

## **Proposals for School Reorganisation in Harrow**

### **Consultation Responses and Analysis**

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#### **1. Statutory consultation**

##### **1.1 Background**

1. At its meeting in October 2007, Cabinet agreed its Strategic Approach to School Organisation. As part of this strategic approach, Cabinet affirmed its commitment to implementing a change in the age of transfer from 12 years to 11 years of age. Cabinet also decided to establish a Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG) with representative membership drawn from elected members, headteachers, governors and unions.
2. In June 2008, Cabinet considered an update report and decided to undertake a statutory consultation on school reorganisation to change the ages of transfer and the age ranges in community schools in Harrow. The statutory consultation was held from 8 September until 5 December 2008. Four voluntary aided faith schools included their proposals for change in the consultation booklet, and their proposals are effectively to regularise the age range of their schools.

##### **1.2 Consultation papers**

3. A consultation booklet titled 'Proposals for Harrow Schools' was widely distributed. This booklet contained information about the overall proposals in a question and answer format, and listed the proposals for each individual school in Harrow. Also included was a map showing the location of Harrow schools, a list of key dates and events, and contact details for specific queries. The consultation booklet is available as background information or from the council website.
4. Over 33,000 consultation booklets and posters were distributed widely around Harrow. The schools distributed the consultation booklet to all parents of children attending

Harrow schools, members of staff and governors. Harrow Council wrote to a wide range of interested parties by letter and email, enclosing the consultation booklet and inviting responses. Information about the school reorganisation proposals and the consultation booklet were made available on the Harrow Council website. Two newsletters have been sent to all families of children in Harrow schools, staff and governors, and to a wide range of interested parties. The list of interested parties that were sent the consultation documents is attached as Appendix 1.

### **1.3 Consultation response form and proforma**

5. A consultation response form was included in each booklet, and additional copies were sent to schools. Also, the response form was available on the Harrow Council website to download or to complete on-line.
6. The consultation response form contained two key questions, with space available for comments, and a number of further questions to establish the interest of the respondent for monitoring and reporting purposes, for example, parent, resident, school connection.
7. The two key questions asked on the consultation response forms were:
  - Do you agree with the proposals to change the ages of transfer in Harrow by creating Infant, Junior, Primary and Secondary Schools in September 2010?
  - Do you agree with the proposals for an individual school?For each of these two key questions the available responses were: 'Yes', 'No', 'Not Sure'. Space was made available under each question for respondents to add any comments. All comments have been transcribed in full, and have been made available to Cabinet and are publicly available on the council website.
8. High level reporting of the views expressed and the comments made by individual respondents on the consultation response form is given in Appendix 2. For ease of analysis and understanding, the comments have been grouped into themes and sub-themes.

### **1.4 Consultation of school communities**

9. All school governing bodies have been asked to consider the consultation proposals and to give their views. High level reporting of the governing bodies' responses is given in Tables 6 and 7 in Appendix 2. All comments have been made available to Cabinet and are available to view as background information.
10. It was agreed by the Stakeholder Reference Group, which has representative membership of headteachers, governors, trade unions, elected members and council officers, that schools would hold open meetings and consult with their school communities.
11. A PowerPoint presentation was developed for use by schools at consultation meetings for parents, staff and governors. The presentation contained information about the proposals, with scope for additional information to be included for the school specific audience. There were extra slides that could be used which provided more detail on the SRG workstreams, and on issues such as the impacts on schools and resources. When requested by schools, council officers attended the open meetings to respond on any matters relevant to the council.

12. Proformas were sent to all schools to complete in order to evidence the consultation activity that was undertaken. The proformas asked schools to confirm that the consultation booklets were distributed, and the consultation activities undertaken with parents, staff, governors, and pupils. Schools were asked to attach any written evidence of the consultation activities undertaken. If Cabinet decides to publish statutory proposals, evidence of the consultation would be included in the complete proposals published for each school.

### 1.5 Public consultation meetings

13. The local authority held two public meetings at Harrow Civic Centre on 3 and 17 November 2008. These meetings were publicised in the consultation booklet, in the public posters, in the newsletters and on the council website. Nine individuals attended the public meetings.

14. At the 17 November meeting, an officer gave a presentation about the proposals, and facilitated a table discussion with the assistance of other officers. The seven parents that attended this meeting have children that are pupils at Priestmead First and Priestmead Middle schools. There was also a reporter from the Harrow Observer present. A record of the discussion has been made available to Cabinet and is available to view as background information.

### 1.6 Children and young people

15. The views of children and young people have been sought through a variety of means, including consultations within schools, individual response forms and the Harrowkidz website. Additionally officers have attended meetings of representative groups of pupils and young people, at Harrow Youth Council and the High School and Middle School Students' Advisory Groups, and have facilitated exercises to obtain the views of children and young people.

### 1.7 Interested parties

16. Harrow Council wrote to a wide range of interested parties by letter and email, enclosing the consultation booklet and inviting responses. In accordance with the DCSF School Organisation Unit guidance the information was sent to all interested parties, including: neighbouring local authorities; diocesan authorities; local MPs and elected members; voluntary and community organisations; and Harrow Youth Council. Information about the school reorganisation proposals and the consultation booklet were made available on the Harrow Council website.

## 2. Summary of views from consultation response forms

17. 686 response forms were received from individual respondents, the majority of whom are parents of children attending Harrow schools. The views, comments and information received from hand written response forms were entered onto the electronic system to enable high level reporting and to ensure transcripts of all the comments received are available to Cabinet.

18. Views expressed about the first consultation question: **Do you agree with the proposals to change the ages of transfer in Harrow by creating Infant, Junior, Primary and Secondary Schools in September 2010?**

Yes	No	Not Sure
54.8%	30.0%	15.2%

19. Views expressed about the second consultation question: **Do you agree with the proposals for an individual school?**

Not all individual respondents expressed a view about a specified school. Some respondents specified more than one school when expressing their view. The percentages of views given by individuals when making comments about individual schools are as follows:

**First schools**

Yes	No	Not Sure
45%	39%	16%

**Middle schools**

Yes	No	Not Sure
56%	31%	13%

**Combined schools**

Yes	No	Not Sure
58%	15%	27%

**High schools**

Yes	No	Not Sure
61%	27%	12%

All comments have been made available to Cabinet and are available to view as background information.

**3. Summary of comments from individual consultation response forms**

20. Many comments were made by respondents on the individual consultation response forms. These comments have been transcribed in full, and have been made available to Cabinet.

21. To assist analysis and decision making, the comments have been grouped into eight main theme areas, with twenty-eight sub-theme areas. The theme areas have been identified by officers reading all the comments and grouping those comments that have a common theme. These theme areas contain all the comments made by respondents who are agreeing, disagreeing and not sure about the proposals. High level analysis of these themes is given in Appendix 2.

22. The following paragraphs contain some commentary about the eight main theme areas: School Organisation; Educational; Pupils; Staffing; Implementation in September 2010 logistics/transition issues; Finance/Resources; Buildings; Admissions.

**School Organisation**

23. Those in agreement and disagreement made a similar number of general comments in support or in opposition to the proposals. The most numerically significant theme of those in opposition to the proposals was about not changing an already successful system of school organisation. The most numerically significant theme of those in support of the proposals was about bringing Harrow schools' organisation in line with the neighbouring areas.

### **Educational**

24. The comments made by those in support of the proposals were about the benefit of aligning the school structure with the national curriculum key stages, and resolving what is viewed as a wasted year in Year 7 in the primary sector. Comments made by those in opposition to the proposals were mostly that the proposals would not benefit the children and would not improve educational standards.

### **Pupils**

25. Most of the comments made within this theme were made by those in opposition to the proposals, or not sure, stating the benefits to pupils of the extra year in middle school causing them to be more mature and better able to cope with the transition.

### **Staffing**

26. Most of the comments made within this theme, irrespective of the overall view about the proposals, stated concerns about possible impacts on job security, teacher movement, and whether the high schools would be ready to teach Year 7.

### **Implementation in September 2010 logistics/transition issues**

27. Most of the comments made within this theme, irrespective of the overall view about the proposals, stated concerns about the management of two sets of year groups transferring during the first year, and emphasised the need for adequate planning to minimise the impact on pupils and staff.

### **Finance/Resources**

28. Most of the comments made within this theme, irrespective of the overall view about the proposals, stated concerns about the impact on the budgets of first and middle schools and queried whether there would be sufficient facilities and resources for the schools. Comments were made that the change would be a waste of resources, and about the need for funding during the transition to help schools.

### **Buildings**

29. Most of the comments made within this theme, irrespective of the overall view about the proposals, stated concerns about the size of the high schools and overcrowding, and emphasised the need for planning for adequate facilities to be in place.

### **Admissions**

30. A number of comments were made about choice, with those in opposition expressing concern about reduced options for transfer to neighbouring authorities. Those in support identified increased choice. Comments were made about distance, links and sibling criteria.

## **4. Summary of governing body responses**

31. All school governing bodies were asked to consider the consultation proposals and to give their views. Of the governing body responses received:

<b>Agreed</b>	<b>Disagreed</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>
66%	20%	14%

32. Ten governing bodies stated disagreement with the proposals. Four are first schools, four are middle schools, and two are special schools. The governing bodies of six of the

first and middle schools gave joint reasons, as did the two special schools. The key reasons given by the governing bodies are summarised below:

<b>School</b>	<b>Reasons given</b>
Alexandra	Alexandra and Shaftesbury propose that both schools would run Year 7 classes, with the expectation that children at Alexandra would stay on for Year 7 at Alexandra, and young people moving from mainstream school to special school at the end of Year 6 would have Year 7 at Shaftesbury.
Elmgrove First	<p>Parents think this is a done deal, and many parents do not understand the proposals.</p> <p>To change the system would create turmoil for the next few years.</p> <p>The issue of losing children at Year 6 has not been sufficiently tested as having 6<sup>th</sup> forms in the high schools is very new.</p> <p>Maturity of children moving school at 12 rather than 11.</p> <p>There is a lack of proper preparation.</p> <p>It is unclear what the benefits are for the children.</p> <p>Parents and children will feel very unsettled.</p> <p>Harrow does not get a dip in achievement in Year 7 (which happens when Year 7 is in the secondary sector).</p> <p>Middle Schools are not expected to get any compensation for the loss of funding between Year 7 and Year 3, which for Elmgrove MS would be £90k.</p>
Elmgrove Middle	As above
Grange First	<p>Governors believe that the proposed changes to the age of transfer will have a negative impact on the quality of education delivered in the two schools and were unable to support that proposal.</p> <p>Governors of both schools recognised there would be financial implication with reduced income as rolls decreased and fixed costs for premises in particular remained the same. This would be particularly hard for the first school with the reduction in PAN and loss of a whole year group.</p> <p>The threat and/or the perceived threat to jobs will cause uncertainty for staff who may choose not to wait to see if their job at Grange still exists.</p>
Grange Middle	As above
Stanburn First	<p>If the proposals are agreed by Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• either the provision of a fourth class in each year group (this case should be unchallenged given the high standard of education delivered regardless of levels of ability on entrance)</li> <li>• or the provision of a three class Nursery School with a total cohort of at least ninety children (.this case should be unchallenged given the inadequate provision in the immediate vicinity and the support from parents and local community for a Nursery)</li> </ul> <p>Thus in both cases replacing the pupils and thereby the funding lost due to the move of Year 3 to a proposed Junior School.</p>

School	Reasons given
Weald First	<p>Principal items discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the question of the future financial stability of the school if the proposals are implemented</li> <li>• the educational benefit to the children of moving at a different age</li> <li>• the lack of suitable teaching posts for those staff that are displaced by the proposals</li> </ul> <p>The Governors remained largely unconvinced of the merit of the positive statements that had been made by Harrow Council. The majority of the Governors were clearly of the view that we are unhappy with the current form of the Council's proposals.</p>
Weald Middle	As above
Welldon Park Middle	<p>Our principal concern is with the impact which the proposed changes would have on the budget of the Middle School and with the consequent negative impact on provision for pupils. An almost 40% per pupil reduction in funding for one year group, despite staffing and other costs remaining the same, which will impact on all our pupils. Also concern over the impact on the First School of a relative reduction in per pupil provision since many of the fixed costs will be as high for a proposed reduced roll. This could become an issue for both Governing Bodies in the light of Harrow Council's current amalgamation policy.</p>
Shaftesbury	<p>There would be a significant increase in pupil numbers at Shaftesbury, possibly as many as 40 pupils. The school broadly supports the proposal of a base for Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) pupils and a collaborative 6<sup>th</sup> Form provision as options that would assist with increased numbers. However the school wishes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a flexibility of admissions for pupils from Alexandra School</li> <li>• to continue to retain the current ethos</li> <li>• all pupils to feel part of the school and their needs are appropriately met</li> <li>• recreational and catering arrangements will need to be reviewed</li> <li>• appropriate staff development opportunities are offered</li> <li>• the curriculum offer and class organisation is reviewed, and all subjects are taught in appropriate rooms</li> <li>• the 6<sup>th</sup> Form remains an integral component of the school</li> <li>• the use of Whittlesea Life Skills Lodge is reviewed</li> <li>• consideration is given to rebuilding the school hall as a two storey building</li> </ul>

## 5. Summary of public consultation meetings

33. Attendance at the public meetings was very low. One person attended the meeting on 3 November, and eight attended the meeting on 17 November 2008.
34. Views from the attenders about the proposals were not formally taken, and attenders were encouraged to complete individual response forms. The issues raised by attenders, and the responses given by officers, were recorded and have been made available to Cabinet.

**6. Summary of views from children and young people representatives**

Source	Yes	No	Not Sure
<b>Harrow Youth Council</b>	2 small groups	1 small group	0
<b>High School Student Advisory Group</b>	2 small groups	0	0
<b>Middle School Student Advisory Group</b>	4 small groups 50% by show of hands	1 small group 50% by show of hands	1 small group

35. The majority of views of the children and young people at the representative forums have been in favour of the proposals, and they have raised a number of issues and concerns for further consideration. The forums had small group discussions of three questions:

- Do you agree with the proposals to change the ages of transfer in Harrow by creating Infant, Junior, Primary and Secondary Schools in September 2010, and do you have any comments?
- If the proposals are agreed, what suggestions do you have to ensure that pupils and young people in Harrow are kept informed during the process?
- If the proposals are implemented, what are the priorities for pupils and young people to be in place on 1 September 2010?

The responses and comments have been transcribed and made available to Cabinet and are available to view as background information.

36. Harrow Youth Council held discussions about the consultation proposals at meetings on 24 September and 29 October 2008. Two of the small groups stated agreement with the proposals, and one small group stated disagreement. Comments in favour of the proposals included: it will be easier for children to learn because they can start Key Stage 3 work; it's about time; won't lose children to other boroughs. Comments in disagreement with the proposals included: lack of space in high schools; people come to Harrow just for the difference; too much hassle, and will disrupt learning.

37. The High Schools Students' Advisory Group held discussions about the consultation proposals at meetings on 15 September and 20 October 2008. Two groups of young people were formed for the small group exercise to consider the questions, and an adult group was formed to draw on the views of the adults present. All three groups stated agreement with the proposals. Comments in agreement with the proposals included: the proposals are more positive for the curriculum; positive use could be made of the extra space created in primary schools. Concerns were stated about: more space and resources would be needed at the high schools; the effect of current and future building work on the schools e.g. on exams.

38. The Middle Schools Students' Advisory Group held discussion about the consultation proposals at their meeting on 7 November 2008. Six groups of young people were formed for the small group exercise to consider the questions. Via an initial show of hands, those agreeing and disagreeing with the proposals were evenly split. On the written sheets, four groups ticked that they agreed. One group ticked that they disagreed. The remaining group did not tick either way, and the comments on their sheet were split evenly for and against. Comments in agreement with the proposals



included: more appropriate equipment for Year 7 at high schools; would help students mature more quickly; it would make the teaching flow better. Comments in disagreement with the proposals included: it would make the high schools more crowded; because you wouldn't be prepared for high school; because how are the younger ones going to learn from the older ones.

39. The children and young people at these forums made many useful responses to the other two questions. These responses have been fully recorded and will be considered further if Cabinet decides to implement the proposals.

## **7. Summary of views from interested parties**

40. No written responses have been received from neighbouring local authorities, diocesan authorities, local MPs and elected members.

41. A number of responses, including letters and emails from individuals and responses from pupils, have been received separately from the consultation response forms. High level reports of the views expressed are given in Appendix 2. These responses have been made available to Cabinet and are available to view as background information.

42. A report was considered by the Education Consultative Forum at its meeting on 30 June 2008. Questions were invited, and the forum was asked to consider how it could engage with the process as a representative group and to comment on how stakeholders could be reached effectively. Members requested that they be provided with termly reports to ensure that they remain fully aware of the progress of the project, and recommended that regular communications be made available to all members of the Forum.

43. Presentations have been made to Directors and Headteachers meeting and the Early Years Forum. A report was considered by the Employees' Consultative Forum at its meeting on 11 December 2008.