

Committee: Scrutiny Committee for Education

Date: 23 October 2002

Title: Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for Education held at 10.00 am at Pelham House, St Andrews Lane, Lewes, East Sussex

Subject: Minutes

Attending: Barnes Field Kramer Livings McPherson Whetstone

Mr J. Taylor (C of E Diocese)

Chief Officer Denise Stokoe

Scrutiny Lead Officer Peter Davidson

Legal Adviser Jonathan Ruddock-West

12. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

12.1 RESOLVED - to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12 June 2002.

13. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

13.1 Councillor Garvican, Councillor Mrs Waite and Mr T. Campbell (RC Diocese).

14. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

14.1 Councillor Barnes declared a personal, non -prejudicial interest in item 20 below, by virtue of being Chairman of the Bexhill and Rother Primary Care Trust

15. REPORTS

15.1 Reports on the matters dealt with in the minutes are contained in the minute book.

16. PUBLIC RELATIONS SUPPORT TO BEST VALUE AND SCRUTINY

16.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Legal and Community Services, on which members' views were sought.

16.2 The report was noted with the following comments:

1. At present, quotes relating to the work of Project Boards are attributed to Scrutiny Committee Chairmen. It would help increase public appreciation of the work of Project Boards if this policy was revised to allow quotes to be attributed instead to Board Chairmen.
2. In the event of a change of policy which allowed Project Board Chairman to give quotes, consideration should be given to amending the County Council's protocol on publicity.

3. To help ensure that a Best Value Review attains the maximum publicity feasible, each Project Board should have a standing item on the agenda of its first meeting on how public relations issues should be dealt with.

17 COUNCIL PLAN: QUARTER 1 MONITORING REPORT

17.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive.

17.2 Members thought it inappropriate that the Council Plan from the first quarter of the year was not considered until October. They also questioned the practice of amending or deleting targets on the Plan which, it was thought, undermined the value of the Plan.

17.3 Members also made a number of specific points about the Plan to which the Director responded. In particular, the Director undertook to report to a future meeting of the Committee on progress with the Connexions Service.

18 SCRUTINY REVIEW OF 6 TERM YEAR CONSULTATION

18.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee and were informed by the Scrutiny Lead Officer, that the primary aim of the review was to investigate the how best the consultation process might be carried out. The Committee were also informed that date of the next update to the Committee was dependent upon progress.

18.2 The Committee noted the report.

19 SCRUTINY REVIEW OF EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP

19.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chairman of the Project Board. 19.2 Members were informed that the final report would be put before the next meeting of the Committee on 10 December 2002. 19.3 The Committee noted the report.

20. DRUGS AND ALCOHOL EDUCATION GUIDELINES AND SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION GUIDELINES

20.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Education and received presentations by Marilyn Stephens and Mandy Forster respectively on the draft versions of the Sex and Relationship Education Guidance and the Drugs and Alcohol Education Guidance Documents.

20.2 The Director of Education informed the Committee that both guidance documents were in the process of being updated by the Personal, Social and Health Education Advisory Team and that the versions before the Committee were a second draft that would be sent out to schools as part of a consultation process ahead of the publication of the final version in early 2003. Members were given copies of the consultation questionnaire that had been sent to schools.

20.3 Members made a number of comments on the drafting of the guidance documents which were taken into account by the Director of Education. Members were also invited to return any more detailed comments they may have to the PSHE team in the questionnaire provided.

20.4 RESOLVED - to note the report and asked for an update to be provided to the Committee at its meeting on 24 July 2003.

21 RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

21.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Education.

21.2 The Director of Education responded to a number of points raised by Members. In particular, the Director undertook to provide Members with details of the results of a revised exit questionnaire that had been sent to teachers who left between August 2001 and August 2002.

21.3 RESOLVED - to note the report and the results of the recruitment and retention initiatives.

22 BEST VALUE REVIEW OF HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT

22.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Education.

22.2 The Scrutiny Lead Officer informed the Committee that as school transport procurement will now be undertaken by the new Central Procurement Unit of the Transport and Environment Department it would now fall to the Transport and Environment Scrutiny committee to monitor performance in this area.

22.3 Members raised a number of points with the Director, including a concern about the Service Level Agreement between the Education and Transport and Environment Departments. In particular, Members emphasised that they thought it important that they should be able to monitor the performance of the Transport and Environment Department's CPU service to the Education Department.

22.4 RESOLVED - to note the report.

23 THE FORWARD PLAN

23.1 The Committee considered the Forward Plan for the period from 11 November 2002 to 25 February 2003.

23.2 The Committee asked the Director of Legal and Community Services to consider how the Forward Plan could be edited in future so as to include only education related items which had yet not been considered by the time of the Scrutiny Committee meeting.