



Schools Forum

Report title: Schools Forum Work Plan for 2024/25

Date: 27th June 2024

Key decision: No.

Item number 5

Outline and recommendations

This report sets out the intended workplan for Schools Forum for the financial year 2024/25.

The workplan may evolve as it becomes necessary to update Schools Forum on relevant matters.

*Review the proposed schedule of future meeting dates and the work programme.
(Appendix 1)*

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

This report is for information and guidance in terms of the anticipated business that Schools Forum needs to consider for 2024/25.

Most items on the agenda are standing items based on the knowledge of timely decision making requirements.

Summary

- 1.1. The Strategic Business Partner for CYP (SBP) is proposing the attached programme of work for the coming financial year. This will provide a logical and structured framework to support a cycle of well-informed decision making, given the volume and complexity of the work of Schools Forum.
- 1.2. The programme presents the schedule for key elements of forum's work programme. It is expected that as the year progresses, subsequent items will be added to the work programme as a result of discussion and consideration by forum.
- 1.3. Schools forum is asked to review and approve the proposed schedule of future meeting dates and the work programme. (Appendix 1)

Background

- 1.4. Each Local Authority is required to operate a Schools Forum. The Department for Education (DfE) has published a good practice guidance which can be accessed on the link below.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/888371/Schools_forum_operational_and_good_practice_guide.pdf

- 1.5. Schools forum's are required to meet a minimum of four times a year. The timing of the meetings are set to strategically enable decisions to be made /supported to assist for example:-

June	Updates on closure of accounts position and consideration of intelligence on budget planning.
October	Updates and consideration of any policy decisions. It is common for the Department for Education to publish data

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	and announce any changes during the summer break.
December	Review any key discussions that impact upon and inform the setting of the 2025/26 schools' budget.
January	Notification of the 2025/26 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) settlement and agreement of the schools delegated budget share, including any de-delegation.

- 1.6. Schools Forum has noted the now ongoing pressure on the High Needs Block, and in response to this agreed a High Needs Working Group and mitigation plan - this has been in place for some years now to support the mitigation plan and also the DBV. For this reason "update from the High Needs Working Group" is to remain a standing item on this workplan. It is anticipated that this process continues for 2024/25 especially as the High Needs Block continues to remain under pressure - albeit showing some positive signs of the mitigation plan working. Report elsewhere on this agenda provides further details with regards to the 2023/24 outturn and projections for 2024/25.
- 1.7. Schools Forum will be aware that Lewisham council is working with the DfE as part of the delivering better value initiative. £1m grant funding has been secured to progress on the DBV mitigation strategies for 2024/25 – this will be discussed elsewhere on the agenda in more detail.
- 1.8. With regards to DfE updates on DSG, again this will remain a standing item for 2024/25. Other areas of interest that we await further information on include:-
- Ongoing transition of Schools Delegated budget share towards a "Hard formula"
 - Government Pledge to deliver 30 hours free child care places by 2027-28.
 - Teachers and Non Teaching Staff pay review and financial implications for schools.
 - Any appropriate consultations from the DfE.

Meeting Dates for Schools Forum 2024/25

- 1.9. The dates for Schools Forum for 2024/25 are as follows: As stated above, the meetings are currently scheduled as Virtual, however we will review the position over the course of the year.

Month	Date	Time	Venue
June 2024	27th	4.30 to 6.30	Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting

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October 2024	24th	4.30 to 6.30	Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting
December 2024	12th	4.30 to 6.30	Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting
January 2025	16th (subject to change dependant on DfE timelines)	4.30 to 6.30	Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting

1.10. The dates for the High Needs Working Group meetings are set as follows:

Month	Date	Time	Venue
June 2024	13th	11:00 to 12:30	Teams
October 2024	10th	11:00 to 12:30	Teams
November 2024	28th	11:00 to 12:30	Teams
January 2025	9th	11:00 to 12:30	Teams

Financial implications

1.11 There are no additional financial implications arising from this report. Schools forum should however note that depending on the date for submission to DFE, schools forum date may either require revising or the turnover time for the funding report could potentially be shorter than the standard time.

Legal implications

1.12 The Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012 requires that School Forums must meet at least 4 times a year.

1.13 The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2021 amended The Schools Forums (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 to make permanent provisions to enable Schools Forum meetings to be held remotely.

Equalities implications

1.14 There are no direct equalities impacts arising from this report.

Climate change and environmental implications

1.15 Not applicable

Crime and disorder implications

1.16 Not applicable

Health and wellbeing implications

1.17 Not applicable

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Report author and contact

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Appendix 1 – Proposed dates of Schools Forum meetings and work plan 2024/25 financial year

Date of Forum meeting	Agenda Item	Lead Officer	For information/Decision/Approval
27th June 2024	2024/25 Workplan	CYP Strategic Business Partner	Approval
	2023/24 Closedown position <ul style="list-style-type: none">including Schools Balances	CYP Strategic Business Partner	Information
	2024/25 DSG funding update	CYP Strategic Business Partner	Information
	High Needs Funding – update including progress on DBV	Head of Integrated SEND Services for Children & Young People	Information/Decision/Approval
	Free Childcare up to 30 hours for working parents -update	Head of Early Years Quality & Sufficiency	Information
12th October 2024	2024/25 DSG update plus any finalisations for 2023/24 DSG	CYP Strategic Business Partner	Information
	High Needs Funding – update	Head of Integrated SEND Services for Children & Young People	Information/Decision/Approval

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	Update from DFE	CYP Strategic Business Partner	Information/Decision/Approval
	Scheme for Financing Schools and Schools Finance Manual update	CYP Strategic Business Partner	Information/Decision/Approval
	Schools Health check following June Budget submissions	CYP Strategic Business Partner	Information
12th December 2024	2024/25 Schools Funding Formula	Strategic Business Partner - CYP	Information/Decision/Approval
	High Needs Working Group Update	Head of SEN	Information/Decision/Approval
	Updates from Relevant Officers on Policy updates	TBC	information/Decision/Approval
16th January 2025 (provisional date)	2025/26 DSG funding settlement Including Schools Funding Formula	Strategic Business Partner - CYP	Information/Decision/Approval
	Schools Forum constitution and membership	Strategic Business Partner - CYP	Information/Decision/Approval
	Updates from Relevant Officers on Policy updates	TBC	Information/Decision/Approval

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