

Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	23 October 2008
Subject:	Future Organisation of Roxeth Manor First School and Roxeth Manor Middle School
Key Decision:	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Heather Clements, Director of Schools and Children's Development
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Anjana Patel, Portfolio Holder for Schools and Children's Development
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Email text from the Chairs of the two governing bodies

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the outcome of the statutory consultation about the future organisation of Roxeth Manor First School and Roxeth Manor Middle School, and the recommendations of the governing bodies that the two schools amalgamate in September 2009.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

1. consider the outcome of the statutory consultation and the recommendations from the governing bodies
2. approve the publication of Statutory Notices to combine Roxeth Manor First School and Roxeth Manor Middle School.

Reason: (For recommendation)

For Cabinet to consider the outcome of the statutory consultation, and to exercise the local authority's statutory responsibility in relation to school organisation and consider whether to publish statutory notices to effect the change.

Section 2 – Report

Introduction

1. Harrow's vision is to provide high achieving schools at the centre of community services, and a corporate priority is to continue improvement in schools to make education in Harrow even better. In order to further this vision, in October 2007 Cabinet agreed its strategic approach to school organisation.

Options considered

2. The Headteacher of Roxeth Manor First School has retired, and the Headteacher of Roxeth Manor Middle School has resigned. In July 2008, the governing bodies commenced the process to amalgamate the two schools in accordance with the Council's October 2007 amalgamation policy. The October 2007 amalgamation policy requires separate first and middle schools to amalgamate when one or more of the triggering circumstances arise unless there are compelling and over-riding reasons not to, and a headteacher vacancy in either or both schools is one of the triggering circumstances. This report sets out the outcome of the statutory consultation.

Consultation

3. In July 2008, the governing bodies formed a representative steering group to plan the consultation process with the school communities and agree a consultation document to send to all stakeholders. A consultation document was prepared by the steering group, with the support of local authority officers, which provided information about the proposals. A more detailed proposal evaluation paper was prepared and made available on request.
4. The statutory consultation was held from 18 September 2008 until 3 October 2008. The schools distributed the consultation document to all parents, members of staff and governors. The steering group arranged meetings for parents of both schools on Tuesday 23 and Wednesday 24 September, and a meeting for staff of both schools on Thursday 25 September 2008. Harrow Council sent the consultation document to interested parties in accordance with the Department for Children, Schools and Families School Organisation Unit guidance, including neighbouring local authorities, diocesan authorities, local MPs and elected members, voluntary and community organisations, Harrow Youth Council. Information about the amalgamation process and the consultation documents were made available on the Harrow Council website.
5. The governing bodies met on Thursday 9 October 2008 to consider the outcome of the consultation with the school communities, and both governing bodies decided unanimously to recommend to Cabinet that the two schools amalgamate from September 2009. The governors felt that this was a unique opportunity in the life of the schools to reorganise and restructure the schools for the benefit of the education of the pupils. The responses gathered from the consultation indicated that the majority of parents agreed with this, and, although there were some concerns raised by staff, and pupils, these would all be considered and taken into account at the next stage of the process.
6. The issues and concerns raised by parents, staff and pupils were primarily about the processes, rather than about the principle, of combining two

schools. Many of the concerns had already been raised at consultation meetings, and the governing bodies will work to address these concerns if the decision is made to combine the two schools. No comments about the consultation proposals were received by the local authority.

7. If Cabinet decides to publish statutory notices, it is proposed that these will be published in November 2008, and considered by Cabinet for determination in January 2009 following the representation period. In accordance with practice under the October 2007 amalgamation policy, the statutory route to establish a combined school would be to discontinue the school where the headteacher vacancy has arisen first, and to extend the age range and expand the capacity of the other school. Cabinet would need to determine the proposals within two months from the end of the representation period.
8. If Cabinet decides to approve the publication of Statutory Notices to combine the two schools, it is proposed that the age range of Roxeth Manor Middle School is extended and the capacity expanded, and that Roxeth Manor First School is discontinued. This is based on the fact that the substantive Head teacher in the First School resigned at an earlier date than the substantive Head teacher in the Middle School. This proposed approach was stated in the consultation paper, and the governing bodies were aware of this when making their recommendations.

Legal comments

9. Only Cabinet can make decisions on proposals to close schools and to make changes to schools. If Cabinet decides to publish statutory notices, the decision must be made with regard to the representations and feedback provided by stakeholders. Cabinet must have regard for the Secretary of State's guidance in their decision making.
10. If Cabinet decides to publish statutory notices, there will be a 6 week statutory period during which representations could be made. Cabinet would need to determine the proposals within two months from the end of the representation period, giving due regard to the representations received during the representation period. A determination may be subject to appeal to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator.

Financial Implications

11. Amalgamating schools has a positive albeit small revenue effect, and in previous cases this has resulted in improved efficiencies of approximately £40k for the combined school. The principal efficiencies result from having one headteacher instead of two. Schools will also benefit from having fewer Service Level Agreement (SLA) charges for some services, for instance, at present first and middle schools are charged separately for the Schools Finance SLA. This will change to only one charge after amalgamation.
12. Harrow Council is currently consulting on school reorganisation proposals that if agreed would be implemented in September 2010. If the proposals to change school organisation are agreed and implemented, there will be a significant change to the schools' funding formula. At this time it is not possible to assess the impact on amalgamated schools. However, it is expected that as a combined school there will be less impact than two separate schools. The greatest financial impact of school reorganisation is

likely to be in the separate first schools where there would be one less year group of pupils.

13. Capital expenditure, where necessary, will be financed through existing capital resources including for example Schools Devolved Formula, and other Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) resources as they come on stream for example, the Primary Capital Programme from April 2009.

Performance Issues

14. Delivering School Reorganisation so that Harrow Schools are in line with the national agenda is Council Improvement Plan project IP7D and contributes to a range of performance indicators, in particular the following from the new National Indicator Set. NI 72 – 109 ‘Enjoy and Achieve’ indicators covering Key Stage achievement and progression, narrowing the gap for lower performing and vulnerable groups, attendance, behaviour, special educational needs.
15. Whilst Harrow’s performance is currently above national and statistical neighbours averages at all Key Stages, Harrow’s targets, which are set annually for the DCSF, are highly challenging. The table below presents Harrow’s performance against its targets and the national averages as published by the DCSF.

Harrow's 2006-07 Results

KS1	Actual	Target	National
Reading L2+	85%	Not set	84%
Writing L2+	81%	Not set	80%
Maths L2+	91%	Not set	90%
Science L2+	88%	Not set	89%
KS2	Actual	Target	National
English L4+	82%	85%	80%
Maths L4+	79%	85%	77%
Science L4+	88%	Not set	88%
KS3	Actual	Target	National
English L5+	79%	82%	74%
Maths L5+	79%	80%	76%
Science L5+	75%	78%	73%
GCSE	Actual	Target	National
% 5+ A*-C	68.0%	67.5%	62.0%
% 5+ A*-C incl E&M	56.1%	Not set	46.8%

Risk Management Implications

16. Risk included on Directorate risk register? No
 Separate risk register in place? No

17. A summary of high level risks is provided.

High Level Risks	Consequences	Mitigating/Control Actions
Challenge to Cabinet decision	Delay.	Cabinet must have due regard to the Secretary of State’s guidance for decision makers in reaching its decisions on school

making.		reorganisation proposals.
Statutory consultation about school reorganisation during the autumn.	Confusion for stakeholders.	If Cabinet decides to publish statutory notices to amalgamate the Roxeth Manor schools, the determination of them will occur before any statutory notices are published about school reorganisation. The school reorganisation consultation papers will explain the position.
Clarification of the Council's Amalgamation Policy.	Confusion for stakeholders.	In response to issues raised by the DCSF in regard to the amalgamation policy, and a corporate complaint investigation relating to a school involved in a school reorganisation process, Cabinet will consider a clarified policy at its October meeting. This clarification does not change the policy requirements.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: John Stansfield	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 10 October 2008		
Name: Sharon Clarke	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 13 October 2008		

Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name: David Harrington	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Divisional Director (Strategy and Improvement)
Date: 13 October 2008		

Section 5 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Chris Melly, Senior Professional, Service Development Team
020 8420 9270 chris.melly@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers:

Consultation document on the Future Structure of Roxeth Manor First and Middle Schools

DCSF School Organisation Unit guidance for decision makers
www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolorg