

HARROW COUNCIL

PUBLICATIONS ADVISORY PANEL

10 NOVEMBER 2004

Reference from the Meeting of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on 28 June 2004: Scrutiny Review of SEN Processes

1. At the meeting of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 28 June 2004, the Sub-Committee received the findings and recommendations arising from the review of SEN Processes. A copy of the full relevant minute is attached for information as Appendix A.
2. The Sub-Committee resolved, inter alia, that:
 - (i) recommendation 2 paragraph 7 of the review be referred to the Publications Advisory Panel for consideration, once the parental guidance document has been produced (Recommendation 2 of the Review is attached as Appendix B); and
 - (ii) the Publications Advisory Panel be asked to consider ways to widen the availability of the review group's report.

FOR CONSIDERATION

Background Papers:

Minutes of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 28 June 2004.

Report of the Executive Director, Organisational Development, (Appendix A of which was the report of the Member Level Review Group).

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APPENDIX A

150. Scrutiny Review of SEN Processes:

The Sub-Committee received the final report on the Scrutiny Review of Special Educational Needs (SEN) processes and a report from the Director of Organisational Performance. Given that the review had formed the main work of the Sub-Committee in the previous year and following consultation with the Vice Chair and the Portfolio Holder for Education and Lifelong Learning, Members agreed that the outcome of the review should be referred to Cabinet.

The Sub-Committee was referred to Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 15 (Part F of the Constitution), which detailed the conditions under which the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or scrutiny Sub-Committee could submit a report to the Executive. The legal representative advised the Sub-Committee that it was not clear that the report satisfied these criteria. Members were advised that it would be at the discretion of Cabinet as to whether the report was considered. It was further agreed that a reference would be made to the Constitutional Review Working Group to consider Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 15 and determine whether this remained appropriate given the role and purpose of the scrutiny function.

Members requested that a reference be made to the Publications Advisory Panel asking them to consider ways to widen the availability of the report.

The Chair thanked the officers for attending the meeting and their work throughout the duration of the review.

RESOLVED: That (1) the Scrutiny Review of SEN Processes be submitted to Cabinet for consideration;

(2) the report of the review group be noted and endorsed by the Sub-Committee;

(3) recommendation 2 paragraph 7 be referred to the Publications Advisory Panel for consideration once the parental guidance document has been produced;

(4) the Publications Advisory Panel be asked to consider ways to publicise the review group's report; and

(5) the Constitutional Review Working Group be asked to review rule 15 in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules to consider widening the opportunities for reviews undertaken by scrutiny to be referred to Cabinet.

APPENDIX B

Recommendation 2 of the Scrutiny Review of SEN Processes

A clear plain English parental guide to the statementing process should be developed in collaboration with parents, schools and the Parent Partnership Service. A glossy high quality document is not essential. Provided it contained the relevant information, a simple desktop published document produced within the team would be fit for the purpose. The guide should include:

- a) An explanation of why jargon has to be used and explaining the terminology used.
- b) Details of support services available, with clear referencing to all the key players, including the LEA team and the Parent Partnership Service, including contact telephone numbers, postal and email addresses, together with similar information on the London Regional Mediation Service.
- c) An explanation of the roles and responsibilities of all involved together with the processes that they will follow.
- d) An explanation of the new criteria applied in the statementing process.
- e) Information in the key community languages explaining very briefly what the guide is about and the support available to anyone who is unable to understand its contents.

The final document should be placed on the Council's web-site, together with an explanatory note in the key community languages giving a very brief explanation of what the document is about and the support available to anyone who is unable to understand its contents.