

## EDUCATION CONSULTATIVE FORUM

23 SEPTEMBER 2004

Chair:	* Councillor Stephenson	
Councillors:	* Mrs Bath * Miss Bednell * Gate	* Ismail * Janet Mote * Ray
Teachers' Constituency:	† Mr R Borman * Ms C Gembala	Ms J Lang * Ms L Snowdon
Governors' Constituency:	† 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	

\* Denotes Member present  
† Denotes apologies received

**PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS****RECOMMENDATION 1 - Standard School Year Model and School Term Dates for 2006-07**

The Forum received a report of the Director of Strategy, People First on the progress on the consultation on school term dates and the setting of dates for the school year 2006-07.

It was reported that the Forum had agreed provisional procedures for the setting of term dates in Harrow and that neighbouring Boroughs' decisions were an important factor in this process. The Association of London Government (ALG) was looking to reach a Pan-London agreement on a standard school year model, which included a fixed spring break and five development days to be chosen by the individual schools to cater for the specific needs of their communities. It was suggested that the Working Group undertake a consultation on the ALG term dates for 2006-07 when the ALG had agreed the proposed term dates.

**Resolved to RECOMMEND:** (to Portfolio Holder)

That (1) a consultation on the ALG standard school year model, with agreed principles for determining the school term dates for the school year 2006-07 and beyond, be undertaken as outlined in the officer report in paragraphs 7.2 to 7.4;

(2) the consultation be undertaken in the Spring term 2005 when the ALG's final proposed dates for the school term dates for 2006-07 have been received as outlined in the officer report in paragraph 7.5(i) and

(3) the outcome of the consultation be reported back to the Education Consultative Forum for a final recommendation to Cabinet without any further consultation.

**REASON:** To agree the school term dates for 2006/2007.

**PART II - MINUTES**

124.

**Minute's Silence:**

The Forum observed a one minute silence in memory of the victims of the siege at school 1 in Beslan, Russia.

125. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that there were no Reserve Members in attendance at this meeting.

126. **Apologies for absence:**

It was noted that apologies had been received from the following Members of the Forum:

Mrs J Rammelt	- Denominational Representative
Mr R Borman	- Teachers' Constituency
Ms Henshaw	- Governors' Constituency

The Chair informed the meeting that Ms Langdon had resigned from the Forum as she was no longer an employee of Harrow Council. Members wished her well and commended her contribution over the years.

A Member of the Teachers' Constituency read out a statement from the Chair of HTCC and the Vice Chair of the Forum, Mr Paul Large, advising that he was stepping down from the Forum due to other commitments. The Forum asked for their thanks to Mr Large to be recorded and wished him luck in the future.

The Chair asked the Members of the Teachers' Constituency to nominate a new Vice-Chair.

127. **Declarations of Interest:**

In relation to this item, Council Members re-stated the governorships, which they each held, as set out in the minutes of the meeting of the Education Consultative Forum on 15 July 2004 (Minute 110).

**RESOLVED:** That the Declarations of Interest now made by Council Members be noted.

128. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

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

129. **Minutes:**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2004, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

130. **Matters Arising from the Minutes:**

To note that there were no matters arising from the minutes.

131. **Public Questions:**

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

132. **Petitions:**

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

133. **Deputations:**

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

134. **Appointment of Members of the Teachers' Constituency:**

**RESOLVED:** That Ms Snowdon and Ms Lang be appointed as Members of the Teachers' Constituency of the Education Consultative Forum.

135. **Update Report on the Implementation of Fixed Penalty Notices for School Non-attendance:**

The Forum received a report from the Executive Director, People First outlining the progress regarding the implementation of fixed penalty notices under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. Penalty notices would be issued as an alternative to prosecution and only in the cases where there was evidence that parents did not ensure their children's school attendance. Harrow had a low level of non-attendance. Penalty notices would be considered along with the other options available to support parents to ensure their children attended school.

In response to a Member's query regarding the information submitted to the School Attendance Panel, officers replied that the investigating officers would have to gather all available information and meet with the family prior to attending the Panel to ensure that the views of the family were reflected.

Some Members queried the effectiveness of the enforcement procedures to ensure school attendance as the cost of prosecuting and issuing penalties might exceed the benefits of the proposal.

The Forum suggested that a wide consultation be undertaken with all Governing Bodies, Headteachers and parents on how to implement the code of conduct for issuing penalties.

**RESOLVED:** That the report and the above comments be noted.

136. **Drug Testing Pupils:**

The report of the Director of Learning and Community Development provided the Forum with an update on the national guidance on drugs for schools.

Officers reported that following the newly issued national guidelines on drugs, a draft amended version outlining Harrow's policy would go out for consultation in the autumn. It would be recommended that drug testing of pupils would not usually be an appropriate response for the reasons outlined in Appendix 10 of the national guidance. In exceptional circumstances, where schools deemed it necessary to consider drug testing, the schools would be advised to refer to the guidance in Appendix 10. Schools would also be advised to consult with Governors and parents prior to making a decision.

In response to a question from a Member whether the 'leading teachers' had been appointed, officers replied that some schools had selected teachers to have special training on drug related issues. This was to develop their particular expertise in the area as part of a strategy to strengthen drugs education in schools.

In response to Members' concern regarding drug dealers around schools, officers advised that the community police were very supportive and worked closely with schools. It was reported that students who were excluded from school for selling drugs were referred to support workers.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

137. **Standard School Year Model and School Term Dates for 2006-07:**

See Recommendation 1.

138. **Implementation of the Joint Single Status Agreement:**

The report of the Executive Director, Organisational Development provided the Forum with information on the key issues arising from the implementation of the Joint Single Status Agreement and outlined the action taken to compensate staff and minimise the impact on those most adversely affected.

Members of the Governors' Constituency raised concern that the agreement would demotivate staff as there was a general feeling among employees that they would have to work longer for less pay. It was felt that the information had been received late and that no time had been given to consult with Governors or staff who were not members of UNISON.

In response to the comments, officers stated that the process was accelerated as the Council was facing a deadline for implementation under a regional agreement. It was advised that the Council had agreed with UNISON that to avoid conflicting information, only joint statements would be issued during negotiations hence information had been limited to these statements.

It was noted that many members of staff had benefited from the agreement and that the Council was trying to ensure that those adversely affected would be compensated and that pension entitlements would remain unaffected. Officers reported that the Council would provide support to schools to assist in the implementation of the change in working hours. It was noted that those Local Authorities which had only implemented increased working hours for newly recruited staff could only do this on a temporary basis and would need to address this as an Equal Pay issue at a later stage.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

139. **Public Library Position Statement and Standards Report 2004:**

The Forum noted the progress in the library services, the extended opening hours and forthcoming initiative to expand and integrate the services at Wealdstone Library with other partners. Members thanked the library staff for all their hard work.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

140. **Date of Next Meeting:**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Forum was due to take place on 7 December 2004.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.37 pm, closed at 9.50 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR BILL STEPHENSON  
Chair