



City of Westminster Cabinet Member Report

Decision Maker:	Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration, Business and Economic Development
Date:	22 nd October 2014
Classification:	General Release
Title:	Petition Response – WAES Classes Closure
Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	No
Financial Summary:	Funding for adult education and training has been reduced nationally and this has directly impacted in the funding provided by the Skills Funding Agency to WAES
Report of:	Strategic Director for Housing, Regeneration and Property

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 A petition was presented to Cllr Prendergast by a group of Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES) students whose 2D Art classes are no longer going to run in their current form. The former students have asked that WAES reconsider the decision taken.
- 1.2 The Head of WAES has advised that the Service has had a reduction in funding from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) for adult learning for 2014/15 which has meant that some classes can no longer be provided or can no longer be subsidised by the public purse. In addition, colleges nationally are required to focus SFA funding on the delivery of qualification bearing, vocational programmes that will train and equip people for work.
- 1.3 As a direct result of these two changes, WAES no longer has sufficient funding to maintain all of its publicly funded and subsidised courses, whilst at the same time

some of the existing programmes have had to be converted to qualification bearing courses such as BTEC Awards, Certificates and Diplomas.

- 1.4 These changes have impacted on the provision of some of the Art classes identified in the petition presented by previous students. In addition, the provision of Jewellery classes has been withdrawn as the demand for these classes has significantly reduced over a number of years resulting in them no longer being financially viable.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Member notes that WAES has had a reduction in funding and can no longer offer all of the classes that were provided during the last academic year;
- 2.2 That the Cabinet Member notes and agrees that, in light of 2.1 above, public funding from the SFA for adult skills courses must be focussed on delivering qualification bearing skills training for the workplace, rather than leisure classes; and
- 2.3 That, in light of 2.1 and 2.2 above, the Cabinet Member agrees that the decision taken by WAES to cease running the specified art classes, as detailed in the petition, be upheld and this decision be provided to the petition organiser as the Council's formal response.

3. Reasons for Decision

- 3.1 The decision taken by WAES to cease running some of the Art classes was as a direct result of:
- the reduction in public funding nationally for adult learning and locally to WAES and
 - the requirement to use the public funding from the SFA for qualification bearing adult skills programmes to provide education and training to develop skills for the workplace. The classes listed in the petition do not meet this requirement.
- 3.2 As a direct result of these two changes, WAES will no longer have sufficient funding to maintain all of its publicly funded and subsidised courses, whilst at the same time some of the existing programmes will need to convert to qualification bearing courses such as BTEC awards, certificates and diplomas. The new BTEC programmes at level 1 and 2 will provide courses that will incorporate a cluster of subject specific areas, for example a Level 1 Award in Drawing incorporates Life Drawing, Landscape, Still Life and Portraiture using a variety of techniques and mediums. Learners following this programme will develop a

range of skills in this area and will then be able to progress to the Level 2 Certificate in Painting and Drawing or Printmaking. These courses are available to all adult learners.

- 3.3 With very few exceptions, WAES will continue to provide courses encompassing all the subject areas that they currently do, but in some cases these have been clustered together to meet both the requirements of the funding body and to provide the opportunity for learners to progress onto further courses or into employment. Where possible, WAES will also continue to provide alternative courses but these will need to be at a fee level that fully covers all associated costs.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no legal implications.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
- 5.2 Funding for adult education and training has been reduced nationally and this has directly impacted in the funding provided by the Skills Funding Agency to WAES. The Service's Board of Governors have been advised of the funding changes and have thoroughly considered the implications and the actions being taken.
- 5.3 A full cost recovery fee level must be set if WAES were to continue to run the courses in question.

5. Staffing Implications

- 5.1 It has been necessary to make a small number of teaching staff redundant. A thorough consultation process was undertaken with the unions over the summer period. The Board of Governors of WAES have been advised throughout the process and have approved the changes undertaken.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Consultation was undertaken with the Universities and College Union (UCU) and UNISON. The WAES Board of Governors was informed throughout the process and considered the implications.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of
the Background Papers please contact:**

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BACKGROUND PAPER:

Petition presented to the full Council meeting held on 9th July 2014

For completion by the **Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration, Business and Economic Development**

Declaration of Interest

I have <no interest to declare / to declare an interest> in respect of this report

Signed: _____ Date: _____

NAME: _____

State nature of interest if any

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(N.B: If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter)

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled

Petition Response – WAES classes closure and reject any alternative options which are referred to but not recommended.

Signed

Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration, Business and Economic Development

Date

If you have any additional comment which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment:
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