

HARROW ADMISSIONS FORUM

19 JULY 2006

Chairman:	* Councillor Bill Stephenson		
Councillors:	* Mrs Janet Cowan		
	* Jean Lammiman (see Minute 1)		
Community School Representatives:	<u>Governor</u>	<u>Primary</u>	<u>Secondary</u>
	(Vacancy)	* Sue Jones	Allan Jones
Jewish School Representative:	Mrs D Palman		
Roman Catholic School Representative:	* Jim Coyle (see Minute 1)		
Church of England School Representative:	Mrs S Hinton		
Church of England Diocese Representative:	Mrs K Uttley		
Catholic Schools Diocese Representative:	* Mr Billiet		
Primary Elected Parent Governor Representative:	* Mr H Epie		
Secondary Elected Parent Governor Representative:	† Mr R Sutcliffe		
Harrow Council for Racial Equality Representative:	† Prem Pawar		
Early Years Development Partnership Representative:	† Helena Tucker		
Children's Services Representative:	(Vacancy)		

* Denotes Member present
† Denotes apologies received

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL**PART II - MINUTES**1. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

RESOLVED: To note that (1) Councillor Jean Lammiman was reserving for Councillor Dinesh Solanki; and

(2) Mr J Coyle was reserving for Mr M Murphy (Roman Catholic School Representative).

2. **Declarations of Interest:**

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

Councillor Bill Stephenson	Declared a personal interest in that he was a governor at Marlborough First and Middle School and Hatch End High School. Accordingly, he remained in the room and took part in the discussion and decision-making.
Councillor Jean Lammiman	Declared a personal interest in that she was a governor at Nower Hill High School. Accordingly, she remained in the room and took part in the discussion and decision-making.

Jim Coyle

Declared a personal interest in that he was a governor at Sacred Heart Language College. Accordingly, he remained in the room and took part in the discussion and decision-making.

3. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

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

4. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2006, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

5. **Matters arising from the Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That (1) the following matter arising from the minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 6 March 2006 be referred to the Director of Legal Services for advice and to request that he prompt the Business Transformation Partnership to provide the data requested:

Minute 76

Resolution 68(1) – Admission Arrangements for the 2007-08 Academic Year (Sharing Council Data Sources) – “The Forum was advised that no definite reply had been received regarding the issue of sharing Council data sources, and that this issue was widespread and not restricted to Harrow. The Forum was advised there was a basic view that data could not be shared at that level due to legal constraints.”

(2) further to discussions on children having Special Educational Needs a report be submitted to the next meeting on the following:

Minute 81

Voluntary Aided (VA) Admissions Arrangements 2006/07.

6. **Harrow Admissions Forum Terms of Reference:**

RESOLVED: That the Terms of Reference be noted.

7. **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).

8. **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).

9. **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).

10. **Single Intake to Reception - Pilot 2005/2008:**

The Forum received an information item on the above matter from the Director of Strategy Services. An officer advised that an article was to be included in the Harrow People Magazine to inform parents of the evaluation.

RESOLVED: That the information sent to schools advising of the timetable for the evaluation of the single pilot intake be noted.

11. **E-applications:**

The Forum received an information item on the above matter from the Director of Strategic Services.

An officer informed the Forum that Harrow was participating in a Pan-London Project. It was noted that parents wishing to apply for primary school places in Harrow would be able to apply online from 1 August 2006.

RESOLVED: That the arrangements put in place to ensure that Harrow met the e-government agenda in relation to online applications for school places be noted.

12. **Medical Claims:**

The Forum received a report of the Director of Strategic Services, which sought the views of the Forum on the medical criterion used for admission to community primary and secondary schools.

An officer advised that under the current medical criterion parents could ask for consideration for priority for a school place on medical grounds for the school closest to their home address. A recent case had highlighted a problem when a parent who had not been offered her preferred school and whose appeal was subsequently not allowed challenged the decision by way of a judicial review. The parent presented medical grounds, which had not been provided at the time of application, for their reasoning. The Authority had decided not to contest the application and the child was allocated a place at the parent's preferred school. The reason for this was that advice from Counsel was that by only considering the school closest to the home address, Harrow's admission rules "fettered their discretion".

The Forum noted that medical claims could only be considered for the school closest to the child's home address. A proposal was made to vary the admission rule and to investigate whether the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Panel could provide some overview and advice in determining medical claims that were not for the school closest to the home address. Advice from Harrow's Legal Department was that the Forum consider tightening the medical claims criterion by including the word "generally" in order to prevent any potential challenges. The criterion would then read as follows;

"Such requests will **generally** only be considered for the school nearest the child's home."

RESOLVED: That (1) the officer consult with SEN to identify whether referrals could be made to the SEN Panel;

(2) legal advice be sought when drafting the precise wording of the medical claims criterion to include the words "in wholly exceptional" in order to prevent any potential appeal challenges, and the criterion then read as follows:

"Claims on medical grounds will only be considered for the school closest to the home address except in wholly exceptional circumstances".

13. **Rising 5 Timetable:**

A report of the Director of Strategic Services was presented to the Forum asking Members to review the timetable for the allocation of places to Reception with a view to bringing it more in line with other London Authorities.

The officer explained that, under the current system, parents could apply for more than one school and, as Harrow had an earlier closing date for admissions with parents being offered a school place earlier, it was then easy for parents to accept and then in principle to later decline the place once they had been offered a more preferential school place by another authority.

The Forum agreed that the proposal to delay the closing date for applications until 31 January each year was subject to consultation. The officer advised that the consultation exercise would be undertaken during the Autumn, be fed back to the Forum in Spring, then followed by any recommendations to Cabinet in March.

RESOLVED: That the consultation on admission arrangements include a proposal to defer the closing date for applications until 31 January each year with offer letters being sent in late March/early April depending on when Easter fell each year.

14. **Admission Arrangements 2008-9:**

The Forum considered a report of the Director of Strategic Services, which sought to review the admission arrangements for the 2008/9 academic year. The officer advised that this was in order to consider the effectiveness of the local admission arrangements and how well they served the parents and children. It was noted that any decision would be included in the annual consultation exercise, which would take place during the Autumn with feedback to the Forum in Spring 2007 with any recommendations being submitted to Cabinet in March 2007.

RESOLVED: That (1) top priority be given to Looked After Children;

(2) the Planned Admissions Number for Cedars and Grange Schools be reduced from 90 to 60;

(3) under the co-ordinated admission arrangements when a child's name had been placed on a waiting list for another school, after already being allocated a place, parents would be deemed to be indicating their preference for this school rather than the one allocated. If at a later date a place was offered from the waiting list, this new offer would supersede any previous offer, which would then be withdrawn.

(4) the introduction of a sibling link for Sixth Forms be kept under review.

15. **Date of Next Meeting:**

RESOLVED: That (1) the meeting provisionally agreed for 10 October 2006 be cancelled; and

(2) three further meetings be arranged for early November 2006, February and March 2007.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 5.45 pm, closed at 6.54 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR BILL STEPHENSON
Chairman