

**THESE MINUTES ARE DRAFT AND SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE
NEXT MEETING OF THE FORUM**

Westminster Schools Forum

Date and time of meeting: Monday 12th October 2015, 4.45 – 6:30pm

Location: St Mary of the Angels

Representing	Name	Organisation	Attendance
Primary Schools	6 Members		
Primary Head	Sandra Tyrrell (ST)	Christchurch Bentinck Primary	Present
Primary Head	Ann Townshend(AnnT)	St Barnabas Primary	Present
Primary Head	Mary Wilson (MW)	St Mary of the Angels Primary	Present
Primary Governor	Aslam Merchant (AM)	Hallfield Primary	Present
Primary Governor	Andrew Garwood-Watkins (AGW)	St Stephens	Present
Primary Governor	Ti Chen (TC)	Christchurch Bentinck Primary	Present
Secondary schools	1 Member		
Secondary Head	Eugene Moriarty (EM)	St Augustine's High	Present
Academies	5 members		
Secondary Non Recoupment Academy Principal	Vacancy		
Secondary Recoupment Academy Head	Kat Pugh (KP)	St Marylebone	Present
Secondary Recoupment Academy	Vacancy		Present
Alternative Provision Academy	Nathan Crawley-Lyons (NCL)	TBAP	Apologies
Primary Recoupment Academy Head	Louisa Lochner (LL)	Gateway Academy	Present
	Lucian Boyd-Harte	Quintin Kynaston Academy	Observer
	Sean Curran	Westminster Academy	Observer
Maintained Nursery Schools	1 member		
Nursery Head	Sylvie Gambell (SG)	Mary Paterson Nursery School	Apologies
Special Schools	1 member		
Special Schools Head	Olivia Meyrick (OM)	Westminster Special Schools	Present
Early Years (PVI)	1 member		
	John Trow-Smith	LEYF	Present
14-19 Representative	1 member		
	Vacant		
Officers in Attendance			
Tri Borough Director of Finance & Resources	Dave McNamara (DMc)	Tri Borough Children Services	Present
Tri Borough Director of Resources	Andrew Tagg (AT)	Tri Borough Children Services	Present
Tri Borough Director of Schools	Ian Heggs (IH)	Tri Borough Children Services	Present
Tri Borough Assistant Director Special Educational Needs & Vulnerable Children	Alison Farmer (AF)	Tri Borough Children Services	Present
Tri Borough Interim Schools Finance Manager	Mala Dadlani (MD)	Tri Borough Children Services	Present
Tri Borough Clerking Service Manager and Clerk to WSF	Owen Rees (OR)	Tri Borough Children Services	Present

Item		Action
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE There were apologies for absence from Ti Chen and Sylvie Gambel.	
2.	MEMBERSHIP The Forum noted the elections of Ti Chen and Aslam Merchant as maintained Primary School Governor representatives. The Forum recorded a vote of thanks to Smita Bora and Jo Saxton for their work as Forum members	
3.	MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS ON 8th JUNE 2015 Mr McNamara reported that the revisions to the Scheme for Financing Schools would be delayed. RESOLVED The Schools Forum agreed the minutes of its meeting on the 8 th June 2015 as true and accurate, subject to the amendment of the minutes to show that the schools finance team had visited all schools rather than MD, and that MW and AT's concerns were in relation to not receiving notice of Working Party meetings.	
4.	APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR RESOLVED (i) That Aslam Merchant be elected as Chair for the 2015-16 academic year, and (ii) That Andrew Garwood-Watkins be elected as Vice-Chair for the 2015-16 academic year.	
5.	SEPTEMBER ROLLS Andrew Tagg noted that this item was an information share, showing the September projections and October pupil count. There had been an overall growth in pupil numbers due to expanding schools, but the focus needed to be on the spare capacity. This would need to be considered in setting the formula going forward, with more work to be done in that area. Ian Heggs reported that the next iteration of the Schools Organisation Strategy would be available by the next meeting. This would take into account population growth, including from development, with the Church Street developments as one example. The Chair noted that taking the census in October tended to underestimate pupil numbers in schools with mobile populations. Mr Tagg noted that the dates were set nationally, and could not be adjusted. He reported the issue could be looked at through the mobility factor, and that a separate mechanism beyond Falling Rolls Fund for schools with one year variations was also a possibility. Mr Heggs noted that Falling Rolls Fund was only available to Good and Outstanding schools. RESOLVED That the report be noted.	
6.	HIGH NEEDS Alison Farmer reported that the report was for information, and covered the current distribution of high needs funding. The report had been drafted prior to the most recent meeting of the HNB reference group. At that meeting, it had been agreed that the focus would be on increasing the number of pupils staying within Westminster, and that secondary heads had already been contacted with regards to this aim. Nurseries were taking forward the enhanced SEN offer, the model for which would be developed by the HNB reference group. Mr Heggs noted	

	<p>that this would increase the chances of positive transition from nursery to primary schools. The full names and contact details for the nurseries would be included in the minutes.</p> <p>The final part of the report covered payments to schools, which would be through the thrice-yearly process, with schedules sent out to schools. Issues could be reported to Sean Richings or to SEN@rbkc.gov.uk.</p> <p>Forum members noted that there did not seem to be a quantitative element to the nursery element. Ms Farmer reported that the framework was being developed. She invited LL or a representative to attend the workshop which would be doing this. Mr Heggs noted that there had been previous discussions about the pressure on nursery school budgets, and a wider funding strategy was being developed.</p> <p>Mr Tagg reported that work was ongoing to reduce the need for sustainability funding and was going through Nursery Schools Board, with a reduction scheduled over 5 years. A paper would come forward detailing how cost pressures would be met and what their offer would be to the next Schools Forum meeting.</p>	<p>AF</p> <p>AT</p>
	<p>RESOLVED That the report be noted.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT</p>	
	<p>Mr Tagg introduced the report noted that 6.9 million was carried forward from 2014-15, with some SEN outstanding claims and commitments to funding full time places held against this. The major anticipated change in income for 15-16 would be the introduction of a take up based assessment of 2 year old funding, which was reduced by £253,000.</p> <p>He noted that no detailed reporting on 2015-16 costs had yet been undertaken. He noted that the Early Years block was level, with the Schools block slightly up to increased admissions costs, with pressures on the HNB, with placements in independent schools having amounted to a cost pressure.</p> <p>Ms Farmer noted that the EHCPs now extended to 16-25, which had meant that some high cost, residential placements had continued. This was a general issue for local authorities.</p> <p>Mr Trow-Smith asked if the announcement on 30 hours had impacted on the nursery plan. Mr Tagg reported that the local authority was awaiting the outcome of the CSR. He added that the local authority needed to have details on the funding for the 30 hour offer before making decisions. He confirmed that the number of places</p> <p>Ms Tyrell asked what the position was in relation to the Early Years Pupil Premium. Mr Tagg reported that the local authority was looking at how it collected the data, as the funding should be allocated on individual children. This meant that the income might not cover the cost of collection. The local authority was therefore discussing Schools would receive a separate notification of how much had been allocated. JT noted that other local authorities had paid their pupil premium already, and while he sympathised with the local authority's position, he noted that there was continuity between 2 year old offer and EY pupil premium and suggested this could be effectively tied together. Mr Tagg replied the local authority wanted , would come back in January and distribute funding.</p> <p>Ms Pugh noted, in relation to the figures shown in Appendix A, that independent was included in a separate line for the HNB reference group. Mr Tagg agreed to show this as a separate line in future reports</p> <p>Mr Heggs noted that more post 16's were being placed, and that the authority was Funding more plans than we did statements. It is crucial to</p>	

	encourage the take up of a local offer, and can fund more. Ms Farmer thanked Headteachers who had supported the local authority in contesting tribunals.	
	RESOLVED	
	That the report be noted.	
8.	SCHOOLS FUNDING FORMULA 2016/17	
	Ms Dadlani introduced the report, noting that the local authority was required to submit it by the 31 st October, and that it was also recommending that it be submitted on the current formula. This would leave time to consult and make changes if required. She noted that the basis would be the same, with December's information and any changes to the formula fed into the APT tool to be submitted in January. She noted that one significant change was the transfer of non-recoupment academies into the grant. A flat cash position was transferred into the DSG, which would appear to create a £650,000 pressure. This would take away from additional income received.	
	RESOLVED	
	(i) That the report be noted, and (ii) That the APT tool be agreed for submission.	
9.	SCHOOLS AND EARLY YEARS REGULATIONS	
	Ms Dadlani noted that the report was a technical paper detailing changes to the regulations. She noted that it covered the changes around non-recoupment. She noted that there was new rules about new schools funding, about the growth fund, a change to the definition of amalgamated schools, which simplified the process, and the formalisation of the use of DSG for post-19 spend.	
	RESOLVED	
	That the report be noted.	
10.	SCHOOLS FORUM WORKING PARTY	
	Mr Tagg reported that the report was an interim paper. He noted that that Working Party had been established to allocated the £3 million in additional funding for 2015-16. Analysis at the time showed that there was an imbalance in funding, with the Forum restricted in what could be changed within the timeframe available; funding had therefore been allocated outside the formula. . The Schools Forum had agreed to a full review of the formula by the working party. The working party had since looked at the formula and officers had identified that standards grants had been mainstreamed and locked in through MFG. It had been identified that 7 schools accounted for £1.6 million in funding via this mechanism, 5 of whom were drawing out £1.3 million. With the MFG in place, no change in the formula would remove this effect. A request would therefore need to be made to the DfE to lift MFG, to equalise between schools and allow changes to be made to the formula. Due to the timescales involved, officers had spoken to the EFA and had been given an extension to 31 December 2015 to make such an application. Mr Garwood-Watkins noted that the Forum needed to agree a direction of travel, and to agree what will the role of the working party will be. In terms of the effect on the individual schools, the working party had asked for a 2 to 5 year transition if the MFG was lifted. He said that, in his view, if an error had been made, it needed correcting, but that any solution would need to look at turbulence for schools before a solution was agreed. He noted that the working party had not been provided with this information on turbulence. He noted that in his view, as it had been necessary to keep funds out of the formula last year, the Working Group needs to be re mandated, with the significant outliers addressed as the first stage of reviewing the formula as a whole.	

	<p>The Forum noted the views of Headteachers of affected schools, who would want to put forward their own position in response to any proposal to remove MFG.</p> <p>Mr Heggs said that any proposal would be the subject of a consultation with all schools, similar to the previous Nursery consultation. He advised that a consultation with all schools would be appropriate. It was noted that this process would need to be completed in order to make a decision in time to make an application by the 31st December. It was agreed that the Forum Working Party would be re-established and would meet shortly after the meeting in order to agree a proposal and a timeframe for consultation with all schools; it was agreed that a special meeting of the Schools Forum would be held if needed after the consultation.</p> <p>Mr Tagg said that another meeting of the party would to agree with principles. He noted that officers would meet individually with schools as principles can be agreed.</p> <p>Mr Garwood-Watkins noted the need to return to the original membership, in order to keep meetings at a reasonable size. The Forum agreed this, agreeing that the membership should be (as originally) Andrew Garwood Watkins, Louisa Lochner, Ann Townsend, Mary Wilson, Lucian Boyd-Harte, Richard Ardron, Kat Pugh, and James Wilson, with the vacancies created by the resignations of Smita Bora and Jo Saxton and that meetings should be restricted to members of the Working Party.</p> <p>Mr McNamara noted that the idea of the Working Party was to look at making the funding formula fair. However, this had to align to the needs of the individual schools affected, which did have a reliance on that funding. There was no certainty that an application for MFG removal would be approved by the EFA, and it was therefore appropriate to go to consultation first, to look at the desire of the school community to progress with this and then to look at other measures. In the interim, it was suggested that new funding to outliers be restricted to avoid further entrenching the disparities in the formula.</p> <p>In response to a question from a forum member, Mr Tagg noted that it would be difficult to look at other elements of the formula and whether it was targeted correctly, without addressing the issues. The first phase would be to look at MFG, and the second to look at the funding formula in full.</p> <p>Forum members asked if there was sufficient time to carry out a consultation. It was agreed that officers would need to map out the process and inform the Working Party of what was achievable. It was agreed that a 4 week consultation period was reasonable.</p>	
	RESOLVED	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) That the contents of the report be noted, and (ii) That the schools funding working party be re-established with a mandate to agree a consultation proposal with regards to the withdrawal of MFG, with a view to completing the consultation and decision making process in time to meet the deadline for submission of the 31st December 2015, and (iii) That the schools funding working party also be mandated to continue the development of the new schools funding model to be implemented for the academic year 2016/17 and (iv) That the working party comprise Andrew Garwood Watkins, Louisa Lochner, Ann Townsend, Mary Wilson, Lucian Boyd-Harte, Richard Ardron, Kat Pugh, and James Wilson 	

11.	LA FINANCIAL STRATEGY	
	<p>Dave McNamara reported that the need for savings at Westminster City Council amounted to £100 million over 3 years. He noted that Children's Services was a large spending department, with a planned reduction of £13 million. There was a recognition that better internal alignment on childcare was required as part of this process, with the creation of the childcare governance programme; the lead officer for this would be Rachel Wright-Turner, and that it would lead to increased cohesion internally and a clearer external offer. He said that there was also a need to look at discretionary areas; this would require engagement with schools, and schools possibly taking a larger role as commissioner of services. He reported this would be ongoing for the next three years.</p> <p>Mr Heggs noted that, as part of the process, there was a review of all SLA's, which would be a key driver for achieving the necessary savings. He noted that all SLA's were being reviewed, with business analysis of other providers and an assessment of . He noted that local authorities often did not provide traded services and that the local authority was keen to maintain</p> <p>Ms Wilson asked if the changes to the Play Service were to address the required savings, and asked if there was an assessment of need. She noted that at the most recent Primary Heads meeting were not enthusiastic about introducing an after school and holiday care element. There were concerns about capacity in schools, and the affordability of the offer to parents.</p> <p>Mr McNamara replied that the local authority would be keen to do whatever it could, but the local authority could not guarantee to fund places. He recognised that there was resistance from schools, but that the position would be as stated. Mr Heggs said that support and advice would be available for schools wanting to move to the 8-6 model or to expand to include the 2 year old offer, but there were reviews ongoing in all discretionary areas of spending, including within children's centres.</p> <p>It was agreed to bring forward a report in the new year discussing the changes agreed to budgets by the City Council.</p>	DM
	RESOLVED	
	<p>That the update be noted, and</p> <p>That a further report be submitted to the next meeting.</p>	
	PUPIL PREMIUM COMPARISON	
	<p>Ms Dadlani reported that she wanted to highlight two factors in the data presented: firstly, the reduction in funding for some schools highlighted in the table. Reasons for this were identified: firstly, the impact of UFSM, secondly, changes to Housing Benefit and rising rents, thirdly, the 6th year of Pupil Premium had been reached, meaning that the some pupils were no longer eligible for Ever 6 funding). She noted that Free School Meals 6 was a major factor in the Funding Formula, so schools were likely to face a challenge on two fronts.</p> <p>Mr Garwood-Watkins noted the challenges of the current intake with the changing demographics, with non-FSM pupils not showing as deprived but presenting as more challenging due to reduced parental input. Ms Lochner and the Chair concurred that a similar effect was taking place at their schools.</p>	
	RESOLUTION	
	That the update be noted.	
	DIRECTOR'S REPORT	
	Managed Services	

	<p>Mr McNamara reported that the situation had not improved from the end of summer term, despite additional resources being deployed BT. Changes managing payment side, payroll for many schools, payments for Westminster schools. We have listened to schools, and for as long as necessary, we will give half a day a week of officer time to those schools needing assistance with the finance system; familiarity and targeted training would address issues in time.</p> <p>He reported that have discussions were ongoing with BT, and that he was aware that schools were looking at an alternative payroll provider. He noted that schools do not need to tender if they go through 3BM, and 3BM were proposing to create a separate offer for payroll which would be compatible with the other elements of the HR service, with the Council keen to keep links in place in that area.</p> <p>The Chair noted that Mr McNamara had previously expected the issues to be resolved by mid-October 2015. Mr McNamara reported that he would not put a timeline in place. BT have put in a new team, but had not corrected the payroll, which was still at 93% accuracy, rather than the expected 99%. The local authority understood the lack of confidence.</p> <p>The Chair asked about schools which wished to move away. Mr McNamara reported this was allowed, but that there was a contract period. He noted that school leaders should seek approval from the Governing Body before entering such an arrangement.</p> <p>School Meals</p> <p>Mr McNamara reported that taste offs had going well. RBKC schools would go first, and call off had begun for that, so the contractor would be chosen in around a month with Westminster next to call off. Schools should be getting regular updates, and the new contract will deploy from April 16. Schools will pick the supplier, but there would be further financial benefit if all chose the same supplier.</p>	
	RESOLUTION	
	That the report be noted.	
	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
	Mr Trow-Smith reported that some PVI's were experiencing cash flow issues, due to late payments. Mr McNamara replied that any affected PVI should contact him with details.	
10.	Date Of Next Meeting	
	11 January 2016 at St Augustine's CE High School 7 March 2016 6 June 2016	