
REPORT OF SCHOOL ORGANISATION COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD ON 22 MARCH 2004

Chair:	* Councillor Gate	
Councillors:	* Miss Bednell * Janet Cowan (1) Anjana Patel	* Ray * Stephenson * Thammaiah
Church of England:	† Reverend P Reece	
Roman Catholic Church:	* Mr J Coyle * Mr M Murphy	* Ms M Roe
Learning and Skills Council:	* Mr T Masters † Mrs E Yates	
Schools (Parent/Secondary):	* Mrs C Millard	
Schools (Parent/Primary):	* Ms J Tushaw	
Schools (Headteachers):	† Mrs M Arnold † Mr D A Jones	* Mr B A Robertson
Schools (Co-optee and Special)	* Mrs P Langdon	
HCRE:	Mr P Pawar	
Adviser:	* Mr B Leaver	

* Denotes Member present
(1) Denote category of Reserve Member
† Denotes apologies received

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL
PART II - MINUTES
36. Attendance by Reserve Members:

RESOLVED: To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Member:-

Ordinary Member
Councillor Jean Lammiman

Reserve Member
Councillor Janet Cowan

37. Declarations of Interest:

RESOLVED: To note that there were no declarations of interests made by Members in relation to the business transacted at this meeting.

38. Arrangement of Agenda:

RESOLVED: That all items be considered with the press and public present.

39. Minutes:

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2003, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

40. Public Questions:

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were put at the meeting under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rule 18.

41. **Petitions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions were received at the meeting under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rule 15.

42. **Deputations:**

RESOLVED: To note that no deputations were received at the meeting under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rule 16.

43. **Changes to the Decision Making Process:**

The Committee received a presentation from the Senior Lawyer (Education and Employment) which updated the committee on recent changes to the decision making process for making changes to schools.

An officer informed the meeting that the changes to legislation allowed a wider group of organisations to propose new schools, such as private companies and local groups. The role of the Learning and Skills Council had been revised to become responsible for changes to post-16 education. In response to a comment from a Member, officers confirmed that private companies could set-up a foundation school.

The meeting was reminded of the process for statutory proposals and advised that if the School Organisation Committee could not reach a decision within two months, the matter would be referred to the schools adjudicator. However, the School Organisation Committee did not have the power to determine secondary school competitions and. The In secondary school competitions, School Organisation Committees would receive the proposals for comments, which would be forwarded to the Secretary of State, who would make the decision. Changes to 6th Form Colleges could be proposed by the Learning and Skills Council, the School Organisation Committee would be a consultees, but the determining power was with the Secretary of State. Officers added that once a proposal had been approved, it must be implemented.

The Learning and Skills Council representative agreed to provide more general information on the role of the Learning and Skills Council at the next meeting.

Officers informed the meeting that the DfES operated a very informative website which parents could be directed towards for information on changes to the decision making process for schools.

44. **Review of the School Organisation Plan:**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director (People First) which provided the meeting with an update on the School Organisation Plan 2003-07.

Officers reminded the Committee that the School Organisation Plan covered a period of five years, but was published every three years. It had been agreed that officers would provide an annual update on the Plan. When this was agreed, it was expected that the DfES would have announced when all LEAs, including Harrow, would be supported with capital funding through the Government's Building Schools for the Future initiative. Unfortunately the DfES have changed the timescale for the announcements. Further announcements will be made during the course of the year.

Officers explained the pupil projections methodology. The projection of pupil numbers was based on population data on a ward-by-ward basis. This year the projections were based on the new Wards for the first time, as previous projections had all been based on the old Wards. The postcodes of all pupils had been used in the formulation of the projections. The postcodes were used to match schools and the homes of its pupils. Officers reminded the meeting that planning areas only applied to primary schools and not secondary schools.

The pupil numbers for 2004 followed a familiar pattern, with surplus places in the North and South East areas. In the North East, the standard number at Aylward School had been reduced and this contributed to addressing 13% surplus. The standard number at Belmont School had also been reduced to help tackle a 12.6% surplus in the Central area. The South East area had the largest surplus, with the surplus expected to rise to 19% by 2010. Overall, there was 12.4% extra capacity across the borough, which was a little over target. In response to comments from Members, officers explained that the vacancies in schools were rarely spread evenly across a number of schools, but concentrated in a few.

Officers informed the meeting that high schools were full, with few surplus places.

However, the pressure for places was expected to relent through smaller entries from Harrow's primary schools. In response to a question from a Member, officers confirmed that Voluntary Aided schools were virtually full, especially in Years 8 and 9. The report highlighted what had happened since the School Organisation Plan was published, and updated the meeting on events in neighbouring boroughs.

In response to comments from a Member, officers explained that the proposed Harrow Sixth Form Collegiate was designed to improve transition from 14-16 to 16-19. In line with government guidance, there would be no divide between academic and vocational courses. A Member commented that it would be interesting to monitor the development of the relationship between the LEA and the Learning and Skills Council.

RESOLVED: That (1) the comments of the School Organisation Committee be noted.

(2) the review of the School Organisation Plan be agreed and circulated to all stakeholders.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.55 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR B E GATE
Chair