



Schools Forum

Report title: Schools Forum Work Plan for 2023/24

Date: 29th June 2023

Key decision: No.

Item number: 6

Outline and recommendations

This report sets out the intended workplan for Schools Forum for the financial year 2023/24.

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 2023/24.

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

1. Summary

- 1.1. The Strategic Business Partner (SBP) for Lewisham's Children and Young People's Directorate 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)

2. Background

- 2.1. 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

- 2.2. In May 2020 the DfE updated the guidance to facilitate schools forum meetings during the period of Covid 19. This practice is expected to continue until the point the DfE amends the regulations. We will over the course of the year consider opportunities for in person meeting as well as hybrid meetings.

Extract from Schools Forum Operational and good practice guide

6. The Schools Forums (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020, which will come into force on 18 June 2020 make provisions to enable schools forums to meet remotely while they are unable to meet physically in a room during the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19).

7. This includes, but is not limited to, telephone conferencing, video conferencing, live webcast, and live interactive streaming.

- 2.3. Schools forums 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 DfE to publish data and announce

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	any changes during the summer break.
December	Review any key discussions that impact upon and inform the setting of the 2024/25 schools' budget.
January	Notification of the 2024/25 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) settlement and agreement of the schools delegated budget share, including any de-delegation.

- 2.4. 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. 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 2023/24 especially as the High Needs Block is now very much under pressure. Reports elsewhere on this agenda provide further details with regards to the 2022/23 outturn and projections for 2023/24. As advised at previous schools forum meetings, the DfE has now commenced their Delivering Better Value (DBV) engagement with Lewisham. DfE has appointed a company called NEWTON, to support the review. We will update schools forum with feedback at appropriate stages during this process.
- 2.5. With regards to DfE updates on DSG, again this will remain a standing item for 2023/24. 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 childcare places by 2027-28.
 - Teachers and non-teaching staff pay review and financial implications for schools.
 - Any appropriate consultations from the DfE or Lewisham Council.

3. Meeting Dates for Schools Forum 2022/23

- 3.1. Dates for schools forum for 2023/24 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	29th	4.30 to 6.30	Virtual Microsoft

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			Teams Meeting
October	19th	4.30 to 6.30	Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting
December	14th	4.30 to 6.30	Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting
January	18th (subject to change dependant on DfE timelines)	4.30 to 6.30	Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting

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

Month	Date	Time	Venue
June	21st	11:00 to 1:00pm	Teams
October	11th	11:00 to 1:00pm	Teams
December	7th	11:00 to 1:00pm	Teams
January	11th	11:00 to 1:00pm	Teams

4. Financial implications

4.1. There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1. The Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012 requires that School Forums must meet at least 4 times a year.
- 5.2. *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.

6. Equalities implications

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

7. Climate change and environmental implications

7.1. Not applicable

8. Crime and disorder implications

8.1. Not applicable

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9. Health and wellbeing implications

9.1. Not applicable

Report author and contact

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Appendix 1 – Proposed dates of Schools Forum meetings and work plan 2023/24 financial year

Date of Forum meeting	Agenda Item	Lead Officer	For information/Decision/Approval
29th June 2023	2023/24 Workplan	CYP Strategic Business Partner	Approval
	2022/23 Closedown position <ul style="list-style-type: none"> including Schools Balances 	CYP Strategic Business Partner	Information
	2023/24 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
	Schools Internal Audit	Head of Assurance	Information
	Free Childcare up to 30 hours for working parents -update	Head of Early Years Quality & Sufficiency	Information
	Mayor of London – Extension of Free School Meals to Key Stage 2	Service Manager – Educational Estate Compliance & Contracts	Information
19th October 2023	2023/24 DSG update plus any finalisations for 2022/23 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
14th December 2023	2023/24 Schools Funding Formula	CYP Strategic Business Partner	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
18th January 2024 (date tbc)	2024/25 DSG funding settlement including Schools Funding Formula	CYP Strategic Business Partner	Information/Decision/Approval
	Schools Forum constitution and membership	CYP Strategic Business Partner	Information/Decision/Approval
	Schools Health Check following November submissions	CYP Strategic Business Partner	Information
	Updates from Relevant Officers on Policy updates	TBC	Information/Decision/Approval

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