

EDUCATION STRATEGY CONSULTATIVE FORUM MINUTES

27 JUNE 2012

- Chairman:** * Councillor Brian Gate
- Councillors:** * Husain Akhtar Janet Mote
* Mrs Camilla Bath * Raj Ray
* Zarina Khalid * Krishna Suresh
- Teachers' Constituency:** Ms A Drew † Ms L Money
† Ms C Gembala Ms L Rowlands
Ms J Lang * Ms L Snowdon
* Reverend P Reece
- Governors' Constituency:** * Mrs C Millard † Mr K Sochall
* Mr N Ransley Ms H Solanki
- Elected Parent Governor Representatives:** Mrs A Khan
- Denominational Representatives:** * Mrs J Rammelt
- In attendance:** Mr Graham Denham
Mr Mike Murphy
Ms Anne Lyons

- * Denotes Member present
† Denotes apologies received

95. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

96. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Kamlesh Bahl, Lesley Money, Simon Goulden, Kevin Sochall and Chris Gembala.

97. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed those present to the first meeting of the new Education Strategy Consultative Forum.

98. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: That the following interests were declared:

Agenda Items 10 - School Term Dates 2013/2014; 11- Information Report: Special Educational Needs and Disability Green Paper - progress and next steps; 12 School Place Planning; 13 Development of the Early Years Strategy

Councillor Husain Akhtar declared a personal interest in that he was a governor at Grange Primary School. He would remain in the room during the discussion and decision making on these items.

Councillor Camilla Bath declared a personal interest in that she was a governor at St George's Catholic Primary School. She would remain in the room during the discussion and decision making on these items.

Councillor Khalid declared a personal interest in that she was a governor at Canons High School. She would remain in the room during the discussion and decision making on these items.

Christine Millard declared a personal interest in that she was a governor at Grange Primary and Cannon Lane Primary Schools. She would remain in the room during the discussion and decision making on these items.

99. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2012 be taken as read and signed as a correct record, subject to Minute 94 being amended to read as follows:

"The Chairman thanked Members, co-opted members and officers for their contribution to the work of the Education Consultative Forum over recent years and looked forward to the first meeting of the new Education Strategy Consultative Forum.

RESOLVED: To note that the next meeting of the new Education Strategy Consultative Forum meeting would take place on 27 June 2012."

100. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

RESOLVED: To appoint Reverend P Reece as Vice-Chairman of the Education Strategy Consultative Forum for the 2012/13 Municipal Year.

101. Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were put, or petitions or deputations received.

RESOLVED ITEMS

102. Order of the Agenda

Forum Members agreed to take the substantive agenda items in the following order: 9, 12, 13, 14, 10, 11.

103. School Term Dates 2013/2014

The Forum received a report of the Head of Education Strategy and School Organisation, which proposed School Term Dates for the academic year 2013/14.

An officer advised that it was the responsibility of the Local Authority to determine the dates when school terms and holidays SHOULD begin and end for all Community Schools. For Voluntary Aided Schools, Academies, Free Schools, Foundation or Foundation Special Schools this responsibility lay with the Governing Body. The officer added that the proposed model for term dates in Harrow had been developed based on the Local Government Association's (LGA) Standard School Year, Harrow's Agreed Principles and other local authority models available. The feedback from other local authorities was that most were proposing to adopt the LGA model.

A member of the Teacher's Constituency stated that Christmas holidays in the LGA model were shorter than usual and that this would have repercussions for teaching staff in both the primary and secondary sectors. Secondary school teachers had substantial amounts of mock exam marking responsibilities during this period and primary teachers, a very large proportion of whom were female, had extensive family responsibilities during this period. The latter may have equalities implications.

Another member of the Teacher's Constituency stated that in the past the LGA had proposed several models to choose from and noted that they had only proposed one model for 2013/14. She also noted that the LGA would cease co-coordinating the development of the draft models for standard school years and that this responsibility would increasingly fall to school governing bodies.

The Forum agreed that in view of the above comments, the determination of School Term Dates be deferred pending further discussion and consultation

with relevant stakeholders, which would be fed back to Forum members in due course.

RESOLVED: That further consultation regarding the proposed school term dates 2013/14 be carried out with relevant stakeholders and provide a revised model based on the feedback from the consultation to the Portfolio Holder for decision.

104. School Place Planning

The Forum received a report of the Head of Education Strategy and School Organisation which updated the Forum about a range of school place planning and school organisation matters. An officer advised that the role of Local Authorities and their relationship with schools was changing considerably as a result of the government's education reform programme. Officers were developing projections and working on models to forecast trends in the demand for school places. She added that:

- increased demand for school places, particularly in the primary sector had been met through the introduction of Bulge Classes, and a programme of permanent expansion of nine schools. The cost of permanent expansion had been factored into the Capital Programme 2012/13 and 2014/15 and the government's Priority Programme;
- 93% of Harrow parents had been allocated a school that was in one of their top three preferences. This achievement had only been possible through partnership working with schools and headteachers. Late applications continued to be received and offers of schools places continued to be made;
- there were vacancies in year 7 but pressures on years 10 and 11;
- a second wave of Harrow schools were considering converting to Academies;
- ten pairs of schools had been amalgamated since September 2005;
- a Consultation and an Engagement Strategy were underway regarding the proposed plans to site the new Free School, Avanti House, at the Harrow Teachers' Centre. The School would have five year 7 classes at the Teachers' Centre and two primary forms of entry at the existing Krishna Avanti School in Edgware;
- the governing bodies of Whitefriars Community School and Heathland School had been working together with the support of officers to develop federation proposals that were the subject of consultation until 25 June 2012;
- work was underway to develop a Special School/SEN Placements Strategy, the key drivers of which were a growing populations, increased financial pressure arising from SEN statements, pressures

on places at Special Schools and the range and complexities of Special Educational Needs. An assessment of whether the out of borough SEN Placement Strategy was the best use of resources and the best way to support SEN pupils was also underway.

Following questions from Forum members, an officer advised that:

- the amalgamation of an Academy School with a Community School may give rise to a number of issues and this is why officers need to review and update policy where necessary to deal with any such issues;
- the proposed Jubilee Academy covered alternative provision for year 10 and 11 pupils who had been identified as being at risk of exclusion. The location of this Academy was still under discussion.

The Divisional Director for Quality Assurance, Commissioning and Schools stated that officers were taking a holistic approach to this issue and working closely with the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and secondary school heads to identify appropriate alternative provision for these pupils.

A Member of the Forum stated that he would not wish to see local schools converting to sponsored academies being sponsored by organisations that were not local and the ensuing loss of local accountability. The Chair of the Forum advised that a list of sponsors was available and local sponsorship would be possible.

RESOLVED: That the comments be noted.

105. Development of the Early Years Strategy

The Forum received a report of the Head of Education Strategy and School Organisation which outlined the key drivers in delivering a Local Authority wide Early Years Strategy. An officer advised that there was a need to review existing practices and to ensure that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) was used to improve outcomes for children under five years of age. He added that in terms of outcomes for under fives, Harrow was ranked in the lowest quartile of Local Authority performance nationally and tenth out of eleven in relation to its eleven statistical neighbouring boroughs, which had similar levels of affluence and population. The recently set up Early Years Strategy Board would establish priorities, which would give officers greater influence with partner groups.

Following questions and comments from Forum members, the officer made the following points:

- partnership work with both parents and services within and outside the borough and multi-agency partnership working would help ensure better outcomes for children under five years of age;

- targeted early intervention and the revised framework which re-affirmed that the primary role and responsibility for the education of under fives lay with parents. Work was being undertaken to identify hard-to-reach communities and those who currently chose not to access these services;
- the budget for Early Years provision was complex and was spread across a number of different teams working in this area.

RESOLVED: That the comments be noted.

106. Terms of Reference for the Education Strategy Consultative Forum

The Forum considered its Terms of Reference. The Chairman advised that the Forum's Terms of Reference had been agreed at the final meeting of the Education Consultative Forum, however, nominations for the vacant positions on the new Education Strategy Consultative Forum had not yet been sought.

Following questions from Forum members, an officer advised that:

- section 2B covered a post-16 education provider at secondary schools, whereas section 3G, referred to a post-16 education provider at further education colleges;
- the two denominational vacancies were for a Hindu and Jewish representative;

Forum members made the following comments about the Terms of Reference:

- each co-opted member should represent only one constituency and should not be allowed to double up;
- the importance of recognising that different types of voluntary aided schools existed. Some of these operated along quite restricted models while others were more expansive in their ethos. It was important to represent divergent views in the borough;
- faith representatives did not necessarily have to be nominated from schools and that different faith groups could be approached for nominations to ensure all aspects of Harrow's multi-faith community were represented.

The Chairman made the following requests with regard to nominations:

- representatives of each of the constituent group present at the meeting to seek nominations from their groups;
- the Vice-Chairman to approach relevant organisations for nominations for the two denominational representatives;

- the Education Professional Lead (Early Years) to seek nominations from Early Years Providers and the linked Education Professional Lead to seek nominations from post-16 providers.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) nominations for the vacant positions on the Forum be sought and confirmed at the next meeting of the Forum;
- (2) the Forum's Terms of Reference be noted.

107. Information Report: Special Educational Needs and Disability Green Paper - Progress and Next Steps

The Forum received a report of the Divisional Director, Special Needs Services, Children and Families, which set out a summary of the key developments that will occur following consultation on the government's Green Paper regarding the future of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disability.

An officer stated that the Green Paper proposed a single assessment process for children and young adults up to the age of 25. Currently, SEN provision did not specify anything outside education provision, whereas in the future it would include social and healthcare needs. Clients would be entitled to opt for personal budgets to cover possibly the cost of items such as transport and personal therapy.

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

- Harrow already published local offers, which helped parents of children with disabilities to see what was available and to make appropriate choices;
- the Green Paper did not explicitly cover work placements for SEN pupils over the age of 18;
- the proposed changes in the Green Paper would not come into force until 2014.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

108. Information Report: Outcomes from the consultations on the future of Brent and Harrow Education Business Service (BHEBS) and the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS)

The Forum received a report of the Head of Education Strategy and School Organisation which set out the results of the reviews and staff consultations related to the Brent and Harrow Education Business Service (BHEBS) and the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS). An officer stated that the

review of BHEBS had been carried out jointly with Brent Council with a view to informing decisions on any future provision of both services.

An officer stated that the staff consultations had yielded a limited response. The officer advised that the results of the review and subsequent staff consultations were that:

- neither service could be maintained financially and BHEBS would cease to operate on 31 August 2012 with four potential redundancies. The EMAS service would be substantially re-organised, with twenty potential redundancies with only two posts remaining within ESSO;
- Harrow School Improvement Partnership (HSIP) were considering how to provide some of the services previously provided by EMAS. HSIP were working to ensure that the pupils in question were appropriately supported through focussed targeted training through local Knowledge Centres, in a bid to close any achievement gaps;
- there was a general shift away from the Council being the sole provider of EMAS and BHEBS types of services, to schools being directly responsible for providing this services themselves;
- responsibility for education business partnerships and work related learning rests with schools. Schools may find it more difficult to support the work experience placement of students with Special Educational Needs pupils but they can purchase support for this elsewhere. Employers had indicated concerns about no longer having a single point of contact to deal with.

Forum Members agreed that schools should be managing vocational provision themselves by widening their curriculum and establishing more links in the community.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

109. Date of Next Meeting

RESOLVED: To note that the next meeting of the Forum would take place on 20 November 2012.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.35 pm, closed at 9.45 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR BRIAN GATE
Chairman