

**REPORT FOR: EDUCATION
CONSULTATIVE FORUM**

Date of Meeting:	25 January 2012
Subject:	Proposals for Constitutional Changes to Education Consultative Forum
Key Decision	No
Responsible Officer:	Catherine Doran, Corporate Director Children's Services
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Brian Gate, Portfolio Holder for Schools and Colleges
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	No
Enclosures:	Annexe A – Summary of Education Act provisions Annexe B – Proposed Terms of Reference for the Education Strategy Consultative Forum (ESCF).

Section 1 – Summary

This report provides the Education Consultative Forum (EdCF) with an update on the Education Act 2011 and proposals for consideration on the constitution for EdCF.

Recommendation:

EdCF are invited to consider and agree for recommendation to Cabinet;

- 1 the proposed name Education Strategy Consultative Forum,
- 2 the proposed scope and function,
- 3 the proposed composition.

Section 2 – Report

Introduction

1. This report proposes changes to the terms of reference and composition of the Education Consultative Forum, now that the Education Act 2011 is coming into force.

Background

2. At its meeting in April 2011, the Education Consultative Forum received an information report about the *Local Authority's Strategic Role for Education in Harrow* outlining some of the changes to schools and the Council arising from the Education Bill 2011. The report also initiated the discussion about the future role of the Education Consultative Forum.
3. A report was presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 19 May 2011, which included an update from the Education Consultative Forum. Cabinet agreed in principle to the education consultation mechanisms being reviewed and revised and recommendations being brought back to a future meeting of Cabinet. Cabinet requested a further report be received in the Autumn to confirm the progress in the following areas:
 - Decision Making and Consultation Forum
 - Strategic Role for Schools
 - Support services for Schools.
4. Up-date reports were presented to the Forum at their meetings in June and November 2011 providing commentary on the emerging Local Authority education role. The report provided details of the current position in Harrow, matters for consideration and the up-dated position in October 2011. This role forms the core of the work undertaken by Education Strategy and School Organisation within Children's Services. Officers are working to ensure that the Local Authority's strategic responsibilities are delivered in the context of new relationships with schools and commissioned service providers.

Education Act 2012

5. The Education Bill received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011. The Local Government Information Unit's (LGIU) policy briefing on the Education Act is provided at Annexe A.
6. Some provisions of the Act came into immediate force; including the repeal of the requirement to appoint school improvement partners and the new OFSTED Framework. Other provisions come into force from 15 January 2012. The commencement of other provisions has yet to be published. It is understood that the abolition of arms length organisations will coincide with the end of the financial year, and the Admissions Forum is no longer required from February 2012. It is proposed that these changes are implemented from 1 May 2012, or a date that statutory requirements are abolished, whichever is the latest.

Education Consultative Forum

7. The current function of the Education Consultative Forum (EdCF) is to act as a medium for communication between the Executive, teaching employees, governing bodies, other councillors, denominational representatives and other interested parties on general education matters. EdCF provides a forum for questions on the provision and administration of education to be considered and to advise on questions referred to them by the Executive. Members of EdCF are from the constituent groups.
8. In the context of the Education Act and the strategic role for the local authority, officers have developed some proposals that would change the constitution of EdCF. The intention of the proposed changes is to define the scope of the Forum and to ensure that there is appropriate representation from the school and local community.

Proposals for Change

9. The proposed terms of reference are provided at Annexe B. A summary of the changes are outlined as follows:

Name

10. It is proposed to rename the Forum Education Strategy Consultative Forum (ESCF). This is to acknowledge that the context for the Forum is to support the new strategic role of the local authority.

Functions, Objectives and Scope

11. It is proposed that the broad function and objectives of EdCF will remain with the new Education Strategy Consultative Forum but will have a more defined scope. ESCF will consider all matters relating to the provision of education and schooling in Harrow in three broad policy areas:
 - School Organisation and Admissions – securing the supply of sufficient school places, including nursery to 19 provision in an increasingly autonomous context with a range of providers, and ensuring fair access for admission to school.
 - Education Excellence – fulfilling the role of the local authority to promote high standards in education and tackling underperformance through school improvement and intervention.
 - Provision for vulnerable children – including those with special educational needs and disabilities, exclusions and alternative provision, and children missing from education in the context of the changes to local authority central services and changes to admission arrangements.
12. It is proposed that ESCF also receives reports on the allocation and expenditure of revenue and capital funding, with particular reference to impact on the three policy areas. As there is no longer a requirement to have an Admissions Forum, ESCF will consider admission arrangements in line with the new Admissions Code of Practice.

13. ESCF is not a decision-making body but an advisory panel able to make recommendations to Cabinet.

Composition

14. It is proposed that the membership of ESCF is changed from that of EdCF to reflect the wider scope of the forum. It is proposed that within the school and governors constituent groups there are representatives from the academies/free school sector. In addition, that there are representatives from the private and voluntary early years sector.

Timescales and Next Steps

15. Changes to the Forum's constitution require a decision by full Council. Before being presented to Council, proposals will need to be considered by the Council's Constitution Review Working Group and by Cabinet. It is intended to present the proposed changes to EdCF to Cabinet in March 2012 and Council in April 2012.
16. In accordance with this timescale, the first meeting of the newly constituted ESCF would be in the summer term 2012.

Section 3 – Financial Implications

17. There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report as the review has been undertaken from within existing resources and no changes to services are proposed.

Section 4 – Corporate Priorities

18. These considerations will support the Council's Corporate Priorities for 2011-2012:
- United and involved communities: a Council that listens and leads
 - Supporting and protecting people who are most in need

Name:	Emma Stabler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date:	5 January 2012		
Name:	Sarah Wilson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date:	6 January 2012		

Section 5 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Adrian Parker, Head of Education Strategy and School Organisation, Children's Services, 020 8736 6522

Background Papers:

Report to Education Consultative Forum on November 2011

<http://moderngov:8080/documents/g60658/Public%20reports%20pack,%20Monday%2007-Nov-2011%2019.30,%20Education%20Consultative%20Forum.pdf?T=10>

Report to Education Consultative Forum on 27 June 2011

<http://www2.harrow.gov.uk/documents/s89167/INFORMATION%20REPORT%20-%20Local%20Authority%20Strategic%20Role%20for%20Education%20in%20Harrow.pdf>

Report to Cabinet on 19 May 2011 - Local Authority's Strategic Role for Education in Harrow

<http://www2.harrow.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=249&MId=60264>

The Importance of Teaching: The Schools White Paper 2010

<http://www.education.gov.uk/b0068570/the-importance-of-teaching/>

The Education Bill 2011

<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/departmentalinformation/educationbill/a0073748/education-bill>