



# Buckinghamshire County Council

## Minutes

## SCHOOL ORGANISATION COMMITTEE

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### AGENDA ITEM: 3

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SCHOOL ORGANISATION COMMITTEE HELD ON 16 JANUARY 2002, IN SEMINAR ROOM 1, GREEN PARK, ASTON CLINTON, COMMENCING AT 2.30 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 4.45 PM**

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

#### **Schools Group**

Mr R Butcher, Mr D Richardson, Ms C Hinds, Mrs P McNeish, and Mrs J Wainwright.

#### **Buckinghamshire County Council**

Mr B Allen, Mrs M A M Aston, Mrs M Baldwin, Mrs M P Clayton, and Ms C Martens.

#### **Oxford Diocesan Board of Education**

Mr J A Loarridge OBE  
Mrs E Cracknell  
Mr D Sullivan

#### **Northampton RC Schools Commission**

Mrs M Bull

#### **Learning and Skills Council**

Ms S Jones

## **Officers Present**

Mr D Ayres – Head of School Organisation  
Mr P Scott – Head of Pupils, Students and Families  
Mr L Brazier – Education Officer (Special Needs)  
Ms C Gray - Committee Administrator  
Mr P Holmes – Education Officer (Capital Programme)  
Mr R Popat – Senior Solicitor Education

Mr Butcher, Mr Richardson and Ms Jones were welcomed to their first meeting.

## **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP**

Mrs E M Lay, Mr B O'Bryne and Mr P Niekirk

## **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Mrs Clare Martens declared an interest in item 5(ii) as a Governor of Kings Wood Junior School.

### **1 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2001, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed subject to noting the omission of the appointment of Mrs M A M Aston as Vice Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

### **2 POST 16 PROVISION – LOCAL LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL**

The Committee received an oral presentation from the Director of External Affairs of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Susan Jones. The main points of her presentation were noted as follows:-

- The LSC was committed to partnership working.
- The LSC was responsible for planning and funding post-16 education, including Further Education and Adult and Community Learning, but not higher education.
- A Green Paper was expected at the end of January dealing with a number of issues in relation to 14-19 education.
- The LSC has guaranteed that 6<sup>th</sup> forms would be funded at or above the level previously funded by the LEA (the real terms guarantee) provided that their numbers did not drop.
- The LSC intended to keep a close liaison with schools and may set up local school forums.
- School 6<sup>th</sup> forms would be subject to the inspection process driven by OFSTED. The lead responsibility for school improvement would rest with the LEA not the LSC. 6<sup>th</sup> forms with identified weaknesses would be re-

inspected within a 2 year period. If the 6<sup>th</sup> form had not improved after the second inspection then the LSC had the right to take the lead and work with the school and the LEA. If at the end of this process the 6<sup>th</sup> form was still not satisfactory then there was the option of closing the 6<sup>th</sup> form or taking further action. The LSC would consult with the LEA and the SOC on the action they wished to take forward. If no local agreement could be achieved then the decision could be referred to the School Adjudicator. However, if there were simply a difference of views, the option promoted by the LSC would usually go forward. Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire LSC did not expect this situation to arise and emphasised the importance of working together.

During discussion the following points were noted:-

- The Committee expressed reservations regarding the fact that proposals for action would rest with the LSC. They agreed that a letter should be written to the Minister expressing their concerns as they felt that this procedure worked against local autonomy which was at odds with partnership working. The letter should ask the Minister to reconsider the proposal where the LSC had preference over the local authority and that the legal responsibility of this Committee should be recognised. The letter would be drafted by the Head of School Organisation and a representative from the Diocese and would be circulated to each Group for their approval.
- A Member expressed concern that there was no representation from Buckinghamshire County Council on the Board of the LSC, particularly in view of the local selective system which needed to be addressed separately. The national formula for funding would be worked out on averages, which could disadvantage grammar schools.
- It was agreed that Ms Jones would write a letter to the Cabinet Member for Schools, Mrs Clayton regarding funding issues as there was a concern that schools may not be properly funded in the long term.
- The LSC were highly supportive of sustaining provision for 6<sup>th</sup> forms, including special schools, and supporting diversity.
- The LSC was currently concentrating mainly on ensuring that 6<sup>th</sup> forms received the correct funding and that no schools were disadvantaged in respect of 6<sup>th</sup> form funding. Once this had been put in place then the LSC would begin to look at other procedures and activities.

Ms Jones was thanked for her presentation and contribution to the Committee.

### **3 DETERMINATION OF STATUTORY NOTICES**

#### **Standard Numbers**

The Committee received and noted the report from the Strategic Manager for Schools on a number of statutory proposals relating to changes in standard

numbers for schools, which were being consulted upon, and for which the statutory objection period had now finished.

During discussion the following points were made:-

### **Winslow CE Combined**

The Head of School Organisation brought to the attention of members that there were three Church Schools in the area, where pupils could continue at the School until Key Stage 2 and parents may therefore seek transfer to Winslow School at Year 4 or even Year 5. However, this year the cohort was exceptionally large which could mean that an additional fourth group would need to be formed which had resource implications. This year the Council has provided extra funding, however, in the future, the position remained unclear.

A Member expressed concern about this issue and suggested that this decision be deferred so that there was more time to look at the options and that further clarification be sought from the DfES for an authoritative statement on the number of entry points established for schools. He commented that this proposal could cause difficulties for two local schools which had not been consulted. It was agreed that the Committee would write to the two schools. In answer to a question with regard to the point of entry, it was noted that in the case of aided schools, the Governing Body had responsibility for publishing statutory notices relating to a change in age range. A Member queried whether there should be wider school consultation. It was agreed that this decision should be looked at the next meeting of the Committee.

### **Resolved**

**That approval be given to the Statutory Notices relating to changes in standard numbers at the following schools:-**

**Jordans Infant**

**Chesham Bois CE Combined**

**St Peters CE Combined, Burnham**

### **Kings Wood Amalgamation**

This item was withdrawn. It was noted that the matter would be passed to the Cabinet Member for Schools for determination.

The report was noted.

### **Marlow CE Infant – Change In Category**

The Head of School Organisation reported on statutory proposals in relation to the change in category of Marlow CE Infant School from Controlled to Aided Status. During discussion the Committee agreed that it would be helpful to have some background information on Voluntary Aided Schools and the advantages for children. It was agreed that this should be an item on the next agenda and Mr Sullivan, Director of Education of the Diocese should talk to the meeting.

**Resolved**

**That the Statutory Notice be agreed.**

**4 UPDATE ON NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS**

The Committee received and noted the report of the Strategic Manager for Schools on the National Consultation on Admission Arrangements which occurred in the Autumn Term 2001. The Government's objectives were about ensuring that admission arrangements meet parents preferences for the school of their choice to the maximum extent possible and work to the benefit of local children and parents.

The report was discussed and noted.

**5 ANNUAL CONSULTATION ON BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LEA ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2003**

The Committee received the report of the Strategic Manager for Schools of the initial responses to the first phase on the LEA consultation on the Review of Secondary School Catchment Areas and other aspects of the admission arrangements where there could be changes which would take place for September 2003.

The report was discussed and noted.

**6 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 17 April 2002

**7 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**Resolved**

**That the press and public be excluded from the meeting by virtue of paragraph 9 of part 1 of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1985 because it contains information about any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the authority in the course of negotiations for a contract for the acquisition or disposal of property or the supply of goods or services.**

**8 SUMMARY OF CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

**Item 10 - Review of SEN provision in Buckinghamshire- Update**