

Committee: **Scrutiny Committee for Education**

Date: 17 September 2003

Title: Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for Education held at 9.30 am at Pelham House, St Andrews Lane, Lewes, East Sussex

Subject: Minutes

Attending: Barnes Field Garvican Kramer Livings McPherson Mrs Waite and Whetstone

Mr A Campbell (RC Diocese)
Mr J Taylor (C of E Diocese)
Mrs S Maynard (parent-governor)

Councillor Simmons, Lead Cabinet Member for Education, and Councillor Lock were also in attendance

Chief Officer Denise Stokoe, Director of Education and Libraries

Legal Adviser Jonathan Ruddock-West, Assistant Director of Law and Performance Management

Scrutiny Lead Officer Peter Davidson

15 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

15.1 **RESOLVED** - to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24 July 2003:

15.2 In respect of minute 5.4 (4), the Committee accepted that given the preliminary nature of the work completed to date, it would be more appropriate to invite representatives of the LSC to the next meeting on 26 November 2003.

15.3 On minute 12.2, the Committee accepted that scrutiny reviews of, 'vulnerable children', 'family learning' and 'PFI arrangements in relation to Peacehaven Community School' were not feasible, although any future scrutiny of PFI contracts should take into account and learn from the Peacehaven Community School PFI contract.

16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

16.1 Councillor Woodall.

17 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

17.1 Councillor Barnes declared a potential non-prejudicial interest in item 19 below by virtue of his being Chairman of the Bexhill and Rother Primary Care Trust.

17.2 Councillor Field declared a non-prejudicial interest in item 19 by virtue of her being a member of the Governing Body of Claverham Community College.

17.3 Councillor Mrs Waite declared a non-prejudicial interest in item 21 by virtue of her being a member of the Chartered Institute of Librarians and Information Professionals.

18 NOTIFICATION OF URGENT MATTERS

18.1 The Chairman informed the Committee that he proposed to take as an urgent item of business the resignation of Mrs J La Coste, a parent-governor representative on the Scrutiny Committee for Education.

18.2 The Chairman informed the Committee that he proposed to write to Mrs La Coste and thank her for her contribution to the work of the Committee and for her commitment to remain, until its work had been completed, as a co-opted member of the Attendance Review Board.

18.3 The Chairman also asked the Director of Law and Performance Management to take steps to recruit a new parent-governor representative on the Committee. Furthermore, and with a view to providing potential applicants within an insight into the main aspects of the position, Mrs S. Maynard also proposed to write an outline describing the role of the parent-governor on the Committee.

18.1 RESOLVED – to (1) write to Mrs La Coste thanking her for her contribution to the work of the Committee and for her decision to continue her work with the Attendance Review Board.

(2) request the Director of Law and Performance Management to take steps to recruit a new parent-governor.

(3) accept Mrs Maynard's offer to produce an outline on the role of the parent-governor on the Committee with a view to aiding the recruitment process

19 HASTINGS AND ROTHER 16+ REVIEW PRELIMINARY REPORT

19.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chairman of the Scrutiny Review Board.

19.2 The Committee discussed the invitation by the Chairman of the Committee for the Lead Cabinet Member for Education, Councillor Simmons, to address the Committee. Members agreed that if the Chairman of the Committee invited a Cabinet Member to address the Committee, then in future the Director of Law and Performance Management should inform all members of such prior to the meeting.

19.3 The Chairman of the Scrutiny Review Board informed the Committee that the Review Board would continue to meet and would report back to the Committee at its next meeting on 26 November 2003.

19.4 RESOLVED – to (1) note the comments of the Scrutiny Review Board;

(2) approve the continuation of the scrutiny review; and

(3) ask the Director of Law and Performance Management to ensure that if a Cabinet Member is invited to address the Committee then members of the Committee are given prior notice of this.

20 SCRUTINY REVIEW OF SIX TERM YEAR

20.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chair of the Scrutiny Review Board and was informed that the final report should be available for the Committee at either the March or June meeting in 2004 dependent upon when the Director of Education and Libraries was able to announce the term times for the academic year 2005/06.

20.2 The Chairman invited Mr Steve Marsh, Manager, Policy and Performance Review, to address the Committee. Mr Marsh informed the Committee that an anomalous result had been discovered in the data collected in the responses to the consultation from Headteachers. The discovery had been made as the report was due to be circulated to Members and as a result there had not been enough time to correct the error. Consequently, Mr Marsh made the following alterations to the data on Headteachers' preferences in paragraph 1.5 of the report verbally:

In favour of a three term year (the status quo)	30%
In favour of the six term year proposals	53%
No preference expressed	17%

20.3 The Committee asked the Director of Education and Libraries to accept a more consistent and rigorous approach to the presentation of results in future.

20.4 RESOLVED – (1) to note the consultation process, recognise the thoroughness of the approach and the savings made against the budget.

(2) dependent upon the timing of the Director of Education and Libraries' announcement about term times for the academic year 2005/06, to invite Mr Steve Marsh to attend a meeting of the Committee in either March or June of 2004.

21 EAST SUSSEX LIBRARY SERVICE – POSITION STATEMENT

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

21.1 The Chairman invited Mrs Alison Merriman, Acting Head of the Library Service, to address the Committee. Mrs Merriman informed the Committee that the East Sussex Library Service was making good progress towards meeting most of the standards set out in the Annual Library Plan. However, Public Library Standard 3.1 (opening hours per thousand population) would prove difficult to meet as this was a target that was not appropriately applied to an authority with a more rural population.

21.2 Mrs Merriman also indicated to the Committee that there were errors in paragraph 1.1 of the covering report. These were that the permanent addition to the book fund was £150,000 and not the £100,000 quoted and that the £50,000 allocated to opening hours is a permanent addition to the Library Service budget and not the one-off payment indicated in the report.

21.3 Members thanked Mrs Merriman for her presentation and proposed that the Director of Education and Libraries should consider arranging training for Members in

recognition of the fact that the Committee has the additional new role of scrutinising the Library Service.

21.4 RESOLVED – to note progress towards meeting the Public Library Standards.

22 SCRUTINY SCOPING REVIEW OF GOVERNORS RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND TRAINING

22.1 The Committee considered the final report of the Scrutiny Scoping Review of Governors Recruitment, Retention and Training and thanked the Review Board for their work on the report.

22.2 The Committee made a number of comments about the report which the Director of Education and Libraries indicated would be taken into account. In particular, the Committee thought that it would aid governor recruitment if all Members of the County Council were informed electronically of school governor vacancies. The Committee also noted some minor typographical errors in the report.

22.3 RESOLVED – (1) to approve the scoping report and its conclusions;

(2) to ask the Director of Education and Libraries to consider the feasibility of informing electronically all Members of the County Council of school governor vacancies.

(3) to ask the Director of Law and Performance Management to ensure that the final version of the report for the Minute Book was amended to correct the minor typographical errors the committee had noted.

23 FORWARD PLAN

23.1 The Committee considered the Forward Plan for the period 1 September 2003 to 31 December 2003.

23.2 RESOLVED - to note the Plan and to request that the Director of Law and Performance Management that the co-opted Members of the Committee are provided with copies of the Bus Strategy report and the Children's and Young People's Strategic Plan that are scheduled to go before Cabinet on 21 October 2003.