



# 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 WEDNESDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2002, IN SEMINAR ROOM 1, GREEN PARK CENTRE, ASTON CLINTON, COMMENCING AT 2.00PM AND CONCLUDING AT 5.40PM**

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

##### **Schools Group**

Mrs C Bevins, Mr C Brownlee, Mr R Butcher, Mrs C Hinds, Mrs P McNeish, Mr D Richardson, Mrs J Wainwright

##### **Buckinghamshire County Council**

Mr B Allen, Mrs M A M Aston, Mrs P Bacon, Mrs M Baldwin, Mrs M Clayton, Mrs E Lay, Mrs C Martens

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

Mr J Loarridge  
Mr D Sullivan

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

Mr B O'Byrne  
Mrs F Image

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

Mrs M Wilkes

## **Officers Present**

Mr D Ayres – Head of School Organisation  
Miss M Bright – Legal and Administration Trainee  
Ms J Hall – Democratic Services Officer  
Mr P Holmes – Education Officer (Capital Programme)  
Mr R Popat – Senior Solicitor Education  
Miss M Bright – Legal and Administration Trainee

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

Apologies were received from Lesley Stevens.

### **1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

#### **RESOLVED**

**That Mr J Loarridge be elected as Chairman for the ensuing year.**

## **MR LOARRIDGE IN THE CHAIR**

### **2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

**That Mrs M A M Aston be appointed Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.**

### **3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest

### **4 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the held on 3 July 2002, were confirmed subject to Mrs M Clayton being included in the apologies for absence but she was actually in attendance at this meeting.

### **5 MATTERS ARISING**

It was noted that a reply had been received from the DfES on the relevant guidance on changing from voluntary controlled to voluntary aided ( a copy of which was circulated at the meeting).

Regarding item 9 of the minutes it was agreed that the Chairman write again to Mrs Hodge as no reply had still been received.

### **6 POST 16 PROVISION – LOCAL LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL (STANDING ITEM)**

The Chairman welcomed Marion Wilkes of the Learning Skills Council who had replaced the former LSC representative.

Mrs Wilkes outlined the work of the LSC explaining the work surrounding the 14-19 Agenda with schools and colleges and their links with the Education Business Partnership and Connexions. It was noted that three schools/colleges in Buckinghamshire were working specifically on the Increased Flexibility 14-16 Years projects with Amersham and Wycombe College.

Members received information packs which included a copy of the Local Strategic Plan 2002-05, Executive Summary for Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, information on 6<sup>th</sup> Form funding and a list of frequently asked questions.

Mrs Wilkes explained the changes to the funding formula, noting that it formed part of the whole budget for a school, aiming not to disadvantage any 6<sup>th</sup> Form. She reported that twenty four 'sixth' forms were attracting more funding than from the former methodology. During discussion members were concerned that Special School Sixth Forms could be disadvantaged as often they were very small and offered pupils a different syllabus according to their specific needs and not always vocational, and nothing in the targets related to them. In reply Mrs Wilkes agreed to look into this further and also into which schools received funding and report back via the Chairman. Members sought clarification on pupil number projections and year on year adjustment mechanisms in the case of over/under projection.

A Member commented that the Local Strategic Plan, which covered three years, did not make reference to, or reflect the School Organisation Committee (SOC). Members stated that the Committee was strategic and therefore decisions it made would affect the LSC and likewise, decisions made by the LSC regarding sixth forms would affect the LEA and therefore consultation and discussions should take place with SOC. SOC needed to be identified and recognised as partners with rights. Members hoped that when the LSC were determining the viability of sixth forms that OFSTED reports were considered as they play a major role in judging schools on added value. In reply, Mrs Wilkes suggested that the Committee suggest how they would like to receive information.

Mrs Wilkes outlined a timetable for the implementation of funding and the determination of figures for the academic year 2003/04 and the consultation that would take place. A member referred to funding levels based on projected performance and when decisions would take place based on this information and which results the LSC would rely on. In reply, Mrs Wilkes explained that this was not her area of speciality and would seek the information for members. She reported that a new team had been established at the LSC with Andy Croft specifically working with sixth form funding. It was noted that Mr Croft was in the process of establishing contact with every school with a sixth form. A member suggested that a letter be sent to schools to help prioritise visits. A member reflected on the funding mechanisms and if these fairly funded a fully selective system as in Buckinghamshire which is very different to the rest of the Country. In reply the view that if figures were based on the national average, then Buckinghamshire could be disadvantaged was acknowledged.

The Committee thanked Mrs Wilkes for her report.

## **7 SEN UPDATE (STANDING ITEM)**

As no representative from Special Educational Services was available to attend the item was deferred. Members regretted the absence of LEA SEN representatives. Mrs Aston agreed to look into this to ensure appropriate attendance in future.

## **8 DETERMINATION OF THE SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLAN 2002-2007**

Members received an updated copy of the appendices to the School Organisation Plan. Paul Holmes highlighted changes made to the draft plan, including data changes, emphasising that figures were still based on MOE and when the transition to 'Net Capacity' took place, surplus capacity would reduce. It was reported that the LEA were still waiting for the revised National Guidance on Admissions which would impact on the way the School Organisation Committee worked. Information was still outstanding from the LSC on supply and demand of places post 16. The MoE figures on pages 22 and 23 of the plan were now up to date.

During discussion a member commented that the Plan was more of a "map" and did not indicate how the LEA planned to achieve the targets and monitor them on a termly and annual basis with short, medium and long term objectives. It was also noted that no report had been received on the performance achieved from previous plans.

Members discussed and noted the following:

- The need for a strategy to move away from the use of temporary classrooms and planning for the future need of schools.
- It was noted that there was a strategy with a £12m spend over 5-6 years and explained how and which schools were expected to have an increase in numbers.
- The Audit Commission's document on reducing statements
- Members requested a report back on the actions stated in point 5.3 of the plan
- A member requested updated information on the transfer of Quarrendon School.
- MOE was likely be replaced by the 'Net Capacity' formula in 2003/04. It was noted that this was a better way of assessing the capacity of a school and took out non-teaching areas from the capacity figures. The BB82 guidelines were being revised and would be re-issued in 2003.
- It was noted that the next plan would use net capacity. Members, however, requested that the next plan is worked in both methods to allow comparability with achievements highlighted.

## **9 DETERMINATION OF STATUTORY NOTICES**

### **Curzon CE Combined School – Change of Category**

The Committee received and noted the report from the Strategic Manager for Schools/Chief Education Officer on the Statutory Notice for Curzon CE Combined School for the change of category to Aided Status.

After discussion, an adjournment was made so that each Group could discuss how they would vote on the proposal.

Following the meeting each Group agreed to put forward the reasons for their vote in a letter to the Chairman which is attached as an Appendix to these minutes.

**The following Groups were in favour of the change in category to Aided Status:-**

**Oxford Diocesan Board of Education  
Northampton RC Schools Commission**

**The following Groups were against the proposal:-**

**Buckinghamshire County Council  
Schools Group**

**As there was no unanimity the issue could not be resolved. Accordingly, the matter should now be referred to the School Adjudicator.**

**Following the decision on the proposal it was agreed that the four group leaders would let the Chairman have their letters setting out their reasons for voting as they did on the proposal.**

## **10 UPDATE ON NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS: UPDATE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

The Committee received and noted a report of the Strategic Manager, Schools which set out the main changes proposed to the School Admissions Framework and identified issues and implications for the Admissions Authority.

It was noted that the Authority was still awaiting the final regulations and therefore the information was based on the draft regulations which officers did not expect to change greatly.

## **11 HIGHCREST COMMUNITY SCHOOL: UPDATE ON PROGRESS WITH FRESH START INITIATIVE**

The Committee received and noted a report of the Strategic Manager, Schools on the progress with the Fresh Start Initiative at Highcrest Community School.

Members were reminded of the historical events which led to the Authority securing an agreement with the DfES to embark on a Fresh Start programme for the then Hatters Lane Upper School.

Officers reported that since the opening of Highcrest Community School exam results had improved from 14% in 2001 to 28% in 2002. It was also reported that this year the school was oversubscribed and received one appeal. Members welcomed the success recognising the hard work of officers and the dedication of staff. A Member of the Committee reported that she had been a temporary governor following the re-opening and reported that the change in feeling around the school was immense, but emphasised that it was still a school that needed continuous support.

**12 SCHOOL ORGANISATION COMMITTEE: BUDGET 2002/03**

A copy of the School Organisation Committee budget was tabled and noted.

**13 OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman reported that this was the last meeting of the School Organisation Committee that David Ayres would be attending prior to his leaving the Council at the end of the month. He thanked Mr Ayres for the work he had done over the years and together with the Members wished him great happiness for the future.

**14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Members requested the use of name plates at meetings.

**15 DATES OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 22 January 2003

Wednesday 9 April 2003

Wednesday 9 July 2003

Wednesday 10 September 2003

(Please note change from the date previously agreed)

**CHAIRMAN**