

Committee: Scrutiny Committee for Education and Libraries

Date: 16 September 2004

Title: Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for Education and Libraries held at 10.00 am at County Hall, St Annes Crescent, Lewes, East Sussex

Subject: Minutes

Attending: Barnes Field Kramer McPherson Whetstone Woodall

Mr T Campbell (RC Diocese)
Mr J Taylor (C of E Diocese)
Mr S Gregory (Parent Governor)
Mrs S Maynard (Parent Governor)

Councillors Glazier and Mrs Stroude, Lead Cabinet Members for Education and Children and Young People and Libraries respectively also attended

Chief Officer - Denise Stokoe, Director of Education and Libraries
Legal Adviser - Jonathan Ruddock-West, Assistant Director of Law and Performance Management
Scrutiny Lead Officer - Mary Hayler

13. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

13.1 RESOLVED – to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17 June 2004.

14. APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

14.1 Councillor Gadd.

15. URGENT ITEM

15.1 The Chairman informed the Committee that she was proposing, as an urgent item under agenda item 14, to invite Mr Taylor to report on the outcome of the Review of Post 16 Education in Hastings and Rother. It was important that the Committee should be updated on the action following the exercise it had undertaken.

16. REPORTS

16.1 Copies of the reports referred to below are included in the minute book.

17. LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES PEER REVIEW

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

17.2 The final version of the review report had just been received and copies would be sent to any members of the Committee who wished to receive one. It would also be made available on the Council's website.

17.3 The Committee noted that the Business Plan for the Libraries Service included reviewing provision in rural areas. This exercise would be undertaken in conjunction with work on the Rural Strategy.

17.4 RESOLVED – (1) to note the conclusions from the Peer Review and to welcome the intention to submit the Action Plan arising from the Review to the November meeting; and

(2) to ask for a further report in six months' time when there will be better information on the planned direction of the service and funding decisions for 2005/06 will have been taken.

18. LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES POSITION STATEMENT

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

18.2 Before the Statement was submitted to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport it would be checked for plain English and the full words would be included before any acronyms.

18.3 RESOLVED – to note the draft Position Statement to be submitted to the Lead Member for Children and Young People; and Libraries for approval on 17 September, prior to submission to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

19. SCRUTINY OF DEPARTMENTAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS IN SELECTED BVPIs

19.1 The Committee considered the final report by the Project Board. In the first bullet point of paragraph 3.2 of the report the word “qualified” was substituted for “quantified”.

19.2 RESOLVED – (1) not to undertake a further scrutiny review of the Information Service provided by the Library Service;

(2) to ask Bernardine Bacon to make a presentation to the next meeting of the Committee on permanently excluded children and to consider, in the light of that presentation, whether to propose a future scrutiny review in this area;

(3) to endorse the recommendations made to improve performance monitoring information; and

(4) to ask the officers provide a briefing on the presentation and interpretation of performance information immediately before the November meeting of the Committee.

20. RECONCILING POLICY AND RESOURCES

20.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Law and Performance Management.

20.2 The Director of Education and Libraries explained some of the possible implications of the Government's recently published proposals in relation to Education.

20.3 The Director pointed out that, due to the passporting of money to schools, it was possible to consider making savings on only 48% of the central Education budget. Accordingly, a 5% reduction in the overall central Education budget would, in effect, mean a 10% reduction on those parts of the budget that were available for consideration. Central Education spending in East Sussex was equivalent to £47 per pupil compared with the

national average of £57 per pupil. Consequently, any budget reductions would affect the level of service; there was no longer any scope to make reductions through efficiency savings.

20.4 RESOLVED – (1) to ask that anti-bullying and other anti-discriminatory behaviour should be included as a priority in the Policy Steers for the Education Service. (In making the request the Committee noted that promoting active citizenship was already included in the Council's overall corporate priorities);

(2) to ask the Director of Education and Libraries to submit a report to a future meeting of the Committee on the possible implications of the Government's latest proposals relating to Education.

21. SEN REVIEW : PRESENTATION

21.1 The Committee received a presentation from the Assistant Director, Children's Services, Planning and Commissioning on the main conclusions from a review that had been undertaken of specialist provision for children with special educational needs in East Sussex and the reasoning behind them. She circulated a summary of her presentation (copy in minute book). Members commented on some of the conclusions.

21.2 The purpose of the presentation was to provide the Committee with early information on the outcome of the review, prior to a report being submitted to the Cabinet. When the review document had been published the Committee, along with other interested parties, would be consulted formally on it.

21.3 The Committee noted the position.

22. UPDATE ON OUTCOME OF 6 TERM YEAR CONSULTATION AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

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

22.2 RESOLVED – (1) to note the progress made on the implementation of a standard school year; and

(2) to propose scrutiny of the process of evaluation and review of the pattern of the school year at an appropriate time in 2006. (The review needed to be late enough in the year to be able to take account of the effects of the new arrangements. The timing may also be affected by any changes in term dates to take account of Government proposals to change university admission arrangements).

23. FORWARD PLAN

23.1 The Committee considered the Forward Plan for the period 17 September to 31 December 2004.

23.2 RESOLVED – to ask the officers to circulate information to the members of the Committee on the following:

Corporate Asset Management Plan
Ten Year Strategy for Local Government
Ant Social Behaviour Act – Education related items

24. SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

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

24.2 RESOLVED – to refer the matter to the School Admissions Forum for consideration and to ask the Forum to report back to the Committee on the outcome.

25. SCRUTINY REVIEW OF ANTI-BULLYING STRATEGIES

25.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Law and Performance Management.

25.2 RESOLVED – to postpone the proposed review of the Anti-bullying Strategy until six months after the LEA's Anti-bullying Strategy has been adopted and implemented.

26. REVIEW OF POST 16 EDUCATION IN HASTINGS AND ROTHER

26.1 Mr Taylor referred to minute 7 of the last meeting of the Committee. Since that meeting, the review report had been well received and the conclusions accepted by the Cabinet and the full County Council.

26.2 Whilst the Project Board had completed the task it had been given, Mr Taylor suggested that the Committee should consider setting up a separate scrutiny review of the outcome of the Post 16 Review at an appropriate time after the conclusions had been implemented.