



City of Westminster

# Minutes

Meeting:	<b>Committee of the Cabinet (Improving Education in Westminster)</b>
Date of meeting:	<b>Tuesday 26 January 2010 at 11am</b>
Members:	<b>Councillor Colin Barrow, Leader of the Council (Chairman) Councillor Mark Page, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People</b>
Co-opted Members:	<b>Councillor Nickie Aiken Councillor Lindsey Hall</b>
Also Present:	<b>Councillor Barbara Grahame</b>
Apologies:	<b>None</b>
Contact:	<b>Mick Steward, Cabinet and Committee Secretariat</b>
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## **1. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE**

- 1.1 There were no changes to the Membership.

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The relevant Members asked that the interests recorded in the minutes of the meeting on 16 December 2009 be included in these minutes namely that Councillor Aiken declared an interest as a parent of school children in Westminster and Councillor Hall declared an interest as a Governor of St George's School. The Leader declared that he had a child with SEN and was the Chairman of the National Autistic Society.

## **3. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2009 were approved for signature as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

## **4. IMPROVING EDUCATION IN WESTMINSTER (report of Strategic Director, Children and Young People – agenda item 3)**

- 4.1 Michael O'Connor, Strategic Director, Children and Young People, introduced his report with support from Angela Drizi, Operational Director for Schools and Learning. As part of his introduction Michael O'Connor apologised for the delay in issuing the papers. The Leader accepted that this was necessary in view of the need to include as much up-to-date information as possible particularly in respect of the benchmarking information. Accordingly, it was agreed that this be recorded as the formal reason for the report being issued with less than 5 days notice.
- 4.2 The Committee noted the progress being made towards implementing the Education Commission's recommendations. In particular, the Leader asked Officers to ensure that commissioning with other boroughs was sufficiently and robustly investigated, for example, in areas of the span of management control. Angela Drizi confirmed that this was currently being explored in discussion with colleagues from other boroughs most notably Hammersmith and Fulham.
- 4.3 It was noted that it would be mainly in the area of span of management that the benefit of shared services would be realised. An example was given that the number of SEN statements would not reduce overall but better management could lead to improvements in performance and wider spans of control.
- 4.4 The Leader confirmed that discussions surrounding commissioning should also include the core statutory services and not only those for which there was a limited funding span. He undertook to discuss this with the Leader of the Council at Hammersmith and Fulham, if discussion at a political level would assist.
- 4.5 In respect of the area of School Improvement, Daria Wignall circulated graphs showing the improvements already in this area. She highlighted the mobility issues of pupils which impacted on this area, highlighting the recent example of

20% mobility rate in Year 6 at Paddington Green Primary School, which was not particularly unusual. The 10% turnover of primary heads, mainly at community schools was noted.

- 4.6 The Leader indicated that the Improvement Target had been set deliberately high at 75%. It was designed to flush out a set of radical steps which would lead to achieving the 75% target.
- 4.7 Daria Wignall gave details of some of the steps which had been undertaken to date. A significant benefit to performance was the increase in the amount of one-to-one tuition which was undertaken, but this was costly.
- 4.8 The Leader advised that the Committee had reached the stage in its discussions where it needed to be shown the solutions and details of the decisions which needed to be taken to implement the Commission's recommendations in respect of the 75% target. He asked that these be presented to the Committee's next meeting. The Leader added that everyone involved wanted the same thing – improved education. He asked that an inventory of issues and solutions be prepared and included in the report to the next meeting.
- 4.9 Daria Wignall stressed that different solutions were needed as the problems were not the same for each school. Councillor Hall commented that leadership of schools needed in some cases to be addressed and suggested that the School Heads Forum be used to exchange best practice.
- 4.10 Angela Drizi circulated summary performance sheets for each of the City's Secondary Schools and for those primary schools which were a focus for improvement. It was noted that, with a few adjustments, the summary sheets would serve the same purpose as the school report card, which was one of the key actions.
- 4.11 Michael O'Connor, Strategic Director for Children and Young People, introduced the proposals for a new commissioning model. The model would seek to achieve improvements to education performance and attainment. This in turn would reduce the lack of engagement and pressures on Social Services and lead to better employment opportunities. Angela Drizi advised that consideration was also being given to appointing a Parenting Commissioner to make better use of resources by bringing these strands together. This would also include the corporate parenting role. The proposals when formally submitted were to include an explanation of what parenting interventions there will be.
- 4.12 The Leader asked that the commissioning roles be considered with secondary heads who could perhaps have more direct responsibility for spending.
- 4.13 The Committee noted that further details of the response to the recommendation relating to gifted and talented children had been provided at Appendix 2 of the report. The papers set out what was done to support these children.

- 4.14 The Committee discussed the alternatives to academic study, such as Diplomas and Apprenticeships which formed part of the 14-19 entitlement. A briefing on this would be provided at the next meeting.
- 4.15 The Leader queried whether the degree of inclusion currently operated in schools was correct and whether this should be explored with Heads.
- 4.16 The Leader briefly summed up and advised that at the next meeting the Committee wanted to see the actual shape of the improvement plan. This was endorsed by the Chief Executive who also summed up.

**Reason for Decision:**

To take forward the Cabinet's decision of 12 October 2009 to build on the recommendations of the Education Commission to improve education in Westminster.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the service's initial response to the Action Plan be endorsed.
- (2) That Officers report to the next meeting with a firmer shape to the response to the Action Plan, including having regard to the issues raised at the meeting and actions requested as set out in paragraphs 4.4; 4.8; 4.11 and 4.14 above.
- (3) That the benchmarking work set out in the report and outlined at the meeting, be endorsed.
- (4) That the next meeting be held at 5pm (not 5.30pm) on Wednesday 24 February 2010.

**5. CLOSE OF MEETING**

- 5.1 The meeting ended at 12.20 pm

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Chairman

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Date