

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 16 OCTOBER 2002**

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

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

Parent Representatives:

P Cherry North area
M W Thompson South area
C Broadhurst East area

Church Representative:

M Stothard Archdiocese of Westminster Schools Commission

Teacher Representatives:

P Brooks National Association of Governors and Managers
J Hayes National Union of Teachers
G Rowlands Association of Teachers and Lecturers
S Springett National Association of Headteachers

PUBLIC PETITIONS (Standing Order C11)

- (i) None

QUESTIONS (Standing Order C9(4))

- 1 **Nigel Agar** asked the Executive Member, **Robert Gordon**, the following question:

'What progress has the teacher recruitment team made to support schools in the employment of supply staff?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'The hiring of supply teachers is a matter for headteachers and governors to manage.

The Teacher Recruitment and Retention Action Group suggested enhancing the LEA supply list. This now gives heads on-line access to the contact details of those who have indicated their willingness to teach on supply.

The Teacher Recruitment website is also being further developed to give teachers more opportunity to specify their availability for supply work. Schools searching for teachers will be able to send a text alert to their phone asking them to contact the school. At present there are 250 teachers registered on the LEA supply website area.

We are also exploring the possibility of a partnership with an existing agency and further regional collaboration.'

Nigel Agar asked the following supplementary question:

'What efforts were made to identify and publicise those agencies that sent us 'inadequate' teachers so that other schools in the County may be forewarned? It is Ofsted that made the allegation of 'inadequate' teachers, not me.'

Robert Gordon replied:

'It is not for the LEA to regulate the market for supply staff. Finding supply teachers is a process we assist schools with, but it is schools that employ supply staff.'

- 2 Tanis Kent** asked the Executive Member, **Robert Gordon**, the following question:

'The budget monitor presented to the cabinet in July showed a £297,000 or 44.1% overspend on respite for children with disabilities. Is more respite care being provided or is it simply becoming more expensive?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'The overspend of £297,000 referred to relates to the outturn for 2001/02.'

Three-quarters of respite provision for children with disabilities is in the form of Homecare rather than of specific provision away from the child's home. Changes in the structure and pricing of the Homecare contract in 2001/02 account for £75,000 of the overspend, with the balance of £218,000 representing additional hours provided.'

- 3 Tanis Kent** asked the Executive Member, **Robert Gordon**, the following question:

'There appears to be a problem funding the Schools Speech Therapy project in the north quadrant. Health appear to be blaming HCC and HCC blaming Health, in the meantime a 5 year old in a Stevenage infant school who has needs classed as "severe" is not getting any speech therapy. What is the situation and what is being done to resolve it?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'Within the North Quadrant, we are currently operating a very successful Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) Pilot Project, which delivers speech therapy directly into mainstream primary schools, as opposed to within local clinics, as was previously the case. It was set up by agreement with local SALT'

managers, and involves the pooling of Clinic resources with CSF resources - i.e. direct SALT input for those pupils who have this provision specified in Part 3 of a statement of SEN.

The local PCT has experienced recent staffing shortages, which would have had an impact on the level of SALT delivered in the area, irrespective of the project's operation.

The number of visits to each school is dependent upon clinical need and number of pupils on roll. This project started only in January 2002 and is in the process of being evaluated.

For reasons of confidentiality, it would be inappropriate to set out details of the circumstances of an individual child but I am advised the situation is not as summarised in the question. I will ensure that officers provide Mrs Kent with appropriate briefing on the circumstances of her constituent.'

Officers to take action

Tanis Kent asked the following supplementary question:

'The SALT pilot project was not reported to Members. Could the Executive Member find a way to inform Members on these types of initiatives?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'There are a lot of interesting initiatives, far too many for the Members' Bulletin; however I shall ask the Director to ensure that as many as practical are added to the Bulletin.'

Director

4 Nigel Agar asked the Executive Member, **Robert Gordon**, the following question:

"I am asking a question about the working of the schools psychologist service, which to assist the officers in answering I have broken down into parts:

- a** *How long does a child classed as a priority case have to wait to be seen by their school's EP?*
- b** *Is it possible for EPs ever to see cases not counted as a priority but simply causing some concern?*

- c *What is the vacancy rate among EPs in each quadrant?*
- d *How many EP visits a year is:*
- i] *a rural primary school*
 - ii] *an urban primary school,*
 - iii] *a secondary school entitled to?*
- e *Is there a system for meeting the needs of a school with a high intake of disturbed pupils?"*

Robert Gordon replied:

- a *'Schools determine the priority of cases. Before being seen by an EP however, schools follow the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice which means they must identify the child's needs and put strategies in place to meet these needs through an Individual Education Plan. These are reviewed every term. Schools receive delegated funding for this work.*

Educational Psychologists (EP) are usually informed/ consulted about these pupils during their routine visits. When a child still requires additional support, a referral made to an EP.

Children prioritised with the greatest need by the school can be discussed at any EP visit. Most Primary Schools will have at least six visits per year so the child will be seen between one and seven weeks after referral. However if the school identifies an urgent need, the EP will make every effort to bring forward the visit. For visits to Secondary Schools, which have between nine and eighteen visits per year, the above timescale is much reduced.

- b** *Schools determine how they will use their EP visits. EPs routinely give advice/consultation to school staff on a range of issues including individual children. All children referred to EPs are prioritised as required by the Code of Practice.*
- c** *Current Vacancies:*
- North Quadrant: 1.1 EP out of a staffing establishment of 8.0 w.t.e.
South Quadrant : 2.0 EP out of a staffing establishment of 7.5 w.t.e.
West Quadrant : 3.2. EP out of a staffing establishment of 9.5 w.t.e.
(including long-term sickness and maternity leave)
East Quadrant : 1.1 EP out of a staffing establishment of 9.7 w.t.e.*
- Total 7.4. w.t.e. Vacancies out of a full staffing complement of 34.7.w.t.e.*
- d** *School visits are not allocated on location i.e. urban/rural. They are calculated using a formula that uses baseline measures and deprivation indices to create a formula. However, all schools are allocated a minimum of three school visits per year whatever their size – this ensures continuity of service and allows for discussion of all statemented and EPF funded pupils. All Special Schools receive an allocation based on school numbers. All Units receive the same set number of visits.*
- e** *There is a very high correlation between indices of need and deprivation with the number of pupils with difficulties. Based on the allocation described in d) above, some schools automatically receive more visits, based on need. All schools at some time or other will have ‘exceptional’ year groups where there appears to be a significant number of pupils who have special needs either behavioural or learning. The EP service tries to respond flexibly and appropriately to these situations and requests. The aim is always to provide support where there is the greatest level of need whilst fulfilling our responsibility to support all schools.*

Schools who are experiencing significant difficulties from disruptive pupils can also receive extra support from the Behaviour Support Team Advisory Teachers and Advisory Teachers.’

- 5 **Roma Mills** asked the Executive Member, **Robert Gordon**, the following question:

'In recent months a television programme publicised the work of the DDAT Centres with children and adults who are dyslexic. This programme suggested that significant improvements were being achieved with people who followed the exercise courses prescribed by the Centres, following assessment, in terms of concentration, reading and writing skills and general self-confidence. This has clearly offered hope to many parents of children described as dyslexic and certainly some Hertfordshire families have had their children assessed by DDAT and are following the exercise programme which the Centres provide. This is a costly commitment and may well involve parents in expenditure in the region of £1,000.

Can you advise me whether this approach to addressing the learning difficulties experienced by children and young people with dyslexia has been considered by the CSF department?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'The publication of claims about the DDAT approach and the research have been considered by professional staff from the bases for Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia). They are currently examining the work of the DDAT Centres to consider what aspects of their research should be incorporated into their complementary programs for children with SpLD.'

The SpLD Bases offer a range of support and training programmes that reflect the current work of the DfES, the Dyslexia Association and other experts.

Advice is also given to families and schools who have children with specific learning difficulties through the Specialist Advisory Service Physical and Neurological Advisory Teachers, Autism Advisory Teachers, Emotional and Behavioural Advisers and the Educational Psychologist Service.'

6 **Tanis Kent** asked the Executive Member, **Robert Gordon**, the following question:

'How long on average are parents having to wait to be allocated a shared carer?'

'If as it appears we cannot find enough shared carers, why can't the shared care money be vired to other forms of respite care, such as playschemes or residential placements?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'We are constantly recruiting to shared care but demand continues to outstrip supply. There are currently 108 children on the waiting list for a shared carer. Consequently, on average one third of children referred are placed with a shared carer within 6 months of the referral being made; one third are placed within a year and one third wait longer than a year.'

'Once a child has been assessed as "in need", a variety of respite options can be looked at to meet the child's needs (residential/shared care, care in the home, playschemes, specialist leisure activities, out-of-hours school clubs, one-off packages). This means that a child being unable to access shared care should already have the option of other schemes if appropriate to meeting their needs.'

Tanis Kent asked the following supplementary question:

'I don't think your answer fully answers my question. Is the money saved by the Authority used to enhance other forms of care, eg playschemes, if we can't provide shared carers?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'This covers a range of issues and I will give a written reply.'

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Officers/
Julia
Harries to
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- 7 **Tanis Kent** asked the Executive Member, **Robert Gordon**, the following question:

'When CSF was established, members were told that cases would be allocated a key worker so that parents would have one point of contact with the new Service.'

'Does this only apply to children who come to the attention of the social services side of CSF or should all disabled children have a key worker?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'The commitment of the new department was that open, active cases would have an allocated case co-ordinator as a point of contact in the system.'

'Many children are supported through funding for childminding, playgroups etc but are not active cases on a worker's caseload and therefore do not have an allocated case co-ordinator. Contact in these circumstances should be through the Team Manager Disability Team.'

Tanis Kent asked the following supplementary question:

'Parents are not clear about the key worker scheme and have difficulty in knowing who to contact. Could we look properly at how we can inform parents who to contact?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'Yes outside this meeting, we could look at particular cases and see if anything further can be done.'

CSF
Officers

- 8 **Tanis Kent** asked the Executive Member, **Robert Gordon**, the following question:

'Stevenage family centre was only able to offer half its usual hours of support for vulnerable families during the summer holiday in 2002. When I asked why, I was told that there was a review of family services going on until it was completed a proper contract with the family centre couldn't be'

drawn up. When is this review going to be completed and the results reported to Members?’

Robert Gordon replied:

‘In view of staff shortages at Stevenage Family Centre there was a reduction, over the summer holiday 2002, in sessions providing respite for families and play for children. This reduction was made in order to prioritise resources for child protection and other higher priority work. Families in these higher priority categories have received services at very much the same level as in 2001; and the family centre was in contact with as many children this summer as last.

The CSF Service Plan 2002/03 sets out how we will further develop the work of the Family Support Centres with health agencies, schools, childcare services and other providers of family support. This will lead to clarification on what we want provided by each family centres. Work to draw up a three year Development Plan for the Family Support Services for under 10s is now underway and a report on the options for taking forward the service will be put before members in the early Spring.

- 9 Richard Smith** asked the Executive Member, **Robert Gordon**, the following question:

‘Will the Executive Member please summarise the responses to the consultation on the six-term year and indicate what further action he proposes to take on the issue?’

Robert Gordon replied:

‘1,505 responses to the consultation exercise about the six-term year is were received as follows:

Responses from	No of Responses	%
Headteachers	202	13.42
STAFF	997	66.25
Governors	220	14.62
Parents/Carers	44	2.92

Others	24	1.59
Did not answer	18	1.20
TOTAL	1505	100

The comments made included staff, governors, parents and carers of children in mainstream and special schools: -

Responses from	No of Responses	%
Primary	899	59.73
Secondary	415	27.57
Special	73	4.85
Not identified	118	7.84

62% of those who sent back the questionnaire agreed with the proposal to introduce a standard six-term year:

Question	% Yes	% No	% Undecided
Do you agree with the recommendations of the Commission to move to a six-term year?	62	21	17
Do you think that a change to a six-term year would help to raise standards in schools?	35	31	34
Is it desirable to have six terms of more even length rather than three terms of uneven length?	74	14	12
Would you be happy to begin the school year in August if it provides educational advantages?	58	26	16
Do you think that the creation of a two week break in October would be beneficial to teachers and pupils (by reducing stress and absence?)	63	20	17

Question	% Yes	% No	% Undecided
Do you think that terms 3, 4 and 5 should be of equal length and should not be dependent on the date of Easter (assuming that Good Friday and Easter Monday are retained as bank holidays)?	72	14	14
Is a summer holiday of between five and six weeks :- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • too long? • adequate? • too short? 	10 77 9		4
Do you feel that change should only be made if it is also implemented by neighbouring Authorities?	55	28	17
Whether or not you support the six-term year, do you think that this LEA should change to a six-term arrangement if neighbouring authorities decide to change?	58	23	17

A number of people made comments about key issues or concerns. These included:

- *the need to avoid reducing the amount of time pupils have to prepare for exams*
- *concern about the way that term 6 may be used*
- *concern about the risk of increased absenteeism*
- *the need for a national decision and a consistent approach by all neighbouring Education Authorities*
- *the advantages of a more even pattern of term times for curriculum planning.*

The comments received have been fed back to the Local Government Association, and the Independent Commission will publish a further report. Discussion is taking place nationally with teacher associations.

The School Term and Holiday Dates Working Party will be meeting in early November to discuss dates for the academic year 2004/05. Our usual procedure would be to consult about draft dates after this meeting with a view to issuing the agreed dates for 2004/05 in February 2003.

A further report on this subject will be presented to the December meeting of the CSF Strategy Cabinet Panel.'

Richard Smith asked the following supplementary question:

'It would be helpful to have the overall percentages of replies reflected in the tables.'

Robert Gordon replied:

'This is a reasonable request and the information will be provided.'

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

'Will the Executive Member explain the current position with regard to LSC achievement and retention monies for Hertfordshire schools?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'Post-16 funding responsibility for pupils in mainstream schools transferred from local authorities with effect from April 2002 with funding in accordance with a national formula including elements achievement and retention.

The LSC provided information and guidance on sixth form funding in July 2001 setting out the principles to be adopted in relation to 2002/03. The

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factors for both achievement (84%) and retention (90%) built into the 2002/03 allocations were based on national assumptions about achievement and retention.

In response to requests from schools – and in consultation with the local LSC – we developed a simple model to help produce accurate medium term financial estimates of the sixth form funding allocations in June 2002. The model reflected school level data, rather than the national assumptions, for retention and achievement.

In late June the national LSC announced that for the funding period process would not reflect school level achievement. If this position is unchanged, the cost to Hertfordshire schools in aggregate is an estimated at £400,000 to Hertfordshire secondary schools – as our levels of achievement exceed those nationally. There will be a range of impacts on individual schools.

It is unacceptable that the LSC should change its funding arrangements unilaterally, part way through the financial period, depriving schools of income on which they will have budgeted.'

Tanis Kent asked the Executive Member, **Robert Gordon**, the following question:

'A Stevenage child who has had 2 years' home and hospital tuition obtained 6 GCSEs, 4 at grade C this summer. She now wants to do A levels, either by a continuation of home and hospital tuition or by Distance Learning, because for medical reasons she is unable to attend college or school.

She has asked County to continue the home and hospital tuition or help with the Distance Learning course fees and exam entry costs, but has been turned down. I was told this is because the criteria for funding children with medical needs post 16 are "not clear".

What steps are being taken to sort out the funding for young people like the case mentioned who for medical reasons cannot access normal 16-18 provision but wish to continue studying?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'Since April 2002 the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has a duty to fund the continuing education of young people to 19. LEAs retain responsibilities to secure access to education for 16-19 year olds enrolled in schools.'

We are working with the LSC to look at the formula funding for 16-19. As yet the position of the LEA is not clear, particularly if the young person is not on the roll of a school. The issue of HHE has been raised with the local LSC. Chapter 4 of the DfES guidance document "Access to Education" describes the LSC's responsibilities in this area, but does not clearly define the responsibility for funding. The local LSC is pursuing the matter with their national office prior to further discussions with the department.'

Pending developments, our Home and Hospital service is funding any 'A' level courses currently underway. Requests for new courses, are being considered on a case by case basis by a central panel.'

Tanis Kent asked the following supplementary question:

'Do we have any idea when the local LSC will have an answer?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'No.'

Roy Clements asked the Executive Member, **Robert Gordon**, the following question:

'Will the Executive Member summarise the scale and impact on Hertfordshire pupils, of the debacle regarding A2 and AS examination results?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'A number of Hertfordshire schools have had cause to query the results of students who took A2 papers, and to a much lesser extent, AS papers in June. The queries were prompted by significant variations between predicted grades, including coursework, and examination outcomes.'

For a number of students and their schools, this has created significant problems which have been the subject of discussion at local HASSH meetings.

The outcome of the regrading exercise was announced yesterday and the national pattern has been the subject of substantial media coverage. It is not yet possible to say precisely how many Hertfordshire students have suffered have received improved grades and may now be eligible to preferred university courses.'

Sue Jones asked the Executive Member, **Robert Gordon**, the following question:

"Will the Executive Member please give an update on the Squirrels Daycare/Ludwick Nursery School project?"

Is the finance now available for this project and what is a realistic start date for the building work?"

Robert Gordon replied:

'This is one of the capital schemes that flows from the closure of the Sir John Newsom Secondary School, Welwyn Garden City. The scheme is intended to relocate Squirrels Day Nursery to the existing Ludwick Nursery School site.

Some months ago, an opportunity arose to enhance the planned scheme by adding new matched-funding grants available for early years' developments. The design and site layout of the scheme are now well advanced and have recently been confirmed following discussions with representatives of both Squirrels and Ludwick.

Whilst this has led to some delay in the scheme it will provide a much more imaginative and comprehensive solution to meet the relatively high level of disadvantage in the area.

The need for matched funding from the County Council's own resources has implications for the County Council's budget and these are presently being assessed and I will update Mrs Jones as soon as a firm decision can be made.

The revised building scheme at the Ludwick School site will shortly be submitted for detailed town planning approval. Providing approval is granted

and a funding package approved, it is hoped to complete the works programme to facilitate a move during the Autumn of 2003.'

Sue Jones asked the following supplementary question:

'Will Squirrels Day Nursery be able to stay on its present site until the Ludwick site is ready?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'Yes, we do not anticipate any difficulties.'

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

'Evidence heard by the CSF Achievement Cabinet Panel on school monitoring highlighted various ways in which Governors can assist in monitoring and challenge. Is the Executive Member confident that Hertfordshire's governors have the training and skills to fulfil this role and, if not, what steps does he intend to initiate to improve the position?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'I acknowledge the important voluntary contribution made by the thousands of governors serving in Hertfordshire schools.'

Many governing bodies already monitor the work of their schools very effectively, and provide an appropriate level of challenge to the headteacher and other senior staff – but others do not. Even within effective governing bodies, there will be a range in effectiveness of individual governors and of the take-up of training and support offered by the department, NAGM and others.'

As part of the administration's on-going sequence of policy review and development, I anticipate soon asking a Cabinet Panel to address a range of issues relating to governance, possibly embracing:

- *appointment*
- *accountability*
- *training*
- *clarity of role*

- *capacity for self-assessment and self-improvement*
- *monitoring and evaluating school performance and finance*
- *support for governing bodies of schools causing concern'*

Moyra O'Neill asked the following supplementary question:

'Is there a timescale for this and how can schools be informed of these points?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'It is anticipated the first meeting of the Panel will be in the New Year.'

PART 1 ('OPEN') BUSINESS

1. THE CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES SERVICE PLAN 2003/04

[Officer contact: Diana Searle, Assistant Director, Development
Division
Tel: 01992 555908]

1.1 The Committee considered a report outlining the content of the draft Children, Schools and Families Service Plan 2003/04.

1.2 Conclusions:

- (i) The consultation programme was welcomed, giving members opportunities to contribute to the Plan, prior to the final version being submitted to the Scrutiny Committee in January 2003.
- (ii) The Committee supported the approach of the draft Plan.

	ACTION
<p>2. TOPIC GROUP REVIEW OF CASUAL ADMISSIONS</p> <p>[Officer contact: Nick Powley, Education Access Manager, Tel: 01992 555933]</p> <p>2.1 The Committee considered a report outlining the work so far of the Casual Admissions Topic Group in respect of secondary casual admissions.</p> <p>2.2 The Director of Children, Schools and Families advised that a revised code of practice for admissions had recently been received from the DfES with a very short consultation period; this meant that Members, including those on the Topic Group, had not had an opportunity to consider the revised code and its implications for the County's casual admissions process.</p> <p>2.3 <u>Conclusions:</u></p> <p>(i) The Topic Group would have an early second meeting following on from its planned 5 November meeting to look at the implications of the code of practice.</p> <p>(ii) The Committee would wish to write to the DfES to express the importance of adequate consultation periods, in accordance with the DfES's own consultation code of practice.</p> <p>(iii) The Topic Group would look again at the time limit of four weeks suggested in the recommendations at paragraph 2.1.</p>	<p>Nick Powley Julia Harries</p> <p>Director</p> <p>Nick Powley</p>

3. INTERIM REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY TOPIC GROUP ON PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDER

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

3.1 The Committee considered a report giving a summary of the work of the Topic Group, suggesting budget recommendations to Cabinet and setting out a future work programme for the Group.

3.2 The Committee thanked the Topic Group for its hard work.

3.3 **Conclusions:**

(i) The Topic Group would wish to continue with its work programme as set out in paragraph 3 of the report.

(ii) The visits had been very helpful, with especial thanks to Kent County Council.

3.4 **Recommendation to Cabinet:**

The recommendations set out in paragraphs 4 and 5 of the report should be referred to Cabinet so that budget issues could be considered.

4. OPERATION COACHMAN 2002

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

4.1 Cliff Broadhurst explained that he had requested this item in order to have more detailed information on the outcomes of Operation Coachman 2002.

4.2 Richard Smith circulated a list of detailed questions regarding Hackney Carriage licensing and other issues relating to drivers of passenger vehicles.

Alan Sapsford

Alan
Sapsford/Dave
Roberts

	ACTION
<p>4.3 <u>Conclusions:</u></p> <p>(i) The Committee found the report and officer responses on Operation Coachman very helpful.</p> <p>(ii) There was concern over the issue of Hackney Carriage licensing and the alleged possibility that unlicensed drivers were being used on County Council contracts. This was a wider concern than CSF, covering Adult Care Services and Environment, with the Passenger Transport Unit responsibility.</p> <p>(iii) Officers would work on the responses to Richard Smith's questions to find out the current position in Hertfordshire; the role of the Passenger Transport Unit Enforcement Officers would also be clarified.</p> <p>(iv) These responses would be reported to members and a small Topic Group, set up under the auspices of the Environment Scrutiny Committee, could undertake further scrutiny if required. It was recommended that this Group would include representatives from CSF, including Cliff Broadhurst, and the Adult Care Services Scrutiny Committee.</p>	<p>Charlie Watson, Caroline Tapster, Nicola Hayden, Peter Hull, Tony Edwards, Julia Harries</p>
<p>5. MEETING THE PLACEMENT NEEDS OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN</p>	
<p>[Officer contact: Cheryl Hopkins, Assistant Director, Local Services, Tel: 01992 555916]</p>	
<p>5.1 The Committee considered a report requested by Tanis Kent and Roy Clements outlining the issues faced by the Children, Schools and Families Service in placing Looked After Children appropriately.</p>	

5.2 **Conclusions:**

- (i) The Committee expressed concern regarding:

the rising number of looked after children,
 emergency placements,
 where out of county placements occur,
 emergency placements for asylum seekers.

- (ii) It was agreed that this issue should be referred to the Corporate Parenting Panel, to consider in particular the recruitment of foster carers, support for families, speeding up the adoption process and the development of a plan of action. The work of the Corporate Parenting Panel on this should be reported back to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

Cheryl
 Hopkins,
 Julia Harries,
 Julian Edwards

6 MONITORING OF SCHOOLS

[Officer contact: Gill Jones, Principal Adviser, School Development,
 Tel: 01582 830360]

- 6.1 The Committee considered a report providing detail on how the County Council monitors the work of schools.

6.2 **Conclusions:**

- (i) The School Improvement and Advisory Service should encourage Heads and Governors to share information on the 9-cell matrix and its implications for schools.
- (ii) Members wanted to know where schools in their division were placed in the matrix; if they required this information they would ask for it. A copy would also be made available in the Members' Lounge; members would understand the sensitivity of such information.
- (iii) There was concern regarding vulnerable schools and those in decline and mechanisms to support such schools. There was a call for a Topic Group on this issue, but recognition of the need to co-ordinate this work in the

Gill Jones
 Les Craggs
 Jackie Goodhall
 Julian Edwards

	ACTION
Achievement Panel.	
(iv) The Committee felt that the work of the Achievement Panel should be completed, including calling expert witnesses, before any scrutiny work was started.	
(v) It was agreed that a Topic Group should be set up in September 2003 to scrutinise the effectiveness of the implementation of the new policy developed by the Achievement Panel.	Julia Harries
ITEMS REFERRED TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL (Standing Order SC.7(2))	
None	

Andrew Laycock
County Secretary