

LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE**13 OCTOBER 2004**

Chair: * Councillor Mitzi Green

Councillors:	* Nana Asante	* Janet Mote
	* Mrs Bath (3)	* John Nickolay
	* Gate	* Marie-Louise Nolan
	Mary John	* Osborn
	* Lavingia (2)	

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

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

* Denotes Member present
 (2) and (3) Denote category of Reserve Member
 † Denotes apologies received

[Note: Councillor Stephenson attended the meeting at the invitation of the Sub-Committee and Councillor Kinsey attended the meeting in a speaking role].

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL**PART II - MINUTES**156. **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 Jean Lammiman	Councillor Mrs Bath
Councillor Lent	Councillor Lavingia

157. **Declarations of Interest:**

During the discussion in Minute 168, Councillor Brian Gate declared an interest in that he was a Reserve Member of SACRE as a representative of the LEA.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted.

158. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

It was agreed that item 9 would be considered in conjunction with item 16, as they dealt with the same subject.

RESOLVED: That (1) the above be noted; and

(2) all items be considered with the press and public present.

159. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2004, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

160. **Public Questions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were put at the meeting under the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 8.

161. **Petitions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions were received at the meeting under the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 9.

162. **Deputations:**

RESOLVED: To note that no deputations were received at the meeting under the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 10.

163. **Cultural Strategy Working Group:**
A Member advised the Sub-Committee that the first meeting of the Cultural Strategy Working Group had been arranged for Wednesday 20 October 2004.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted.

164. **Education Service Review:**
The Sub-Committee received a report from the Director of Learning and Community Development, which detailed the Education Service Review for 2003/04. The Portfolio Holder for Education and Lifelong Learning and Human Resources began by reminding Members that the previous year had seen significant organisational changes with the establishment of the People First Directorate. The Portfolio Holder noted a number of areas that had achieved progress over the last year, which included:

- new purpose built facilities and refurbished facilities at the Hillview Centre, Tyneholme Nursery and Little Stanmore
- work on exclusions
- the provision of new technology, such as broadband and interactive whiteboards
- the attainment of the attendance target
- Library Services

The Chair enquired as to the progress of the Healthy Schools initiative. An officer informed the meeting that all schools in Harrow were involved in the initiative at one stage or another. Over 50% of the Borough's schools were working towards or had already been designated as 'Healthy Schools.'

Members were referred to an item on the information circular, which provided an update on the web page for Governors. A Member of the Sub-Committee enquired as to when the bulletin board was expected to be on-line. It was hoped that the bulletin board would be launched once the staffing and legal implications had been addressed. It was agreed that these issues would be fed through to the Publications Advisory Panel.

Members were referred to page 19 of the supplemental agenda. The Chair asked for clarification on how the 14-19 curriculum would be developed. It was anticipated that the curriculum would be broadened to include more vocational qualifications as a supplement to the core curriculum.

The Sub-Committee discussed the problem of parents taking their children out of school for holidays during term-time. Parents were required to gain permission by the Headteacher before taking their children out of school. The legal adviser informed the Sub-Committee that the Council were intending to introduce penalty notices in January 2005 for use in prescribed circumstances. The Director of Learning and Community Development added that a less severe penalty was that any such absences would be recorded as unauthorised and included on the pupil's report.

Members were referred to the heading Shortfall on Target on page 33 of the supplemental agenda, which noted the work being undertaken to develop specialist provision for autism in schools. An officer advised that progress in mainstream schools had proved more challenging than originally expected. The aim in relation to provision for autism in schools was to provide a greater degree of choice for parents and a higher level of expertise. By achieving these objectives, it was hoped that fewer pupils with autism would have to go to school outside the Borough.

Discussion turned to the attainment of under-achieving groups. The Director of Learning and Community Development noted that 60% of school pupils in the Borough were Black and Minority Ethnic. Whilst other areas with similar demographic characteristics were associated with underperformance, Harrow had managed to avoid this trend. However, it was recognised that the results of Black African and Black Caribbean pupils were below the national average and as a result a number of initiatives would be targeting this group. The Sub-Committee expressed an interest in the Travellers' Education Service, owing to the recruitment of a new Traveller Support Worker. The Sub-Committee was informed that traveller pupils continued to underachieve, although progress had been made due to the work of the Travellers' Education Service.

A Member asked for a written response to a question that he had raised regarding the role of the Play Development Officer. The Director of Learning and Community Development noted that Arts Development had been an area that had previously been under-resourced. As part of the Middle Management Review, it was hoped that the appointment of a Group Manager for Community and Culture, together with the position

of Cultural Strategy Manager, would provide senior leadership in this area for the first time.

RESOLVED: That (1) the Portfolio Holder for Education and Lifelong Learning and Human Resources provide a written response to questions received by a Co-opted Member;

(2) the Sub-Committee receive a report on the Travellers' Education Service at a future meeting;

(3) the Director of Learning and Community Development provide the Sub-Committee with a written answer explaining the role of the Play Development Officer; and

(4) the Education Service Review 2003/04 be noted.

165. **Progress on the Scrutiny Review of SEN:**

Members were reminded that the Scrutiny Review of Special Educational Needs (SEN) Processes was submitted to Cabinet in July 2004. The Sub-Committee was referred to a tabled document entitled 'The Statutory Assessment Process in Harrow – a guide for parents/carers,' as requested by recommendation 2 of the Scrutiny Review of SEN Processes. Members welcomed this document and felt that it would be of great benefit to parents of children with SEN. It was added that the document would be made available on the Council's website. A Member suggested that various contact numbers should be included in the document.

Given the short period of time since the review was referred to Cabinet, the Sub-Committee agreed to receive a written report in January 2005, when progress would be more measurable. It was further agreed that a meeting would be arranged between the Portfolio Holder for Education and Lifelong Learning and Human Resources and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Sub-Committee to discuss the review.

RESOLVED: That the Sub-Committee receive a progress report on the Scrutiny Review of SEN Processes at its meeting on 12 January 2005.

166. **Harrow Teachers' Centre:**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Director of Learning and Community Development, which provided Members with an update on the funding arrangements introduced at the Harrow Teachers' Centre. It was explained that the previous funding structure was based on a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Borough's schools. Following the High Schools' decision to opt-out of the SLA, Cabinet had approved the introduction of a pay-as-you-go system. Originally the Teachers' Centre was expected to make a loss of £72,000 as a result of the lower charges introduced for the first five months of the financial year. However it was anticipated that this would be reduced to £55,000, providing bookings remained at the current level.

The officer informed Members that the Teachers' Centre had launched a publicity campaign in order to increase the use of their facilities. This had reportedly resulted in discussions with local community groups and organisations that had since expressed an interest in using the facilities at the Teachers' Centre. It was added that a new computerised booking system would help to improve the efficiency and usage of the facilities at the Teachers' Centre. The officer recognised the dangers of the pay-as-you-go system due to the lack of a guaranteed income. However, Members were informed that room bookings at the Teachers' Centre had not seen a decline since the introduction of the new charging system.

RESOLVED: That the Sub-Committee receive a report at its meeting in April 2005 to update Members on the financial position of the Teachers' Centre, including a breakdown of the different categories of users.

167. **Public Library Position Statement:**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Director of Learning and Community Development. It was explained that the authority was required to submit a Public Library Position Statement and Standards Report to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Members were reminded that in October 2003, the Sub-Committee had recommended to Cabinet that a strategy be developed in order to address the shortfall of professionally qualified librarians within the Library Service. It was advised that the authority was a member of the Society of Chief Librarians, who had piloted a number of courses to address the shortage. Possible local initiatives had also been considered, including the reintroduction of a graduate trainee scheme. The officer anticipated that the Library Service would continue to experience problems in this area. Members

agreed that it was important to introduce measures before the problem became more acute. The Sub-Committee agreed that a reference would be made to Cabinet, reiterating the recommendation in October 2003, that a strategy should be developed in order to address the shortfall of professionally qualified librarians.

In response to a query, it was noted that the policy of the Library Service was to have a qualified librarian at each facility. A Member suggested that it would be beneficial if the profession was included as part of the 14-19 Strategy, which was designed to build a wider vocational skills network.

RESOLVED: That (1) a reference be made to Cabinet, reiterating the need to develop a strategy to deal with the shortfall of qualified professional librarians;

(2) the Sub-Committee receive a report in April 2005 to chart progress on addressing the problem; and

(3) the Public Library Position Statement and Standards Report 2004, be noted.

168. **The Work of SACRE:**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Director of Learning and Community Development, which gave Members an overview of the work of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE). The officer explained the key functions of SACRE, which included advising the LEA on issues relating to religious education and collective worship, providing advice on the revision of the Agreed Syllabus and the consideration of determinations.

The officer clarified that a determination was a request by the Headteacher, with the agreement of the Chair of Governors, that the school drop the clause 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' in collective worship. It was advised that only nine out of seventy-two schools in the Borough had a determination, primarily because the majority of schools felt that they could act within the existing arrangements. A Co-opted Member of the Sub-Committee pointed out that the date of a religious holiday listed in Appendix 2 was incorrect. The officer agreed to check the query raised by the Co-opted Member.

RESOLVED: That the Sub-Committee receive SACRE's 2003/04 Annual Report and an updated membership list as information items at a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.

169. **Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2003/04:**

RESOLVED: That the Chair's draft report of the Sub-Committee's work over the last year for inclusion in the 2003/04 scrutiny annual report be approved.

170. **Review of Exclusions:**

The Chair reminded Members that the Exclusions Review Group would not begin its work until January 2005, following the completion of the Phase 3 SEN Funding Review. It was noted that colleagues from Slough were due to visit Harrow to discuss issues arising from the review. Councillor Asante asked for her name to be added to the attendance list on Appendix B of the officer report within the minutes of the review group's first meeting. Since the agreement of the review group membership at a previous meeting of the Sub-Committee, Councillor Asante had volunteered to become a member of the group.

RESOLVED: That (1) the scope for review be agreed; and

(2) the Sub-Committee agree the addition of Councillor Nana Asante to the membership of the Exclusions Review Group.

171. **Scoping Report for the Scrutiny Review of Phase 3 Delegated Funding for Pupils with SEN Statements in Mainstream Schools:**

It was hoped that the review group would report in January 2005 in time to refer its recommendations to Cabinet before the decision on phase 3 funding was agreed. Given the tight timescale of completing the review, the Chair indicated that it might prove necessary for herself and the Vice-Chair to approve the final report by Urgent Action in order for the report to reach Cabinet. Members of the Sub-Committee indicated that they would be happy with this approach. Members noted that since the previous meeting of the Sub-Committee, Councillor Asante had volunteered to become a member of the group.

RESOLVED: That (1) the scope for review be agreed; and

(2) the Sub-Committee agree the addition of Councillor Nana Asante to the membership of the Phase 3 Delegated Funding Review Group.

172. **Key Stage Level 1, 2, 3 and 4 statistics for Children with SEN (including a breakdown by gender and ethnicity):**

(See Minutes 158 and 165).

173. **Any Other Business:**

RESOLVED: That there was no other business to be discussed at this meeting.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.34 pm, closed at 9.50 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR MITZI GREEN
Chair