Paper O1

Westminster College

Westminster College Transition Group

Basic information

Contact name and email address	The Revd Sarah Moore **sarah.moore@urc.org.uk**
Action required	**Decision.**
Draft resolution(s)	**Resolution 12** **Acting on behalf of the General Assembly, Assembly Executive delegates authority to the Business Committee to appoint members of the governing body of Westminster College until the 6 July 2028.**

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Implementation of Resolution 2 section D, General Assembly 2026.
Main points	This is an enabling resolution to enable work to progress following the decisions taken about Resource Centres for Learning at General Assembly 2026. This resolution delegates authority to the Business Committee to make decisions on behalf of General Assembly and Assembly Executive where it is unnecessary, impractical or unhelpful to wait for a meeting of those councils in order to implement decisions already taken.
Previous relevant documents	Paper A3 Resource Centres for Learning Education for Ministry1 (EM1) Review.
Consultation has taken place with...	

Summary of impact

Financial	
External (eg ecumenical)	

1. Following the decision made at General Assembly 2026 to cease using Westminster College, Cambridge, for EM1, a Westminster College Transition Group made up of representatives of the College and the General Assembly was formed to begin the process of implementing that decision.

2. The membership of the Westminster College Transition Group is as follows: Westminster College representatives – The Revd Dr Peter McEnhill (College Principal),

The Revd Jennifer Mills-Knutson (Chair of Governors), Ms Muna Levan-Harris (member of Management Committee), and Mr Stephen Forber (College Bursar); General Assembly representatives – The Revd Dr John Bradbury (General Secretary), The Revd Nicola Furley-Smith (Deputy General Secretary Ministries), The Revd Sarah Moore (Clerk), Mr Andy Middleton (Legal Advisor) and Mr Alan Yates (Treasurer). The General Secretary was absent from the group from 1st September 2026 due to sabbatical leave. Ms Farrah Carrer is supporting the group as minutes secretary.

3. In recent years Westminster College has increasingly operated greater autonomy from the General Assembly. Decisions have rightly been taken in relation to its operations as it moves towards financial and governance independence from the United Reformed Church. The work of this group aims to best enable this process to continue in such a manner that honours the story of the United Reformed Church (and its predecessor denominations) in Cambridge while putting in place solid foundations for the college's future.

4. The group has identified multiple matters that will need to be resolved as a result of the 2026 General Assembly decision. These non-exhaustively include (in no particular order):
    1. The ongoing relationship between the United Reformed Church and Westminster College as a Resource Centre for Learning that does not offer provision for EM1 students but includes other educational provision and partnerships.
    2. The financial sustainability of the college.
    3. The future governance arrangements which includes the proposal that Westminster College become a charity independent of albeit in close relationship with the United Reformed Church including the appointment of a governing body independent of the General Assembly and the United Reformed Church Trust.
    4. The status of the covenant on the land on which the college is located involving St John's College, Cambridge.
    5. Other matters arising from the Transition Process.
5. As the group has begun its work, it has become apparent that there is a need for some further decisions to be made to enable good governance arrangements for the next steps in the life of the college. Most significantly several members of the governing body have demitted from office in recent months. At present, responsibility to appoint Westminster College Governors rests with the General Assembly. As Westminster College moves to register as a charity independent of the URC with full autonomy of governance, it will naturally need to have a process in places laid out within its constitution to appoint governors in a manner appropriate for the sort of organisation it becomes. This is likely to be such that the Westminster College charity will appoint its own governing body albeit with representatives from the United Reformed Church.
6. It is proposed that during the interim period, Business Committee be given the authority to act on behalf of the General Assembly to appoint members of the governing body at Westminster College.
7. The matter of clarifying the status of the covenant on the land set up by St John's College when the college site was gifted in the late nineteenth century is central to ongoing steps forward. Advice is being sought from specialist counsel about this matter. It is hoped that advice from counsel will be received by the group in early 2027.
8. Further reports of this work shall be made to future meetings of Assembly Executive and General Assembly.