

EDUCATION CONSULTATIVE FORUM

22 SEPTEMBER 2005

Chair:	† Councillor Bill Stephenson	
Councillors:	* Mrs Bath * Miss Bednell * Gate	* Ismail * Janet Mote * Ray
Teachers' Constituency:	† Mr R Borman * Ms C Gembala * Ms J Lang	* Ms L Money * 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:	(none)	(none)

* Denotes Member present
† Denotes apologies received

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS**RECOMMENDATION 1 - Education Consultative Forum's Terms of Reference**

Your Forum considered its current Terms of Reference and made the following comments:

- The copy of the Terms of Reference circulated with the agenda had not included the amendment previously agreed by Cabinet, which allowed a non-Councillor to be appointed Vice Chair.
- The abbreviated version of the Forum's name should be changed to EdCF to avoid confusion with the Employees' Consultative Forum.
- The two elected parent governors should be listed separately from the Governor constituency of six members nominated by the Association of Harrow Governing Bodies.
- The wording of 'Functions and Objectives' item 1(i) contained a grammatical error.
- The view was expressed that the two members appointed by the Arts Culture Harrow had not attended many meetings of the Forum because the majority of issues discussed at the meetings were not relevant to the arts constituency. The Forum agreed that it was not practicable to continue to require two arts representatives in the membership, but felt that art and culture served an important function and should continue to be represented in the Council's committees.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (To Cabinet)

That (1) the amendment, previously approved by Cabinet, which allowed non-Councillors to be appointed Vice Chair, be incorporated into the Terms of Reference;

(2) the abbreviated version of the Forum's name be changed to EdCF;

(3) the two elected parent governors listed under 'Composition of the Education Consultative Forum', item (c), become a separate item (d); consequently, item (d) be listed as item (e);

(4) the "arts constituency of two members nominated by Arts Culture Harrow" (item e) be removed;

(5) the wording of 'Function and Objectives' item 1(i) be changed to "...between the Executive, its teaching employees..."; and

(6) Cabinet consider where art and culture representation might be more appropriately placed within the Council's meetings structure.

[REASON: To enable the Forum's Terms of Reference to be updated].

PART II - MINUTES

178. **Appointment of a Chair for the Meeting:**
In the absence of the Chair of the Forum, Councillor Bill Stephenson, nominations were requested for a Chair of the meeting.
- RESOLVED:** Unanimously, to appoint Councillor Miss Bednell as Chair of the meeting.
179. **Appointment of Chair:**
- RESOLVED:** To note the appointment at the meeting of Cabinet on 19 May 2005, under the provisions of the Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 2 (Part 4E of the Constitution) of Councillor Bill Stephenson as Chair of this Forum for the Municipal Year 2005/2006.
180. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**
- RESOLVED:** To note that there were no Reserve Members in attendance at this meeting.
181. **Apologies for Absence for Non-Councillor Members:**
- RESOLVED:** To note that apologies had been received from the following Members of the Forum:
- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Councillor Stephenson | - Chair of the Forum |
| Reverend P Reece | - Denominational Representative |
| Mr R Borman | - Teachers' Constituency |
182. **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 made by Council Members be noted.
183. **Arrangement of Agenda:**
- RESOLVED:** That all items be considered with the press and public present.
184. **Appointment of Vice Chair:**
- RESOLVED:** That (1) the appointment of a Vice Chair for the Municipal Year 2005/2006 be deferred until the revised Terms of Reference for the Forum (Agenda Item 12) had been approved by Cabinet; and
- (2) the Vice Chair of the Forum for the Municipal Year 2004/2005 would continue to receive the draft minutes of meetings for comment at the same as the Chair, until such time as a Vice Chair for the Municipal Year 2005/2006 was appointed.
185. **Minutes:**
- RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 April 2005, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.
186. **Matters Arising:**
- RESOLVED:** That the following matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting be noted:

- (i) Minute 171 – Matters Arising - Contingency Provision within Schools
The Forum was reminded that an update report had been requested for the Special Meeting on 6 December 2005.
- (ii) Attendance
Councillor Gate offered his apologies for having been absent from the last meeting and not sent apologies or a Reserve Member in his place.

187. **Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations:**

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were put, or petitions or deputations received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rules 15, 13 and 14 (Part 4E of the Constitution) respectively.

188. **Education Consultative Forum's Terms of Reference:**

See Recommendation 1.

189. **School Term Dates 2007/08:**

The Forum considered a report of the Director of Strategy (People First) which provided options for agreeing the way forward to determine the term dates for Harrow schools for the academic year 2007/08.

Officers advised the Forum that, in their view, it would be prudent to await further information from the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Association of London Government (ALG) prior to determining the 2007/08 school dates. However, officers reported that the ALG had indicated that it would welcome feedback on the proposed term dates prior to a meeting with the LGA on 30 September 2005.

The Forum discussed the proposed term dates and agreed that their main concern was the difficulties caused by Easter not being a fixed date; this meant that, in 2007/08, the academic year would effectively be split into six terms. This resulted in 'part-weeks' that were generally felt to be unpopular with both parents and teaching staff. Some members of the Forum expressed the view that the proposed term dates might prompt an increase in truancy and absence around Easter time.

RESOLVED: That (1) the Forum's comments be forwarded to the ALG; and

(2) the report be noted.

190. **Teaching of Religious Education in Harrow:**

The Forum received a verbal report of the Associate Adviser (People First) on the teaching of Religious Education (RE) in the Borough.

The officer explained that RE was within the legal framework and was therefore taught to all pupils in full-time education. Unlike other subjects, the RE syllabus was agreed locally rather than nationally. The syllabus was set by the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) every five years. The current syllabus, which had been established in 2000 and so was due for renewal, focused on Christianity as the religion historically practised in Britain, but also included other principle religions. This was particularly important for Harrow, which had one of the broadest ranges of religious communities in the country. The syllabus sought to serve two main functions: to support the belief systems of the pupil's family, and to educate about other religions.

Schools had recently been provided with a resource pack provided by the Muslim Council of Britain. This had been well received, and at the meeting of SACRE on 21 September 2005, the Council had considered writing to all faith communities to encourage them to provide similar resources. The officer stated that all were welcome to attend meetings of SACRE.

The Chair thanked the officer for her presentation and suggested that officers consider placing an article in the Harrow People to publicise the way in which religion was taught in schools.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted.

191. **16-19 Update:**
Officers provided an oral update on developments on this issue since the last meeting of the Forum.
- The 14-19 skills centre had opened and was operating. It had 98 students in the 14-16 age range, and 60 students in the 16-19 range accessing provision. The manager of the centre had advised that anyone wishing to visit the centre would be most welcome.
- Following a meeting with Lord Adonis, new guidance was expected on the bidding process for sixth form provision. The terms of reference for the bidding would be published in November 2005, and early indications suggested that the preferred model would be a Harrow-wide solution, whereby schools would work co-operatively to offer provision for all academic and vocational pathways. In response to a question from a member of the Forum regarding sharing of funds for a single bid, officers advised that it was likely that funds would be allocated based on a school's current situation, such as whether the school had surplus accommodation.
- A Member of the Forum expressed concern that some schools were progressing plans for sixth form provision, including building works. Officers advised that the plans had been discussed with headteachers.
- A Member requested that the Council's website be updated to provide information on which schools would be offering sixth form provision from September 2006.
- RESOLVED:** That (1) the above be noted; and
- (2) officers be requested to provide information regarding sixth form provision for 2006 on the Council's website.
192. **The Danks Report:**
Officers advised, in an oral report, that a consultation paper regarding the Danks Report had been sent to every school in Harrow outlining the needs of young people at risk of exclusion. A copy had also been sent to every Chair of Governors, and a monthly newsletter would be sent to schools.
- In response to a question regarding financial support, officers advised that the Action Plan would need to be costed before figures could be confirmed, but advised that there would be no cost to the Authority apart from the establishment and maintenance of the Working Group.
- RESOLVED:** That the position be noted.
193. **Children and Young People's Plan:**
The Forum received a report of the Group Manager (People First) which provided a brief overview of the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP), which the Council was required to produce by 1 April 2006.
- Officers advised that the CYPP was intended to reduce bureaucracy by replacing up to nineteen other plans. The Plan would need to demonstrate what Harrow's needs were, and how they would be met. It was intended that the CYPP would drive change by putting children at the centre of planning, so that service requirements would be dictated by need. Officers advised that the CYPP would initially be driven by an audit of need, but was intended to be an ongoing process, so could change over time. The CYPP would be key evidence in any inspection of the Authority.
- The Council had a duty to produce and co-ordinate the CYPP but would be dependent upon its partner services to implement the Plan. Stakeholders and the community would be encouraged to participate in shaping the plan, and the final version would need to be available to a wide range of audiences and include a children's version.
- A member of the Forum expressed the view that some of the language used in the draft CYPP meant that the meaning was not always clear, and asked whether simpler language could be used. Officers responded that the wording was driven largely by the Department for Education and Skills, but advised that some other local authority plans had provided additional 'links' to provide context for some of the ideas contained within the plans. Members of the Forum felt that this additional information might be helpful.
- A Member of the Forum commented that, in places, the CYPP appeared to be a hybrid of strategic-level planning and expressed some concern that such a Plan might be difficult to implement. Officers responded that it was intended that the CYPP would

provide an over-arching strategy for other more detailed plans, and emphasised that the content would have to be based on an audit of need that could be evaluated.

The Forum commended officers on the initial draft of the CYPP and

RESOLVED: That (1) the report be noted; and

(2) officers be requested to liaise with the respective Chairs of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Sub-Committee and the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee with a view to taking the report to future meetings of the sub-committees for consultation.

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

RESOLVED: To note that the next meeting of the Forum would be a Special Meeting, to be held on 6 December 2005.

195. **Items for the Next Meeting:**

RESOLVED: To note that (1) the agenda for the next meeting would include Bullying in Schools; and

(2) officers be requested to widen the Bullying item to include Truancy.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.45 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR BILL STEPHENSON BEDNELL
(in the Chair)