



City of Westminster

Westminster Schools' Forum Meeting - Minutes

Date and time of meeting: Thursday 20th January 2022 at 4.45pm

VIRTUAL MEETING VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Representing	Name	Organisation	Attendance
Primary Schools	6 Members		
Primary Head	Lee Duffy (LD)	St Marys Bryanston Square CE Primary	Apologies
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	Present
Special Schools	1 member		
Special Schools Executive Head	Jo Petch (JP)	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			
Deputy Cabinet Member for Children’s Services – Specialising in Finance	Cllr Barbara Arzymanow (BA)	Councillor	Present
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	Present
Director of Finance and Administration	John McDonald (JM)	The St Marylebone CE School	Present

Item		Action
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies were received from Lee Duffy.	
2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST There were no declarations of interest.	
3.	MEMBERSHIP Lyn Meadows (Soho Parish CE Primary) was appointed as a Primary Governor representative with effect from 20 January 2022 for a period of two years. Susanne Staab (The Greycoat Hospital School) was appointed as a Secondary Academy Principal representative with effect from 20 January 2022 for a period of two years. Liz Hilliard (Tachbrook Nursery) was appointed as the Maintained Nursery School representative with effect from 20 January 2022 until the end of the academic year.	
	RESOLUTION: Noted.	
4.	MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 1 NOVEMBER 2021 The minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2021 were agreed to be a true and accurate record of the meeting.	
	RESOLUTION: The minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2021 were agreed to be a true and accurate record of the meeting.	
5.	MATTERS ARISING Minimum Funding Protection	

	<p>ASt reported that the DfE have not outlined how any protection will work going forward.</p> <p>Schools Rolls Projections IH reported that it had been agreed that the working group will re-convene and invites for a meeting will be going out shortly.</p>	
	<p>RESOLUTION: Noted.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>2021/22 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT BUDGET MONITORING AS AT DECEMBER 2021.</p> <p>ASt presented the report and highlighted table 2 – DSG Budget Monitoring 2021/22. She reported that the projected variance of £3,322m was significantly worsening, largely due to the high needs costs. As a result, it was likely that the DfE will require a Deficit Management Plan to be put in place .</p> <p>There is an overspend on SENIF and eligibility is being reviewed. In addition, the expected overspend on the agreed budget for Schools and CSSB is expected to be £708k.</p> <p>An overspend of £2,382m is forecast on the High Needs Block, resulting in the scale of increase being higher than anticipated compared to the last projected overspend of £1,107m. Therefore, there will need to be a transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block for 2022-2023. SN explained that there had been an issue with the Education Banding Tool (EBT), and this is being reviewed.</p> <p>JE confirmed that the review is already underway with the key themes being identified. The LA is talking to the developers of the EBT as the normal distribution curve is not where it should be and therefore a request has been made to see some previous case studies.</p> <p>Changes will need to be made and the key message is that currently this is unaffordable and unsustainable and therefore does not meet the principles set by the Schools’ Forum, so changes will need to be made. A review group meeting will take place on 8 February and the outcomes will be reported to the March meeting.</p> <p>DG joined the meeting at 5pm.</p> <p>JE explained that moderation may be required in case of higher allocations. A robust piece of work is being undertaken and conclusions will be drawn in due course.</p> <p>KP asked if the overspend was related to the higher ends of the banding tool and the extent of the roll out. JE explained that the review had looked in detail at the</p>	

modelling that had previously been undertaken but, for example, those expected to be banded at 4-6 were in fact coming out at 8.10 in mainstream schools. The roll out was currently 50% in relation to where it was expected to be. There is a level of confidence in the review, the detail was being examined and it was thought that the issues were down to the specific needs of individual children.

The Chair asked how confident officers were that the overspend would not be £5m by the end of March. ASt explained that there had been a bulge in assessments in September resulting in higher numbers than anticipated with higher needs. There could be some further changes before the end of the financial year but not too much. JE agreed and advised that should there be another surge this would not impact on the current financial year.

The Chair asked if there were any other issues that the Forum needed to be aware of. He also asked how quickly schools would be informed if they had been overpaid this year and what their budget would be for 2022-2023. SN said the working group will be looking at the banding, how much has been overpaid, what the implications will be and how the LA and schools can best work together. Headteachers will be consulted and a paper with recommendations from the review group will be brought to the next Schools Forum meeting in March.

JE informed members that the EBT was not the only problem, this was a multi-faceted issue. A provision costing tool for the costs of the provision is being used and moderation will also be used but the situation has to be handled sensitively.

The Chair asked if any schools had expressed surprise at the level of funding they had received. JE said there had not been any claims or reports of schools receiving too much funding. Some schools had questioned whether the £6k had been deducted but there had been no complaints.

The Chair advised members that the review group were scheduled to meet on 1 February 2022. MB suggested the Schools Forum could give the review group a steer.

Members considered whether it might be prudent to tell everyone that the funding is under review as schools need to know values may be adjusted. The High Needs Review Group may have to meet twice.

LL pointed out that funds had been awarded in error and asked whether the description and value would be changed. The Chair explained that this would be for the review group to consider and decide. The review group and the Schools Forum will need to decide on what happens regarding overpayments, taking into account the impact on settings and that there may be a need for deficit recovery plans. General

	<p>principles will need to be agreed. Legal Services are also exploring whether losses can be recouped and if not, why not.</p> <p>LM asked whether the provision funding formula will reflect the actual cost of making the provision. JE said the review group would look at the specifics, interventions, costs and the EBT. The actual costs will be shared with the review group.</p> <p>IH explained it would be important to share the recommendations with the Headteacher groups to give wider awareness. SN explained that all decisions were made with the best intentions, and it had been recognised from the start that tweaks would need to be made. However, the problem has been bigger than anticipated and it was important the problems were solved in partnership.</p> <p>The Chair asked if anyone had any suggestions that the High Needs Review Group could consider. Suggestions put forward were to review the MFG and look at the High Needs Funding of Special Schools.</p>	
	<p>RESOLUTION: JE/ASt to provide an update to the next meeting in March.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>HIGH NEEDS BUDGET UPDATE AND 2022/23 PROPOSED BUDGETS</p> <p>JE presented the paper. JE reminded Members that where the local authority (LA) makes special educational needs (SEN) provision for children and young people subject to Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP), and places them in independent or non-maintained special schools, the cost is charged to the high needs block.</p> <p>She highlighted the information on the placements, tables, and year group analysis. The financial implications were outlined and members were informed that the DSG monitoring position for 2021/22 (month 6) had highlighted a projected unfavourable year end position of £1.225m, against a budget of £1.018m for post 16 placements in the independent sector.</p> <p>The action being taken was outlined, notably the refreshed SEN Strategy identifying action to create capacity in maintained mainstream schools and early years settings, with a view to supporting more pupils with SEN, including SEN Support and EHCPs. The workforce development is aimed at reducing the overall demand for specialist provision.</p> <p>A ‘bridging’ offer for young people whose long-term provision will best be met through adult social care has been identified following a review of SEN provision for post 16. When the change was made for provision from 0-25 instead of 2-18 no new funding was allocated, which put pressure on the 19-25 sector.</p>	

	<p>JE recommended that consideration should be given to establishing specialist provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulties; resources which can cater for learning and language needs to make the position economically viable.</p> <p>The Vice Chair asked JE if there was any support the Schools' Forum could provide. JE explained that the LA was already creating their own provision and keeping provision local, whenever possible. When St Marylebone Bridge moved into their new building she would find it useful if the school would consider increasing their age range for learning and language needs.</p>	
	<p>RESOLUTION: To agree that consideration should be given to establishing specialist provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulties; resources which can cater for learning and language needs.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>2022/23 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (DSG) AND SCHOOL BUDGETS</p> <p>ASt presented the paper. Members were referred to Table 1 and Table 3, along with appendices A, B and C. ASt highlighted a decrease in pupil numbers of 241, 12 in secondary schools and 229 in primary schools. This included the Afghan refugees. The impact is shown in appendix C.</p> <p>Any adjustments relating to 4.7, 4.8 and 4.9 would be adjusted the following year. Information will be provided in future monitoring papers provided to the Schools' Forum.</p> <p>The School Intervention and Brokering Grant, which is used to fund statutory school improvement support and intervention in LA maintained schools was highlighted. Members were informed that the DfE propose that this funding is de-delegated from schools, and it is therefore proposed to de-delegate £85,000 for statutory school improvement support and intervention in LA-maintained schools.</p> <p>In addition to the DSG, mainstream schools will receive a supplementary grant in 2022-23. For early years and post-16 provision. The Indicative allocation of the SSG for Westminster is £3.690m. Final allocations for the SSG will be confirmed in spring 2022, based on final FSM6 data. There will be a separate grant for Early Years and an area cost adjustment will be applied.</p> <p>ASt was asked if the de-delegation applied just to maintain schools. She confirmed that was correct as the LA is not responsible for academies. Funds are not taken from academies.</p>	

	<p>A member asked for confirmation that the figure in table 1, section 2, row 1 of 1.2 should be 1.2%. ASt confirmed this was correct.</p> <p>The Chair asked if the Afghan refugees were included in the main pupil numbers. ASt confirmed they were. He asked what the impact would be on funding if these pupils were not in schools for April 2022 or September 2022. ASt explained that schools had been informed that the funding of £5.5k per pupil was one off funding.</p> <p>SN reported that it was likely that all Afghan pupils would be relocated by the end of March 2022. The bridging hotel had given notice to the Home Office and there will be none in Westminster.</p> <p>IH informed members that the ISOS report needed to be reviewed. The projection of vacancies of 23% was now projected down to 22%. The working group will review and assess capacity. A paper will be brought to the next meeting in March.</p> <p>The Chair asked if funding for Afghan refugees will apply until March 2023. IH confirmed it would. The Chair reminded everyone that the Afghan refugees needed to be excluded for future funding and falling rolls predictions. ASt agreed.</p> <p>LM left the meeting at 6.03pm.</p>	
	<p>RESOLUTION: To agree the resolutions as shown at 5.1.1 to 5.1.7.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>EARLY YEARS FUNDING 2022/23</p> <p>ASt presented the paper highlighting Table 1 and paragraphs 2.8, 2.9, 2.10 and 2.11.</p> <p>ASt was asked if the Schools’ Forum could start considering the use of the 3% contingency to Early Years that has previously been spread across all providers. For example, in Dagenham and Barking they have looked at using additional hours for the social justice element. PG explained that the intention was that the contingency will go to all providers following approval of the Schools’ Forum. ASt explained that the NFF must be followed, and she did not believe this was allowed. She agreed to check and bring her findings to the next meeting.</p> <p>LH asked if the Early Years SEN funding will be monitored by the High Needs Group. IK explained that SENIF is linked to the Early Years DSG and due to a reduction in numbers the budget had to be reduced. The position will continue to be monitored and reviewed by the panel. LH offered to be a part of the panel.</p>	
	<p>RESOLUTION: i) to note the methodology used to arrive at the budgets and hourly rate of £6.78 for providers in 2022-23, which is transparent and</p>	

	<p>deemed to strike a balance between allocating the maximum available to all providers while also allowing for eligible children to benefit from funding for deprivation and the SEN Inclusion Fund.</p> <p>ii) To note that the budget set aside for contingency is prudent and strikes a balance between providing a safeguard for managing fluctuations and maximising the amount passed directly to all providers through the hourly base rate. ASt to check if flexibility is allowed in how funds are allocated.</p> <p>iii) To note the reduction in funding for maintained nurseries in line with the reduced allocation for 2022-23.</p> <p>iv) To note the reduction in the SEN Inclusion Fund for 2022-23.</p> <p>v) To agree the hourly rate of £6.78 to be paid to providers of early years childcare and education in 2022-23 as set out in Appendix A.</p>	
10.	<p>SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS</p> <p>PG introduced the report highlighting the two proposed changes.</p> <p>The Chair asked if schools would be notified of their funding one month earlier given the proposed new deadline. ASt said they would not but budgets are available and with the School Forum papers. Schools are being encouraged to prepare multi-year budgets. Schools will have three months to prepare, although she accepted it may be too soon.</p> <p>DG said he supported the idea for the deadline to be one month earlier given falling rolls, rising costs, and staffing restructures required due to deficits. It was important that the Schools' Forum was confident that the LA are aware of actual budgets to prevent redundancies and enable planning.</p> <p>The Chair asked how much testing of Year 2 and Year 3 data, numbers on roll and birth rates had been undertaken. ASt said when deficit recovery plans are put in place schools are challenged to ensure balanced budgets have been agreed and where there are areas that stick out these are challenged.</p> <p>SN left the meeting at 6.30pm.</p>	
	<p>RESOLUTION: i) To approve the updated Scheme to be consulted on with all maintained schools in line with provision 1.4 of the policy.</p> <p>ii) To agree to the Scheme being placed on the agenda for the next Schools Forum meeting so that consultation responses can be reviewed, the final policy approved and implemented from 2022-2023.</p>	
11.	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p>	

	<p><u>Feedback from Education Partnership Board</u></p> <p>IH reported that the EPB had considered forecasts and progress on the ISOS reports and been updated on governing body decisions. The proposed amalgamation of St Vincent de Paul and Westminster Cathedral Catholic Primary Schools had also been considered. An update had been given on the Inclusion Action Plan and a review of the School Improvement Framework was underway with focus group meetings taking place. An update on the School Improvement Framework would be given at the next meeting, along with an update on the ISOS recommendations and a request had been made for the Chair of the Schools' Forum to attend the next meeting of the EPB.</p>	
	RESOLUTION: Noted.	
12.	<p>DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS</p> <p>Monday 21 March 2022 – 4.45pm – Venue tbc Monday 6 June 2022 – 4.45pm – Venue tbc</p>	

Meeting closed at 6.34pm

ACTIONS

Item 6	ASt to provide an update on the overspend and EBT to the next meeting in March.	JE/ASt
Item 9	ASt to check if flexibility is allowed in how contingency funds are allocated.	ASt
Item 10	Scheme for financing schools to be placed on the agenda for the March meeting.	AST/Clerk