

LIFELONG LEARNING AND SOCIAL INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

20th June, 2002 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Hussain (Chair); Councillors Akbar, Boyle, Cole, J. Davies, Hand, Jenkins, Patterson and Yasin.

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVES: Mr. G. Ryan and Mr. J. Wrigglesworth.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Coleman.

46 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (REF: 1)

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors Bullock and Dunington.

47 MINUTES (REF: 2.1 AND 2.2)

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 18th April and 23rd May, 2002 be taken as read, approved as correct records and signed by the Chair.

48 REFERENCE FROM THE EXECUTIVE: TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION (REF: 5.1)

The Chief Executive (Head of Local Democracy) referred to the Committee's decision at Minute 15/02 and reported that the Executive at its meeting held on 15th April, 2002 decided (Decision No. EX/172/02):-

“That the Executive approve the recommendations of the Lifelong Learning and Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee in respect of teacher recruitment and retention:

- (a) That the workforce in schools should be representative of the ethnic make-up of the Borough and, therefore, there is a need for centrally held funding to assist in recruitment from ethnic groups;
- (b) That "Grow Your Own Teacher Scheme" continue to be encouraged;
- (c) That the question of the payment of Outer London Weighting for teachers in Luton schools be actively pursued with the DfEE;
- (d) That there is a need to encourage parents to promote the teaching profession to their children and that schools and the Lifelong Learning Department should work collaboratively on funding the promotion of Luton as a place to teach;
- (e) That the Director of Lifelong Learning be instructed to investigate all possible sources of funding for recruitment and retention of teachers and Pupil Referral Units (Key Stages 1-4) including the many initiatives that are coming to Luton;
- (f) That there is a need to encourage teachers with potential to train for management roles; and
- (g) That the Lifelong Learning Department support schools in ensuring teachers recruitment and retention is contained in School Improvement Plans.”

In addition, at its meeting held on 15th April, 2002, the Executive considered a report of the Director of Lifelong Learning entitled “Corporate Action Schools: Teacher Recruitment and Retention” and decided (Decision No. EX/185/02):-

“(i) That subject to the views of Lifelong Learning and Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee as

set out at Decision No. EX/172/02 above, approval be given to introduce for 2002 only a rent or mortgage subsidy scheme for newly qualified teachers and teachers taking up their first teaching post as follows:

£50 per week for 6 months for those teachers who meet the criteria and take up post during the Autumn term 2002 with a requirement to repay if leaving Luton schools within two years of appointment.

The cost of the scheme will be funded within the overall cash limits set by the Council.

(ii) That approval in principle be given to the funding of the scheme from 2001/2 underspends with the first call being on the Chief Executive's Department, subject to appropriate underspends being achieved when the accounts have been closed, in accordance with the scheme of devolved financial management.

(iii) That the initiative be commended as a model for schools to develop for more teachers using their own delegated budgets."

Resolved: That the report be noted.

49 APPOINTMENTS (REF: 6.1)

The Director of Scrutiny reported that Best Value Reviews for Housing (Strategy and Private Sector) and Passenger Transport (insofar as it related to Special Education Needs and Social Services) were planned for 2002-2003 and he sought 3 nominations to serve on each Panel to investigate the findings of the Reviews.

In addition, he reported that the Scrutiny Board had decided that performance information should be scrutinised and he sought 2 nominations to serve on a Panel which would have responsibility for monitoring performance statistics and indicators.

The Director of Scrutiny reported that the Scrutiny Board, at its meeting held on 30th May, 2002, had approved the Committee's recommendation to establish a joint panel to examine teacher recruitment and retention policies and he sought 3 nominations to serve on the Panel.

The Committee were of the strong opinion that a Parent Governor representative should also serve on the Panel.

Councillor Patterson referred to Minute 25/02 and reported that he wished Councillor J. Davies to replace him as the Committee's nominee to oversee the Best Value Review of Children's Services.

Resolved: (i) That Councillors Boyle, Jenkins and Patterson be appointed to the Scrutiny Panel to oversee the Best Value Review of Housing (Strategy and Private Sector).

(ii) That Councillors Coleman, J. Davies and Hand be appointed to the Scrutiny Panel to oversee the Best Value Review of Passenger Transport.

(iii) That Mr. G. Ryan and Mr. J. Wigglesworth be appointed to the Panel to scrutinise performance information.

(iv) That, in addition to Councillors Dunington and Patterson who had previously been nominated, Councillors Cole, Yasin and Mr. G. Ryan be appointed to the Joint Panel to look at the issue of Teacher Recruitment and Retention.

(v) That the Scrutiny Board be recommended to approve one additional seat on the Joint Panel to look at the issue of Teacher Recruitment and Retention for a Parent Governor representative of the Committee.

(vi) That Councillor Patterson be replaced by Councillor J. Davies on the Scrutiny Panel to oversee the Best Value Review of Children's Services.

50 THE SCRUTINY PROCESS (REF: 6.2)

The Director of Scrutiny reminded the Committee of the revised scrutiny process which had been approved by the Scrutiny Board and provided Members with a checklist for the first stage of that process.

Resolved: That the checklist attached as Appendix B to the report of the Director of Scrutiny (Ref: 6.2) be used to undertake the first stage of the scrutiny process for the first topic in the Committee's work programme for this year.

51 SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICIES AND CATCHMENT AREAS (REF: 6.3)

The Head of Access reported on the Council's current admissions policy and catchment area system.

Resolved: That the following aspects be identified for the evidence and information gathering stage of the scrutiny process relating to the topic of school admissions.

What is the purpose and objective of the scrutiny?

- to provide better information/advice for parents
- to operate a clear and fair policy to assist in the elimination of disputes
- to identify where there are problems
- to ensure adequate transport/safe journeys to school
- to take account of shifting growth of demand
- to take account of effect on community cohesion
- to avoid splitting siblings

What is the scope of the topic – what is included/excluded?

- include all schools
- include Schools Organisation Committee
- exclude post 16

What evidence and information would be useful?

- data on occasional transfers within phase
- Early Years Policy
- audit of school pupils – neighbourhoods
- proposals for new housing developments including outside Borough (planning for places)
- up to date maps/demographics gazetteer
- how do we compare
- Newham judgement
- appeals data/process
- new Education Bill
- Ofsted report – thematic
- statistics – Census results, numbers of parents applying
- reasons for schools popularity
- survey of parents – unpopularity
 - what factors do they take into account
 - how clear is the information they receive
 - why do some choose to go outside Borough
- where are the pressure points?
 - over/under subscription
- policy on size/location of schools
- infants schools with more than 30 pupils in classes

- who draws the lines – how decided
- feeder schools
- percentage surplus places
- temporary accommodation

Who is interested in or affected by this topic/service?

- parents
- schools
- Local Education Authority
- governors

Who are the main players in this service?

- schools
- Local Education Authority
- governors

Who should be consulted about this topic/service?

- parents
- schools
- Schools Admissions Forum
- Local Education Authority
- governors

Who should be asked to give evidence to the Committee?

- parents
- schools
- Schools Admissions Forum
- planners
- Schools Organisation Committee

How is the scrutiny to be conducted?

- consultation form in information booklet provided to parents
- Postal/sample survey
- via Area Committees
- via Citizens' Panel
- upon existing results
- letters sent home with pupils

Where should meetings be held?

- location convenient for witnesses/consultees (preferably not in the Town Hall)
- venues to cover the whole town

What should the timescale be?

late Autumn

What level of publicity is appropriate for this topic?

- through Area Committees
- posters in community centres, schools, libraries, etc.
- advertisements in local press

- school news sheets
- Council's website
- parents fora

What are the resource implications of carrying out this work?

- acknowledge large piece of work
- produce a project plan
- involve Policy and Performance Unit
- demographics – Research and Information, Planning Dept.

(Note: The meeting ended at 7.50 p.m.)