

28 June 2017

SCHOOLS CONSULTATION INCLUDING DE-DELEGATION

Report of the Operations Director, Education

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 To update the Forum on progress and timetable for discussions round de-delegation of funding for school improvement and activities related to maintained schools, together with proposals for schools' involvement in contract monitoring of the HfL contract.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Forum is recommended to note the proposed timetable and processes described below.

3. Background

- 3.1 Usually, there are a number of matters on which it is necessary to consult schools over the summer period. However, this year there are no specific proposals requiring this. The major issue for schools' decision for the coming year will be round the de-delegation of funding for school improvement and activities related to maintained schools.
- 3.2 Forum will remember that, in preparation for last year's decision, we established a working group made up of representatives of maintained schools to consider what specific proposals might be recommended to schools as the subject of a consultation process.
- 3.3 At the same time, further work was undertaken covering the services provided by HfL and paid for from other elements of the overall DSG budget, so as to bring back to Forum a comprehensive report covering a large part of the work undertaken by HfL and funded centrally.
- 3.4 Following consultation with schools, in December 2017 Forum agreed a package of proposals including both retained DSG funding and de-delegated funding against a set of services to be provided by HfL. It was also agreed to establish a group to monitor/oversee the resulting HfL contract and to agree a process for developing a further set of proposals for 2018/19.

- 3.5 The first meeting of this group took place on 15th June. Following discussion a process/timetable for going forward was agreed, and is attached as Appendix A. Two further meetings are planned for the coming month. It was noted in the meeting that, whilst an annual process was inevitable for 2017/18, it was not reasonable to take annual decisions in December about the continuation or otherwise of the HfL contract from the following April; there would therefore need to be some consideration of a multi-year arrangement so far as that is feasible.
- 3.6 The group also discussed the current contract management/monitoring process, which is based to some degree on three formal termly meetings. The process is highly detailed and the group felt it would not be appropriate for Heads to participate in this. A better alternative would be a periodic report back on performance to Forum, perhaps annually; but that if one or more Heads wished to attend the termly review meetings this would be arranged.

4. Conclusions

- 4.1 Forum is asked to note the proposals, and in particular the timeline set out in the Appendix.