

Meeting:	Education Consultative Forum
Date:	31 January 2006
Subject:	Voluntary Aided Hindu primary school
Responsible Officer:	Lorraine O'Reilly, Executive Director, People First
Contact Officer:	Geoff Wingrove, Director of Strategy, People First (0208 424 1513)
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Bill Stephenson (Education and Lifelong Learning)
Key Decision:	No – information only
Status:	Public

Section 1: Summary

On 12 October 2005 Ruth Kelly, Secretary of State for Education and Skills, announced the successful bids for Targeted Capital Fund money 2005-08. Harrow's bid for a new faith school was successful, and the project has been allocated capital funding to establish the school. This will be the first state Hindu school in the country.

Decision Required

FOR INFORMATION

That the Education Consultative Forum notes the report.

Reason for report

This report is for information only.

In May 2005 Cabinet decided to submit a bid to the Department for Education and Skills for allocation from the Targeted Capital Fund to create a new voluntary aided school in Harrow.

The promoter is I-Foundation, which is working in affiliation with the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, which has been running a private Hindu school in Hertfordshire for the last 20 years.

The Targeted Capital Fund allocations were announced on 12 October 2005, and £9,852,943 capital funding has been allocated for 2005-08.

Benefits

1. Will meet the aspirations of a large community in Harrow
2. Effects will be incremental on existing provision as admissions would be on a year by year basis
3. Will balance the diverse needs of Harrow's faith community for educational provision
4. Will give Harrow a national profile
5. May attract pupils who go out borough or attend independent schools

Cost of Proposals

The 90%/10% DfES/Governor liability has been revised with the DfES providing up to 100% funding in future. This includes the purchase of the site.

The revenue funding for the new school would be contained within the Dedicated Schools Grant. The Dedicated Schools Grant is set by the Government. If the new school draws its pupils from within the existing Harrow schools' population then the majority of the revenue funding for the new school would be redistributed from other Harrow schools. If the new

school draws its pupils from outside of the existing Harrow schools' population then the majority of the funding would be provided by an increase in the Dedicated Schools Grant.

Risks

1. Will be Harrow provision in the main and will therefore draw pupils from existing provision over a period of time
2. This will add further pressure to achieving the Council's target of 10% surplus capacity across the primary school sector. However, the school will be one form of entry and will fill on an incremental year by year basis, so this pressure will be kept to a minimum.
3. The site for the new school will be subject to planning consents
4. May affect linked school admissions policy
5. Any potential health and safety risks will be considered at the appropriate time.

Implications if recommendations rejected

No recommendations - for information only

Section 2: Report

In February 2005 the government made it possible for promoters of voluntary aided schools to bid through the local education authority for the creation of a new voluntary aided school where there is a clear local demand. The bid was to the Department for Education and Skills for allocation from the Targeted Capital Fund.

Harrow has the largest percentage Hindu population in its area of any local authority in the country, and there is currently no voluntary aided Hindu school in Harrow or nationally. Hindu faith organisations have been in informal contact with the Council since 2003 exploring the possibility of such provision, but were unable to proceed to any formal position. The promoters are representing a

strong wish from a large section of the community to establish a Hindu school in Harrow.

The council received excellent submissions from two different promoters, the Sai School of Harrow and the I-Foundation, wanting to establish a voluntary aided Hindu primary school in Harrow. At the May 2005 Cabinet meeting, the Council decided to submit the bid from I-Foundation. I-Foundation is working in affiliation with the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, which has been running a private Hindu school in Hertfordshire for the last 20 years.

Harrow already has 10 voluntary aided faith schools. All of these schools are a well established part of the Harrow school system making a very positive contribution to education in Harrow.

The new school will be located in Harrow. The proposed site for the school is not determined yet. Detailed work is progressing on the issues around site procurement, which cannot be made public currently as it is subject to commercial sensitivity. It is hoped the site will be resolved in the near future.

The new school will teach the national curriculum. The admissions criteria will not be selective, and children of other faiths will be able to apply for a place.

I-Foundation plans to create a flagship institution, which will deliver a high standard of academic, moral and spiritual education, preparing students to become individuals of good character, behaviour and competence. The school will combine a grounding of Hindu teachings and lifestyle, and will also promote understanding and co-operation with other cultures.

The school will use innovative teaching styles, and cutting-edge online learning tools for teaching. I-Foundation is also developing strong relationships with education experts from other faith communities to ensure that pupils will have a strong sense of appreciation for other world faiths. I-Foundation is committed to developing a green travel plan

Officers across the Council will be working closely with I-Foundation to ensure the successful implementation of this project. A Project Management approach will be implemented. A Core Group is being established, with an Associate Group of officers who will input when required.

Consultation

I-Foundation is committed to ensuring that the school is fully integrated and working in synergy with the local community and schools. Once the site for the school is resolved I-Foundation will work closely with Harrow Council to begin a rigorous programme of community and local school consultation to enable us to make this project successful.

Financial Implications

The revenue funding for the new school would be contained within the Dedicated Schools Grant. The Dedicated Schools Grant is a specific grant set by the Government. If the new school draws its pupils from within the existing Harrow schools' population then the majority of the revenue funding for the new school would be redistributed from other Harrow schools. If the new school draws its pupils from outside of the existing Harrow schools' population then the majority of the funding would be provided by an increase in the Dedicated Schools Grant.

Legal Implications

The promoters of a new school must issue statutory notices, which will occur following consultation. The School Organisation Committee will then determine whether to allow the proposal, having considered both Harrow's School Organisation Plan, and any responses to the statutory notices. If the Committee cannot agree or refuses the proposal, the Committee must, at the promoter's request, refer the proposal to the independent School Adjudicator.

Equalities Impact

This new school will help to balance the diverse needs of Harrow's faith community for educational provision. Faith schools do not currently reflect all the significant faith communities in Harrow. There are six Roman Catholic, one Jewish and one Church of England primary schools currently in Harrow, and two Roman Catholic high schools and a Roman Catholic sixth form college. There is no VA Hindu school in Harrow or the surrounding area.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Considerations

None at this stage.

Section 3: Supporting Information/ Background Documents

Further information about the Targeted Capital Fund, and the list of projects allocated funding, can be found on the TeacherNet website www.teachernet.gov.uk

May 2005 Cabinet report and accompanying documents.

There are no other background papers.