

## **EDUCATION & SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of a MEETING held at COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE on WEDNESDAY, 6th SEPTEMBER, 2000.

**PRESENT:** Mr KC Wren (Chairman), Mrs M Boulton, Mrs NS Bryant, Mr GJM Downes and Mr WA Spiers.

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30. **Apologies** Apologies for absence were received from Mr RT Rogers.

31. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

*Resolved: To confirm and sign the minutes of the Sub-Committee meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2000.*

32. **Chairman's Announcements** The Chairman reminded members of the arrangements for meeting with the consultants reviewing scrutiny.

33. **Best Value Review of Care Programme Approach / Care Management** The Committee considered a report by the Director of Social Services explaining the current statutory responsibilities and proposals for the future.

During discussion members noted that this review was originally programmed for 2000/01. Under the circumstances described in the report, the Sub-Committee was happy to support the initial scope of the review as part of Stage 2 having heard about the restructuring of the service already underway. An explanation of the organisational difficulties faced in the Ridgeway Downs area was also given.

*Resolved: To agree that the next stage of the review be deferred until 2002-03 for the reasons explained in the report*

34. **Grants to Voluntary Sector Organisations** The Sub-Committee considered a report by the Director of Social Services to which senior officers in the Education and Libraries Department contributed.

The Sub-Committee requested this as a topic for scrutiny at one of its earlier meetings. The paper informed members of the processes for determining, managing and monitoring grants to voluntary organisations throughout the County Council. Members raised a number of questions about monitoring procedures, awareness of balances, potential duplication of resources within the Council and between authorities, meeting corporate objectives and the impact of lottery funding.

Resolved: To thank the officers for their initial report and ask for a further report to the 30<sup>th</sup> November meeting covering the following points:-

- (i) how many committees/forums are involved;
- (ii) monitoring and evaluation process – differences;
- (iii) value for money/benefits to the community;
- (iv) ‘audit trail’; and,
- (v) options for establishing a single process for the County Council.

35. **Education Development Plan** A report by the Chief Education Officer considered by the Education Committee on 26<sup>th</sup> June had been circulated. He explained the purpose of the Plan and the role and responsibilities of the LEA in preparing it.

The Sub-Committee identified the Plan as a topic for scrutiny at one of its earlier meetings following comment by the Chief Education Officer. Members were advised that the Education Committee noted the Plan’s contents including the achievements in its implementation in the first year.

Members discussed the issue of the volume of paperwork now having to be completed by schools and asked questions about the main achievements and areas for further improvement, including ICT teaching and schools with serious weaknesses.

Resolved:

- (1) To note the content of the Education Development Plan considered by the Education Committee.
- (2) To ask the Chief Education Officer to report to the next meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> October providing information on why the number of schools with ‘serious weaknesses’ had been increasing and the remedial action to be taken.
- (3) To ask the Chief Education Officer to report to the March, 2000 meeting on steps to improve ICT teaching.

36. **Work Plan** A copy of the current work plan was circulated.

Members held a general discussion about moving the scrutiny process forward in Wiltshire and were aware of the forthcoming review of the scrutiny function by consultants and the Best Value review of political structures.

Resolved:

- (1) To update the plan on the basis of the decisions taken on the earlier items on the agenda.
- (2) To include a report back on the lessons learnt from the transfer of Older Peoples homes to the not-for-profit sector at the request of the Social Services Committee.

- (3) *To ask officers to make arrangements for members to be more closely involved in the 'build-up' to scrutiny items for the next meeting.*
- (4) *To recommend the Policy and Resources Committee, via the Policy and Resources and Environment and Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee, to give early consideration to the need for adequate resources to enable the scrutiny function to be more effective, particularly in*
  - (i) *supporting the work of members of the sub-committees between the meetings on specific topics;*
  - (ii) *taking a more proactive role, including developing the ideas expressed by members;*
  - (iii) *liaising with the service departments, who should provide a contact officer for members on scrutiny;*
  - (iv) *ensuring that reports highlight the topics to be discussed by the scrutiny sub-committees; and,*
  - (v) *providing training and development opportunities for members and officers so that their skills can be further improved.*

(Duration of meeting: 2.00 – 3.25 pm )

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Paul Kelly, of the Committee Services Unit, direct line 01225 713049.

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