

# BRIEFING PAPER

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**SUBJECT:** Best Practice Review of the Role of Schools Forum  
**DATE:** 18<sup>th</sup> July 2012  
**RECIPIENT:** SCHOOLS' FORUM

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## **SUMMARY:**

This paper reviews the recent research produced by Local Government Association on good practice review of the role of Schools Forums.

## **BACKGROUND and BRIEFING DETAILS:**

1. The Local Government Association (LGA) commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to explore the current role, operation and impact of Schools Forums in England.
2. The research included confidential and anonymous interviews with representatives from schools forums across the country. The report published in May 2012 provides recommendations on best practice.

## **KEY FINDINGS:**

3. The research concludes that:
  - Schools Forums were generally perceived to have a strong influence on funding decisions and provide a platform for discussion at the strategic level about funding decisions at the local level.
  - Effectiveness of schools forums was characterised in terms of connected, proactive and child centred behaviour, including effective communication within forums with Local Authority staff as well as the wider educational community.
  - In the most proactive Schools Forums there was clear evidence that the funding formula was developed through consultation.
  - Schools Forums valued the contribution of councillors and cabinet members as this provided a council perspective, expert advice, feedback on education issues. Information and advice.
  - Although Schools Forums' meetings were 'open', members of the public were not actively invited and rarely attended meetings.
4. Looking to the future, interviewees expressed a lack of clarity about the role and status of Schools Forums in general, there was uncertainty about whether the changes around the outcome of the national funding consultation will result in a strengthened or reduced role for schools forum.

