

LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE**7 OCTOBER 2003**

Chair: * Councillor Mitzi Green

Councillors:	* Miss Bednell	* Jean Lammiman
	* Gate	* Lavingia (2)
	* Ismail	* Lent
	Mary John	Janet Mote
	* Kara (5)	

Voting Co-opted: (Voluntary Aided) (Parent Governors)

* Mrs J Rammelt	Mr H Epie
Reverend P Reece	* Mr R Sutcliffe

* Denotes Member present
 (5) and (2) Denote category of Reserve Member

87. 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 John Nickolay	Councillor Kara
Councillor Marie-Louise Nolan	Councillor Lavingia

88. Declarations of Interest:**RESOLVED:** To note that there were no declarations of interests made by Members in relation to the business transacted at this meeting.**89. Arrangement of Agenda:****RESOLVED:** That (1) all items be considered with the press and public present;

(2) Items 10 and 17 be discussed concurrently;

(3) Item 12 be taken in advance of Item 11;

(4) Items 13 and 14 be discussed concurrently.

90. Minutes:**RESOLVED:** That (1) the minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2003, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record;

(2) authority be given to the Chair to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 8 April 2003 following the meeting.

91. Public Questions:**RESOLVED:** To note that no public questions had been received.**92. Petitions:****RESOLVED:** To note that no petitions had been received.**93. Deputations:****RESOLVED:** To note that no deputations had been received.

94. **References from Council, Cabinet and Other Committees/Panels:**

RESOLVED: That the reference received from the Education Consultative Forum, in relation to the Public Library Position Statement, be noted and considered under Item 10 of the agenda (Minute 96 refers).

95. **Education Service Review:**

The Sub-Committee received the report of the Interim Director of Education which outlined the annual Education Service Review for the year 2002-2003. The Interim Director of Education informed Members that the Education Service annually reviews progress against targets in the Education Service Strategy, which currently covers the period 2002-2006. Members were additionally informed that the Education Service Strategy included 17 Strategic Targets which indicated progress made towards the four Strategic Priorities:

- (1) Continuing to raise awareness;
- (2) Targeting services for individual children and families;
- (3) Regenerating and empowering the community through learning;
- (4) Making effective use of resources.

The Interim Director of Education advised Members that the Education Service Review report was being presented to the Sub-Committee differently this year. Following feedback from previous years, it was decided that it would be more efficient to separate the Data Profile and Best Value Performance Indicators from the main report, in order for Members to concentrate on the overall progress against each of the 17 Strategic Targets. Both the Data Profile and Best Value Performance Indicators reports had been inserted into the Information Circular, as stand-alone documents which Members could cross-refer back to throughout the following academic year.

The Interim Director of Education recommended that Members focus particularly on the 17 Strategic Targets summarised on pages 23 and 24 of the report; which could be cross-referred to the detailed information on progress against each of the targets contained within pages 26-55 of the report. The Sub-Committee was also referred to the headline statements on pages 20 and 21 of the report, which highlight significant progress made against targets in 2002-2003.

The Chair invited Members to put any questions relating to the Education Service Review report to either the Interim Director of Education or the Education and Lifelong Learning Portfolio Holder, whom the Chair additionally welcomed to the meeting.

In relation to Strategic Target 1 (i), the Vice Chair welcomed the information showing that unauthorised absence levels for both primary and secondary schools had decreased to 0.21% and 0.52% respectively but asked about the level of unauthorised absence in special schools which was significantly higher at 1.98%. Responding, the Interim Director of Education advised that the issue of the level of unauthorised absence in special schools had been noted by officers and that this issue was being addressed at the relevant schools.

With reference to Strategic Target 1 (e), a Member asked about the range of unsatisfactory teaching and learning in schools, which at its maximum was 7%, and requested to know whether any special efforts were being made in these schools. Responding, the Interim Director of Education advised that following OFSTED inspections in schools, Advisers visited schools and provided a higher level of support where there were relatively high levels of unsatisfactory teaching. The Education and Lifelong Learning Portfolio Holder added that Harrow schools had good statistics in this area in comparison with other schools and that it was important to focus support where teaching or learning problems had been identified.

A Vice Chair of the Sub-Committee asked for clarification on why the Council had been criticised in relation to the schools budget 2003/2004, Strategic Target 15. The Education and Lifelong Learning Portfolio Holder advised that there had been a technical error in relation to the calculation of the schools budget. Members were informed that when the final detailed calculations were completed for the Section 52 return at the end of March 2003, the schools budget was short of the target by just £28,000. The DfES calculated the target as a percentage of the increase that was achieved and therefore Harrow achieved an increase of £12.112 million of £12.140 million or 99.8%. The Council did not intend the £28,000 shortfall.

A Member of the Sub-Committee queried Strategic Target 1 (g) with regards to the rate of permanent exclusions for Years 7 – 11 being twice the national average. The Interim Director of Education advised that further work needed to be carried out in this area

and that a meeting had recently taken place between officers in the People First Directorate to learn from initiatives in other local authorities to reduce permanent exclusions. Members were informed that some other local authorities had an arrangement for a fresh start for pupils before they were permanently excluded.

The Education and Lifelong Learning Portfolio Holder advised that Education Services would be undertaking research into why permanent exclusions were relatively high for Years 7 – 11, including the proportion of African-Caribbean students. Members were advised that support for schools, pupils and parents would be increased due to the coming together of Education and Social Services under the People First Directorate. In addition, the Sub-Committee was informed that officers would be examining the effects of 'early intervention', 'short sharp shock' and 'out of school activities' in relation to exclusions. A Member of the Panel warned use of a 'short sharp shock' approach could greatly increase the number of exclusion appeals.

A Member of the Sub-Committee welcomed the amalgamation of Education and Social Services in the People First Directorate and stressed that this new Directorate needed to support the families of pupils through the exclusion process. The Interim Director of Education informed Members that the Harrow Tuition Service had introduced some support for families where pupils were excluded and that there was also a range of projects supported by the Children's Fund in the voluntary sector, such as parenting classes. A Member of the Sub-Committee advised that many local faith groups also held parenting classes.

The Chair advised Members that an in-depth scrutiny review in relation to exclusions would be considered for next year.

In relation to Strategic Target 7, a Member of the Sub-Committee queried why students go to educational establishments outside the Borough following the completion of their GCSE examinations and also queried why there was a lack of sixth form education. The Education and Lifelong Learning Portfolio Holder advised that students who go to educational establishments outside the Borough go both to colleges and school sixth form. Members were informed that the Council was about to undertake a stakeholder survey in relation to Post-16 education. The Interim Director of Education explained that there is both movement into and out of the Borough at all stages. Members requested that they be provided with information on the net inflow and outflow of pupils at all stages in the Borough.

A Member of the Sub-Committee raised the issue of the age of transfer from primary to secondary school and requested an update on the current situation. The Education and Lifelong Learning Portfolio Holder advised that the matter was currently under review and that the Council would be putting in a funding application to central government for re-organising the age of transfer in advance of further consultation on this issue.

A Member informed the Sub-Committee that the years were missing from a few charts in the Information Circular. The Interim Director of Education advised that he would look into the recovery of this data.

The Chair referred Members to page 12 of the Information Circular and queried the lack of Eastern European languages recorded. Responding, the Interim Director of Education advised that the census had been carried out three years ago. At the time there may not have been a large proportion of the population who spoke these languages. The Chair requested that the Interim Director of Education find out when the next language census would be conducted.

With reference to Strategic Target 4, the Chair wished to know how many schools had joined the healthy schools programme since the completion of the Sub-Committee's review of the Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles in school, in order to monitor the effectiveness of this aspect of the review. In response, the Interim Director of Education confirmed that 37 schools were now part of the programme and that he would send the Chair details of how many applications were started in the past year.

The Vice Chair wished to thank the Interim Director of Education for his presentation and advised that the format of the report was considerably more user-friendly than in previous years. The Chair seconded this and requested, on behalf of the Sub-Committee, that the officers involved in contributing to the report be commended for their efforts.

RESOLVED: That (1) members be provided with information on the net inflow and outflow of pupils at all stages in the Borough;

- (2) the Interim Director of Education look into the recovery of information on years missing in the Information Circular;
- (3) the Interim Director of Education inform the Chair when the next language census would be conducted;
- (4) the Interim Director of Education send details to the Chair of how many applications for the healthy schools programme were received since the completion of the healthy lifestyles review;
- (5) the officers involved in contributing to the report be commended for their efforts;
- (6) the report of the Interim Director of Education be noted.

96. **Public Library Position Statement:**

The Sub-Committee received the report of the Executive Director (People First) which contained the draft submission of the Public Library Position Statement. The Sub-Committee was requested to consider the draft Public Library Position Statement in conjunction with the reference received from the Education Consultative Forum and refer any comments to Cabinet.

The Library Services Manager informed Members that Annual Library Plans were discontinued as part of the Local Government White Paper implementation process. They have been succeeded by Position Statements for a maximum of two years by library authorities other than those with particularly high ratings in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment of 2002.

The objective of Public Library Position Statements is to show how English public library authorities intend to shape and deliver their library services in line with themes within 'Framework for the Future: Libraries, Learning and Information in the Next Decade', published by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in early 2003, and to give an indication of their current service levels. The Library Services Manager advised that Section 3.1 of the draft statement outlined areas where the Council had already met standards and areas which required improvement. Members were additionally informed that Harrow's book issues per capita have been ranked as the highest in Outer London boroughs in the most recently published comparative data from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance (CIPFA).

The Chair referred Members to page 79 of the agenda which detailed the findings and recommendations made by the Public Library Position Statement Working Group, which had been set up by Members of the Sub-Committee to review the draft statement in depth. In relation to Recommendation (v), a Member of the Sub-Committee queried why there was a shortage of librarians. In response, the Library Services Manager advised that the number of graduates going into Library Services was insufficient to meet demand, adding that working in local government was not perceived to be as attractive as other graduate level employment.

A Member of the Sub-Committee commented that Harrow libraries' opening hours have been increased, which has significantly improved access to facilities. The Member wished to know whether there were any plans to improve other facilities within libraries, such as catering facilities. The Library Services Manager advised that there are plans to incorporate a cafeteria at the Healthy Living Centre which will be sharing premises with the planned new library in Wealdstone, and there may also be plans to build such facilities at the proposed central library in due course.

The Sub-Committee considered and noted the reference from the Education Consultative Forum in relation to the draft statement. The Chair wished to thank the Library Services Manager for his presentation and stated that Harrow does have a very good library service.

RESOLVED: That (1) the recommendations arising from the meeting of the Working Group held on 1 September 2003 be endorsed; and

- (2) referred to Cabinet for consideration and endorsement: -
 - (i) that publicity for book groups be improved via methods outlined by the Working Group
 - (ii) that information on story groups for under 5's be distributed by schools and other appropriate bodies and institutions

- (iii) that downloadable application forms for membership of the Library Service be made available on the web site
 - (iv) that the Education and Lifelong Learning Portfolio Holder be requested to write to the relevant Minister highlighting the future crisis in the recruitment of librarians
 - (v) that the Council develop a strategy for the recruitment of librarians ahead of any expected shortage.
- (3) the reference from the Education Consultative Forum be noted.
- (4) the report of the Executive Director (People First) be noted.

97. **Adult and Community Learning Inspection Report / Action Plan:**

The Sub-Committee received the report of the Interim Director of Education which sought to provide Members with a summary of the findings of the Inspection of Adult and Community Learning in Harrow and an opportunity to comment on and approve the Post Inspection Action Plan and the Three-Year Development Plan 2003-2006.

The Lifelong Learning and Youth Service Manager advised Members that the Inspection Report was published at the end of May 2003, a summary of which has been attached as Appendix 1; the full report is available to view in the Members' Library. The Sub-Committee was also asked to note thirty-seven inspection reports on the performance of local authorities have been published, of which Harrow is the only local authority to have received Grade 2 (good) for its Leadership and Management, which is the highest rating achieved so far by any local authority. Members were additionally informed that Harrow also received Grade 2 for Equality of Opportunity.

The Lifelong Learning and Youth Service Manager informed Members that officers were pleased with the outcome of the Inspection Report, which graded eleven areas of work, of which seven were Grade 2 (good), three were Grade 3 (satisfactory) and one was Grade 4 (unsatisfactory). Members were advised that officers were currently working towards further improving the grades, particularly the one area of work classed as Grade 4, which was 'Hospitality, Sport, Leisure and Travel'. This area will be subject to re-inspection within the next two years.

The Sub-Committee was notified that the Post Inspection Action Plan, produced to address the weaknesses identified in the Inspection Report and to build on its strengths, had been approved by the Adult Learning Inspectorate and will be monitored by the London West Learning and Skills Council.

A Member of the Sub-Committee proposed that officers in Education Services be commended for achieving Grade 2 in seven areas of work. The Chair seconded this proposal, adding that the findings of the report were excellent and that the Sub-Committee would review progress made against targets in the Post Inspection Action Plan at its meeting in July 2004.

The Chair informed Members that she had been approached by Inspectors from the Adult Learning Inspectorate who wished to know whether the Sub-Committee had an Adult Learning 'Champion'. Members were requested to consider volunteering for this role and notify the Chair following the meeting if they were interested.

RESOLVED: That (1) the Sub-Committee would review progress made against targets in the Post Inspection Action Plan at its meeting in July 2004;

- (2) officers in Education Services be commended for achieving Grade 2 (good) in seven areas of work in the Inspection Report;
- (3) Members consider volunteering for the role of Adult Learning 'Champion' and notify the Chair following the meeting if they were interested;
- (4) the report of the Interim Director of Education be noted.

98. **2003/04 SEN Transport Budget Reductions:**

The Chair invited Members to volunteer to undertake a visit to Shaftesbury High School to discuss the impact of the special educational needs (SEN) transport budget reductions with parents and teachers. It was agreed that three Members who were present at the meeting and a fourth Member who was absent but who declared an interest in this item, be appointed to undertake the visit to Shaftesbury High School.

The Chair introduced the new Scrutiny Support Officer to Members of the Sub-Committee and requested that the officer set up a meeting between the four Members and the parents and teachers at Shaftesbury High School and report back to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee on 20 January 2004.

RESOLVED: That (1) the following Members undertake the visit to Shaftesbury High School:

- (i) Councillor Mitzi Green
- (ii) Councillor Miss Bednell
- (iii) Councillor John Nickolay
- (iv) Councillor Ismail

(2) that the Scrutiny Support Officer set up a meeting between the four Members (above) and the parents and teachers at Shaftesbury High School and report back to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.

99. **Review of Statutory Assessments and Statements of Special Educational Needs:**
The Sub-Committee received the scoping report for the Review of Statutory Assessments and Statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) which outlined the aims and objectives of the review, the measures of success, methodology, assumptions, constraints and timescale of the review.

The Vice Chair referred Members to the pre-scoping session for Members of the Review Group, which was held on 25 September 2003 with the IDeA Consultant, and stated that she found it very helpful in outlining and refining the scope of the review. The Chair seconded the Vice Chair's comment and requested that the timescale for the review be extended sufficiently for the final review report to be submitted to the meeting of the Sub-Committee in July 2004.

In response to a query from a Member, the Chair clarified that the scope of the review was limited to pupils with special educational needs (SEN) with a Statement issued in the six months prior to November 2003, and that the link between SEN pupils and exclusions would be addressed in the review of exclusions which was being considered for next year.

The Scrutiny Support Officer informed Members that the North West London Trust had provided a health representative to be co-opted onto the review. The Sub-Committee endorsed the co-option of the health representative, Doctor Peter Lachman, and agreed that he be invited to the next full meeting of the Scrutiny Review Group on 3 December 2003.

The Sub-Committee agreed the scoping report for the review, as amended.

RESOLVED: That (1) the timescale for the review be extended sufficiently for the final review report to be submitted to the meeting of the Sub-Committee in July 2004;

(2) the health representative, Doctor Peter Lachman, be co-opted onto the review and be invited to the next full meeting of the Scrutiny Review Group on 3 December 2003;

(3) the scoping report for the Review of Statutory Assessments and Statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) be agreed, as amended.

100. **Review of Recruitment and Retention Process for School Governors:**
The Sub-Committee received the scoping report for the Review of Recruitment and Retention Process for School Governors which outlined the aims and objectives of the review, the measures of success, methodology, assumptions, constraints and timescale of the review.

The Chair confirmed that she and the Vice Chair would be meeting with officers prior to the evidence gathering session for the review, due to take place on 22 October 2003 at 7.30 pm in Harrow High School's Main Hall. The purpose of this meeting would be to ascertain likely attendance, establish which questions Members would be asking contributors and to finalise details for the event. Members were requested to send any comments or questions to either the Chair, Vice Chair or Scrutiny Support Officer via email due to the short timescale between the meeting and the evidence gathering session.

In addition, Members were informed that a briefing session would be held at 6.30 pm prior to the evidence gathering session at a separate room within the school. The Chair requested that the Committee Administrator re-issue the flyer promoting the review to all Members of the Council to raise awareness of the evidence gathering session.

The Sub-Committee agreed the scoping report for the review.

RESOLVED: That (1) Members send any comments or questions regarding the evidence gathering session to the Chair, Vice Chair or Scrutiny Support Officer via email;

(2) all Members of the Sub-Committee be requested to attend the briefing session at 6.30 pm prior to the evidence gathering session at 7.30 pm at Harrow High School;

(3) the Committee Administrator re-issue the flyer promoting the review to all Members of the Council;

(4) the scoping report for the Review of Recruitment and Retention Process for School Governors be agreed.

101. **Proposed Schools' Budget Presentation and Meetings:**

The Sub-Committee received a verbal report from the Committee Administrator which outlined proposals to hold a presentation for Members of the Sub-Committee, the Education Consultative Forum and the Schools Forum on the proposed schools' budget. Members were informed that in order to streamline the schools budget process and to facilitate the earlier deadline of 31 December 2003 for submissions to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), officers in Education had suggested that a joint presentation be made on the proposals. It was envisaged that questions would be taken at the presentation and that the three bodies would then meet in their separate entities to discuss the proposals and make recommendations for submission to Cabinet.

The Committee Administrator notified Members that it has been proposed that all three bodies receive the presentation on 9th December 2003 and that meetings to discuss the proposals be arranged following the presentation, not necessarily on the same evening. Members were informed that at present officers were experiencing difficulties in finding rooms for the bodies to meet following the presentation and that there were also problems with Member availability. It was noted that presentation and subsequent meetings of the three bodies had to take place between 9 – 11 December 2003 in order to fit in with both statutory and Cabinet's deadline.

A Member of the Committee stressed that availability of rooms should not be the main consideration and that the availability of Members must be the key driver. The Chair seconded this proposal and added that it was imperative that the Vice Chair be available for the presentation and the subsequent meeting of the Sub-Committee. It was noted that the Vice Chair was unavailable on 9 December 2003.

The Committee Administrator informed Members that they would be advised on progress in finding suitable dates and locations in due course.

RESOLVED: That (1) availability of rooms should not be the main consideration in finding a date for the presentation and subsequent meetings in relation to the proposed schools' budget and that the availability of Members be the key driver;

(2) the verbal report from the Committee Administrator be noted.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.32 pm, closed at 8.37 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR MITZI GREEN
Chair