

## EDUCATION CONSULTATIVE FORUM

15 JULY 2004

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| Chair:                                   | * Councillor Stephenson                                  |  |
| Councillors:                             | * Mrs Bath<br>* Miss Bednell<br>* Gate                   | * Ismail<br>* Janet Mote<br>* Ray            |
| Teachers' Constituency:                  | * Mr R Borman<br>† Ms H Cowgill<br>† Ms C Gembala        | † Mrs P Langdon<br>† Mr P Large<br>(Vacancy) |
| Governors' Constituency:                 | * Ms H Henshaw<br>* Mrs C Millard<br>(Vacancy)           | † Mr N Rands<br>* Ms H Solanki<br>(Vacancy)  |
| 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  | (Vacancy)                                    |
|  | * Denotes Member present<br>† Denotes apologies received |  |

**PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL****PART II - MINUTES**107. **Appointment of Chair:**

**RESOLVED:** To note the appointment at the meeting of the Cabinet held on 20 May 2004 of Councillor Stephenson as Chair of the Forum for the Municipal Year 2004/2005.

108. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

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

109. **Apologies for Absence from Non-Councillor Members:**

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

|                |   |                               |
|----------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Ms Gembala     | - | Teachers' Constituency        |
| Mrs P Langdon  | - | Teachers' Constituency        |
| Ms H Cowgill   | - | Teachers' Constituency        |
| Mrs J Rammelt  | - | Denominational Representative |
| Mr P Large     | - | Teachers' Constituency        |
| Mr R Sutcliffe | - | Elected Parent Governors      |
| Mr N Rands     | - | Governors' Constituency       |

The Chair reported that Ms Cowgill, from the Teachers' Constituency, would be leaving Harrow and wished her well. He informed the Forum that the Chair of Harrow Teachers' Consultative Committee, Mr Paul Large, had asked for his thanks to Ms Cowgill to be recorded.

The Chair also advised that the representative from Harrow Observer, who attended the Forum's meeting, was leaving the newspaper and thanked her for her coverage of education in the paper over the years.

110. **Declarations of Interest:**

**RESOLVED:** To note the following declarations of interest by Members present relating to the business to be transacted at this meeting: -

Councillor Stephenson:  
Governor of Hatch End High,  
Marlborough First and Middle  
School and Harrow College.

Councillor Bath:  
Governor of Whitchurch First School and Nursery  
and Harrow High.

Councillor Ray:  
Governor of Kingsley High  
and Shaftesbury.

Councillor Janet Mote:  
Governor of St John Fisher and a Member of ATL.

Councillor Ismail:  
Governor of Whitchurch  
Middle School.

H Solanki, Governors' Constituency:  
Governor of Stanburn Middle School and Pinner  
Park Middle School.

Councillor Gate:  
Governor of St Dominic's  
College.

C Millard, Governors' Constituency:  
Governor of Nower Hill High and Grange First.

Councillor Bednell:  
Governor of Whitmore High,  
Vaughan First and Middle  
School and Stanmore  
College.

H Henshaw, Governors' Constituency:  
Governor of Stag Lane First and Stag Lane Middle  
School.

111. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

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

112. **Appointment of Vice Chair:**

**RESOLVED:** That Mr Paul Large from the Teachers' Constituency be appointed as Vice Chair of this Forum for the Municipal Year 2004/05.

113. **Minutes:**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2004, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

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

School Term Dates:

The Chair reported that he had attended the meeting of the Association of London Government (ALG) regarding the setting of term dates. At the meeting it had emerged that the ALG favoured a pan-London agreement on a Standard School Year Model with a fixed Spring break. It was agreed that Harrow would maintain the agreed term dates for 2005/2006 and that the Working Group, set up by the Forum to consider these matters, be asked to consider the setting of future term dates in the light of the new information received from the ALG.

New Proposal for Schools to be Able to Drug Test Pupils:

The Chair informed the meeting that when a policy was adopted on the above issue, there would be a report to the Forum.

Responding to Irregular School Attendance:

The Chair advised that there would be a report on this matter in September.

**RESOLVED:** That the above information be noted.

115. **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).

116. **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).

117. **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).

118. **Presentation on People First:**

The Executive Director, People First made a presentation on progress in relation to the development of the structure and services of People First.

He reminded the Forum of the key principles and objectives which had emerged from the original consultation and reported that the past 18 months had seen a total reconstruction of the Service, as a new Directorate, which had been formed from the former areas of Education and Social Services. He advised that People First was a key part of the New Harrow Project and services were being planned to be area based, wherever possible and practical, with a sharper focus on the customer. The new structure of the Directorate which was predicated upon joined-up services would also, for the most part, be likely to meet future government requirements as set out currently in the Children's Bill. The Forum was reminded that the structure was based on 5 departments: Children's Services, Learning and Community Development, Community Care Services, Area Services and People First Strategy. It was noted that all but one substantive Director had now been appointed and the Council was in the process of appointing to senior middle management posts, of which there were 17 (Group Managers) responsible for major service areas across the Directorate.

The Executive Director, People First advised that the reorganisation aimed to create an integrated, transparent and accountable service based as locally as possible. A fulfilment of the strategic objectives which he outlined would represent the performance contract for People First with the Council and its service users.

It was intended that there would be a single point of contact for People First at the Council to streamline customer contact and the People First services would be enhanced by their focus on multi-agency work and sharing of information to secure efficiency. The intention was to achieve better outcomes for children, young people, adults and older people and the Executive Director clarified ways in which the services would be regularly measured and evaluated. These would be through self-evaluation according to agreed targets, through feedback from service users and through inspection.

The Executive Director then went on to give some practical examples of People First work currently being undertaken, particularly in the pilot community school clusters. He indicated that some of the successes of the new services would be achieved over a longer time-scale and would not be immediately evident, given the nature of the work.

It was explained that People First managed around 75% of the Council's budget and, whilst the Council had provided resources within its current budget and medium term budget strategy for budget stabilisation in People First and for extending the community schools programme, there were no current plans for spending outside these resources. People First would seek to optimise existing resources to continue developments.

The Executive Director, People First recorded his thanks to his Directors and to all the committed staff in People First for their work in making such progress.

In response to a question from a Member of the Governors' Constituency regarding the time scales for the roll-out of the community schools programme, the Executive Director replied that this would depend on the action plan that each school cluster would present to the authority for release of funding.

The Chair thanked the Executive Director, People First for his presentation.

**RESOLVED:** That the presentation of the Executive Director, People First be noted.

119. **Shaping Schools for the Future:**

The Forum received a report of the Executive Director (People First) outlining the Council's Strategy on the management of school places and the establishment of Extended Schools to increase the function of schools to serve as a community resource. The report advised that school admissions would be adjusted to reflect the intake of students which could promote an amalgamation process in schools with a low student intake. The report gave consideration to a possible change in the age of transfer to high schools from 12 to 11.

The Forum was asked to comment on the amalgamation policy as part of a wide consultation process with stakeholders.

The Director of Strategy reported that Cabinet, at its meeting on 20 May 2004, had agreed to the recommendations regarding school re-organisation and had established a cross party working group to develop proposals on re-organisation. The Director reported that the working group had met once and agreed to extend the time for consultation until November and that all Governors would be consulted. Officers would regularly meet with Headteachers and Governors and letters containing updates from the working group's meetings would be sent out to all interested parties.

A Member of the Governors' Constituency expressed satisfaction that all Governors would be consulted and she asked for this to be recorded.

A Member of the Governors' Constituency raised concern that the consideration of a possible amalgamation could begin without an elaborated strategy in place as the working group had just been established, and stated that a strategic review would be welcomed.

In response to the comment the Director of Strategy replied that this was not a new strategy and that an amalgamation had to be considered on a case by case basis at the appropriate time for the individual schools. He assured the Forum that officers would support the Governing Body asked to consider an amalgamation throughout the whole process. The Director continued, explaining that the amalgamation process was lengthy and that an early consideration would be advisable.

Several Members of the Forum raised concern regarding the uncertainty for staff during the process and asked for a clear amalgamation policy to avoid insecurity among staff. It was also queried whether an amalgamation would lead to redundancy.

In response, the Director of Strategy stressed that although the schools would close, the number of students would remain the same in the new school and this would continue to determine the staffing structure and finance.

In response to a question regarding the amalgamation process the Director of Learning and Community Development confirmed that Cabinet would take a decision on school amalgamation based on the report from the Director of Learning and Community Development which would take into account the Governing Bodies' conclusions regarding the amalgamation.

**RESOLVED:** That the report of the Executive Director, People First and the contributions from Members of the Forum be noted.

120. **Items raised by Governors:**

**Admissions to High Schools and School Places:**

A Member of the Governors' Constituency expressed concern regarding the number of students who did not gain admission to the high school of their first choice. The Member reported that students, despite being linked to a high school since nursery, were not admitted to their preferred schools as there were other students who changed school in Year 7 to secure a place at the preferred high school and gained admission before others.

In response to this, the Director of Strategy replied that the Council was aware of the issue but it would not be addressed through the admission criteria given the current legal framework. The Director reported that discussions on these matters with the Headteachers' executive committees would be held in the Autumn.

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

121. **The Streamlining of the Appointment of LEA Governors:**

The Forum received a report of the Director of Learning and Community Development which outlined a proposed process to accelerate the appointment of Local Education Authority (LEA) Governors by delegating the decision to the Portfolio Holder for Education and Lifelong Learning instead of requiring a decision by Cabinet.

Officers advised that the proposal would be put to Cabinet for decision and that the simplification of the nomination process had been a request from Governors. The Chair advised that the recommendation to Cabinet also included a proposal to consider non-political affiliated Governors.

**RESOLVED:** That the report of the Director of Learning and Community Development be noted.

122.

**14 -19 Provision in Harrow:**

The Forum received an update report of the Director of Learning and Community Development which informed Members of the progress on the 14-19 Provision and Strategy in Harrow.

The Director of Learning and Community Development reported that the key issue for the 14-19 Strategy was the lack of capital funding. It was advised that Harrow would probably not fulfill the Department for Education and Skills' (DfES) criteria of deprivation and it was therefore unlikely that the Council would receive early funding from DfES under 'Building Schools For The Future'. However, the Director explained that as a result of this, discussions were underway with the DfES Academies Unit and the local Learning and Skills Council for the possible set up of 16-19 Academy in the Borough. The Academy would contribute to broadening education in Harrow by providing an inclusive and comprehensive curriculum offer. This increase in choice, focused on students' needs, would help retain students within the Borough.

**RESOLVED:** That the report of the Director of Learning and Community Development be noted.

123.

**Date of Next Meeting:**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Forum was scheduled to take place on Thursday 23 September 2004.

A Member of the Governors' Constituency requested that a report on the Single Status Review be made to the Forum's September meeting.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.35 pm, closed at 9.52 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR BILL STEPHENSON  
Chair