

Meeting:	Education Consultative Forum
Date:	13 September 2007
Subject:	Strategic Approach to School Organisation
Responsible Officer:	Heather Clements, Director of Schools and Children's Development
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Christine Bednell Schools and Children's Development
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	None

SECTION 1 – SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet will be considering a report on Strategic Approach to School Organisation in Harrow at their meeting in October. This report outlines the reasons for considering school re-organisation at this time and provides the Education Consultative Forum with the opportunity to consider and comment on initial proposals.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Education Consultative Forum is requested to:

- consider the contents of this report
- confirm support for the proposed approach to school re-organisation in Harrow.

SECTION 2 - REPORT

1. Harrow schools are popular and successful and perform consistently in line with or above National Averages at all Key Stages. There are good partnerships between schools, the local authority and other organisations and as a result many schools provide a range of opportunities for the local community. The Council's commitment to this agenda is confirmed in its Vision Statements and associated Corporate Priorities. The Vision Statement to provide high achieving schools at the centre of community services translates to a Corporate Priority to continue improvement in schools and make education in Harrow even better.
2. Whilst this level of achievement has been maintained demographic data indicates that the profile of Harrow is changing. Therefore, the challenge for Harrow is to secure the most effective school organisation for the 21st Century that supports the best outcomes for all schools and local communities and maximises the use of resources.
3. The organisation of schools in Harrow has been the subject of debates and surveys with stakeholders. The School Organisation Debate in 2003 confirmed a consensus amongst stakeholders to increase post-16 opportunities, increase provision for early years and change the age of transfer to 11. The Harrow Sixth Form Collegiate has increased choice and opportunities for post-16, including provision on school sites and Early Years provision has been developed with the Early Years Partnership.
4. As part of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme, in 2003 Harrow submitted a bid for capital to change the age of transfer and provide post-16 on school sites. It is not expected that Harrow will receive capital funding for high schools until at least 2011-2013.

Recent Developments relating to School Organisation

5. There are a range of local and national factors relating to school organisation that together create a context in which it would be appropriate to undertake preliminary work to support a change in the age of transfer. The factors are outlined as follows:
6. There will be a DCSF consultation in the Autumn Term regarding the BSF programme and it is hoped that there will be the opportunity to re-submit the Harrow BSF bid and secure earlier funding.
7. Since the BSF Programme announcement, the DCSF have brought forward some of the funding for One School Pathfinder Projects. Whitmore High School will be re-developed under the Pathfinder project, and there will be capacity for Year 7 pupils on completion in Autumn 2009.
8. The DCSF Primary Capital Programme funding will be available from 2009. In readiness for this funding for primary schools, each school is preparing a school development plan to inform capital investment. These

plans address individual school needs as informed by the Asset Management Plan (AMP) within the context of the school covering the full primary age range.

9. The current organisation of schools in Harrow is out of line with that found in most authorities nationally and out of sync with the current Key Stage structure.
10. Since Cabinet agreed the Amalgamation Policy in 2005, six schools have amalgamated to establish 3 combined first and middle schools. From September 2007 there will be 32 separate first and middle schools. The combined schools are more aligned with National Curriculum Key Stages and there will be less impact with the change in the age of transfer.

Moving Forward

11. In order to maximise the advantage of being able to re-submit a bid to the DCSF as part of the BSF programme it is essential that preparatory work is completed. At this stage this work will include: project planning and timelines; establishing the representative stakeholder group to assist with planning and implementation; briefing and engaging key stakeholders; developing the communication and consultation strategy; developing HR strategies and financial models to support the change programme; and undertaking feasibility studies to assess school capacity for increased high school roles etc. If the BSF bid is successful there will be wide consultation including details for all schools. This will be followed by the publication of statutory notices, their determination and implementation.
12. Changing the age of transfer is a challenging and complex project and will impact on all schools in Harrow. It involves delivering teaching and learning within the context of the removal of approximately 2,000 Year 7 places from the first and middle school sector and their relocation into high schools. There is also real potential to secure exciting and quality outcomes for all Harrow's communities. Engaging stakeholders at the outset in the development of a re-organisation strategy and retaining their commitment throughout the strategy's implementation is critical. The timescale needs to be challenging but realistic to ensure that the full benefits are experienced by those children, young people and communities now as well as in the future. To move the project forward Harrow will:
 - Present a report to Cabinet in October that will seek to re-affirm their commitment to implementing a change in the age of transfer, establish a Representative Stakeholder Group, and re-submit a bid to the DCSF Building Schools for the Future programme.
 - Brief and engage stakeholders on an informal basis during early Autumn 2007, including Headteachers, Governors and external partners in Harrow and DCSF.
 - Develop options to implement a change in the age of transfer to 11 plus including an analysis of high schools' capacities, an initial

capital build programme, revenue requirements, consultation processes and project plan. (This will form the basis of any future submission to the DCSF for funding as part of the Building Schools for the Future programme if possible and the basis of consultation)

- Respond to the DCSF Building Schools for the Future consultation in the Autumn Term.

SECTION 3 - STATUTORY OFFICER CLEARANCE

Chief Finance Officer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Name: Bharat Jashapara
		Date: 22 August 2007
Monitoring Officer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Name: Helen White
		Date: 3 September 2007

SECTION 4 - CONTACT DETAILS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

Contact: Johanna Morgan
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Background Papers: None

IF APPROPRIATE, does the report include the following considerations?

1.	Consultation	Yes
2.	Corporate Priorities	Yes
3.	Manifesto Pledge Reference Number	N/A