

MEMORANDUM

Date: 20 March 2002

**To: All Members of the County Council
and of the Children, Schools and Families
Scrutiny Committee
All Chief Officers**

**From: COUNTY SECRETARY'S
DEPARTMENT**

Ask for: Julia Harries

Ext: 25563

Minicom: 6611

My Ref: JH

Your Ref:

cc: CSF officers
All officers named for 'actions'
Committee section

**CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 20 MARCH 2002**

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

T I Ambrose, D E Billing, P T J Channell, R S Clements, A D Dodd, B C Engel, A K Gray,
F Guest, D W Hills, T G M Kent (Chairman), L R Kercher, M H O'Neill, S Quilty,
R H Smith (Vice-Chairman), J Taunton, J W A Usher

Representative Members

Parent Representatives:

P Cherry	North area
M W Thompson	South area
T Douris	West area

Church Representatives:

J Reynolds	Education Board of the Diocese of St Albans
M Stothard	Archdiocese of Westminster Schools Commission

Teacher Representatives:

P Brooks	National Association of Governors and Managers
I Gibson	National Association of School Masters/ Union of Women Teachers
G Rowlands	Association of Teachers and Lecturers
S Springett	National Association of Headteachers

Health/Voluntary Sector Representatives:

J Linskill Director of Nursing, Children's Services, North Herts and Stevenage
Primary Care Trust
C Whittle Herts and Beds MENCAP

Also present:

Executive Members: R I N Gordon (Children, Schools and Families), D E Lloyd

N E Agar, D A Ashley, N K Brook, K F Emsall, G D Game, P V Goggins, S E Jones, A Lee,
D B Lloyd, R Mays, R Mills, D Royall, R Sanderson, I Simpson, E N Singham

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(i) Membership changes

P T J Channell had replaced D A A Peek on a permanent basis.

J W A Usher had replaced B J Lamb for this meeting only.

(ii) The Chairman welcomed C Whittle, Herts and Beds MENCAP to the meeting as a non-voting co-opted member of the Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee.

(iii) Change in Order of Business

Items 8 and 9 were taken after item 2

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee held on 23 January 2002 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

PUBLIC PETITIONS (Standing Order C11)

(i) Liz McNiven presented a petition of 196 signatures regarding the admission rules for junior schools - these should give a high priority to children coming from an associated infant school. This petition related to item 1 on the agenda and was heard immediately before that item.

ACTION

Alan
Sapsford/
Nick
Powley to
respond to
petitioner

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- (ii) Cathy Moffat presented a petition of 222 signatures regarding the proposed transfer of Sandringham to the Harpenden educational area. This petition related to item 2 on the agenda and was heard immediately before that item.

Alan
Sapsford/
Nick
Powley to
respond to
petitioner

QUESTIONS (Standing Order C9(4))

- 1 **Paul Goggins** asked the Executive Member, **Robert Gordon**, the following question:

'Will the Executive Member please explain why so many children with emotional and behavioural difficulties are being placed at Chessbrook Education Support Centre when there are so many unfilled places at nearby EBD Units? Is he aware of the inordinate stress this is inflicting on the ESC?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'There are currently 26 permanently excluded pupils on roll at Chessbrook Education Support Centre. Currently it is not the practice to place permanently excluded children in such units prior to the completion formal assessment.

Eleven of these 26 children have been assessed as having emotional and behavioural difficulties that require placement in an EBD school. Of these 6 are primary age and could potentially be placed at the EBD Units attached to the mainstream primary schools at Lea Farm and Bushey Manor.

Children can be placed at an EBD Unit if they have a Statement or are undergoing formal assessment, are within the range of ability usually found within a mainstream school and can be integrated into mainstream provision for part of the week.

All the 6 primary age children have a statement that requires an EBD school and so it would not be appropriate for them to attend an EBD Unit. Arrangements are being made for them to be admitted to Haywood

Grove or Larwood when places become available. It is expected that a number of places will be available during next term.

Issues impacting on the capacity of provision for children out of mainstream classrooms for behavioural reasons is part of the work currently under consideration by the CSF Achievement Cabinet Panel.'

Paul Goggins asked the following supplementary question:

'Some of the information in the answer doesn't tally with that received at the Management Committee meeting on 13 February. Is the Executive Member sure that only 6 children are involved? Are there any non-excluded children at Chessbrook?'

Robert Gordon undertook to give a written reply to this question, which would be circulated to all members of the Committee.

David
Ring

- 2 **David Billing** asked the Executive Member, **Robert Gordon**, the following question:

"Would the Executive Member provide an update on progress in providing additional places at secondary schools in SW Hertfordshire, St Albans, Harpenden and Cheshunt?"

Robert Gordon replied:

'1. SOUTH WEST HERTS

In South West Herts, the expansion of Queens School by one form of entry was agreed by the School Organisation Committee in December. Building work is in progress. 30 additional places, making a total of 262, will be available in September this year.

The LEA is continuing to work with St Clement Danes School about the feasibility of the school providing the other form of entry. Modelling has established that if those places had been available this year 26 out of the 30 places would have been allocated to Hertfordshire children. As a result of this I have concluded that the current admission arrangements of the school are not an impediment to creating this additional capacity there.'

2. ST ALBANS

In St Albans we are expanding three schools:

<i>Verulam</i>	<i>156</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>178</i>
<i>Marlborough</i>	<i>196</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>205</i>
<i>Francis Bacon remaining</i>	<i>at</i>		<i>168</i>

(they have taken that number for the last two years but without the capital investment they could not have continued at this level).

These admission limits are all being raised for the September 2002 intake.

There is further basic need funding for another 243 places in St Albans. Discussions are taking place but as yet no decision have been made about how this should be spent.

3. HARPENDEN

In Harpenden we are expanding the two Community schools:

<i>Roundwood Park</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>180</i>
<i>Sir John Lawes</i>	<i>162</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>180</i>

The admission limits have been raised for the September 2002 intake. There is another small amount of basic need funding for 31 places in Harpenden but as yet no decisions have been made about how this should be spent.

In view of the pressures confirmed by the secondary admissions consultation, the Administration is keen to increase still further the aggregate capacity of the three Harpenden Schools.

4. CHESHUNT

The Committee will be aware of the earlier work undertaken to establish a 25FE expansion target for the Cheshunt area and the local consultation exercises relating to the replacement and expansion of St Mary's High School and the expansion of Turnford and Goffs Schools.

Consultation on the town planning aspects of the package was reported to the CSF Select Committee on 11 July and to Cabinet/Executive Committee on 23 July 2001.

A bid under the Voluntary Aided Major Works programme was approved by DFES in December 2001.

Discussions at officer-level about the town planning and related implementation issues are currently being undertaken with the local planning authority, Broxbourne Borough Council. It is expected to make an announcement about the package before Easter.'

David Billing asked the following supplementary question:

'I am surprised that this is the only way to get this information.

Are we going ahead with the scheme at St Clement Danes School and will progress be monitored?

Should there be plans in place for spending the Basic Need money in Harpenden, rather than just thinking about it?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'This is not the only way for members to get information and officers are available to answer such questions.

The scheme at St Clement Danes seems to be the best option and relies on the co-operation of the school.

The schemes in Harpenden are subject to a building project being agreed and the resources being available.'

- 3 **David Billing** asked the Executive Member, **Robert Gordon**, the following question:

"Would the Executive Member report on the state of LEA discussions with Foundation and Voluntary Aided secondary schools, in relation to their intended admission rules for September 2003."

Robert Gordon replied:

'No formal 'discussions' have taken place with other Hertfordshire admission authorities although admissions issues are touched on by members and officers in the regular contacts with the schools.'

The consultation process shows a number of helpful adjustments that should benefit Hertfordshire children. In particular, I welcome those proposed by Dame Alice Owens, Potters Bar (detailed in reply to question 9), J F Kennedy RC, Hemel Hempstead and St Mary's, CoE Cheshunt.'

David Billing asked the following supplementary question:

'I am surprised there have not been more discussions. Are we going to have more reports in future of this kind and public meetings?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'There is regular contact with schools when admission rules are discussed, and also Local and Community Admissions Forums. There are not discussions of the more formal nature that you suggest.'

- 4 **Bernard Lloyd** asked the Executive Member, **Robert Gordon**, the following question:

'Will the Executive Member outline his recommendations to Cabinet following the statutory consultation on the admission rules for Junior Schools?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'Following consideration of the response to statutory consultation I have decided that it is right to introduce a 'linked infant school' rule for admissions to Junior Schools. This recommendation has been advised to affected schools. I will be recommending to the CSF Resources Panel and Cabinet that this is inserted as a new rule 3.'

Whilst this arrangement will be less responsive to the needs of families who move house it will maximise the continuity of the education of young children and closely replicate the current certainties found in JMI Schools.'

I should stress that any 'cap' on the proportion admitted under Rule 4 (as consulted upon) applies only to admissions under that rule. It does not 'cap' the proportion admitted under prior rules and will apply only if less than 90% of places are allocated under prior rules.'

Bernard Lloyd asked the following supplementary question:

'Can the Executive Member confirm that with the introduction of the new rule 3, the former rule 3 regarding siblings would become rule 4, and that there will be no cap applied on new rules 3 and 4?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'Yes, I can confirm that the rules will be renumbered and that the cap will only apply to new rule 5.'

- 5 **Moyra O'Neill** asked the Executive Member, **Robert Gordon**, the following question:

'Will the Executive Member comment on the 'day of action' by the National Union of Teachers in support of their claim for enhanced recognition of the cost of living in Hertfordshire?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'I have considerable sympathy with the generality – but not necessarily the specifics – of the NUT claim. Proper recognition by the government of the true cost of living in Hertfordshire would assist in mitigating the current teacher recruitment and retention crisis and help maintain teacher morale.

However, it is essential that any increased allowance is fully funded. Better paid, but fewer, teachers would not be an answer.

This said, I do not support any action by teachers or other school staff that adversely affects the education of Hertfordshire children and disrupts the relationships between staff and governors. Many headteachers and their staff, including NUT members who did not take strike action, have worked very hard to minimise the disruption to pupils, and I am grateful to them.

Strike action also undermines the ability for the Administration to align itself clearly with the justice of the claim.'

Moyra O'Neill asked the following supplementary question:

'Can the Executive Member comment on any feedback concerning the damage caused by the day of action?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'There has not been a full report on this yet, but some schools had to close and children were sent home, so there was some harm done to the education of some children. This is a just case but an unjustified way of pursuing it.'

- 6 **Seamus Quilty** asked the Executive Member, **Robert Gordon**, the following question:

'Will the Executive member outline the issues relating to the future of Wall Hall Nursery School?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'Wall Hall Nursery was established in the 1970s, initially for children from the Meriden estate in Watford and then also from Radlett. More recently the children have come from the Knutsford area of Watford, and Radlett. In addition to its excellent staff, the school has been a resource for trainee teachers from the Wall Hall campus.

As the University is planning to leave Wall Hall and sell the site for development, the nursery, which is housed in one of the teaching blocks that will be demolished, has to close in December 2003.

However I do not want to lose the School's expertise, all that it stands for, and the strengths it has offered to provision in the area. Officers are therefore exploring the opportunities for a continuing contribution by "Wall Hall" to nursery education either at Knutsford or in Radlett. Knutsford School has just been rebuilt, following destruction by fire, with a nursery class that has not yet opened. In Radlett there are spare nursery places at St John's Infants' School and Newberries School would like nursery provision on their site.

I anticipate that formal consultation on these issues will commence next term.'

ACTION

- 7 **Bernard Engel** asked the Executive Member, **Robert Gordon**, the following question:

'Will the Executive Member outline the Authority's response to the issue of Primary Admissions in Bishop's Stortford?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'In terms of reception class places for September, 2002 and January, 2003, there is a very close match between supply and demand of places in Bishop's Stortford as a whole.

Three years ago a decision was taken to admit two additional cohorts of 30 children to Manor Fields Primary School, which is the school located nearest to the newest area of housing development. A decision was also taken to transfer Hillmead Primary School from a site in the East of the town to a new site in the West in order to provide for a better geographical match between demand and supply. Hillmead School moves into its new premises after the forthcoming Easter school holidays.

As the Hillmead scheme was delayed in relation to its original implementation timescale, Manor Fields School also admitted additional nursery children for the school year 2001/02 on the understanding that the school would revert to its original standard number of 60 (for reception places) from the school year 2002/03 onwards. Allocation decisions have therefore been made on this basis.

In the allocation for Manor Fields School there are 38 siblings, leaving only 22 places for other applications. A significant number of appeals is being heard and a number of parents has written to the Authority raising issues about the local impact of the current primary admissions rules and asking that the County Council should admit a further cohort of up to 90 children to the 2002/03 reception year at Manor Fields School.

As Mr Engel knows, the local members, Member of Parliament and I have met some of the parents personally to listen to their concerns. A formal meeting in the town has been organised for this evening where admissions and planning staff, local members and I will have an opportunity outline the issues and listen to interested parties. Parents, Headteachers and governors of the all of the local primary schools have been invited and the open

meeting has been publicised in the local press.'

- 8 Derek Hills** will ask the Executive Member, **Robert Gordon**, the following question:

'Will the Executive Member summarise any amendments he will be recommending to the proposals following the statutory consultation on admission rules for community secondary schools?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'I hope it will be helpful to members to detail precisely what I propose to invite the CSF Resources Cabinet Panel to recommend to Cabinet, as follows:

- 1. That principle of priority areas for single-sex and co-educational community schools comprising defined parishes and towns be agreed.*
- 2. That the rules for single-sex community schools be agreed as follows:*

Rule 1: *Children who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs naming the school*

Rule 2: *Children who can prove they have a particular medical or social reason for attending the school*

Rule 3: *Children who have a brother or sister at the school at the time of application*

Rule 4: *Children of staff permanently employed at the school where the Local Authority has determined, in consultation with the Governing Body, that this is necessary to reduce recruitment and/or retention difficulties*

Rule 5: *Children who live in the priority area for the school and who demonstrate an aptitude in the area of the school's specialism (with those demonstrating the greatest aptitude being given priority). This rule to apply to 10% of places in those schools determined by the LEA following consultation with their Governing Bodies*

Rule 6: *Children who live in the priority area. Places will be allocated to each parish or town in proportion to the number of applications made. In the event of there being more applications than places available to a particular parish or town, places will be allocated in the following order:-*

- (i) *to those who would have to travel further to another non-faith maintained school than the one applied for.*
- (ii) *to those living closest to the school*

Rule 7: *Children living outside the priority area who live closest to the school.*

3. *That the priority areas for St Albans Girls and Verulam Schools comprising the following parishes and towns be agreed:*

<i>Aldenham</i>	<i>Kimpton</i>	<i>Sandridge</i>	<i>St Michael</i>
<i>Colney Heath</i>	<i>London Colney</i>	<i>Shenley</i>	<i>St Stephen</i>
<i>Harpenden</i>	<i>Redbourn</i>	<i>St Albans</i>	<i>Wheathampstead</i>

4. *That the priority areas for Hitchin Boys and Hitchin Girls Schools comprising the following parishes and towns be agreed:*

<i>Baldock</i>	<i>Holwell</i>	<i>Letchworth</i>	<i>St Ippolyts</i>
<i>Codicote</i>	<i>Ickleford</i>	<i>Lilley</i>	<i>St Pauls</i>
<i>Graveley</i>	<i>King's Walden</i>	<i>Offley</i>	<i>Walden</i>
<i>Hexton</i>	<i>Knebworth</i>	<i>Pirton</i>	<i>Weston</i>
<i>Hitchin</i>	<i>Langley</i>	<i>Preston</i>	<i>Wymondley</i>

5. *That the priority area for Hatfield Girls School comprising the following parishes and towns be agreed:*

<i>Hatfield</i>	<i>North Mymms</i>	<i>Welwyn</i>	<i>Welwyn Garden City</i>
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6. *That the priority area for Presdales School comprising the following parishes and towns be agreed:*

<i>Aspenden</i>	<i>Great Amwell</i>	<i>Little Berkhamsted</i>	<i>Stapleford</i>
<i>Bayford</i>	<i>Great Munden</i>	<i>Little Munden</i>	<i>Tewin</i>
<i>Bengeo Rural</i>	<i>Hertford</i>	<i>Much Hadham</i>	<i>Thundridge</i>

<i>Bramfield</i>	<i>Hertford Heath</i>	<i>Sacombe</i>	<i>Ware</i>
<i>Brickendon</i>	<i>Hertingfordbury</i>	<i>Stanstead Abbots</i>	<i>Wareside</i>
<i>Liberty</i>	<i>Hunsdon</i>	<i>Stanstead St</i>	<i>Watton-at-</i>
<i>Datchworth</i>		<i>Margarets</i>	<i>Stone</i>
<i>Essendon</i>			<i>Widford</i>

7. That the priority area for Richard Hale School comprising the following parishes and towns be agreed:

<i>Bayford</i>	<i>Hertford</i>	<i>Sacombe</i>	<i>Ware</i>
<i>Bengeo Rural</i>	<i>Hertford Heath</i>	<i>Stanstead Abbots</i>	<i>Wareside</i>
<i>Bramfield</i>	<i>Hertingfordbury</i>	<i>Stanstead St</i>	<i>Watton-at-</i>
<i>Brickendon</i>	<i>Hunsdon</i>	<i>Margrets</i>	<i>Stone</i>
<i>Liberty</i>	<i>Little</i>	<i>Stapleford</i>	<i>Welwyn</i>
<i>Datchworth</i>	<i>Berkhamsted</i>	<i>Tewin</i>	<i>Widford</i>
<i>Essendon</i>	<i>Little Munden</i>	<i>Thundridge</i>	<i>Woolmer Green</i>
<i>Great Amwell</i>			

8. That the Cabinet receives recommendations from the Executive Member following further consideration of the issues raised concerning Beaumont, Roundwood Park, Sandringham and Sir John Lawes Schools and the following parishes and towns:

<i>Ayot St Lawrence</i>	<i>King's Walden</i>	<i>St Michael</i>
<i>Colney Heath</i>	<i>London Colney</i>	<i>St Pauls Walden</i>
<i>Flamstead</i>	<i>Markyate</i>	<i>St Stephen</i>
<i>Harpenden</i>	<i>Redbourn</i>	<i>St Albans</i>
<i>Harpenden Rural</i>	<i>Ridge</i>	<i>Shenley</i>
<i>Kimpton</i>	<i>Sandridge</i>	<i>Wheathampstead</i>

9. *That subject as in 8, above, the rules for co-educational community schools be agreed as follows:*

Rule 1: *Children who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs naming the school*

Rule 2: *Children who can prove they have a particular medical or social reason for attending the school*

Rule 3: *Children who have a brother or sister at the school at the time of application.*

Rule 4: *Children of staff permanently employed at the school where the Local Authority has determined, in consultation with the Governing Body, that this is necessary to reduce recruitment and/or retention difficulties.*

Rule 5: *Children who live in the priority area for the school and who demonstrate an aptitude in the area of the school's specialism (with those demonstrating the greatest aptitude being given priority). This rule to apply to 10% of places in those schools determined by the LEA following consultation with their Governing Bodies*

Rule 6: *Children who live in the priority area and who would have further to travel to another non-faith co-educational school than the one applied for. Where more children qualify under this rule than there are places available, places will be allocated to those who live nearest to the school.*

This rule will be applied until 90% of places at the school have been allocated.

Rule 7: *Children who live in the priority area who live closest to the school.*

Rule 8: *Children who live outside the priority area and who would have further to travel to another non-faith co-educational school than the one applied for. Where more children qualify under this rule than there are places available, places will be allocated to those who live nearest to the school.*

Rule 9: *Children living outside the priority area who live closest to the school.*

10. That the priority area for Birchwood High School comprising the following parishes and towns be agreed:

<i>Albury</i>	<i>Furneux Pelham</i>	<i>Little Hallingbury</i>
<i>Birchanger</i>	<i>Gilston</i>	<i>Much Hadham</i>
<i>Bishop's Stortford</i>	<i>Great Hallingbury</i>	<i>Sawbridgeworth</i>
<i>Eastwick</i>	<i>High Wych</i>	<i>Sheering</i>
<i>Elsenham</i>	<i>Little Hadham</i>	<i>Stocking Pelham</i>
		<i>Thorley</i>

11. That the priority area for Broxbourne, Sheredes and Turnford Schools comprising the following parishes and towns be agreed:

<i>Broxbourne</i>	<i>Nazeing</i>	<i>Waltham Cross</i>
<i>Cheshunt</i>	<i>Northaw & Cuffley</i>	
<i>Hoddesdon</i>	<i>Stanstead Abbots</i>	

12. That the priority area for Edwinstree, Freman College, Greneway, Meridian, Ralph Sadleir and Roysia Schools comprising the following parishes and towns be agreed:

<i>Anstey</i>	<i>Buckland</i>	<i>Nuthampstead</i>
<i>Ardley</i>	<i>Buntingford</i>	<i>Reed</i>
<i>Aspenden</i>	<i>Cottered</i>	<i>Royston</i>
<i>Barkway</i>	<i>Great Munden</i>	<i>Standon</i>
<i>Barley</i>	<i>Hormead</i>	<i>Therfield</i>
<i>Braughing</i>	<i>Kelshall</i>	<i>Westmill</i>
<i>Brent Pelham</i>	<i>Meesden</i>	<i>Wyddial</i>

13. That the priority area for Chauncy, Sele and Simon Balle Schools comprising the following parishes and towns be agreed:

<i>Bayford</i>	<i>Hertingfordbury</i>	<i>Tewin</i>
<i>Bengeo Rural</i>	<i>Hunston</i>	<i>Thundridge</i>
<i>Bramfield</i>	<i>Little Berkhamsted</i>	<i>Ware</i>
<i>Brickendon Liberty</i>	<i>Little Munden</i>	<i>Wareside</i>
<i>Great Amwell</i>	<i>Sacombe</i>	<i>Watton-at-Stone</i>
<i>Hertford</i>	<i>Stanstead St Margarets</i>	<i>Widford</i>
<i>Hertford Heath</i>	<i>Stapleford</i>	

14. That the priority area for Barclay, Barnwell, Collenswood, Heathcote, Marriotts, Nobel and Thomas Alleyne Schools comprising the following parishes and towns be agreed:

<i>Aston</i>	<i>Datchworth</i>	<i>Knebworth</i>	<i>Walkern</i>
<i>Benington</i>	<i>Graveley</i>	<i>Stevenage</i>	

15. That the priority area for Monks Walk, Onslow St Audreys, Sir Frederic Osborn and Stanborough Schools comprising the following parishes and towns be agreed:

<i>Ayot St Peter</i>	<i>Hatfield</i>	<i>Welwyn Garden City</i>
<i>Codicote</i>	<i>North Mymms</i>	<i>Welwyn</i>
<i>Essendon</i>	<i>Potters Bar</i>	<i>Woolmer Green</i>

16. That the priority area for Knights Templar School comprising the following parishes and towns be agreed:

<i>Ashwell</i>	<i>Clothall</i>	<i>Rushden</i>
<i>Baldock</i>	<i>Hinxworth</i>	<i>Sandon</i>
<i>Bygrave</i>	<i>Newnham</i>	<i>Wallington</i>
<i>Caldecote</i>	<i>Radwell</i>	<i>Weston</i>

17. That, subject as in 8, above, the priority area for Fearnhill, Highfield, Norton and Priory Schools comprising the following parishes and towns be agreed:

<i>Hexton</i>	<i>Langley</i>	<i>Pirton</i>
<i>Hitchin</i>	<i>Letchworth</i>	<i>Preston</i>
<i>Holwell</i>	<i>Lilley</i>	<i>St Ippolyts</i>
<i>Ickleford</i>	<i>Offley</i>	<i>Wymondley</i>

18. That the priority area for Hertswood School comprising the following parishes and towns be agreed:

<i>Aldenham</i>	<i>Bushey</i>	<i>Elstree and Borehamwood</i>
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19. That the priority area for Adeyfield, Astley Cooper, Bridgewater, Cavendish, Francis Combe, Hemel Hempstead, Kings Langley, Longdean and Westfield Schools comprising the following parishes and towns be agreed:

<i>Abbots Langley</i>	<i>Hemel Hempstead</i>	<i>Pinner</i>
<i>Aldbury</i>	<i>Kings Langley</i>	<i>Rickmansworth</i>
<i>Berkhamsted</i>	<i>Little Gaddesden</i>	<i>Sarratt</i>
<i>Bovingdon</i>	<i>Maple Cross</i>	<i>Tring</i>
<i>Chipperfield</i>	<i>Nash Mills</i>	<i>Tring Rural</i>
<i>Chorleywood</i>	<i>Nettleden with Potten End</i>	<i>Watford</i>
<i>Croxley Green</i>	<i>Northchurch</i>	<i>Watford Rural</i>
<i>Flaunden</i>	<i>Northwood</i>	<i>Wiggington</i>
<i>Great Gaddesden</i>		

Derek Hills asked the following supplementary question:

'Can the Executive Member confirm that the Redbourn parents will fare better under the proposed new rules?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'Yes, modelling suggests that the new rules will help the Redbourn children.'

- 9 **Cliff Broadhurst** asked the Executive Member, **Robert Gordon**, the following question:

'Could the Executive Member tell me how many Y6s have been offered places in Hertswood School in Borehamwood

- a) from Potters Bar/Cuffley and the rest of East Herts*
- b) how many of those families placed Hertswood on their preference form, and*
- c) How this compares with last year?*

I am personally aware of several families who are in this position, two from Cuffley, and I would like to know how the Council can justify allocating places to children some 11.5 miles from their home with no easily accessible means of transport between them. I understand that if the proposed changes to secondary admissions are approved that it is very unlikely to happen again in the future, but that is no comfort for those families who are affected this year.

ACTION

Would the Executive Member undertake to review those hardest hit by this year's admissions allocations and also ask officers to test the proposed admissions criteria to ensure that this situation would not have occurred this year under the new rules?'

Robert Gordon replied:

- (a) *30 children from Potters Bar, 7 children from Cuffley were allocated places at Hertswood School for September 2002.*
- (b) *All of these were unranked allocations.*
- (c) *Last year there was 1 allocation to Hertswood from Potters Bar and none from Cuffley or the rest of East Herts.*

This reflects the position on the day of allocation and does not take account of the consequences of continuing interest and appeals.

In respect of Home to School transport, I can confirm that any of these children who live more than 3 miles from Hertswood School will have an entitlement to free transport. Where public transport does not provide a reasonable link at an appropriate time, then the County Council will provide transport itself.

Mr Broadhurst will appreciate that the County Council cannot offer a guarantee that children will not be "written in" to schools under the proposed admission arrangements. Whilst the proposed rules generally should make it easier for a child to attend a local school, the allocation of places will always be dependent on the pattern of applications and the size of a particular year cohort.

The changes proposed by Dame Alice Owens should be of particular benefit to the children of Potters Bar and Cuffley, both of which lie within the school's proposed priority area. The school proposes to guarantee at least 50% of its 200 places (after siblings) to Hertfordshire children compared with just 25.5% in 2001 and 32.8% in 2002.'

PART 1 ('OPEN') BUSINESS

		ACTION
1.	STATUTORY CONSULTATION ON ADMISSION RULES FOR COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED NURSERY, INFANT JUNIOR AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS	
	[Officer contact: Alan Sapsford, Assistant Director, Operations Division, 01992 588500]	
1.1	Liz McNiven presented a petition on junior school admission rules.	Alan Sapsford/ Nick Powley
1.2	Fred Briffit spoke on behalf of parents of Letchmore Infant School.	
1.3	The Committee considered a report outlining the statutory consultation proposals on admission rules for community and voluntary controlled nursery, infant, junior and primary schools.	
1.4	In response to a member's question, it was noted that it was not possible to have separate rules for nursery and primary schools.	
1.5	It was noted that the outcomes of the consultation would be available at the meeting of the Resources Panel.	
1.6	<u>Response to Cabinet</u>	Dave Roberts
	1) There was general support for the proposals.	Alan Sapsford
	2) There was general support for the proposal to give priority to pupils transferring from infant to a linked junior school.	
	3) If the proposals were adopted there would be a need to ensure that the associated documents were clear to parents as to implications.	

2. REVIEW OF ADMISSIONS RULES FOR COMMUNITY SECONDARY SCHOOLS 2003/04	ACTION
[Officer contact: Alan Sapsford, Assistant Director, Operations Division, 01992 588500]	
2.1 Cathy Moffat presented a petition regarding the priority area for Sandringham School.	Nick Powley/ Alan Sapsford
2.2 Jan Palmer-Sayer spoke regarding the effect the changes to the St Albans/Harpenden priority areas would have on Sandringham School.	
2.3 In response to member's questions, it was noted that officers designed the consultation questionnaire.	
2.4 It was noted that some schools were already using aptitude tests and that we would wish to learn from them.	
2.5 The Committee noted that the options available were to revert to the existing rules, to adopt the proposed rules that had been consulted on or to vary the proposed rules but not in a substantial way.	
2.6 Officers agreed to provide David Billing with an update on the co-operative arrangements schools were making.	Alan Sapsford
2.7 <u>Response to Cabinet</u> 1) That the proposed priority areas were largely helpful, but concern was expressed regarding St Albans, Wheathampstead and villages, Letchworth and Baldock and villages. 2) There were concerns expressed about the operation of Rule 4, regarding the allocation of places to children of staff at the school, in particular how effective this would be as a recruitment and retention of staff tool. 3) There were concerns expressed regarding the appropriateness and robustness of aptitude tests.	Dave Roberts Alan Sapsford

3. SCRUTINY OF SERVICES FOR DISABLED CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

ACTION

[Officer contact: Gill Webster, Client Development Manager, 01992 556981]

3.1 The Committee considered a report outlining the key findings and proposed actions arising from the member scrutiny of services for disabled children and their families.

3.2 All the reports of member visits were available for members to read.

3.3 It was noted that the scrutiny had given direction and focus to the development of the Joint Disability Strategy with Health which will go to Panel and Cabinet.

3.4 The Committee noted that the report contained a range of proposed actions which would be referred to the Director under his delegated authority.

Ray Shostak

3.5 In response to a member's question, the Committee were advised that Occupational Therapists posts would be increased by 0.5 in each Quadrant of the County; a new post of Moving and Handling Officer was being created to assess people in their own homes, thereby reducing the assessment waiting list.

3.6 **Conclusions**

1) The hard work of members and officers was commended by the Committee.

All to note

2) This was a positive outcome of a successful scrutiny process, with welcome extra resources to fund the proposed actions.

3) A Press Release would be issued on this item.

4) Reports on follow up actions would appear in the new CSF members' bulletin and would go to Panel, if appropriate.

Ray Shostak/
Cheryl Hopkins

5) Concerns were expressed regarding the transition of young people, and the provision of Occupational Therapists.

4. CASUAL ADMISSIONS

ACTION

[Officer contact: Nick Powley, Education Access Manager
Tel: 01992 555933]

4.1 The Committee considered a report giving an analysis of data relating to casual admissions.

4.2 **Conclusion**

- 1) That a short term Topic Group should be set up to scrutinise Casual Admissions, focussing on the differences between primary and secondary procedures and those children who move into the County, to report back to the next meeting of the Committee.

Alan Sapsford/
Nick Powley/
Julia Harries

5. PROSECUTION OF PARENTS

[Officer contact: Lesley Hewitt, Head of Education Welfare Practice,
01992 588580]

5.1 The Committee considered a report giving information on the number of legal actions undertaken by the Education Welfare Service in each quadrant, in response to a request for a possible scrutiny item by Ivor Ambrose.

Conclusion

- 1) The report was welcomed.
- 2) There was no need for further scrutiny.

6. ACTIONS SUPPORTING TARGETS IN THE CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES DEVELOPMENT PLAN

[Officer contact: John Evans, Deputy Director,
01992 555764]

6.1 The Committee considered a report on the process of setting and achieving targets, in response to a request for a possible scrutiny item by David Billing.

6.2 Conclusions

- 1) Updates would appear in the CSF member's bulletin, as necessary.
- 2) There would be a further report when the full picture was known at the year-end.
- 3) Members were pleased that there was a closeness between the CSF Plan and actions.

ACTION

Ray Shostak/
John Evans

John Evans

7. THE SCHOOL PLACES PLANNING PROCESS

[Officer contact: Jim Dalton, Assistant Director, Planning,
01992 555862]

7.1 The Committee considered a report describing the school place planning process, in response to a request for a possible scrutiny item by David Billing.

7.2 Conclusions

- 1) This was an excellent and useful report; congratulations were given to officers involved.
- 2) Scrutiny of the issue would be deferred until the new computerised school places forecasting system had bedded in; members could have a presentation/seminar on the new system and then decide if further scrutiny was necessary.

Officers to
note

Jim Dalton/
Julian
Edwards/
Julia Harries

ACTION

8. REVIEW OF HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT

[Officer contact: Alan Sapsford, Assistant Director, Operations Division, 01992 588500]

- 8.1 The Committee considered a report outlining the consultation proposals for a home to school transport policy for children aged 5 to 16 years.
- 8.2 In response to a member's question, it was noted that the saving arising from the phasing out of assisted transport to denominational schools for children who were not admitted on faith grounds would be £22,000.
- 8.3 In response to members' questions, it was recognised that it should be made clear to parents with statemented children that the need for assisted transport was on their statement.

8.4 Conclusions

- 1) The proposals were broadly supported.
- 2) There was a need to ensure children did not spend too much time travelling to the detriment of their education.
- 3) Concerns were expressed that the implications of any changes to the home to school transport policy needed to be made clear to parents, especially those with statemented children.

Alan Sapsford

9. NORTON SECONDARY SCHOOL, LETCHWORTH

[Officer contact: Pauline Davis, Planning Manager, North, 01992 55865]

Lorna Kercher declared a pecuniary interest as a member on Letchworth Heritage Foundation Board and left the Chamber.

Keith Emsall, Nigel Agar and Richard Smith also declared an interest.

- 9.1 The Committee considered a report on the consultation on the proposed closure of Norton Secondary School, Letchworth.

Julia Harries to enter in register

ACTION

- 9.2 In response to a member's question, the Committee noted that Fearnhill, The Highfield and Knights Templar Schools could expand to accommodate pupils from Norton.
- 9.3 In response to a member's question, it was noted that special needs children transferred from Norton would receive support in their new school.
- 9.4 In response to a member's question, it was noted that since the Norton site could not be sold until 2004 because children would still be on the premises, there would be a shortfall in the cost of provision of the additional places.

9.5 **Conclusions**

- 1) It was recognised that Norton School had been successful in the past but there had been a number of problems at the school, which despite every effort, had not been resolved.
- 2) The Committee were very impressed by the commitment and support of all the Headteachers involved.
- 3) There were concerns regarding the impact of the possible closure of the school on the CSF capital programme.
- 4) It was important to move as quickly as possible, in order to reduce the impact on pupils and staff.
- 5) Concerns were expressed regarding those pupils who would be left on the Norton site, and members felt that this should be for as short a time as possible.
- 6) Concerns were expressed regarding the impact of split site working on Knights Templar School.
- 7) The quality of agency staff was questioned.
- 8) There was broad support for the consultation proposals.

Pauline Davis

ACTION

ITEMS REFERRED TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL
(Standing Order SC.7(2))

No items were reported to County Council

Andrew Laycock
County Secretary