

SUMMARY PAPER FOR HARROW SCHOOL ORGANISATION COMMITTEE

Subject: Determination of the Statutory Proposal to Establish the Krishna-Avanti Primary School

The I-Foundation propose a voluntary aided one-form entry Hindu faith primary school and nursery, known as the Krishna-Avanti Primary School. The school will take reception to year 7 inclusive and proposes to take pupils, both boys and girls, from 1 September 2008.

This report is in accordance with the DfES' 'Decision Makers Guidance' Section 6, Paragraphs 19 and 20 and will cover the following matters:

1. Advice on whether the notice met statutory requirements
2. Advice on whether the consultation met statutory requirements
3. The capital cost to implement proposals and how it is to be met
4. Whether the proposals are:
 - A. Linked to other published proposals,
 - B. Conflict with other published proposals: or
 - C. related to proposals published by the LSC.
5. Advice on the SOC's power to proceed:
 - A. A summary of the objections and comments received and the response of those who published the proposals.
 - B. The relevant sections of statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State, to which SOC members must have regard when deciding statutory proposals.
 - C. The timescale for the decision.

1. Advice on whether the notice met statutory requirements

The notice met statutory requirements. The statute does not require the return date to be on the notice.

2. Advice on whether the consultation met statutory requirements

Members are referred to 'Decision Makers Guidance' Section 3 paragraphs 10 and 11, see Appendix 2 to this report.

The I-Foundation address the consultation issue in Annex A to the Prescribed Information document and in their response to objections at pages 196-198, 206, 208 of the main agenda pack.

On the face of the section headed 'Methodology' in Annex A to the Prescribed Information document there may be some departures from the requirements of the Guidance.

At the time of writing the report of the LEA is outstanding. Definitive advice will be provided at the meeting as to the validity of the consultation once the outstanding report has been considered.

3. The capital cost to implement proposals and how it is to be met

The Prescribed Information document refers to the capital cost being £9 582 400 DfES contribution and £2 395 600 promoter contribution. SOC must be satisfied that the capital required will be available.

At the time of preparing the report, a letter dated 10 January 2007 has been received confirming that the Directors of the I-Foundation will meet their share of the costs, together with a copy of 'Form 18'.

The DfES have provided further written clarification that they will still meet their share of the capital in an email to the Secretary dated 10 January 2007. This is attached as Appendix 1.

4. Whether the proposals are:

- A Linked to other published proposals,**
- B Conflict with other published proposals: or**
- C Related to proposals published by the LSC.**

The proposal is not linked to any other published proposals.

5. Advice on the SOC's power to proceed to include:

A A summary of the objections and comments received and the response of those who published the proposals.

Copies of the objections to the proposal and the I-Foundation's response has already been supplied to members and is contained in the main agenda pack at pages 44-192 and 193-209 respectively.

B The relevant sections of statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State, to which SOC members must have regard when deciding statutory proposals.

SOC is required to take a number of factors into account when determining the proposal. The relevant guidance and extracts from the statutory plans referred to in the documentation before SOC is attached as follows:

1. Appendix 2 -Statutory Guidance – DfES 'Decision Makers Guidance' Sections 1, 2.1 and 3(paragraphs 10 &11).
2. Appendix 3 - Non-statutory Guidance – DfES 'Decision Makers Guidance' Section 5.
3. Appendix 4 – Harrow Children and Young People's Plan – extract only. (Foreword and parts 1,2, 4, 5 (Enjoying and Achieving only), Conclusion). **Nb A full copy of the plan is available to SOC by contacting the Secretary at the below address; on the Harrow Council website or by telephone 020 8424 1980.**

A copy of the Harrow Unitary Development Plan is available to be inspected by members of SOC in advance of the meeting by contacting the Secretary at the below address. It can be viewed via the 'Planning' portal on the Harrow Council website. It is a lengthy document and is not reproduced here.

C The timescale for the decision.

The proposed implementation date is achievable. This would be subject to the timeframe for agreeing terms of purchase with Harrow Council for the proposed site and its subsequent acquisition; the timeframes for the change of planning use and planning approval for the school and the length of time for it to be built.

Should SOC be satisfied the capital for the school will be met and with the statutory requirements for publishing the Notice and for consultation, it may proceed to consider the proposal on its merits. The available options are:

- a) Approve the proposal unanimously without modification;
- b) Reject the proposal unanimously;
- c) Approve the proposal unanimously with modification subject to consultation with promoter;
- d) Give conditional approval unanimously. This is a final decision but the proposal may not be implemented unless the condition is satisfied. Examples of conditions may include, amongst other things, the acquisition of a site and planning permission. A date must be stipulated for the condition to be satisfied. If the condition is not satisfied the approval will lapse and the proposal cannot be implemented; or
- e) Defer the proposal unanimously.

SOC will decide the proposal by the casting of a vote by all groups on the committee. Each group has one single vote. A decision must be unanimous with an abstention not counting as a vote for or against the proposal. If the groups do not vote unanimously the matter must be referred to the Schools' Adjudicator for a decision.

SOC may adjourn for a short period to allow for the individuals within a group to confer upon a vote. In the event that the individuals within a group cannot agree, the group vote will be the majority vote. If there is a tie within the group, it must abstain.

Members who have an interest in the proposal must abstain from voting. Where the majority/equal number of individuals in a group have an interest, the entire group must abstain. If two groups abstain for this reason, the matter should be referred to the Schools' Adjudicator.

Should members be in doubt of whether they may have an interest in the proposal, they are advised to seek advice in advance of the meeting.

Helen White

for Hugh Peart

Secretary to the Harrow School Organisation Committee

c/-Legal Services

Harrow Council

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Dated: 10 January 2006

Appendix 1

From: <Alison.POWELL@dfes.gsi.gov.uk>
To: <helen.white@harrow.gov.uk>
Date: 10 January 2007 14:26:49
Subject: RE: NEW HINDU SCHOOL - HARROW LOCAL AUTHORITY

Helen

I can confirm that the allocation of capital funding for the proposed Hindu school in Harrow has not been withdrawn. Our original letter of 22 November 2005 did request that certain deadlines had to be met in respect of the statutory proposals otherwise the funding would be withdrawn. However, the promoters of this school have encountered various problems, primarily in securing a suitable site, so we have exceptionally agreed to extend the deadline for publication of statutory notices until the end of November. As you are aware the notices were published in October.

To avoid any confusion please ensure the SOC are informed that the funding for this project will be held until the SOC (or Adjudicator if appropriate), have considered these proposals

I hope this helps, if you need any further information then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you,

Alison Powell
department for education and skills
Schools Capital / VA Policy Manager
Direct 01325 392152 / Fax 01325 392186
For information on VA schools, visit
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/voluntaryaidedschools/>

-----Original Message-----

From: Helen White [mailto:helen.white@harrow.gov.uk]
Sent: 10 January 2007 13:53
To: POWELL, Alison; PEARSON, Pat
Cc: ngor@emg-im.com; Chris Melly
Subject: NEW HINDU SCHOOL - HARROW LOCAL AUTHORITY

Dear Ms Powell

I am in the process of finalising my summary report for Harrow SOC which will be considering the proposal of the I-Foundation on 16 January 2007. I have seen your letter to the I-Foundation of 22.11.05 and your email to Mr Gor of today's date.

For the avoidance of doubt, could you please confirm that the terms of your letter of 22 November 2005 stand, with the exception of the timetable, and the allocation has not been withdrawn. Please also confirm the extended dates for the conditions to be satisfied.

I will place your reply before SOC to read in conjunction with your letter of 22.11.07 as evidence that the DfES share of the capital funding will be met.

I would appreciate a reply by return.

Yours sincerely

Helen White

Principal Solicitor - People First
(Group Manager)

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CC: <ngor@emg-im.com>, <chris.melly@harrow.gov.uk>, <Pat.PEARSON@dfes.gsi.gov.uk>

Appendix 2

Decision Makers Guidance Section 1

Statutory Guidance - Issues to be considered in deciding proposals.

■ Standards

1. The Secretary of State wishes to encourage changes to local school provision which will boost standards and opportunities for young people, while matching school place supply as closely as possible to pupils' and parents' needs and wishes. Decision Makers should assess proposals in the light of these overall criteria, and the specific further considerations set out in this guidance. The Decision Maker may wish to consider whether the proposals are consistent with the Children and Young People's Plan for the area, where such a plan is required, but if they are not consistent they should not reject the proposals solely on these grounds.
2. The Government aims to transform the opportunities open to pupils in secondary education, and greater diversity and innovation have a key role to play in this, with each school developing its own ethos and sense of mission and being encouraged to develop a centre of excellence or specialism. Every school should have an incentive to improve, have effective leadership and management, and collaborate with other schools.
3. The Government wants to use the best schools to lever up standards across the system. This may be by enabling successful and popular schools to expand, or by encouraging a range of collaborative arrangements by which successful schools can share their management and other expertise with less successful schools. Decisive action must be taken to deal with failing schools.
4. In considering standards issues, the Decision Maker should also take account of recent reports from Ofsted or other inspectorates, the autumn package of performance data, and any other performance data. The LAs and others bringing forward proposals should justify them specifically in terms of their impact on standards.

■ Curriculum

5. The Decision Maker must also be satisfied that the proposals are consistent with delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum to the pupils involved.

■ Proposals involving schools in special measures and those causing concern

Powers of Intervention

6. The categories of schools causing concern are defined in sections 14-19 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended by sections 54-59 of and Schedule 5 to the Education Act 2002. Further information on these categories and the relevant follow-up procedures can be found in the DfES guidance on schools causing concern. This legislation is being consolidated and extended within the Education and Inspections Bill currently before Parliament. In addition the Department is currently consulting on new draft statutory guidance in this area, and details are available at <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/sie/si/SCC/>
7. All maintained schools causing concern should receive intensive support from their LA.
8. The Education Act 2005 (section 44), changes the definition of a school in special measures and a new category - significant improvement - replaces previous Ofsted

categories of serious weaknesses, inadequate sixth form or underachieving (a non-statutory category). Before reaching a judgement that a school requires special measures, Ofsted inspectors must now take into account a school's capacity to improve. A school that is not considered to need special measures but is nevertheless not performing as well as it should be, may be given a notice to improve. These changes came into force with new inspection arrangements in September 2005. Schools judged to require special measures, to have serious weaknesses, an inadequate sixth form or to be underachieving under the arrangements in place until the end of July 2005 will be re-inspected two years after their designation. Under the new arrangements schools that are made subject to special measures will continue to receive termly monitoring visits; those requiring significant improvement will be re-inspected after one year. However, Ofsted will from September 2006 be trialling a system whereby schools requiring significant improvement will receive one monitoring visit, around 8 months after the initial inspection that made the judgement, to see what progress the school is making in advance of the re-inspection.

9. When considering the closure of any school causing concern and the expansion of other schools in the area, LAs should take into account the popularity with parents of alternative schools.

10. "Fresh start" proposals are normally designed to replace a school that is subject to special measures, needs significant improvement or is subject to a warning under section 15 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The proposals for both the closure of the school and the opening of the new school on the same site should be submitted in parallel and should be considered together. In such cases there should be a presumption to approve both proposals. When considering the approval of a Fresh Start proposal, the Decision Maker should check that the places the new school will provide are needed.

11. DfES has put in place a programme to support Fresh Start schools. In order to qualify for support under this programme, the Fresh Start proposal will need to be endorsed by Ministers. Such endorsement will of course depend on approval of the statutory proposals relating to the Fresh Start. However, in exceptional circumstances Ministers may decide not to endorse a Fresh Start proposal after the associated statutory proposals have been approved. In such circumstances, the new school will neither qualify for support from the Fresh Start support programme, nor be recognised nationally as a "Fresh Start" school. "Collaborative restart" is a variant of Fresh Start and federation, involving closure/reopening of a failing school in a strong partnership with another local school. It therefore comes under exactly the same decision making regime as Fresh Start.

12. For all closure and Fresh Start proposals involving schools causing concern, copies of the Ofsted monitoring letters for the relevant schools should be made available. The Decision Maker should have regard to the length of time the school has been on special measures, needed significant improvement or otherwise caused concern, the progress it has made, the prognosis for improvement, and the provision of places at neighbouring schools. Where the Decision Maker is presented with proposals to close schools in special measures or otherwise causing concern, they should start from the presumption that these should be approved, subject only to checking that there will be sufficient accessible places of an acceptable standard available in the area to meet foreseeable demand and accommodate the displaced pupils.

13. Where a school is to be closed so that it may be amalgamated with a more successful and popular school, the Decision Maker should again normally approve these proposals, subject to evidence being provided by the LA and other interests that the development will have a positive impact on standards.

14. From September 2006, Fresh Start or Collaborative Restart proposals for secondary schools can only go forward without a competition if the Secretary of State has consented under section 28A (1) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as inserted by section 65 of the Education Act 2005.

Secretary of State's power to direct closure

15. Section 19 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 as substituted by section 45 of the Education Act 2005, gives the Secretary of State the power to direct an LA to close a school requiring special measures. Such a direction would not be subject to the agreement of the School Organisation Committee or Schools Adjudicator. However, they may be required to consider proposals for the opening of a new school or for alterations as a consequence of the directed closure. There should be a presumption to approve the consequential proposals.

Proposals other than closure or Fresh Start

16. These should be dealt with as quickly as possible, and the Decision Maker should have regard to the impact the proposals may have on the school's ability to take forward its action for recovering from special measures, removing serious weaknesses or no longer requiring significant improvement.

■ **Creating Additional Places (in existing schools or by new schools)**

17. Where proposals will provide additional places, the Decision Maker should consider whether they are needed. In considering need, the Decision Maker should take into account not only the existence of spare capacity in neighbouring schools, but also the quality and popularity with parents of the schools in which spare capacity exists and evidence of parents' aspirations for a new school or their support for expansion of an existing school. The existence of surplus capacity in neighbouring less popular or successful schools should not in itself prevent the addition of new places. In considering proposals for additional places, the Decision Maker must take account of the impact which proposals will have on the standards of provision. Where proposals add to surplus capacity (either by adding places at existing schools or creating new schools) but there is a strong case for approval on parental preference and standards grounds, the presumption should be for approval. The LEA in these cases will need to consider parallel action to remove the surplus capacity thereby created.

■ **School Size**

18. Decision Makers should not make blanket assumptions that schools need to be of a certain size before they can be good schools (although the cost-effectiveness of proposals should continue to be one of the factors taken into account). All proposals should be considered on their individual merits.

■ **New schools**

19. Any organisation, association or individual willing to meet the conditions associated with being in the maintained sector, may publish proposals to set up a new maintained school. The Government wishes to encourage the widest possible range of promoters with a contribution to make to educational standards and diversity to come forward – including parent and community groups, private and charitable companies, voluntary groups including church and faith communities, those offering distinctive educational philosophies, existing schools or consortia of schools. All proposals, from whatever source, must be

considered on the basis of their educational merits, the extent of parental demand for the places and what they have to offer the local community.

■ Establishing a new secondary school

20. With effect from 1 September 2006 a new statutory framework applies for the establishment of any new secondary school – whether it is to be a brand new school or to replace an existing school. Where a local authority wishes to see a new secondary school established it must either:

- a. invite proposals for such a school as provided for under section 66 of The Education Act 2005 and regulation 3-6 of The Education (New Secondary School Proposals) (England) Regulations 2006. The process is generally referred to as "secondary school competitions". This is expected to be the route by which most new secondary schools will be established; OR
- b. apply to the Secretary of State for permission to publish proposals for a new secondary school, without running a "competition" as provided for in section 28A of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as inserted by section 65 of The Education Act 2005.

21. Where proposers – other than a local authority wish to establish a new secondary school, they must also apply to the Secretary of State for permission to publish proposals for a new secondary school, without running a "competition" as provided for in section 28A of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. There is no provision for proposers other than LAs to hold competitions.

22. It is important to note that the Secretary of State may only give consent to **publish** proposals. Where consent is granted, the normal statutory process must be followed i.e. Consultation; Publication; Representations and Decision.

■ Academies

23. Academies are publicly-funded independent schools established in partnership with business and voluntary sector sponsors. They normally replace one or more schools facing challenging circumstances or will be set up to meet a need for new school places. Academies may be established in rural as well as urban areas. All Academies should contribute to a strategic approach to diversity in their area. The involvement of business and other non-Government partners will enable Academies to develop and implement new approaches to teaching and learning in order to raise standards and promote innovation. All Academies will be required to share their facilities and expertise with other local schools and the wider community.

24. Statutory proposals are not required for the establishment of an Academy – an Academy may be proposed to replace an existing school or schools or may be proposed in response to a secondary school competition. The legal basis for Academies is section 482 of the Education Act 1996, which provides for the Secretary of State to enter into funding agreements with persons undertaking to establish and maintain specific types of independent school. Where an Academy is to replace an existing school or schools, however, the proposals for the closure of those schools should indicate whether pupils currently attending the schools will transfer to the Academy and, if appropriate, what arrangements will be made for pupils who are not expected to transfer.

25. All proposals in response to a secondary school competition will be considered together on their merits. The SOC must consult the Secretary of State to seek a written statement on whether he would be willing to commence negotiations with a view to entering into an agreement for the establishment of an Academy before taking a decision on a

competition which includes any proposals for an Academy. All other statutory proposals for changes to maintained schools relating to the establishment of an Academy should be considered together. If provision for pupils at a school proposed for closure is dependent on the establishment of an Academy, any approval of the closure proposals should be conditional upon the making of an agreement for an Academy, but there should be a general presumption in favour of approval.

26. It should be noted that the SOC must consider proposals made by an LA where there are no objections, as the LA do not have the power to make their determination conditional on the making of an agreement for a new Academy.

■ Expansion of Successful and Popular Schools

Secondary Schools

27. The Government is committed to ensuring that every parent can choose an excellent secondary school for their child. The DfES Five Year Strategy document accordingly laid out a range of proposals for increasing the supply of successful secondary schools. One proposal was to support and make easier the expansion of successful and popular secondary schools.

28. The process for the expansion of secondary schools has now been shortened to less than twelve weeks (for proposals which are not referred to the school adjudicator). Governors of all categories of secondary school have the power to publish proposals to increase their intake and the size of their school. And up to two representatives of any governing body that is the subject of expansion proposals are entitled to attend the School Organisation Committee (SOC) meeting which is considering the proposals in order to make their case. In addition, where proposals by a governing body to expand are rejected by the SOC, that governing body now has the right to refer those proposals to the Adjudicator to decide.

29. LAs and school governing bodies may apply to the Department for capital assistance with the work needed for the expansion of secondary schools (other than grammar schools) – more information is available at <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=10541>. Funding will only finally be made available if the proposals are approved by the SOC or the Adjudicator.

General

30. When there is a need or demand to expand school provision, LAs and Governing Bodies should take account of the wishes of parents in deciding which schools should expand. The Secretary of State also wishes to encourage LAs to reorganise provision in order to ensure that places are located where parents want them. For the purposes of this guidance, the Secretary of State is not proposing any single definition of a successful and popular school. It is for the Decision Maker to decide whether a school is successful and popular, however, the following indicators should all be taken into account:

The school's performance

- in terms of absolute results in key stage assessments and public examinations
- by comparison with other schools in similar circumstances (both in the same LA and other LAs)
- in terms of value added
- in terms of improvement over time in key stage results and public examinations.

The numbers of applications for places

- the Decision Maker should also take account of any other relevant evidence put forward by schools.

31. The strong presumption is that proposals to expand successful and popular schools should be approved. In line with the Government's long-standing policy that there should be no increase in selection by academic ability, this presumption does not apply to grammar schools.

32. The existence of surplus capacity in neighbouring less-popular schools should not in itself be sufficient to prevent this expansion, but if appropriate, in the light of local concerns, the Decision Makers should ask the LA how they plan to tackle any consequences for other schools. The Decision Maker should only turn down proposals for successful and popular schools to expand if there is compelling objective evidence that expansion would have a damaging effect on standards overall in an area, which cannot be avoided by LA action.

33. Before approving proposals the Decision Maker should confirm that the admission arrangements of schools proposed for expansion fully meet the provisions of the School Admissions Code of Practice (Note: under the provisions in the Education and Inspections Bill this is to be replaced by the School Admissions Code). Although the Decision Maker may not modify proposed admission arrangements, the proposer should be informed that proposals with unsatisfactory admissions arrangements are unlikely to be approved, and given the opportunity to revise them in line with the Code of Practice. Where the local authority, rather than the governing body, is the admissions authority, we will expect the authority to take action to bring the admission arrangements into line with the School Admissions Code.

■ Balance of denominational provision

34. In deciding proposals to close or reduce the capacity of a Church of England or Roman Catholic school, the decision maker should consider the effect that this will have on the balance of denominational provision in the area. Parental demand and the standards of the school must be taken into account.

35. The Adjudicator should not normally approve proposals for the closure of a Church of England or Roman Catholic school where the relevant church SOC group has voted against its closure and it is clear that the closure, together with any related changes, will reduce the proportion of such denominational places within the authority's area. The exception would be where the school is severely undersubscribed or standards are low.

■ Surplus Places

36. It continues to be important that education is provided as cost-effectively as possible. Empty places can represent a poor use of resources. LAs with high levels of surplus are encouraged to take action to remove surplus places where schools have a quarter or more of their places unfilled and at least 30 surplus places. However, standards at the schools also need to be taken into account, as well as geographical and social factors, such as population sparsity in rural areas, and the effect on any community use of the premises (see paragraph 60).

37. As noted in paragraphs 17, 30 and 32 above, the Secretary of State wishes to encourage LAs to organise provision in order to ensure that places are located where

parents want them. LAs should take action to remove empty places at schools that are unpopular with parents and which do little to raise standards. The removal of surplus places must always support the core agenda of raising standards and respect parents' wishes by seeking to match school places with parental choices.

■ Finance

38. The Decision Maker must be satisfied that any capital required to implement the proposals will be available (paragraph 3(4) of Schedule 6 to the SSFA 1998). Normally, this will be some form of written confirmation from the source of funding on which the promoters rely. In the case of a local authority, this may be from an authorised officer within the Authority.

39. There can be no assumption that the approval of proposals will trigger the release of capital funds from the Department unless the Department has previously confirmed in writing that such resources will be available; nor that any allocation "in principle" can be increased. In such circumstances the proposals should be rejected, or consideration of them deferred until it is clear that the capital necessary to implement the proposals will be provided.

40. Proposals must not be approved "conditionally" upon funding being made available but with two specific exceptions – those being funded under the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) or the Building Schools for the Future programme (BSF). For proposals being funded under PFI and BSF schemes the Decision Maker must be satisfied that funding has been agreed "in principle" but it should set a condition of its approval (see Decision Maker's Guidance Section 6 - paragraph 28 (e) and (f)). This protects proposers so that they are not under a statutory duty to implement the proposals until the relevant contracts have been signed and/or funding is finally released.

41. The Decision Maker will need to be satisfied that the proposals represent a cost-effective use of public funds. The proposed areas and costs should be in line with the Department's guidelines. Decision Makers should confirm that promoters/proposers have referred to the Department's school building design guidance - area guidelines for schools is available in Building Bulletin 98 (Briefing Framework for Secondary School Projects), Building Bulletin 99 (Briefing Framework for Primary School Projects) and BB77 for special schools. Cost information is available in 'Education Building Projects: Information on Costs and Performance Data'. Where costs/areas are not in line with the guidelines the promoters/proposers should provide a satisfactory explanation and in cases of doubt Decision Makers could seek specialist advice from professional building consultants.

■ Proposed admission arrangements – new schools

22A. The Decision Maker should confirm that the admission arrangements proposed comply with the provisions of the School Admissions Code of Practice (Note: under the provisions in the Education and Inspections Bill this is to be replaced by the School Admissions Code). Where the admissions arrangements are unsatisfactory the proposals should normally be rejected. However, where the Decision Maker would otherwise have been minded to approve the proposals, the Decision Maker should consult the proposer on a proposed modification to the proposals in order that the proposed admission arrangements comply with the Code of Practice.

42. Implementation of proposals may depend on capital receipts from the disposal of land previously used for the purposes of a community school. Those bringing forward proposals and the Decision Maker should therefore assure themselves that any necessary consent for

disposal of the land under paragraph 2 of Schedule 35A to the Education Act 1996 has been received from the Secretary of State. Consent is also necessary for the disposal by foundation or voluntary schools of any publicly funded land and buildings under Schedule 22 of the SSFA 1998.

43. The prior agreement of the Secretary of State will also be needed where it is proposed that capital should be raised from the disposal of school playing fields (details are given in DfES Guidance 1017 - 2004 The Protection of School Playing Fields and Land for Academies published in November 2004). Proposals dependent on disposal of land for their implementation may not receive full approval until consent for their disposal has been received. Proposals may, however, be approved conditionally under Regulation 9 of the Education (School Organisation Proposals) (England) Regulations 1999 conditional upon the acquisition of a site or playing fields.

■ **New Voluntary Aided School – Promoter liabilities**

44. For proposals for a new voluntary aided school the Decision Maker must have a statement (Form 18), signed by the promoters, that provides evidence that the Governing Body will be able to meet their financial responsibilities for all future building work.

■ **Views of Interested parties**

45. The Decision Maker must consider the views of all those affected by the proposals or who have an interest in them including parents, residents, pupils, staff, other schools and colleges, diocesan bodies and other providers, LAs, the LSC (where proposals affect 14-19 provision) and the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership or any local partnership that exists in place of an EYDCP (where proposals affect early years provision). This includes statutory objections and comments submitted during the representation period (and before proposals are accepted as valid the Decision Maker will need to be satisfied that the legal requirement to consult has been met).

■ **Community cohesion and race equality**

46. The Government wants to promote ethnic, religious and cultural tolerance and respect between different groups of people living and working together. Tensions can grow where ethnic groups have segregated themselves from each other - whether by choice or circumstance - in housing, work, leisure and education. The Government is therefore committed to improving community cohesion: the uniting of people of different races, cultures and faiths in a common sense of belonging and pride in a shared civic identity. The areas which appear to be most successful in uniting different communities are those which combine an emphasis on shared values and common citizenship with a positive approach to celebrating diversity.

47. To realise the benefits of our multi-cultural society there is a need for positive action to promote community cohesion. Schools have a key part to play in this by providing opportunities for young people from different backgrounds to learn from each other; by encouraging, through their teaching, an understanding of, and respect for, other cultures and faiths; and by activities in the community which help to build bridges between different ethnic groups.

48. When considering proposals for new schools the Decision Maker must consider whether the proposals will help to promote community cohesion. This will need to be considered on a case by case basis, taking account of the community that the new school will serve and the views of different sections within the community. There is no single model

of school inclusiveness which can be applied to all circumstances - prime consideration should be the needs of the particular local community. Examples of matters which the Decision Makers might consider are: how the school proposes to meet its statutory duty to promote racial equality, how it will encourage good citizenship, if the school is to have a religious character how it will deliver RE both in its own faith and other faiths, how it will address ethnic minority achievement issues and the needs of bi-lingual learners, if it has a religious character whether it will give priority to pupils of other faiths/denominations or to a specified group of applicants regardless of faith/denomination and its plans for partnership working with other schools. Some examples of partnership working are set out in Section 5

49. Promoters of new schools must include in their proposals information about how the school will tackle religious, racial and cultural division, and contribute to well-being across the community. Where proposed new maintained schools already exist as independent schools, information about what they are already doing and contributing will also be relevant.

50. The Decision Maker will need to consider the views of the local community, the commitment of the new school promoters and their own assessment of the robustness of the proposed means for achieving inclusiveness. Proposals for new faith schools should be judged on the same basis as proposals for other schools. The Local Government Association's Guidance on Community Cohesion should also be referred to by those drawing up proposals for changes in school organisation. Proposals should be prepared against the background of the initiatives and documents referred to in that guidance, including the Local Strategic Partnership's community strategy.

51. The Decision Maker must ensure that a proposed school does not intend an admission policy which would disadvantage pupils such as Gypsy and Traveller pupils and asylum seeker pupils where the need to provide for such pupils is likely to arise.

■ Accessibility

52. Difficulties with transport can prevent people participating in learning or restrict their choice of the quality, subject matter or type of learning they attend. In considering proposals for the reorganisation of schools, Decision Makers should satisfy themselves accessibility planning has been properly taken into account that e.g. in cases such as school closures and the location of new schools. Facilities are to be accessible by those concerned and disadvantaged groups not disadvantaged further, particularly by the cost or availability of transport to places of learning

■ Equal opportunity issues

53. The Decision Maker must consider whether there are any sex, race or disability discrimination issues that arise from the changes being proposed, for example, that where there is a proposed change to single sex provision in an area, there is equal access to single sex provision for the other sex to meet parental demand. In considering proposals for an existing independent school to become maintained the Decision Maker must be satisfied that if the school is co-educational it will provide equal opportunities for boys and girls.

■ Rural schools and sites

54. In considering statutory proposals to close a rural school, the Decision Maker should have regard to the need to preserve access to a local school for rural communities. There is therefore a presumption against the closure of rural schools. This does not mean that no rural school should ever close, but the case for closure should be strong and the proposals

clearly in the best interests of educational provision in the area. In order to assist the SOC, those proposing closure must provide evidence to the SOC to show that they have carefully considered:

- The transport implications of rural school closures, including the welfare and safety of the children, the recurrent cost to the LA of transporting pupils to a school further away, the quality and availability of transport links to the alternative provision, the effects on road traffic congestion, and the environmental costs of pupils travelling further to schools.
- The overall and long term impact on local people and the community of closure of the village school and of the loss of the building as a community facility.
- Alternatives to closure including the potential for federation with another local school to increase the school's viability; the scope for Extended School or children's centre status to provide local community services and facilities e.g. child care facilities, family and adult learning, healthcare, community internet access etc.

55. It is the responsibility of the Decision Maker to decide whether a school is to be regarded as rural for the purpose of considering proposals for closure under this guidance and in particular the presumption against closure. The Department's register of schools - Edubase - includes a rural/urban indicator for each school in England based on an assessment by the Office for National Statistics. The Decision Maker should have regard to this indicator. Where a school is not recorded as rural on Edubase, the SOC may nonetheless wish to consider evidence provided by interested parties that a particular school should be regarded as rural. The Office for National Statistics have introduced new rural/urban indicators, and may be prepared to advise in cases of doubt, as may the Countryside Agency.

56. Where a school is situated on more than one site, proposals are required to close one of the sites if any of the other sites is a mile or more away from it. The Decision Maker should take into account the same sort of factors in deciding whether to approve the closure of one of the sites of a rural school, and there is a presumption against their closure also, particularly where schools have recently been amalgamated and there has been an understanding that education would continue on the site.

■ Travel to School

57. In deciding statutory proposals, the Decision Maker should bear in mind that proposals should not have the effect of unreasonably extending journey times or increasing transport costs, or result in children having to negotiate significant barriers such as railway lines or major roads. Proposals should also be considered against Government objectives to reduce traffic congestion and promote alternatives to the car through the School Travel Planning process

58. When considering proposals to close a school in a deprived area, Decision Makers should have particular regard to the transport arrangements proposed by those bringing forward proposals, the quality of the transport links between the communities served by the school and the site of the alternative provision, and the possible effect of the proposed arrangements on pupil unauthorised absence and staying-on post-16.

■ Extended schools

59. As part of the Every Child Matters agenda to improve outcomes for all children the Government wants all schools to provide access to a core offer of extended services by 2010, with half of all secondary schools and a third of all primary schools doing so by 2008. The Government's vision for extended schools is set out clearly in the Extended Schools Prospectus available at www.teachernet.gov.uk/extendedschools. The core offer will

comprise of: 8am-6pm childcare/varied menu of interesting activities all year round; parenting support including family learning; swift and easy referral to a range of specialist support services; and community access to the school's sports, arts and ICT facilities including adult learning. Where the provision of extended services are a feature of proposals (e.g for a new school) this should strengthen the case for their approval.

■ Impact on Community

60. In some areas, a school may already be a focal point for family and community activity, and its closure may have wider social ramifications. It may also provide extended services for a range of users. In considering proposals for the closure of such schools, the effect on families and the community should be considered. The information presented by those bringing forward proposals to close such schools, particularly when they are in receipt of funding as part of regeneration activity, should therefore show evidence that options for maintaining community facilities in the area have been considered. The views of other relevant agencies and partnerships with responsibility for community and family services should be taken into account, alongside those of the local police, Government Offices and Regional Development Agencies having responsibility for the New Deal for Communities.

■ Foundation body

61. Foundation and Voluntary schools may establish foundation bodies to be responsible for the land and assets of a group of schools. Proposals may therefore include a reference to plans to establish a new foundation body or join an existing body. Where the proposals include a reference to the need to establish a new foundation body, an approval should be conditional upon the Secretary of State approving the establishment of that body by a certain date.

■ Federation of schools

62. Schools may become federated under a single governing body. Where proposals for a new school include plans for a new federation, or to join an existing federation, any approval should be conditional upon the school being accepted into the federation or the federation coming into being by a certain date.

■ School playing field issues

63. The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 set out the standards for school premises, including minimum areas of team game playing fields to which schools must have access. Decision Makers should satisfy themselves that the proposals include provision that ensures that these standards are met unless the Secretary of State has agreed exceptionally to a relaxation in their case.

■ Land tenure arrangements

64. For new voluntary aided schools it is desirable that a trust holds the freehold interest in the site. Sites of certain voluntary schools are held on diocesan general trusts, or by religious orders on their general trusts and these arrangements may apply to new schools. Other arrangements can provide for sites to be held on specific trust for the purposes of the school. Where there are no existing established arrangements, promoters of new schools should consider creating a specific trust.

65. Where the trustees of the proposed VA school hold or will hold a leasehold interest in

the site, the Decision Maker will need to be assured that the arrangements provide sufficient security for the school. A leasehold interest under a specific trust would do so where the lease is for a substantial period - normally at least 50 years - and where it avoids clauses which would allow the leaseholder to evict the school before the termination of the lease. The lease should also avoid provisions which would obstruct the governing body or the headteacher in the exercise of their functions under the Education Acts, or place indirect pressures upon the funding bodies.

66. The Department will consider the land tenure arrangements in deciding whether grant-aid can be offered in principle for the establishment of a new VA school. The Department will offer advice as necessary to the promoters on how far the proposed arrangements are acceptable and this advice can be made available to the Decision Maker. For proposals to change a school's category to VA the SOC will need to refer to details of proposed land tenure in the prescribed information to satisfy itself that proposed arrangements are satisfactory.

67. Promoters of new foundation or voluntary controlled schools, and any governors seeking a change of category to such, should discuss their land tenure arrangements with the LA. The LA should provide assurance to the SOC that land tenure arrangements will be satisfactory.

■ Independent schools

68. If the proposal is from an existing independent school the Decision Maker will need to consider whether the school has, or would have, a range of suitable staff to meet the school's needs, including teachers with qualified teacher status, and whether the premises will be suitable for the purpose of a maintained school.

■ Early Years provision

69. In considering any proposals involving changes in early years provision, the Decision Maker should consider whether the proposals will integrate pre-school education with childcare services and/or with other services for young children and their families; and should have particular regard to the views of the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

70. In deciding whether to approve any proposals to close a nursery school, the Decision Maker should be aware that nursery schools generally offer high quality provision, and have considerable potential as the basis for developing integrated services for young children and families. There should be a presumption against the closure of a nursery school unless the case for closure can demonstrate that:

- full consideration has been given to developing the school into a children's centre and there are clear, justifiable grounds for not doing so, for example, unsuitable accommodation, poor quality provision and low demand for places;
- plans to develop alternative provision clearly demonstrate that it will be at least as equal to the quantity and quality of early years provision provided by the nursery school with no loss of expertise and specialism; and that
- replacement provision is more accessible and more convenient for local parents.

71. In deciding whether to approve any proposals to close a nursery class, the Decision Maker should consider whether the alternative provision will maintain or enhance the standard of education provision. Alternative provision could be with providers in the private or voluntary sectors.

■ Infant class sizes

72. Local education authorities and schools have a legal duty to ensure that no infant class of 5, 6 and 7 year olds with a single teacher contains more than 30 pupils (apart from a few very limited exceptions, which relate to children with special needs or those offered places outside the normal admissions round). Before approving any statutory proposal affecting infant classes, the Decision Maker should ensure that its implementation will not compromise the Authority's ability to meet the class size limit.

■ 14-19 provision and collaboration

73. The Government has published proposals to develop 14-19 as a coherent phase of education in which young people remain committed to continuing learning after the age of 16. To that end, it wants young people to be able to choose from a broad range of general and vocational options from the age of 14 and to be able to progress through learning at a pace that is right for them. Where necessary, it expects that this should be achieved through increased collaborative working between local providers, including schools, colleges, training providers and employers.

74. Where a proposal relates to provision for 14-16 year-olds, the Decision Maker should consider the extent to which it will extend the range of options available to students in this age group and enhance the opportunities for collaboration between relevant local providers.

■ 16-19 schools

75. The Learning and Skills Act 2000 allowed the establishment of maintained schools which provide full-time education suitable for the requirements of pupils over compulsory school age but do not provide education suitable for the requirements of pupils of compulsory school age. Arrangements for the publication of proposals for the establishment of 16-19 schools are broadly as for other maintained schools.

■ 16-19 Provision - General

76. The Learning and Skills Act 2000 entitles all 16-19 year olds to further education and training. Schools and colleges must offer high quality provision that meets the diverse needs of all young people, their communities and employers. 16-19 provision should be organised to ensure that, in every area, young people have access, within reasonable travelling distance, to high-quality learning opportunities across schools, colleges and work-based training routes.

77. In September 2003 Ministers set out their **five key principles** for the reorganisation of 16-19 provision, following requests from partners (including LSC and LAs) for more clarity on Government expectations. Decision Makers should therefore consider all proposals for changes to 16-19 provision in the context of these principles.

78. Details of the five key principles can be found in 'Principles underpinning the organisation of 16-19 provision' booklet - <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=5233>. Briefly they are:

- quality - all provision for all learners should be high quality, whatever their chosen pathway;
- distinct 16-19 provision - all young people should be attached to a 16-19 base which will meet the particular pastoral, management and learning needs of this age group;
- diversity to ensure curriculum breadth – well-managed collaboration between popular and successful small providers will enable them to remain viable and to share and build on their particular areas of expertise;

- learner choice – all learners should normally have local access to high quality 16-19 provision in a range of settings and any proposals for change to this provision should take into account the views of all stakeholders;
- affordability, value for money and cost effectiveness - proposals for change should include how any capital and recurrent costs and savings will lead to improved educational opportunities.

■ ADDITION OF SIXTH FORMS BY “HIGH-PERFORMING” SCHOOLS

79. There should be a strong presumption in favour of the approval of proposals for a new sixth form where:

- The school is a high-performing specialist school that has opted for a vocational specialism; or
- The school, whether specialist or not, meets the criteria for “high performing”, and does not require capital support.

80. Where a new sixth form is proposed by a specialist school that has met the “high performing” criteria and which has opted for a vocational specialism, capital funding will be made available from the new 16-19 Capital Fund. Specialist schools wishing to apply to the 16-19 Capital fund should contact the Learning and Skills Council.

81. There should also be a strong presumption in favour of proposals for a new sixth form where the school, whether specialist or not, is assessed as meeting the DfES criteria for “high performing” and does not require additional capital resources.

82. The presumption will apply to proposals submitted to the SOC within:

- 12 months from the date a school commences operation with vocational specialist status; or
- 12 months from the date a school is informed that it meets the DfES criteria for “high performing”;

whichever is the latest. [NOTE: “submitted to the SOC” above refers to when proposals and representations are with the SOC, following the end of the representation period.]

83. Schools wishing to open a sixth form under these circumstances should consult and publish its proposals as soon as possible. The school should ensure that, in forwarding its proposals to the local school organisation committee, it provides a copy of the notification from the DfES that it meets one of the criterion in paragraph 79 above.

84. It is important that any new school sixth form works in partnership with other providers to ensure young people have access to a wide range of learning opportunities. In assessing proposals from “high performing” schools to add a sixth form, decision-makers should have regard to the importance of collaborative working.

85. “High performing” schools seeking to add sixth forms are subject to the same special procedures as secondary schools seeking to expand. The following timetable will therefore apply.

Stage of process	New timeframe
Period for objections and comments	4 weeks
Period by which the LEA must pass comments to SOC together with its own comments and views on the comments of others.	2 weeks
Period after which the governing body of the school concerned can ask for the proposal to be referred to the school adjudicator	6 weeks

86. In addition, the governing bodies of all secondary schools bringing forward proposals to add sixth forms will be able to attend the School Organisation Committee meeting at which their proposals are to be discussed and make representations. They will also be able to appeal to the Adjudicator if their proposals are rejected by the SOC.

■ 16-19 provision “Competitions”

86A. Non statutory competitions for new 16-19 provision were introduced from January 2006. They are being administered by local LSCs, in line with their role as commissioner of 16-19 provision. Local LSCs will identify need for provision through StARs and invite and process competition entries. The establishment of new institutions by competition will involve a 2-stage approval process:

- i. the competition selection process;
- ii. approval of the outcome by existing processes (e.g. SOC approval of school/LA proposals and Secretary of State approval of college/LSC proposals, as required by law);

Competitors will be eligible to apply to the 16-19 Capital Fund from December 2005 for funding from 2006/07. Where a competition is “won” by a school, they must then publish statutory proposals and these must be considered by the Decision Maker on their merits

Where proposals to establish sixth forms are received, and the local LSC is running a 16-19 competition, the Decision Maker must take account of the competition when considering the proposals.

■ LSC proposals to close inadequate 16-19 provision

87. The Learning and Skills Act 2000 (as amended by the Education Act 2005) gives the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) powers to propose the closure of sixth forms requiring significant improvement at all categories of school (by proposing to change the school’s age range to stop at 16); and to propose the closure of a 16-19 school placed in special measures or requiring significant improvement of whatever category, including special schools.

88. A sixth form is deemed to require significant improvement if Ofsted judges that it is failing to give students an acceptable standard of education, or in relation to its provision for pupils over compulsory school age the school is performing significantly less well than it might in all circumstances reasonably be expected to perform. A 16-19 school may require special measures if the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. A 16-19

school may require significant improvement if although not requiring special measures it is performing significantly less well than it might in all circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

89. The LSC powers to close are triggered only where, having had two consecutive adverse reports from Ofsted, a school has failed to turn its 16-19 provision round. Where the sixth form is proposed for closure there should be a presumption to approve these proposals, subject to evidence being provided by the LA and other interests that the development will have a positive impact on standards.

■ LSC powers to propose the reorganisation of 16-19 provision

90. The LSC may make proposals for the reorganisation of post-16 provision in an area, including changes to school sixth forms. The proposals may be made in response to the findings of an area inspection, or in order to meet at least one of three relevant objectives:

- to increase participation amongst 16-19 year olds
- to increase the achievement of 16-19 year olds
- to expand the range of learning opportunities available to 16-19 year olds.

91. LSC reorganisation proposals may include changes to provision in sixth form colleges and other FE settings in addition to schools and all decisions will be made by the Secretary of State. School Organisation Committees will be consulted and their comments on the proposals, and any objections or comments by interested parties, must be passed by the LSC to the Secretary of State within one month of the end of the objection period when the proposals are submitted for decision.

■ Conflicting Sixth Form Reorganisation proposals

92. Where the implementation of reorganisation proposals from the LSC conflict with other published proposals put to the School Organisation Committee for decision, the Committee will be prevented by the School Organisation Proposals by the LSC for England Regulations 2003 from making a decision on the related proposals until the Secretary of State has decided the LSC proposals (see paragraph 7-9 of Decision Makers' Guidance Section 3). If proposals come before the Adjudicator he or she should similarly delay a decision until the Secretary of State has taken a decision on the LSC proposals.

■ Special educational needs provision

93. Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 provides a general duty on LAs to ensure sufficient primary and secondary school places. The same section also requires LAs to have regard to the need to secure that special educational provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Indeed almost every school in the country will have some children on roll who have special educational needs (SEN). So there are likely to be SEN implications in every school reorganisation. School reorganisation provides opportunities for LAs to consider the most effective ways of ensuring that appropriate SEN support is delivered to pupils wherever it is needed. This may be in mainstream schools, in specialist resourced provision within the school or in a specialist unit attached to, or co-located with, mainstream schools, or in special schools.

94. When considering proposals for the reorganisation of special educational needs provision the Decision Maker should have regard to:

- the statutory duty placed on Local Authorities, under section 315 of the Education Act 1996, to keep under review their arrangements for special educational needs provision;
- the elements of the Local Authority's Children and Young People's Plan relevant to special educational needs, and in particular the Authority's plans for promoting inclusion (that is, for educating a higher proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs within a mainstream setting);
- the particular SEN factors mentioned in Section 2.9.

95. Some children with special educational needs will also be disabled, and some disabled children, though they may not have special educational needs, may have particular access requirements. From September 2002 schools and LAs are under a statutory duty under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to increase the accessibility of schools for disabled pupils. LAs are required to prepare accessibility strategies and schools are required to prepare accessibility plans. These strategies and plans must show how the LA or school plan to:

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum;
- improve the physical school environment;
- improve the delivery to disabled pupils of written information in different formats.

■ Change of school category

96. The Government's five-year strategy and the White Paper - Higher Standards, Better Schools for All - envisages a system of "independent specialist schools", based on the expectation that community and voluntary controlled (VC) schools increasingly will seek to change category to foundation. Regulations have been introduced enabling the governing bodies of most community and VC schools to decide their own proposals to change category to foundation, and the Department has consulted on extending these arrangements to primary schools. Any proposals to change the category of a school falling to the SOC to decide should be considered on their individual merits. A school cannot gain, lose or change a religious character by changing category. To do this a school must close and open as a new school.

97. In deciding such proposals the Decision Maker must take into account the restrictions on changing category prescribed in the regulations:

- if the school proposes to change to the voluntary aided category, evidence must be provided that the governing body are able and willing to meet their financial responsibilities for building work after the proposed implementation date (Form 18 should be provided);
- the change of category cannot authorise a school to establish, join or leave a foundation body; and
- a foundation, voluntary aided and voluntary controlled school may not become a community school and a foundation special school may not become a community special school unless the required transfer agreement is entered into (i.e. regarding the land or buildings owned by the trustees and/or governing body).

98. Where the change of category will lead to a change in admission arrangements those bringing forward proposals should also ensure that all interested parties are consulted on the proposed arrangements at an early stage. These parties should include schools and parents of children already at, or likely to attend the school. In considering proposals for a change of school category the Decision Maker may not modify proposed admission arrangements. These fall to be dealt with under the normal admissions consultation arrangements.

Implementation

99. Where as a result of a voluntary aided (VA) school changing category the Local Authority becomes responsible for the implementation of previously approved statutory proposals in respect of the VA school which have not yet been fully implemented, the Department would continue its support of any agreed capital costs for those proposals, and would be prepared to consider applications from an LA to meet its share of any capital costs which previously fell to the governing body. LAs would also be able to publish statutory proposals to be relieved of the duty to implement approved proposals in respect of the school in its previous category. The Decision Maker would decide any such proposals under the provisions of paragraph 5 of Schedule 6 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Conditional approvals

100. Some proposals to become a foundation school may involve becoming a member of a group foundation and may only be approved conditionally i.e. upon the Secretary of State approving the establishment of the new foundation body, or agreeing to the school joining an existing group foundation by a specified date. All such change of category proposals will require conditional approval and therefore cannot be determined by the local authority. They must be referred to the School Organisation Committee for decision and then passed to the adjudicator if the SOC cannot agree a unanimous decision.

101. Where it is necessary for a trust to be established or for an existing trust deed to be varied for the school to change category, any approval must also be conditional upon this occurring by a specified date.

■ **New secondary school proposals – Every Child Matters**

102. The Decision Maker should consider how the proposals will help every child and young person achieve their potential in accordance with Every Child Matters principles. This should include considering how the school will provide its extended services, opportunities for personal development, access to academic and vocational training, measures to address barriers to participation, support for children and young people with particular needs e.g. looked after children or children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities.

■ **New foundation secondary school proposals with a foundation**

103. The Decision Maker should consider whether the Trust has charitable objects which are appropriate for a key role in the establishment and leadership of a school (e.g. the advancement of education and/or other charitable objects relevant to this purpose), and also whether the trust partners are involved in any activities that might be considered inappropriate (for example tobacco, gambling, adult entertainment, alcohol etc). Where such information is available, the Decision Maker will also want to consider the experience and track record of the Trust partners, their particular expertise and background as against the needs of the school, for example, their contribution to raising school standards and also to promoting community cohesion.



Decision Makers Guidance Section 2.1

Statutory Guidance - Factors to be considered - proposals for new schools other than proposals for new secondary schools in response to a secondary school competition

■ 2.1. PROPOSALS FOR NEW SCHOOLS OTHER THAN PROPOSALS FOR NEW SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RESPONSE TO A SECONDARY SCHOOL COMPETITION

(For new secondary school in response to a competition see Section 2.1A, for new nursery schools see Section 2.5 and for new sixth form schools see Section 2.6)

The following factors should not be taken to be exhaustive. Their importance will vary, depending on the type and circumstances of decisions. All proposals should be considered on their individual merits.

The Decision Maker must also consult statutory guidance in Section 1, in particular any paragraph(s) referred to in brackets.

There should be a presumption to approve proposals for a new school to replace a failing school closed by direction of the Secretary of State (paragraph 15 of Section 1).

■ Effect on standards and contribution to school improvement

- Whether the proposals will improve the standards, quality, range and/or diversity of educational provision in the area (Paras 1-4, 18, 19-23);
- Whether they advance the national and local transformation strategies (Para 1-4);
- Whether the proposals will deliver a broad and balanced curriculum (Para 5);
- The effect of the proposals on other institutions' standards, bearing in mind the effect on quantity and quality of other schools' intakes and any suggestions put forward for collaboration, partnership or federation (Para 2-3).

■ Need for places

- Whether there is a need for additional places in the area, or whether there are surplus places (Para 17, 36-37);
- The extent of parental demand for the type of school in question, for example, provision for particular faiths or denominations or specialisms (Para 17, 19).

■ Finance

- Whether the proposals represent a cost-effective use of public funds (para 41);
- Whether the capital resources required are available (Para 38-40);
- Whether the sale proceeds of redundant sites are to be made available and whether the Secretary of State's consent has been obtained where necessary (Para 42-43);
- If the proposal is for a new voluntary aided school, whether the promoters have provided a statement that the governing body would be able to meet their financial responsibilities for building work (Para 44).

■ Views of interested parties (Para 45)

- The views of parents and other local residents, including those who may be particularly affected by the proposals or have a particular interest in them;
- The views of any Local Education Authority affected by the proposals or with an interest;
- The views of the CE and RC dioceses in the area
- The views of other schools and colleges in the area;
- The views of the Learning and Skills Council (if the proposals affect the provision of post-16 education);

- The views of the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (where proposals affect early education provision).

■ Community cohesion, inclusiveness and partnerships

- The extent to which, and how satisfactorily in the circumstances of the community, the proposals address the need to promote community cohesion (Para 46-49);
- Where a proposed new maintained school already exists as an independent school, its current approach and contribution to community cohesion will be relevant (Para 49);
- The extent to which the proposals take account of the needs of families and the wider community (Para 50-51).

■ 14-19 issues

- Where 14-19 provision is involved, the extent to which appropriate collaborative arrangements have been considered (Para 73-74);
- The criteria for considering new sixth forms should also be taken into account where the proposed school includes 16-19 provision (See Section 2.6).

■ Equal opportunities

- Any sex, race or disability discrimination issues or other human rights issues including any sex discrimination issues in relation to proposals for a single sex school (Para 53).

■ Effect on school journeys

- The existence of safe walking, cycling and bus routes to the proposed site (Para 57).

■ Other issues

- Whether the school will provide strong links with the local community and provide family and community services (Para 59); (Primary provision only) Whether the proposals comply with the infant class size limit (Para 72); For voluntary and foundation schools where a trust is not to hold the freehold of the site, whether the land tenure arrangements are satisfactory (Para 64-67); For voluntary and foundation schools, whether the proposal is to join an existing group foundation body or to jointly establish a new group foundation body (Para 61); Whether the proposal is to join an existing federation or to jointly establish a new federation (Para 62); Whether the new school will meet the minimum statutory requirement for provision of school playing fields (Para 63).

■ Proposal from an existing independent school:

- if co-educational, whether it would provide equal opportunities for boys and girls (Para 53); whether it would have suitably qualified staff and the premises would be suitable for the purpose of a maintained school (Para 68).



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Section 3**EXTRACT ONLY**

- a. the likely effect of the discontinuance of the school on the local community;
- b. the availability, and likely cost to the local education authority, of transport on other schools;
- c. any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the discontinuance of the school, and the likely effects of any such increase; and
- d. any alternatives to the discontinuance of the school.

9A. An order will be made by the Secretary of State to designate schools as "rural primary schools for this purpose.

* ■ **Those who must be consulted about statutory proposals**

10. Under sections 28(5) and 29(4B)-(4D) of the SSFA those considering bringing forward statutory proposals must consult interested parties, and in doing so must have regard to the Secretary of State's guidance. The Secretary of State considers that those bringing forward proposals should consult all interested parties. In doing so they should allow adequate time, and provide sufficient information for those being consulted to form a considered view on the matters on which they are being consulted, and should make clear how their views can be made known. Those bringing forward proposals should be able to demonstrate how they have taken into account the views expressed during consultation in reaching any subsequent decision as to the publication of proposals. Where, in the course of consultation, a new option emerges which the proposers wish to consider, it will probably be appropriate to consult afresh on this option before proceeding to publish proposals.

11. The Secretary of State considers that the interested parties who should be consulted by proposers include:

- any LEA likely to be affected by the proposals, including neighbouring authorities where there may be significant cross-border movement of pupils;
- other schools in the area, including schools in an adjoining LEA that may be affected by the proposals, whether community, foundation, voluntary, community special or foundation special schools;
- parents and teachers in the area who may be affected by the proposals including parents of pupils at feeder primary schools and those living in, or who have children attending a school in the area of, an adjoining LEA;
- in the case of any proposals by the LEA for a new secondary school (including replacement schools, mergers and amalgamations), the local CE and RC dioceses and anyone else who has previously expressed an interest in setting up a secondary school;
- (if proposals involve, or are likely to affect a school which has a particular religious foundation) the appropriate diocesan authorities, or where there is no diocesan structure, the faith group which provides the school;
- (if a foundation or voluntary school does not have a religious character) any trust or foundation providing the school;
- (if the proposals affect the provision of full-time 14-19 education) the Learning and Skills Council (LSC);
- MPs whose constituencies include the schools that are the subject of the proposals or whose constituents are likely to be affected by the proposals;
- the local district, parish or community council where the school, or proposed school, that is the subject of the proposals is situated;
- any other interested party, for example, the Early Years Development and Child Care Partnership (or any local partnership that exists in place of an EYDCP) where proposals affect early years provision, or those who benefit from a contractual arrangement giving them the use of the premises;
- (in the case of new schools proposed by promoters) parents and teachers of independent schools that may be closed as a result of the proposals; and
- such other persons as appear to the proposers to be appropriate.

Rural Primary Schools – Consulting on Closure

12. Section 29(4B) places a statutory duty on those proposing the closure of a rural primary school to consult:-

Decision Makers Guidance Section 5

Non-statutory guidance on community cohesion

■ Community cohesion – additional factors that may need to be considered

- How the school proposes to fulfil the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 requirement to promote racial equality.
- How good citizenship will be encouraged.
- Where the school is to have a religious character, what are the intentions for religious education in the school's own and other faiths.
- Where the school is to have a religious character, whether it intends to give priority for at least some places to applicants of other faiths/denominations, or to specified groups of applicants (e.g. from the locality or local feeder schools) regardless of faith/denomination.
- Where the school is seeking to join the maintained sector from the independent sector, what it already does to demonstrate care for community cohesion.
- What plans the school has for partnership working with other schools, that would contribute to community cohesion by enabling pupils to gain an understanding of, and share experiences with, others from different ethnic, cultural or faith backgrounds. Illustrative examples of possible approaches are given below. This list is not exhaustive or prescriptive and promoters of new schools should be encouraged to be as creative as possible in the light of local circumstances.
- Inter-school twinning between schools with pupils from mainly different cultural backgrounds.
- Lesson exchanges giving opportunities for children of different backgrounds to meet and learn together.
- Teacher exchanges whereby teachers have the opportunity to take classes comprising children from different ethnic backgrounds.
- Joint school trips, either field trips where pupils work together in groups, or recreational trips such as visits abroad.
- Joint school choirs, orchestras or sports teams - offering opportunities for cross-cultural groups to work as part of the same team.
- Joint visits to theatres, museums and galleries.
- Joint drama productions.
- Joint committees of school governors/teachers/parents, working together to share experience and improve standards within the local family of schools.
- Joint cross-cultural community projects such as community action groups to help people living in isolation, or with special needs, for example young mothers, the elderly and infirm; or joint charity events.
- Community projects within the school designed to coach people with English language difficulties, helping them with conversation, reading and writing.
- Mentoring arrangements at various levels - between schools where the best schools help the lowest achievers, on a one-to-one basis between governors and heads where the more experienced help the less experienced, and between pupils where individuals have a named mentor in another school.
- Shared facilities so that less advantaged pupils have access to good IT facilities, science and language laboratories etc.
- Shared secular school assemblies.
- Joint workshops for brainstorming cross-cultural issues.
- Joint communications such as pupils and teachers working together on an inter-school newspaper, video conferencing between schools and electronic linking between schools, for example via a local area network.

- Community projects within the school designed to coach people with English language difficulties, helping them with conversation, reading and writing.
- Mentoring arrangements at various levels - between schools where the best schools help the lowest achievers, on a one-to-one basis between governors and heads where the more experienced help the less experienced, and between pupils where individuals have a named mentor in another school.
- Shared facilities so that less advantaged pupils have access to good IT facilities, science and language laboratories etc.
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- Joint workshops for brainstorming cross-cultural issues.
- Joint communications such as pupils and teachers working together on an inter-school newspaper, video conferencing between schools and electronic linking between schools, for example via a local area network.



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Foreword

APPENDIX 4 Harrow Children and Young People's Plan 2006-2009

One of the most important developments in the past few years has been the bringing together of education and children's and young people's services within one single directorate - People First. This plan highlights the new 'joined up' method of working with and for children and young people, not only within the council but also with our partners in the PCT, Northwick Park, the police and many voluntary organisations. It is wonderful to see the progress that has already been made, as well as our ambitious but realistic plans for the future. It is a tremendous credit to everyone concerned.

We are pleased to support the aspirations for Every Harrow Child, as set out in this plan. It demonstrates the determination of the council, in partnership with other agencies, the community and children and young people, to improve the life chances of our young people.

We want to thank all those who worked on the plan and all those who will deliver it.



Navin Shah
Cllr Navin Shah
(Leader of the Council)



Bill Stephenson
Cllr Bill Stephenson
(Portfolio Holder, Education
and Lifelong Learning)



Margaret Davine
Cllr Margaret Davine
(Portfolio Holder, Social
Care and Health)

Children and young people in Harrow are growing up in a rapidly changing, culturally rich, metropolitan city. Harrow has strong traditions of public service. The workforce in all agencies, together with community groups, is energetic and enthusiastic about the potential for our combined efforts to improve outcomes for all children and young people. We have made considerable progress in many separate multi-agency initiatives, and in valuing and listening to children and young people's views.

This plan, and the work of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and the Local Safeguarding Children Board, is our opportunity to draw together the initiatives, resources, targets and plans to ensure we deliver the best we can together.

The enthusiasm and active engagement in the work behind the plan convinces me that working together will create more effective services and will ultimately improve the outcomes for children and young people.



Paul Clark
Paul Clark
Director of Children's Services
Chair, Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership

April 2006

Extract
only

Acknowledgments

Children and young people in Harrow took part in a series of events which enabled them to make their views known and share their vision for the future. Contributions to this plan were also made by statutory and voluntary agencies. Harrow Council members' support has been instrumental in making this plan happen. All those who contributed have expressed a commitment to future planning and to shared development with others to enable widespread meaningful engagement in the challenges ahead over the coming years. A special thanks to all who have put so much effort into making this plan a reality.



If you would like to contribute to further editions, you can do so in the following ways:

- ▶▶ **e-mail** tasneem.yusufali@harrow.gov.uk
- ▶▶ **website** www.harrow.gov.uk
- ▶▶ **phone** 020 8424 1980
- ▶▶ **letter** Paul A Clark
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Civic Centre
PO Box 7
Station Road
Harrow HA1 2UL

1. Introduction



Following the death of Victoria Climbié and other tragedies in the early part of this decade, an inquiry report recommended clear leadership and accountability to ensure children and young people were given priority by all agencies⁶⁶. It also referred to the need for arrangements for agencies to collaborate, share information and put the child at the centre of decision making.

The resulting Children Act 2004 and guidance ("Every Child Matters"⁷²) requires that every area provides a clear published plan setting out how they intend to reach these goals. This is Harrow's first edition, designed to generate continued developmental progress over the coming 3 years.

There is widespread understanding and agreement that investing in prevention and support provides better outcomes for children and young people than crisis intervention. This must be balanced against the need to ensure that vulnerable groups are provided for and are safe.

This plan sets out the key agreed local priorities for all children and those in specific groups identified as having particular needs. Ways of meeting those needs are identified in the plan.

Harrow Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership

This multi-agency group is made up of statutory and voluntary agencies and is part of the Harrow Strategic Partnership. It has special oversight for the needs of children and young people.

The group:

- ◆ Provides vision, leadership, innovation and strategic guidance
- ◆ Works in partnership with other agencies in the wider community
- ◆ Provides a strategic lead on implementing Every Child Matters⁷² and the National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services⁷³
- ◆ Enables positive integrated arrangements across the borough to ensure best outcomes for children and their families.

2. A shared vision

Harrow Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership sets out in this plan a shared vision for children and young people growing up in Harrow. The plan is driven largely by the aspirations of children and young people themselves. Local community groups, schools, elected members, voluntary agencies and faith groups are all committed to working together and developing the plan over time.

The plan is a continuing design, shaped around the changing needs and aspirations of Harrow's community. It is grounded in the realities of resource constraints, and acknowledges the impact of change on a busy professional community.

Over the three years of the plan, voluntary and statutory agencies have agreed to work together to deliver year on year improvements in outcomes for children. Our vision combines high aspirations with realistic targets for improvement in the context of available resources. The vision is not modest – it is for a thriving, diverse and successful future for every Harrow child. Our plan shows we know our community, we are busy, innovative and determined to succeed, but we do not set unrealistic goals. Our strongest supporters and fiercest critics are our young people. This vision is for them.

Harrow intends to develop a community where:-

- ◆ Children and young people enjoy the highest quality of life that can be provided.
- ◆ Children and young people have a voice in how services are arranged.
- ◆ Early intervention, support and information to children, young people and their families are

provided in order to prevent long term or more serious problems.

- ◆ Advice and support is provided by people from voluntary and statutory agencies working together, and is local, age appropriate and accessible.
- ◆ Children's centres will be the focus of this multi-professional support and they will be accessible to all children, young people and their families.
- ◆ Extended schools and school clusters will provide additional opportunities for services to pupils and families.
- ◆ Agencies providing services to children, young people and their families will shape their services to meet the requirements of our changing and diverse community, respecting personal identity and integrity.
- ◆ The community has a voice in shaping future services, and is informed and aware of problems facing young people.
- ◆ Learning choices for children, young people and their families continue to expand, providing opportunities for a range of talents and abilities.
- ◆ Children and families needing support will have one lead professional supporting them, ensuring all services communicate with each other using one communication tool, the Common Assessment Framework.
- ◆ Agencies working with families ensure they work together, by strengthening partnerships, developing alliances, working towards integration and planning to pool budgets.



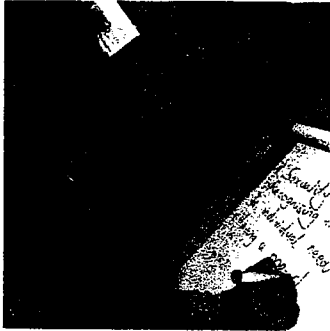


To help us make this vision a reality, we are developing multi-agency children's centres and extended schools. Currently, there are 3 children centres. This will expand to a total of 9 by the end of 2009.

The centres will provide integrated early education and will form a network, which will become the base for multi-agency delivery of services. They will provide frontline health and social care services, information advice and support to parents, children and young people. Each centre will use local information to inform service provision so that services are accessible and appropriate to the needs of local communities. They will also create links and be a base for work by appropriate voluntary agencies and faith groups.

Our extended schools programme provides schools with longer opening hours and facilities for other agencies, including voluntary services who provide information, support and advice to parents, children and young people. Partners are already working together to enable schools to become a focal point for local communities by providing extended opening times, access to support for parents and children and increased community use. Identifying and supporting clusters of schools will have a positive impact on the outcomes for children in Harrow.

4. A summary of priorities



This section is divided into three parts.

Part One:

The priorities agreed in the Local Area Agreement (LAA).

Part Two:

The priorities agreed for the Every Child Matters outcomes.

Part Three:

The priorities agreed to support specific local groups.

The summary of the priorities is therefore:

Local Area Agreement:

- ◆ Best start
- ◆ Sexual health of young people
- ◆ Children Looked After
- ◆ Permanent exclusions

Every Child Matters

- ◆ Being healthy
 - Physically healthy
 - Mentally and emotionally healthy
 - Sexually healthy
 - Healthy lifestyles
 - Choose not to take illegal drugs
- ◆ Staying safe
 - Safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation
 - Safe from accidental injury and death
 - Safe from bullying and discrimination
 - Safe from crime and anti-social behaviour in and out of school
 - Have security, stability and are cared for

◆ Enjoying and achieving

- Ready for school
- Attend and enjoy school
- Achieve stretching national educational standards at primary school
- Achieve personal and social development and enjoy recreation
- Achieve stretching national educational standards at secondary school

◆ Making a positive contribution

- Engage in decision-making and support the community and environment
- Engage in law abiding and positive behaviour in and out of school

◆ Achieving economic well-being

- Engage in further education, employment or training on leaving school
- Live in households free from low income

Specific local groups:

- Children Looked After
- Young carers
- Children with special needs
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

Enjoying and achieving

This priority is about ensuring children are well prepared for school, that they attend and enjoy school, that the school environment provides them with opportunities to achieve personal and social development, that they enjoy recreation and can achieve their full potential.

What children and young people have told us about enjoying and achieving:

Young children said⁷⁵:

They like good quality toys and equipment. They like playing in nice places with good people who look after them and their friends.

They like spending time with their parents and doing things like swimming and doing family activities together. They like interesting places like libraries, learning all together but not in school and workshops.

Older children and young people said⁷⁵:

Easy access to facilities.

People aged 14-15 years should be provided with ID cards, for buses, cinemas etc.

More advertisements of existing services.

There should be more youth clubs and more information on existing youth clubs. Also there should be better communication, advice and information of services. Youth Clubs need to look at those people over 13 years.

There is a lack of local services.

We don't want to leave our local patch to participate in sport and recreation.

We want to our schools after hours to play sport. We want the leisure facilities to act as our community hub. More fun and sport activities especially more adventurous equipment for older youth and spaces to swim not just lane swim. We want to use weights but it is too expensive or the youth hours are during school time.

Cheaper services and facilities.

* These are unaltered, direct quotes from young people

Ready for school

Level of development reached at the end of the foundation stage, including narrowing the gap in the 20% most disadvantaged areas

Findings	Key challenges	Actions
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Parents want access to advice and support at specific times in their children's lives in dealing with the newborn; the toddler at 18 months; starting school, moving on to the next school and leaving school.

Every child aged 3-19 to be offered the highest quality services in schools and other settings. These services are to reflect the individual needs and characteristics of each child so that learning is enjoyable and they are able to achieve their full potential.

To provide high quality, accessible, local services, through children's centres and extended services in schools. These services to be provided by a range of professionals, including voluntary agencies².

Embed the recently launched transition process which helps children move smoothly and successfully from their Early Years setting to school³.

All three and four year olds to be offered high quality early learning services for 15 hours per week by 2010.

Support schools in developing their provision for young people's personal and social development and their enjoyment of recreation including the extension of use of outdoor and indoor leisure provision to the whole community³.

The "Parents as First Teachers" programme will be rolled out across the 9 children's centres. This is a programme accessible to all parents providing information on development, so children can reach their full potential⁴.

All foundation stage practitioners will be trained on how to use the foundation stage development portfolio to support the raising of attainment of all children in the foundation stage. This involves the use of a variety of materials which can be used in a number of different ways and includes children whose first language is not English.

Parents experiencing social exclusion will have particular difficulty accessing services.

To arrange services to meet the needs of parents who may have specific difficulties accessing services.

The Children's Fund will support the following projects⁵:

"One to One project": for families dealing with difficulties as a result of a child's behaviour. Helping parents develop confident parenting skills and encouraging them to access other support services.

"Parenting education support"; to develop and promote wider access to parenting support services.

"Mother tongue parenting support": for parents whose first language is not English providing parenting workshops in a number of community languages for Black, Minority Ethnic and asylum-seeking parents.

Attend and enjoy school

Half days missed through absence

Findings	Key challenges	Actions
<p>The Victoria Climbié report found that Victoria was not at school for the short period of time she lived in the UK. The range of professionals who were in contact with the family did not act upon this⁶⁶.</p>	<p>To identify and take appropriate action when a child is missing education.</p>	<p>Minimise the risk of children going missing from education by having robust systems in place to monitor transition from school to school, and developing a multi-agency policy and training⁴⁴.</p> <p>Harrow has signed up to "Welfare Call", which is a system to identify when Children Looked After do not attend school.</p> <p>Schools will continue to monitor attendances, paying particular attention to movements from school to school and those young people who do not regularly attend school⁴².</p>
<p>There were four truancy sweeps conducted in the Spring of 2006. 22 children and young people were stopped, 2 had no valid reason for not attending school⁴².</p>	<p>To continue the local authority's duty to conduct truancy sweeps as indicated by government.</p>	<p>The police and educational welfare will work together to implement the truancy sweeps, identifying Children Looked After, and arranging transport arrangements for children stopped and returned to school or home⁴².</p> <p>An individual action plan is devised for every child stopped with no valid reason for absence and followed up by the Education Welfare Service⁴².</p>

Achieve stretching national educational standards at primary school.

Percentage 7 year olds achieving L2 at KS1.

Percentage 11 year olds achieving L4+ in English and Maths including floor targets

Education achievement of 11 year olds Children Looked After compared with peers

Findings	Key challenges	Actions
<p>Achievement at Key Stage 2 is good with Harrow being in the top quartile in all core subjects for value added, however some groups of pupils do not make such good progress.</p>	<p>To build on these successes, and continue to raise educational attainment, and to include more vulnerable groups in this success.</p>	<p>Work with schools to promote a rich, relevant, and inclusive curriculum and develop a learning culture both within and across schools, including the provision of personalised learning to ensure that learners receive their Harrow curriculum entitlement and achieve stretching targets³.</p> <p>Promote the achievement and inclusion of identified groups of young people at risk of not achieving their potential and challenge schools to identify and support these pupils.</p> <p>Ensure through training that knowledge about how best to meet their needs is embedded.</p>

Achieve personal and social development and enjoy recreation.

Take up of sporting opportunities by 5-16 year olds

Take up of cultural & sporting opportunities among over 16 year olds

Findings	Key challenges	Actions
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A recent cultural services inspection found that leisure and sports facilities are not suitable to meet the needs of some ethnic minority groups and those with disabilities⁹⁹.

To engage Sports and Leisure Services in the "Every Child Matters" agenda to work on ways to develop culturally sensitive facilities

To work with providers of leisure and sport facilities within Harrow to promote facilities within the community to engage all ethnic groups. The interim strategy for sports leisure and open space identifies the following actions²¹:

- ◆ Review the provision options for women only swimming and sport hall sessions.
- ◆ Undertake improvements to Harrow Leisure Centre to ensure it is compliant with Disability Discrimination Act
- ◆ Adapt the current changing room provision at Harrow Leisure Centre to cultural needs.
- ◆ Provide information in various formats e.g. variety of languages, blind or partially sighted.

To recruit a "Bookstart" co-ordinator to ensure the "Bookstart" programme is delivered⁸ (introducing young children to reading).

Young people and children told us that they like playing in nice places with good people who look after them and their friends. They like spending time with their parents and engaging in activities such as swimming both with their peers and families. They like interesting places like libraries and enjoy learning outside the formal school environment.

Children and young people to have access to sport and recreational activities within easy reach of their home. This includes children with disabilities.

All schools to develop extended services to facilitate as out of school activities and homework clubs. In addition to providing appropriate childcare they will allow the wider community to access a wide variety of learning, recreational and sporting activities¹⁴.

Improve the physical accessibility of indoor sport facilities by meeting legal requirements for access and endeavouring to reduce other physical barriers²¹.

To develop and deliver a range of targeted sports development initiatives, which seek to raise participants quality of life.

The interim sports strategy outlines the following actions²¹;

- ◆ Install low level lighting at all neighbourhood play ground sites to increase security and usability.
- ◆ Develop a sensory play area at Harrow Recreation Ground and involve young people in the design and project management.
- ◆ Develop with appropriate access arrangements, floodlighting and equipment.
- ◆ Develop a Multi Use Games Area in the west of the borough, together with appropriate access arrangements, floodlighting and equipment.
- ◆ Extend the availability of Harrow High School's Multi Use Games Areas for the community for pay and play use.
- ◆ For all district and destination parks to have a noticeable recreation area for youth.
- ◆ To develop the initiatives generated by Arts, Sports and Leisure, Crime Prevention, the Youth Services and Connexions to ensure positive, constructive use of leisure time for children and young people.

Young people want more opportunities to spend their leisure time positively.

To increase opportunities for young people to use their leisure time constructively.

Achieve personal and social development and enjoy recreation.

– Continued

Findings	Key challenges	Actions
<p>Young refugee and asylum seekers need support in accessing cultural and sports activities.</p>	<p>To facilitate the involvement of young refugees and asylum seekers in mainstream activities</p>	<p>The Children's Fund will support the "Young Refugee and Asylum Seekers Activity Scheme" to improve access to refugee and asylum seekers and their families¹².</p>
<p>Community and Culture provide a range of services and activities, which are aimed specifically at engaging young people in Harrow. Art, music, sport and leisure are accessible to all. The Music Service, the Arts Development Unit, Sports and Leisure Services and the Library Service provide a wide variety of projects across the borough.</p>	<p>To encourage young people in these activities</p>	<p>Improve the targeting of arts development programmes and cultural strategy implementation, towards the needs of priority groups, including Children Looked After and care leavers, disabled young people and those individuals who may benefit from engagement with the arts⁹</p> <p>Children and young people will take part in the "Westwords", a literature festival spanning eight west London boroughs, led by a former pupil of Nower Hill High school.</p> <p>Harrow Council's cultural strategy and action plan provides details on improving access to the arts by all children¹³. Extracts below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Encourage all schools to achieve the Artsmark, Sportsmark, Activemark and Healthy Schools Standard ◆ Focus on national curriculum developments to increase access and achievements in the arts, creativity and PE at Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, 2, and 3. ◆ All primary pupils to have the opportunity to access instrumental music tuition. ◆ Extend opportunities for participation in arts, sports and cultural activities in Family Learning Centres.

Achieve stretching national educational standards at secondary school

Percentage 14 year olds achieving L5 in Eng. Maths, Science and ICT, including floor target

Percentage 16 year olds achieving the equivalent of 5 A-C GCSE, including floor target

Education achieving of 16 year olds Children Looked After compared with peers

Findings	Key challenges	Actions
Harrow's GCSE and A Level results are among the best in the UK, with 62% of pupils achieving 5 or more A-C grades in 2005 ²⁵ .	To build on these successes, continue to raise educational attainment, and to include more vulnerable groups in this success.	Work with schools to promote a rich, relevant, and inclusive curriculum and develop a learning culture both within and across schools including the provision of personalised learning to ensure that learners receive their Harrow curriculum entitlement and achieve stretching targets ³ .
5% do not go on to education, training, or employment ¹¹ . 39% have not achieved a level 2 qualification by age 19. This is low in comparison to the national average.	To reduce NEET rates, (see Achieving Economic Well-being on page 39)	The compact agreement aims to identify children and young people at risk of school exclusion at an early stage to prevent permanent exclusions ⁹ . With the support of the LAA the school absence rates in primary schools is currently 6.76% and will reduce to 6% by 2009, and the secondary schools absence rate is 7.37% and will reduce to 6.2% by 2009 ⁹ .
There is a low level of educational achievement for Children Looked After compared to the remainder of the local child population ²⁸ .	To improve the education achievements of Children Looked After.	Work with schools to improve the academic attainment of Children Looked After by reducing exclusions, improving attendance and creating flexible pathways and personalised learning opportunities. An educationalist will support the social care Children Looked After Team in this endeavour. This will be monitored by the Children's Services Performance Management Group, which includes educationalists and also by the Strategic Monitoring Group set up by the CYPSP. The corporate parenting group will support this process ^{4 *3}
Harrow schools have a number of children who are refugees and asylum seekers. (see "unaccompanied asylum seeking children" on page 44 for more details). Some of these children experience difficulties in learning due to language and emotional issues. They can also experience difficulty in accessing health services. ²⁹	Promote the achievement and inclusion of identified groups of young people at risk of not achieving their potential, and encourage schools to identify and support these pupils. Ensure that training and knowledge about meeting the needs of all groups are embedded.	The council's Achievement and Inclusion Division will work with partners to support children who are refugees and asylum seekers and Travellers, people whose first language is not English and those who have newly arrived in Britain. (see "unaccompanied asylum seeking children" on page 44 for more details).
Irish Traveller children experience unique cultural problems, for example, leaving school at a very young age, usually at around aged 12. From Sept 2004 to Sept 2005 there were 231 Traveller pupils in Harrow schools. 175 pupils were in 36 primary schools and 56 pupils in 11 high schools ⁴³	To support Irish Traveller children and their families to encourage them to stay at school beyond 12. Collecting data on Irish Traveller populations is challenging due to high mobility.	Education Welfare Officers provide support to schools and families to encourage their children to stay at school working with the Harrow Tuition Centre. Education Welfare Services, the Achievement and Inclusion Division and the Harrow Tuition Centre will work together to promote the education of Irish Traveller families. This will link with the Rapid Intervention teams as Irish Traveller children approach aged 12 years they are more at risk of school exclusion.

Achieve stretching national educational standards at secondary school – Continued

Findings	Key challenges	Actions
<p>Some parents find the organisation of schools in Harrow does not suit their preferred pattern of schooling. Harrow operates a first/middle school system with secondary transfer at the end of Year 7, which differs from surrounding boroughs. High schools do not have Sixth Forms. Therefore, some parents choose schools outside Harrow: in 2004, 44.3% chose post-16 destinations outside Harrow.⁵¹</p>	<p>A school and college system that offers diverse provision better to meet the needs of the Harrow community, including access to school-based Sixth Form courses.</p>	<p>Develop a Sixth Form Collegiate with all High Schools and Colleges working together to provide a broad range of opportunities post 16.</p> <p>A bid has been drafted, and following approval by the Learning and Skills Council this will be delivered.</p> <p>An Age of Transfer working group has been formed to consider the options for changing the age of transfer in preparation for a wider consultation and the development of a long term action plan</p>
<p>There is a surplus of places in Harrow schools. There are between 12.4% extra places in the primary schools and high schools have 2.3% surplus places⁴¹.</p>	<p>To reduce the numbers of surplus school places.</p>	<p>Manage the process of removing surplus school places and work towards a reorganisation of schools better to meet the needs of the Harrow community.</p>



Conclusion

This plan sets out all agencies' clear intentions to improve outcomes for children. The aspirations are high, the targets realistic, the outcomes practical.

Young people have had a major say in what we want to achieve and we owe it to them to work together for their success.

In each year we will refresh and improve the plan, be more explicit as to the impact and outcomes and give clear evidence of our success.

Thanks are due to all who helped put this first edition together and those who will deliver it.

I look forward to further growth, development and engagement as we continue working to improve the lives of every Harrow child.

Paul Clark

Director of Children's Services

Chair, Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership