

EDUCATION CONSULTATIVE FORUM (SPECIAL)**7 DECEMBER 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:	(Vacancy)	(Vacancy)

* Denotes Member present

† Denotes apologies received

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS**RECOMMENDATION 1: Proposed Schools Budget 2005/2006**

The Forum received a joint report of the Executive Director (Business Connections) and Executive Director (People First), which outlined the proposed schools budget for 2005/2006.

It was reported that on 2 December, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) had made the announcement on the minimum amount which the Local Education Authority (LEA) should pass on to schools, and that Harrow had received a larger increase in the schools formula spending share (SFSS) than the national average. Officers explained that the report outlined Harrow's proposed budget based on the amount specified by the DfES. There was a statutory duty to notify the proposal by the end of December which was known as 'fully passporting'.

The SFSS was divided into two parts, the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) which was given directly to schools and the Central Items, which were retained by the LEA to be spent on Special Education Needs (SEN), nursery provision and other services.

It was advised that the ISB funding would be increased by 7.1% if it were agreed to reduce schools' contingency provision. The proposed budgets for the Central Items were discussed; it was noted that the budget for SEN provision was anticipated to increase by over £500k and that this could be funded from an anticipated reduction in the Early Years budget.

It was reported that the entire schools budget for 2006/2007 would be set and funded by the Government, which was planning to increase the funding to those LEAs that currently funded below SFSS. There was therefore a risk that this would be resourced from those Authorities who currently spent above the SFSS.

The Chair informed the Forum that the December Cabinet meeting needed to decide whether to agree to recommend fully passporting or not. The specific budget allocations to education would be discussed at the next meeting.

In response to a query from a representative of Elected Parent Governors regarding the high number of SEN placements outside the Borough, officers replied that most of the SEN budget was spent on Harrow pupils attending schools outside the Borough as there was not sufficient specialised provision within the Borough to cover all SEN pupils. However, Harrow collaborated with Boroughs in West London and Pan-London to cut costs and to ensure good service to all SEN pupils.

In response to a question from a member of the Governors' Constituency regarding whether sufficient trend analysis had been carried out in order to safely reduce the contingency for schools, officers advised that the decision to accept the total allocated sum upfront or at a later stage was currently the subject of consultation with individual schools. There was a certain risk in the decision, but officers explained that the allocations to schools would be based on last year's trends and therefore the risks should be minimal.

In response to another question regarding possible cutbacks in the schools budget after 2006, officers replied that it was uncertain whether a possible reduction in the budget would affect both the ISB and the Central Items.

The Chair stated that strong representations would be made to the Government to ensure that funds for schools were not reduced in the future.

In response to a query regarding the deprivation indicators used to target schools with high levels of deprivation, officers confirmed that both the provision of free school meals and the postcode to determine pupils' place of residence were being used as measures of deprivation.

A member of the Teachers' Constituency commented that more support to schools with a large number of refugees was needed to cater for additional needs such as counselling and the provision of English as a second language.

In response to this comment, the Chair stated that the Extended Schools initiative, which was partly funded by the Government, had initially been rolled out in deprived areas but would eventually be rolled out to all schools.

The Chair recognised the considerable financial pressure placed on schools last year by having to deal with issues such as workforce re-modelling, single status, recruitment and retention and other extra costs. The Council had therefore decided last year to grant an extra £1.2 million to the schools budget, which was intended to fund initiatives in coming years.

A member of the Governors' Constituency voiced concern regarding the proposed schools budget as the settlement received from the Government last year had been too low, and hoped that schools would not be under-funded this year.

The Chair indicated that he anticipated that the Authority's administration would be asking the Council to support full passporting of the proposed schools budget. Another Council Member advised that she believed that this would also be the position adopted by her political Group on this issue.

The Forum thanked officers for the presentation.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (for decision by Cabinet)

That the comments made by Forum members on the proposed schools budget for 2005/2006 be considered by Cabinet.

REASON: To meet the Education Act 2002 requirement to notify the proposed schools budget to the Secretary of State by 31 December 2004.

PART II - MINUTES

141. **Appointment of Chair:**

RESOLVED: That the appointment at the meeting of the Cabinet on 11 November 2004 of Councillor Stephenson as Chair of this Forum for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2004/05 be noted.

142. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

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

143. **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).

Councillor Ray declared a personal interest as a member of his family was a teacher at Rooks Heath High School, but remained and took part in the discussion on agenda item 10, "Proposed Schools Budget 2005/2006".

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

144. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

RESOLVED: That (1) in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the following agenda item be admitted late to the agenda by virtue of special circumstances and grounds for urgency detailed below:-

<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Special Circumstances/Grounds for Urgency</u>
10. Proposed Schools Budget 2005/2006	The report was not available at the time the main agenda was printed and circulated owing to the announcement of the provisional settlement being made on 2 December 2004. Members were asked to consider the report in order to make recommendations (if any) to Cabinet on the proposed schools budget.

(2) all items be considered with the press and public present.

145. **Appointment of Vice Chair:**

RESOLVED: That Ms Jo Lang, from the Teachers' Constituency, be appointed Vice Chair of the Forum for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2004/05.

146. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the signing of the minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2004 be deferred until the next ordinary meeting of the Forum.

147. **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).

148. **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).

149. **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).

150. **Proposed Schools Budget for 2005/2006:**

Further to Recommendation 1 it was

RESOLVED: That a report on contingency provision in Harrow schools be made to the next meeting.

151. **Date of the Next Meeting:**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Forum was due to be held on Tuesday 1 February 2005.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.37 pm, closed at 8.35 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR BILL STEPHENSON
Chair