

Report for: Cabinet, 10th December 2024

Title: Scheme of Financial Regulations & Standing Orders for Schools

Report authorised by : Taryn Eves, Director of Finance

Lead Officer: Neil Sinclair, Head of Finance.

Ward(s) affected: n/a

Report for Key/

Non Key Decision: Reports to the Cabinet should be classified according to the definition of a key decision set out in the Council's Constitution (Part 4, Section D, Rule 12 Access to Information Rules).

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1 The Scheme of Financial Regulations and Standing Orders for Schools sets out the financial relationship between the council and the maintained schools in the Borough. The Council is required to have an up to date and agreed Scheme for Financing schools.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

- 2.1 In an environment where financial pressures are increasing right across the public sector it is important that the controls on how schools operate and use their delegated budgets are brought up to date.
- 2.2 The attached set of financial regulations and standing orders for schools refreshes previous versions of the document reflecting current DfE guidance, and changes in the operational environment in the council as well as schools.
- 2.3 The financial regulations and standing orders have been shared with schools and considered by the School's Forum.
- 2.4 Once approved by Cabinet, the document will be published on the council's website and a copy will be sent to the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors of each school.

3. Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to

- Approve the Scheme of Financial Regulations and Standing Orders for Schools
- Note that schools have been consulted on the regulations and standing orders and have been endorsed by the Schools Forum on 16 July 2024.

4. Reasons for decision

- 4.1 The Financial Regulations and Standing Orders for Schools have not been updated for a considerable period of time. The attached document revises and updates the regulations and standing orders based on current DfE guidance.
- 4.2 The role of the scheme sets out the financial relationship between the local authority and the maintained schools which it funds and describes requirements relating to financial management and associated issues, binding both on the local authority and on schools.
- 4.3 This is issue 16 of statutory guidance given by the Secretary of State pursuant to s.48(4) and paragraph 2A(2) of Schedule 14 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, School Standards and Framework Act 1998.
- 4.4 Local authorities are required to publish schemes for financing schools, setting out the financial relationship between them and the schools they maintain. This guidance lists the provisions which a local authority's scheme must, should or may include. Schemes need not follow the format used in this guidance, except for the text of directed revisions.

5. Alternative options considered

- 5.1 No other options considered as preparation and publication of the Scheme for Financing Schools is a statutory requirement with which local authorities must comply.

6. Background information

- 6.1 The regulations and standing orders sets out the controls expected to be maintained, procedures that should be in place and responsibilities of school officers in managing the schools delegated budget.
- 6.2 The draft regulations and standing orders have been shared with schools and were considered by the school's forum in July 2024.
- 6.3 As a result of the financial risks emerging from falling school rolls and general financial pressures revising the updating the regulations and standing orders is critical to maintain and improve financial controls.
- 6.4 The financial regulations and standing orders will be updated annually and shared and approved at Schools Forum. In the event of major changes to the regulations governing schools and which may require a major update to the financial regulations and standing orders, a report will be brought back cabinet to approve a new set of financial regulations and standing orders.

7. Contribution to the Corporate Delivery Plan 2024-2026 High level Strategic outcomes'

7.1 Theme 3: Children and young people

- Outcome 2 Happy Childhoods -All children across the borough will be happy and healthy as they grow up, feeling safe and secure in their family networks and communities.
- Outcome 3 Successful Futures - Every young person, whatever their background, has a pathway to success for the future.

8. Carbon and Climate Change

8.1 There are no direct carbon and climate change issues contained in this report.

9. Statutory Officers comments (Director of Finance (procurement), Head of Legal and Governance, Equalities)

Finance

9.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Procurement

9.2 Strategic Procurement have been consulted in the preparation of this report. Strategic Procurement note the report contents and recommendations in section 3 of the report. The recommendations do not include a procurement decision. Strategic procurement have no objection to the recommendations in this report.

Head of Legal & Governance [Ellen Harley Matheson, Principal Lawyer]

9.3 Section 48 School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (the Act) requires each Local Authority to maintain a scheme dealing with matters concerning the financing of schools maintained by it as prescribed in the statutory framework consisting of the Act and statutory Regulations and Guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

9.4 Approval of the Scheme is an executive function and as such falls within the remit of Cabinet.

9.5 Revisions to the scheme is subject to approval of the Schools Forum subject to the consultation of the governing body and head teachers of every school maintained by the Authority.

9.6 In accordance with the statutory process for approval the proposed revised Scheme was presented to and approved by the Schools Forum in July 2024.

9.7 The Authority is required to publish the revised scheme on a website that is accessible to the public by the date that the revisions are due to come into force

together with a statement that the revised scheme comes into force on that date.

Equality

- 9.8 The Council has a public sector equality duty under the Equalities Act (2010) to have due regard to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.
- 9.9 The three parts of the duty applies to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership status applies to the first part of the duty. Although it is not enforced in legislation as a protected characteristic, Haringey Council treats socioeconomic status as a local protected characteristic.
- 9.10 It is not anticipated that any groups with protected characteristics will be impacted by this report specifically as a result of these characteristics.

10. Use of Appendices

- 10.1 Financial Regulations and Standing Orders for Schools

11. Background papers

- 11.1 None