

Time commenced – 6.00pm  
Time finished – 8.30pm

## EDUCATION COMMISSION 19 SEPTEMBER 2005

Present: Councillor MacDonald (in the Chair)  
Councillors Afzal, Allen, Higginbottom, Hird, Latham  
and Liversedge.

Co-opted Members: David Edwards (Church of England Diocese),  
Dr Devendra and Nasreen Iqbal – Parent Governor  
Representatives, Tony Walsh (Derby REC)

Also in Attendance Dave Wilkinson (NASUWT) and Ian Jennison  
(UNISON)

### Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Khan and John Honey  
(Catholic Diocese).

### Late Items Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

The chair proposed that the Commission holds a pre-meeting prior to the formal public meeting to enable members to plan the questions they wish to ask of the witnesses and consider how much time to devote to each item. There were mixed views on this proposal, some people met within their groups to discuss the topics. Cllr MacDonald agreed to make herself available to members should they wish to discuss items.

### Declarations of Interest

Name	Type of interest	Reason
Councillor MacDonald	Personal	Governor – Lees Brook Community Sports College
	Personal	Member of National Union of Teachers
Councillor Higginbottom	Personal	Vice Chair of Governors – Ashgate Primary School

Councillor Allen	Personal and Prejudicial  Personal	Minute Number 17/05 Redesignation of Derby's Special Schools  Chair of the Management Committee at the Pupil Referral unit
Nasreen Iqbal	Personal	Governor Hardwick Primary school
Dr Devendra	Personal	Governor Chellaston Junior School
Mr D Edwards	Personal	Chair of Governors – St Peters, Littleover  Vice Chair Governor – St James' Junior Schools

## 09/05 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 4 July 2005 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chair, subject to the following amendment:

Page 2 last paragraph – change LCS to LSC.

## Items for Discussion

### 10/05 Appointment of One Member of the Commission on the Corporate Parenting Joint Sub-Commission

**Resolved to appoint Councillor Higginbottom to the Corporate Parenting Joint Sub-Commission.**

### 11/05 Integrating Children's Services

The Commission received an update from Andrew Flack – Director of Education, about the progress in Integrating Children's Services. A discussion paper was distributed to members, Andrew Flack advised that the deadline for comments was 23 September 2005 although this was not absolute and comments could be fed in after this date.

Andrew Flack – Director of Education advised that the structure under the Director of Children's Services was not yet known and discussions had just started on this.

Councillor Latham asked for clarification of the locality structure. Andrew Flack responded that it was about the management of integrated teams in the five areas.

There would be a dual line of accountability to area management and professional service managers.

Councillor Latham asked who were the Children's Trust Board? Andrew advised that the Children's Trust Board would in effect be the Children's Partnership. The intention was to bring all agencies together. Each agency would have to go back to their relevant bodies to get decisions made in some cases. The Trust would be chaired by the Director of Children's Services. Councillor Higginbottom commented that people appointed to the Trust should have appropriate seniority to take decisions. Andrew Flack advised that the current partnership was pitched at a lower level but the intention was that the Trust would have members with the appropriate seniority.

Dave Wilkinson suggested that there should be an Education Champion to ensure Education did not get lost in all of this. All pupils in the City had to be considered not just vulnerable children. He asked by what mechanism could they ensure the Education Service was not submerged. Andrew Flack responded that it was inevitable that the focus would be on vulnerable children. However it was clear that this could only be successful if based in universal services. The best thing was to ensure each child got a good education. Education had to be one of the main thrusts in Children's Services. Good education depended on the support for vulnerable children and families being very strong. The Council would have to make sure that amongst other things there was clear responsibility for school improvement.

**Resolved to note the update.**

## 12/05 Youth Matters Green Paper

The Commission considered a report from the Director of Education giving a summary of the Green Paper proposals and details of the consultation process for commenting on these proposals. Members were advised that the consultation period would end on 4 November 2005.

Lesley Whitney, Assistant Director - Lifelong Learning and Community, explained that the paper set out four key challenges for the Youth Service. These were:

- How to engage more young people in positive activities and empower them to shape the services they receive
- How to encourage more young people to volunteer and become involved in their communities
- How to provide better information, advice and guidance to young people to help them make informed choices about their lives
- How to provide better and more personalised support for each young person who has serious problems or gets into trouble

Councillor Latham asked for clarification of what the Opportunity Cards would be used for. Lesley Whitney responded that the cards would be used for a range of out of school activities. Andrew Flack added that the cards would have credits added to them not money. The administration of a scheme like this would be very difficult.

Members queried whether the Opportunity Cards would only be available to 13 -16 year olds and asked whether these should be extended to other age groups. Members also queried the merits of having sanctions and considered whether this would be counter productive.

Members were concerned that the £40million capital funding available over 2 years nationally was insufficient especially for capital building projects. Also the £45million available over 3 years to support an expansion in volunteering opportunities for young people seemed too bureaucratic, was likely to create a plethora of bodies and to take the money away from young people.

David Finn, Head of Youth Service, advised that he shared a lot of the Commission's concerns, however this would create opportunities for young people to get involved, in particular the Opportunities Fund. The volunteering element was already strong in the City. David added that there was a lot of local interpretation involved in this. The real disappointment was the lack of capital funding. £40million compared to the investment in schools was small.

David Wilkinson, NASUWT, commented that it was too optimistic to expect young people to make informed decisions. In practice the processes would be a nightmare and the bureaucracy could swallow up funds before it started.

Dr Devendra commented that important issues had been highlighted. However at the moment there was no structural support for young people to take up any activities in some areas, but just giving them money would not improve the situation.

Nasreen Iqbal stated that she accepted what had been said, however, disadvantaged children needed challenging to develop them. Perhaps if young people were given the incentive to volunteer it would encourage more to take it up. Councillor Latham commented that children had opportunities now to volunteer with organisations such as Guides or Scouts. If children were not bothered now how would this change them?

It was also stated that young people were being consulted much more regularly now and made positive contributions to local issues through the young people's consultation strategy.

Lesley Whitney responded that she did not think the Opportunities Card would change this but the role of the Youth Support Worker could. The Youth Support Worker would help to engage young people, they would have a mentoring role and would work on self-confidence building in young people.

David Finn commented that the appropriate infrastructure needed to be in place to enable children to take part. Derby's Youth Service was reasonably well resourced compared to others nationally, but currently we only served a third of young people.

It was suggested that a separate meeting be held for the Commission to consider a response to the paper.

**Resolved to arrange a separate scrutiny meeting for the Commission to consider a response to the Youth Matters Green Paper.**

## **13/05 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2005/6**

The Commission considered a report from the Director of Corporate Services asking the Commission to agree a work plan for its topic and scrutiny reviews.

**Resolved to review the impact of Learning and Skills Council's Agenda for Change Programme on learners in Derby as the Commission's principle topic review item. The Commission also agreed to consider other items detailed in the report for the Commissions topic and scrutiny review activities in the coming year at appropriate times.**

## **14/05 Monitoring Performance – First Quarter 2005/6**

The Commission considered a report from the Director of Corporate Services detailing the Council's performance under the remit of the Education Commission during the first quarter 2005/6.

Councillor Allen asked that once the actual attainment figures were released that the Commission be given national comparators to evaluate Derby's performance.

Mahroof Hussain suggested that Councillor Higginbottom and himself work with the Education Department to identify any indicators that can give quarterly performance data.

**Resolved to note the report.**

## **15/05 Overview and Scrutiny Training**

The Commission considered a report from the Director of Corporate Services asking that members advised the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Team to arrange delivery of any training related to Overview and Scrutiny that they wish to undertake.

Mahroof Hussain added that this would include Co-opted members.

**Resolved to note the report.**

## **16/05 Primary School Place Planning Strategy**

The Commission received an update on the consultation process for the Primary School Place Planning Strategy. Andrew Flack – Director of Education, advised that the closing date for comments to be fed into the consultation would be 31 October 2005. The consultation document would be brought to the next meeting of the Commission and would include a report highlighting comments that had been received. The Commission would also be able to submit their comments into the consultation process at that point. Members were issued with a copy of the consultation document.

**Resolved:**

- 1. to note the update.**
- 2. to comment on the consultation for the Primary School Place Planning Strategy at the next meeting of the Commission.**

Having declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the following item, Councillor Allen left the meeting.

## **17/05      Redesignation of Derby's Special Schools**

The Commission considered a report from the Director of Education about the re-designation of Special Schools. Members were advised that consultation had been carried out on the proposal to redesignate four of Derby's Special Schools, St Giles', St Andrew's, St Clare's and St Martin's. From the outcome of the consultation Council Cabinet, at its meeting on 6 September 2005 agreed to approve the publication of the statutory notices for the re-designation of St Giles' and St Andrew's Special School, and to defer proposals for St Martin's and St Clare's Special Schools, pending further development work.

Dave Wilkinson, NASUWT, commented that he was supportive of the redesignation of St Giles' and St Andrew's and he also supported the deferral of St Martin's and St Clare's.

**Resolved to note the report.**

Councillor Allen returned to the meeting.

## **Matters Referred to the Commission by Council Cabinet**

### **18/05      Re-Inspection of the Adult Learning Service**

The Commission considered a report from the Director of Education on the re-inspection of the Adult Learning Service that was considered by Council Cabinet at its meeting on 6 September 2005. The Council Cabinet had referred the report to the Commission for their comments.

The Commission were advised that the Adult Learning Service had been inspected initially in January 2004, when they were found to be a weak service. They were inspected again in May 2005 and were found to be satisfactory or better across all areas of inspection.

The deadline date for submission to the Learning and Skills Council was 30 September. Any comments from the Commission would be taken into account in finalising the action plan.

**Resolved:**

- 1. To ask the Director of Education to thank the staff who had put the effort in to raise the standards resulting in the successful and positive inspection.**
- 2. To note the action plan.**

**19/05 Council Cabinet Forward Plan**

The Commission identified the following items on the Forward Plan for consideration at a future meeting.

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Decision Matter</b>
37/05	Phase 2 Children's Centres and Extended Schools
27/05	Primary School Place Planning Strategy

**20/05 Call-In**

There were no call-ins.

**21/05 Responses of the Council Cabinet to any Reports of the Commission**

There were no items.

Minutes End