



EDUCATION, YOUTH & LEISURE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting of the EDUCATION, YOUTH & LEISURE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE held on MONDAY 24TH NOVEMBER 2003 at 7.00 PM at the Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB

PRESENT: Councillor Andy Simmons (Chair)
Councillors Eliza Mann, Kenny Mizzi and Robert Smeath

CO-OPTED MEMBERS: Mr Godson Agomuo

OFFICERS: Chris Bull – Strategic Director of Social Services
Karen Murphy – Legal Services
Peter Roberts – Scrutiny Team

ALSO PRESENT: Kathryn MacDermott - Acting Deputy Director, Partnerships
Hilary Thompson – Director of Operations, Office for Public Management

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Alun Hayes, Graham Neale and from co-opted members Venerable Douglas Bartles-Smith, Sheila Simpson and Josie Spanswick.

CONFIRMATION OF VOTING MEMBERS

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

DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no dispensations notified nor interests declared.

NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMED URGENT

The Chair agreed to accept the following items as late and urgent for the reasons set out in the reports, i.e.

Open Business [Agenda Part A]

- Item 1: **Long Term Review of Education Support Services**
- Office for Public Management Report “The Long Term Review of Education Support Services” [Final Report, November 2003];
- Item 2: **Children’s Green Paper “Every Child Matters”**
- Every Child Matters – Consultation Response Form
 - Draft report to Executive [24/11/03] “Green Paper, Every Child Matters”
 - Appendix C1 to Executive Report [24/11/03] “Southwark Children & Young People’s Strategic Partnership Board – Definition of Vulnerability, Identification, Referral and Tracking”

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.

VARIATION TO ORDER OF BUSINESS/DISCUSSION

The Chair advised the meeting that in the light of the links between the Office for Public Management [OPM] report and the Green Paper “Every Child Matters”, he would invite presentations on each item, followed by Member discussion of both matters together, after which any resolutions would be made.

1. **LONG TERM REVIEW OF EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES** [see OPM report pages 1-74, circulation date 21/11/03 & presentation pages 73-74]

The Chair expressed concern that the Executive had seemed unwilling to delay its consideration of the OPM report. He believed that the principle of scrutiny being able to consider decisions prior to them being made by the Executive should be upheld. The Chair outlined that the Diocesan representatives were unhappy with the timescale for consultation, and had been looking for 2-3 weeks to allow them time to fix it in their diaries.

The Chief Executive responded that it had become apparent in mid-November that the timetable for report production would not be achieved. He had been under the impression that the current meeting would consider the OPM report, and not the meeting on 20th November 2003 at which there was never the reasonable prospect of its presentation. It was important for the Executive to agree how to respond to the OPM report which would shortly be in the public domain. The report had been jointly commissioned and as such it would be inappropriate for the Executive to give no direction.

The Executive was to be asked to agree to go to consultation rather than being asked to agree the response. The intervening period between 25th November and the start of consultation would provide the opportunity for scrutiny to look at the matter. A clerical error on the part of the post room had prevented Members from receiving the OPM report on until today.

Concern was expressed that party groups had been given insufficient time to consider the matter and that consequently the Executive would be unaware of the views of other Councillors when taking its decision.

The Chair stated that liaison with the Leader and Deputy Leader about timetabling issues was necessary, and that he intended to raise the matter at Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Hilary Thompson [Office for Public Management] was then invited to present the OPM report, and made a presentation a copy of which has been placed on the Minute File. Following the presentation, Member discussion ensued, during which the following points were made, i.e.

- Members noted that the term “independent” when referring to membership of the Education Partnership Board referred to members of the Board appointed from *outside* the local authority. The capacity already existing across the system should be drawn in, through involving independent and other schools and local business people;
- In respect of why Option F might be preferred over Option E, Hilary Thompson noted that there was much work with schools to be done within the given timescale and that a model providing a strong educational model within an integrated planning context was needed. Option E enabled sufficient pace for development of the locality, with sufficient length to avoid central government proscription were it to be made. Further examples of authorities following similar models were available, although none were fully-fledged;
- The Chief Executive acknowledged that staff turnover was likely in the event of the CEA contract being extended by one year, but it was hoped that some temporary staff might subsequently be permanently recruited, thus maintaining continuity;
- Whilst geographical clustering enabled the concerns of a delineated community to be considered, it was acknowledged that clusters would each have differing patterns of need. However, it would be reasonable to expect schools to work together – for example in like/unlike pairings, or across clusters - to address common concerns, learn from good practice and draw in capacity. It was acknowledged that this process was dependent on the establishment of dialogues between school stakeholders;

- The Education Partnership Board would provide a means for stakeholders to drive forward the education plan.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Executive be urged to move to consultation on the future of the Local Education Authority.
- 2) That Education, Youth & Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee notes the Office for Public Management's report "Long Term Review of Education Support Services" and recommends this be used as the basis for this consultation.
- 3) That Education, Youth & Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee receive an update on the scope of the consultation at its next meeting on 3rd December 2003.
- 4) That the Executive be asked to outline proposals for maximising staff stability, in the light of this Sub-Committee's concerns that staff turnover at senior level is a potential area of weakness over the next few years.
- 5) That the Executive gives careful consideration to the terms of any extension to Cambridge Education Associates [CEA] interim management contract.
- 6) That Overview & Scrutiny Committee be asked to consider how Education, Youth & Leisure and Health & Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committees might work jointly to scrutinise the roll-out of the proposed integrated children's service.

2. GREEN PAPER "EVERY CHILD MATTERS" [see pages 1-51 & 53-72]

The Strategic Director of Social Services took Members through the recommendations to the Executive on 25th November 2003 in respect of the direction of travel in relation to the Government Green Paper "Every Child Matters", and the Council's draft response to the Department for Education and Skills as set out in Appendix C(2).

The Southwark Vision for Children's Services [Health & Social Care] was in line with the Green Paper and placed the needs of the child at the centre of service development. The assessment of the authority's position in relation to the proposals in the Green Paper were set out in detail in Appendix B to the report.

The Government proposes that children's service be brought together within a single organisational focus. Paragraph 13 of the report outlined the main practical arrangements in respect of post and function accountability and integration.

The Council was required to respond to the Green Paper by 1st December 2003. Stakeholder events had been held, a presentation on the principles of the Green Paper had been made to Health & Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 12th November and overall a fair amount of feedback had been made on the proposals.

In terms of the response, the Council might wish to respond in more detail and on issues that were not directly addressed by the response form itself. For example, in respect of the degree of central prescription and local flexibility. The issues of structure and process were, he believed, already decided to a greater extent.

The Acting Deputy Director, Partnerships confirmed that front line staff had been asked for feedback in workshops, which had combined questions set in the green Paper with those relating to local flexibility. Better information sharing, and how best to adapt the Common Assessment Framework for use across the health and local authority sectors. In respect of common targets a mix of immediate and longer term targets was most desirable.

Discussion of this item ensued, during which the following points were raised, i.e.

- The Council's response aimed at a balance between achievable long and short term objectives;
- Headteachers were keen to be involved, but wished to come to the table with the authority to work issues through;
- It was acknowledged that the format of the Council's response to the green paper was somewhat inaccessible, and the Director of Social Services proposed the production of a separate document setting out the information;
- A full discussion on the nature and provision of children's social care was necessary, especially in respect of negotiating its relation to social care and schools clusters;
- Maintaining the child protection agenda and supporting processes through the inevitable period of change and service redesign remained everyone's priority and was of paramount importance;
- Senior posts within the proposed new structure would be recruited to on the basis of the new vision, seeking to ensure strong education leadership, school improvement and co-ordination of children's services planning. The nature of chief officer posts across health and social care would change dramatically over the next five years, in this case particularly reflecting the new form of government expressed through the Children's Trust;

Having heard presentations on Items 1 and 2, and having discussed the matters arising from their consideration, Members subsequently made recommendations as outlined elsewhere in these Minutes under Item 1 paragraphs 1)-6).

The meeting finished at 8.45 p.m.

CHAIR:

DATE: