

EDUCATION CONSULTATIVE FORUM

24 MARCH 2004

Chair:	* Councillor Stephenson	
Councillors:	* Mrs Bath * Miss Bednell * Gate	* Kara (1) * Miles (2) * Ray
Teachers' Constituency:	† Mr R Borman * Ms H Cowgill * Ms C Gembala	† Mrs P Langdon * Mr P Large
Governors' Constituency:	* Mrs M DeBeer (Reserve) † Ms H Henshaw * Mrs C Millard	† Mr N Rands * Ms H Solanki
Elected Parent Governor Representatives:	* Mr H Epie	* Mr R Sutcliffe
Denominational Representatives:	* Mrs J Rammelt	Reverend P Reece
Arts Culture Harrow Representatives:	Mr V Gresty	Mr D Pullinger
* Denotes Member present (1), (2) Denote category of Reserve Member † Denotes apologies received		

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS**RECOMMENDATION 1 - School Term Dates 2005/06**

The Forum received a report from the Director of Strategy (People First) which outlined the recent consultations on term dates undertaken since the Forum's last meeting. At the Forum's meeting in February, members had requested that consideration of neighbouring boroughs' term dates be taken into account. The Parental Support and Information Services Manager explained to the Forum that after consultation with neighbouring boroughs an amended version of Model 1, the preference of those previously consulted, was now presented to the Forum. The officer explained that the amendments consisted of a change to the dates for the February 2006 half term in order to achieve more consistency with neighbouring boroughs and the proposed model of the Association of London Government (ALG).

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (To Portfolio Holder)

That the school term dates for 2005/06 be set in accordance to the amended Model 1.

PART II - MINUTES95. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

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

Ordinary Member

Councillor Thammaiah
Councillor Janet Mote

Reserve Member

Councillor Miles
Councillor Kara

96. **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.

97. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

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

98. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2004 having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

99. **Matters Arising from the Minutes:**(i) New Proposal for Schools to Be Able to Drug Test Pupils

The Chair informed the Members of the Forum that guidelines on this matter were yet to be issued.

A Member of the Teachers' Constituency raised concerns that any future implementation of drug testing in schools would be left to the discretion of individual schools and the Forum agreed that a general policy would be preferable and further to follow up the discussion when more information was available.

(ii) Workforce Remodelling

The Chair informed the members of the Forum that a conference with governors to address this issue had recently been held.

A Member of the Teachers' Constituency stressed the importance of a general policy on the employment of Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) and Cover Supervisors in the borough. The member also expressed concern that the HLTAs be required to teach whole classes in order to obtain their title. The Chair stated that it was also in the interests of all concerned to have a common policy in this matter.

(iii) Education Budget 2004/05

The Chair informed the meeting that the budget with an additional £1.2 million for schools had been approved by the Council.

(iv) Meeting with MPs

The Chair reported that the meeting with the MPs for Harrow, Tony McNulty and Gareth Thomas had been both interesting and rewarding. A Member of the Governors' Constituency thanked the Chair for arranging the meeting.

(v) Seminar on People First

RESOLVED: That a presentation of People First take place at the Forum's next meeting.

100. **Responding to Irregular School Attendance - Parenting Contracts and Penalty Notices:**

The Principal Education Welfare Officer explained that although guidelines on the implications of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act had been drawn up, more information was required on the subject of issuing penalties to parents residing outside the borough but with children attending schools in Harrow. The officer reported that he would be meeting with neighbouring boroughs to address the implications involved and to discuss common procedures to follow in these cases. The officer continued to explain that all the measures to combat unauthorised absence would be implemented in September and schools would soon be notified of the procedures to follow.

In response to a question from a Member of the Elected Parents' Constituency regarding information sent out to parents, the officer explained that the borough would be issuing guidance to schools on parenting contracts in the near future and that parents would also be informed on the implications of pupils' non-attendance at schools.

Following a further question regarding unauthorised absence due to bullying, the Principal Education Welfare Officer informed the Forum that at School Attendance Panels, children and parents were questioned on the reasons for absence to secure the views of the families involved. The officer also reminded the Forum that the proposal on unauthorised absence contained several measures to combat the problem and that issuing a penalty would only be a last resort. The Principal Education Welfare Officer stressed that cases coming to the School Attendance Panel are those where the levels of absence were of great concern and in some cases children would be on the child protection register.

A member of the Forum thanked the officer for circulating the information on responses to unauthorised absence.

101. **14-19 Provision in Harrow:**

Further to the circulation of an information item regarding this matter the Policy Review Manager informed the Forum that the Cabinet had considered the report outlining the results of the consultation on school re-organisation and had agreed on the recommendations made in the report. These recommendations would now be presented to London West Learning and Skills Council (LWLSC).

The Director of Strategy explained that there had been a wide discussion on the post-16 reorganisation which had included an Advisory Group involving representatives from Harrow schools, colleges, LEA and LWLSC. The role of the Advisory Group had been to analyse the options for a 14-19 provision and to advise the cross-party Steering Group formed to liaise with LWLSC in these matters. Following the work of the Advisory Group and the Steering Group a Stakeholder Survey was undertaken outlining four different models for school re-organisation. The survey concluded that model 1, 14-19 provision in every high school, was the preferred model of those consulted. Further to the results of the survey four consortiums were formed, each involving several schools in Harrow to undertake the work on re-organisation on a more local basis.

In response to a question from a Member of the Governors' Constituency relating to the governors' role in the consortium, the Director of Strategy explained that the governors involved in the consortiums would be consulted via their Governing Bodies as was normal practice.

In response to a further query it was confirmed that there was awareness that a single solution would not be appropriate to meet the need for all the consortiums and that depending on the needs identified different solutions would be sought within the context of the overall principles and framework agreed by Cabinet.

In response to a comment made by a Member of the Elected Parents' Governor Constituency, the Chair explained that the content of the report on 14-19 provision had been considered twice by the Forum but due to an extended time for consultation and a tight timescale to present the recommendations to LWLSC it had not been possible to present the full report to the Forum in advance.

In response to a further comment the Director of Strategy indicated that parents opting for education outside the borough do so for various reasons and leaving the borough to attend Sixth Form in schools was just one of the options considered by these parents.

A Member of the Forum expressed concern that not enough provision was made for disabled students, but was reassured by other members that schools and colleges in Harrow actively promote inclusive education for disabled students.

102. **Public Questions:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no public questions to be received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 15 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

103. **Petitions:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no petitions to be received at this meeting under the provisions of the Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 13 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

104. **Deputations:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no deputations to be received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 14 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

105. **School Term Dates 2005/06:**

See Recommendation 1

106. **Date of Next Meeting:**
It was noted that the next meeting of the Forum was scheduled to take place on 23 June 2004.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.33 pm, closed at 8.48 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR BILL STEPHENSON
Chair