

**REPORT TO:** Schools Forum

**DATE:** 15 October 2013

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Ann McIntyre

**SUBJECT:** Education Funding Agency Observer  
Feedback

**WARDS:** Boroughwide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To advise the Forum of the comments received from Bev Thompson, the EFA Observer, at the last meeting held on 18 June 2013; and to present the final version of the Schools Forum Terms of Reference following her comments, which is attached at Appendix 1.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Schools Forum notes:**

- 2.1 the comments made; and**
- 2.2 receives the revised Terms of Reference.**

## **3.0 EFA FEEDBACK**

Representatives of the EFA had spent some months visiting Schools Forums in the North West to introduce themselves and explain the functions of the Agency, as well as ensure that Schools Forums were complying with the EFA regulations.

She had determined that Halton Schools Forum had complied with the regulations as follows:

- Advance publication of the agenda and papers on the Council's website;
- Full participation in discussions from Members from all sections of representation was evident;
- Local Authority participation was in a support context and to provide additional information to Members only;
- Positive chairing – ensuring all who wished to contribute were able to do so;
- Clearly set out recommendations and decisions together with well laid out papers/reports;
- Voting criteria compliant.

One observation had been made with regards to the need for reference to the requirement for proportional academy representation on the Schools Forum being included as part of the Terms of Reference. The

Terms of Reference have now been amended to reflect this and is attached at Appendix 1.

Further to the Forum's queries regarding the management of Academy surplus balances, she had advised that the Financial Handbook now states that they can carry over any amount, unless there are restricted by their Financial Agreement to 12%. With regards to the transparency of budgets, academies are expected to publish their accounts to their websites.

The EFA are available to provide advice or assistance to Schools Forums at any time or to attend a particular meeting if requested in advance.

#### **4.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

None under the meaning of the Act.