
REPORT OF SCHOOL ORGANISATION COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD ON 16 JANUARY 2007

Chairman:	* Councillor Miss Christine Bednell	
Councillors:	* Jean Lammiman	* Mrs Anjana Patel
	* Jerry Miles	* Raj Ray (2)
	* Janet Mote (2)	* Bill Stephenson
Church of England:	Mr G Edwards	* Reverend P Reece
Roman Catholic Church:	* Mr J Coyle	Ms M Roe
	* Mr M Murphy	
Learning and Skills Council:	† Mr G Egere	
Schools (Parent/Secondary):	(Vacancy)	
Schools (Parent/Primary):	(Vacancy)	
Schools (Headteachers):	* Mr D A Jones	† Mr B A Robertson
	* Ms A Lyons	
Schools (Co-optee and Special)	* Mrs P Langdon	
HCRE:	* Mr A Aggarwal	
Adviser:	* Mr B Leaver	

* Denotes Member present
 (2) Denotes category of Reserve Member
 † Denotes apologies received

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL
PART II - MINUTES

 1. **Election of Chairman:**

RESOLVED: That Councillor Miss Christine Bednell be appointed Chairman of the Committee for the period of one year.

[Note: In the absence of a Chairman of the Committee, the Vice-Chairman, Reverend P Reece, presided for the above item. Upon conclusion of the item, the newly appointed Chairman, Councillor Miss Christine Bednell, took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting].

 2. **Attendance by Alternate Members:**

RESOLVED: To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed alternate members:

<u>Ordinary Member</u>	<u>Alternate Member</u>
Councillor Nizam Ismail	Councillor Raj Ray
Ms M Roe	Ms V Pye
Councillor Tom Weiss	Councillor Janet Mote

3. **Declarations of Interest:**

RESOLVED: To note that (1) the following interests were declared by members of the Committee:

<u>Member</u>	<u>Nature of Interest</u>
Councillor Miss Christine Bednell	Governor of Vaughan First and Middle Schools, Whitmore High School and Stanmore College
Mr J Coyle	Governor of Sacred Heart Language College
Councillor Jean Lammiman	Governor of Nower Hill School Governing Body Representative of Arts College (Nower Hill High School and Hatch End High School)
Mrs P Langdon	Governor of Shaftesbury High and taught at a local girls' independent school
Mr B Leaver	Governor of Moriah Jewish
Ms A Lyons	Governor of Sacred Heart Language College and St John Fisher First and Middle Schools
Councillor Jerry Miles	Governor of Rooks Heath High School
Councillor Janet Mote	Governor of John Fisher First and Middle School and taught at Peterborough and St Margaret's private school
Mr M Murphy	Governor of Sacred Heart Language College
Councillor Mrs Anjana Patel	Governor of Vaughan First and Middle Schools
Councillor Raj Ray	Governor of Shaftesbury High School and Kingsley High School
Reverend P Reece	Governor of St Johns, Stanmore
Councillor Bill Stephenson	Governor of Hatch End High School, Marlborough First and Middle School, Harrow College

(2) the following interests were declared by Members of Harrow Council who were present in the room but were not members of the Committee:

<u>Member</u>	<u>Nature of Interest</u>
Councillor Nana Asante	Governor of Stanmore First and Middle Schools and Ward Councillor for Edgware
Councillor David Ashton	Used to be, but was no longer, a Governor of Stag Lane School
Councillor Marilyn Ashton	Used to be, but was no longer, a Governor of Elmgrove First School
Councillor Margaret Davine	Governor of Newton Farm and Stanmore College and Ward Councillor for Egware
Councillor Navin Shah	Governor of Medway School

4. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

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

<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Special Circumstances/Grounds for Urgency</u>
7 (a) Statutory Notice and Prescribed Information	The information circulated with the main agenda was inadvertently incomplete. A complete set of documentation was circulated to enable members to consider all information relating to this item.
7 (b) SOC Secretary's Summary Paper	This report was not available at the time the agenda was printed and circulated as further information was awaited. Members were requested to consider this item, as a matter of urgency.
7 (c) Harrow Council's Report on Statutory Proposal	This report was not available at the time the agenda was printed and circulated. Members were requested to consider this item, as a matter of urgency.

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

5. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That (1) the minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2006, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:

Attendance list

"Mrs J Howkiss" be amended to read "Mrs J Howkins".

(2) the notes of the informal meeting held on 19 July 2006 be ratified, subject to the following amendment:

Attendance list

"Mrs P Langon" be amended to read "Mrs P Langdon".

6. **Deputations:**

Having been advised that two late requests for deputations, formally submitted in accordance with paragraph 15(b) of the Constitution, had been received, the Committee

RESOLVED: That (1) in accordance with paragraph 15(c) of the Committee's Constitution, the requirement that deputations be given to the Secretary at least five clear working days before the day of the meeting be waived on this occasion, on the grounds of fairness, to enable deputations to be received from Mr Len Halsey, on behalf of the William Ellis Action Group, and Mr Nitesh Gor, on behalf of the I-Foundation;

(2) the deputation from Mr Len Halsey on behalf of the William Ellis Action Group be heard immediately before agenda item 7(c) – Krishna-Avanti Primary School Proposal – Objections;

(3) the deputation from Mr Nitesh Gor on behalf of the I-Foundation be heard immediately before agenda item 7(d) – Krishna-Avanti Primary School Proposal – I-Foundation Response.

[Note: After receiving the deputations, the Committee agreed to extend the time limit for deputations, as specified in paragraph 15(d) of the Constitution, for both deputations, to enable members of the Committee to seek clarification in relation to points raised during the deputations].

(See also Minutes 7(iii) and (iv)).

7. **Krishna-Avanti Primary School Proposal:**

In her introduction to the above item, the Chairman explained that the Committee would be considering the suitability of the proposal on education grounds, and that it was not within the Committee's terms of reference to consider issues relating to planning.

(a) **Statutory Notice and Prescribed Information:**

The Committee considered the report as set out in pages 1 to 88 of the supplemental agenda.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(b) **SOC Secretary's Summary Paper:**

The Committee considered the report as set out in pages 89 to 132 of the supplemental agenda.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(c) **Objections:**

The Committee considered the report as set out in pages 47 to 192 of the main agenda and received a deputation from Mr Len Halsey on behalf of the William Ellis Action Group.

Mr Halsey's deputation included the following points:

- The William Ellis Action Group had queried the validity of the closing date on the Statutory Notice.
- The I-Foundation's consultation process had been flawed and was driven by the funding timetable. Schools did not feel they had a proper opportunity to consult with their communities and make their views known. The consultation had been short.
- The William Ellis Action Group was the only party which had provided a formal objection to the Statutory Notice. Schools had not been able to put forward a proper formal response to the Notice.
- The proposed site was in an area that already had a cluster of existing schools that would suffer if the new school was approved. Some of the existing schools were undersubscribed and the impact on them should not be underestimated.
- The site was currently used by Belmont Football Club and was a valuable community facility for sporting and social use. The Club would lose half of the site if the school was built. Up to 4,000 users of the football ground would be affected.
- The William Ellis Action Group supported the I-Foundation's proposal but did not believe the proposed site was right for the school.

During the time allowed for questions relating to the deputation, Mr Halsey provided the following additional information:

- Belmont Football Club had 220 registered players. The figure of 4,000 people affected by the development of the site had been calculated by adding together the number of people who played and trained on the site, including opposition teams. These figures had been obtained by the William Ellis Action Group following discussions with Belmont Football Club.
- The intention of the William Ellis Action Group was to prevent building on Green Belt land. The Group had not been formalised.
- A high proportion of Hindus attended the cluster of schools in the area.

RESOLVED: To note (1) the report; and

(2) the deputation.

(See also Minute 6).

(d) I-Foundation Response:

The Committee considered the report as set out in pages 193 to 282 of the main agenda and received a deputation from Mr Nitesh Gor on behalf of the I-Foundation.

Mr Gor's deputation included the following points:

- The consultation process had been extended in agreement with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). The I-Foundation had held a meeting with local schools, at Stag Lane School, on 22 September 2006 as part of the consultation process.
- The Statutory Notice had been advertised in the local press. Two exhibition days run by the I-Foundation had been advertised on Harrow Council's website and had been attended by 40 people on one day and 90 on the other.
- Some objections to the proposal had been received late or had not been sent to the SOC Secretary. Although these were technically invalid the I-Foundation had wished for all objections to be considered by the Committee.
- The I-Foundation had demonstrated a clear parental demand for the proposed school.
- The I-Foundation were in talks with Belmont Football Club and Sport England in relation to the use of the site. If the school were built on the site, the Club would receive numerous benefits including better sports facilities to increase the usability of the site.
- Edgware Ward, and the three surrounding wards of Kenton East, Kenton West and Queensbury, had the four highest Hindu populations in the Borough, ranging from 32% to 43%. The proposed location for the school was ideally situated to be of benefit to the Hindu community.

During the time allowed for questions, Mr Gor provided the following additional information:

- The DfES had been very supportive and recognised the proposal to be a landmark project.
- The redevelopment of the Belmont Football Club site would provide improved pitches so that the land could be used more effectively.
- The I-Foundation had not sent Statutory Notices to local schools as they did not appear on the DfES list which set out the statutory requirements for issuing notices.
- The consultation meeting at Stag Lane School had been held prior to the issuing of the Statutory Notice. Five headteachers attended.
- The I-Foundation had not sent leaflets about the proposed school to local residents.
- Surplus places in local schools were not a relevant issue as the school would be unique and approval was sought on grounds of parental preference.
- The I-Foundation would be willing to reconsider the priorities list for admissions (on pages 13-14 of the supplemental agenda).
- The I-Foundation would be willing to put a time limit of three years on the five places reserved for applications supported by the Faith Partner (page 14 of the supplemental agenda).

RESOLVED: To note (1) the report; and

(2) the deputation.

(See also Minute 6).

(e) Harrow Council Report on Statutory Proposal:

Mr Paul Clark, Director of Children's Services at Harrow Council, introduced the report, which recommended approval of the proposal, and highlighted the following points:

- The Council's report was based on National Government policy.
- The Council was satisfied that the I-Foundation had some experience of running schools.
- The school would satisfy the need for education diversity in the Borough. There was a significant group in the Borough who wished to take part in the faith school being proposed. Pupils coming from outside of Harrow would bring funding into the Borough.
- The school would be a part of the community. The I-Foundation was clear in its wish to work as part of the local community and offer facilities to members of the general public as well as the school's pupils.
- The development of the site would provide Belmont Football Club with an opportunity to improve its facilities.

In response to questions from members of the Committee, Mr Clark provided the following additional information:

- There were already surplus places in the local area. The proposed school, if approved, would have an impact on other schools but it was the business of the Local Education Authority (LEA) to manage this impact effectively. There was a need to address the community's request for a school to meet its needs.
- The Jewish Moriah School provided an example of an existing faith school that had grown over time and had worked well in harmony with the local community.
- There were no plans for Kenmore School to be adopted as a Voluntary Aided School for the Sikh or Hindu faith.
- All schools offered facilities to the community and the I-Foundation would be communicating with the local community to find out what would be appropriate for its needs.

RESOLVED: That (1) the above be noted;

(2) the report as set out in pages 133 to 138 of the supplemental agenda be noted.

(f) Voting and Decision:

The Chairman explained the voting procedure as set out in paragraph 9 of the Constitution.

In response to a query from a member of the Committee, the Legal Advisor to the Committee confirmed that, should the Committee be minded to do so, it could approve the proposal subject to confirmation by the I-Foundation and the LEA that the modifications to the admissions arrangements discussed during the deputation by Mr Nitesh Gor were acceptable. This was subsequently agreed by Mr Clark on behalf of the LEA.

The Committee adjourned to consider their voting in private, taking into account the statutory guidance annexed to the Secretary's report. The meeting resumed and the votes from the groups were received as follows:

Local Education Authority Group – Supported the proposal, subject to the two modifications to the admissions arrangements previously discussed.

Church of England Group – Supported the proposal.

Roman Catholic Church Group – Supported the proposal.

Schools Group – Supported the proposal

HCRE Group – Supported the proposal.

RESOLVED: That (1) the proposal be approved unanimously, subject to the following modifications:

- (i) The priorities list for admissions (on pages 13-14 of the supplemental agenda) be amended to take into consideration new guidance from DfES.
- (ii) A temporary time limit of three years be put on the five places reserved for applications supported by the Faith Partner (page 14 of the supplemental agenda).

(2) the following reasons for the decision be noted:

- (i) A strong case for parental preference had been demonstrated.
- (ii) The location of the school would be ideal for recruiting Hindu children.
- (iii) Belmont Football Club would gain from the association.
- (iv) The agreed modifications to the admissions policy were satisfactory.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.37 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR CHRISTINE BEDNELL
Chairman