



City of Westminster

Westminster Schools' Forum Meeting - Minutes

Date and time of meeting: Monday 6th June 2022 at 4.45pm

VIRTUAL MEETING VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Representing	Name	Organisation	Attendance
Primary Schools	6 Members		
Primary Head	Lee Duffy (LD) represented by Marina Coleman (MC)	St Marys Bryanston Square CE Primary St Vincent's CE Primary	Apologies Present
Primary Head	Darren Guttridge (DG)	Edward Wilson CE Primary	Present
Primary Head	Rebecca Anson (RA)	St Gabriel's CE Primary	Present
Primary Governor	Andrew Garwood-Watkins (AGW) (Chair)	St James and St John CE Primary	Present
Primary Governor	Lyn Meadows (LM)	Soho Parish CE Primary	Present
Primary Governor	Henry Scutt (HSc)	All Souls CE Primary	Present
Secondary schools	1 Member		
Secondary Head	Eugene Moriarty (EM)	St Augustine's High School	Present
Academies	6 Members		
Secondary Academy Principal	Richard Ardron (RA)	Marylebone Boys School	Present
Secondary Academy Principal	Peter Broughton (PB)	Westminster City School	Present
Secondary Academy Principal	Susanne Staab (SS)	The Greycoat Hospital School	Present
Secondary Academy Proprietor	Michael Bithell (MB) (Vice Chair)	United Westminster Schools Foundation	Present
Primary Academy Head	Louisa Lochner (LL)	Gateway Academy	Present
Alternative Provision Academy	Wasim Butt (WB)	Ormiston Beachcroft	Absent
Maintained Nursery Schools	1 member		
Nursery Head	Liz Hilliard (LH)	Tachbrook Nursery School	Apologies
Special Schools	1 member		
Special Schools Headteacher	Claire Shepherd (CS)	Federation of Westminster Special Schools	Present
Early Years (PVI)	1 member		
PVI	John Trow-Smith (JTS)	LEYF	Present
14-19 Representative	1 member		
Secondary Head	Kathryn Pugh (KP)	The St Marylebone CofE School	Present
Officers in Attendance			
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
Deputy Director of Education	Richard Stanley (RS)	Bi-Borough Children's Services	Present
Assistant Director – SEN & Educational Psychology	Julie Ely (JE)	Bi-Borough Children's Services	Present
Head of Bi-Borough Early Education and Childcare Service	Iraklis Kolokotronis (IK)	Bi-Borough Children's Services	Present
Lead Strategic Finance Manager	Anita Stokes (ASt)	Bi-Borough Finance – Children's	Present

Senior Finance Manager	Poonam Gagda (PG)	Bi-Borough Finance – Children’s	Present
Finance Manager	Nicholas Grey (NG)	Bi-Borough Finance – Children’s	Present
Finance Manager - Schools	Vandana Modha (VM)	Bi-Borough Finance – Children’s	Present
Senior School Governance Adviser/Clerk	Jackie Saddington (JS)	Bi-Borough Children’s Services Education	Present
Observers			
Principal Lead Adviser	Shelley Duffy (SD)	Bi-Borough Children’s Services Education	Present
Senior Adviser School Inclusion	Hilary Shaw (HSh)	Bi-Borough Children’s Services Education	Apologies
Director of Finance and Administration	John McDonald (JM)	The St Marylebone CE School	Present

Item		Action
1.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies were received from Lee Duffy, Liz Hilliard, and Hilary Shaw.</p>	
2.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
3.	<p>MEMBERSHIP</p> <p>There were no changes in the membership.</p>	
	<p>RESOLUTION: Noted.</p>	
4.	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 28 MARCH 2022</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2022 were agreed to be a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p>	
	<p>RESOLUTION: The minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2022 were agreed to be a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p>	
5.	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p><u>Fair Access</u> A report will be brought to the November meeting.</p> <p><u>Education White Paper</u> IH reported that the DfE were seeking applications from Local Authorities for an LA MAT, as part of a test and learn process. It is expected they will only accept applications from Local Authorities where there are no strong MATS in the area. A paper will go to the EPB meeting. The Chair asked if the EPB paper could be circulated to members of the Schools’ Forum, and this was agreed.</p>	

	<p>RESOLUTION: To circulate the EPB paper on options for an LA MAT.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>DSG OUTTURN, DSG DEFICIT MANAGEMENT PLAN AND SCHOOL BALANCES 2021/2022</p> <p>ASt presented the report. She reported that any surplus was used to offset the deficit. She highlighted the main variants in table 1, noting high needs was the highest. In table 2, she highlighted the net deficit.</p> <p>Table 3, in section 4, referenced the deficit management plan. By 2023-2024 it is expected the High Needs Block/DSG will be back with a positive balance. This paper would be submitted to the DfE to explain how the LA will address the plan.</p> <p>It was pointed out that table 3, 2022-2023 showed an overspend of £366m, and ASt was asked if this should be an underspend. ASt clarified it should be and she would change this. She stated that the assumptions were the best estimate at this stage – detail went to the last Schools’ Forum meeting.</p> <p>JE explained that it also assumed that some mitigations being put in place would be successful. In addition, the LA will use local provision not the independent sector.</p> <p>The Chair asked if the plan should be set over three years, with the aim of resolving the deficit in two years. ASt explained that the LA has to show the link to the Schools’ Forum paper where this was discussed. There may be a need to add more to the assumptions. The plan has to be regularly updated but it is not a problem if the position changes.</p> <p>JE said it was important to break down the assumptions by volume, place, price, reasons, and mitigations. The figures for band 8 went to the last Schools’ Forum with estimated changes to other bands. The DfE will not wait until November for a final plan.</p> <p>KP queried that the plan commits £618k for two years. She asked if it could be the last resort instead, as the SEN green paper may provide more funds and the Schools’ Forum does not want to transfer funds from the Schools Block. ASt agreed that it should be the last resort and she would be happy with the wording.</p> <p>The Chair stated he was concerned about the impact of the floor setting on the NFF, as it was important the floor value is as high as possible. ASt stated this could be considered but the Director of Finance may have concerns about the risk to the council if it carries on longer. The chair stated he felt two years was optimistic and it was important that the Schools’ Forum held the LA accountable, just as the LA holds schools to account.</p>	

	<p>SN stated that the LA does not want to create hardship for schools, but they must show rigour to schools, although an alternate plan could be provided.</p> <p>SS agreed 2 years was optimistic, given the scale of the problem and the number of variables. Another meeting of the Schools’ Forum should be called when the plans are finished as it was uncomfortable for members to give an opinion without details of the final plan.</p> <p><u>Balances</u></p> <p>Members were informed that 11 schools were in deficit, although this was down from 13 from 2021-2022. Balances had increased by £700k. Half the schools had a deficit in year, with half increasing in year. When 7% or more of schools are in deficit, the LA has to provide the DfE with a summary report.</p> <p>Six schools have not submitted revised deficit plans, and these were due in May. The position for most schools with a deficit has worsened and is a concern. This is driven by falling pupil numbers, additional supply costs, lower expected income, and extra unexpected costs.</p> <p>The chair noted 20% of nursery balances were up, whilst 10% of primaries were down and this was a concern. He asked whether there was a trend in deficits. IH stated there were real challenges for primary schools, as outlined in Aaron Sumner’s paper, and this is a concern.</p> <p>ASt was asked what happens to the deficits of St Vincent De Paul and Westminster Cathedral with the schools amalgamating. She confirmed it is charged to the council, not the DSG, although the deficits have reduced.</p>	
	<p>RESOLUTION: i) To note the DSG Carry Forward position as shown in sections 2 and 3 of the report.</p> <p>ii) To defer approval of the deficit management plan to an additional extraordinary meeting before the November Forum meeting.</p> <p>iii) To note the level of school’s balances and summary RAG ratings (sections 5 and 6).</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>MAINTAINED NURSERY SUPPLEMENT REVIEW UPDATE</p> <p>PG presented the report. She explained that nothing had been agreed so far and the outcome for 2023-2024 was expected to be known in time for the November meeting. Early Years had sent a letter to the DfE.</p>	

	<p>IK agreed that funding had been confirmed for the 2022-2023 academic year for maintained nurseries, with an increase of 3.5% for 2023-2024. The Family Hubs fund is being reviewed.</p> <p>IH reported there had been good engagement from the nursery Headteachers but there had been a disappointing response from the DfE, although the LA will continue to lobby the DfE.</p> <p>Cllr Roca asked if the council undertook to make up the shortfall from the census during covid. PG confirmed the shortfall was funded from the Early Years contingency and the same is expected in 2022-2023 while the MNS options review is being conducted.</p>	
	<p>RESOLUTION: i) To note the planned review of the MNS supplementary funding allocations.</p> <p>ii) To agree to the outcome of the review being placed on the agenda for the next Schools Forum meeting in November so that any proposed changes can be implemented from 2023-24.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>REPORT FROM ISOS WORKING GROUP RE PRIMARY SCHOOL CAPACITY</p> <p>IH reminded members that the Schools' Forum had agreed that the working group should be reformed, and the group had met that day. It was projected that there would be 29% spare capacity. Aaron Sumner reported that the original recommendation had been to reduce by 3-4FE but there was now a need to increase that to 7-8FE by September 2025. There is a lot of variability in budgets in schools and consideration would need to be given as to whether some schools were viable.</p> <p>IH informed members that the work was building on the original recommendations, and they were taking a system led approach with schools, admissions, finance, and school standards. Some schools will need to consider removing the cap on school admissions numbers.</p> <p>PB asked if there were any plans to look at where schools have used a marketing approach, reduced trends, and looked at good practice. IH stated the Isos recommendations were to maximise numbers but where numbers are falling, quality is a factor. Schools share good practice as groups through the Headteacher partnerships. AS said marketing was not a solution, it is numbers that are the issue.</p> <p>IH was asked if they were on track to achieve the 3-5FE reductions. He said the spare capacity is based on permanent numbers of 3-5FE if the caps were removed. By 2023 it will be 2.5FE. The original target was 4-5FE with no timeline. The aim is to get to reducing 5FE by September 2023.</p> <p>AS left at 5.40pm.</p>	
	<p>RESOLUTION: i) To agree that the working group continues to support schools to consider all possible options that will reduce the overall primary provision capacity by 7-8 forms of entry by the start of</p>	

	<p>the academic year 2025.</p> <p>ii) To agree that the Working Group continues to receive information on the deficit position of schools with significant surplus places to inform options to reduce capacity.</p>	
9.	<p>DFE SEND CONSULTATION</p> <p>JE presented the report, informing members that the DfE consultation on the SEND and alternative provision system in England was now live and would close on 22nd July 2022.</p> <p>The Review had identified three key challenges facing the SEND and AP system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcomes for children and young people with SEN or in alternative provision are poor • Navigating the SEND system and alternative provision is not a positive experience for children, young people, and their families • Despite unprecedented investment, the system is not delivering value for money for children, young people, and families <p>The Green Paper suggests there will be a single national SEN/AP system. She took members through the initial thoughts for the Westminster council response to the financial elements of the consultation.</p> <p>SEND Procurement – The DfE is looking at digitalising EHCPs. Therefore, it was recommended that the DfE carry out the procurement.</p> <p><u>Questions</u></p> <p>Q. SEND provision is not just education. What about support from Health and other providers as there is a long-time lag from initial identification?</p> <p>A. JE - this would be covered in the main consultation response as it is just about finance at the Schools’ Forum. It is expected that the Department of Health will receive a strong direction on what they should cover.</p> <p>Q. Will that include funding to support assessments in a timely fashion and higher levels of professional qualifications of PVI staff in PVI settings.</p> <p>A. JE - IK is leading on level 3 qualifications for PVI settings. Individuals should also respond. The LA wants to comment on ratios too and wait times for autism. SN is pressing this with the Department of Health. The LA will continue to press for access.</p>	
	<p>RESOLUTION: i) To note the summary of the DfE SEND review and provide any comments to the issues identified for inclusion in the LAs response to the proposals.</p> <p>ii) All to respond Individually to the consultation.</p>	
10.	<p>HIGH NEEDS EDUCATION BANDING TOOL REVIEW UPDATE</p>	

	<p>JE presented the paper, highlighting the bandings at 2.3 and the Terms of reference for the moderation at 3.2. She explained that anonymised case papers are sent out five days before meetings and the outcomes sent to the High Needs Review Group. Every allocated case is reviewed. The Chair thanked her and commented that this was a very thorough piece of work.</p> <p>MB asked whether schools would have to pay back historical overpayments. JE stated she will review the position to see if that is appropriate.</p> <p>The Chair advised that the Schools' Forum will need to consider everything, including individual schools, at the November meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Roca asked what the size of the temporary hardship fund was. JE stated the cap is lifted and it reverts back to the original.</p>	
	<p>RESOLUTION: i) To note the planned moderation. ii) To consider whether to develop a repayment model for funding received in error during 2021/22 at the November meeting.</p>	
<p>11.</p>	<p>DFE NFF CONSULTATION OUTCOME AND PROPOSED SCHOOLS FORMULA A7 Page 3 of 3 CONSULTATION FOR 2023/24</p>	
	<p>ASt presented the report. She reported that in future all mainstream schools would be funded via the National Funding Formula (NFF), although there is no deadline for when this will be achieved at the moment.</p> <p>The DfE will bring forward legislation to move to allocate funding directly through a single direct national funding formula (NFF) and implement a gradual approach to the transition to the direct NFF and require LAs, to move their factor values at least 10% closer to the NFF in 2023/24. This will be reviewed once the impact of the 10% change is known.</p> <p>She outlined the options at item 3 for the Schools' Forum to consider.</p> <p><u>Questions and Comments</u></p> <p>Q. Will the 25% deprivation move from the previous year, be for all deprivation factors this year, meaning 25% of 75%? A. ASt stated that was correct as the LA follows the DfE method in the calculation of % move towards the NFF values.</p> <p>Q. Could the Schools' Forum recommend moving 10% without consultation? A. ASt stated it could and this prevents instability which was what the Schools' Forum agreed previously.</p> <p>The Chair stated that there must be a move of at least 10% and asked members if they wished to consult on more than 10%.</p> <p>Q. Which factors are we furthest away from?</p>	

	<p>A. Deprivation, EAL – secondary. AWPU is £300 for primaries and £5-600 for secondaries.</p> <p>Q. If we move further on deprivation would that reduce AWPU? A. Yes and increase the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG).</p> <p>Q. Would that not address the national agenda? A. We need to address different factors.</p> <p>It is well documented that covid affects pupils from deprived backgrounds and therefore to move further would be appropriate.</p> <p>To move 10% would give stability due to unknowns.</p> <p>Q. Is it possible to make a decision for two years? A. We are bound to do the minimum as it is set by the DfE.</p> <p>Can a report be prepared to show the differences against the IDACI factors? If we must start at 10% and then move, that would reduce AWPU. Could we try 25% for IDACI as there is a strong correlation with covid issues for schools and other issues for families?</p> <p>Fifteen percent moves closer to the principles we set. Making decisions annually is sensible as other unknowns must be considered and we must be mindful of funding floors, as we do not know where it will be set. Therefore, making significant moves might not be in schools’ best interests. Can we consider 10% or 15%?</p> <p>If the majority want to consult we need to be happy with all the amendments at paragraph 3 in the report.</p> <p>We should consult as the work last year was well modelled, with a clear rationale and a good process.</p> <p>Consult, particularly for 10% and 15%.</p> <p>The Chair stated in summary he felt members wanted to consult on option 1 and 2 but including IDACI too. ASt stated that would work with IDACI balancing the MFG.</p> <p>Q. Will it cause problems changing the principles? A. A bigger MFG may expose schools to more risk.</p> <p>PB left the meeting at 6.29pm.</p> <p>The Chair asked if an additional step could be added in between 1 and 2, which would be an informal meeting with the Primary Exec Heads Group, WSSIC Chair and LA officers before the next agenda setting meeting. IH agreed.</p>	
	<p>RESOLUTION: i) To agree the updated principals for agreeing the schools funding formula for 2023/24 budgets. ii) To agree the proposed Options go forward for consultation with</p>	

	<p>primary and secondary Headteacher groups in September and October 2022, and to include IDACI factors at a higher move towards the NFF factors.</p> <p>iii) To note the next steps for agreeing the schools funding formula for 2023/24 budgets.</p>	
12.	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>Cllr Roca thanked everyone for all their hard work.</p> <p><u>Payments for Fair Access.</u></p> <p>RA asked when the payments would be made in respect of fair access. The Chair confirmed these would be made in November.</p>	
	<p>RESOLUTION: Noted.</p>	
13.	<p>DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS</p> <p><u>It was agreed that future meetings will be held in-person.</u></p> <p>Monday 26 September 2022 – 4.45pm – Westminster City Hall – Extra meeting Monday 14 November 2022 – 4.45pm – Westminster City Hall Wednesday 18 January 2023 – 4.45pm – Westminster City Hall Monday 20 March 2023 – 4.45pm – Westminster City Hall Monday 19 June 2023 – 4.45pm – Westminster City Hall</p>	

Meeting closed at 6.33pm.

ACTIONS

Item 5	To circulate the EPB paper on options for an LA MAT.	JS
Item 6	To defer approval of the deficit management plan to an additional extraordinary meeting before the November Forum meeting.	AGW/ASt
Item 7	To agree to the outcome of the planned review of the MNS supplementary funding allocations being placed on the agenda for the next Schools Forum meeting in November.	AGW/ASt
Item 9	To provide any comments to the issues identified for inclusion in the LAs response to the SEND proposals.	ALL
Item 9	To respond to the SEND consultation.	ALL
Item 10	To consider whether to develop a repayment model for funding received in error during 2021/22, at the November meeting.	AGW/AST
Item 11	The proposed Options to go forward for consultation with primary and secondary Headteacher groups in September and October 2022, and to include IDACI factors at a higher move towards the NFF factors.	AST