

EDUCATION STRATEGY CONSULTATIVE FORUM MINUTES

30 JANUARY 2013

Chairman:	* Councillor Zarina Khalid	
Councillors:	* Mrs Camilla Bath * Ramji Chauhan * Kairul Kareema Marikar	* Janet Mote Raj Ray * Krishna Suresh
School Employee Constituency:	† Anne Drew Ruth Duncan	* Anne Lyons * Lynne Snowdon
Governor Constituency:	Sanjay Karia (1)	
Denominational Representatives:	* Simon Goulden	Reverend P Reece
Early Years Private and Voluntary Sector Provider	Ann Nash	
Post-16 Provider at a Further Education College:	* Jacqui Mace	

- * Denotes Member present
- (1) Denotes category of Reserve Members
- † Denotes apologies received

122. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

123. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Anne Drew.

124. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

Agenda Item 8 Information Report: Revenue Budget 2012-13 To 2014-15 Including School Funding Reforms; 9 Information Report: Hsip Update; 10 Information Report: Raising The Participation Age; 11 Information Report: Implementing The Local Authority's Duties And Legal Measures To Secure School Attendance; 12 Information Report: Fair Access Protocol - Department For Education Advice; 13 Secondary School Strategy; 14 School Term Dates 2014/15

Councillor Mrs Camilla Bath declared a non-pecuniary interest in that she was a governor at Whitchurch First School and Nursery, St George's Roman Catholic School and Harrow High Academy. She would remain in the room whilst the matters were considered and voted upon.

Councillor Ramji Chauhan declared a non-pecuniary interest in that he was Local Authority appointed governor at Hatch End High School and Glebe Primary School. He would remain in the room whilst the matters were considered and voted upon.

Councillor Zarina Khalid declared a non-pecuniary interest in that she was a Local Authority appointed governor at Canons High School. She would remain in the room whilst the matters were considered and voted upon.

Councillor Kairul Kareema Marikar declared a non-pecuniary interest in that she was a Local Authority appointed governor at Bentley Wood High School. She would remain in the room whilst the matters were considered and voted upon.

Councillor Janet Mote declared non-pecuniary interests in that she was a governor at St John Fisher Catholic Primary School. She would remain in the room whilst the matters were considered and voted upon.

Councillor Krishna Suresh declared a non-pecuniary interest in that he was a governor at Vaughan Primary School. He would remain in the room whilst the matters were considered and voted upon.

Anne Lyons declared a non-pecuniary interest in that she was a governor at the Sacred Heart Language College. She would remain in the room whilst the matters were considered and voted upon.

Jacqui Mace declared a non-pecuniary interest in that she was a governor at Canons High School. She would remain in the room whilst the matters were considered and voted upon.

125. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2012 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

126. Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were put or petitions or deputations received at this meeting.

RESOLVED ITEMS

127. Information Report : Revenue Budget 2012-13 to 2014-15 including School Funding Reforms

The Forum received a report of the Finance Business Partner, Children's Services which set out a summary of the draft Council budget for 2013/14 to 2016/17 and outlined changes to school funding, effective from 2013/14.

An officer stated that the Draft Budget report was seeking input from stakeholders prior to being submitted to Cabinet and that the Department of Education was making a number of significant changes to how the Dedicated Schools Grant would be calculated. She highlighted the following areas of the report:

- the Government's austerity measures meant that the grant to local government had been substantially reduced and Harrow had been obliged to reduce its spending in recent years, with further savings needing to be made over the next 4 years;
- savings were being made through the implementation of a raft of measures. These aimed to minimise the impact on services by delivering savings through better procurement, demand management and staffing efficiencies. However there were reductions in some front facing services such as reduced opening hours for children's centres and the implementation of Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for the education psychology service;
- whilst the school funding reforms brought movements in school budgets the DfE have retained a statutory Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) which provided some protection to school funding as it limited reductions in budgets to -1.5% per pupil.

Following questions and comments from Members of the Forum, the officer advised that:

- High Needs pupils were defined by the DfE as those who required provision of more than £10k. In addition to the £10k, top up funding would be available if required. If the child in question were to move to a new school, then only the top up funding amount would move with the child;
- the eligibility criteria for 2 year olds to access early education was to be either a Looked After Child (CLA) or meet the Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility criteria;
- the Pupil Premium in respect of CLAs and those eligible for FSMs had increased to £900;
- local authorities were now responsible for commissioning post-16 SEN provision and this issue would be reported in greater detail to the March meeting of the Forum.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

128. Information Report: HSIP update

The Forum received a report of the Head of Harrow School Improvement Partnership (HSIP) which set out information regarding the work of HSIP. An officer highlighted the following areas of the report:

- HSIP had been established in September 2011 in order to separate the school improvement function from the statutory education function of the Local Authority (LA) and it was funded mainly by schools, but also by the LA commission for School Improvement support;
- HSIP worked in close collaboration with schools. 56 of the 61 Community and Academy schools in Harrow were either full or associate Members of HSIP;
- HSIP's remit was to support and facilitate schools' and the Council's commitment to educational excellence;
- the support offered by HSIP to schools was wide ranging and included the following: inspection support to schools prior to, during and following an inspection; implementing Rapid Improvement Partnership Plans in schools identified by the LA as schools causing concern; and, offering leadership development programmes for teachers and head teachers;
- Harrow's schools had a strong profile and a large number of Harrow's schools were outstanding. Additionally, 56% of Harrow Schools had been rated by OFSTED as 'outstanding' and 94% were rated as 'good' or better.

Forum Members congratulated HSIP for its contribution to maintaining the excellent profile of schools in Harrow.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

129. Information Report: Raising the Participation Age

The Forum received a report of the Corporate Director of Children and Families which set out the latest developments in relation to the Council's duty to promote Raising the Participation Age (RPA). An officer advised that:

- the Education and Skills Act (2008) placed a duty on all young people to participate in education or training until their 18th birthday. This duty comes into force from the Summer of 2013;
- although the duty to participate is on young people, the LA had a responsibility to offer support and advice and encourage engagement by young people;
- under this new duty, schools, colleges and employers would be obliged to report any young people who had dropped out at the age of 17 to the LA, which was required to promote effective participation and identify those who were not participating;
- RPA did not necessarily mean remaining in school beyond the age of 16, but included apprenticeships, full or part-time education, training or volunteering; education and training must lead to a recognised qualification;
- Harrow had among the lowest numbers of young people who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) after the age of 16.

Following questions and comments from Forum Members, the officer advised that:

- local employers offering apprenticeships and traineeships would be contacted and these would be promoted among young people. Employers would receive funding for taking on young people. If a young person were to leave before completing the traineeship or apprenticeship, then it would be possible for the funding agency to claw back the funding;
- many employers offering apprenticeships and traineeships tended to prefer older candidates as they were perceived as being more mature and reliable;
- London Councils had a London-wide agenda to promote RPA Harrow is a contributing Council;

- the age of participation in some European countries is significantly higher than in the UK;
- anyone working 20 hours per week or more would be considered to be in full time employment.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

130. Information Report: Implementing the Local Authority's Duties and Legal Measures to Secure School Attendance

The Forum received a report of the Corporate Director of Children and Families which set out the Council's position on the use of statutory measures to secure good attendance at school for children of statutory school age.

An officer advised that there had been a policy change regarding the use of these statutory measures due to concerns raised by schools and Council officers working in this field. Furthermore, research suggested that attendance improved where the full range of statutory powers were used. The LA had carried out a consultation with schools regarding how overall absence could be reduced. The response to the proposals made in the consultation was overwhelmingly positive. The Early Intervention Service would provide some additional targeted support for those pupils who were persistently absent and their families but enforcement measures would remain an option.

The officer made the following additional points:

- Police officers, the local authority, head teachers and those authorised by them (deputy and assistant head only) were authorised to issue FPNs for unauthorised absences;
- the Local Authority was required to publish a local code of conduct setting out how the penalty notice scheme would work for all schools in the area. In practice, the vast majority of penalty notices are issued by Local Authorities. To date, Harrow has never issued a penalty notice for school attendance;
- Harrow had a higher authorised absence figure than the average of its statistical neighbours;
- hard to reach groups and those parents whose first language was not English may require additional support.

A School Employees' Representative stated that both teachers and school headteachers felt that the policy was a coherent approach and supported it. The Representative for post-16 providers agreed with this and added that extensive unauthorised absences could have a detrimental effect on both the child, the teacher and other pupils in the class.

An officer stated that this initiative would be publicised through the Council's website, schools' newsletters if agreed, and the Harrow People magazine. The Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education was providing supportive advice to schools on days of religious observance.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

131. Information Report: Fair Access Protocol - Department for Education Advice

The Forum received a report of the Head of Education Strategy and School Organisation which highlighted a report issued by the Department for Education (DfE) regarding Fair Access Protocols.

An officer stated that the DfE had issued additional advice regarding the Principles and Processes regarding the Fair Access Protocols (FAPs) in November 2012. The Council was consulting local schools on the FAP as part of the consultation on admission arrangements. It was proposed that all schools, regardless of their designation, would be asked to take children in line with the FAP. Every Local Authority was required to devise a FAP in agreement with the majority of its schools, and this was binding on all schools.

Following questions and comments from Members of the Forum, an officer advised that the FAP came into operation when there was no school with a place in the child's relevant year group that was a reasonable travelling distance from home, (the maximum distance was 2 miles for children under 8 years of age and 3 miles for those over 8 years of age). The information that was provided to the Fair Access Panel included the name and address of the pupil, and any schools indicated by the parent(s) as a preference as well as alternative schools that had been suggested by the Admission Service. Preferences were indicated though not ranked.

A Member who was a Member of Harrow's Fair Access Panel stated that the Panel consisted of three Councillors and two head teachers from Harrow Schools. The Panel often received letters regarding pupil numbers at their schools from the head teachers. The Panel was required to balance the needs of the child against the needs of the school being allocated. Space, health and safety issues, and the number of Special Educational Needs and disabled pupils in a class was also taken into consideration when allocating places.

A School Employee representative stated that in her view the FAP operated fairly and the allocation of children was spread equally across all Harrow schools.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

132. Secondary School Strategy

The Forum received a report of the Corporate Director of Children and Families, which set out the proposed approach to develop a secondary school place planning strategy to ensure that there were sufficient secondary school

places in Harrow. An officer advised that the Local Authority (LA) had a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places. The LA was no longer a direct provider but a commissioner of school places and was required to formulate a joint strategy with schools. In recent years increased demand for school places, particularly in the primary sector, was being met through the School Expansion Programme, phase 1 of which had been agreed. It was anticipated that the pressure for secondary places would intensify in future years.

The Post-16 provider representative stated that from September 2013, colleges would be able to offer places to 14-16 year olds and that this should be factored in to the LA's planning.

Following questions and comments from Forum Members, an officer advised that:

- there were 160 places at Key Stage 4 available at the new Free school, the Jubilee Academy, which would open in September 2013. Those pupils at risk of exclusion were among those who would be offered a place;
- the new Free school, Avanti House, which was based at the Teachers' Centre, had 180 places available in year 7.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

133. School Term Dates 2014/15

The Forum received a report of the Head of Education Strategy and School Organisation which set out proposed school term dates for the academic year 2014/15 for consultation with constituent groups. An officer advised that the Council was required to determine school term dates for Community Schools and that all schools were required to provide schooling for 190 days. In the case of Voluntary Aided Schools, Academies, Free or Foundation Schools, this was the responsibility of the Governing Body. He added that:

- the draft proposed model had been developed based on the Harrow Agreed Principles;
- the three Occasional Closure Days allowed schools the flexibility to choose which, if any, additional religious holidays they wished to close on.

An officer requested Forum Members to consult with constituent group members and feedback at the March 2013 meeting of the Forum.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

134. Date of Next Meeting

RESOLVED: To note that the next meeting of the Forum would take place on 21 March 2013.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.05 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR ZARINA KHALID
Chairman