

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 19 MARCH 2003**

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

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

Parent Representatives:

P Cherry	North area
C Broadhurst	East area
T Douris	West area

Church Representative:

J Reynolds	Education Board of the Diocese of St Albans
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Teacher Representatives:

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

Health and Voluntary Sector Representatives:

J Linskill	Director of Nursing, Children's and Older People's Services, North Herts and Stevenage Primary Care Trust
L Wallace	Chairman of Hertfordshire Association for Young People (HAYP)
C Whittle	Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire MENCAP

Also present:

Executive Member: R I N Gordon

E M Clarke, K Coleman, M Downing, R J M Ellis, K F Emsall, G D Game, M Green, M H T Janes, S Jones, I Laidlaw-Dickson, R Mays, R Mills, P A Ruffles, R J Smith

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(i) Membership changes:

Ian Simpson had replaced Lorna Kercher on a permanent basis.
D E Lloyd had replaced S Quilty for this meeting only.
J W A Usher had replaced A K Gray for this meeting only.

(ii) The Chairman thanked Carol Whittle for her valuable contribution to the Committee, as this was her last meeting.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22 January 2003 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

PUBLIC PETITIONS (Standing Order C11)

Mr Gareth Lodge presented a petition on behalf of Applecroft Action Group, 'Local Schools for Local Children', concerning the reduction of primary school places at Applecroft Primary School.

Jim Dalton gave an update on the meeting on Tuesday 18 March 2003 with officers, parents, teachers, governors and other interested parties. The Executive Member and officers agreed to consider all the issues raised and to communicate to all concerned a resolution as quickly as possible. Local Members and the Resources Panel would be kept informed of progress.

Jim
Dalton
Peter
Hudson
Julian
Edwards

QUESTIONS (Standing Order C9(4))

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

're: Secondary Transfer

Yet again children from my Division have been offered secondary school places in Watford and Hemel Hempstead, and I am aware that other youngsters from the West of St Albans have been offered places in Hatfield. Parents have noted the number of buses bringing children into schools located in St Albans from outside the District, and find it difficult to understand why this takes place when local children are unable to secure a local place.

Could you advise me how many children who live outside the District of St Albans have been offered a secondary place for September 2003 at schools within this area?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'I am advised that the number is 576.

Some of these lie within the relevant priority area but outside the City and District of St Albans. Many have obtained places at Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools and, in particular, the faith schools in the area.

As Mrs Mills knows, I have invited St Albans members to join me in briefings to gain a closer understanding of the issues impacting on secondary transfer in the District. A further briefing will be held presently to examine the detail of the 2003 allocations and to reflect on any issues to be pursued to improve still further the outcomes for local children.'

Roma Mills asked the following supplementary question:

'This is an ongoing problem. Has the number of children living outside the City and District of St Albans offered a secondary place for September 2003 within this area increased since 2002?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'The figure in 2002 was 593, so it has gone down. There will be further briefing sessions on this issue with local members.'

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

'Could the Executive Member tell me if he believes the support offered to Hertfordshire pupils for their 'Work Experience' is excellent, adequate or below the level pupils and their parents should expect? In answering could he pay particular attention to the number of places that County is able to provide compared to demand, the quality of and range of work experiences offered and whether anything prevents the authority offering a better more wide ranging service?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'Work Experience in the county is the responsibility of the Hertfordshire Learning & Skills Council which contracts for the service via the education business link consortium B2E with Herts Careers Services.

Each year its work experience programme places more than 12,500 15 and 16 year olds in placements with over 6,000 employers. Inevitably, there will be variability in the quality of these placements and I would not wish to generalise. If Mr Broadhurst has any observations on particular placements I would be happy to have details.

In November 2002 Herts Careers Services was presented with a national award by the Centre for Education in Industry for the quality of work experience organisation. It was one of but four UK organisations to receive the award and the only one to be re-accredited having first gained the award in 1999. This indicates that the service in Hertfordshire is seen externally to be of high quality.

Supply of placements meets demand in most parts of the county although there are occasional difficulties for children in rural areas, particularly in East Herts.

Placements cover many occupational areas but this experience is not intended as a taster for a possible future career. It is meant to provide experience of the world of work in any occupational area.'

Cliff Broadhurst asked the following supplementary question:

'Could the Executive Member provide a breakdown of the places and the net cost to schools of this provision and how the cost has increased recently?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'I will provide a written answer to be circulated to members with the minutes of this meeting.'

To follow
- Julia
Harries/
Mike
Connelly

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

'Could the Executive Member tell me who is responsible for the behaviour of school children on buses to and from school regardless of whether the authority pays for the transport or not. In an incident of bullying occurs on a bus should the parents expect action from the school, the authority or the bus company?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'Following the 'Bradford-Smart' case in the Court of Appeal last year and new guidance from the DfES, it has been clarified that schools have responsibility for the behaviour of their pupils on school transport and should, where appropriate, take disciplinary action.'

Cliff Broadhurst asked the following supplementary question:

'Are schools aware of this responsibility and are schools responsible for the costs of policing school transport?'

Robert Gordon replied:

'Yes.'

Nick
Powley/ Neil
Darlington/
PTU to
check

PART 1 ('OPEN') BUSINESS

1. SCRUTINY UPDATE REPORT

[Officer contact: Julia Harries, Committee Administrator,
Tel: 01992 555563]

1.1 As agreed by the Scrutiny Co-ordination Panel at their meeting on 7 February 2003, the Committee received an update report with brief details of every item considered for scrutiny since October 2000.

1.2 The Committee noted that item 17, Monitoring of Schools, was not finished, but, as agreed by this Committee in October 2002, a Topic Group would be set up in September 2003 to scrutinise the effectiveness of the implementation of the policy developed by the Achievement Panel.

Les Craggs
Julia Harries
Jackie
Goodhall

1.3 Members would be informed of the date of the members' briefing on Health. [item 20]

Paul Clark

1.4 Members would be informed through the Achievement [or appropriate] Panel and the CSF Members' Bulletin regarding the further conference on more able pupils and the achievement of boys. [item 4]

Les Craggs
Jackie
Goodhall

	ACTION
1.5 <u>Conclusions:</u>	
(i) The Committee noted the report.	
(ii) The Committee noted that monitoring information on scrutiny items appeared in the CSF Members' Bulletin; this could lead to members raising issues for further scrutiny.	
(iii) The Committee requested that the Environment Scrutiny Committee consider adding an item on 'Operation Coachman' to their work programme.	Julia Harries Nicola Hayden Clare Kaye John Wood Rob Smith Antony Edwards
(iv) The Committee requested that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Panel should look at the format of this report, in particular the 'Status' column; the Panel should also consider how Cabinet decisions resulting from scrutiny could be shown in the report.	Dave Roberts Clare Kaye
(v) The Committee requested that, where a Topic Group had been set up, the membership of this Group should be listed on the update report.	Julia Harries
(vi) It was agreed that a Work Programme report should be on the agenda for the next meeting of this Committee on 18 June 2003.	Julia Harries Clare Kaye

2 ITEMS REFERRED FROM RESOURCES, PROSPERITY, PARTNERSHIP AND CONSULTATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

[Officer contact: Julia Harries, Committee Administrator
Tel: 01992 555563]

2.1 The Committee considered a report detailing several items referred by the Resources, Prosperity, Partnership and Consultation Scrutiny Committee for possible scrutiny by this Committee.

2.2 It was noted that the figures with respect to Local L252 and L266 were based on early estimates.

2.3 Conclusions:

(i) The Committee agreed that a programme of reports should be developed on those Traffic Light Monitor indicators relevant to the Children, Schools and Families service, to enable monitoring of trends with a view to possible scrutiny.

Geoff Brown
Clare Kaye
Julia Harries
Adrian Service

(ii) The Committee agreed that a report by the Minority Ethnic Curriculum Support Service [MECSS] be put in the CSF Members' Bulletin on projects supporting the achievement of minority ethnic pupils.

Jan Hardy
Julia Harries

(iii) The Corporate Parenting Panel would be asked to look at the Achievements of looked after children [Local L252 and L253].

Cheryl Hopkins
Felicity Evans
Julia Harries

	ACTION
<p>3 REVIEW OF THE SCRUTINY OF SERVICES FOR DISABLED CHILDREN</p> <p>[Officer contact: Gill Webster, Client Development Manager, Tel: 01992 556981]</p>	
3.1 The Committee considered a report detailing the developments in services for disabled children since March 2002.	
3.2 The Committee requested that the membership of Topic Groups should be listed on reports.	Julia Harries
3.3 It was noted that at paragraph 12.3, the last sentence should read 'the report will be presented to the Strategy [or appropriate] Panel', not 'CSF Scrutiny Committee'.	
3.4 <u>Conclusions</u>	
(i) The Committee welcomed this report and commended progress made as an excellent outcome of scrutiny.	
(ii) The Committee were pleased that parents and carers had been involved in this work and would welcome a further opportunity to hear their views on the effect of the changes in practice; this could be achieved by the members of the Topic Group meeting with parents and carers.	Gill Webster Diana Searle
(iii) Areas for further work included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sharing of good practice • initiatives to recruit and retain occupational therapists • salaried shared carers 	Gill Webster Diana Searle
(iv) The Committee requested more information on the work of the Carers Topic Group and requested an item on this for the CSF Members' Bulletin.	Paul Clark Gerardine Butler

4 STATUTORY CONSULTATION ON ADMISSION RULES FOR COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED NURSERY, INFANT JUNIOR AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS

[Officer contact: Nick Powley, Education Access Manager
Tel: 01992 5555933]

- 4.1 The Committee considered a report detailing the responses received to the statutory consultation proposals for community and voluntary controlled primary schools for 2004/05.

Comments to Cabinet on 24 March 2003:

- 4.2 The Committee suggested that the wording of paragraph xxvi in the Schedule of Co-ordinated Arrangements should be clarified.

Nick Powley
Alan Sapsford
Dave Roberts

5 STATUTORY CONSULTATION ON ADMISSION RULES FOR COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SECONDARY SCHOOLS

[Officer contact: Nick Powley, Education Access Manager
Tel: 01992 5555933]

- 5.1 The Committee considered a report detailing the proposed rules for community and voluntary controlled secondary schools and the scheme of co-ordination for 2004/05.

5.2 Comments to Cabinet on 24 March 2003:

The Committee suggested that:

- (i) the words 'and those in public care' should be added to Rule (b) for Tring VC School, subject to discussion with the Governing Body.
- (ii) the wording of paragraph xxvi in the Schedule of Co-ordinated Arrangements should be clarified.
- (iii) Rule 6 of the Secondary Rules should be clarified and more closely reflect the wording of the Primary distance rule.

Nick Powley
Alan Sapsford
Dave Roberts

6 PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDER

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

6.1 The Committee considered a report detailing the work and recommendations of the Topic Group on Provision for Children and Young People with Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

6.2 Representatives from HARC [Hertfordshire Autistic Resource Centre] and PHEAT [Parents of Hertfordshire for Early Autism Intervention Today] addressed the Committee, expressing appreciation of the hard work of the Topic Group and welcoming the recommendations in the report.

6.3 **Conclusions:**

(i) This report and the contributions by HARC and PHEAT were welcomed by the Committee; all involved with the Topic Group were thanked for their hard work.

(ii) The Committee recognised that life with an autistic child was stressful.

(iii) The importance of the following areas was highlighted:

- early diagnosis
- good liaison with health professionals
- exchange of information with health colleagues
- support for carers within their own community
- development of respite care, out of school activities, holiday and buddy schemes

	ACTION
(iv) The Committee agreed that a more user friendly version of the report would be produced and distributed widely.	Alan Sapsford
(v) The Executive Member agreed to take forward the recommendations in the report.	
(vi) Any further work would be taken forward by the Special Needs [or appropriate] Panel.	Alan Sapsford
7 THE PROVISION FOR EXCLUDED PUPILS LIVING IN WELWYN HATFIELD AND HERTSMERE	
[Officer contact: Nick Powley, Education Access Manager Tel: 01992 5555933]	
7.1 The Committee considered a report giving information about the provision for permanently excluded pupils from Welwyn Hatfield and Hertsmere, requested by Bob Mays at the last meeting.	
7.2 Bob Mays requested further information concerning demand, facilities, capacity, capital and revenue costs.	Nick Powley
7.3 <u>Conclusion:</u>	
The Strategy [or appropriate] Panel would consider the detailed issues regarding Education Support Centres [ESCs], as part of the development of the Achievement and Behaviour Strategy.	Nick Powley

8 THE ROLE OF THE PARENT REPRESENTATIVES ON THE CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

[Officer contact: Andrew Pennycook, School Governance Officer
Tel: 01582 830373]

8.1 The Committee considered a report requested by Cliff Broadhurst providing information on the role of Parent Representatives on the Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee

8.2 Conclusions:

- (i) The Committee recognised and welcomed the valuable contributions of the four Parent Representatives on the Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee.
- (ii) The Committee agreed there was no need for further scrutiny of this issue.
- (iii) It was agreed that the Director would meet with the Parent Representatives to discuss further development of their role.

Director
Clare Kaye

9 PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES IN ST ALBANS

[Officer contact: Paul Wray, Area Planning Manager, North West
Tel: 01992 555860]

9.1 The Committee considered a report providing information about primary school places in St Albans, as requested by Roma Mills.

ACTION

9.2 **Conclusions:**

- (i) It was agreed that members would be kept informed of the situation via the appropriate Panel
- (ii) The Committee recognised members' concerns regarding the provision of extra school places in areas with new housing developments.
- (iii) It was important that forecasting mechanisms and data should be as accurate as possible, while allowing for some flexibility and the possibility of response to demographic changes.

Paul Wray

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

None

Andrew Laycock
County Secretary