

SCRUTINY UPDATE REPORT

Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer

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1. Purpose of the report

To inform Members of action taken on all scrutiny items chosen by the Committee.

2. Summary

The meeting of the Scrutiny Co-Ordination Panel on 7 February 2003 agreed that:

'The March 2003 cycle of Scrutiny Committees should receive update reports with brief details of every item considered by the Committee in question to enable the Committees to decide:

1. *The item was finished; or,*
2. *The item should be included in a work programme for future attention; or,*
3. *The item should be the subject of regular updates.'*

The spreadsheet attached gives brief details of progress on all scrutiny items chosen by the Committee.

3. Conclusion

The Committee is asked to decide if the scrutiny items listed are finished, should be included in the work programme or should be the subject of regular updates.

	ITEM	COMMITTEE DATE	EFFECTS OF SCRUTINY	STATUS OF SCRUTINY
1	Youth Justice Service Arrangements for Saturday Courts	18 October 2000	The scrutiny prompted a review of practice leading to a number of changes which were brought to the attention of the Committee. The primary considerations were about the role, responsibilities and responsiveness of the Emergency Duty Team and the Remand Fostering Services. No further difficulties have since been experienced and it would appear that the problems that were apparent and led to the scrutiny are now resolved.	Finished

	ITEM	COMMITTEE DATE	EFFECTS OF SCRUTINY	STATUS OF SCRUTINY
2	Year 7 Admissions	18 October 2000	<p>The most recent information on this subject was provided to members in the December 'Members' Information Bulletin.</p> <p>On the first day of term, a number of children do not arrive at the school to which they have been allocated. There are three main reasons for this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents decide to send their child to another school • parents chose not to send their child to the allocated school • parents decide to educate their children otherwise than at school i.e. home education <p>New procedures were introduced to reduce the number of children not attending the school allocated on the first day of term and to ensure that the LEA was aware at an earlier stage than previously of arrangements by parents to educate their children elsewhere.</p> <p>This has led to a reduction in the number of children in this category and members are advised annually of numbers in the Members' Bulletin.</p>	Finished

	ITEM	COMMITTEE DATE	EFFECTS OF SCRUTINY	STATUS OF SCRUTINY
3	Children Out of School	18 October 2000	<p>Progress has been achieved in reducing the number of children who are out of school and in ensuring those children who are unable to attend school receive alternative provision. Developments have considerably improved the provision and support offered to those children who are 'out of school'. The snap shot surveys now give information on which provider children are attending and record information on the reasons for poor and non-attendance. In addition to the snap shot survey, information on children out of school is now monitored monthly. This intensive monitoring has further reduced the number of children out of school by identifying the need for urgent responses to individual situations.</p> <p>Regular information on this subject is provided in the Members Bulletin.</p>	Finished
4	The Attainment of Pupils in Hertfordshire [including A/AS Level]	18 October 2000	<p>The School Improvement and Advisory Service have developed their services with particular attention to boys' achievement. This has included INSET (particularly for new teachers), KS3 schemes of work for English (currently being trialled in boys schools), a literacy co-ordinators' conference covering boys' writing skills and a conference on raising the achievement of boys. A further conference is planned on the subject of more able pupils and the motivation of boys. A research project is currently underway including case studies from two secondary schools experiencing success in closing the gap. Further work has taken place in schools which is targeted on particular subjects.</p>	Finished

	ITEM	COMMITTEE DATE	EFFECTS OF SCRUTINY	STATUS OF SCRUTINY
5	Criteria for Statutory Assessment	24 January 2001	The findings of the scrutiny were taken into account when setting up assessment, decision making and resourcing arrangements in CSF. Moderation Panels involving CSF and school staff now make decisions about statutory assessment, earmarked pupil funding and placements. An increased role for the Head of Assessment and Review in monitoring trends and expenditure across all 4 Quadrants and providing professional support to Pupil Service Managers, has been developed.	Finished
6	Services to Disabled Children	28 March 2001	There is a full review of this scrutiny work on the agenda at item 3.	Finished

	ITEM	COMMITTEE DATE	EFFECTS OF SCRUTINY	STATUS OF SCRUTINY
7	Children, Schools and Families Vacancies	17 October 2001	<p>Campaigns to recruit social workers during 2002 have successfully recruited additional staff, including overseas workers.</p> <p>The scrutiny has led to the creation of a specialist recruitment team which aims to develop innovative solutions for hard-to-fill posts and the setting up of a cross-service retention group led by the Director.</p> <p>Targeted recruitment work has been focused successfully on hard to recruit groups, including occupational therapists and educational psychologists, where the national shortage is having a serious effect.</p> <p>Teacher recruitment is improving overall this year. Vacancy figures for September 2002 and January 2003 were halved from the same time in previous years. There are still underlying problems of teacher recruitment combined with teacher retention which are causing concern amongst Headteachers. The Teacher recruitment and retention team have established a highly successful teachinherts recruitment website (www.hertsdirect.org/teachinherts), and organised a wide range of initiatives and events. More intensive work on teacher retention will be a focus for CSF in next year's work. Members will find a full report about Teacher Recruitment and Retention in the March edition of the Members Information Bulletin.</p>	Finished

	ITEM	COMMITTEE DATE	EFFECTS OF SCRUTINY	STATUS OF SCRUTINY
8	Casual Admissions	17 October 2001	<p>A topic group was established and this group made final recommendations to the Scrutiny Committee on 22 January 2003. The recommendations were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the secondary allocation process should run when a place becomes available at a school, or when a request is received. b. standing appeal panels should be set up in each Quadrant. c. the timescale of casual admissions should be changed so that a school is given 10 days to put a child on roll. d. parents should be asked to review whether they wish their child to remain on the continuing interest list on a termly basis following the annual admissions round <p>Recommendations a, b and C are procedural and work has begun to implement them. Recommendation d. was considered by the Admissions Forum on 27 February, and its views will now be considered by the Cabinet.</p>	Finished

	ITEM	COMMITTEE DATE	EFFECTS OF SCRUTINY	STATUS OF SCRUTINY
9	Fixed Term Exclusions	23 January 2002	Further intervention based on the scrutiny has led to a trend for fixed term exclusions being slightly downward. As a result of the Scrutiny, a working group was established to look at the exclusion guidelines for schools, in the light of the new regulations to be issued by the DfES. These regulations were eventually published in January 2003 and a working group, including representation from HASSH, has agreed interim guidance which will be sent to schools.	Finished
10	Prosecution of Parents	23 January 2002	<p>The effectiveness of prosecution as a strategy for improving attendance is now being more closely monitored. Data is collected at three-monthly intervals following court proceedings. Court Assessment Meetings that do not progress to court action also form part of the monitoring process. Information currently being analysed shows that legal action has been effective in returning pupils to school particularly when it has been used at an early stage.</p> <p>Links have been established with clerks to the court and magistrates, as well as greater involvement in the court users' group.</p>	Finished

	ITEM	COMMITTEE DATE	EFFECTS OF SCRUTINY	STATUS OF SCRUTINY
11	Transitional Arrangements between CSF and ACS [joint scrutiny with Adult Care]	23 January 2002	<p>A draft protocol, which details the Statutory framework, and the roles and responsibilities of all of the partner agencies involved in the transition planning of a young person with disability, is in the process of consultation within CSF, ACS and Connexions.</p> <p>A further draft document, which deals with the issues for Disabled Care leavers, is also the subject of consultation.</p> <p>CSF and ACS contributed to the Transition conference held at County Hall in October 2002. A leaflet for parents is in the final stages of design, and will shortly be in print.</p>	Ongoing

	ITEM	COMMITTEE DATE	EFFECTS OF SCRUTINY	STATUS OF SCRUTINY
12	Targets in the CSF Plan	20 March 2002	<p>The Scrutiny Committee concluded that information and data about targets would appear in the Members Bulletin as necessary. This was to provide information relating to targets during the year. Data on the following has been included in the Members Bulletin.</p> <p>Issue 1 May 2002:</p> <p>Out of School Hours Learning. Adoption.</p> <p>Issue 2 June 2002:</p> <p>CSF complaints. Teacher vacancies. Looked After Children.</p> <p>Issue 3 September 2002:</p> <p>Admission and Exclusion Appeals. Children in Public Care in contact with the Police. School Attendance Survey. Provision for Gifted and Talented Pupils.</p>	Finished

			<p>Issue 4 December 2002:</p> <p>KS results in Hertfordshire Schools. Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils. Teacher recruitment and retention. Child protection.</p> <p>Issue 5 February 2003:</p> <p>Numeracy at KS1 and KS2.</p> <p>It was also agreed that at the end of the year information on the targets would be set out. This was done during the preparation of the 2003-04 CSF Plan where information about the actual level of performance was shown against targets in the draft CSF Plan.</p> <p>The Performance Measures set out in last year's plan have been reviewed in the light of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feedback from the CPA Assessment • the bureaucratic burden of data collection on schools • their continuing relevance in the light of any changes made in the priorities set out in the Plan • changes in government measures • any issues about the data collection • forecast performance in 2002 	
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	ITEM	COMMITTEE DATE	EFFECTS OF SCRUTINY	STATUS OF SCRUTINY
13	The School Places Planning Process	20 March 2002	<p>The Committee considered a report describing the school place planning process in March 2002 and decided to have a presentation/seminar on the new computerised pupil number forecasting system once that was in place. There was a presentation, followed by detailed questions, after the last meeting of the Committee. Members discussed the forecasting areas; the inputs to the system; the method of calculation; and the way in which allowance is made for new housing, particularly the system's ability to model future numbers according to the mix of dwelling sizes.</p> <p>The scrutiny has enabled the new system to be able to respond to frequently asked questions by members, and by parents and the public. The service has become more responsive as a result of the scrutiny.</p>	Finished
14	Provision for Children And Young People with Autistic Spectrum Disorder	19 June 2002	The final report summarising this scrutiny work is on the agenda for this meeting at item 6.	Finished at this meeting

	ITEM	COMMITTEE DATE	EFFECTS OF SCRUTINY	STATUS OF SCRUTINY
15	Parent Partnership Service	19 June 2002	A survey of Parent Partnership Service Users took place in the autumn term. 360 survey forms were sent out to a random sample of parents and carers who had contacted the service in the last three years. 175 forms were returned; this represents a return of 49% of the total, which is a very good rate for a postal survey. Early findings suggest a high level of satisfaction with the service. As requested, a full report will be completed for the June meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.	Further report to the June Scrutiny Committee meeting
16	Final Warnings/Convictions of Looked After Children	19 June 2002	Initial indications are that there has been a reduction in the level of offending by looked after children. There will be a full report to the May meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel	Finished; ongoing in Panel
17	Monitoring of Schools	19 June 2002	Developments include the implementation of new electronic databases, a more widely differentiated programme of monitoring visits, mid-inspection cycle reviews for a targeted group of schools, the "Leadership for Improvement" programme and the increased use of partnerships between schools.	Finished; ongoing in Panel

	ITEM	COMMITTEE DATE	EFFECTS OF SCRUTINY	STATUS OF SCRUTINY
18	Operation Coachman	16 October 2002	All District Hackney Carriage licensing officers have received lists of the County's special needs taxi contracts. Three Districts responded to the original correspondence supporting that approach. Other items are being followed up as part of the partnership arrangements with County officers regularly being invited to discuss issues of mutual interest, including a programme of on-going vehicle checks."	Referred to Environment Scrutiny Committee
19	Meeting the Placement Needs of Looked After Children	16 October 2002	Further detailed report on issues specified by the Corporate Parenting Panel – adoption delay, family support, supported lodgings will be discussed by the Panel in May.	Finished; ongoing in Panel
20	CSF and Health	22 January 2003	A members' briefing will be held in April [exact date to be confirmed] to explain how children's health services work in the County and how a partnership approach benefits the child.	Finished
21	Effectiveness of Quadrants	22 January 2003	Follow up local Quadrant scrutiny twilight sessions being organised for April to examine local issues particularly in relation to Child Protection, Attendance and Statements of Special Educational Needs	Ongoing
22	Provision for Excluded Pupils in Hertsmere and Education Support Centres	22 January 2003	There has been further consideration of how best to meet the needs of excluded children in this area, but there are plans to increase the capacity of The Park and to improve accommodation. There is a full report on this agenda at item 7.	