

Item no:	Classification: OPEN	Committee: Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Date: 19 May 2003
From: Education, Youth & Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee		Title: Review of Education, Youth & Leisure Scrutiny 2002/3	

Decisions of Overview & Scrutiny Committee

1. That the following achievements of Education, Youth & Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee be noted, i.e.
 - 1.1 Influencing policy, including developing the preferred position on new secondary school provision for East Dulwich/Nunhead and commissioning a new strategy for tackling low-level disruption in the classroom;
 - 1.2 Holding the Executive to account, through performance reports, executive member questions and a monitoring role on the PIAP;
 - 1.3 Engaging stakeholders, including teachers, headteachers and governors;
 - 1.4 Engaging the local community, notably on the East Dulwich/Nunhead scrutiny;
 - 1.5 The breadth of issues covered, from general reviews of service performance and statutory plans through the complex topics of school organisation, behaviour management and exclusions; and
 - 1.6 The multiple, creative approaches employed, from direct questioning of officers and the executive member, through the engagement of external advisers and invited stakeholders, to members visiting schools and youth centres.
2. That the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny's thanks to Members of Education, Youth & Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee be formally noted.
3. That Education, Youth & Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee be invited to consider the following topics for inclusion in its 2003/04 work programme, i.e.
 - 3.1 School Exclusions (see interim report on Exclusions & Attendance);
 - 3.2 Review of the work of the Youth Service in the context of what other services are being delivered to young people in Southwark (see interim report on Youth);
 - 3.3 PIAP progress monitoring report in Sep/Oct;
 - 3.4 Impact of congestion charging on schools report back in Sep/Oct; and
 - 3.5 Early consideration to the form and content of future performance reports.

4. That Overview & Scrutiny Committee notes the following lessons learned by the Education, Youth & Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee during 2002/03, i.e.
 - 4.1 With so many statutory plans and strategies in education, agendas can become overstuffed; a more selective approach should be taken to scrutiny of these
 - 4.2 Topics need to be more tightly focused on the key areas of member concern; the temptation to broaden the scope to catch every area of concern should be avoided (e.g. from "school exclusions" to "exclusions and wider issues of attendance").
 - 4.3 An ever greater variety of approaches to scrutiny should be employed, with a real effort to be creative and to engage with the most hard to reach.

Background information

Key Achievements

Influencing policy

5. The draft Post Inspection Action Plan (following the Ofsted Report of July 2002) was reviewed over two meetings in October and November 2002, and recommendations formulated to the Executive. Following these recommendations: the plan was developed in two formats - one version as an officer/management tool, with a second, more user-friendly version for members and stakeholders; a list of consultees was appended to the plan; timely publication of the admissions booklet was agreed; a monitoring role for the sub-committee was agreed
6. Early in 2003, the Executive also accepted the recommendation of the sub-committee to commission a new strategy to minimise low-level disruption, based on sharing best practice, to be developed in consultation with headteachers, and that the next revision of the Behaviour Support Plan should include the new strategy
7. The preferred option of the sub-committee for secondary school provision in East Dulwich/Nunhead has been adopted by the Executive i.e. to establish a small boys school on the Waverley Lower School site with the intention of federating with Waverley Girls School.
8. The sub-committee has also reviewed and commented on: Community Councils (education functions), the Annual Library Plan, Youth Service Plan, Connexions Development Plan, School Organisation Plan and Behaviour Support Plan, the Community Strategy (education targets and descriptions, and overall priorities), the Best Value Review of Sport & Fitness; and has examined the impact of the Congestion Charge on teachers in local schools.

Holding the Executive to account

9. The Executive Member for Education, Youth & Leisure has been held directly to account through Executive Member Questions and the sub-committee reviewing the Quarterly Performance Reports to Executive. The sub-committee has also reviewed the management reports to the Executive Member on Key Stage 2 performance and will be monitoring the implementation of the PIAP in Autumn 2003.

Engaging stakeholders

10. This sub-committee is unique, in having four statutory co-opted voting members representing parent governors and the dioceses. In addition to these co-opted members, the sub-committee has sought to cast as wide a net as possible to involve local stakeholders in its work. The PIAP, Behaviour Management, Exclusions & Attendance, and the Congestion Charge have been debated with headteachers, governors, teachers, trade unionists, Southwark Race & Equalities Council and external advisers.

Engaging the local community

11. The scrutiny of secondary school provision in East Dulwich/Nunhead generated a great deal of interest from local people, with weekly features in Southwark News and the South London Press as it continued. Members of the EDEN campaign group and the Waverley School community attended almost every meeting of the sub-committee and a deputation with a 500 signature petition was presented in January 2003.
12. To get a better understanding of the behavioural challenges faced and the methods employed by schools to control disruption, members visited a range of primary and secondary schools to discuss the issue with headteachers, then fed back their findings to the December 2002 meeting of the sub-committee. Similarly members visited a range of voluntary and statutory youth providers in March 2003.

Breadth of issues covered

13. In addition to the priority topics originally selected (PIAP, Behaviour Management, Exclusions & Attendance, Youth), two substantial topics were added (Secondary School Provision in East Dulwich, Congestion Charging) and a range of more general reviews were undertaken (of service performance, statutory plans, current best value reviews, and Executive Member performance)

Multiple, creative approaches

14. In addition to direct questioning of Executive Member and officers, two key features of the way the sub-committee has approached its work have been inviting stakeholders and external advisers to help identify issues and challenge the received wisdom; and members getting out to schools and youth centres to gather evidence.

Lead Officer Ian Hughes Head of Corporate Strategy

Report Author Graeme Gordon Adviser to the Education, Youth and Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Background Papers	Held at	Contact
Minutes of Education, Youth & Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee 15.04.03.	Constitutional Support Unit [Scrutiny] Southwark Town Hall 3 rd Floor (Room 3.16) Peckham Road SE5 8UB	Fitzroy Williams : 020 7525 7238

