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| <b>TITLE</b>                | <b>Matters Arising Update</b>                 |
| <b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b> | Schools Forum on 17 March 2021                |
| <b>WARD</b>                 | None Specific;                                |
| <b>LEAD OFFICER</b>         | Director, Children's Services - Carol Cammiss |

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

This reports forms part of regular reporting to Schools Forum, informing areas of statutory decision making and improving visibility and consultation on wider Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) financial matters.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Schools Forum are asked to note the update on matters arising.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

The report provides Schools Forum with an update on the following matters arising:

- Insurance Arrangements for Maintained Schools
- School Admissions

## **Update for Matters Arising March 2021**

### **1. Insurance Arrangements for Maintained Schools**

Following the decision not to continue to offer insurance for maintained schools through the de-delegated route, a revised charging methodology has been put in place for the 2021/22 financial year.

Insurance previously funded through the de-delegated route has been rolled together with contents insurance to offer a 'core' offer to maintained schools. This has not altered the insurance options available to schools in any way but has allowed a per pupil charging model basis. Pupil numbers used are as per the October 2020 census.

Doing so, and passing on the actual charge would have offered a per pupil cost for the 2021/22 financial year of around £38, a slight reduction for most schools on current equivalent charge, but still a significantly higher cost than if schools chose to join the RPA. Clearly a significant number of schools choosing an alternative insurance route would have significant financial implications for the Council given the current contract runs until 2023. Agreement has therefore been reached that a lower cost will be offered to schools, with the Council effectively subsidising the rate for the next 2 years through the use of insurance reserves etc. A charge of £26 per pupil has therefore been set for the new 'core' insurance offer. While that is still higher than the RPA, it is hoped this gives schools a more cost effective offer, particularly where they value the support of the Council on insurance matters.

In terms of longer term financial planning there is of course a tipping point on whether the Council still offering schools insurance at all is financially sustainable, depending on how many schools continue to purchase their insurance through the Council. That is something that will need to be considered in the run up to the procurement exercise for retendering insurance contracts for 2023. It is the intention to fully consult with schools on longer term planning decisions, and the continued input into that from the task & finish group would be most welcome.

### **2. School Admissions**

The School Admissions Task and Finish Group of the Schools Forum held the first meeting on the 19th January and formally adopted the Terms of Reference for the group.

An initial workplan was developed in respect of key activity or areas of exploration that members of the Task and Finish Group wished to work on. These include:

- Review of admissions arrangements (given the increase in housing development within the borough)
- Review of staffing capacity within the School Admissions Team
- Development of a timeline of key school admissions activity
- Commencement of a consultation on the Fair Access Protocol
- Review of SEND placement processes and practices

A work plan based on these areas will be presented to the Task And Finish group at the next meeting during March (ST to confirm dates).