

**Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Sub-Committee**

**Pre-scoping Meeting Review of Exclusions**

**Venue: Small Meeting Room, Middlesex Floor, Civic Centre**

**September 21<sup>st</sup> 2004 6:30-pm**

**Attendees:** Cllrs Mitzi Green (Chair), Janet Mote, Mr. Epie, Brenda Rayson (Senior Advisor)

**Apologies:** Councillor Vina Mithani

The aim of this meeting was to put together a scoping document for October 2004 meeting of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Sub-Committee. This meeting was also to help the review group identify the focus and scale of the exclusions review, starting in January 2005.

**Introduction and welcome**

Councillor Mitzi Green made introductions to councillors and co-opted members.

**Current Issues**

Brenda Rayson, Senior Adviser gave a presentation about the current issues surrounding pupil exclusions on a local and national level. Her presentation is provided in Appendix A. The main points of her presentation are summarised as follows:

It was suggested that Members have a session looking at the key indicators including indicators on pupil exclusions where Members could gain a better understanding of the issues surrounding pupil exclusions.

It was highlighted that Harrow had been criticised by Ofsted following the 2001 inspection. It was important to understand that headline statistics do not reflect the whole picture.

Members attention was drawn to tables 1 and 2 in Appendix A on page 1, which showed figures on permanent and fixed term exclusions. The government Circular 10/98 entitled Social Inclusion, and subsequent amendments in the guidance, shifted national policy and school response. It was highlighted that the context in Harrow is an overall inclusive agenda.

The rates of permanent exclusions in Harrow are a concern, as they are felt to be too high. Fixed term exclusions are also high.

It was highlighted that most excluded pupils are admitted to another school. They were referred to the Harrow Tuition Service if there were additional complexities in gaining admission to another school or following a second permanent exclusion. Harrow Tuition Service has approximately 40 pupils on its register at any one time – but it may rise significantly above this, occasionally there is a waiting list. It was suggested that it would be useful to visit the service. There is a proposal to expand the accommodation at Harrow Tuition Service.

Some LEA's have Pupil Referral Units, where excluded pupils attend for tuition for a block of time before moving onto a new school.

Recent developments in Harrow were:

Learning Support Units in 3 high schools established in 2001-02 and a further two this year.

A primary advisory teacher post was established at Harrow Tuition Service in 2002/03 and two further posts appointed this year.

Connexions have a funded support worker (September 2003) working with excluded pupils and their families to support them during the pupil's transition to another school. Connexions have also a funded support worker (September 2004) for pupils where drug related problems, may have contributed to an exclusion.

Slough LEA was highlighted as a 'total inclusion zone' and has put in place a Rapid Response Team available to discuss with schools alternative ways of trying to respond to specific cases that might otherwise have become a permanent exclusion. Harrow has piloted a Rapid Response Team between January and July 2004.

## Discussion

Members discussed the following issues which they wanted to focus the review around are summarised as follows:

- An initial meeting will be held to give Members a better understanding of issues surrounding exclusions; this meeting will involve key officers, including for example education welfare officers.
- Desktop research and general research to include excluded children who are looked after, training given to school governors on exclusions and a look into comparative data for Harrow in relation to other authorities.
- Research into the high exclusion rates for black boys; Councillor Asante volunteered to do some background research. Possibly making contact with the Black Police association and talking to the ethnic minority achievement service.
- Identifying and visiting schools with the highest and lowest rates of pupil exclusions. Visit Canons school learning support unit and also visiting Harrow Tuition Service.
- Visit to Slough- This will be a combination trip looking at SEN funding and exclusions policy.
- Focus group of secondary and primary head teachers.
- Try to co-opt voluntary organisations into the process and involve health officers.