LIFELONG LEARNING AND SOCIAL INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT 2001/02

Introduction

The Council's constitution, introduced in December 2001, provides that each of the scrutiny committees reports once a year to the Scrutiny Board. This is the first annual report of the Lifelong Learning and Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee

During the year covered by this report the Membership of the Committee was as follows:

Chair	Councillor Hussain
Vice Chair	Councillor Dunington
Member	Councillor Akbar
Member	Councillor Akhtar
Member	Councillor Boyle
Member	Councillor Bullock
Member	Councillor J. Davies
Member	Councillor Hand
Member	Councillor McCarthy
Member	Councillor Patterson
Member	Councillor Yasin
Co-opted Diocesan Representatives	Rev. P. Budgell
	Mr L. Matthews replaced by Mr C. Carey
Parent Governor Representatives	K. Coleman
	K Waller (resigned)
Employee Representatives	J. Callow
	J. Hathaway replaced by J. Wrigglesworth
	G. Ryan

The terms of reference of the Lifelong Learning and Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee cover the following:

Executive portfolios	Lifelong Learning
	Social Services and Health
	Housing and Welfare Rights
Functions	Schools
	Education and Achievement
	Training
	Further Education and Higher Education links
	Post 16 and Learning Skills Council
	Adult Education

Libraries
Developing Young People as Citizens
Youth Services
Children's Issues and Initiatives
Youth Offending Team
Corporate Parent
Looked After Children
Anti-poverty
Housing
Benefits and welfare
Services to vulnerable people
Disabilities
Exclusion and disadvantage
Health and Health Action Zone
Elders
Mental Health
Homes and Day Centres

Mentors

The Scrutiny Board appointed Councillors McCowen and Saleem to oversee the work of the Lifelong Learning and Social Inclusion scrutiny committee

Panels

Members of Lifelong Learning and Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee serve on the Leisure Panel, the Housing Panel and the Community Cohesion Panel.

The Role of Scrutiny Committees

The role of scrutiny committees is as follows
- To hold the Executive to account
  - By considering Executive decisions which are 'called in'
  - By giving advice to the Executive about matters included in their forward plan
- To monitor and evaluate performance
  - Using performance Indicators
  - And best Value reviews of services
- To examine topics of public interest or concern
- To consider topics referred by the Executive
- To undertake policy development, reviews and revision
- To undertake the role of community champion
  - By reviewing the performance of other public and 'common' services
  - By considering matters affecting the area and/or local people

Work completed

The Committee has met generally every four weeks throughout the last municipal year. The topics considered by the Committee are set out in the attached appendix. Notable successes of the Committee include completion of best value reviews on services for adults with learning difficulties and the music service, lobbying the Government through the MPs on the issue of Health Funding for Bedfordshire, drawing attention to and publicising the scale of schools' unspent balances, recommendations that the quality protects action plan should emphasise the benefits of and the funding needed for early intervention and focus on raising educational attainment of looked after children, recommendations about joining up educational and social services initiatives focussed on the same categories of children and recommendations for initiatives on teacher recruitment.

A number of topics remain under review including the monitoring of performance in key areas of educational attainment, attendance, behaviour and inclusion.

Future Work

The Committee has considered an extensive range of topics over the last twelve months but few of them have been considered in any great depth or have given rise to significant recommendations to the Executive or to the Council. This has been a common experience of all four Committees. The Scrutiny Board, at their meeting in December 2001, considered the experience of operating scrutiny since its inception in May 2000. The outcome of their consideration was a decision to adopt a much more structured and planned approach to scrutiny involving in depth reviews of relatively few major topics. The advice which is being given to the Scrutiny Committees is to have regard to the Council's vision, its corporate plan and the main priorities for the forthcoming year in considering what topics to select for the new work programme. The Committee will be considering its work programme for the forthcoming municipal year and submitting proposals to the Scrutiny Board. "School admissions" has been identified as a priority topic for the future work programme.

Councillor M. Hussain
Chair of the Lifelong Learning and Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee

18th April 2002

Date	Topics Considered	Comments
18 June 2001	• Financial monitoring for Education	• Recommendations to Exec re school

Date	Topics Considered	Comments
	• Teenage Pregnancy Strategy	budgets, briefing and training for Governors • Executive recommended to consider provision of school nurses
19 July 2001	• Health Funding • Lea Manor High School • Education Development Plan • School Organisation Plan • Behaviour Support Plan • Services for Frail Older People – Best Value	• MPs briefed and asked to lobby Government • Commended to the Executive for approval and submission to the DfES • New panel appointed
26 Sept 2001	• Lea Manor High School • Community Cohesion • Child Protection and Education – NSPCC report • Occupational Therapy Services • National Literacy Strategy • National Numeracy Strategy • Performance Information	• Panel established • Detailed recommendations to Executive incl. re teacher training • Exec recommended to take account of religious and cultural issues • Further report on Youth Service requested
25 Oct 2001	• School balances • Budget and capital programme • Scheme for financing schools • Music services inspection report • Services for adults with learning difficulties – best value	• New panel appointed
Date	**Topics Considered**	**Comments**
22 Nov 2001	• Services for frail older people – best value • Lea Manor High School • Key Stage results 2001 • School OfStEd reports	

	• School exclusion statistics	
10 Dec 2001	• Education Development Plan • Achieving Success – White Paper • Quality Protects Action Plan • Post Ofsted Action Plan • Post 16 Education • Careers Guidance/connexions • Performance Information	• Recommendations re funding for early intervention and attainment of looked after children
24 Jan 2002	• Pupil attendance at schools • Disabled Facilities Grants • Adult Literacy/Numeracy • Educational Attainment of Children in Care • Excellence in Cities Strategy • Services for Adults with a learning disability – best value • School Results at Key Stages • Education Development Plan	• Concerns expressed re transport arrangements
26 Feb 2002	• Children's Fund • Teacher Recruitment and Retention	• Recommendation re joined up working • Detailed recommendations for action and report back
7 March 2002	• Services for Frail Older People – best value • Criteria for Provision of Special Equipment or Adaptations • ICT Support for Schools	• Report forwarded to Executive with a recommendation to consider the concerns expressed by the panel

Date	Topics Considered	Comments
21 Mar 2002	• Exclusion/Inclusion • School Admissions • Educational attainment • Behaviour Support Plan • Music Service – best value	• Request for a report back with detailed statistics • Major topic for the work programme