



City of Westminster

Westminster Schools Forum Meeting - Minutes

Date and time of meeting: Monday 3rd December 2018 at 4.45pm

Location: 5 The Strand, London, WC2N 5HR

Representing	Name	Organisation	Attendance
Primary Schools	6 Members		
Primary Head	Sandra Tyrrell (ST)	Christchurch Bentinck Primary	Present
Primary Head	Darren Guttridge (DG)	Edward Wilson CE Primary	Present
Primary Head	Miles Ridley (MR)	St Peters' Eaton Square CE Primary	Present
Primary Governor	Vacancy		
Primary Governor	Andrew Garwood-Watkins (AGW) (Chair)	St Stephens CE Primary	Present
Primary Governor	Vacancy		
Secondary schools	1 Member		
Secondary Head	Eugene Moriarty (EM)	St Augustine's High School	Present
Secondary Head	Kathryn Pugh (KPUG)	The St Marylebone CoFE School	Present
Academies	5 Members		
Secondary Non-Recoupment Academy Principal	Richard Ardron (RA)	Marylebone Boys School	Present
Secondary Recoupment Academy Head	Sian Maddrell (SMA)	The Grey Coat Hospital	Present
Secondary Recoupment Academy	Michael Bithell (MB) (Vice Chair)	United Westminster Schools Foundation	Present
Alternative Provision Academy	Krishna Purbhoo (KPUR)	TBAP	Present
Primary Recoupment Academy Head	Louisa Lochner (LL)	Gateway Academy	Present
Maintained Nursery Schools	1 member		
Nursery Head	Liz Hillyard (LH)	Tachbrook Nursery	Present
Special Schools	1 member		
Special Schools Head	Andy Balmer (AB)	Westminster Special Schools	Present
Early Years (PVI)	1 member		
	John Trow-Smith (JTS)	LEYF	Present
14-19 Representative	1 member		
	Vacant		
Officers in Attendance			
Director, Children's Service	Melissa Caslake (MC)	Bi-Borough Children's Services	Present
Director of Education	Ian Heggs (IH)	Bi-Borough Children's Services	Present
Director of Operations and Programmes	Andrew Tagg (AT)	Bi-Borough Children's Services	Present
Lead Strategic Finance Manager	Anita Stokes (AS)	Bi-Borough Strategic Finance Education	Present
Finance Manager	Nicholas Grey (NG)	Bi-Borough Strategic Finance Education	Present
Senior Finance Manager	Amanda Anerville	Bi-Borough Strategic Finance Education	Present
Head of School Governor Services/Clerk	Jackie Saddington (JS)	Bi-Borough Children's Services	Present
Observers			

Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Young People	Cllr David Harvey (DH)	Councillor	Present
Deputy Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Young People	Cllr Jackie Wilkinson (JW)	Councillor	Present
Department of Education	Kay Goodacre	Department of Education	Present
Headteacher	Marina Coleman (MC)	St Vincent's Catholic Primary	Present
Head of HR	Penny Collins (PC)	Westminster Academy	Present
Observer	Sara Bagnall (SB)	Marylebone Boys' School	Present
Observer	John McDonald (JM)	St Marylebone CofE School	Present

Item		Action
1.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>There were no apologies.</p>	
2.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
3.	<p>WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Ms Kay Goodacre, from the DfE, and a round of introductions took place.</p>	
4.	<p>MEMBERSHIP</p> <p>There was no update on the Membership.</p>	
	<p>RESOLUTION: Clerk to continue to follow up on vacancies.</p>	Clerk
5.	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 15 OCTOBER 2018</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2018 were deferred to the next meeting.</p>	
6.	<p>UPDATED PROVISIONAL DSG FUNDING SETTLEMENT, NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA AND LOCAL FUNDING FORMULA OPTIONS 2019/20.</p> <p>AT opened by reminding Members that following the previous meeting it had been agreed to invite a representative of the DfE, to the School's Forum to enable Members to seek clarity on the National Funding Formula (NFF) and take advice. KG was attending as the representative of the DfE. AT explained he had been looking at a variety of ways to address the various issues and the next step was to consider the core principles.</p> <p>There were four areas needed addressing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge • Transition 	

- Core Principles that were open, fair and transparent.
- The Funding Floor, baseline, and what future options would be based on, along with the potential implications of changes.

KG informed everyone that no date had been set for the hard national funding formula to be brought in and there would be a soft formula until 2021. She advised that some Local Authorities were closer to the NFF already, although it was accepted that the closer schools were to the floor, the less incentive there was for them to want to change.

KG explained that the floor factor had been introduced in 2018 to help LA's with a mix of factors. She gave examples of different approaches LA's were using to address the change to the NFF, notifying them that it was not expected that many schools in London would use the floor factor. She explained, in response to a question from a Member, that the floor factor is based on the 2017/2018 baseline so that schools would gain 0.5% each year, for two years, which would compound to 1%.

KG was asked what the basis for the floor was now. She said no decisions had been taken beyond 2021 so everything was still based on the 2017/2018 baseline. The expectation was that there would be no move away from the floor factor, but no decisions had been announced to date and it was not known when any decisions would be forthcoming.

AT explained that there was too wide a gap between the highest and lowest funded schools. Therefore, over time the MFG at -1.5% had been used. He cautioned if the Schools Forum was to continue along that path, schools will be disadvantaged.

KG said the policy team was aware that they can't go back to using the baseline for 2017/2018 going forward. There was not an expectation that there would be lower deprivation rates than the NFF. It is anticipated that any work would flow to the formula.

AT pointed out the challenge was whether to move funding at the same rate or have stable budgets. KG said she strongly believed in the MFG. A variable MFG was introduced last year and if the Schools Forum was trying to rectify historic issues then it would be better to use the MFG. AT said they had been working with a MFG of -1.5%. KG explained that where LA's use the MFG year on year, it would be rare for the DfE to agree a disapplication. It was appreciated it will take time to get through.

The Chair asked if Members had any questions on the principles. A Member asked if the £100k lump sum was included. AS said this was not, as it was considered separately.

A Member asked if both Principles outlined at 4.1 of Appendix 1 could be considered together, as decisions taken by schools could have long term implications. The Chair pointed out that there is a challenge for Members, as it was hoped by now that there would be more clarity, in order that everyone can make definitive plans. Schools are struggling to make decisions affecting pupils, are continuing to reduce services and questioning how decisions can be made without clarity.

KG agreed everyone would like, and needs, certainty. Therefore, if a decision was based on moving towards a formula based on characteristics, this would be stable,

but historic decisions will impact. She said she would strongly encourage making decisions based on stability and slow changes.

The Chair expressed concern that any decisions taken now, could unravel later. KG said the expectation was that the policy would be to continue with the NFF, although the final decision is that of Ministers. This would be based on a national timeline, although a spending review is currently being undertaken by the government.

Paragraph 3.3

The Chair reminded everyone that a decision would need to be taken on the High Needs Block. The Options to be considered were shown at Item 5. A paper titled – Updated 2019-2020 School Funding Options was circulated.

Members were advised that Option C was not affordable. A Member noted that there was no cap in place. AS agreed and explained that a cap can only be applied if it was already in place – such as with the MFG. AS described the options put forward with area cost adjustments. She said no school can be out by more than 8% compared to the 2018-2019 funding. Another Member asked if it was possible to put a cap in place. AS said it was and gave an example of applying a 2.5% cap, which would free up £400k. This would mean a reduction for some schools that had seen a gain. The money would be spread across the other schools but using the NFF. KG clarified that if this option was approved, it provided a gain for schools where there is high deprivation and low attainment. By moving to the NFF, WCC schools would gain. AT pointed out this would involve moving funding from Secondary to Primary schools.

The Chair pointed out at the last meeting it was agreed every pupil should be equally funded. Therefore, Members needed to make a decision as to whether they want to continue with the MFG to transition as fast as possible, or decide on a slower rate of transition and decide on the factors to be used.

Cllr Harvey arrived at 5.25pm.

The Chair reminded everyone the principle was agreed at the last meeting and this meeting was to agree the policy going forward, but not actual figures.

AT stated the paper did capture two principles that they were trying to put in place and gives staff a steer.

The Chair reminded Members the purpose of the meeting was to look at how the transition should be made to the NFF and what the differences were. Assuming a hard option was agreed, progress would be undertaken using the principles. Staff haven't had time to look at all the factors yet. AT said any decisions taken would help staff and the majority of schools.

KG explained that the various options provide for different speeds of transitioning to the NFF. Using IDACI is the way the DfE has chosen to distribute funding. A Member questioned whether the NFF Principles were currently being used. The Chair explained they were not as there was not enough information available at this stage. A paper will be presented to the next meeting of the Schools Forum which will make everything clear. AT advised Members that regardless of the factors used, the MFG option is the best.

	<p>KG pointed out it was implicit that deprivation is included in the AWPU rate in London. Therefore, it was taken out and it is the LA's decision on how funding is used. AT informed her that in WCC, it is encouraged that the Schools Forum make the decisions.</p> <p>Members asked KG if there was likely to be any change in the IDACI factor as it didn't work well in WCC. There were now more refugees who don't qualify for FSM. KG said the last update was in 2016 and it is usually reviewed on a five-year cycle.</p> <p>KP asked why option 4 was not being considered. AT explained that this was due to historical allocations. Although some schools gained, most would not gain as much. Therefore, there would be no journey of equitable funding.</p> <p>MC left at 5.43pm.</p> <p>SM highlighted that it was important that everyone understood how difficult it was for schools as Heads felt they were operating in a blind tunnel and trying to second guess what may happen next. KG informed Members that the DfE was bidding for funding as part of the spending review and was doing all they could to gain support for schools.</p> <p>EM raised the issue of the impact of pension costs for schools. KG confirmed the DfE will fund pension increases in 2019-2020, but it is not known whether this will be covered in future years, as everyone must wait for the outcome of the spending review.</p> <p>IH pointed out that the huge pressure on the High Needs Block was of even greater concern. KG agreed and said the department know it is a major problem for LA's. Although WCC is better managed than many LA's, the High Needs issue is becoming a greater problem and the department is looking at this.</p> <p>AT recommended continuing with the MFG in the short term and deciding on where to allocate funding received for deprivation and additional needs. The Chair said this would be a decision for the January meeting.</p> <p>EM asked for EAL to be reviewed and AS agreed to provide a table for Members.</p>	
	<p>RESOLUTION: To consider the proposed Options at the meeting in January 2019.</p>	<p>AT/AS</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p><u>£50K Additional Extras</u></p> <p>EM asked if there was any update on when schools would receive the 50k funding announced in the Chancellor's budget as "for the little extras schools need". KG reported that this would be a devolved capital allocation for one year and a decision was expected on distribution this month. IH reminded Members that this would be an average of £50k for Secondary schools and £10k for Primary schools but did not include nurseries.</p> <p><u>Column B and Column C</u></p> <p>KP asked what the difference was between columns B and C on the options sheet. Column B had 3% capping with the school full. Column C includes the NFF values</p>	

	<p>with no funding floor. KP asked for more clarity on capping options in the next funding models, with the MFG included. KG reminded everyone that it was difficult to provide complete modelling without details of all the factors.</p> <p>The Chair agreed and said the paper brought to the next meeting of the Schools Forum must be affordable, transparent, fair and include the principles. It was agreed that funding allocations per school would be prepared in an anonymous format. Examples would be given, including some with outliers.</p> <p>IH reminded everyone that principles had been applied to the falling rolls initiative and this had worked very successfully.</p> <p>AT said they would endeavour to ensure no school loses more than 1.5%.</p> <p><u>Nursery Schools</u></p> <p>IH asked KG if there was any update on the funding of nursery schools. KG stated the department was currently carrying out a consultation and gathering evidence. AT said the situation was critical with the viability of nurseries an issue.</p> <p>KP left at 6.04pm</p> <p>The Chair thanked KG for attending the meeting and her valuable contribution.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The date of the next meeting is as follows:</p> <p>Monday 21 January 2019 – 4.45pm – 5 The Strand, WC2</p>	

Meeting closed at 6.05pm