
REPORT OF SCHOOL ORGANISATION COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD ON 2 NOVEMBER 2004

Chair:	* Councillor Gate	
Councillors:	* Miss Bednell * Branch * Ismail (3)	* Jean Lammiman * Anjana Patel * Ray
Church of England:	* Mr G Edwards	† Reverend P Reece
Roman Catholic Church:	† Mr J Coyle † Mr M Murphy	* Ms M Roe
Learning and Skills Council:	† Mr T Masters	
Schools (Parent/Secondary):	* Mrs C Millard	
Schools (Parent/Primary):	† Ms J Tushaw	
Schools (Headteachers):	† Mrs M Arnold Mr D A Jones	* Mr B A Robertson
Schools (Co-optee and Special)	* Mrs P Langdon	
HCRE:	† Mr P Pawar	
Adviser:	* Mr B Leaver	

* Denotes Member present
(3) Denotes category of Reserve Member
† Denotes apologies received

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL
PART II - MINUTES
57. Re-establishment of Committee (Council Side Membership), Re-appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair:

RESOLVED: That (1) Councillor Gate, a member of the Local Education Authority Group, be appointed Chair of the Committee for the remainder of the 2004/2005 Municipal Year.

(2) Mrs C Millard, a member of the Schools Group, be appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee for the remainder of the 2004/2005 Municipal Year.

58. Attendance by Reserve Members:

RESOLVED: To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Member:-

<u>Ordinary Member</u>	<u>Reserve Member</u>
Councillor Stephenson	Councillor Ismail

59. Declarations of Interest:

Mr Brian Leaver, the Adviser to the Committee, wished it to be noted that he was the Chair of Governors for the Moriah Jewish Day School, which had a Statutory Notice to be determined by the Committee.

RESOLVED: That (1) the above be noted; and

(2) the following declarations of interest be noted:

<u>Member</u>	<u>Nature of Interest</u>
Councillor Branch	Declared a personal interest in that he is a Governor at St George's Roman Catholic Primary School.
Councillor Miss Bednell	Declared a personal interest in that she is a member of the Post 16 Steering Group.

60. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

RESOLVED: That (1) in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the following agenda items be admitted to the agenda by virtue of special circumstances and grounds for urgency stated:

<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Special circumstances/Grounds for Urgency</u>
9. Statutory Notice – Moriah Jewish Day School	This report was not available at the time the agenda was printed and circulated. Members were requested to consider this item in order to determine the Statutory Proposal.
10. Place Planning Issues in Harrow	This report was not available at the time the agenda was printed and circulated. Members were asked to consider the report, as this meeting was the last opportunity for the Committee to comment on the draft response to the DfES Consultation before the deadline in December 2004.

(2) that all items be considered with the press and public present.

61. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2004, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

62. **Public Questions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were put at the meeting under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rule 18.

63. **Petitions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions were received at the meeting under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rule 15.

64. **Deputations:**

RESOLVED: To note that no deputations were received at the meeting under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rule 16.

65. **Statutory Notice - Moriah Jewish Day School:**

The Committee received a report requesting determination of a Statutory Notice from the Moriah Jewish Day School, which proposed to reduce the age range of the school from 3 to 12 years (Nursery to Year 7) to 3 to 11 years (Nursery to Year 6). It was noted that the school did not currently have any Year 7 pupils. Throughout the consultation period and since the publication of the proposal on 9 September 2004, there had been no objections to the proposal.

It was explained that in November 2003 the school had informed parents of Year 5 pupils that it would be embarking upon a consultation process to determine the feasibility of reducing the age range. The legal adviser informed the Committee that the Statutory Notice was a legally valid document and the process of consultation and publication had fulfilled the legal requirements.

RESOLVED: To approve unanimously by group vote, in accordance with paragraph 9(a) of the Constitution and terms of reference of the School Organisation Committee, the reduction in age range of the Moriah Jewish Day School with effect from September 2005.

66. Place Planning Issues in Harrow:

The Committee received a report of the Director of Strategy (People First) which provided an update on place planning issues in Harrow, and on a consultation being undertaken by the DfES on Proposals for Foundation Schools, Expanding Popular and Successful Schools and Adding Sixth Forms. The Committee was asked to note that the Governors of St John's First and Middle Schools were consulting on the proposal to amalgamate the schools. If the proposal were agreed, Statutory Notices would be published, after which the School Organisation Committee would be asked to determine the proposal at a meeting in January 2005. Members were informed of other proposals, including the reduction of admission numbers at Rooks Heath High School and the extension of age range of Shaftesbury High School. The latter proposal did not require a Statutory Notice due to the number of pupils affected and since the change was consistent with the 14-19 policy, previously endorsed by Cabinet.

The second part of the report dealt with the DfES consultation, and detailed the areas that would have a significant impact on Harrow Council's ability to manage school place planning and potentially implement a change in the age transfer and post 16 provision. The Committee was asked to give its comments on the consultation for inclusion in the Council's response to the DfES. It was added that the consultation papers had also been sent to the Heads and Chairs of Governing Bodies for their comments.

The Committee discussed the main areas of concern. A Member questioned the feasibility of defining a school as successful or popular and noted that these measurements could fluctuate over time. It was added that the expansion of several popular and successful schools would be likely to have an adverse affect on other schools in the locality.

Concerns were raised over the shortened notice period that the consultation proposed to introduce. The proposals were not felt to provide a sufficient timeframe in which to conduct a thorough and meaningful consultation with parents, neighbouring schools, the LEA and the School Organisation Committee. It was anticipated that this could lead to the fragmentation of the partnership between neighbouring schools. This proposal was also expected to have a negative impact on equality of opportunity, given the potential for schools to make changes that would result in some pupils not being offered appropriate places.

The legal adviser noted that the 2002 Education Act changed the process for proposals relating to admission numbers and actually diminished the School Organisation Committee's role, therefore reducing the control that the LEA had over school places in the Borough.

RESOLVED: That (1) the report be noted; and

(2) the comments and concerns outlined above be included in the Council's response to the DfES consultation.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.32 pm, closed at 8.25 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR B E GATE
Chair