

MINUTES of the meeting of the **EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00 am on 29 November 2012 at Ashcombe Suite, County Hall, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 2DN.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Monday, 28 January 2013.

Elected Members:

- * Mrs Denise Turner-Stewart (Chairman)
- * Denis Fuller (Vice-Chairman)
- * Mrs Carol Coleman
- * Nigel Cooper
- * Mr Tim Hall
- A Mr Peter Lambell
- * Mrs Marsha Moseley
- * Mr Chris Pitt
- * Dr Andrew Povey
- A Mrs Diana Smith
- * Mr Keith Taylor
- * Mr Chris Townsend

Ex officio Members:

- A Mr David Munro, Vice Chairman of the County Council
- A Mrs Lavinia Sealy, Chairman of the County Council

Co-opted Members:

- A Cecile White
- * Derek Holbird
- A Sean Whetstone
- * Duncan Hewson
- Mary Reynolds

47/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Peter Lambell, Diana Smith, Cecile White, Sean Whetstone and Simon Parr. Will Forster substituted for Peter Lambell.

48/12 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 4 OCTOBER 2012 [Item 2]

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true record of the meeting.

49/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

No disclosable pecuniary interests were received from Members.

50/12 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

None.

51/12 RESPONSES FROM THE CABINET TO ISSUES REFERRED BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE [Item 5]

None.

52/12 RECOMMENDATION TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 6]

Carol Coleman queried whether the letter to the Secretary of State for Education referred to in section SC015 of the recommendation tracker had been sent. The Committee's Scrutiny Officer stated that the letter would be sent shortly. The letter had not been sent immediately as it had become apparent that a similar letter had previously been sent and officers wished to check the content of this first.

53/12 LOCAL PREVENTION FRAMEWORK [Item 7]

Declarations of Interest:

None.

Witnesses:

- Garath Symonds, Assistant Director for Young People
- Peter Brayne, Secretary, Surrey Youth Consortium
- Andy Gill, Community Projects Manager, The Leatherhead Youth Project
- Linda Kemeny, Cabinet Member of Children and Learning
- Kay Hammond, Cabinet Member for Community Safety

Key Points Raised During the Discussion:

1. The Cabinet Member for Community Safety introduced the report. She stated that the Local Prevention Framework (LPF) was still very much in its infancy and, like any new process, scrutiny was important. It was explained that whilst the implementation of the LPF had not been

without its problems, there were already some positive signs that it was making an impact and that the ground work already achieved would set the way for further improvements.

2. The Assistant Director for Young People supported these comments and added that it was important to note that the Youth Transformation project had saved significant sums of money with no loss of frontline service. He stressed that despite the procurement issues identified in the report, he strongly supported the LPF principles.
3. The Community Projects Manager for the Leatherhead Youth Project stated that one of the biggest challenges the LPF faced was overcoming the conflict between localism and the desire for central control. He added that the Risk of NEET Indicator (RONI) list had been a little crude in practice and welcomed the findings of the report. The Secretary for the Surrey Youth Consortium added that the LPF procurement process had been difficult for small organisations.
4. The Assistant Director for Young People stated that whilst his service had worked closely with both Legal and Procurement to try and streamline the commissioning process as much as possible, it was accepted that the process was still challenging for small organisations. It was hoped that by incorporating Youth Small Grants and the LPF into a commissioning grants approach, the application process would be made clearer.
5. A Member queried whether treating the LPF as distinct from centre-based youth work had the potential to cause unnecessary fragmentation. The Assistant Director for Young People stated that whilst the LPF was focussed on specific outcomes, centre-based youth work was often focussed on the needs of individuals. Whilst there was some natural cross-over, both strands of work had different focuses.
6. Members thanked officers for providing the comparative performance data for the different contracts across Surrey. It was noted that some contracts were performing significantly better than others and that it would be beneficial for Youth Task Group Chairmen to jointly explore the data to see what could be learnt. Officers were asked to add additional information to the comparative performance data, including details of hours worked.
7. The Committee felt that it would be beneficial for Members to be involved in the market development process, not just the commissioning stage.
8. The recommendation to get rid of the centrally-prescribed RONI list with the intention of moving towards a neighbourhood based approach was generally supported, although such an approach would have to be managed carefully to ensure that small pockets of deprivation were not missed. The Assistant Director for Young People stated that the RONI list was conceptually sound, but had been undermined by inadequate IT and out of date data. He acknowledged the potential issues with a neighbourhood approach, but stated that local discretion

could be used to avoid a situation where small but needy areas were missed.

9. The Committee commented that LPF contracts were performing best where providers had already been working in an area and had good connections with the local community. The Projects Manager for the Leatherhead Youth Project stated that his organisation had already been working with approximately half of the individuals listed on the RONI list and had therefore been in a good position to work with the additional individuals. In areas where there was no existing level of provision, the Committee accepted that it would likely take longer to see results.
10. In line with the recommendations of the report, the Committee agreed that there was a need to ensure young people were properly involved in the process of defining outcomes of LPF contracts.

Actions/Further Information to be Provided:

- i. Officers to add additional information to the comparative contract performance data, including details of hours worked, with the intention that this can be shared with Youth Task Group Chairmen;
- ii. Officers agreed to provide Members with further detail of the discussions that had happened with Local Committee Chairmen on 20th November 2012, and greater clarity around the proposed implementation of opportunity grants and personalised budgets.

Recommendations:

- i. The recommendations contained in the report be supported;
- ii. Officers ensure that the list of young people at risk of being NEET is up-to-date and broader in scope so to include siblings and peers;
- iii. Officers to more clearly involve Members of the Local Committee Youth Task Groups and young people in the process of defining outcomes of LPF contracts.

54/12 THE EDUCATION AND ACHIEVEMENT PLAN [Item 8]

Declarations of Interest:

None.

Witnesses:

- Maria Dawes, Head of School Effectiveness, Babcock 4S
- Penny Plato, Head of Education, Babcock 4S
- Linda Kemeny, Cabinet Member of Children and Learning
- Dr Kathy Beresford, Performance and Intelligence Manager

Key Points Raised During the Discussion:

1. The Head of Education at Babcock 4S introduced the Education and Achievement Plan, explaining that the document was one of three plans that made up the Children and Young People's Strategy, approved by Cabinet in July 2012. The plan was intended to be a high level document and consultation with a wide range of organisations, including the Phase Councils, had begun.
2. Officers stressed that Surrey had always worked hard to maintain good relationships both with and between schools. However, it was hoped that these relationships could be better formalised. This was particularly important in light of the new Ofsted inspection framework and schools, particularly primary schools, would increasingly need to work in partnership to succeed. However, it was not realistic to expect schools to tackle the issue of improvement alone and there remained a need for Surrey County Council to be actively involved in the process.
3. A Member noted that many parents had concerns about post-16 provision and questioned whether the draft document gave this enough of a focus. Officers agreed to see whether this could be strengthened.
4. It was felt that the plan did not reflect the real pressures facing education in Surrey, particularly the need to increase performance in a time of dwindling resources. Members queried whether the Measures of Success detailed in Appendix 4 were achievable with the current level of resource. The Head of Education at Babcock 4S stated that with the current level of resource, which was only 30% of that available 3 years ago, it would not be possible to meet all these targets by 2017 and that officers were currently involved in discussions to identify how much additional funding would be required.
5. A Member raised concern that given the current economic climate, the ability of Surrey County Council to raise achievement was limited and that some of the ambitions contained in the report seemed unrealistic. The Head of Education at Babcock 4S stated that there had been a big shift in the way the County Council worked with schools and that Babcock 4S could add most value by brokering partnerships and helping schools to share knowledge and experience. However, the vast majority of schools had been supportive of the Local Authority remaining involved.
6. The Head of School Effectiveness at Babcock 4S stated that there needed to be an increased focus on building and supporting strong leadership in schools, and holding these leaders to account. Whilst additional resources were required, there probably wasn't the need for as much as there had historically been.
7. A Member queried whether there needed to be reconsideration of how head teachers were trained, as the role had evolved significantly over the years and was increasingly complex. The Head of Education at Babcock 4S stated that they were looking at

how they supported new head teachers and that Surrey's Chief Executive had supported a leadership programme for those already in post.

Actions/Further Information to be Provided:

None

Recommendations:

- i. The Committee endorses the content and aims of the Draft Education and Achievement Plan for Surrey 2012-17;
- ii. Officers to ensure that the plan reflects the urgency required to ensure that all schools in Surrey are good or outstanding by 2017;
- iii. Officers to strengthen the reference to post-16 provision in the plan.

55/12 EDUCATION PERFORMANCE (2011/12) HEADLINE REPORT [Item 9]

Declarations of Interest:

None.

Witnesses:

- Maria Dawes, Head of School Effectiveness, Babcock4S
- Dr Kathy Beresford, Performance and Intelligence Manager, Schools and Learning
- Linda Kemeny, Cabinet Member of Children and Learning

Key Points Raised During the Discussion:

1. The Education Select Committee considered provisional results for early years, primary, secondary and special school phases for the academic year ending in the summer of 2012. In addition to giving the Committee an opportunity to scrutinise the provisional data, the report allowed Members to identify specific areas of interest so that further analysis could be made available when the validated data was brought back to the Committee in 2013.
2. The Committee noted that education performance seemed to worsen as students got older, with each subsequent key stage performing worse than the one before it. It was noted that whilst the County Council had historically sought to address this disparity through investment in secondary education, it was possible that there was a need to invest more heavily in the lowest performing primary schools to ensure that students were prepared for the next step in their education. It was agreed that officers would provide a more detailed analysis of performance results for individual phases in subsequent reports to Committee.
3. The Committee asked that further analysis be conducted to see whether there was a variance in performance between students that

attended combined primary schools and those that were educated in separate infant and junior schools. An initial view of the situation was shared with Members in June 2012 but did not find a conclusive outcome. However, it was requested that this analysis be extended with the 2012 results and brought back to the Committee.

4. Members raised concern that since the introduction of the new Ofsted Inspection Framework in January 2012, 17% of schools inspected in the first six months of the new framework had been judged to be inadequate. Whilst it was accepted that the new framework was more challenging and that the schools inspected were not a representative sample of education provision in Surrey, it was felt that the data would still cause concern for parents. It was therefore requested that any information published on Ofsted inspection results note and explain the changes to the inspection framework.
5. When presenting Ofsted inspection data, the Committee felt it would be beneficial for subsequent reports to include more detailed information on the quality of teaching in schools - one of the four key judgements school inspectors reported on.
6. The Committee agreed that there was an urgent need to review the way in which Surrey sought to raise standards in schools, particularly in light of budget pressures and the new Ofsted inspection framework. Members expressed concern that Surrey had historically been too content with its school improvement performance and that Babcock 4S had not done enough to challenge this status quo. As such, the Committee welcomed Babcock 4S' commitment to review its School Improvement activities to ensure that in the future it provided both better value for money and a more robust service. However, the Committee also acknowledged the need to consider whether additional resources might be required in order to achieve this given the County Council's aim for all children to attend a 'Good' school by 2017.

Actions/Further Information to be Provided:

- i. Officers to ensure that the final validated data presented to Committee include:
- ii. Detailed analysis of performance results for individual phases;
- iii. Analysis of performance between students attending combined primary schools and those educated in separate infant and junior schools;
- iv. Greater clarity concerning the changes to the Ofsted inspection framework.

Recommendations:

- i. Officers to ensure that future reports concerning education performance consider the specific areas of interest highlighted by the Committee, as detailed above.

- ii. Officers bring more detailed analysis of performance results for individual phases to future meetings.
- iii. Officers to ensure that information published on Ofsted inspection results acknowledges the changes to the Inspection Framework.

56/12 CHAMPIONING PARENTS TASK GROUP UPDATE [Item 10]

Declarations of Interest:

None.

Witnesses:

- PJ Wilkinson, Assistant Director for Schools and Learning
- Linda Kemeny, Cabinet Member of Children and Learning

Key Points Raised During the Discussion:

1. The increased transparency detailed in Recommendation 3 was strongly supported.
2. A Member queried how Surrey would identify school admission policies that were not in the spirit of the Admissions Code of Practice. The Assistant Director for Schools and Learning stated that the Head of Admissions was responsible for monitoring admission policy and had a duty to report unfair or ill-conceived admission rules. The admission policy for Surrey maintained schools was reviewed every year, although there were no significant changes expected for 2013/14.
3. Following questions, the Assistant Director for Schools and Learning stated that Surrey had to be prepared to actively challenge school performance and could no longer simply be content with the current situation.
4. It was acknowledged that recent comments by Sir Michael Wilshaw indicated that local authorities would continue to have a role in monitoring the performance of academies.
5. There was a need to explore how Babcock 4S could support the Pupil Premium. For example, was it more effective to use the resource to reduce class sizes across the board, or was it better utilised by supporting specific children?
6. In response to a question, it was clarified that there was no prospect of bringing the Home School Link Worker role back into the Local Authority. However, it was acknowledged that there was a need to improve consistency amongst Link Workers and to strengthen partnership arrangements.

Actions/Further Information to be Provided:

None.

Recommendations:

- i. That the report and the progress made be noted.

57/12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 11]

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 28 January 2013 at 10:00am.

Meeting ended at: 1.15 pm

Chairman

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