Many questions raised had been answered in previous years.

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

A member raised that one of the responses (50%) supported the proposal to disagree there should be no changes to the local formula. The response stated that schools with below average levels of pupil deprivation had been disproportionately affected and adjustments could be made to the deprivation-driven payments so that this perceived imbalance could be reversed for their school. The member suggested that when officers attended Primary Head Teacher Forums as part of consultations, they should ask for a show of hands to ensure colleagues understood the impact on their budgets. Officers agreed to incorporate asking for a show of hands into future consultation visits.

A member asked for more information about the recent headline of the Education Schools Funding Agency (ESFA) miscalculation of school budgets for 2024-25 and how that would effect Camden schools. Officers confirmed that the ESFA miscalculated the NFF for 2024-25 by inputting the wrong pupil numbers, which resulted in surplus funding to schools. The consequence of the error would be Camden's schools funding per pupil increase dropping from 2.4% per pupil to 1.9%. It was noted that that the statistics given at the September 2023 Forum were provisional and based on October 2023 census data. The per pupil funding figures released after December 2023 would be based on census data from October 2023.

RESOLVED -

THAT Schools Forum

- 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.

9. HIGH NEEDS SUB-GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Head of Education Commissioning and School Organisation presented slides to the Forum which covered the following areas; key tasks of the HNB Sub-group; the baseline HNB funding and reserve position, with relevant recent trend analysis; and the membership of the group and organisation of initial meetings.

The Vice-Chair thanked officers for their presentation and invited questions and comments from the Forum.

- Members commented that the focus areas of the HNB Subgroup should be a longer-term project and the proposals were for the task and finish group to run for one academic year. Members asked if the Subgroup timeline should be extended. Officers responded they anticipated longevity of the focus areas and ongoing functions of the Subgroup, however they wanted to commit to tangible outcomes for year one.
- A member noted that the terms of reference stated that membership would consist of Schools Forum members. The member stated that there should be more diverse voices around the table and not just Schools Forum members, as a function advising themselves. Officers responded that it would be at the discretion of the HNB Subgroup chair to invite reps onto the Subgroup.
- A member stated that the core membership should go wider than head teachers and suggested that people involved in the Cluster work could be part of the membership.
- A member suggested that health commissioning colleagues should be part of the membership because there would be outcomes from the Subgroup's recommendations at Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) level. The Subgroup needed additional voices around the table outside of Education.
- A member suggested that there should be a quorum of Schools Forum members required to be present at a HNB Subgroup.

RESOLVED -

THAT Schools Forum agree the revised terms of reference.

10. FORWARD PLAN

The forward plan was noted.

11. FUTURE MEETING DATES

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

Schools Forum - Wednesday, 1st November, 2023

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

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no urgent business.

The meeting ended at 6.40 pm.

CHAIR

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MINUTES END