

Item 1

Interview with the executive member for children's services and education

Children's services and education scrutiny sub-committee

October 11 2006

1. What do you regard as your top three priorities for the coming 12 months? What actions do you plan to take in the next 12 months to ensure those priorities are achieved?
2. Can you please tell us what the current status is with schools going in and coming out of special measures? Are we learning from the experiences and developing best practice?
3. What measures are being undertaken to attract high quality candidates for Headship in the borough?
4. Could we have an update on the Southwark School Leaders Team set up to address the shortage of Head Teachers?
5. Are you happy with the way the Admissions system is working as there still seems to be significant dissatisfaction?
6. Can you provide figures to show how many Southwark pupils got their first choice of secondary school, how many got none of their choices and how many got no school at all in the first round of allocations?
7. What percentage of Southwark children accepted places out of borough or at private schools, and how does that compare with other London boroughs?
8. The common admissions form has streamlined the process of applying to schools, however what plans do you have for streamlining the admissions criteria for each school to prevent children who live in certain areas from falling between differing schools admissions criteria?
9. Could you outline the strategy for improving the academic performance of Looked After Children?
10. What do initial school results indicate in relation to achievements of Looked After Children for 2006?

11. Could you comment on the measures the council is taking in the field of behaviour management of pupils and 'low level disruption'?
12. What annual savings are likely to accrue to the council if and when all secondary schools in the borough become academies (as against the position if no schools were academies)? How does this compare with funding the council will lose because the schools are no longer part of the LEA?
13. Can you give assurances that the site problems relating to the two proposed academies, East Dulwich Boys and Walworth Schools, are now resolved? Could you set out the definitive position on the Walworth Academy proposals in the light of the Aylesbury estate regeneration programme and the current split site of Walworth School? Could you also tell us if site problems relating to Sacred Heart are now resolved?
14. The council's Corporate Plan 2006-2007 at page 38 identifies as a key project the preparation of a feasibility study for additional primary provision in North Dulwich of at least 30 places. The action/aim is "to undertake a study to identify practical options and funding to satisfy need for additional places". The target is "to produce completed proposals ready to allow capital bid for inclusion in 2007/2008 year" and the officer responsible is Alison Delyth.
 - a. Will this key project be achieved on time (i.e. by November 2006)? If not, why not?
 - b. Please describe the present state of this project, and give a resume of work already done.
 - c. In particular, what specific steps have been taken to date to assess local demand for additional primary places in North Dulwich?
 - d. What capital bid is likely to be included for the 2007/08 financial year?
15. How will extended schools develop in terms of life long learning?
16. The C&YPP identifies that 10% of Southwark's young people identify their faith as Christian and 10% as Muslim. Do you agree that an important aim of the council should be to encourage young people to understand, and be tolerant of, different faiths? Does the C&YPP anywhere identify this as a specific priority or target? If not, should it do so? What, if anything, can and should the council do to achieve this aim?
17. How will you ensure that the work being done through Southwark Alliance and CIDU to encourage more diversity in school governors is reflected in the appointing system?

18. How far are local strategies now in place to reduce the level of teenage pregnancies in Southwark? Are there any more recent figures than 2004 (cited in Southwark News) and do they demonstrate an improvement? What recent developments have there been in a) improving access to support services b) training youth workers and teachers?
19. Are we likely to see any decrease in teenage pregnancy figures as a result of adopting good practice from other boroughs?
20. Can you give an update on the Early Years/Community Nursery review?
21. How do SASBU, the police and the Youth Service work together when a young person starts down the road of getting an ASBO?
22. In a recent report the "Boyhood to Manhood" organisation criticised the police support to schools project saying a great deal still needs to be done to address mental health problems of black teenage boys and that this should be the way forward. Health and Social Care Scrutiny has looked at accessibility of mental health services for young people particularly young black men. Has there been progress on the recommendations of that scrutiny?
23. What management and/or reporting tools are in place to monitor progress towards the targets set out in the Children and Young People's Plan (C&YPP)? Do you believe these tools are adequate to alert you if targets are likely to be missed?
24. Are there any targets in the C&YPP which you do not anticipate achieving, and if so why?
25. In particular, are there any targets in the C&YPP which you think may be missed because there are insufficient resources available?
26. Are there any areas where the performance of your department is particularly strong which you would like to draw to our attention?
27. Are there any areas where the performance of your department is presently falling short of what might reasonably be expected? If so, what are you doing about it?