

EDUCATION CONSULTATIVE FORUM

19 MARCH 2008

Chairman:	* Councillor Miss Christine Bednell	
Councillors:	* Mrs Camilla Bath	* Janet Mote
	* B E Gate	* Raj Ray
	* Manji Kara	* Bill Stephenson
Teachers' Constituency:	Mrs D Cawthorne	Ms J Lang
	* Ms C Gembala	* Ms L Money
	† Ms J Howkins	Ms L Snowdon
Governors' Constituency:	Ms H Solanki	
	* Mrs C Millard	
Elected Parent Governor Representatives:	† Mr R Chauhan	* Mrs D Speel
Denominational Representatives:	* Mrs J Rammelt	† Reverend P Reece

* Denotes Member present
† Denotes apologies received

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL**PART II - MINUTES**81. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

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

82. **Apologies for Absence:**

RESOLVED: To note that apologies for absence had been received from Janice Howkins, Ramji Chauhan and Paul Reece.

83. **Declarations of Interest:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no declarations of interests made by Members in relation to the business transacted at this meeting.

84. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

RESOLVED: That all items be considered with the press and public present.

85. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2008 be taken as read and signed as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

Minute 79 - School's Amalgamation Policy

Paragraph two be amended so that it reads: "A member expressed concern that the report came across as biased towards amalgamation and that the Forum had not been consulted on the policy before the Cabinet 2007 decision. The member asked for the reasons against amalgamation."

86. **Matters Arising:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no matters arising that did not appear on the agenda.

87. **Public Questions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 16 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

88. **Petitions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions were received at this meeting under the provisions of the Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 14 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

89. **Deputations:**

RESOLVED: To note that no deputations were received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 15 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

90. **Vision for Education in Harrow:**

The Forum received the report of the Director of Schools and Children's Development, which set out a draft vision for Education in Harrow which is being developed to support the council's submission for the Primary Capital Strategy and Building Schools for the Future (BSF). The Director of Schools and Children's Development added that the draft vision had been constructed to set the tone and path for Education in Harrow during the next 10 years. Consultation was due to take place with headteachers, officers and the governors' forum. The Forum was asked to note that although consultation was taking place in some schools, it was merely a 'soft consultation' which tested the water in some of the more needy communities. Schools have been asked to discuss the vision within their own school communities. This is not a formal consultation process and all views are welcomed. The Director of Schools and Children's Development further added that the vision was in response to the DCFS's desire for Harrow to be forward thinking and innovative. The Forum was reminded that the council was setting the framework for the future but was not the driving force behind the proposals, but the schools themselves. The Forum was asked to deliver the draft vision to their constituency groups and discuss whether the vision was right, was there anything else that could be included, and what the potential political barriers might be.

A Member commented that the draft vision was in need of more clarity as the educational vernacular was not so understandable to the lay person. The Member added that the vision may then be led to misinterpretation by the press.

A member commented that the report was concerned with cohesiveness yet the content read in favour of diversity. The member further commented that more clarification was needed about statements within the report referring to 'choice'. The Director of Schools and Children's Development replied that schools within Harrow were individual and distinctive, offering, in addition to Community Schools, a choice of different religious and voluntary aided schools and nurseries. The Director of Schools and Children's Development added that they would be happy to consider the member's suggestions for better wording within the report.

A member queried whether the rating of 'good' used in the report was derived from Ofsted's view of Harrow's schools. They added that if this was true, then shouldn't Harrow schools be aspiring for 'outstanding'. The Director of Schools and Children's Development replied that the idiosyncratic nature of the language used by Ofsted left this open to interpretation and that Ofsted see Harrow' Schools as, "good in their judgment". A Member added that many schools remain in their 'comfort zones' when Ofsted are 'satisfied' with them. The Member suggested that attainment should be raised from 'satisfied' to 'good'. Another Member agreed and added that what schools needed were realistic, achievable targets.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

91. **Three Year Results for Key Stage 2, 3 and Key Stage 4:**

The Forum received an information report of the Director of Schools and Children's Development, which showed Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3 and GCSE results for Harrow LA compared to statistical neighbours over a 3-year period. In addition to this the report provided an analysis of pre and post amalgamation results in Primary Schools over a 5-year period.

A member commented that they were pleased with the results, but queried why were some of the values declining. The Director of Schools and Children's Development replied that the values can change due to fluctuations in the affluence of the cohorts. The Director of Schools and Children's Development further explained that although Harrow's statistical neighbours remain the same, Harrow was not necessarily a statistical neighbour in return. What was important to remember was that the list was drawn from a high range profile. Indicators were not just performance based, but could

also be socio-demographic. The Forum was reminded that remaining high-performing would become increasingly challenging as Harrow's population continued to change.

A Member commented that by observing the report as a whole the Forum should be pleased, but with the proviso that this would not lead to complacency. The Member requested that it be noted in the minutes that gratitude and congratulations should be expressed to staff in all Harrow schools, support staff in the LEA, Harrow Governors, the Forum, the parents, parental support and also to the pupils themselves. The Chairman agreed and added that the most important part of education was not passing exams but that students are formed into well-rounded citizens. A member added that unfortunately statistics did not reflect this importance.

The Director of Schools and Children's Development concluded that there was not enough data of post amalgamation yet to generate a trend.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

92. **Date of Next Meeting:**

RESOLVED: That the date of the next meeting, 30 June 2008, be noted.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.37 pm, closed at 8.31 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR CHRISTINE BEDNELL
Chairman