

EDUCATION CONSULTATIVE FORUM

MINUTES

7 NOVEMBER 2011

Chairman:	* Councillor Brian Gate	
Councillors:	* Husain Akhtar * Christine Bednell (1) * Krishna James (4)	* Janet Mote * Raj Ray Krishna Suresh
Teachers' Constituency:	Ms A Drew Ms C Gembala Ms J Lang	* Ms L Money † Ms L Rowlands Ms L Snowdon
Governors' Constituency:	Mrs C Millard * Mr N Ransley	* Mr K Sochall Ms H Solanki
Elected Parent Governor Representatives:	* Mrs A Khan	
Denominational Representatives:	* Mrs J Rammelt	* Reverend P Reece

* Denotes Member present
(1) and (4) Denote category of Reserve Members
† Denotes apologies received

57. Appointment of Members

RESOLVED: That the appointment of Mrs Aamirah Khan as a Secondary Sector Parent Governor Member of the Education Consultative Forum.

58. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

Ordinary Member

Councillor Camilla Bath
Councillor Zarina Sheikh

Reserve Member

Councillor Christine Bednell
Councillor Krishna James

59. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Ms Lyons and Ms Rowlands.

60. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

Agenda Item 10 – Primary School Expansion Programme and Related School Organisation Issues

Councillor Christine Bednell declared a personal interest in that she was a governor at one of the primary schools identified for expansion as part of the proposals. She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered.

Agenda Item 12 – Information Report – Outcomes of Rising 5 and 11+ Allocations for 2011-12

Councillor Brian Gate declared a personal interest in that he was a Member of the Harrow Admissions Forum. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered.

Agenda Item 10 – Primary School Expansion Programme and Related School Organisation Issues; Agenda Item 11 – Information Report, Local Authority Strategic Role for Education in Harrow – Update Paper; Agenda Item 12 – Information Report – Outcomes of Rising 5 and 11+ Allocations for 2011-12; Agenda Item 13 – Information Report, Academies Update; Agenda Item 14 – Information Report, Harrow Pupils’ Attainment and Progress: Summer 2011 (Provisional); Agenda Item 15 – Information Report, The New Inspection Framework for Schools: January 2012.

Mrs Aamirah Khan declared a personal interest in that she was a parent governor at Bentley Wood High School. She would remain in the room whilst the matters were considered.

61. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2011 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

62. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

63. Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were put, or petitions or deputations received.

RESOLVED ITEMS

64. Primary School Expansion Programme and Related School Organisation Issues

An officer introduced a report which provided information on the Council's Primary School Expansion Programme and related school organisation issues including proposals for a secondary school strategy, updates on free schools, academies and school admissions.

The officer reported on a number of issues to the Forum including:

- this was significant piece of work being conducted by the Council;
- in July 2011, Cabinet had agreed a school expansion programme as part of the School Place Planning Strategy;
- a consultation was launched on 10 October 2011 and would close on 11 November 2011. This consultation sought views on proposals to permanently expand eleven schools from September 2013;
- a representative group of primary school Headteachers had been established to work in partnership with officers to develop the Primary School Expansion Programme. The group had been of great assistance to officers;
- the Government had launched the Priority School Building Programme to rebuild schools in the poorest conditions across the country. The Council had submitted applications for eleven schools, some of which were those highlighted for expansion. An outcome on these applications was awaited;
- it was anticipated that the increase in pupil numbers and expansion proposals would have an impact on High Schools. The projections indicated that there would be a small shortfall of Year 7 secondary school places in September 2015. Officers had met with the High Schools to discuss options on how to address this issue, which was still ongoing;
- seven High Schools had converted to academy status on 1 August 2011. The Council was currently developing its offer of services for purchase by all schools;
- the Government had announced that new state funded schools (Free Schools) would open from September 2012 onwards. One of those proposed under this scheme could be located in Harrow;

- at the end of the consultation, responses would be analysed and a report presented back to Cabinet in December 2011. This report would recommend those schools to be taken forward to the statutory process for permanent expansion.

In response to a query raised by a Member of the Forum, an officer commented that if there were any concerns regarding provision of certain subjects as a result of the proposals, this should be raised as part of the consultation. Now that schools were not teaching Key Stage 3, there was a possibility that some subjects would be taught in general classrooms as opposed to specialist classrooms.

During the discussion on this item, Members of the Forum made a number of comments including:

- officers had shown professionalism and dedication in working on the proposals. This had been recognised by other school governing bodies across the borough;
- this was positive piece of work being conducted within the borough.

Officers also reported that there had been a recent announcement made by the Government to make £500 million available for authorities nationally to deal with provision of additional school places. The Council had only received £126,000 which was relatively low compared to a neighbouring borough who had received £24 million. The Chairman suggested that the Forum should write to the Department for Education (DfE) querying the amount provided especially as the Council had performed excellently in relation to schools and education.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Chairman, on behalf of the Forum, write to the Department for Education querying the amount of funding provided in comparison with other neighbouring boroughs;
- (2) the report be noted.

65. INFORMATION REPORT - Local Authority Strategic Role for Education in Harrow - Update Paper

The Forum received a report providing an update about the future strategic role of the Council for education in Harrow. An officer reported that the Education Bill was currently being discussed in Parliament and further details had been released on the Department for Education's (DfE) White Paper on the Importance on Teaching. Additionally the outcome of the DfE's consultation on the Green Paper on Special Educational Needs (SEN) was awaited. These all contained important provisions which outlined changes to schools and impacted upon the Council.

The officer additionally reported:

- the key areas relating to the future role of the authority included securing sufficient places for pupils, championing the interests of pupils and communities by challenging under performance, co-ordinating admissions, ensuring fair access to all schools and addressing proposals from the Government's SEN and Disability Green Paper;
- the Admission Forum would be considering its function due to legislative changes. This could potentially have an impact on the scope and role of the Education Consultative Forum;
- Local Authority governors had been appointed to the academies in consultation with the political groups on the Council;
- the Council had responded to a first consultation on the national funding formula in relation to schools. This would be followed by a second consultation. Feedback was expected at the end of 2011 but any changes to the funding formula were expected to take effect from September 2013.

During the discussion on this item, Members of the Forum raised a number of issues which were responded to as follows:

- any changes to the national funding formula would affect academies but not Sixth Form Colleges. These were funded separately;
- further information was awaited from the DfE on how the Local Authority was to report on schools causing concern. The Council had developed a support plan for weaker schools, which the DfE had acknowledged. There were also discussions ongoing relating to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee holding academies to account. The Chairman confirmed that he would be in favour for Ward Councillors to also be aware of any issues in schools within their wards;
- academies were developing data streams which the Council could access. A data sharing protocol was required which would be mutually beneficial especially for funding decisions. It was expected that there would be some information which academies would automatically have to provide to the Council;
- it was not yet sure in which format academies would publish their GCSE and A-Level results, although it was acknowledged that it would be in their interests to publish these to attract future pupils.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

66. INFORMATION REPORT - Outcomes of Rising 5 and 11+ allocations for 2011-12

The Forum received a report setting out details of the outcomes relating to the allocation of places for the 2011-12 academic year. An officer reported that in September 2011, there were no pupils in Harrow who had applied for a reception place in time without an offer. Eight reception bulge classes had been opened for September 2011 which had proved to be accurate.

The officer also reported that:

- there had been an increase in the number of parents given their first preference in relation to reception places to 79%. For High School places this figure was 81%;
- at two High Schools within the borough, there had been large oversubscription which had meant that a number of parents had not been successful for their first preference.

During the discussion on this item, Members of the Forum raised a number of queries, which were responded to by officers as follows:

- if a pupil was admitted to a school as a result of a successful admission appeal, the school would receive the associated funding for this pupil, the following September from when they were admitted;
- whilst the outcome of an appeal could not be discussed in relation to Cannon Lane School, this did not necessarily mean that the appeal had been successful on the grounds of maladministration. There were a range of other factors that could have been relevant;
- when considering the Primary School Expansion Programme, popularity at schools was a key issue.

The Forum extended their thanks to officers for their work and the key achievement of ensuring that all pupils who had applied for a reception place in time had been offered a place.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

67. INFORMATION REPORT - Academies update

An officer introduced a report which provided the Forum with an update on the conversion of seven High Schools to academy status. The officer reported that:

- the seven High Schools that converted to academies legally came into existence on 1 August 2011. A significant amount of work had been conducted between officers and the academies to assist the conversion. There were also legal issues to address relating to

defining the sites and the transfer of employees under the TUPE regulations;

- in relation to financial implications, it was expected that there would be a reduction in funding provided for schools by the Government. Money designated for the academies would now be paid to them directly;
- it was not yet clear on how exactly the revised funding would be allocated. Further consultation was being conducted and this may not be clear until the beginning of 2012. This was an important issue for the Council as other school services relied on the funds provided and was a significant income stream for the Council.

The Chairman commented that it was important that funding provided by the Government was equitable amongst all schools.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

68. INFORMATION REPORT - Harrow Pupils' Attainment and Progress: Summer 2011 (Provisional)

An officer introduced a report which set out provisional results for Harrow pupils in the relevant key stage assessments in 2011. An officer explained that Harrow was a high performing local authority in relation to pupil attainment. 87% of schools had been adjudged to be good or better and all secondary schools were either good or outstanding. The officer highlighted several issues which included:

- in relation to Early Years Foundation Stage, Harrow had improved at a higher rate than the national average, although there was still some further improvements to be achieved;
- results at Key Stage 1 had been positive. Attainment amongst boys had improved which had contributed towards Harrow now being ranked 19th amongst Local Authorities from 39th the previous year;
- progress at the Key Stage 2 level was broadly in line with the national average;
- Harrow had been ranked 23rd nationally for adding value from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2;
- achievement at Key Stage 4 had continued to be significantly above the national average. Harrow had achieved its highest ever results;
- Harrow had been ranked 20th in the country for its results even though with lower results they had been ranked 12th. This demonstrated fluctuations in the ranking scheme;
- for the new English Baccalaureate, Harrow was ranked 11th nationally;

- Harrow was ranked 1st in London for low levels of unauthorised absences in secondary schools and 4th nationally;
- for the percentage of learners who made expected progress in English, Harrow was ranked 14th nationally., 8th in outer London and 11th in London as a whole;
- for the percentage of learners who made expected progress in maths, Harrow was ranked 7th in the country, 3rd in Outer London and 4th in London as a whole;
- Harrow was ranked 2nd in the country for the percentage of candidates achieving two or more passes of A Level equivalent qualification.

During the discussion on this item, Members of the Forum raised a number of issues which the officers responded to as follows:

- if parents felt that a headteacher was not performing adequately, they should raise this as an issue with the governing body of the school. Parents could also ask Ofsted to perform an inspection;
- officers were conducting an investigation into why there had been a fall in the level of attainment at Reading and English at Level 5. It was believed that this may be in relation to the script used in the examinations which was not user friendly for young people. Better understanding of the data was required;
- information relating to vocational courses was included in the data presented. It was important to note that in future years it was expected that this data would not feature in final reports.

The Chairman commented that overall the data was positive and the Harrow School Improvement Partnership (HSIP) was working hard to bring improvements where required. Another Member of the Forum commended the fact that Harrow had one of the lowest rates of unauthorised absences in Primary Schools nationally.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

69. INFORMATION REPORT - The New Inspection Framework for Schools: January 2012

The Forum received a report which set out the implications of the new OFSTED inspection framework and evaluation schedule for schools from January 2012 which was subject to Parliamentary approval when the Education Bill received Royal Assent.

An officer reported that:

- the White Paper 'The importance of Teaching' put forward a view that future OFSTED inspections would be measured by four key judgements:
 - Achievement;
 - Quality of Teaching;
 - Leadership and Management; and
 - Behaviour and Safety;
- inspectors would conclude by making a judgement on overall effectiveness. This would take into account children's' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, emphasise the effectiveness of the leadership of teaching and the appropriateness of the curriculum to meet learners needs;
- the new inspection framework amounted to an important change which would provide greater independence to the inspectors. Additionally schools could have similar judgments on the four key areas but have a different judgement on overall effectiveness;
- during the last school year, the new framework had been trialled in 148 schools. The feedback was one of general satisfaction with the new approach;
- parents would have an opportunity to utilise an online questionnaire regarding a school. However it was unlikely that an inspection would take place solely on the feedback received through this tool;
- in the new framework, schools that were judged to be outstanding in their last inspection would no longer be subject to routine inspections. Most of those who were judged as good would have an inspection within five years. Schools deemed to be satisfactory would be subject to an inspection in a three year cycle. If there were any issues concerning behaviour or safeguarding this time scale could be shortened. The new framework meant that some schools not improving fast enough would have greater attention paid to them;
- schools would not be exempt from the subject and themed surveys that OFSTED carried out. Special schools and Pupil Referral Units would still have a three year cycle of inspection. Special schools that were judged to be outstanding in two previous inspections, and had the same headteacher in place, may also have their inspection deferred but were not exempt from routine inspections;
- there was now a greater focus on teaching. Views would be sought from all stakeholders on whether there an a real impact on learners.

During the discussion on this item, Members of the Forum raised a number of queries, which were responded to as follows:

- some schools would benefit from the new inspection regime whilst others would not. Additionally thematic surveys could trigger an inspection depending on its outcome;
- there was a greater emphasis on teaching. This was the most important aspect in relation to schools. Whilst the inspection regime had changed, the Council's School Improvement Service would now focus on teaching and leadership;
- it was believed that there were resources to work with all schools on the inspection regime particularly those where improvement was required in teaching. Next year there would be a review of the effectiveness of the support provided.

The Chairman commented that he had received excellent feedback regarding the role of the Harrow School Improvement Partnership (HSIP). It was now important for the new inspection regime to be communicated to parents to ensure they understood that the new regime focused on raising standards and was not to be perceived as a decline in schools; performance.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

70. Date of Next Meeting

RESOLVED: That the next meeting of the Forum would take place on 25 January 2012.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.35 pm, closed at 9.05 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR BRIAN GATE
Chairman