



City of Westminster

Committee Agenda – Supplementary Documents

Title:

Business and Children's Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Meeting Date:

Thursday 31st March, 2022

Time:

6.30 pm

Venue:

**Hybrid MS Teams and 18th Floor, Westminster City Hall, 64
Victoria Street, Westminster London SW1E 6QP**

Members:

Councillors:

Karen Scarborough
(Chairman)
Geoff Barraclough
Christabel Flight
Lindsey Hall
Aicha Less
Eoghain Murphy
Tim Roca
Mark Shearer

Elected Representatives

Ryan Nichol, Parent Governor

Co-opted Voting Representatives

Alix Ascough, CE Diocesan Rep
Marina Coleman, RC Diocesan Rep

**Non-Voting Co-opted
Representatives**

Mark Hewitt, Headteacher, St John CE
Primary School
Wasim Butt, Principal, Beachcroft AP
Academy

**Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting
and listen to the discussion Part 1 of the Agenda**

[Link to live meeting](#)



**This meeting will be livestreamed and recorded. To access
the recording after the meeting, please revisit the link.**



**If you require any further information, please contact the
Committee Coordinator, Tracey Chin.**

E: tchin1@westminster.gov.uk

Corporate Website: www.westminster.gov.uk

Note for Members: Members are reminded that Officer contacts are shown at the end of each report and Members are welcome to raise questions in advance of the meeting. With regard to item 2, guidance on declarations of interests is included in the Code of Governance; if Members and Officers have any particular questions they should contact the Head of Committee and Governance Services in advance of the meeting please.

AGENDA

PART 1 (IN PUBLIC)

3. MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the Business & Children's Policy and Scrutiny Committee Call-in meeting held on **7 March 2022**.

(Pages 3 - 6)

4. CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS, LICENSING AND PLANNING - PORTFOLIO UPDATE REPORT

An update from the Cabinet Member on actions arising from the meeting on **2 Feb 2022**.

(Pages 7 - 10)

Stuart Love
Chief Executive
29 March 2022



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

**Business and Children's
POLICY and SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
7 March 2022**

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of the Call-In meeting of the **Business and Children's Policy and Scrutiny Committee** held on **7 March 2022** at **6.30pm**.

Hybrid meeting via Microsoft Teams and Rooms 18.01-03, 18th floor, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP.

Members Present: Councillors Karen Scarborough (Chairman), Ian Adams (substituting), Geoff Barraclough, Aicha Less, Eoghain Murphy, Tim Roca, Mark Shearer and Jacqui Wilkinson (substituting).

Co-Opted Members Present: Marina Coleman, Alix Ascough (Head of All Souls Primary), Ryan Nichol (Elected representative, Parent Governor)

Also present: Councillor Timothy Barnes (Cabinet Member for Young People and Learning), Wendy Anthony (Head of Admissions and Access to Education, virtual), Daniella Bonfanti (Cabinet Manager, virtual), Ian Heggs (Bi-Borough Director of Education), Tracey Chin (Policy and Scrutiny Co-ordinator), Artemis Kassi (Lead Scrutiny Advisor), (Patrick Ryan (Portfolio Advisor, virtual), Anita Stokes (Lead SFM Childrens, virtual), Peter Sweeney (Director of Education, Westminster Diocese)

1. MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 Councillors Christabel Flight and Lindsey Hall were unable to attend and sent apologies. Councillors Ian Adams and Jacqui Wilkinson attended as substitutes.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 Marina Coleman declared her role as a headteacher of a Roman Catholic school in Westminster and a Roman Catholic Diocesan Representative. Ms Coleman also confirmed that Mr Scott Cree (Head Teacher of Westminster Cathedral School) had been her Deputy Head for six years. Councillor Karen

Scarborough declared her role as a school governor for two RC Westminster schools.

3. MINUTES

- 3.1 It was confirmed that the minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2022 would be approved at the next meeting on 31 March 2022.

4. CALL-IN: CABINET MEMBER DECISION TO AMALGAMATE WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL AND ST VINCENT DE PAUL RC SCHOOLS

- 4.1 The Committee convened to review a call-in brought by three of the Committee's members - Councillors Geoff Barraclough, Aicha Less and Tim Roca. The members stated their reasons for the call-in, identifying three key areas:
1. What makes an effective amalgamation: why one site was chosen over the other.
 2. How the schools got to this point.
 3. Parental concerns relating to possible consequences of the merger e.g. additional school uniform costs, separation of siblings.
- 4.2 A report responding to the reasons for the decision was presented by the Cabinet Member for Young People and Learning, Councillor Barnes and Ian Higgs, the Bi-Borough Director for Education. Both addressed members' questions arising from the report.
- 4.3 The Council cited a 22-23% surplus in the number of places available in primary schools in Westminster as the main reason for the amalgamation (3.2 of the report). This figure extended to up to 25% in the south of Westminster. Schools needed to obtain a certain number of pupils to ensure the viability of the school. It was concluded that it was in the young people's best interests to amalgamate the schools. The Council stated that their role was to recognise and agree to the recommendations put forward resulting from the numerous discussions that had been held between governors and the RC diocese.
- 4.4 Call-in members queried the reasons for the site selection. The Council stated that the decision was made by the governors and diocese, who recognised that the Vincent de Paul site had "better" facilities to be able to continue as a Catholic school. The Council confirmed that both sites would be used for educational purposes.
- 4.5 Following queries from the call-in members on the issues of school uniform costs and class sizes, it was confirmed that discussions were ongoing on uniforms, but that additional support would be provided for parents where

- needed. It was explained there was sufficient space at the new site to take in additional pupils with no issues anticipated. It was confirmed that disabled access would be improved.
- 4.6 Regarding the staffing of the new school, it was explained that a consultation was currently underway to discuss the arrangements going forward.
- 4.7 Concerns were raised about the possible separation of siblings if one sibling had to be educated elsewhere, due to “overcrowding”. It was stated that the risks of this happening were low, owing to the surplus of school spaces already available, and that this was unlikely to result in future school openings.
- 4.8 Members enquired about the marketing process to invite pupils from other parts of the City. The Council confirmed that a thorough marketing strategy had been utilised and explained that there were not enough pupils to enrol overall. The Council stated that over 40% of children attending were from outside the City, with the reputable school system mentioned as being a key factor in attracting pupils.
- 4.9 Call-in members reported parents’ concerns that they were not fully informed about the schools’ financial position prior to the consultation. It was explained that it was the governors’ duty to liaise with parents and provide as much detail as was possible. It was stated that training would have been provided to governors on best practice for this.
- 4.10 Members queried who would be responsible for the deficit. It was confirmed that the costs would be coming from multiple sources, including from the schools’ general fund and from the Council. It was confirmed that local taxpayers would not be responsible for the costs.
- 4.11 The Council acknowledged the sensitivities of delivering the news and maintained that due process had been followed in involving both schools’ governors and parents, with governors making the final decision. It was confirmed that the schools had liaised closely with the Council to ensure a deficit recovery plan was in place. An additional FAQ document was available to parents to help address their concerns.
- 4.12 A question arose on the efficacy of the deficit recovery plan. The Council explained that this was dependent on each schools’ particular circumstances. Both schools had differing deficits, with Vincent de Paul’s being the lower of the two. Resident location and population decline also had an impact. Depopulation was a continuing issue which was impacting on schools in the City. It was stated that a birth rate of 2.1% was needed to maintain a stable population. In 2021, the national rate had been recorded as 1.6%. It was concluded that more schools were available in the City than was needed.

- 4.13 The Chair enquired about Catholic admissions in schools. Peter Sweeney, Head of the Catholic Diocese in Westminster, explained that approximately 70% of pupils were Catholic, but that spaces were open to all. The intention was to ensure that the option of a Catholic based education was available to parents, but which was not exclusive to Catholic families.
- 4.14 Discussion arose on the future of the Westminster Cathedral site. The Council reported that proposals for the site to provide SEND facilities was under discussion. It was confirmed that the site would remain a diocesan school in Westminster.
- 4.15 The Committee queried the impact the decision would have on the school rolls. It was confirmed that work was ongoing on this. Factors to consider were changing life and work patterns as well as individual choices.
- 4.16 The Chair provided a summation of the discussion and thanked everyone for their hard work before moving the Committee towards a formal vote. The vote included all Committee Members, plus three co-opted members.
- 4.17 **Voting:**
8 – For: to note the report.
3 – Against: to proceed with referral back to the decision-maker.
- 4.18 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee note the report.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

- 5.1 The Committee noted that its next scheduled meeting would take place on 31 March 2022.

6. TERMINATION OF MEETING

- 6.1 The meeting ended at 19.42.

CHAIRMAN _____

DATE _____

1. To send Committee details of all Covid-19 grant programmes available to businesses.

The ARG (Additional Restrictions Grant) is a funding pot that has been made available by central government's Department for Business Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS), to all Local Authorities in England to support businesses as part of the emergency response to the pandemic. So far, Westminster have received 4 tranches of funding, cumulatively totalling circa £18m. The Council have obtained Cabinet Member approval to administer this third tranche of funding in the form of grants to individual eligible businesses in accordance with the fourth-round eligibility criteria, as well as to fund a suite of business support activity. The ARG funding must be defrayed by 31 March 2022, or it will be subject to recovery by central government.

Please see below Business Support schemes that have been funded by the ARG that are all due to launch from March:

1.1. Green Business Audit Scheme – launch w/c 21 March, go live w/c 22 April

Westminster City Council have declared a climate emergency and have committed to the City becoming net zero carbon by 2040. We have an ambitious vision to be a City for All and a Smart City. Commercial buildings are responsible for 11% of Westminster's carbon emissions and represent a significant challenge to meeting our net zero targets. We recognise the challenges faced by small to medium enterprises, charities and social enterprises in taking steps to address these.

The Green Business Audit scheme project aims to provide support to Westminster businesses to assist them in transitioning to a green economic recovery following the economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Council has partnered with GEP to deliver this programme of business support which seeks to provide businesses with bespoke recommendations and tailored support to reduce their emissions and associated costs. Suitably qualified experts will conduct an audit of the businesses carbon impact. The results of the audit will be articulated in a report along with a recommended action plan setting out improvements that can be made either to the business' premises or operations. This scheme helps to address the issues of the funding, knowledge and resource gaps that exist for small businesses in this space whilst simultaneously battling with the on-going challenges imposed by Covid-19. A funding pot of £500,000 has been made available to deliver this scheme which will support up to 1000 Westminster businesses.

Eligibility criteria/target audience:

- Fewer than 250 employees.
- A turnover of not more than £36million.
- A balance sheet total of not more than £18 million.
- Businesses must be the freeholder or leaseholder with more than 3 years unexpired on a lease OR a private tenant with a full repairing obligation
- Must be a business that is trading in the City of Westminster

The scheme is open to all sectors providing they meet the above criteria.

Partners

- Share via Business Support Orgs & Trade Associations – Enterprise Nation, FSB, London Business Hub, Abbey Centre, Soho Business Alliance, Westminster Business Council, UK Screen Alliance.
- Internal Services: Licensing, Planning, Business Rates, Waste & Recycling.
- BIDs.
- Landowners: Crown Estate, Grosvenor, Shaftsbury.

1.2. Westminster Hospitality & Leisure Recruitment Service – launch w/c 21 March, go live date RBC

Hospitality & leisure have been amongst the hardest-hit sectors of the Covid-19 pandemic. There are three key issues which drive the need for the service:

- *Businesses are finding it difficult to fill vacancies* – 3 in 10 hospitality and leisure businesses are finding vacancies difficult to fill which is impacting on businesses' productivity and viability.
- *The impact of Covid and Brexit on the available talent pool* – 300,000 people left jobs and returned to their home countries in the past year (source Caterer.com).
- *Confidence in the sector and interest in hospitality & leisure careers* – 64% of furloughed hospitality and leisure workers plan to move industries. Hospitality and leisure has been a long standing hard-to-fill sector because of perceived unattractiveness of the sector and an absence of awareness of the myriad of occupations and career advancement opportunities within the sector.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate negative impact on Westminster's hospitality and leisure sector. The importance of this sector to other related sectors that depend on it cannot be overstated. Many of our businesses in this sector were among the last to re-open following lockdowns, and recently, the emergence of the omicron variant has exacerbated the economic impact of the pandemic on the visitor economy that has been a priority sector in Westminster and the lifeblood of the West End.

The Council has partnered with the New West End Company (NWEC) and the Knightsbridge Partnership to develop a scheme to address the recruitment challenges faced by these sectors. The Council and its partners' interests in developing a local response ultimately stems from the scale and importance of the sectors in Westminster. There are over 3000 hospitality businesses within the Westminster area, including Food and Accommodation services (UK Business Counts, April 2021) employing over 80,000 people (BRES 2020), and 4,415 leisure businesses, including the arts, entertainment, recreation and other industry services (UK Business Counts, April 2021), employing 41,000 people. Westminster is the hub for world renowned names, innovative start-ups and wider supply chain organisations. Currently, there are 27 Michelin star restaurants within the area of Westminster.

The service to be delivered will create the much-needed, exclusive, recruitment infrastructure to support Westminster's hospitality and leisure businesses at no cost. The following services are some examples of the type of support that is to be provided through this scheme.

Eligibility Criteria/Target Audience:

Businesses within the hospitality and leisure sectors in the City of Westminster will be eligible for support through this scheme. These sectors are defined as the following business groups:

- *Hospitality & leisure definition:* a business whose main function is to provide a venue for the consumption and sale of food and drink.
- *Leisure definition:* a business that provides opportunities, experiences and facilities for culture, recreation, entertainment, celebratory events, days and nights out, betting and gaming.
- *Accommodation definition:* a business whose main lodging provision is used for holiday, travel and other purposes.

The Council have identified the following business categories who would be supported by this scheme in accordance with the above definitions:

- Food courts, public houses/pub restaurants, restaurants, roadside restaurants, wine bars, cafés, country house hotels, guest houses, hostels, hotels, canal boats or other, wedding venues, events venues, night clubs & discotheques, arenas, concert halls, casinos and gambling clubs.

Partners:

- Share via Business Support Organisations and Trade Associations – Enterprise Nation, FSB, London Business Hub, Abbey Centre, Soho Business Alliance, Westminster Business Council, UK Screen Alliance.
- Internal Services: Licensing, Planning, Business Rates, Waste & Recycling.
- BIDs.
- Landowners: Crown Estate, Grosvenor, Shaftsbury.
- Recruitment Agencies specialising in sourcing talent for these sectors.
- Large Hoteliers and restaurants.

1.3. Start-up to Scale-up – launch w/c 7 March, go live date 26 April

This programme has been designed and piloted to support Westminster based businesses on a high-growth trajectory prior to Covid-19, to harness the resilience required to survive, and adapt their business to thrive in the post-covid future economy. With a combination of peer networking and business education, the pilot was delivered between November 2020 and April 2021 to 10 Westminster based businesses. The participating companies came from a diverse range of ethnicity and business backgrounds and the participants ranged from start-ups to more established businesses and not-for-profits.

Westminster is home to 9% of all UK companies which have received equity investment over the last decade (1,452 Westminster based companies) and has the highest density of scale-ups in London. A number of significant high-growth sectors are already well represented in the borough, including business banking and financial services (19% of the UK's high-growth population in this sector) and software-as-a-service (8% of the UK base). Westminster-based companies have raised £1.4bn in 2020 alone via 544 equity deals. According to Beauhurst research:

- There are 2,155 active high growth companies in the City of Westminster.
- 1,452 of these companies have received equity investment.
- 23% of ambitious companies (1,156) in London are based in Westminster.

The Council has partnered up with Gazelle's to deliver these courses for businesses located in Westminster. There will be 4 cohorts of 10 businesses, supporting 40 businesses in total.

Eligibility Criteria/Target Audience:

- Fewer than 250 employees.
- A turnover of not more than £36million.
- A balance sheet total of not more than £18 million.
- Start-ups on a high-growth trajectory.

These courses are open to all business sectors.

2. To confirm the date of the next Harrow Rd Forum meeting (general request for Cllr Green from Cllr Roca).

Ward Councillors, Cllr Hitchcock and officers from the Council met on 4 February to discuss Maida Hill Market. This was followed by a meeting between Cllr Green, Cllr Bush and the

Policy and Scrutiny 2 Feb 2022 actions – Cllr Green

Maida Hill Neighbourhood Forum on 25 February. Another meeting on the Maida Hill Market project is taking place on 25 March.