

MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL ORGANISATION COMMITTEE

12 June 2003

COUNCILLORS: *Bax, *J.C. Brown, *Santry, *Harris and Laird.

SCHOOL GOVERNORS: *Mr T Fyles, *Ms L Singleton, Mr G Day, and *Ms B Simon.

LONDON DIOCESAN BOARD FOR SCHOOLS: Mrs D. Hansen, and *Mr L Haward

WESTMINSTER DIOCESE EDUCATION SERVICE: Ms S Livesey, Mr P Murphie, and *Mrs S Berkery-Smith.

LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL: Ms L Boereboom

SOCI. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR (Agenda item 1)

RESOLVED: That Councillor Bax be appointed Chair of the Committee for the remainder of Municipal year 2003/2004.

SOC2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR (Agenda item 2)

RESOLVED: That Mrs S Berkery-Smith be appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee for the remainder of Municipal year 2003/2004.

SOC3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda item 3)

Apologies were received from Councillor Laird, Ms Livesey, Mr Day and Mrs Hansen.

SOC4. URGENT BUSINESS (Agenda item 4)

Members agreed to admit item 7 the Proposed Expansion of Alexandra Park School as urgent business as the report had been despatched late but needed to be considered in the best interests of the school and pupils. The report was late as the period of consultation on the proposals had not expired until 4 June.

SOC5. MINUTES (Agenda item 5)

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19 September 2002 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

SOC6. APPOINTMENT OF SECRETARY TO THE COMMITTEE (Agenda item 6)

RESOLVED: That Christine McLean, Head of Local Democracy, be appointed as the Secretary to the Committee for the Municipal Year 2003/04.

SOC7. PROPOSED EXPANSION OF ALEXANDRA PARK SCHOOL (Agenda Item 7)

As agreed at item 4 this item was admitted by the Chair as an urgent item.

Mr Haward was concerned that the papers for the meeting had not been despatched in accordance with the requirements of the constitution ie seven working days in advance of the meeting. This was not in dispute but it was acknowledged that members of the Committee had received advance notice of the meeting and business to be transacted by means of a letter despatched on 28 May 2003. Mr Haward further asserted that the papers when received did not include all that was required eg. statistics on sixth form results, information on standard numbers broken down by age group. Neither had he received a formal copy of the proposal together with the statutory notice.

The Committee were advised that the original proposal had in fact been sent out with the consultation document and that all papers which were required to be circulated, had been. Mr Haward advised that whilst he was not seeking to challenge the validity of the proceedings he suggested that the Deputy Director of Education obtain legal clarification on the points raised and if necessary seek the ratification of any decisions taken at the meeting by the subsequent meeting of the Committee. The Deputy Director apologised to the Committee if papers had not reached them and, in particular, if other members had not received some earlier papers. No other members commented at this stage.

Members considered the report of the Director of Education in respect of the proposed expansion of Alexandra Park Secondary School. The proposal was to increase by 2 forms of entry for years 7-11 and to change the character of the school from an 11-16 establishment to one which provides education to pupils aged 11-18. We noted the two stage consultation exercise both informal and statutory which had taken place and that the proposed provision formed part of the strategy to meet needs as detailed in the approved School Organisation Plan.

Four objections had been received to the proposals and these were appended to the report. It was noted that of those responding to the consultation document 88% were in favour of the school becoming an 11-18 establishment.

A successful bid had been made to the DfES to cover the cost of providing the buildings and this had been included in the Education Capital Programme.

Councillor Harris requested information in relation to the approximate cost of the two forms of entry and the sixth form. He was advised that in capital terms the overall cost was approximately £8M. Revenue costs were more difficult to precise about although to some degree they would be offset by a bid for additional monies as a result of the increased numbers. The Deputy Director confirmed, as stated in the report, that the Education Capital Programme supported the cost of the project and that the revenue implications would be met via the overall schools budget and from the allocations from the Learning and Skills Council London North (LSCLN).

We noted that the LEA believed there would be no detrimental effect upon other schools and that the expansion afforded an opportunity for children to remain in the Borough to pursue their post 16 studies. The school had met with the LSCLN following its initial observations and we received confirmation that the LSCLN was now convinced of the robustness and uniqueness of the curriculum to be offered to students. Collaborative arrangements with other schools would be pursued were the expansion approved although initial discussions had been held with Fortismere school which had expressed an interest in purchasing some level 2 provision. The College of North East London (CONEL) had indicated that it supported the proposals as they would enhance provision in the Borough.

Councillor Harris was concerned at the timing of the proposals given that the LSCLN was about to undertake a review of 16-19 provision. The LSCLN advised that whilst they were to undertake the review it would not impact on Alexandra Park School given the very limited catchment area from which its students were drawn, being between 0.6 - 0.7m from the school.

In terms of evidence of support for the scheme the school cited its own consultation which of a response rate of 94%, 96% were in favour of the proposals. The school were keen to establish strong links with the Fortismere-Highgate-Hornsey consortium and would be negotiating the supply of particular options. The Head Teacher of Hornsey School for Girls advised that the schools had enjoyed a close working relationship and would continue to do so.

RESOLVED: That the School Organisation Committee unanimously support the alteration of Alexandra Park school by an increase by 2 forms of entry for years 7 - 11 and by a change to the character of the school from an 11 - 16 establishment to one which provides education to pupils aged 11- 18.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judy Bax". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

JUDY BAX
Chair