

LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

30 JUNE 2003

Chair:	* Councillor Mitzi Green	
Councillors:	* Miss Bednell * Gate * Ismail (1) † Jean Lammiman * Lent (4)	* Janet Mote * John Nickolay * Marie-Louise Nolan * Osborn (2)
Voting Co-opted:	(Voluntary Aided) † Mrs J Rammelt * Reverend P Reece	(Parent Governors) † Mr H Epie * Mr R Sutcliffe

* Denotes Member present
(1), (2), (4) Denote category of Reserve Member
† Denotes apologies received

69. **Appointment of Chair:**
RESOLVED: To note the appointment at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 15 May 2003, under the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 11.2, of Councillor Mitzi Green, as Chair of the Sub-Committee for the 2003/2004 Municipal Year.
70. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**
RESOLVED: To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Members:-
- | <u>Ordinary Member</u> | <u>Reserve Member</u> |
|---|---|
| Councillor Nana Asante
Councillor Omar
Councillor Mary John | Councillor Ismail
Councillor Lent
Councillor Osborn |
71. **Declarations of Interest:**
In response to a query from a Member, the Senior Lawyer (Education and Employment) advised that it was not necessary to declare all interests at the start of a meeting, as a record was kept by Committee Services of Members' interests, however if a Member felt that they had a personal or prejudicial interest arising from any of the specific items on the agenda then the interest must be declared. Following a brief discussion, the Senior Lawyer (Education and Employment) informed Members that she would verify this advice with the Borough Solicitor.
- RESOLVED:** To note that the following interests were declared:
- | <u>Agenda Item</u> | <u>Member</u> | <u>Nature of Interest</u> |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---|
| 1-17 | Councillor Janet Mote | The Member indicated a personal interest, as she was a Governor of a Voluntary Aided (VA) School. The Member remained in the room whilst all items were being considered and took part in the discussions thereafter. |
72. **Arrangement of Agenda:**
RESOLVED: (1) That all items be considered with the press and public present;
(2) that item 13 be taken in advance of item 10;
(3) that items 16a and 14 be discussed concurrently.
73. **Appointment of Vice-Chair:**
RESOLVED: To appoint Councillor Miss Bednell as Vice-Chair of the Sub-Committee for the 2003/2004 Municipal Year.

74. **Minutes:**
RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 April 2003 be deferred until printed in the next Council Bound Minute Volume.
75. **Public Questions:**
RESOLVED: To note that there were no public questions to be received at this meeting under the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 8 (Part 4F of the Constitution).
76. **Petitions:**
RESOLVED: To note that there were no petitions received at this meeting under the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 9 (Part 4F of the Constitution).
77. **Deputations:**
RESOLVED: To note that there were no deputations received at this meeting under the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 10 (Part 4F of the Constitution).
78. **References from Council/Cabinet:**
RESOLVED: That there were no references received from Council/Cabinet at this meeting.
79. **Response to the Sub-Committee's Reviews in 2002/2003:**
The Panel received the report of the Education and Lifelong Learning Portfolio Holder in response to the two reviews conducted by the Sub-Committee in the 2002/2003 Municipal Year; review of the promotion of healthy lifestyles in schools and the review of the distribution of SEN statements in mainstream schools. The Portfolio Holder informed the Sub-Committee that he welcomed the reviews in the healthy lifestyles and SEN areas and had found the reports, produced by the review groups, both relevant and interesting. The Portfolio Holder also advised that he would welcome the continued attention to these areas in the 2003/2004 Municipal Year from the Sub-Committee.

The Portfolio holder advised that both reviews had identified helpful areas for further development, which were being analysed and progressed by officers in both the Council's Education and Contract Services and also other partner agencies. The Sub-Committee then discussed each review in turn and posed questions to the Portfolio Holder.

The Review of the Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles in Schools

A Member requested that Ordinary and Reserve Members of the Sub-Committee receive a copy of the healthy schools newsletter when it is next published. In addition, the Sub-Committee agreed that copies of the new tuck box menu be circulated to Members when it has been finalised. The Chair suggested that she would contact the schools that had participated in the review in order to ascertain whether students had noted a marked increase in the standard of the tuck box menu.

The Chair informed Members that the Sub-Committee would be receiving an update on the progress achieved against each recommendation at the joint meeting of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny and Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committees on 17 September 2003. The Chair requested that the Head of Contract Services be invited to attend this joint meeting in order to respond to any queries that Members may have in relation to the tuck box menu and free school meals.

The Review of the Distribution of SEN Statements in Mainstream Schools

The Vice Chair informed Members that she had no doubt that funding was available for schools from the date of the completion of final SEN statements and that equipment is arranged as soon as the relevant professional have agreed what is required. However, she advised that schools visited during the review perceived that there was a significant time delay between schools receiving an SEN statement and receiving all the adaptations required by that pupil.

Responding, the Head of Children and Community Services advised that Officers had checked that all the funding and equipment required by SEN statemented pupils transferring from middle school to high school would be in place for this September. A similar check would be made for SEN statemented pupils commencing first school. The Head of Children and Community Services advised that it was more difficult to have provision in place for pupils who moved into the borough.

A Member of the Panel queried whether there had been any evidence that certain schools within the Borough had resisted taking on SEN statemented pupils. Responding, the Vice Chair informed the Sub-Committee that this was the initial aim of the review - to ensure that there was an even distribution of statements - and that Members had concluded that there was a satisfactory distribution of statements throughout the Borough's schools but that this situation required regular monitoring. The Chair advised Members that some schools were oversubscribed as they were perceived by parents as being highly capable in their particular SEN area.

The Portfolio Holder commented that the distribution was previously less even and that there has been a change in the distribution in recent years. Members were informed that schools were now only able to reject an application for an SEN statemented pupil according to the provisions set out in the SEN Code of Practice.

The Chair advised that this situation should be monitored. It was also requested that copies of both reviews be sent to Councillor John Nickolay, as he was not a Member of the Sub-Committee in the 2002/2003 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED: (1) that Ordinary and Reserve Members of the Sub-Committee receive a copy of the healthy schools newsletter when it is next published;

(2) that copies of the new tuck box menu be circulated to Members when it has been finalised;

(3) that the Head of Contract Services be invited to attend the joint meeting of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny and Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committees on 17 September 2003;

(4) that copies of both reviews be sent to Councillor John Nickolay;

(5) that the report of the Education and Lifelong Learning Portfolio Holder be noted.

80.

Youth Service Plan:

The Sub-Committee received the findings arising from the meeting of the Youth Service Plan Working Group, which was constituted to consider the contents of the Youth Service Plan. Councillor Williams led the review of the Youth Service Plan but was unable to attend the meeting. The Lifelong Learning and Youth Service Manager informed Members that the Group discussed the key issues raised by the plan and formulated provisional recommendations, contained within the minutes, for the Sub-Committee to endorse.

In addition, the Lifelong Learning and Youth Service Manager informed Members that Cabinet agreed the Plan at its meeting on 20 May 2003 and that the Plan had been forwarded to the Government Office for London for approval; the Lifelong Learning and Youth Service Manager was currently awaiting a response from the government in relation to the contents of the Plan. The Chair discussed the process by which the plan was analysed by the Group and stated that this was an efficient and effective way of reviewing statutory plans prior to their consideration by the Committee as a whole.

A Co-opted Member requested, on behalf of Councillor Williams, that recommendation (i) be extended; that the Sub-Committee recommend that it be given financial control over grants to youths and voluntary/community organisations. The Chair advised that this was not within the Sub-Committee's remit, as the Grants Advisory Panel dealt with grant applications and that the Lifelong Learning and Youth Service Manager had been dealing with other available funds for such groups.

In response to a question from a Member, the Lifelong Learning and Youth Service Manager clarified the funding available directly through the Service, which was approximately £4,000 for funding for organisations, e.g. for equipment and £10,000 for individuals; a limit of £100 was supplied to each successful applicant.

The Chair requested that recommendation (i) therefore be amended to read: that the Lifelong Learning and Youth Service Manager and the Education and Lifelong Learning Portfolio Holder be requested to examine ways in which the grants system could be simplified for applicants. Members also agreed that the Grants Advisory Panel be informed of this recommendation in order for it to be taken into account during their review regarding the grants process.

Members requested information relating to the number of applications received by the Lifelong Learning and Youth Service Manager for funding. The Lifelong Learning and Youth Service Manager confirmed that the budget received for this type of funding was always allocated to applicants and that there was seldom surplus funds at the end of the financial year. Members were informed that applicants did not have to live in Harrow to secure funding, however, their business or activities had to take place in Harrow.

The Chair highlighted recommendation (iii); that young people with disabilities were not emphasised enough in the Plan and that it should be ensured that next year's Plan addresses this issue. The Sub-Committee agreed that the recommendation contained within the report, as amended, be forwarded to the Education and Lifelong Learning Portfolio Holder for a response.

RESOLVED: (1) That the recommendations of the Youth Service Plan, as amended, be endorsed by the Sub-Committee and forwarded to the Education and Lifelong Learning Portfolio Holder for a response: -

- (i) that the Lifelong Learning and Youth Service Manager and the Education and Lifelong Learning Portfolio Holder be requested to examine ways in which the grants process could be simplified for applicants.
- (ii) That the Youth and Connexions Service support voluntary sector organisations in applying for grants.
- (iii) That young people with disabilities, who did not fall within the scope of the 13-19 age category, receive adequate support from the Youth and Connexions Service and that this provision be highlighted in the Plan.
- (iv) That Members' involvement with the work of the Corporate Parenting Group be highlighted in the Plan.
- (v) That it be recognised that young people need access to parks and open spaces in order to carry out leisure pursuits and for this to be taken into consideration in relation to future planning applications.
- (vi) That young people be included in the consultation process for the redevelopment of parks and open spaces.
- (vii) That young people be consulted on facilities being developed exclusively for them and that future developments consider a range of age appropriate facilities.
- (viii) That the Sub-Committee receive annual updates on the Plan.

(2) that the Grants Advisory Panel be informed of recommendation (i) in order for it to be taken into account during their review regarding the grants process;

(3) that information relating to the number of applications received by the Lifelong Learning and Youth Service Manager for funding be sent to Members of the Sub-Committee;

(4) that the minutes of the meeting of the Youth Service Plan Working Group, held on 13 May 2003, be noted.

81. **Update on the Implementation of the SEN Strategy:**

The Sub-Committee received the report of the Executive Director (People First), which provided an update on the implementation of the SEN strategy requested by the Sub-Committee in July 2002. The Head of Children and Community Services advised that the strategic objectives of the scheme has been set out in Appendix A and that the six issues that officers in Education Services were working on had been set out in Appendix B. Other issues relevant to SEN matters were also being addressed through other Education plans.

A Member of the Sub-Committee expressed concern that delays in pupils receiving medical advice had hindered the speed with which statutory assessments were being carried out. In response, the Head of Children and Community Services advised that this had been caused by staff shortages in Northwick Park Hospital and that officers in Education Services were currently working with staff at the hospital in order to find an

alternative method of completing pupils' SEN statements.

In response to a further question from the Member, the Head of Children and Community Services informed Members that learning support units had been established in the following three schools: Canons High School, Rooks Heath High School and Harrow High School.

Members requested that they be sent information relating to permanent exclusion rates and which schools had been taking in excluded pupils. In addition, Members also requested that they be sent information relating to the number of children in the Borough registered as having autism. In response to a question from a Member, the Head of Children and Community Services confirmed that the number of children registered as having autism had risen over the past decade.

The Sub-Committee also discussed the support received from Social Services by pupils and parents of pupils with disabilities. The Head of Children and Community Services advised that Education Services was currently working with Social Services who are establishing the Children with Learning Disabilities Team to address this situation. The Chair wished for it to be recorded that she welcomed the joined up working that has occurred since the establishment of the People First Directorate. The Chair requested that the Sub-Committee receive regular reports on the SEN Strategy and envisaged that the next report would be included on the agenda for the meeting of the Sub-Committee on 22 April 2004.

RESOLVED: (1) That Members be sent information relating to permanent exclusion rates and which schools had been taking in excluded pupils;

(2) that Members be sent information relating to the number of children in the Borough registered as having autism;

(3) that the Sub-Committee receive regular reports on the SEN Strategy;

(4) that the report of the Executive Director (People First) be noted.

82. **Overview and Scrutiny's Annual Report 2002/2003:**

RESOLVED: That the Chair's report of the Sub-Committee's work over the past year be approved for inclusion in the 2002/2003 Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

83. **Appointment of Statutory Assessments and Statements of SEN In-depth Review Group:**

RESOLVED: That the following Members of the Sub-Committee be appointed to the Statutory Assessments and Statements of SEN In-depth Scrutiny Review Group: -

- (i) Councillor Mitzi Green (Chair)
- (ii) Councillor Marie-Louise Nolan
- (iii) Councillor Lent
- (iv) Councillor Janet Mote
- (v) Councillor John Nickolay
- (vii) Co-opted Member, Reverend P Reece

[Note: (1) Co-opted Member, Reverend P Reece, advised that he would contact Co-opted member, Mr Epie, to see whether he wished to be appointed to the Scrutiny Review Group;

(2) Councillor Miss Bednell advised that she would join the Scrutiny Review Group unless any of the Members unable to attend this meeting wished to be appointed].

84. **Appointment of Library Position Statement Working Group:**

RESOLVED: (1) That the following Members of the Sub-Committee be appointed to the Library Position Statement Working Group: -

- (i) Councillor Mitzi Green
- (ii) Councillor Gate
- (iii) Councillor Ismail
- (iv) Co-opted Member, Mr R Sutcliffe

[Note: (1) Councillor Osborn advised that he would check whether Councillor Mary John wished to be appointed to the Working Group;

(2) Co-opted Member, Mr R Sutcliffe, advised that he would check whether Co-opted member Mr Epie wished to be appointed to the Working Group].

(2) that a meeting between the Library Position Statement Working Group and the Library Services Manager be arranged.

85. **Progress Reports on Reviews - Members' Verbal Updates:**
Review of Statutory Assessments and Statements of Special Educational Needs

See Minute 13.

Review of the Governors Recruitment and Retention

The minutes of the planning meeting of the Review Group on 11 June 2003 were circulated to Members at this meeting and the Chair summarised the main points of interest from the meeting. The Chair requested that information packs circulated to Members at the planning meeting be re-circulated to all Members of the Sub-Committee. Members were informed that no further planning meetings had been arranged, instead decision-making authority had been delegated to the Chair of the Review Group, Councillor Miss Bednell, and the Chair of the Sub-Committee, Councillor Mitzi Green.

The Chair informed the Sub-Committee that the review would be taking place on 22 October 2003 at 7.30 pm at Harrow High School.

RESOLVED: (1) that information packs circulated to Members at the planning meeting be re-circulated to all Members of the Sub-Committee;

(2) that the review take place on 22 October 2003 at 7.30 pm at Harrow High School.

86. **Work Programme 2003/2004:**

RESOLVED: That the Education and Lifelong Learning Portfolio Holder and Director of Education be invited to the meeting of the Sub-Committee on 1 October 2003 for the item on the Education Service Review.

[Note: In the event of the current interim arrangements being still in place, the Head of Children and Community Services, the Head of School Development Services and the Director of Strategy (People First) would attend for the Director of Education].

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.41 pm, closed at 8.36 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR MITZI GREEN
Chair