



# Buckinghamshire County Council

## Minutes

## SCHOOL ORGANISATION COMMITTEE

---

### AGENDA ITEM: 3

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SCHOOL ORGANISATION COMMITTEE HELD ON 21 APRIL 2004, IN SEMINAR ROOM 1, GREEN PARK TRAINING CENTRE, ASTON CLINTON COMMENCING AT 2.30 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 4.35 PM**

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

##### **Schools Group**

Jenny Wainwright, Doug Richardson, Angela Coneron, Chris Brownlee, Katy Simmons, John Beardsmore

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

Bruce Allen, Margaret Aston (Vice-Chairman), Clare Martens, Betty Lay, Mary Baldwin

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

John Loarridge OBE (Chairman)  
Leslie Stephen  
Roy Davey

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

Barry O'Byrne  
Maggi Bull

##### **Officers Present**

Nick Powley – Head of Policy, Planning and Performance (Schools)  
Len Brazier – Education Officer, Special Education Services  
Paul Holmes – Group Manager, School Organisation  
Rebecca Cooper – Project Manager, Special Education  
Raj Popat – Group Solicitor, Education and Litigation  
Sue Butt – Democratic Services Officer

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

Apologies were received from Marion Clayton (Buckinghamshire County Council), Pam Bacon (Buckinghamshire County Council), Frances Image (Northampton RC Schools Commission) and Marion Wilkes (Learning and Skills Council).

The Committee welcomed John Beardsmore, a new Schools Group member and Roy Davey, new Oxford Diocesan Board of Education member.

The Committee noted the departure of the Clerk, Sue Butt, and Education Officer, Len Brazier, and thanked them both for the support they had given to the Committee.

## **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **3 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2004, copies of which had previously been circulated, were agreed as a correct record subject to the following amendment:

That apologies were received from Katy Simmons and should be include under Minute 3.

### **Minute 6 – Post 16 Provision Local Learning and Skills Council**

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People reported that she had been invited to attend a meeting with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in connection with post-16 funding of pupils with special education needs (SEN) and was hoping for a positive outcome.

### **Minute 7 – SEN Update**

Len Brazier, Education Officer Special Education Services, circulated a written response to the question of the difference of 906 pupils in July 2003 with moderate learning difficulties compared with 814 in November 2003. A copy is appended to the minutes.

### **Minute 9 – Correspondence**

It was confirmed that a response had not yet been received from Oakridge School regarding the offer of a draft scheme to increase specialist capacity. The Committee requested officers to re-contact the school to ascertain whether it is interested in this offer.

### **Minute 10 – Update on Action and Monitoring of School Organisation Plan**

It was reported that a letter went to the Chief Officer and Cabinet Members from the Chairman advocating the need to ring-fence grants secured for school buildings and development. A response to this letter had not yet been received.

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

An update from the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) was circulated to all members for information and presented by Paul Holmes, Group Manager School Organisation, on behalf of Marion Wilkes who had sent her apologies.

The Committee requested further details from the LSC on the following issues:

- i) Confirmation from the LSC that Post-16 funding of pupils with special education needs (SEN) would be pursued
- ii) Information on the added value of the relationship with Connexions and whether more coherent performance measures existed
- iii) Information on LSC funding of the remodelling of the School Workforce Agreement for 6<sup>th</sup> Forum teaching and planning time.

The Committee requested attendance by the LSC representative to the next meeting as a matter of priority. The Chairman agreed to write to the LSC Chief Executive outlining the Committees concerns of non-attendance by the LSC representative and

the importance of LSC presence at each meeting to provide information and answer questions.

## **5 SEN UPDATE**

Len Brazier, Education Officer from Special Education Services, presented a summary of activity in Special Educational Needs to the end of March 2004 including some comparisons relating to the last two years.

It was reported that Janet Sparrow, Acting Head of Special Education Services, was currently reviewing the new SEN Strategy. The New Strategy would also link in OfSTED recommendations and is scheduled to be presented for ratification by Cabinet in the Autumn. Members of the Schools Group requested that consideration should also be given to the old strategy when reviewing and compiling the new strategy.

The Committee noted the success of the recent SEN workshop day that was attended by over 100 people connected with special education including some members of the Committee. The main theme that came out of the day was funding and the need to reach a balance of inclusion by bringing about significant cultural change.

Discussion took place on the content and style of the SEN Monthly Update Report. Members of the Schools Group requested further details on long term forecasts and overall trends in data to enable monitoring of implications and progress.

It was reported that Ron Westwood, Headteacher at Kynaston School, had been seconded to cover Len Brazier's post until the end of the Summer term. In addition, two new officers had been appointed to bring the team back to full complement.

The Committee noted that the DfES had sent guidelines on resource implications for social inclusion and that officers acknowledged this was a big issue that the LEA would need to tackle.

A list of SEN acronyms was circulated for information. A copy is attached to the minutes.

## **6 AYLESBURY VALE PRIMARY COMPLEX NEEDS SCHOOL**

The Committee received and noted a report from Rebecca Cooper, Project Manager, on the development of special school provision in Aylesbury Vale and the possible opening of a Primary Complex school.

It was reported that statutory notices, proposing the re-organisation of Aylesbury Vale primary provision and the build of a complex day school for primary aged pupils had been signed by Cabinet members and published on 19 April 2004.

The Committee noted that for the project to meet its timelines and receive the large source of funding from the DfES that the July meeting would need to be rescheduled to a later date.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Committee consider delaying its July meeting to as close to 21 July 2004 as possible.**

### **RESOLVED**

**That the July meeting take place on Wednesday 21 July 2004 at 2.30pm at Green Park Training Centre, Acton Clinton.**

The issue of case law regarding the LEA duty to provide non-stressful transport and whether these proposals would put the LEA in breach of this duty was raised. The Group Solicitor for Education confirmed that when the duty to provide transport was triggered this was to the nearest appropriate school or the school named in the statement of SEN. The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People was confident that if the proposals were approved then the travelling distance for most children would be less.

Discussion took place on the delay of the provision of residential respite. Officers confirmed that planning applications would include a block for residential respite so that approval was in place, but that financial constraints prevented the building of respite accommodation at the outset of the project. Members of the Committee expressed concern that respite would not be included in the initial build of the new school and requested officers to consult with relevant health representatives on the impact this delay in provision of respite would have on the overall proposals and needs of parents. The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People was in agreement and hoped that funds could be found to provide on-site respite care at the outset of the build.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People commended the Project Manager for pulling together all the proposals and hoped that in the future it could be replicated in the south of the county.

## **7 THE REMOVAL OF TEMPORARY CLASSROOMS IN THE 2003-04 FINANCIAL YEAR**

Paul Holmes, Group Manager School Organisation, presented a report on the removal of temporary classrooms in the financial year 2003-04.

The Committee requested for future reports the overall number of temporary classrooms in the county against target figures.

## **8 SEED CHALLENGE FUNDING FOR 2004-05**

Paul Holmes, Group Manager School Organisation, presented a report on the Seed Challenge fund for 2004.

The Committee noted that all schools had now been written to informing if their bids had or had not been successful. Schools that had very good bids that did not quite meet Seed Challenge funding had been asked to contact the LEA after the Easter holiday to ascertain if their bid could be progressed via other means.

## **9 CAPITAL PROJECTS IN SCHOOLS IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

The Committee received and noted the report from Paul Holmes, Group Manager School Organisation, on capital projects in schools in the county.

Members of the Committee requested further details on how the capital projects were progressing against targets and monitoring information on actual implementation against projected completion. The Committee noted that all planned completion dates were accurate and fair and would not change unless complications with projects arose.

It was reported that the LEA was not eligible to receive Building Schools Future (BSF) funding as schools in the county rarely met the four criteria. An expression of interest had been made and Cressex Community School was at the top of the list to receive the funding if eligibility criteria were met.

Following a request from members of the Schools Group, it was agreed that the criteria for determining priorities in the capital programme for 2005-06 would be brought to a future meeting for consideration.

#### **10a) CORRESPONDENCE (STANDING ITEM)**

Members of the Committee received and noted the letter from Derrick Fiske, Headteacher at Bedgrove Junior School, in connection with the schools application for Foundation Status and the meeting of 24 September 2004.

The Chairman agreed to write on behalf of the Committee to Derrick Fiske acknowledging receipt of the letter and noting the points that were raised.

#### **10b) HOLMER GREEN UPPER SCHOOL**

Officers reported that they had received an application from Holmer Green Upper School requesting a large increase in admission number for one year from 150 to 180. The Committee were asked to support the LEA's proposal for a long term increase of six to 156 admission number where officers were concerned that an increase of 30 was to meet short term budget pressures which would cause an admission numbers conflict with neighbouring schools.

Members of the Committee agreed with officers concerns and endorsed the proposal for a long term admission number increase of six.

#### **11 DETERMINATION OF STATUTORY NOTICE FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED UNIT AT SIR WILLIAM RAMSAY SCHOOL**

The Committee were asked to approve the following Statutory Notice:

##### **RECOMMENDATION**

**The Committee is asked to determine the statutory notice published on 18 November 2003 for a 10 place Hearing Impaired Unit at Sir William Ramsay from September 2004.**

The Committee noted that no objections had been received and therefore resolved that:

##### **RESOLVED**

**That approval be given to the Statutory Notice for a 10 place Hearing Impaired Unit at Sir William Ramsay School from September 2004.**

Clarification was sought on whether the county had a Hearing Impaired Unit or facilities for children with hearing impairment at grammar schools. Officers agreed to look into and confirm what facilities were in place at grammar schools and feedback to the Committee at its next meeting.

## **12 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

- Wednesday 21 July 2004, 2.30pm, Seminar Room 1, Green Park Training Centre (previously 7 July)
- Wednesday 29 September 2004, 2.30pm, Seminar Room 1, Green Park Training Centre

**CHAIRMAN**