

Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	23 April 2009
Subject:	Proposals to change the age range of four voluntary aided schools
Key Decision:	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Heather Clements, Director of Schools and Children's Development
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Anjana Patel, Portfolio Holder, Schools and Children's Development
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	<p>Annexe 1 Decision Makers Guidance</p> <p>Annexe 2 Recommendation of the governing body of Krishna-Avanti Primary School</p> <p>Annexe 3 Recommendation of the governing body of St John Fisher Catholic First and Middle School</p> <p>Annexe 4 Recommendation of the governing body of St John's Church of England School</p> <p>Annexe 5 Recommendation of the governing body of St Teresa's First and Middle Catholic School</p>

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

In February 2009 the governing bodies of four voluntary aided schools published statutory proposals to change the upper age limit of the schools. These statutory proposals are separate from the community school reorganisation statutory proposals published by Harrow Council that are the subject of a separate report to Cabinet. This report informs Cabinet about the recommendations of the governing bodies about their proposals, including any representations received, and comments on the proposals in relation to

the statutory guidance for decision makers.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Consider the statutory proposals for the four voluntary aided schools, and the recommendations from the four governing bodies, and to make decisions while having regard to the statutory and non-statutory decision makers guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
2. Approve the recommendations of the governing bodies for each of the separate statutory proposals as follows:
 - i) Krishna-Avanti Primary School to become a one-form entry school voluntary aided Hindu primary school for children aged 4 – 11 years, Reception to Year 6 classes, plus nursery, with a planned admission number of 30 per year and capacity for 210 pupils, plus nursery,
 - ii) St John Fisher Catholic First and Middle School to become a two-form entry voluntary aided Catholic primary school for children aged 4 – 11 years, Reception to Year 6 classes, with a planned admission number of 60 per year and capacity for 420 pupils,
 - iii) St John’s Church of England School to become a two-form entry voluntary aided Church of England primary school for children aged 4 – 11 years, Reception to Year 6 classes, with a planned admission number of 60 per year and capacity for 420 pupils,
 - iv) St Teresa’s First and Middle Catholic School to become a two-form entry voluntary aided Catholic primary school for children aged 4 – 11 years, Reception to Year 6 classes, plus nursery, with a planned admission number of 60 per year and capacity for 420 pupils, plus nursery.

Reason: (For recommendation)

For Cabinet to exercise:

- the local authority’s statutory responsibility in relation to school organisation.
- the decision maker’s responsibility to determine the statutory proposals within two months from the end of the representation period, and with regard to the statutory and non-statutory guidance provided by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).

Section 2 – Report

Introduction

1. Delivering school reorganisation so that schools are in line with the national agenda is a major project of Harrow Council in 2009-10.
2. Cabinet’s commitment to changing school organisation in Harrow, and these voluntary school proposals, are consistent with a range of national and local policies impacting currently on Children’s Services and schools. These include:
 - the aspirations from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) Children’s Plan.
 - outcomes of Every Child Matters.

- the local authority's role as champion for pupils and parents.
 - the council's aspirations to extend and localise services.
3. In January 2009, Harrow Cabinet considered the outcome of the statutory consultation on proposals for community school reorganisation in Harrow and decided to publish statutory proposals that, if approved, would have the effect of establishing infant, junior, primary and secondary community schools in Harrow in September 2010. In a separate report, Cabinet is recommended to approve the statutory proposals for community schools.
 4. January Cabinet noted the outcome of the consultation in respect of these four voluntary aided schools. The governing bodies of the four voluntary aided schools consulted their school stakeholders about their proposals to lower the age limits of their schools. At their request, Harrow Council conducted their consultation of interested parties on their behalf as part of the school reorganisation consultation it was undertaking. The diocesan bodies were consulted. The consultation outcomes indicated support for the proposals of the voluntary aided schools.
 5. Following the publication of statutory proposals by the governing bodies, Cabinet is recommended to approve the separate statutory proposals of each of the four voluntary aided schools.

Options considered

Statutory proposals

6. On 9 February 2009, the governing bodies of these four voluntary aided schools published separate proposals to change the upper age limits of their schools. These four proposals have the same closing date of 23 March 2009 for the representation periods.
7. These four proposals are separate from the statutory proposals published by Harrow Council in February 2009 that are the subject of a separate report to Cabinet.

Representations

8. No representations about their statutory proposals were received by the governing body of Krishna-Avanti Primary School.
9. No representations about their statutory proposals were received by the governing body St John Fisher Catholic First and Middle School.
10. Three representations about their statutory proposals were received by the governing body of St John's Church of England School. These were observations: one commented that the children were still too young at Year 7 to move to High School; the other two were in support of the proposals.
11. No representations about their statutory proposals were received by the governing body of St Teresa's First and Middle Catholic School.

Recommendations of the governing bodies

12. All four of the governing bodies recommend that Cabinet approve their statutory proposals as published. The letters from each governing body are attached to this report in Annexes 2 – 5. .

Implications of the Recommendations to Cabinet

13. It is the Director of Schools and Children's Development's recommendation to Cabinet that the proposals for the four voluntary aided schools are approved. This is based on the following evidence:

Decision Makers Guidance

14. Annexe 1 of this report outlines the relevant criteria from the Decision Makers guidance, and contains officer commentary in relation to them. It is considered that the proposals for each of the voluntary aided schools meet the criteria and will serve to improve educational standards, and reflect the wishes of the majority of parents.
15. Overall, the proposals of these four voluntary aided schools are effectively to regularise the age range of the schools in accordance with existing practice. Only St John's Church of England School actually has Year 7 pupils, and the normal pattern is that less than 20 of a possible cohort of 60 Year 6 children stay on for Year 7 at the school. Because of this, the implications for the four schools are considered to be manageable by the schools. These proposals are not linked to the proposals for the community schools, and therefore Cabinet may make decisions about them irrespective of decisions made about the community school proposals.
16. The framework for taking forward the implementation work if Cabinet approves the community school proposals has been reported to Cabinet. The four schools will be considered as appropriate within the workstreams, and the voluntary aided sector is represented on the Stakeholder Reference Group. A protection factor has been agreed so that there is no reduction to the voluntary aided schools formula funding as a result of changes in the age of transfer that Cabinet may approve.
17. There is no identified detrimental impact on any of the equality groups. Overall the alignment of Harrow community schools with the voluntary aided sector and neighbouring boroughs will enhance the equality of opportunity and choice for young people.

Legal comments

18. The proposals must be determined by Cabinet within two months of the close of the representation period which ended on 23 March 2009. Cabinet must have regard to the Secretary of State's guidance when reaching its decision. In considering proposals, Cabinet can decide to: reject the proposals; approve the proposals; approve the proposals with a modification; or approve the proposals subject to them meeting one of several conditions specified in the legislation.

Financial Implications

19. There are no financial implications for the Council arising from these proposals.
20. The governing body of Krishna-Avanti Primary School does not identify any essential capital costs arising directly from their proposals, as there is sufficient accommodation. The school will transfer to a new school building in September 2009. Given that the School is opening incrementally the governing body does not anticipate there being any costs associated with the proposed changes. The school opened with its Reception class in September 2008, and will add its Year 1 class and Nursery in September 2009.

21. The governing body of St John Fisher Catholic First and Middle School does not anticipate any significant costs because the school is already running as an age 4 – 11 years school. Any minor costs would be funded from the school budget.
22. The governing body of St John's Church of England School anticipates that there are minimal cost implications to these proposals as historically they have a small number of year 7 pupils. The school is proactively managing historic budget pressures resulting from the school amalgamation and aims to manage this change through natural wastage. There are no essential capital costs arising directly from these proposals, as there is sufficient accommodation.
23. The governing body of St Teresa's First and Middle Catholic School considers there are no essential capital costs arising directly from these proposals, as there is sufficient accommodation. The Governing Body considered the issue of costs and decided that the cost of change will be minimal and will be absorbed within the school budget.

Performance Issues

24. Delivering school reorganisation so that Harrow's 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.
25. 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.

Harrow's 2007 - 08 Results

KS1	Actual	Target	National
Reading L2+	87.0%	Not Set	84.0%
Writing L2+	83.0%	Not Set	80.0%
Maths L2+	91.0%	Not Set	90.0%
Science L2+	88.0%	Not Set	89.0%
KS2	Actual	Target	National
English L4+	82.0%	85.0%	81.0%
Maths L4+	79.0%	85.0%	78.0%
Science L4+	87.0%	Not Set	88.0%
KS3 (Provisional)	Actual	Target	National
English L5+	77.6%	82.0%	73.0%
Maths L5+	79.5%	82.0%	77.0%
Science L5+	74.2%	78.0%	71.0%
GCSE	Actual	Target	National
% 5+A*-C	69.5%	68.2%	65.3%
% 5+A*-C inc E & M	57.7%	58.0%	47.6%

Environmental Impact

26. There is no significant environmental impact associated with this decision, which is essentially to regularise the situation that already exists at the schools.

Risk Management Implications

27. There is no significant risk to the Council associated with this decision. If Cabinet does not decide these proposals within two months of the end of the representation period, the proposals must be referred to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator for decision.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name:	Emma Stabler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date:	26 March 2009		
Name:	Helen White	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date:	7 April 2009		

Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name:	David Harrington	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Divisional Director (Strategy and Improvement)
Date:	24 March 2009		

Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

Name:	Andrew Baker	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Divisional Director (Environmental Services)
Date:	23 March 2009		

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact:

Johanna Morgan, Head of School Organisation Strategy
020 8736 6841

Background Papers:

- Paper 1 DCSF School Organisation Unit guidance for decision makers
www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolorg
- Paper 2 Cabinet Report on the Proposals for School Reorganisation in Harrow 15 January 2009
- Paper 3 Consultation document Proposals for Harrow Schools
- Paper 4 Cabinet Report on the Strategic Approach to School Organisation 19 June 2008
- Paper 5 Complete statutory proposals for each school (to make an arrangement to view the complete proposals contact Harrow Council on 020 8416 8733)