

CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

UPDATE AND WORK PROGRAMME 2003/4

Agenda item
no.

8

17 MARCH 2004

RECOMMENDATIONS MADE TO CABINET/EXECUTIVE MEMBERS/CHIEF OFFICER AT THE LAST MEETING ON 21 JANUARY 2004:

CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES SERVICE PLAN 2004/05

The Committee's comments were reported to Cabinet on 9 February 2004 as follows:

The Committee:

- supported the proposals made by the Director for future plans to have a more robust evaluation framework and make clear the link between actions and desired outcomes,
- suggested that in future the section on building capacity in schools be reworded to improve clarity, and
- suggested that the timing of the presentation of targets should be brought forward to enable better forecasting and hence more accurate target setting.

CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES BUDGET MONITORING AND REPORTING IN 2002/03 AND BUDGET MONITOR

The Committee expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of reply to the Director's letter to the Minister requesting consideration of the financial demands of supporting unaccompanied asylum seekers; it was agreed that this would be pursued and Members kept informed of progress.

Beverley Huges, Minister of State for the Home Office, responded to Cllr Ellis's letter on 12 February 2004, after consultation with the DfES and the Audit Commission. The Minister confirmed that funding for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) is only available to cover direct costs and cannot be extended beyond these direct costs. It may be possible to seek one-off funding if, for instance, Hertfordshire can demonstrate an exceptional growth in demand. Officers will explore this possibility.

CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES PROPOSED RESOURCE BUDGET 2004/05 - 2007/08

The Committee's comments were reported to Cabinet on 26 January 2004 as follows:

The Committee:

- noted the Children, Schools and Families Proposed Resource Budget 2004/05 – 2007/08 and welcomed the efficiencies that had been achieved,
- expressed concern at the transitional funding arrangements for school budgets, the perverse incentives in the way it is distributed and the uncertainty about the future, and urged the Executive Member to lobby the Government on this issue, and
- welcomed the proposals outlined by the Director to shift the focus of work with looked after children into support and preventative work wherever possible.

UPDATE ON PETITIONS PRESENTED TO THE LAST MEETING:

None

UPDATE ON PREVIOUS SCRUTINY ITEMS

	ITEM	C'TTEE DATE	EFFECTS OF SCRUTINY	STATUS* (see endnote)
1	Transitional Arrangements between CSF and ACS [joint scrutiny with Adult Care] Sue Jaye	23 January 2002	Adult Care and Health Scrutiny Committee considered a report on Transition in October 2003. Members of the Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee attended this meeting. Members requested that a parent's guide to the Transition Protocol should be written. The final draft of this document was prepared at a meeting with Carer's in Herts, and with interested parents, on 23 February. When a leaflet format of this document is available, it will be published. The interagency training programme to deliver 4 Quadrant based workshops has taken place. Delegates from Connexions, CSF, Health, Sensory Services, EPD and Learning Disability in ACS, all took part. The feedback from these workshops will indicate areas for further developments and initiatives.	monitoring
2	Monitoring of Schools	19 June 2002	Topic Group membership: David Billing, Tony Dodd, Derek Hills, Seamus Quilty, Ian Simpson [Chairman], Maureen Thompson, Moyra O'Neill; report of the Topic Group on this agenda.	investigation
3	Operation Coachman	16 October 2002	The Scrutiny Committee on 19 January 2004 agreed that child protection issues arising from Operation Coachman, in particular enhanced checks on taxi drivers and escorts on County Council contracts, should be added to the Work Programme; this item has been added to the Work Programme for the June meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.	investigation

	ITEM	C'TTEE DATE	EFFECTS OF SCRUTINY	STATUS* (see endnote)
4	Effectiveness of Quadrants	22 January 2003	<p>Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee on 18 June 2003 set up a Topic Group (<i>R H Smith, D E Lloyd [Chairman], S Quilty, N K Brook, L R Kercher, T G M Kent, and I Simpson</i>)</p> <p>There has been an SSI Inspection of Child Protection, full findings to be received in February 2004 – this will be on the agenda for the Scrutiny Committee in June 2004.</p> <p>There has been no further action on this item pending discussion between the Director, Executive Member and Chairman of the Topic Group on any future work for this Group.</p>	investigation
5	Provision for Excluded Pupils in Welwyn Hatfield and Hertsmere and Education Support Centres	22 January 2003	<p>A review of practice in all ESCs is being undertaken as part of the Behaviour and Achievement Strategy and will be reported to the Achievement Panel in summer 2004.</p> <p>In addition, further work has been undertaken on the quality of all ESC accommodation. As a result, all ESCs have been included in the County Council's 'expression of interest' to the Government's Building Schools for the Future capital programme.</p>	work outside scrutiny

	ITEM	C'TTEE DATE	EFFECTS OF SCRUTINY	STATUS* (see endnote)
6	Review of the Scrutiny of Services for Disabled Children	19 March 2003	<p>Report to SN Panel on 28 January 2004 on Joint Disability Strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress has been made in delivering the 11 strategic objectives set out in the Joint Disability Strategy • The Strategic Health Authority has agreed funding for a Project Officer to facilitate the development of joint assessment arrangements with health agencies • A detailed Transition Protocol has been developed with Adult Care Services • The progress of other strands within the policy will be reviewed • Further reports will be presented to the SN Panel at future meetings 	Monitoring
7	Provision for Children and Young People with Autistic Spectrum Disorder	19 March 2003	<p>Report to SN Panel on 28 January 2004, setting out progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southfield School will be recognised as a designated resource base from April 2004, with increase in number of funded places to 8 • Additional welfare and tuition budget [£200,000 in 2003-04] has coped with increased number of pupils with Statement for autism • Funding secured to establish 1 secondary and 2 primary bases – criteria have been developed to find the right schools for these bases • Extensive programme of training has taken place • Secondary transition pack and training programme have been developed and implemented • Review of provision for adults with Aspergers Syndrome being undertaken • Funding identified for 2 additional advisory teachers in the Specialist Advisory Team, within existing resources 	Work outside scrutiny

	ITEM	C'TTEE DATE	EFFECTS OF SCRUTINY	STATUS* (see endnote)
8	Primary School Places In St Albans	19 March 2003	See attached table setting out timescale for the review and implementation process.	work outside scrutiny
9	Parent Partnership Service	18 June 2003	A survey has been developed on Inquisite (HertsDirect) for schools and other non-service users to collect data about the way they feel the parent partnership service should develop. Results of this survey should be available in September 2004.	work outside scrutiny
10	Placement needs of Looked After Children	18 June 2003	This item has been referred to Panel for detailed work to be undertaken in developing a revised Policy and Strategy for children at risk of becoming Looked After.	work outside scrutiny
11	PAF Target C18	18 June 2003	The Committee requested that the Director provide statistics on this area of performance in the CSF member bulletin on a regular basis.	monitoring
12	School Attendance	18 June 2003	Arising from the Traffic Light monitor report, the Committee requested that the Director report on the work on school attendance for looked after children in the CSF member bulletin.	monitoring

	ITEM	C'TTEE DATE	EFFECTS OF SCRUTINY	STATUS* (see endnote)
13	Budget Monitor for CSF – April 2002 to February 2003	18 June 2003	The Committee noted the theme of overspends on transport and suggested that this might be an area for the Director to review.	monitoring
14	Children and Young People's Preventative Strategy	18 June 2003	The Committee agreed to review progress in June 2004.	monitoring
15	Future of Leavesden Green, Alban Wood Infant and Alban Wood Junior Schools	18 June 2003	<p>A report on the result of the consultation was considered by the Schools Resources Panel on 14 January and Cabinet 26 January 2004 to decide on the publication of Statutory Notices.</p> <p>Cabinet agreed:</p> <p>1. That the Council publish statutory notices to:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(a) close Alban Wood Infant and Alban Wood Junior Schools and open a new primary school with a planned admission limit of 30 on the Alban Wood Infant site with effect from September 2005, and</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(b) reduce the planned admission limit to 30 at Leavesden Green School, with effect from September 2005.</p> <p>2. That, in the event of there being no statutory objections to the closures, the Director of Children, Schools and Families be authorised to confirm them.</p>	Work outside scrutiny

	ITEM	C'TTEE DATE	EFFECTS OF SCRUTINY	STATUS* (see endnote)
16	Proposals by West Herts College to Discontinue Certain Provision on the College's Dacorum Campus	18 June 2003	<p>The Committee agreed to establish a Topic Group of members to engage with the College, Learning and Skills Council and schools and consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The implementation of the current proposals The future provision for 16 to 19 year olds The phased withdrawal of recreational courses <p>(Note: The size of the topic group is 9 (5:4) membership: F Guest, P T J Channell, D E Lloyd, J Taunton, R H Smith, D Billing, E Singam, and Terry Douris, one Liberal Democrat vacancy)</p> <p>Further meeting planned for 17 May 2004 and final report to Scrutiny Committee in June 2004.</p>	investigation
17	Children, Schools and Families Budget Monitoring and Reporting in 2002/03	15 October 2003	<p>The Committee were particularly concerned with budget monitoring and reporting around Looked After Children budgets. An outline report on Looked After Children Strategy was presented to the Children and Families Panel on 11 December 2003, [a summary of this report was included with the Budget Monitoring Report to the Scrutiny Committee in January 2004]; an in-depth study of Out County Placements was presented to the Children and Families Panel on 5 February 2004. A further report on Looked After Children Strategy will be presented to the Children and Families Panel in May 2004.</p>	investigation

	ITEM	C'TTEE DATE	EFFECTS OF SCRUTINY	STATUS* (see endnote)
18	A/AS Level Achievement	15 October 2003	The Committee requested a further report to the March 2004 meeting on the effectiveness of the whole 16-19 Strategy, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocational courses • Further statistical analysis of value added data and a comparison with our statistical neighbours • The relationship with colleges • Transport needs generated by collaboration and how these are met • Curriculum analysis and choices offered to students Report on this agenda	investigation
19	Year 7 Children Out of School	15 October 2003	Regular update to be provided to Committee every October	monitoring
20	Key Stage 2 results	15 October 2003	Arising from discussion of the traffic light monitor, the Committee agreed that Key Stage 2 results should be the subject of further scrutiny, report on this agenda.	investigation
21	Dyslexia	15 October 2003	Requested by Derek Hills on 15 October 2003. Report to Special Needs Panel on 28 January 2004. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a very successful service in Hertfordshire with a low Tribunal rate • Work is required to revise the contract but the service as a whole is working well • Officers will continue with development work and report back to the Panel as appropriate • SN Panel members agreed that a scrutiny of the service was not required at this stage 	Work outside scrutiny

	ITEM	C'TTEE DATE	EFFECTS OF SCRUTINY	STATUS* (see endnote)
22	Processes and Member Involvement in School Reorganisations	21 January 2004	David Billing raised the issue of the processes and member involvement in school reorganisations, and it was agreed that this would be added to the Scrutiny Update report so that the work of the Schools Resources Panel in this area could be reported to Members.	Work outside scrutiny

* Status definitions:

- **Investigation** – The scrutiny committee has commissioned work, which could be from a topic group, officers, consultants or other parties which is not yet complete but will report to the main committee in the future.
- **Work outside scrutiny** – an item which has been raised by the scrutiny committee where work is being taken forward through another mechanism in response to the item being raised by scrutiny– a panel, external body or officer mechanism for example.
- **Monitoring** – Items which the scrutiny committee has scrutinised in the past where it has asked for occasional or regular updates. This update could be a planned report, in which case the dates should be given, or monitoring through the update report. Items where there is work outside scrutiny can also be monitoring items.
- **Awaiting Action** – Items the committee wishes to scrutinise or review where the timing is unclear due to awaiting events or the outcome of other investigations. E.g. government guidance

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

	ITEM	C'TTEE DATE	SCRUTINY FOCUS
	<u>CHILDREN'S SERVICES</u>		
1	Under 10 Family Support Centre Service	17/03/04	The report will outline proposals to remodel the Family Support Service for Children under 10 and give the Scrutiny Committee opportunity to comment on the proposals.
	<u>EDUCATION</u>		
2	CSF Plan Strategic Area One	17/03/04	It was agreed that the Director would be requested to bring a full report to the March meeting of the Committee on performance information and how actions link to addressing the areas of concern, particularly where performance has declined; this report should include a particular focus on Key Stage 2 results which have plateaued in recent years.
3	A/AS Level Achievement	17/03/04	The Committee considered this on 15 October 2003 and requested a further report to the March 2004 meeting on the effectiveness of the whole 16-19 Strategy, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocational courses • Further statistical analysis of value added data and a comparison with our statistical neighbours • The relationship with colleges • Transport needs generated by collaboration and how these are met • Curriculum analysis and choices offered to students
4	Statutory Consultation on Admission Rules for Community and Voluntary Controlled Nursery, Infant, Junior and Primary Schools	17/03/04	To enable the Scrutiny Committee to comment on the statutory consultation proposals and consider responses received to the statutory consultation proposals for community and voluntary controlled primary schools. Rules to be approved by County Council on 30 March 2004.

	ITEM	C'TTEE DATE	SCRUTINY FOCUS
5	Statutory Consultation on Admission Rules for Community and Voluntary Controlled Secondary Schools	17/03/04	To provide the Scrutiny Committee with an opportunity to comment on the proposed rules for community and voluntary controlled secondary schools and the scheme of co-ordination as part of the consultation and consider responses received to the consultation. Rules to be approved by County Council on 30 March 2004
6	Admission Rules for Sixth Forms of Community and Voluntary Controlled Secondary Schools	17/03/04	To provide the Scrutiny Committee with an opportunity to comment on the proposed rules for sixth forms of community and voluntary controlled secondary schools Rules to be approved by County Council on 30 March 2004
7	Monitoring of Schools	17/03/04	Final report of the Topic Group
8	Traffic Light Monitor	17/03/04	To receive regular report
9	Budget Monitor	17/03/04	To receive regular report

	ITEM	C'TTEE DATE	SCRUTINY FOCUS
	<u>CHILDREN'S SERVICES</u>		
1	The Effectiveness of Hertfordshire's Implementation of the CSF Direct Payments Scheme Ken Harvey	23/06/04	The Direct Payments Policy sets out the commitment that the County Council makes to those with a parental responsibility for a disabled child and young disabled people aged 16/17 following the implementation of the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000.
2	Children and Young People' Preventative Strategy Andrew Wellington	23/06/04	First reported to Committee on 18 June 2003; Committee agreed to review progress in June 2004.
3	Operation Coachman Wendy Broome	23/06/04	The Scrutiny Committee on 19 January 2004 agreed that child protection issues arising from Operation Coachman, in particular enhanced checks on taxi drivers and escorts on County Council contracts, should be added to the Work Programme for the June meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.
4	SSI CP Inspection	23/06/04	
	<u>EDUCATION</u>		
5	West Herts College Mike Griffin/Marianne Stevenson	23/06/04	Final report of the Topic Group
6	Traffic Light Monitor Geoff Brown	23/06/04	To receive regular report
7	Budget Monitor Lesley Brockington	23/06/04	To receive regular report

Note: there will also be an Update & Work Programme Report to each meeting on all new and live scrutiny items and the work programme for forthcoming meetings.