

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

Meeting:	Education Consultative Forum
Date:	26 th June 2003
Subject:	School Re-Organisation and Post-16 in Harrow
Key decision:	N/A
Responsible Chief Officer:	Executive Director – People First
Relevant Portfolio Holder:	Portfolio Holder for Education and Lifelong Learning
Status:	Part 1
Ward:	All
Enclosures:	Annex A - Comments and Discussions from the Post 16 Study Feedback Sessions Annex B - JOINT STRATEGIC GROUP – Draft Terms of Reference

1. Summary/ Reason for urgency (if applicable)

- 1.1** In April 2003 Members received an Information Item detailing the impact of the decision of the DfES not to support a PFI bid for the re-organisation of schools in Harrow. This report outlines up-dated information from the DfES feedback, interim detail of the consultation on capital strategy and developments within Post 16 provision.

2. That the Committee note the Report

REASON:

The potential re-organisation of schools in Harrow is a major policy development that will impact across the Council and all stakeholders. To a considerable extent the DfES and others including the Learning and Skills Council determine the timescale. The Council's initial indicative timescale proposed during the Debate held in Spring/Summer 2002 will need to be revised significantly. This report provides Members with current information and progress.

3. Policy Context (including Relevant Previous Decisions)

3.1 In July 2002, Members' received a report detailing the outcome of a debate on school organisation in Harrow and agreed recommendations that officers would develop options for consultation to address the major issues raised through the debate:

- A change in the age of secondary transfer from 12+ to 11+;
- Increasing choice for Harrow students at post 16;
- Strengthening provision at the foundation stage.

3.2 In addition, Cabinet requested that officers continue discussions with DfES officials on resourcing the significant capital works that a change in the age of secondary transfer would require. An Information Item was presented to Cabinet in April 2003.

4. Relevance to Corporate Priorities

4.1 School re-organisation and Post 16 proposals will contribute to the Corporate priority of Harrow as a centre of Lifelong Learning, by contributing to raising attainment and improving the management of school places to meet demand, thereby ensuring investment in buildings for education and community purposes.

5. Background Information and options considered

5.1 Following the announcement of the DfES that Harrow PFI's bid for Cluster investment and re-organisation was unsuccessful Officers have met with the DfES for feedback.

Meeting with DfES for Feedback

5.2 Officers and Headteachers from Rooks Heath and Canons High Schools met with DfES officials for feedback. It was reiterated that the process had been very competitive, with only 15 out of 56 bids made being supported. Those bids that were supported were each limited to £60m PFI credits. Harrow's bid which totalled between £87m and £152m had not scored sufficient points as part of the evaluation and was therefore not selected. The main reason given was that the brief did not address some of the key issues set out in the Government's education agenda. Although the education content of the bid was highly regarded, it was not possible in Harrow's submission to give the same emphasis to issues relating to urban and rural deprivation, increasing pupil's very low attainment and addressing failing or underachieving schools in the way that successful bids were able to do.

5.3 The DfES official explained some of the emerging issues from the consultation on the new approach to capital Building Schools for the Future. The consultation will close at the end of May and although no decisions have been made, it would appear that there maybe a type of bidding process and that the Joint Venture Company approach to procurement is likely to feature in some form. If the timetable is maintained, there should be guidance published during the Summer with submissions required in the Autumn.

5.4 It was stressed about the need for Harrow Members to have some reassurance from the DfES that capital funding would be available for a school re-organisation before a consultation on options would be undertaken. Officers and headteachers expressed their concerns about the proposed timescales in respect of further delays to the process. It was suggested that Harrow developed a strategy for meeting with Ministers, to discuss school re-organisation and capital requirements. In addition, it was proposed that the Harrow bid should be reviewed to ensure that it adopted an approach that would meet the Government's policy objectives of securing investment in Secondary Schools.

School Re-Organisation Next Steps

5.5 It is proposed that officers continue to work with Members to develop a strategy for meeting with Ministers in June/July.

5.6 Work will continue on developing options to implement a school re-organisation, to identify sites and an implementation strategy. Part of this will include the continuation of informal discussions with secondary headteachers and Chairs of Governors about school capacity and capital requirements. These discussions will be used to inform the development of a bid to the DfES for capital as required by the guidance due to be published in the Summer.

Post 16

5.7 As part of the work to inform and develop Post 16 provision in Harrow, a study was commissioned jointly with the London West Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and Harrow. The study included gathering a wide evidence base involving discussions with stakeholders, for example, college principals and headteachers, a Year 10 Student Survey, Year 6 Pupil Survey and the analysis of data on destinations, attainment, progression etc. Through the discussions with stakeholders models for Post 16 provision were assessed against criteria. From this assessment and further analysis a series of recommendations to progress developments in Post 16 provision are being developed.

5.8 The findings of the study have been disseminated to stakeholders and participants in the study. The feedback from these sessions is summarised in Annexe A. Officers are working with the LWLSC to consider the recommendations and address the Post 16 agenda.

Post 16 Next Steps

5.9 In partnership with the London West LSC a Joint 14-19 Strategy Steering Group will be established. The Steering Group will comprise representatives from Colleges and Schools in Harrow, other providers including for example, Connexions. The Group will be chaired jointly by the Chief Executive of the LSC and the Executive Director (People First) in the first instance. The draft terms of reference are in Annexe B. As there are currently 14-19 working groups within Harrow. For example the 14-19 Curriculum Group, the Pathfinder Steering Group. It is proposed that the Joint Steering Group will encompass these groups to ensure that there is a coherent approach.

Post 16 Timescale

- 5.10** An indicative timescale is detailed in the table below. The Post 16 Strategy Steering Group will develop this timescale and work programme further.

Establish Post 16 Strategy Steering Group and agree work programme and timescale. Dissemination of Post 16 Report including consultation on models of provision for Post 16	June 2003 to September 2003
Report to Cabinet on outcomes of consultation and proposals for options to implement developments at Post 16	October/ November 2003
Consultation on options for implementation including provision details, locations and timescale	November to January 2004
Report to Cabinet outcomes including recommendations for implementation and statutory process timescale.	February 2004
Determination of Statutory Notices	May 2004
Implementation	September 2005

Consultation

- 6.1** A wide ranging consultation will be undertaken on any proposals or options for Implementation to change the age of transfer to 11 plus and increase choice in Post 16 provision in Harrow.

7. Finance Observations

- 7.1** At this stage there are no financial implications

8. Legal Observations

- 8.1** At this stage there are no legal observations.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1** The School Re-Organisation and development of Post 16 in Harrow has potential to achieve a step change in provision across the Borough. There are challenges in maintaining a common timescale, but it is important that momentum and support for change generated by the Debate on School Organisation is embraced. It is intended that a further report is presented to Cabinet in July outlining the DfES capital strategy and a timescale for consultation on options for implementation if appropriate. The Joint 14-19 Steering Group will be established and the report will detail progress and a timescale for action.

10. Background Papers

- 10.1** Cabinet Report July 2002
Education, Arts & Leisure Report January 2002
Governors' Consultation Paper January 2002
Cabinet Information Item April 2003

11. Author

- 11.1** Geoff Wingrove, Head of Strategy and Resources 0208 424 1513.