



# City of Westminster

## Westminster Schools' Forum Meeting - Minutes

Date and time of meeting: Monday 20th March 2023 at 4.45pm at Westminster City Hall

Representing	Name	Organisation	Attendance
<b>Primary Schools</b>	<b>6 Members</b>		
Primary Head	Lee Duffy (LD)	St Marys Bryanston Square CE Primary	Present
Primary Head	Darren Guttridge (DG)	Edward Wilson Primary	Present
Primary Head	Rebecca Anson (RA)	St Gabriel's CE Primary	Present
Primary Governor	Andrew Garwood-Watkins (AGW) <b>(Chair)</b>	St James and St John CE Primary	Present
Primary Governor	Lyn Meadows (LM)	Soho Parish CE Primary	Present
Primary Governor	Simon Mair (SM)	Edward Wilson Primary	Present
<b>Secondary schools</b>	<b>1 Member</b>		
Secondary Head	Eugene Moriarty (EM)	St Augustine's CE High School	Present
<b>Academies</b>	<b>6 Members</b>		
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
Bursar	<b>Represented by: Marie Holmes (MH)</b>	The Greycoat Hospital School	Present
Secondary Academy Proprietor	Paul Wood (PW)	Westminster Academy	Present
Primary Academy Head	Louisa Lochner (LL)	Gateway Academy	Present
Alternative Provision Academy	Wasim Butt (WB)	Ormiston Beachcroft	Present
<b>Maintained Nursery Schools</b>	<b>1 member</b>		
Nursery Head	Liz Hilliard (LH)	Tachbrook Nursery School	Apologies
<b>Special Schools</b>	<b>1 member</b>		
Special Schools Headteacher	Noel Gibb (NG)	Westminster Special Schools Federation	Apologies
<b>Early Years (PVI)</b>	<b>1 member</b>		
PVI	John Trow-Smith (JTS)	LEYF	Present
<b>14-19 Representative</b>	<b>1 member</b>		
Secondary Head	Kathryn Pugh (KP)	The St Marylebone CofE School	Present
<b>Officers in Attendance</b>			
Executive Director of Children's Services	Sarah Newman (SN)	Bi-Borough Children's Services	Apologies
Director of Education	Ian Heggs (IH)	Bi-Borough Children's Services	Apologies
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
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 School Deficits	Estera Wojcik (EW)	Bi-Borough Finance - Children's	Present

Finance Manager Capital and School Budgets	Rahul Ganatra (RG)	Bi-Borough Finance – Children’s	Present
Head of Transformation and Innovation	Justine May (JMa)	Bi-Borough Children’s Services	Present
Finance Manager Schools	Vandana Modha (VM)	Bi-Borough Finance – Children’s	Present
Senior Adviser School Inclusion	Hilary Shaw (HS)	Bi-Borough Children’s Services	Present
Senior School Governance Adviser/Clerk	Jackie Saddington (JS)	Bi-Borough Children’s Services Education	Present
<b>Observers</b>			
Director of Finance and Administration	John Mcdonald (JMc)	The St Marylebone CE School	Present

Item		Action
<b>1.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>  Apologies were sent by Sarah Newman, Ian Heggs, Cllr Roca, Liz Hilliard and Noel Gibb.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>  There were no declarations of interest.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>  JS reported there were no changes to the membership.	
	<b>RESOLUTION: Noted.</b>	
<b>4.</b>	<b>MINUTES OF MEETINGS HELD ON 18 JANUARY 2023</b>  The minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2023 were deferred to the next meeting.	
	<b>RESOLUTION: To defer the minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2023 to the next meeting.</b>	<b>AGW/JS</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>MATTERS ARISING</b>  It was agreed to defer any matters arising not covered in the meeting to the next meeting.	
	<b>RESOLUTION: To defer any matters arising to the March meeting.</b>	<b>AGW/JS</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE HIGH NEEDS BLOCK REFERENCE GROUP RE ALLOCATION OF ADDITIONAL BUDGETS AND PROPOSALS RE CLAWBACKS</b>  JE presented the report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. She highlighted point 3.4, where it was proposed that non-capped bands 1-7 are also amended from September 2023 to reflect the pay award and over provision re planned 1.25% NI increase that did not materialise.	

In addition, JE informed members, as outlined at paragraph 4.3, that the HNBRG had endorsed a recommendation to extend capping of bands 8-10 indefinitely giving schools confidence that this was a transparent and more equitable way forward. There would be no clawback.

JE recommended the Schools' Forum approved the allocation of £545,000 for the initiative in Westminster of delivering better value (DBV), as outlined at 7.1, with funding to be earmarked for two years, with detailed proposals to be considered at the May HNBRG. Some members wanted further information before agreeing to approve the funding.

ASt outlined the recommendations at 9.1 She explained that the proposal would help to provide funding to support schools with falling rolls. This would mean a change in practice, as this would normally be taken from the school's block. The Chair queried this, stating it was his understanding that falling rolls funding came from the reserves. ASt reminded him that this had not been the practice for some time. Another member stated they were not comfortable transferring funding to the DBV, as funding should go to cover falling rolls and fair access.

JE informed members that funding of £1m for SEND had been secured for RBKC, from the DfE, which will be available from the start of the 2023-2024 financial year. Diagnostic work had to be completed, but investment now would enable savings to be made in the future.

Members suggested funding could be returned to schools, or schools could at least be consulted on its use, and it would be helpful to know the proposed timescales for DBV. JE explained that there was a two-year programme in RBKC, and she suggested similar activity for WCC could be planned from May and dovetailed in from September. The Chair reminded everyone there was £500k in the reserves and schools could be asked to pay, whilst another suggestion was made that discrete pieces of work could be carried out rather than a full programme.

ASt clarified that £617,691 was available for schools, unspent from the DSG, but the DfE says it cannot be paid back to schools until 2024-2025. The Chair asked her to challenge this with the DfE.

ASt was asked why there was a 10.4% increase as outlined at 3.4, but for SRPs and Special Schools the increase was only 5.6%. ASt explained this was due to the capping at bands 8-10, reflecting the 2022-2023 pay award. The costs were all set out. Additionally, she was asked why there is a difference between SRPs and Special Schools. JE explained that the starting point and costs varied, but they had tried to align where possible, based on information provided by the schools.

	<p>KP noted that the paper did not propose any increase for St Marylebone re 2022-2023. Members were informed that the budget for St Marylebone Bridge was increased in September 2022. Another member pointed out mainstream schools would not have agreed to operating resource bases if the funding was to be taken from the schools' own budget.</p> <p>The Chair reminded members that boroughs operate different systems, whilst other members pointed out that whatever mechanism was used it had to be fair and queried whether the allocation at 12.1.4 for high needs pupil developments was enough. JE said it was a prudent estimate.</p> <p>JE and ASt thanked all those on the HNBRG for their time and efforts.</p>	
	<p><b>RESOLUTION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>i) To approve the proposals regarding increases to the capped bandings 8-10 and bandings 1-7 as shown in section 3 of the report.</b></li> <li><b>ii) To approve the proposals regarding the clawback in section 4 of the report.</b></li> <li><b>iii) To approve the proposed top ups for the SRPs and Special Schools as shown in section 5 of the report.</b></li> <li><b>iv) To approve the £243,000 budget for high needs pupil developments as shown in section 6 of the report.</b></li> <li><b>v) To agree the proposal regarding the transfer from the school's block to the high needs block in 2022-2023 as shown in section 9 of the report, with the funding of £617, 691 being distributed to schools as soon as possible.</b></li> <li><b>vi) To note the forward plan for the HNBRG as shown in section 11 of the report.</b></li> <li><b>vii) To defer discussion and approval of the £545,000 budget for delivering better value in Westminster, as shown in section 7 of the report, with detailed proposals to be discussed at the May HNBRG.</b></li> </ul>	
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>ALTERNATIVE PROVISION AND BEHAVIOUR OUTREACH PROVISION PROPOSALS</b></p> <p>JM presented the report that had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The main highlights were that the funding would be kept the same, there would be a top up of 59 places and 10 places would be funded at the Pears' Family school for children resident in Westminster, as agreed by Westminster Headteachers. ASt confirmed that this had been considered at the HNBRG and agreed.</p> <p>JM highlighted 2.4 which proposed to remove the distinction between statutory and non-statutory top-up and offer Ormiston a two-year block funding agreement for the remaining two years of the contract. Following TBAP being given a financial notice to improve by the RSC, TBAP joined OAT in 2021 and the partnership between WCC and</p>	

	<p>OAT is strong. Year on year increases are not wanted and OAT is preparing a traded offer for schools. OAT aim to break even next year.</p> <p>JM left the meeting at 5.30pm.</p>	
	<p><b>RESOLUTION:</b> i) To agree that top-up funding for Ormiston Beachcroft AP Academy will be maintained at 2022-23 academic year levels for the remaining two years of the contract.</p> <p>ii) To agree to vary the Ormiston Behaviour Outreach contracts for up to two years so the end dates are in line with those of the AP.</p> <p>iii) To agree to continue to fund the Pears' Family School for another academic year as agreed by Westminster Headteachers.</p>	
8.	<p><b>DSG MONITORING UPDATE 2022-2023</b></p> <p>ASt presented the report. She informed members that the in-year forecast underspend was £2.4m here was no change in the overspend, the high needs block underspend had increased to £2.64m and the forecast cumulative surplus on the DSG is £1.267m. ASt was asked if the Schools' Forum can agree funding increases to schools. ASt confirmed the DfE will re-imburse the growth funding in 2023-2024. Members considered the need to monitor growth in schools in light of falling rolls and insufficient children in the area for places available. RS confirmed there is no growth planned in secondary schools.</p> <p>JE left the meeting at 5.35pm.</p>	
	<p><b>RESOLUTION: To note the revised 2022-2023 DSG allocation of £94.761m and forecast underspend of £2.434m. This will eliminate the DSG cumulative deficit of £1.167m at the end of 2021-2022 and result in a balance of £1.267m by the end of 2022-2023.</b></p>	
9.	<p><b>SCHOOL BUDGET TIMELINE REGARDING MOVE TO NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA (NFF)</b></p> <p>ASt presented the report. She highlighted sections 3 and 4, how the MFG would be affected, plus referred members to the table at 4.3, which referenced the options to consider. ASt stated that whatever options the Schools' Forum decided to choose, the LA would carry out modelling ready for June before going to consultation. It will not be possible to model all three options.</p> <p>In the final year, the move to the NFF must be completed, and the Chair asked how far they had moved already. ASt confirmed it was at least 25%. LAs varied on progress, with some moving at the minimum whilst others had already reached 100%. RBKC had moved to 100% and then moved back as it affected the AWPU.</p>	

	<p>DG reported that the Primary Headteachers did not have a strong view as it was felt there was not much difference between options. It was also noted that the impact on primary and secondary schools was different, changes can happen quickly and primary schools were facing many challenges. It was agreed that whichever options were chosen, a review should take place annually to reflect the changing funding landscape.</p>	
	<p><b>RESOLUTION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) To agree that no changes are made to the principles for agreeing the schools funding formula.</li> <li>ii) To agree options 2 and 3 for three future years for the move to the NFF factor values, and to go forward for consultation with primary and secondary headteacher groups in September/October 2023, and that, whichever options were chosen, a review should take place annually to take account of the changing financial landscape for school funding.</li> <li>iii) To note the next steps for agreeing the move to the NFF factor values and schools funding formula for 2024/2025 onwards.</li> </ul>	
10.	<p><b>FALLING ROLLS PROPOSED ALLOCATIONS</b></p> <p>ASt presented the report. She reported that three schools had applied for the funding and two had submitted business cases. One school is not eligible due to receiving an RI Ofsted judgment and the school will need to be informed.</p> <p>It was recommended that Queens Park Primary School and Essendine Primary School should receive funding but St Peters Eaton Square CE Primary does not meet the criteria set previously. This will mean £117k has been allocated from the funding of £133,441.</p> <p>It was proposed to initiate a thematic audit for WCC schools that will receive this funding from 2023/24 onwards to ensure better oversight and monitoring of these funds. This happened in RBKC with success. This was agreed.</p>	
	<p><b>RESOLUTION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) To allocate falling rolls funds to Essendine Primary School and Queens Park Primary School.</li> <li>ii) To agree for a thematic audit to be initiated for schools receiving falling rolls funding from 2023-2024.</li> </ul>	
11.	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <p><u>School Standards Statutory Role</u></p>	

	LH had queried the statutory role of School Standards. RS explained that the LA role was monitoring, and intervention where necessary, in maintained schools. The School Improvement Framework sets out how the LA undertakes these duties.	
	<b>RESOLUTION: JS to send LH the School Improvement Framework.</b>	<b>JS</b>
<b>13.</b>	<p><b>DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS</b></p> <p><b>It was agreed that future meetings will be held in-person. The next meeting will take place on:</b></p> <p>Monday 19 June 2023 – 4.45pm – Westminster City Hall</p>	

### ACTIONS

<b>Item 4 and 5</b>	<b>Minutes and Matters Arising to the next meeting</b>	<b>AGW/JS</b>
<b>Item 6</b>	<b>To defer discussion and approval of the £545,000 budget for delivering better value in Westminster.</b>	<b>JE/AST</b>
<b>Item 11</b>	<b>To send LH the School Improvement Framework.</b>	<b>JS</b>