

SELECT COMMITTEE ON LIFELONG LEARNING

Wednesday 8th March, 2006 at 6.00pm
in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor Mrs Ridney (Chairman)
Councillors Mrs Coulter, Hart, Johnston, Mrs Pearce, Rahman, Ryder and Wright; Mr Hatton; Mrs Hewitt-Clarkson; Mr Nottingham and Mrs Simms

OFFICERS

The Director of Finance (As Lead Officer to the Committee), The Director of Children's Services, the Assistant Directors of Children's Services (Access & Inclusion), (Community Education and Development), (School Effectiveness) and (Children's Social Care) and Mr J Jablonski (Directorate of Law and Property)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Mr M Galikowski (Head of Youth Offending Service) (for Agenda Item number 5 only).

67

COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (CPA) - VISIT BY INSPECTION TEAM

The Chairman welcomed Colin McShane to the meeting who was attending, in an observer capacity, as a Member of the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment Inspection Team.

68

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs Dunn and Rogers and Mrs Capell, Mr Dudley, Mr Guest, Mrs Roe and Mr Smith and accepted in respect of Mr Dudley and Mr Smith in accordance with the relevant regulations.

69

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of personal interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, were made by the following Members for the reasons indicated:-

Councillor Mrs Coulter in respect of Agenda items numbers 7 and 8 - Data trends and developments relating to attendance at exclusions in respect of Dudley's Schools for the 2004/05 Academic Year and Performance Data respectively, in view of her being a Governor of Netherton Church of England School and Chair of the Pupil Referral Units Management Committee.

Councillor Hart in respect of matters of school exclusion and performance assessment in view of her being a Governor of Russells Hall Primary School.

Councillor Johnston in respect of matters relating to Wrens Nest Primary School, St. Edmunds Church of England School and Castle High School in view of him being a Governor of these schools in respect of Agenda item 10 - Quarterly Corporate Performance Monitoring Report, in view of his being the Chair of Castle and Priory Area Regeneration Board.

Councillor Mrs Pearce, in any matter on the Agenda in view of her Governorship at Milking Bank Primary School and at Fairhaven Primary School.

Councillor Mrs Ridney, in respect of Agenda item 7 - Data trends and developments relating to attendance and exclusions in respect of Dudley's School for the 2004/05 Academic Year in view of her being a Governor of The Coseley School, Christ Church Primary and Netherton Church of England Primary Schools.

Councillor Wright, in any matter on the Agenda relating to his Governorship of the Straits Primary School and of Ellowes Hall School and Sports College.

Mrs Hewitt-Clarkson, in respect of Agenda item 8 - Performance Data, in view of her being a Deputy at Wollescote Primary school.

Mr Nottingham, in respect of Agenda item 8 - Performance Data, in view of his being the Chair of Governors of the Crestwood School.

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Committee held on 16th January, 2006 and of the meeting of the Committee held on 18th January, 2006 be approved as correct records and signed.

YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE

Mr M Galikowski, Head of the Youth Offending Service, gave a presentation on the background to the development of the service, its activities, future development and facts and figures relating to its activities. The purpose of the presentation was to inform the Committee and obtain their views on the work of the service.

Particular mention was made of the legislative background to the service relating to the stated aim in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to prevent offending by children and young people and that all involved must have regard to that aim. The Act also imposed a duty on Local Authorities to establish a Youth Offending Team in their area comprising at least one representative from the main agencies involved for example Social Workers, Probation Service, Police, Health and Local Education Authority together if they so wished with representatives from other statutory and voluntary sector bodies.

Details were also given of the current and proposed staffing of the service, with a number of posts yet to be filled, in view of the change in focus from dealing with children and young persons who had offended to one involving prevention of offending. Given that the Youth Offending Service was now part of the Directorate of Children's Services this linked into other services provided by the Directorate and was seen as a real benefit of an integrated children's service.

Details of the work carried out by the service were then given involving the assessment of all young people using a system known as ASSET, the use of a final warning programme and management of the Referral Order Process in all there were a range of activities used to tackle offending together with the latest focus on prevention.

The role of the Youth Justice Board was then outlined, to which the service was responsible, comprising twelve members from all areas of the system. Amongst the functions of the Board was to monitor the Youth Justice System and provide core funding so as to meet National objectives. The Youth Offending Service was also responsible for producing an annual Youth Justice Plan.

In relation to the statistics referred to in respect of the Service it was noted that 1,547 offences had been committed by 889 individuals during the last twelve months and that of these 609 persons had committed one offence.

Arising from the presentation given Members requested that a copy of the details presented be forwarded to them and that given the changes in focus and staffing that were occurring it was suggested that Mr Galikowski give a further presentation to the Committee in approximately six months time giving further details of the preventative measures to be put in place and the measures to stop first time offenders re-offending.

Members also requested that the presentation to be given also include information regarding the nature of the offences committed, a breakdown between primary and secondary age groups and the ethnicity of offenders. Comparative information was also requested following the introduction of the new team working to see what measures were having an effect and which were not and details of offending relating to the deprived areas of the Borough.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the presentation given on the Youth Offending Service be noted and that, in the light of the comments made at the meeting, a further presentation be made to the Committee in approximately six months time to include the information requested.

72

DRAFT REPORT OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE WORKING GROUP

A report of the Chairman of the Terms of Reference Working Group proposing terms of reference and future methods of operation for a Select Committee responsible for the Children's and Young People's Services was submitted.

The Lead Officer in commenting on the report also referred to the work of the Planning and Developing Children's Services Working Group and to the Report of the Director of Children's Services on the structure of the Directorate of Children's Services that would be considered at the meeting of the Cabinet to be held on 15th March, 2005. A copy of that report was available on the Committee Management Information System. A report from the Working Group would be submitted in due course to the Select Committee.

During consideration of the report submitted Councillor Hart requested that further consideration be given to the establishment of a further Working Group of the Select Committee to consider aspects of the spiritual, moral and character development of children.

RESOLVED

(1)(a) That the following Terms of Reference for a Select Committee responsible for Children's and Young People's Services be endorsed:-

To fulfil all of the functions of a Select Committee as they relate to Children's and Young People's Services, and in particular the functions and the responsibilities of the Council under the Children Act 2004 and Associated Regulations and Guidance, including:-

- i) The roles and responsibilities of relevant partners; and
- ii) Listening to and involving children,

with the objective of improving the well-being of all children in the Council's area by developing the "Every Child Matters" outcomes.

- (b) That this matter be referred to the Council at its Annual Meeting in May, 2006, for consideration with any other proposals regarding future arrangements for Select Committees.
- (2) (a) That the principle of appointing the following Working Groups be endorsed:-
 - i) Corporate Parenting - to scrutinise arrangements for discharging the Council's Corporate Parent Responsibilities, including the "Out of Borough Placements" priority.
 - ii) School support - to ensure schools receive appropriate support and advice from the Council.
 - iii) Health issues - jointly with a Select Committee responsible for health issues, to discharge the Council's statutory responsibility for health and scrutiny; and
 - iv) "Listening to Children and Young People" - a "very informal" group including children's representative and the Cabinet Member for Children's Services to meet across the Borough to engage with and consult young people.
- (b) That the Select Committee responsible for Children's and Young People's Services at its first meeting to be held in June, 2006 give further consideration to the appointment of Working Groups together with the suggestion made that a further Working Group be appointed to consider issues relating the spiritual, moral and character development of children.
- (3) That the principle that the Select Committee with the "primary" service responsibility takes the lead, with joint meetings where appropriate, be supported.

- (4) That the Officers be asked to identify areas for potential duplication for further consideration by Select Committee Chairmen.
- (5) That the position with co-opted Members as set out in paragraphs 16, 17 and 18, of the Report submitted be noted.

73

DATA, TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS RELATING TO ATTENDANCE AND EXCLUSIONS IN RESPECT OF DUDLEY SCHOOLS FOR THE 2004/05 ACADEMIC YEAR

A Report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted on information and data relating to attendance and exclusions in Dudley Schools for the 2004/05 Academic Year.

Jon McCabe, Acting Assistant Director for Access and Inclusion outlined the content of the report, and the related appendices, in respect of information on exclusions, attendance and on measures taken to reduce exclusions and improve attendance.

Arising from the comments made Members commented in particular on the Education Welfare Service and the role of the Committee in this regard; the measures taken in respect of children absent on holiday during term time and the flexibility in this regard; the role and development of the Child and Adolescent Mental Services; the use of fixed penalties and the procedures in relation to these; the need for pupils to be reintegrated into school as soon as possible and the perceived link with criminal activity by the Community in respect of pupils excluded; the measures available to assist pupils with behavioural difficulties including the use of the alternative provisions and the appointment of a new post of "Children Missing from Education" and the work being done arising from the statistics produced for fixed term exclusions by year groups to explain the variations between various year groups.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and appendix to the report, submitted on Data, Trends and Developments relating to attendance and exclusions in respect of Dudley's Schools for the 2004/05 Academic Year, be noted and received.

PERFORMANCE DATA

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted on the latest data available on the performance of schools in the Borough in relation to Foundation Stage, Foundation Stage Ethnicity Report, Key Stage 1 National Curriculum Assessment, Key Stage 1 Ethnic Minority Assessment Data, Key Stage 2 National Curriculum Assessment, Key Stage 2 Ethnic Minority Data, Key Stage 3 National Curriculum Assessment, Key Stage 3 Ethnic Minority Assessment Data, Key Stage 4 National Curriculum Data, Key Stage 4 Ethnic Minority Assessment Data, Key Stage 5 and Looked After Children Assessment Data - Key Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Jane Porter, Assistant Director School Effectiveness, in commenting on the content of the Report, and appendices to the Report, submitted indicated that Key Stage 3 data was provisional at this stage and that the confirmed data would be submitted to a future meeting of the Select Committee in the new municipal year.

Arising from consideration of the available data it was considered that the Select Committee needed to consider how to use the available data to carry out its role. This data could be used when considering individual schools achievement and when the Key Stage 2 results for mathematics are monitored. It was also considered that the available data indicated that whilst improvements had been made there was still room for further improvement. There was also a need to find ways to use the available data appropriately to monitor future results.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and appendices of the report, submitted on performance data in respect of schools in the Borough be noted.

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT - CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted on the performance assessment framework for Children's Social Care.

Pauline Sharratt, Assistant Director of Children's Social Care commented on the content of the report, and appendices to the report, submitted in respect of the Performance Assessment Framework Indicators for Children's Social Care and on current performance and comparative and trend data for Staying Safe.

Consideration was also given to the issue of the format for future performance reporting in respect of Children's Social Care.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and appendices to the report, submitted on the Performance Assistant Framework for Children's Social Care be noted and that the Lead Officer to the Committee in consultation with the Assistant Director - Children's Social Care and other officers be requested to consider and determine the format for future performance reporting in respect of Children's Social Care.

76

QUARTERLY CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT

A report of the Lead Officer to the Committee was submitted on the performance of the Council in relation to the activities relating to the terms of reference of this Committee for the third quarter of 2005/06.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report and sections to the report submitted be received and noted.

77

THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted on the draft Children and Young People's Plan, a copy of which was attached to the report submitted. The draft Plan was presently out for consultation.

RESOLVED

1. That the information contained in the report, and draft Children and Young People's Plan, attached to the report, submitted, be noted and that should any member wish to comment on the Plan, they be requested to respond direct to the person indicated in the consultation document.
2. That it be noted that following the consultation period, an analysis of the responses received will be submitted to the Committee and that the final Plan will be agreed by means of a joint Decision Sheet of the Cabinet Members for Lifelong Learning and Social Services.

The meeting ended at 8.40pm.

CHAIRMAN