

SELECT COMMITTEE ON LIFELONG LEARNING

Thursday, 29th April, 2004 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor Mrs Ridney (in the Chair)
Councillor Hart-Bowman (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Burston, Mrs Cowell, Mrs Dunn, Rahman and Turner,
together with the following non-Council members: -

Voting Member

Parent Governor Representative

Primary Schools – Mrs Lonergan

Non-Voting Member

Teacher Representative

Secondary education – Mrs P Roe

Free Churches

Mr J Guest

Person with experience of and interest in education in the Borough

Mr W G Smith

together with the Director of Finance, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, Assistant Director of Education (Resources and Planning), Assistant Director of Education (Community Education), Acting Assistant Director of Education (School Effectiveness), Mr Fletcher, School Development Adviser (Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning) and Miss M Stephens (Directorate of Law and Property).

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MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 31st March, 2004, be approved as a correct record and signed.

90 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Member made a declaration of interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

91 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs Faulkner and Fletcher, Mrs Sprason, Reverend Morphy, Ms Hewitt-Clarkson, and Mrs Calder and accepted, in accordance with the relevant regulations, in respect of Mrs Sprason.

92 PRESENTATION OF MEMBERS OF THE YOUTH PARLIAMENT

The following Members of the Dudley Youth Parliament gave a presentation; Hayley Manley, Jo Sinar, Lee Thompson, Junaid Parvez, Ben Millward, Daniel Horrocks, each highlighting personal projects undertaken throughout the municipal year and shared experiences gained. Members of the Youth Parliament stressed the need for further publicity of the development work currently being undertaken by Members of the Youth Parliament.

Following consideration of the presentation received several comments and questions were raised by Members in particular regarding: -

Mrs Roe offered her thanks to the Youth Parliament Members in highlighting their experiences of citizenship, and invited Members to share their experiences and ideas with pupils at the Redhill School.

In expressing his thanks to the Members of the Youth Parliament, Councillor Rahman stated that the Members were a shining example of how young people can achieve within the community. He also commented upon the representations made at the Central Dudley Area Committee and how the young Members in promoting their good works, helped to dispel negative feelings towards young people.

The Chair offered her thanks to the Members of the Youth Parliament, and wished them luck in their future endeavours.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the presentation given, be received and noted.

14-19 AREA REVIEW

A report of the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning was submitted on the 14-19 Area Review. An executive summary of the Review was attached as appendix 1.

Following consideration of the report and appendix submitted, several comments and questions were raised by Members in particular regarding: -

- (a) The Chair queried the numbers of school leavers not entering post 16 education and the areas of the Borough these groups were from. In response Mr Fletcher stated that they were generally clustered in the wards that suffered multiple social deprivation. The Chair also commented that the cost of buses and travelling time was a social barrier for residents from these deprived wards.
- (b) In response to a query from Councillor Hart-Bowman regarding tracking the destination of school leavers, Mr Fletcher stated that the strategy aimed to develop stronger partnership links with other education based bodies, such as Connexions and the Learning Skills Council, in order to eliminate duplication of work. The Director of Education and Lifelong Learning further stated that progress was being made with other organisations to ensure a seamless transition from GCSE stage to further education and raising the attainment level.
- (c) Councillor Rahman raised his concerns regarding poor attainment and the low numbers entering further education from deprived areas. In response Mr Fletcher stated that in conjunction with other key organisations, individuals would be successfully tracked and that the action plan would be based on the individual needs of the young person and not the institution. He further stated that children in public care would have specific individual action plans and that funds had been ear marked for this group.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report and appendix to the report, submitted, regarding the 14-19 Area Review, be received and noted.

FEEDBACK FROM THE SELECT COMMITTEE WORKING GROUPS

Oral reports were received from each of the Select Committee Working Group Chairs namely: - Councillor Mrs Cowell for Personal, Social and Religious Education Working Group, Councillor Mrs Dunn for Use of Assets Working Group and Councillor Mrs Ridley for Finance Working Group.

Councillor Mrs Dunn outlined the work undertaken by the Use of Assets Working Group in connection with the asset management process. Particular reference was made to concerns regarding limited capital funds.

Councillor Mrs Cowell commented on the areas examined by the Personal, Social and Religious Education Working Group, in particular, requirements for Personal and Social Education, the National Curriculum and the Dudley Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. Concerns were also raised by Members of the Working Group regarding the need for clarification of the term Collective Worship. Mr Guest further added that a report would be submitted to SACRE highlighting the Working Groups concerns.

The Chair stated that the Inclusion Working Group, chaired by Councillor Fletcher had concluded its business earlier on in the year and had commented on the content of the final inclusion policy document. The Director of Education and Lifelong Learning further added that the final version of the action plan was currently being drafted, subject to discussion with individual schools and would be published on 28th June 2004.

The Chair reported on the activities of the Finance Working Group, stating that the activity led funding formula had been scrutinised in conjunction with representatives from the Primary and Secondary Head Teachers Forum and the Budget Working Group. The Chair highlighted the need for the Working Group to continue its work during the next municipal year.

Following further comments received from Members, it was

RESOLVED

That the information received regarding the progress of each of the Select Committee Working Groups, be noted.

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DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON LIFELONG LEARNING

A report of the Chair of the Select Committee on Lifelong Learning was submitted on the draft Annual Report to the Executive and Council of this Committee's review of the 2003/04 year.

Arising from consideration of the report, it was

RESOLVED

That the content of the Annual Report of the Select Committee on Lifelong Learning for the 2003/04 municipal year be endorsed for submission to the Executive and Council.

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OUTLINE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2004/05

A report of the Lead Officer was submitted on an outline work programme for the Select Committee for the next municipal year.

It was noted that this was a draft outline work programme which could be added to as required by Members and in this connection it was suggested that the following issues be included for examination; Connexion Service - to be reworded as 14-19 Services and Children in Public Care.

Following consideration of the report submitted it was

RESOLVED

That the outline work programme of the Select Committee for 2004/05, with the addition of the issues of 14-19 Services and Children in Public Care, be endorsed for further consideration at the first meeting of this Select Committee in the new municipal year

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QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 11.8

Councillor Mrs Cowell raised a question regarding youth offenders rehabilitation to school, the Chair then responded directly.

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REMARKS BY THE CHAIR

At the conclusion of the Committee's business the Chair thanked Members and Officers for their help and encouragement in conducting the business of the Select Committee. Members and Officers in response thanked the Chair for the able manner in which she had conducted meetings of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 7.30pm.

CHAIR