

LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE**27 JUNE 2005**

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| Chair: | * Councillor Mitzi Green | |
| Councillors: | * Nana Asante * Blann (1) * Gate * Jean Lammiman * Vina Mithani (1) | * Janet Mote * John Nickolay * Osborn * Anne Whitehead (3) |
| Voting Co-opted: | (Voluntary Aided) | (Parent Governors) |
| | † Mrs J Rammelt Reverend P Reece | * Mr H Epie * Mr R Sutcliffe |

* Denotes Member present

(1) and (3) Denote category of Reserve Member

† Denotes apologies received

[Note: Councillors Mrs Champagnie and Ray also attended this meeting to speak on the item indicated at Minute 224 below].

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL**PART II - MINUTES****214. Appointment of Chair:**

RESOLVED: To note the appointment at the Special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 May 2005 of Councillor Mitzi Green as Chair of the Sub-Committee for the Municipal Year 2005/2006.

215. 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 Kinsey | Councillor Anne Whitehead |
| Councillor Omar | Councillor Blann |
| Councillor Mary John | Councillor Vina Mithani |

216. Apologies for Absence:

RESOLVED: To note that apologies for absence had been received from Mrs Julia Rammelt.

217. 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.

218. Arrangement of Agenda:

RESOLVED: That (1) in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the following agenda items be admitted late to the agenda by virtue of the special circumstances and grounds for urgency detailed below:-

| <u>Agenda item</u> | <u>Special Circumstances/Grounds for Urgency</u> |
|---|--|
| 13. Performance Reporting | Consultation on the report was completed after the publication of the main agenda. Members were requested to consider this item in line with the Sub-Committee's 2005/2006 Work Programme. |
| 14. Adult and Community Learning Review – Project | The report was delayed as a result of the need to consult with Members and officers in advance of |

- Scoping publication of the draft scope. Members were asked to receive the report to enable consideration of the proposed scope of the adult and community learning review, to allow work on the review to commence as soon as possible (the next meeting was not scheduled to take place until 19 October) and to prevent an adverse impact on the programme of scrutiny reviews.
- (2) all items be considered with the press and public present.
219. **Appointment of Vice-Chair:**
RESOLVED: That Councillor Janet Mote be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Sub-Committee for the Municipal Year 2005/2006.
220. **Minutes:**
RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2005, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.
221. **Public Questions:**
RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were put at the meeting under the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 8.
222. **Petitions:**
RESOLVED: To note that no petitions were received at the meeting under the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 9.
223. **Deputations:**
RESOLVED: To note that no deputations were received at the meeting under the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 10.
224. **African Exchange Presentation:**
The Sub-Committee welcomed Mrs Lynne Pritchard, Headteacher of Whitefriars First and Middle School, who provided Members with a presentation on the African Exchange. It was reported that over the previous two years, Whitefriars School had developed links with schools and communities in Uganda through a charity called Link Community Development. Since the first visit to Isagara in 2002 it was explained that several further exchange visits had taken place, including the recent visit of the Isagara Deputy Head in May 2005. The exchange project was underpinned by several principles, including co-operation, learning from others, mutual understanding and an acceptance of similarities and differences in people and cultures. The Sub-Committee noted that a literacy training programme was undertaken in summer 2004 for approximately one hundred teachers in the Masindi District of Uganda. It was added that a numeracy training programme would be undertaken during summer 2005 when more of the schools' staff were expected to visit Uganda.

Members were also informed that Whitefriars School had set-up a Global Citizenship Week whereby pupils learnt about a different continent each year. Discussion focussed on a range of subjects including the content of the Ugandan curriculum, teaching hours, the size of classes, the benefits that both parties had gained through the project and the opportunity to build similar links with schools in other parts of the world.

RESOLVED: That (1) the Publications Advisory Panel be asked to examine ways to publicise the work of the African Exchange Project undertaken by Whitefriars First and Middle school; and
(2) the Portfolio Holder for Education and Lifelong Learning be sent a copy of the presentation.
225. **Update on the Implementation of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Strategy:**
Members received a report of the Director of Children's Services, which provided the Sub-Committee with an annual update on the implementation of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) strategy. In response to a query on page 8 of the agenda, it

was explained that the apparent discrepancy of 0.8% in the percentage of SEN pupils without statements represented those children in nurseries with SEN.

The Chair referred the Sub-Committee to the table on page 10 of the agenda and asked an officer how many of the nine appeals referred to the SEN Disability Tribunal in 2003/2004 had been upheld. It was clarified that eight of the appeals had been dismissed. Although the report stated that Harrow's appeal figures were high in the national context, the figures were not unusual for a London Borough. It was requested that future reports on the SEN Strategy include the number of appeals upheld each year.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

226. **Single Status Implementation In Schools:**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Director of Human Resources and Organisational Effectiveness, which updated Members on the implementation of the joint Single Status Agreement for non-teaching staff in schools. It was reported that the vast majority of part-time school workers had opted to increase their contractual hours. An officer indicated that by the end of June 2005 it was hoped that 90% of schools' former manual worker employees would be covered by model job descriptions.

A Member expressed concern at the lack of information received by staff and governing bodies and felt that personalised letters should have been sent to all employees to explain that their terms and conditions would change. An officer clarified that the Portfolio Holder for Education and Lifelong Learning had made it a requirement that any governing body wishing to meet with Human Resources would have the opportunity to do so. It was also explained that the second set of letters sent to staff were personalised.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

227. **Performance Reporting:**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Director of Organisational Performance, which invited Members to consider their preferred methods of performance reporting. Members discussed the targets relating to school attendance. Although the Council had failed to meet the attendance target in primary schools, it was partially explained by the challenging target that had been set. In response to a query, the Sub-Committee were advised that it was left to the discretion of individual Headteachers to distinguish between holidays and family visits during term time. It was added that individual schools were responsible for ameliorating the disadvantages of pupils taking family trips during term time. Members agreed that they receive a report at the meeting on 10 January 2005 examining the causes and effects of such absences and possible initiatives to help pupils who undertook family visits during term time.

Whilst considering the targets in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2, 3 and 4, Members were reminded that it was important to see targets in their overall context. It was therefore suggested that future performance reporting should include an explanation of each of the targets relevant to the Sub-Committee. An officer reminded Members that the Sub-Committee would receive the Education Service Review at its meeting in October 2005, which would include details of the Council's performance in key areas.

RESOLVED: That (1) the Sub-Committee receive a report at its meeting on 10 January 2005 on absences relating to family visits; and

(2) the Strategic Performance Report be noted.

228. **Adult and Community Learning Review - Project Scoping:**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Director of Organisational Performance detailing the scope of the Adult and Community Learning Review.

RESOLVED: That (1) the proposed scope of the Adult and Community Learning Review be agreed; and

(2) the Review Group membership, as set out in Appendix 1 to the published officer report, be agreed.

229. **Any Other Business:**

Exclusions Review

It was noted that the report prepared by Mr Clive Danks had been shared with Headteachers, and was now publicly available. It was explained that a small group of Headteachers and the author of the report would be drawing up an action plan. The Sub-Committee noted that Members would meet informally on 20 September 2005 at 7.30pm to consider the Exclusions Review.

Special Meeting 5 December 2005

It was suggested that at the close of the Sub-Committee's Special meeting on 5 December 2005, Members meet informally to prepare questions for the Portfolio Holder, who would be attending the meeting on 10 January 2006.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.35 pm, closed at 9.40 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR MITZI GREEN
Chair