



City of Westminster

Westminster Schools Forum Meeting - Minutes

Date and time of meeting: Monday 14th October 2019 at 4.45pm

Location: Westminster City Hall, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP

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	Louise Ritchie (LR)	Soho Parish CE Primary	Present
Primary Governor	Vacancy		
Primary Governor	Andrew Garwood-Watkins (AGW) (Chair)	St James and St John CE Primary	Present
Primary Governor	Vacancy		
Secondary schools	2 Members		
Secondary Head	Eugene Moriarty (EM)	St Augustine's High School	Present
Secondary Head	Vacancy		
Academies	5 Members		
Secondary Non-Recoupment Academy Principal	Richard Ardron (RA)	Marylebone Boys School	Present
Secondary Recoupment Academy Head	Vacancy		
Secondary Recoupment Academy	Michael Bithell (MB) (Vice Chair)	United Westminster Schools Foundation	Present
Alternative Provision Academy	Krishna Purbhoo (KPUR)	TBAP	Absent
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	Apologies
Early Years (PVI)	1 member		
	John Trow-Smith (JTS)	LEYF	Present
14-19 Representative	1 member		
Secondary Head Director of Finance and Administration	Kathryn Pugh (KPUG) John McDonald (JM) (represented KP)	The St Marylebone CofE School The St Marylebone CofE School	Apologies Present
Officers in Attendance			
Acting Bi-Borough Executive Director of Children's Services	Sarah Newman (SN)	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
	Wendy Anthony (WA)	Bi-Borough Children's Services	Present
Lead Strategic Finance Manager	Anita Stokes (AS)	Bi-Borough Strategic Finance Education	Present
Assistant City Treasurer	Steve Muldoon (SM)	Commercial and Financial Management	Present
Finance Manager	Nicholas Grey (NG)	Bi-Borough Strategic Finance Education	Present

Senior Finance Manager	Amanda Anerville (AA)	Bi-Borough Strategic Finance Education	Present
Head of School Governor Services/Clerk	Jackie Saddington (JS)	Bi-Borough Children's Services Education	Present
Observers			
Cabinet Member for Family Services, and Public Health	Cllr Heather Acton (HA)	Councillor	Apologies
Deputy Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Education and Skills	Cllr Jacqui Wilkinson (JW)	Councillor	Apologies
Headteacher	Peter Broughton (PB)	Westminster City School	Present
School Bursar	Marie Holmes (MH)	The Greycoat Hospital	Present

Item	Action
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies were received from Mr Andy Balmer, Ms Kat Pugh, Cllr Heather Acton and Cllr Jacqui Wilkinson. The Chair informed Members that Cllr Harvey had stood down from his role as Cabinet Member. He had initially been replaced by Cllr Acton who was unable to attend the meeting. Cllr Barnes would now take on the role.	
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST EM informed members from 28 October 2019 he would be the Executive Headteacher of the Federation of St Augustine's. There were no other declarations of interest.	
3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 3 JUNE 2019 The minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2019 were agreed to be a true and accurate record of the meeting. Matters Arising from the minutes not included elsewhere on the agenda: Financial Notices of concern IH reported no financial notices of concern had been issued. Place numbers for College Park and QE2 Jubilee AS confirmed the correct numbers were those issued by the DfE.	
RESOLUTION: Noted	
4. CONSTITUENCY AND MEMBERSHIP AT reminded members he had been asked to look at the constituency and membership of the Schools Forum. There had been no review over the last eight years, and it had been expected that the NFF would be in place by now and the LA would have no role. However, this was still to be addressed so he had looked at the membership, purpose and principles of the Forum, members views and the process and communication process for different constituents. He was now recommending a fundamental review in order to have the most effective Schools Forum. It was agreed a paper would be brought to the next meeting.	

	Members asked if they could fill vacancies in the meantime, if there would be Terms of Reference or if any categories would change. They were advised not to fill vacancies until the outcome of the review is known, there would be Terms of Reference and categories would not change unless there was a fundamental change in numbers. The clerk agreed to support AT.	
	RESOLUTION: AT to circulate a paper, with recommendations on constituency and Membership, to Members at the next meeting.	AT/JS
5.	<p>SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLAN</p> <p>IH reminded members the school organisation plan had been published earlier in the year, so he would be providing an update. He informed members six forms of entry had been removed permanently from schools, due to the changing demographics. Where numbers had been capped, schools may choose to make this a permanent arrangement.</p> <p>IH informed members reception classes for 2019-2020 were slightly up. The Chair stated it was indicated at 3.3 that there was a downward trend. He was informed that was correct at the time of writing the report. However, the census had just taken place, and this indicated numbers were slightly up.</p> <p>A member asked if there was any indication on numbers for 2020-2021. WA said it was too early to tell as applications are not usually submitted until the end of November and take up in nurseries does not give an indication of reception numbers.</p> <p>AT informed members there is an upward trend in take up for 3-4 year olds, which is due to an uptake in the thirty-hour offer, but this doesn't always translate to reception intake. Mapping is being carried out.</p> <p>IH explained the LA was working with the DfE, and relevant Diocese. There is a challenge for 1FE schools with falling rolls, as they cannot reduce to half a form of entry, as that is not viable. The situation is being kept under review. Although there is good work being carried out by governors it is a challenge to maintain standards with diminishing finances.</p> <p>The Chair asked what needed to be achieved in order that schools can stay viable, as schools are of the view that the message is they must change so positive action is being taken by schools. Nevertheless, no progress is being seen with the Church Street redevelopment programme, which means the original predictions are now likely to be wrong. IH reminded him the full plan gives more detail and the impact is being looked at, but the regeneration is not within the remit of the Schools' Forum. Members considered the impact of smaller classes, higher mobility, more take up of 30 hours offer and noted that figures are stable in the secondary sector.</p> <p>IH reminded members that there was continued pressure on schools and the LA with SEN support, as well as more complex needs.</p>	
	RESOLUTION: Noted.	
6.	<p>UPDATED PROPOSAL RE FUNDING FOR NUMBERS ABOVE PAN</p> <p>AS reminded members a decision had been made at the last meeting, but this was not in accordance with funding regulations and therefore an updated paper was</p>	

	<p>presented. She highlighted that two secondary schools had offered additional places to Bi-borough children. Members thanked her for the report, which they felt, was much clearer.</p>	
	<p>RESOLUTION: To agree to provide funding, totalling £40k, to secondary schools who have offered places above their PAN to meet basic need, where the offer is 30%, or above, of places to bi-borough year 7 pupils in September 2019. The growth funding criteria will be reviewed and included in 2020-2021 school budget proposals later in the year.</p>	
	WA left at 5.20pm.	
7.	<p>DSG 2019-2020 BUDGET MONITORING</p> <p>AS highlighted the forecasts in Table 2, notably the Early Years budget position, and the forecast of £35k for fair access admissions. She informed Members that the 2019-2020 DSG allocations for deductions for copyright licences covering all schools are deducted in year.</p> <p><u>High Needs</u></p> <p>AS highlighted that there is a challenge around post 16 charges, pointing out some of these figures are historical. She pointed out the figure at 3.11 informing members the change was due to an over-estimate previously. Overall, the forecast is for an under-spend of £2k.</p> <p>AS was asked why the rate paid to LSAs is low compared to other Local Authorities. She said this was due in part to pensions contributions being lower in Westminster and the move to the resource allocation system (RAS) will do away with hourly rates as the banding will replace the identified hours for individual pupils.</p> <p>AT explained there is a need to review the High Needs area in its entirety, through the High Needs Group. Teachers' costs were always slightly higher but there are also real term funding pressures, with real term increases of 8%, whereas only 1% extra is received. The intention is to provide more flexibility and transparency.</p> <p>The Chair asked if there were any risks, or opportunities, to be aware of for the next year. AS said the issues to be aware of were increases in; post 16 numbers, and increasing numbers of EHC plans, although it had just been announced that the High Needs funding allocations was increasing by £2.6m next year.</p> <p>AS was asked why an extra £1m was shown in table 2. She advised this was mainly around Early Years. AT informed Members that the initial figures were notional and 95% is allocated to schools. The Vice Chair expressed concerns regarding the projected variance of £344k in the budget areas "Top-Up Independents Pre-16". AS said this was known about. IH explained the LA was facing challenges on places for autism and the resource bases are full. Therefore, the LA is trying to create specialist provision.</p>	

	<p>The Chair expressed concern that the contingency costs were significant. AT explained significant scrutiny is undertaken before funds are allocated and schools must submit a robust business plan. IH informed members the school standards team were working closely with schools and therefore there were no surprises. Ofsted has also raised the bar and if school results go down this can create additional problems for schools. Therefore, it is important that a multi-team approach is taken to support schools, which is the approach of the LA.</p>	
	<p>RESOLUTION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) To note the revised 2019-2020 DSG allocation of £83.908m and forecast underspend of £2,000. ii) To note the falling rolls fund balance of £67,000 will be distributed to schools via the WCC formula, schools protected by the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) are unlikely to receive any of this funding as their budget allocation is above the WCC formula allocation. iii) To note that in future years the cost of the copyright licences, which the ESFA organise on behalf of all schools and then deduct from the Schools Block of the DSG, will be deducted from the Schools Block before it is allocated to schools via the funding formula. 	
8.	<p>GOVERNMENT FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENTS AND LOCAL FUNDING FORMULA 2020-2021</p> <p>Members were informed that updated information regarding the 2020-2021 funding as shown at 2.1(cumulative figures), was released the previous Friday and this will be added to the paper on the website. A paper will be brought to the next meeting. Nothing has been released in detail, for 2020-2021, on the NFF, and it is not known when the NFF will come into place, but it could come in for 2021-2022. The DfE has said they will work with LAs on this.</p> <p>AS drew Members attention to item 3. She said modelling would be brought to the next meeting, or the meeting in January.</p>	
	<p>RESOLUTION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) To note than an exceptional Schools' Forum meeting will be arranged for November or December so that the ESFA detailed funding allocations and requirements and updated 2020-2021 WCC school budget formula modelling can be considered. ii) To note that proposals will come to the January 2020 Schools' Forum meeting regarding any transfer to the High Needs Block and a falling rolls fund. iii) To review updated figures after information has been received from the ESFA, but before the 21 January 2020 statutory deadline for APT submission. 	
9.	<p>HIGH NEEDS REVIEW – CONTINGENCY FUNDING</p> <p>AS presented the paper and referenced the contingency funding at item 4.1. She said this had been agreed in principle at the High Needs Reference Group and if it is agreed</p>	

	by the Schools' Forum it will start in January 2020. The Chair explained other issues were still under discussion. This was approved.	
	RESOLUTION: i) To cease the current Contingency Fund (retaining the previously agreed £75k for early years) as set out in 4.1 of the paper. ii) To set up a £30k Contingency Fund for arrivals mid-year as set out in 4.2 of the paper.	
10.	<p>UPDATE RE SCHOOL BALANCES AND RAG RATING</p> <p>Members received an update on the school balances and AT highlighted 2.1 and 2.2, in the paper, pointing out the named schools. He explained that rag rating will be used for internal analysis in the future. He explained that the monitoring information received from schools, helps the LA identify schools at risk. He said schools needed to be clear that they had accurate balances if they were planning reductions.</p> <p>The Chair asked if there was evidence of trends from schools as there appeared to be a trend under balances being used. AT said it was important that schools were allowed to manage their own finances as they had delegated authority to do so, and the LA wanted an open and transparent relationship with schools. The response must be proportionate.</p>	
	RESOLUTION: i) To note the revised closing balances set out in table 1 of the report. ii) To note that the RAG ratings for individual schools will be used internally only. iii) To note the intention to allow sufficient time for consultation with schools on final balances in advance of publication (taking account of key dates at year-end).	
11.	SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS AA reported no responses to the consultation were received from schools. The Chair asked if schools were spending the next quarters funds. AT explained he was aware there were some critical dates that affected cash flows, such as around payment of salaries. This was being addressed.	
	RESOLUTION: i) To note the new DfE policy positions set out in 2.2 of the paper, to be included in the updated scheme. ii) To note the changes proposed in 2.3 on which schools have now been consulted, and the inclusion of these in the updated Scheme.	
12.	EDUCATION PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE	
	IH introduced the paper on the work of the High Needs Block Review Group, explaining that the paper includes recommendations from the High Needs Block Reference Group.	

	IH said the proposal would need an additional £80k but no one loses their three days allocation. Members commented that they felt the proposal made everything fairer.	
	<p>RESOLUTION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) To increase the tier two EPCS using weighting that reflects the proportion of pupils receiving free school meals as set out in 3.4 of the paper. ii) To agree additional resources from the high needs block as set out in 4.1 of the paper. 	
13.	<p>DATES OF MEETINGS FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2019/2020</p> <p>2nd December 2020 – 4.45pm – Sir Simon Milton UTC – Venue to be confirmed</p> <p>13th January 2020 – 4.45pm – Westminster City Hall</p> <p>23rd March 2020 – 4.45pm – Westminster City Hall</p> <p>1st June 2020 – 4.45pm – Westminster City Hall</p>	

Meeting closed at 6.30pm

ACTIONS

Item 4	To prepare a paper, with recommendations on constituency and Membership, to Members at the next meeting.	AT/JS
Item 8	To arrange an exceptional Schools' Forum meeting for November or December.	Clerk
Item 8	To provide a paper to the next Schools' Forum meeting in January 2020 regarding transfers to the High Needs Block and the falling rolls fund.	AS
Item 8	To review updated figures after information has been received from the ESFA, but before the 21 January 2020 statutory deadline for APT submission.	AS