

Time commenced – 6.00pm
Time finished – 7.55pm

EDUCATION COMMISSION 19 DECEMBER 2005

Present: Councillor MacDonald (in the Chair)
Councillors Afzal, Higginbottom, Hird and Khan

Co-opted Members: Nasreen Iqbal – Parent Governor
Dr Devendra – Parent Governor
Tony Walsh - Derby Race Equality Council

Also Present:

Councillor Wynn
Dave Wilkinson – NUSUWT Observer

Apologies for Absence

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

Late Items Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

Declarations of Interest

Name	Type of interest	Reason
Councillor MacDonald	Personal Personal	Governor – Lees Brook Community Sports College Member of National Union of Teachers
Councillor Higginbottom	Personal	Vice Chair of Governors – Ashgate Primary School
Councillor Allen	Personal	Chair of the Management Committee at the Pupil Referral unit Governor at St Clare's School
Dr Devendra	Personal	Governor Chellaston Junior School

28/05 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 7 November 2005 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chair.

Items for Discussion

29/05 Integrating Children's Services

Members received an update on the Integrating Children's Services agenda from Andrew Flack, Director of Education. He informed the Commission that there had now been 2 meetings with staff and the provisional structure had now been agreed. This would be put into place from 1 January 2006. The provisional structure was necessary to ensure risks were minimised and to ensure continuity for those receiving services. He reported that the integration would continue into the Spring with the integration of front line services starting on 1 April 2006.

Resolved to note the update and request a further update at a future meeting.

30/05 Implications of the Schools White Paper for the Cities Policy and Practice on School Admissions, Exclusions and the Role of the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU).

The Commission received a presentation from Simon Longley, Assistant Director Resources and Strategic Planning, on the Government's 'School's White Paper'. He felt that the implications for Admissions, Exclusions and the PRU could only be understood when the White Paper as a whole had been examined.

The Commission noted that the White Paper did not go into detail about how the aims of the White Paper would be achieved. They noted the paper would not necessarily lead to any immediate changes in Derby Schools.

Simon Longley reported that the White Paper aimed to support access and choice for all to ensure the less affluent were not at a disadvantage. He said the White Paper increased parents' choice over which school their child would attend.

It was noted that the proposed 'Foundation Schools' would become their own admissions authorities. Simon Longley reported that a version of the current Admissions Code may become statutory. He felt that procedures and policies on admissions could become very fragmented and vary between different schools.

The Commission noted that Exclusion Procedures were not affected specifically by the White Paper and therefore it was felt that the initial impact upon PRUs would be limited.

Councillor Wynn felt that the White Paper's objectives were admirable and would be supported by the majority of people, however he felt the lack of detail over how the objectives would be achieved made it difficult to assess effectively. He stated

that there were a number of contradictions in the paper which were concerning. He felt the White Paper would have a limited impact in Derby and that the extra powers that the Local Authority were given were not required at present in the City.

He highlighted that an alternative version of the White Paper along with a detailed critique of the Government's proposals, which was supported by local MPs, had been published on the Internet.

Councillor Wynn believed that the White Paper may have a damaging affect on the Council's relationships with local schools. He felt that the collective and collaborative approach that had been nurtured amongst Derby's schools could also be disrupted.

Tony Walsh commented that there was a lack of support for teachers in the White Paper and no mention of proposals to tackle bullying, especially racial bullying were identified.

David Wilkinson spoke with the permission of the Chair. He said he welcomed the Council Cabinet Member's strong position on the White Paper. He supported the opinions and critique of the White Paper as set out on the Internet version.

Councillor Higginbottom asked how the paper would affect school governor's role? Simon Longley stated that governors would have an enhanced role in Foundation schools. Councillor Wynn believed governors role's and responsibilities would increase under the White Papers proposals.

Councillor Khan felt that the White Paper was a hindrance to parents rather than an aid and said he was struggling to see the benefits.

Nasreen Iqbal felt that the White Paper would make parents choice harder in an already complicated system and argued that there was a need for greater advice and information for parents, especially in hard to reach groups to ensure that everyone had access to the best education for their child.

Resolved to:

- 1. ask for further updates to be brought back to the Commission as more detail is released**
- 2. circulate the alternative White Paper published by 'Compass' as background information to the Commission.**

31/05 Development of Phase 2 Children's Centres and Extended Schools

The Commission received a report from the Director of Education on proposals, which had been to Council Cabinet, on the development of the second phase of Children's Centres and the development of Extended Schools.

The Assistant Director - Lifelong Learning and Community outlined the proposals detailed in the report.

The Commission noted that consultation on the proposals would begin in the New Year and that a final submission would be submitted to the Council Cabinet in March.

Councillor Higginbottom queried whether there was an opportunity through the consultation process to influence the location of the centres. She was concerned that the Reigate School in Mackworth may not be the best site as it was a long way from the children living in a deprived area that needed the services most.

The Assistant Director - Lifelong Learning and Community assured Councillor Higginbottom that there would be a spread of facilities and provision across the City and that the services would be configured to meet the needs of local communities.

David Wilkinson spoke on this item with the permission of the chair. He was concerned that staff would be required to work long hours in unsuitable buildings. He asked that staffs' contracts be negotiated centrally with the employer.

Councillor Wynn reported that staffs' contracts would comply with the European Directive on working hours. He assured the Commission that health and safety issues would be given priority when buildings were being assessed for their suitability as a Children's Centre. The Assistant Director - Lifelong Learning and Community reported that there was insufficient funding to build new facilities as had been available for Phase 1.

Councillor Higginbottom asked what support schools would be given to implement the Extended Schools Programme? The Assistant Director - Lifelong Learning and Community reported that a team of officers had been developed to control both the strategic development of the scheme and the implementation of the scheme in schools across the City. A development officer would be responsible for each area and would ensure that schools developed their programmes together to try to reduce competition between schools and achieve an equally effective service across the City.

Dr Devendra asked how much work had been done to establish the demand for the proposed services? The Assistant Director - Lifelong Learning and Community said that officers were working on this and reported that they would later have to officially audit the demand in 2007.

Reference was made to this being the last Commission meeting at which Ms Lesley Whitney Assistant Director - Lifelong Learning and Community would be present. Tributes were paid to her valued contribution to the promotion of learning within the City of Derby.

Resolved to:

- 1. note the report**

- 2. thank the Assistant Director - Lifelong Learning and Community for her work with Derby City Council and to wish her well in her future career.**

32/05 Forward Plan

There were no items.

33/05 Call-In

There were no items.

34/05 Responses of the Council Cabinet to any reports of the Commission

There were no items.

MINUTES END