

HARROW ADMISSIONS FORUM

23 FEBRUARY 2009

Chairman:	* Reverend P Reece		
Councillors:	* Mrs Anjana Patel * Dinesh Solanki * Bill Stephenson		
Community School Representatives:	<u>Governor</u> (Vacancy)	<u>Primary</u> † Sue Jones	<u>Secondary</u> * Janice Howkins
Jewish School Representative:	Mrs D Palman		
Roman Catholic School Representative:	* Mike Murphy		
Church of England School Representative:	† Mrs S Hinton		
Church of England Diocese Representative:	* Reverend P Reece		
Catholic Schools Diocese Representative:	* Mr Billiet		
Primary Elected Parent Governor Representative:	* Mrs D Speel		
Secondary Elected Parent Governor Representative:	Mr R Chauhan		
Harrow Council for Racial Equality Representative:	Julia Smith		
Early Years Development Partnership Representative:	* Helena Tucker		
Children's Services Representative:	(Vacancy)		

* Denotes Member present

† Denotes apologies received

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS**RECOMMENDATION 1 - Proposed Admission Arrangements 2010/11**

The Forum considered a report of the Director of Schools and Children's Development, which had been admitted late to the agenda on the grounds of urgency as the authority's admissions arrangements needed to be determined by the statutory deadline of 15 April 2009. The report had not been available at the time the main agenda had been printed, as the consultation had not yet come to an end.

The report detailed the results of the consultation on the Authority's proposed schemes of coordination, the proposed admissions arrangements for 2010, and Harrow's relevant area and the Fair Access Protocol.

The consultation documents had been circulated to Governors and Headteachers of all Harrow Schools, all other admission authorities in the relevant area, neighbouring Local Authorities and local Community Groups. Schools had been provided with an A4 flyer and response pro-forma, and asked to use their normal channels of communication to consult with parents. Notices and posters had been provided for nurseries, pre-school playgroups, libraries, community notice boards, medical centres, doctors' surgeries and supermarkets to display in order to inform parents about the consultation.

One of the main focuses of the consultation had been the change from linked school to distance for the over-subscription criteria for community high schools. Additionally for 2010 only, for families with children in both Year 6 (11+ transfer) and Year 7 (12+ transfer) transfer groups who had indicated that they wanted their children to attend the

same school, the following rule would apply: where one child was offered a place, because they best meet the admission rules at a preferred school, the other child would be given the sibling priority for that school.

It was noted that the highest response to the consultation had been received from parents through the schools. 77% of parents were in favour of the sibling link for 2010 only and 54% of parents were in favour of the change from linked schools to distance regarding the over-subscription criteria. Some parents had felt that the change in criteria should be phased in, as introducing it straight away might unfairly affect some families with children already in schools.

Some parents had responded that a linked school system had benefits, such as providing continuity by allowing children to remain within the same peer groups. A number of parents had also responded in favour of the distance criteria, as this would give an opportunity to many children to walk to school instead of being driven, thereby benefiting the environment. Some parents believed that such a change might have an impact on house prices due to parents moving closer to their favoured schools.

There were no responses to the consultation from other admission authorities, neighbouring Local Authorities or community groups.

An officer reported that the new School Admissions Code of Practice had come into effect on 10 February 2009. The Code gave a list of prohibited over-subscription criteria, which included giving priority to children according to their date of birth. As a tie-breaker, in cases where applicants lived equidistant from the preferred school and places could not be given to both children, Harrow currently gave priority to the eldest child. This also applied in cases of multiple births. The Members of the Forum were requested to consider changing to random computer selection as the tie-breaker in circumstances where applicants lived equidistant or in cases of multiple births.

The Forum's attention was drawn to the tie-breaker which was part of the over-subscription criteria for nursery class places when there were more children with the same date of birth than there were places in the nursery. Places were offered first to children whose first language was not English, and then to children whose parents were in receipt of Income Support / Income Based Job Seekers' Allowance. Forum Members were asked to consider whether they wished to consult during the next admissions round on continuing with such a tie-breaker.

It was noted that:

- the Church of England Diocese had been consulted on the admission arrangements but the Diocese had indicated that the response should come from the schools themselves;
- parents were generally in favour of an increase in the Planned Admission Number (PAN) for Elm Grove and Roxeth First and Middle Schools;
- Roxeth First and Middle School had indicated that it might be possible to accommodate the increase in PAN, which would require changes to the buildings, by the 2010 school year;
- the response from parents to consultations in the past had been low;
- parents tended to respond if there were feelings of discontent;
- one governing body had circulated the consultation information individually and discussed the proposed changes at two meetings. The responses were thoroughly analysed and it appeared that some groups had not fully understood what was being proposed;
- responses from some Governing Bodies had been received late. The responses would be included in the report to Cabinet, but would be marked as having been received after the deadline.

Members felt that the proposed changes would not make a significant difference to the majority of applications to Harrow schools. They noted that the changes to the admissions arrangements would be publicised through the Harrow website and the local press. The Portfolio Holder for Schools and Children's Development would contribute to an informal article about the changes to the admission arrangements in the Harrow People magazine. It was agreed that the Working Group would be retained

to continue work on the admission arrangements, including the over-subscription criteria for nursery places.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Cabinet)

That (1) the proposed admissions arrangements as consulted upon be implemented;

(2) where applicants lived equidistant from a school, or, in cases of multiple births, random computerised selection be used as the tie-breaker.

[Reason for Recommendation: To meet the requirement under the School Standards and Framework Act 1988 for admission authorities to determine admission arrangements by 15 April in the determination year].

(See also minutes 105 and 108).

PART II - MINUTES

104. **Attendance by Alternate Members:**

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

105. **Declarations of Interest:**

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Nature of Interest</u>
7. Proposed Admissions Arrangements 2010/11	Councillor Dinesh Solanki	The Member declared a personal interest in that his daughter attended a Harrow school. He remained in the room whilst this matter was considered and voted upon.

106. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2008 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

107. **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 16, 14 and 15 (Part 4E of the Constitution) respectively.

108. **Proposed Admission Arrangements 2010/11:**

Further to Recommendation 1 above, it was

RESOLVED: That (1) the feedback from the consultation on admission arrangements for the 2010/11 academic year be noted;

(2) that a working group of members of the Forum and select headteachers be set up to review the Nursery oversubscription criteria.

109. **Consultation on Admissions Arrangements 2010/2011 - Voluntary Schools:**

The Forum considered a report of the Director of Schools and Children's Development, which had been admitted late to the agenda on the grounds of urgency as the authority's admissions arrangements needed to be agreed. The report had not been available at the time the main agenda had been printed, as the consultation had not yet come to an end.

An officer introduced the report of the Director of Schools and Children's Development, which detailed a change to the timetable for consultation. All admission authorities were requested to complete their consultation by 1 March 2009.

Members of the Forum were requested to agree the arrangements they wished to make to consider the proposed admission arrangements for Voluntary Aided schools to ensure that they met the statutory requirements.

An officer informed the members that the Office of the Schools' Adjudicator would be looking very carefully at Voluntary Aided school admission arrangements, in particular schools with complex points systems. Presently, one Voluntary Aided school in Harrow used a complex point system when determining admissions. As a result members of the Forum were requested to consider how best to monitor and deliver their opinions on the matter.

RESOLVED: That a Working Group be set up to review all Voluntary Aided school admission arrangements.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 6.05 pm, closed at 7.05 pm)

(Signed) REVEREND P REECE
Chairman