

Annexe A of EdCF report on School Reorganisation - 29 June 2009

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| Meeting: | Cabinet |
| Date: | 23 April 2009 |
| Subject: | Proposals for School Reorganisation in Harrow |
| 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: | Annexe 1 Decision Makers Guidance Annexe 2 Proposals for Individual Schools |

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

Statutory Proposals were published in February 2009 that could effect the reorganisation of schools in Harrow to establish infant, junior, primary and secondary schools from September 2010. This report informs Cabinet about the representations received on the proposals published for community schools by Harrow Council, and comments on the proposals in relation to the statutory guidance for decision makers.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Consider the proposals for community school reorganisation in Harrow, and the one representation, and to make decisions while having regard to the statutory and non-statutory decision makers guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
2. Agree the Director of Schools and Children's Development's recommendation in paragraph 10 to approve the linked community school proposals for school reorganisation across Harrow that will

establish:

- i) separate first schools (Reception to Year 3) to become infant schools (Reception to Year 2) as proposed for individual schools in Annexe 2i;
- ii) separate middle schools (Year 4 to Year 7) to become junior schools (Year 3 to Year 6) as proposed for individual schools in Annexe 2ii;
- iii) combined first and middle schools (Reception to Year 7) to become primary schools (Reception to Year 6) as proposed for individual schools in Annexe 2iii;
- iv) high schools (Year 8 to Year 13) to become secondary schools with 6th form provision (Year 7 to Year 13) as proposed for individual schools in Annexe 2iv.

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 is 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 school reorganisation in Harrow. The consultation outcomes indicated support for the school reorganisation proposals, and Cabinet 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.

Options considered

Statutory proposals

4. Statutory proposals were published on 9 February 2009 in relation to 52 community schools to change the relevant upper and lower age limits. Further linked statutory proposals to expand eight community high schools were published on 23 February 2009.

5. All sixty statutory proposals in relation to community schools are linked, and had the same closing date of 23 March 2009 for the representation periods.
6. On 9 February 2009, the governing bodies of four voluntary aided schools published separate proposals to change the upper age limits of their schools. These four proposals had the same closing date of 23 March 2009 for the representation periods, and are the subject of a separate report to Cabinet.

Representations

7. One representation has been received in relation to the published statutory proposals for community schools. This representation is from the Weald First & Middle Schools' Federated Governing Body. The representation is a full and detailed letter addressed to the Director of Schools and Children's Development expressing increasing concern about the impact the proposals will have on the educational and financial health of both schools. The letter sets out the governing body's concerns about the financial, educational, staffing and governance implications of the proposals for the two schools. The issues raised in the letter, and officer comments in relation to them, is contained in Annexe 1 under 'Other issues'.
8. The areas of concern contained in this representation are important and correlate with established workstreams of the Stakeholder Reference Group. The issues raised will be taken to the Stakeholder Reference Group for full consideration of the concerns, and to ensure that all necessary guidance and support is provided to schools if Cabinet decides to approve the statutory proposals.
9. A letter dated 2 April 2009 has been received from the Corporate Director of Education & Children's Services, London Borough of Hillingdon. This letter has been received outside the formal representation period. The letter states no objection to the proposals, and wishes the local authority and schools every success with this exciting change and hopes that these sentiments can be included in this report.

Implications of the Recommendation

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

Decision Makers Guidance

11. 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 community schools meet the criteria and will serve to improve educational standards, reflect the wishes of the majority of parents, and will provide opportunities to enhance educational and community provision.

Timescale for Implementation

12. If Cabinet decides to approve the proposals there will be four academic terms to undertake the implementation work. A framework is already in place to progress the work, including officer resources and a stakeholder reference group.

Resources

13. The Harrow Transforming Learning Team is a small dedicated officer team that focuses on this project and other education projects such as Building Schools for the Future and the Primary Capital Programme. A School Organisation Officer Group meets monthly to coordinate officer activity and ensure work is progressed. The meetings of these groups are chaired by the Director of Schools and Children's Development.
14. The Stakeholder Reference Group includes representative headteachers and governors from all the school sectors, together with elected members and union representatives, and is chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services. Workstreams have been established, most of which have representative sub-groups.
15. This framework has proved effective in developing proposals and implementation strategies for this project, and in the consultations about the proposals. It has ensured the engagement of key stakeholders and promoted a collaborative and shared approach to resolving the issues that arise in a project of this scale. There has been progress in the work of all the workstreams, and two key areas of activity to date have been school finances and workforce strategy.

School finances

16. A representative sub-group has developed principles and proposed a model to address the school finance issues that would arise from these proposals. This model has been endorsed by the Stakeholder Reference Group and was agreed by the Schools Forum in January 2009.
17. The model is affordable and includes limited two year transitional protection for eligible primary sector schools, and a protection factor so that voluntary aided schools do not lose any formula funding as a result of changes in the age of transfer.
18. The school finance sub-group has now been disbanded, and the Schools Forum will address any further school finance issues.

Workforce strategy

19. A representative workforce strategy sub-group has been meeting regularly to consider the workforce issues that may arise from these proposals. Scoping work has been undertaken into the likely implications. Tools to assist workforce planning have been distributed to schools, and a simple survey format has been developed to enable termly monitoring of progress with workforce planning. An initiative called 'Springboard' has been developed to facilitate the matching of staff interests with career development opportunities arising in schools. A series of Headteacher Seminars have been arranged to support schools and to promote the sharing of issues and potential solutions.

Equalities impact

20. The Equalities Impact Assessment was included in the January Cabinet report, and will be reviewed throughout the project. 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

21. The Local Authority has a statutory entitlement, under s19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, to issue statutory proposals in respect of school reorganisation. The statutory proposals were published following the decision of Cabinet on 15 January 2009. The proposals must be determined by Cabinet within two months of the closure 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.
22. External legal advisers were appointed to support officers with the school reorganisation project. The lawyers appointed are experts in education law and were appointed jointly by Children's Services and Legal Services. They have advised on all the statutory processes including the preparation of consultation materials, consultation processes and mechanisms, drafting and publication of the statutory proposals and all reports to Cabinet.
23. This appointment was made to ensure actions have been undertaken in compliance with legal requirements. The external lawyers are satisfied that the statutory processes completed are in accordance with legislation as defined by statutory and non statutory guidance.

Financial Implications

24. As the funding for schools is based on pupil numbers, the school budgets for primary sector schools will fall with a corresponding increase in secondary school budgets. To assist the primary sector to manage this reduction in funding a 2 year transitional funding model will provide some funding for schools with balances below the recommended maximum level.
25. The proposals assume that, given the long lead in time, schools will be able to work together to manage excess staffing in the primary sector and there will be no redundancies. If there are redundancies these would be an additional cost and would be a charge against both the schools budget and the Council.
26. There are capital costs arising directly from these proposals. The local authority has undertaken a site review and completed a School Site Development Plan for each community high school to ensure that there is potential to provide sufficient accommodation for the proposed increase in pupil numbers. The Development Plan identifies the quantity and possible location for the permanent accommodation and internal modifications that would be required for the additional Year 7 students. The development plan also incorporates the additional temporary accommodation that would be required to accommodate the school's students in September 2010.
27. The funding for the temporary accommodation is available from DCSF Targeted Capital Grant, part of Modernisation Funding, and was agreed by Cabinet in February 2009 as part of the Children's Service's Capital Programme.

28. The Council has submitted an Expression of Interest to the DCSF for funding through the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) initiative. This will provide funding for the site development of the high schools, including permanent building to replace the temporary accommodation provided to enable Year 7 pupils to be accommodated. There will be a separate report to Cabinet about the framework for delivery of the BSF programme.

Performance Issues

29. 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.
30. 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

31. Adverse environmental impact associated with this decision is likely to be low.
32. The temporary accommodation provided onto high school sites would be procured through the partnership agreement with Kier. Sustainability will comply with national and local guidance in accordance with the predicted lifespan. However, the temporary accommodation should be insulated to a good standard and efficient heating systems should be installed.
33. The permanent accommodation offers an opportunity to deliver units to a high standard that will help the council in meeting its Carbon Reduction Commitment, improve its performance under NI 185 (CO2 reduction from local authority operations), and contribute to achieving its LAA

target for NI 186 (Reduction of per capita CO2 emissions in the LA area).

34. In both temporary and permanent accommodation, particular attention should be paid to ensure that the units do not require mechanical cooling during hot weather.
35. Within these proposals no schools will be changing their site, and the distribution of school sites would remain as it currently is. The Year 7 cohort of students would move into high schools, and it is likely there would be a greater reliance by these students on public transport for travel to and from school. If this leads to a reduction in the volume of cars on the school run, this will help to deliver two LAA targets: NI 186 (see above) and NI 198 (Children travelling to school – mode of transport usually used). It may also help to improve NI 167 (congestion – average journey time per mile during the morning peak).
36. Travel planning by the schools would need to consider any potential impacts of the changes of Year Groups. Transport for London representatives are kept informed through liaison meetings. No advance planning is expected to be needed, and any impact on public transport routes would be assessed at the time and adjustments made as necessary.
37. It is expected that the move of Year 7 pupils from primary sector schools would create space at the schools that can be used to promote the roles of schools at the heart of their communities. Opportunities would be sought to enhance localised service provision for Harrow's communities.

Risk Management Implications

38. The risk register for the school reorganisation project was included in the January Cabinet report, and is subject to on-going review and development by the School Organisation Officer Group and was discussed at the Education Consultative Forum on 27 January 2009. It contains a high level risk for each of the workstreams.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

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|-------|---------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 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



on behalf of the
Divisional Director
(Strategy and
Improvement)

Date: 24 March 2009

Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

Name: Andrew Baker



on behalf of the
Divisional Director
(Environmental
Services)

Date: 20 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 Representation response from Weald First & Middle Schools' Federated Governing Body, and letter from London Borough of Hillingdon
- Paper 3 Cabinet Report on the Proposals for School Reorganisation in Harrow 15 January 2009
- Paper 4 Consultation document Proposals for Harrow Schools
- Paper 5 Cabinet Report on the Strategic Approach to School Organisation 19 June 2008
- Paper 6 Complete statutory proposals for each school (to make an arrangement to view the complete proposals contact Harrow Council on 020 8416 8733)