



EDUCATION, YOUTH & LEISURE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting of the EDUCATION, YOUTH & LEISURE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE held on WEDNESDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2003 at 7.00 PM at the Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB

PRESENT: Councillor Andy Simmons (Chair)
Councillor Lisa Rajan (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Alun Hayes, Eliza Mann, Kenny Mizzi, Graham Neale, and Robert Smeath

CO-OPTED MEMBERS: Sheila Simpson and Josie Spanswick

ALSO PRESENT: Jacqui Fergus – Gloucester Primary School Governing Body
Hywel Lloyd – Office of Public Management
Patricia Mbasani – International People's Democratic UHURU Movement
Jennifer Morris – International People's Democratic UHURU Movement
Hilary Thompson – Office of Public Management

OFFICERS: Shelley Burke – Head of Overview & Scrutiny
Louise Gardiner – Strategic Services
Leigh Henderson – Scrutiny Team
Ian Hughes – Head of Corporate Strategy
Karen Murphy – Senior Lawyer, Education
Roger Smith – Strategic Director of Education
Martin Wilcox – Department of Education

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Reverend Douglas Bartles-Smith (co-opted member).

CONFIRMATION OF VOTING MEMBERSHIP

The Members listed as being present were confirmed as the voting Members.

NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS AS URGENT

The Sub-Committee agreed to receive a deputation from Jacqui Fergus and the International

People's Democratic UHURU Movement.

DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no disclosures of interests or dispensations.

RECORDING OF MEMBERS' VOTES

Council Procedure Rule 1.17(5) allows a Member to record her/his vote in respect of any motions and amendments. Such requests are detailed in the following Minutes. Should a Member's vote be recorded in respect of an amendment, a copy of the amendment may be found in the Minute file and is available for public inspection.

The Sub-Committee considered the items set out on the agenda, a copy of which has been incorporated in the minute file. Each of the following paragraphs relates to the item bearing the same number on the agenda.

MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 24 July 2003 be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the proceedings.

1. DEPUTATION BY JACQUI FERGUS AND THE INTERNATIONAL PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC UHURU MOVEMENT

The Sub-Committee agreed to receive a deputation regarding issues at the Gloucester Primary School. Jacqui Fergus and the International People's Democratic UHURU Movement circulated two documents, copies of which are incorporated in the minute file.

The group thanked the Sub-Committee for the opportunity to make a deputation. During the deputation the group outlined three key issues - the case of Jacqui Fergus, issues surrounding management of the school (including issues relating to the head teacher) and performance/exclusions issues. Comments in relation to these three key issues are outlined below:

The Case of Jacqui Fergus

- The Deputation claimed that the 22 month school ban on Jacqui Fergus was unlawful
- The Deputation believed that the school governing body intended to vote her out at the next governing body meeting on Monday 8 September
- The Deputation believed that there was a lack of support and protection for the whistle-blowers
- The Deputation stated that Jacqui Fergus had been cleared of 3 counts of harassment and assault and that teachers who had made complaints against her did not appear in court

Management of the School

- The Deputation stated that the head teacher had been suspended from December 2002 following allegations of misappropriation of funds and financial irregularities
- The Deputation felt that there were poor hygiene standards at the school and alleged that staff smoked in the presence of children
- The Deputation stated that children were deprived of the use of computers
- The Deputation claimed that there was a lack of response from the LEA and Atkins regarding issues at Gloucester Primary School

Performance and Exclusions

- The Deputation indicated that there were high exclusions rates for black students
- They felt that black children performed poorly in the school and that there were problems recruiting and retaining black teachers

Sheila Simpson informed the deputation group that she would arrange a meeting with the governing body in her capacity as Governor representative on the Education, Youth & Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee. The Chair informed the Deputation that the Sub-Committee would review exclusion rates and performance in October and November respectively. The Chair also outlined the role of scrutiny. As the Sub-Committee was not a decision-making body, the Chair advised Jacqui Fergus and the International People's Democratic UHURU Movement to make a deputation to the Executive, which was due to meet on 9 September.

Members asked a number of questions regarding the current management of the school and whether school lunches were culturally sensitive. Jacqui Fergus was unable to comment on the current temporary school management due to her school ban however she believed that there had been some improvements since December 2001 when she had made allegations about physical assaults and health hazards at the school.

- RESOLVED**
1. That the group be advised to make a deputation to the Executive on 9 September 2003;
 2. That the group provide feedback to Cllr Simmons on any outcomes of the Executive meeting; and
 3. That Jacqui Fergus and the International People's Democratic UHURU Movement are invited to the Sub-Committee's meetings when exclusions and performance are considered.

2. **EDUCATION MEDIUM TERM REVIEW (OFFICE FOR PUBLIC MANAGEMENT)**

Hywel Lloyd and Hilary Thompson presented a progress report on the medium term education review. The slides of the presentation are incorporated in the minute file. Southwark Council and the Department for Employment and Skills (DfES) had commissioned the Office of Public Management (OPM) to undertake the review, the terms of reference and the process having been agreed by both the DfES and the Council.

OPM outlined to Members the process for the review. There were five stages culminating in a final report in late October/early November. OPM reported that they had reviewed the relevant corporate documents and were currently interviewing stakeholders. Stage 2 involved OPM assessing various models for the provision of LEA services in place in other Councils. A stakeholder event would be held on the 23 September (stage 3) and themed workshops would be conducted in mid-October (stage 4).

Through stakeholder consultation, OPM would identify and prioritise objectives. Assessment of the models would allow OPM to develop options considered most likely for the LEA to achieve these objectives.

Southwark characteristics, such as high levels of deprivation, significant numbers of ESOL pupils, high inter-borough pupil flows, high pupil mobility and performance were highlighted. Many of these characteristics were London-wide issues. The provision of education services should be considered in the wider London and national context. OPM also emphasised the need for education services to be linked to the corporate agenda and other government services.

Members expressed a general lack of confidence in professional networks existing in Southwark. Members were of the view that excellent practices existed in some Southwark schools, however these were not readily shared across schools. Members highlighted the diversity of performance and that pupil flows created a more complex environment in which to deliver services. The impact and opportunities of having a high number of independent schools needed to be considered. Other issues raised by Members included admissions policies, travelling distances for students, variations in teaching quality and recruitment problems. It was acknowledged that recruitment was a national issue that needed to be addressed. It was also suggested that OPM consider the education criteria against which boroughs were assessed for the CPA.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That OPM invite Education, Youth & Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee members to the stakeholder event on 23 September 2003;
 2. That OPM circulate to Education, Youth & Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee members more detailed information on the models being assessed;
 3. That the Sub-Committee is provided with an update on the review's progress by 8 October;

4. That officers draft a letter to Councillor Nick Stanton and Bob Coomber indicating that the Sub-Committee wishes to contribute and make recommendations prior to OPM issuing a final report on the future management of education services;
5. That the final report is made available to the Sub-Committee by 5 November; and
6. That officers circulate to Sub-Committee members a report prepared for DfES on new ways of working in local education authorities.

3. EDUCATION BUDGET TIMETABLE

The Strategic Director of Education indicated that the departmental business plans would be for 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2006/07 in accordance with the Councils three year financial planning framework. The Sub-Committee asked the Strategic Director to specify when education business plans would be available to the Sub-Committee and agreed to seek clarification from the Chief Executive.

RESOLVED: That the Sub-Committee write to Chief Executive to clarify when the business plan would be available to the Sub-Committee.

4. DRAFT SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLAN

The Strategic Director of Education and Martin Wilcox provided the Sub-Committee with an overview of the School Organisation Plan (SOP), the key strategic framework for the planning of education services. The SOP provided information on current student numbers and projections for the borough and whether existing school places would be sufficient in the future. Officers reported that there were sufficient numbers of places for primary students however that there would be pressure for secondary school places. The SOP projections for secondary students were higher than the Greater London Authority (GLA) projections due to the impact of City Academies. Current student flows in and out of Southwark were substantial with a net outflow of approximately 1 school.

The SOP would be published for consultation with the local community. Members agreed that the current mechanisms to engage the community in education policy were not especially effective. It was noted that the five education planning areas were across different Community Councils and parents with young children were unlikely to attend Community Council meetings. It was suggested that if more natural units bound by common interests were consulted the outcomes of consultation would be improved.

The Strategic Director discussed the Charter School experience – in particular the high demand for places at the Charter School and the positive community impact. The Council's ability to replicate the Charter School experience and the potential benefits it could bring to Southwark were discussed. There were risks associated with undertaking education planning on the basis of the Charter School experience, in particular the funding arrangements from the national Government. Councils were funded on current service delivery to the existing student population and must demonstrate need to increase funding allocation. Larger schools received relatively higher funding.

It was noted that the Greater London Authority (GLA) had criticised Southwark's UDP for not adequately addressing education planning. Officers were of the view that education needed to be prioritised in the planning framework. It was noted the proposed housing developments in Peckham town centre was not included in the areas highlighted for population growth.

Members commented that there were issues surrounding continuity particularly into sixth form. Members also suggested that more consideration should be given to the use of school facilities as leisure/recreation centres. The Sub-Committee considered reviewing affordable summer play schemes, and/or the use of schoolyards during holiday periods, at a future date.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That Officers consider how to improve consultation with the community on the School Organisation Plan, and report back to the Sub-Committee on this issue;
 2. That the concerns of Members and the GLA that the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) has not adequately addressed education planning are noted, and that in future it is ensured that there are much stronger links between the School Organisation Plan and the UDP in terms of school planning and in particular for new secondary schools;
 3. That more consideration is given to issues of continuity into 6th form provision;
 4. That Peckham Town Centre be added to the list of areas in the School Organisation Plan currently being proposed for large increases in housing; and
 5. That Officers prepare a formal report to the Executive outlining the above recommendations.

5. YOUTH SERVICES AND CONNEXIONS – DRAFT PROJECT BRIEF

Due to the evenings busy agenda, Members agreed to provide comments to Peter Roberts, Scrutiny Team, who would prepare a draft project brief on Youth Services and Connexions.

6. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Sub-Committee sought the advice of officers with regards to how to proceed with the Gloucester Primary School. Officers commented on Jacqui Fergus' case and the previous and current arrangements at the school. Officers advised that they were not aware of any problems at the school currently and believed a conclusion was imminent. The Members of the Sub-Committee agreed that further review may be required depending on the outcome of the group's deputation to the Executive and any outcome of the ongoing legal proceedings.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That performance reports will be considered in December;
 2. That Councillor Skelly's Executive review be scheduled for January;
 3. That Councillor Porter's Executive review be scheduled for February
 4. That Youth Services & Connexions be considered in November; and
 5. That officers ensure that, where possible, Education ,Youth & Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting dates do not clash with Community Council meeting dates, in particular Nunhead & Peckham.

The meeting finished at 10.20 pm.

CHAIR:

DATE: