

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL - 18TH JULY 2005

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON LIFELONG LEARNING

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To consider the annual report of the Select Committee on Lifelong Learning for 2004/05 and the proposed work programme of the Committee for 2005/06.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Article 6 of the Council's Constitution requires Select Committees to report annually to the full Council on their workings and to make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate. Select Committee Chairs, at their meeting held on 6th November, 2003, agreed that the annual report of the Select Committee on Lifelong Learning be made to the July meeting of the Council.

2.2 The Committee's work programme for the 2004/05 municipal year included:-

- Youth Parliament
- Dudley 14-19 Strategic Area Review
- Inclusion Action Plan
- Health Promotion in Schools
- Developments in 14-19 Education and Training
- Equality and Diversity Annual Report
- Capital Strategy
- Exclusion, Attendance and Admissions
- Children in Public Care
- Remodelling the School Workforce
- Revenue Budget 2005/06
- Supply Teaching in Dudley
- Education Development Plan 2004/05
- Sure Start Plan 2004 – 06
- Standards in Dudley Schools 2004
- New Headteacher Support Programme
- Primary School Review
- Secondary School Review
- Consultation on Three Year Budgets
- Consultation on First Steps, Personal and Community Development Learning for Adults

2.3 The main focus of the Committee's activity in 2004/05 can be summarised as the review and scrutiny of:-

- (a) a wide range of policy and strategy documents;
- (b) key performance indicators and output measures for the Education and Lifelong Learning Service, including key stage results;

- (c) the work of the different divisions in the Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate;
- (d) the support made available to schools (see para. 2.7) and particularly those in special measures or with serious weaknesses.

2.4 In relation to issues covered by and arising from the Committee's agreed work programme, particular consideration was given to:-

- (a) the Council's role as corporate parent, and the support and guidance afforded those children in the Council's care;
- (b) the further development of the Revised Inclusion Strategy, and the proposed Special Education Needs Action Plan, both of which were considered in detail at specially convened meetings of the Committee;
- (c) School Performance in 2004 and key stage results where Dudley continues to achieve at or just above the national average in most measures, including the revised "value added" indicators;
- (d) Schools Budgets 2005/06 and the further review of the Schools Funding Formula which was considered by a dedicated Working Group;
- (e) Primary School Provision, which was also considered by a dedicated Working Group;
- (f) Secondary School Review with the wider context of Learning for the Future;
- (g) the Sure Start Plan 2004/06, which provides the framework to bring together education, childcare, health and family support to target services in disadvantaged areas and universal services for children aged 0 – 16, early education and out-of-school provision.

2.5 The Committee also considered a number of national consultation papers, including Three Year School Budgets and the Learning and Skills Council proposals to reform funding and planning arrangement for first steps, personal and community development learning for adults, and supported the submission of appropriate responses.

2.6 One important development of the Committee work during 2004/05 was the regular and systematic review of the parts of the Corporate Quarterly Performance Report relevant to the Committee's Terms of Reference. We noted good performance in some areas and the need for further improvement and corrective action in other areas.

2.7 Schools OFSTED Reports

- 2.7.1 In addition to its ordinary meetings, the Committee held a number of special meetings to consider school OFSTED reports. It is not the responsibility of the Committee to scrutinise the performance of individual schools – that is a matter for governing bodies. The Committee's responsibilities in this area are concerned with scrutinising the Council's support for schools, particularly the relationship between that support and school performance.
- 2.7.2 The OFSTED reports consistently demonstrated the key ingredients for a successful school and it is worth repeating them here:-
- Leadership by the headteacher, senior staff and governors;
 - Commitment and positive attitude from staff and pupils;
 - High self expectation from everyone involved;
 - Good self assessment and monitoring processes;
 - Robust management of resources;
 - Appropriate and relevant support and challenge from the Council.
- 2.7.3 The Committee saw and heard of various examples of good practice in these areas and others, but again identified a number of issues which could have an effect on educational achievement and which will need to continue to be addressed and monitored:-
- (a) the effect of mobility of pupils;
 - (b) pupils taking extended leave in term time;
 - (c) levels of attendance and parental support;
 - (d) the quality of supply teaching;
 - (e) the condition of school buildings;
 - (f) the effects of deprivation and other social factors.
- 2.7.4 The Committee had regular update reports on the two schools in the Borough, which had been placed in the category of requiring Special Measures. Both schools have continued to receive significant additional support from the Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate. Although more remains to be done, encouraging progress is being made in both schools and the target dates for being removed from Special Measures should be met.
- 2.7.5 The Committee's work in this area was much enhanced by the input of Headteachers and Governors and the Committee is very grateful that so many were able to find time to contribute to its discussions.
- 2.7.6 Having considered the school OFSTED reports in detail, and taken evidence from Headteachers, Governors and Council's officers, the Committee was satisfied that the right and appropriate level of support had been available by the Council to the schools concerned. A number of follow-up and action points were identified by the Committee and these will be considered in future Work Programmes.

2.8 Lifelong Learning Outside Schools

2.8.1 For the first time we developed a working group to support developments through scrutiny and policy development of those areas of lifelong learning which were not focused on schools.

2.8.2 The work programme arose from an overview presentation of the work which is undertaken through the Community Education and Development Division and the Library and Information Division, and has included:

- Healthy eating in schools, looking at the working together and direction of health promoting schools and the schools meals service;
- The library archive service, its potential move to new premises and how policy and practice can be extended and developed to meet emerging needs;
- The work of the detached youth work teams within youth and community, how they are addressing anti-social behaviour in targeted areas and increasing engagement with young people who would not normally get involved in positive activities within their communities;
- Potential changes to funding and targeting arrangements by the Learning and Skills Council for work with adult and community learning and its possible negative impact on learning in our most deprived areas;

2.8.3 The Committee saw and heard a variety of good practice in these areas, but identified a number of issues which could have an effect on achievement and community engagement in learning, which will continue to be addressed and monitored:

- External funding streams and their impact on sustainability of delivery;
- Working together to avoid duplication of effort and ensure same direction of travel;
- The impact of changes in national funding streams;
- The impact of changes in national delivery of services, such as student finance;
- Re-focusing of services to meet the effects of deprivation and other social factors.

2.9 Conclusion

2.9.1 The Select Committee has a key role to play in the continuing development of the Education and Lifelong Learning Agenda in the Borough. During 2004/05 we have covered a wide range of subjects and issues which are summarised in this report. Good progress continues to be made and, on the whole, Key Stage Results are satisfactory and there is much to recognise and celebrate in our schools.

2.9.2 The outline work programme for 2005/06 was approved at the first meeting of the Committee in the new municipal year on 16th June 2005 subject to further consideration of the implications of the Children Act, 2004. The programme agreed included:-

- Issue arising from "Every Child Matters" in the Children Act 2004
- Learning for the Future, including the Review of School Places and Building Schools for the Future.
- Children and Young Person's Plan (a single plan to replace a range of existing statutory plans)
- Full Service Extended School development

- Home to School Transport
- Post 16 Transport
- Adult Learning Inspection
- Preparing for CPA and Joint Area Review
- Attendance and exclusions
- School standards
- Development of Sure Start Plan
- Remodelling the School Workforce
- Support for children in Public Care
- The (pending) Youth Service Green Paper
- Developing the Archives Service

2.9.3 There will also be changes affecting the relationship between the Council and Schools, and a new School Ofsted Inspection Framework and this will have implications for the way the Committee reviews School Ofsted Reports.

3.0 PROPOSALS

3.1 That the annual report of the Select Committee on Lifelong Learning for 2004/05, as set out above, be received.

3.2 That the outline work programme for the Committee for 2005/06, as set out in paragraph 2.9.2 above, be approved.

4.0 FINANCE

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report at this stage.

5.0 LAW

5.1 The requirement for the Committee to make an annual report to the Council is contained in Article 6 of the Constitution.

5.2 The relevant statutory provisions regarding the Council's Constitution are contained in Part II of the Local Government Act, 2000, together with Regulations, Orders and Statutory Guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

5.3 The legal provisions regarding the issues referred to in paragraphs 2.4 and 2.7 above are as indicated in the reports submitted to the Select Committee on Lifelong Learning on those issues.

6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

6.1 The Select Committee on Lifelong Learning has taken equality and diversity issues into account whilst scrutinising the areas of work described, particularly in relation to front-line service delivery and issues such as attendance and exclusion and engagement of potentially disenfranchised groups in normal service delivery.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 That the proposals set out in Section 3 above be approved.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 Article 6 of the Constitution

The Minutes of the Meetings of the Select Committee on Lifelong Learning held in the 2004/05 municipal year and the reports submitted to those meetings.

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CHAIRMAN OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON LIFELONG LEARNING