

**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

18<sup>th</sup> April 2002