

REPORT FOR: Education Consultative Forum

Date of Meeting:	10 November 2010
Subject:	Future Operating Model of School Improvement Services
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Heather Clements, Director of Schools, Quality Assurance and Commissioning
Portfolio Holder:	Brian Gate, Portfolio Holder Schools and Colleges
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 – progress report to Children’s Services Programme Board

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the current position of the project to develop a Future Operating Model of School Improvement Services in Harrow.

Recommendations:

The Forum is requested to consider the proposals described in the report and in the Children’s Services Programme Board progress report (Appendix1). A copy of the full consultation paper will be provided to Forum members as soon as it is available.

Reason: To contribute to proposals that would support the future improvement of Harrow’s schools.

Section 2 – Report

The update report to the Children's Services Programme Board (Appendix 1) describes the drivers that have led to the proposed establishment of a Harrow Schools Improvement Partnership (HSIP). In particular the reduced expectations of the Local Authority as a provider of School Improvement services and the much reduced funding available to the Local Authority for such services has made the development of a new way of working essential.

It is proposed that the Council retains a very small Quality Assurance and strategic school improvement function, mainly relating to schools causing concern.

Any local provision for traditional school improvement activities will only exist in the future if established with the support of schools. In essence it proposes that schools drive the establishment of the Harrow Schools' Improvement Partnership with the Local Authority as a key partner.

The Partnership would manage a range of school improvement activities, determined by the Partnership itself, that would support future improvement in schools. Those activities would be provided by a number of different possible providers, e.g. schools themselves, current Local Authority school improvement staff, external experts. Detailed proposals about the HSIP are set out in the consultation paper (to follow).

The research phase of this project has suggested that headteachers wish to pursue this idea and a consultation document will be distributed to all schools in November. Schools will be asked to signal their level of commitment to the establishment of HSIP. If there is enough commitment at this stage, Cabinet in December will be asked to agree, in principle, that officers work with schools to develop the HSIP, for full implementation by September 2011.

An inevitable consequence of this new way of working is that fewer school improvement staff will be employed directly by the Local Authority. The impact of this on staff currently employed in the Council's Achievement and Inclusion Service will be determined by the eventual shape of the HSIP. Any consequent employment implications will be dealt with under the Council's "Protocol for Managing Change".

Financial Implications

The school improvement service is heavily reliant on funding from specific grants and area based grant, both of which are not expected to continue in 2011/12. In the future it is anticipated that the service will be largely funded by schools and will work in partnership with the schools to develop services that schools wish to buy into. It is proposed that the Local Authority will make a significant financial contribution in the early years of the Partnership, partly to commission remaining statutory duties related to schools causing concern, Early Years provision and training, and Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT)

support and induction. This is being considered as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

The council funding will be lower than the current budget and the subsequent savings (£450,000) will contribute to the Council's savings targets in 2011-12 and in future financial years.

There is a risk of staffing reductions, with potential costs, in the Achievement and Inclusion Service depending on the HSIP's decisions on maintaining some current Local Authority staff in the Future Operating Model. Any subsequent costs will be considered as part of agreeing the project.

Risk Management Implications

Risks associated with this project, particularly the threat of significant staffing reductions, are recorded in the Programme Board Risk Register.

Equalities implications

An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out before the proposed Future Operating Model is reported to Cabinet.

Corporate Priorities

The proposed arrangements for the development of a HSIP would support the future improvement of Harrow's schools. This would enhance the work of schools at the heart of the community and maintain the current focus on narrowing the attainment gap for vulnerable pupils.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name:	Emma Stabler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date:	22 October 2010		
Name:	Helen Ottino	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date:	27 October 2010		

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Adrian Parker, Head of Achievement and Inclusion Service –
0208 736 6503

Background Papers: None

Appendix 1

Children's Services Programme Board Report 13.10.10

Project Title:

Future Operating Model for School Improvement services

Lead Officer:

Adrian Parker

Project Outline:

To re-configure Harrow Council's School Improvement Service in the light of:

- 1) changing national expectations, and resourcing, of Local Authority School Improvement services;
- 2) local expectations of the Council's School Improvement service;
- 3) contribution to budget reductions, and;
- 4) contribution to "New Deal for Residents" programmes.

It is proposed that the Council retains a very small Quality Assurance and strategic school improvement function, mainly relating to schools causing concern.

At this stage, there remains uncertainty about the Local Authority's future role around the accountability of schools, currently discharged through School Improvement Partners. This will probably be determined as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR).

Any local provision for traditional school improvement activities will only exist if established with the support of schools in what is, currently, being described as the "Harrow School Improvement Partnership" (HISP)

The outcome of the consideration of these strands will have significant implications for current School Improvement Partner, advisory and support staff within the Achievement and Inclusion (A&I) Service.

Currently, the proposals do not include other teams within A&I as they are all very largely funded outside Council budgets. Further consideration is being given to the placing of those teams (Teachers' Centre, EMAS, BHEBS, HTS) in any new organisational structure.

Update:

In the light of known national and local developments around School Improvement services, and known and projected funding reductions, a research paper has been drafted that describes a possible way forward for the School Improvement service in Harrow. (Copies available) In essence it proposes that schools drive the establishment of a "Harrow Schools' Improvement Partnership" with the Local Authority as a key partner.

The research paper has now been:

- circulated to A&I staff
- shared with Headteacher Executives
- discussed at CSB
- discussed with a large number of headteachers at Heads and Directors (30 September), with a small representative group of primary headteachers and with all special school headteachers.

A meeting with High School Headteachers' Executive is planned after half term as they wish to discuss it after the CSR announcement.

Feedback from headteachers suggests that:

- there is a desire to establish some sort of local school improvement infrastructure
- school to school support is and will be important but needs a framework for schools to make best use of that support
- schools would want a core and permanent provision of, possibly, (i) strategic guidance and advice, (ii) expert and experienced quality assurance (iii) limited curriculum advice and support
- schools want to be involved in defining and establishing that core provision, possibly retaining some existing Local Authority staff but also looking wider where that expertise does not currently exist, e.g. Special School leadership
- additional provision for Governor Services, NQT induction and possibly other areas would be supported by schools, but would need to be decided with schools in the next stages of development
- some current LA provision might be re-configured to better meet the needs of schools, e.g. Special School support, EYFS
- the management and governance model, building on the most efficient and effective aspects of the G2O core group and Schools Forum, appears to offer a way forward
- schools recognise and value particular experience and expertise in current Local Authority staff but also know that the current provision is unaffordable going forwards. They also recognise the employment sensitivities that this demands in discussing future developments.
- funding for any future arrangements is a crucial issue, particularly in the forthcoming years that will be affected by the CSR announcement and resultant policy
- they acknowledge the Local Authority's commitment to establishing some future framework, not the least through a funding contribution that has not been made available by many other Authorities
- a transition and development stage through to full implementation from September 2011 is a realistic timescale

Next Steps:

- formal proposal consulted on - November 2010 – aimed at establishing level and scope of schools' commitment to this initiative
- Cabinet paper – December 2010
- Protocol for Managing Change (PFMC) paper to follow Cabinet approval for whatever way forward is agreed. This probably needs to be aligned

with re-organisation proposals and PFMC in other areas of Children's Services.

Progress:

Headteachers are increasingly aware of and committed to the need to develop a new model of local school improvement support.

The research phase has been helpful in discussing the issue with a significant number of headteachers.

The consultation period over a future operating model will run into the preparation of the Cabinet paper and will not be finished before the early draft of the Cabinet paper is required.

Key dates:

	Sept - Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan-August 2011
Project phase	Research phase	Consultation phase	Agreement phase	Implementation period
Key activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with headteachers to research acceptance of principles, proposed model, etc • Director's meeting (30/9/10) • VSS process • Proposal review (October) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal consultation with members, schools and unions on way forward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal to Cabinet (December) • Consequent A&I restructuring paper, in line with "Protocol for Managing Change" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal implementation-fully by 1/9/11