

CHILDREN, FAMILY AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

21 June 2012 at 7.30 pm

MEMBERS: Councillor Dave Callaghan (Chair), Councillor Wendy
(*Absent) Mathys (Vice Chair) and Councillors Sheila Andrews,
Moira Butt, Anisha Callaghan, Peter Fosdike, Ed Joyce,
Paddy Kane, Jonathan Pritchard and *Sue Stears.
Councillor Ruth Dombey (ex-officio)

CHURCH Mr Andrew Theobald (Catholic)
REPRESENTATIVES: Peter Gowlland (Anglican)

574. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to this inaugural meeting of the Committee.

575. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES

An apology was received from Councillor Sue Stears. Councillor Roger Thistle attended as substitute.

576. ANY URGENT ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD AT THE DIRECTION OF THE CHAIR

Non-councillor Representatives

This was brought forward as an urgent item by the Chair as information regarding non-councillor representatives had been received from the Department for Education (DfE) yesterday.

The Chair announced that following discussions, and agreement, with the Sutton Centre for Voluntary Sector that only councillors would be members of the new committees. However, anyone who wished to speak must request to do so before the day of the meeting. The exception to this was the representatives from the Anglican and Roman Catholic Dioceses. Following consultation, the Department for Education had confirmed that these dioceses had the right to each nominate one representative to be a member of the committee that dealt with education matters.

The Executive Head of Legal and Democratic Services confirmed this position and that these representatives only had the right to speak and vote on education matters. He went on to state that the rules concerning the inclusion of Parent Governor representatives had also changed and they were only entitled as of right to places on scrutiny committees. As this Committee was not a scrutiny committee they were not entitled to places. However, they were very welcome to attend meetings and could ask to speak in the same way as other community representatives.

Mr Andrew Theobald, Roman Catholic Representative, disputed the advice that the church representatives could only speak on education items. He also disputed the legal interpretation of the rights of parent governors. He questioned the Committee's governance arrangements as there was not a substantive item on the agenda regarding non-councillor representatives.

Councillor Jonathan Pritchard requested that all members of the Committee be given a briefing on how this decision had been reached.

Following clarification from the Executive Head of Legal and Democratic Services it was:

Resolved: (i) To note that representatives from the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Diocese had the right to speak and vote, as members of this Committee, only on matters concerning education.

(ii) To note that the legislation concerning the appointment of parent governor representatives was different and the provision for the diocesan representatives did not apply to them.

(iii) To request that the Executive Head of Legal and Democratic Services provide a written brief to all members of the Committee on how the decision of non-councillor members had been reached.

577. PRIMARY SCHOOL EXPANSION 2012 AND DRAFT PUPIL PLACES STRATEGY - 2013

Further to Minutes 115/12 and 446/12, when The Executive authorised public consultations on the possible expansion of specific primary schools across the Borough to meet the expected need for additional places, the Committee considered a report which gave details of the feedback received. The consultation documents had been widely distributed and a series of public meetings organised.

Consultation had taken place on the possible one form entry expansion of four primary schools and a four form primary provision on the former site of Stanley Park High School.

The report also outlined the progress achieved in developing schemes for the expansion of schools and summarised the options and associated likely costings. It made recommendations about expansion proposals for consideration to be pursued further through the publication of statutory proposals as well as the next steps in the process and an outline timescale. The expansions, as proposed, would be fully funded from Basic Needs Funding.

A draft pupil places strategy was also considered. It was reported that ongoing discussions were being held with schools, particularly in the secondary sector, in preparation to meet the necessary expansion for that age phase.

It was explained that Dorchester Primary School had been originally considered for expansion. That was not being taken forward at present as it was thought that there were enough places in that area. Officers were also in talks with the Department for Education regarding the budgetary issues and looking at the potential impact on secondary schools in the Borough. As well as each school having a Travel Plan potential traffic related issues arising from the expansion proposals would be discussed with traffic officers and individual schools. A certain amount of funding had been ring-fenced for this.

Members noted that there could be more joined-up thinking with regards to strategic planning and how this affected the need for school places. There were a few large developments planned in the Borough which could have a great impact on the number of school places needed.

Resolved: (i) To note that, following the approval of The Executive at the meeting of 8 May 2012, bulge classes at Amy Johnson Primary School, Devonshire Primary School and St Mary's Catholic Infants School were being progressed in readiness for September 2012.

(ii) To note the options and to agree option 2, as given above, to enable enough school places to be provided for this September 2012.

(iii) To note that statutory proposals would be published, with appropriate liaison with the Schools, their Governing Bodies and, where relevant, the Diocesan Board of Education, in respect of the permanent expansion of the following schools with a view to implement the proposals with effect from September 2013:

- Amy Johnson Primary School (30-60 places at Year Reception per year)
- The Avenue Primary School (90-120 places at Year Reception per year)

- Bandon Hill Primary School (60-180 places at Year Reception per year)
- St Mary's Catholic Infants School (60-90 places at Year Reception per year)

(iv) To defer the decision on the expansion of Dorchester Primary (90-120 places) but to continue with detailed design work on replacement of time expired buildings for September 2014 which would incorporate the necessary accommodation to complete the Key Stage 2 elements of the expansion to 3 Forms of Entry.

(v) To note that determination of the statutory proposals by this Committee in Autumn 2012 would be subject to securing necessary planning consents.

(vi) To note that the outcomes of the feasibility studies on the five schools proposed for possible expansion and the note the financial implications.

(vii) That any additional funding from the Department for Education beyond the current requirements should be earmarked to cover the costs of future expansion commitments to meet the projected demand in future years.

(viii) That thanks and appreciation be made for the leadership and positive contribution made by all schools as part of the consultation on the expansion proposals and to all those who responded to the consultation.

(ix) To note the Draft Pupil Place Strategy and the ongoing discussions with Headteachers in the secondary sector on admissions policies.

(x) That a request be referred to the Housing, Economy and Business Committee that future joint working takes place regarding housing developments and the provision of pupil places.

Councillor Jonathan Pritchard declared a personal interest in that he was a governor for one of the schools proposed for expansion.

At the close of discussions on education matters Mr Andrew Theobald and Mr Peter Gowlland withdrew from the meeting.

578. OFSTED INSPECTION OF SAFEGUARDING AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN'S SERVICES - LONDON BOROUGH OF SUTTON

The Committee considered a report which set out the findings of the Ofsted Inspection of safeguarding and looked after children's services. An action plan was also before the Committee.

The Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services in Sutton had been completed in April 2012. The purpose of inspection had been to evaluate the contribution made by relevant services in the areas of safeguarding and services to looked after children. Ofsted published the report of this inspection on 29 May, 2012. The inspection framework concentrated on the child's journey through services from early support, referral to services and support and intervention for children subject to a child protection plan, looked after children and care leavers. The inspection focused on the quality of assessment and the impact of intervention on outcomes. The inspection found safeguarding services in Sutton to be inadequate and services to looked after children, adequate. The Inspectors also judged the Council's capacity to improve as adequate.

The Committee expressed concern about the findings of the inspection and discussed work that had already taken place as a result of the findings including the six-month action plan. Members were keen to ensure that performance, quality and outcomes were improved. It was reported that the recording tool used at present was rather prescriptive and not user friendly and that a new recording tool would go

live on 20 August. The role of the Local Safeguarding Children Board was also discussed.

Resolved: (i) To note the Ofsted Inspection report and its findings.

(ii) To note the high level action plan that was produced during the Inspection and presented to the Lead Inspector during the second week of the inspection.

579. DELEGATED AUTHORITY REPORT

Resolved: To note the list of decisions taken under delegated powers since May 2012.

580. REFERENCE FROM CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Adoption Report: Final recommendations from the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee for approval

Councillor Wendy Mathys introduced the paper before the Committee as one that would have been signed off by The Executive. She explained that the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee had conducted an investigation into the Adoption Service and had made several recommendations which had been accepted by officers. Some work had already started on these.

Resolved: To approve the following recommendations of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee:

1. That the Council to write to the courts and continue to engage with them to make changes enabling them to deal with complex cases more expeditiously.
2. That the Council examine the benefits of setting up post adoption support groups for Sutton families to enable adopters to offer advice and support from others in a similar position, and to consider carefully cost implications, if any, to the Council and whether they would be justified.
3. To develop a business case to look at the possibility of undertaking concurrent planning i.e. to consider both adoption and short term fostering at the same time.

581. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved: To note that the next meeting of this Committee was scheduled for 20 September 2012.

The meeting ended at 9.10 pm

Chair:

Date: