

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

Minutes of the meeting held at 4.00 pm on 20 December 2010

Present:

Ernest Noad, Executive Portfolio Holder

Also Present:

Councillor Brian Humphrys, Executive Assistant
Councillor Robert Evans, CYP PDS Committee Chairman
Councillor John Getgood, Father Owen Higgs,
Councillor Mrs Anne Manning and Mrs Joan McConnell

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence for the cancelled 5.30pm PDS Committee meeting had been received from Alison Regester.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Father Owen Higgs declared a personal interest as Chairman of Governors of St Georges Primary School.

Councillor Anne Manning declared a personal interest as Chairman of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Supporting Committee.

3 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING

No questions had been received.

4 SCHOOLS' BUDGET 2011/12 TO 2013/14

This item was deferred until January 2011.

5 PROPOSALS FOR RESTRUCTURING WITHIN LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT SERVICES

The Portfolio Holder was due to consider a report on the restructuring of Learning and Achievement Services on the Part 2 agenda. Before considering the report in detail in Part 2, the Portfolio Holder received representations about the proposals in public from the Staff Side Secretary, Glenn Kelly, on behalf of staff in Learning and Achievement Services.

Mr Kelly urged councillors to protect front-line services, and emphasised that young people were facing an increasingly bleak future with these proposals, the withdrawal of Education Maintenance Allowance and the increases in university tuition fees. He felt that this was the end of the Youth Service as it had been constituted since the 1960s, that young people would lose their access to safe,

secure environments, and that the church and voluntary sector could not be expected to fill the gaps in provision. For the first time, he argued, the hope of every generation that its children would have better lives than before would not be met. He urged Councillors to re-consider the proposals, and make use of the Council's reserves to support the service. The Portfolio Holder responded that although he would take Mr Kelly's comments into account, he did not consider that any alternative savings had been suggested, and he did not feel that using the Council's reserves would be sustainable. Mr Kelly stated that money did exist at a national level to fund these services, and he urged Councillors to demand money from the government to fund services - if they did, staff would fully support them.

The Director of Children and Young People Services tabled her response to the points raised by staff during the consultation and the Portfolio Holder invited her to explain the drivers behind the proposals. She summarised the drivers for the restructuring which included: the in-year reduction in government grant to Bromley of £1.6m, of which £1.4m fell on the Children and Young People portfolio; the heavy reliance of her department on grants from government, which in real terms constituted 44% grant-funded services; and the fixed term nature of national initiatives, such as the National Strategies to support primary and secondary school improvement, which were due to end in March 2011. As so many factors which affected funding streams were beyond the control of the Council, she felt that it was important to take a proactive approach and re-structure Learning and Achievement Services to ensure that the Council could retain an appropriate level of core service provision to fulfil statutory duties within future funding levels.

The Assistant Director, Learning and Achievement, added that the policy direction regarding school improvement had been made clear in previous and current government policy, and that the funding streams relating to school improvement services were moving to the schools as part of Dedicated School Grant announcements. Staff had been kept informed throughout the consultation process, and there had been numerous meetings with individuals, teams and groups. Many of the concerns which had been raised by staff and their Staff Associations had related to human resources issues, and these were summarised in the Director's response.

The Portfolio Holder invited other Members present to comment. Councillor John Getgood stated that the proposals were not in the best interests of young people – as a school governor he had seen the difference that the Local Authority's school improvement support services had made. He felt that use of reserves should be considered to support services for young people while the proposals were re-considered. Councillor Robert Evans countered that in the national context it was essential to examine all services and ensure that the remaining service was secure.

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that he would take the statement of Mr Kelly and all the other views and comments made into account in making his decision.

6 PROPOSED ADMISSIONS CONSULTATION 2011/12
Report DCYP10147

This report was due to be subject to pre-decision scrutiny at a PDS Committee meeting starting at 5.30pm. The PDS Committee meeting had been cancelled due to the severe weather conditions, so the Portfolio Holder agreed to consider the report as a matter of urgency so that the formal consultation could take place within the statutory timescale.

The Portfolio Holder considered a report providing the results of the annual consultation with the Governing bodies of Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools on the proposed Local Authority Admissions policy for 2012/13. Recommendations for changes and clarification of the policy for 2012/13 were also outlined – the main change proposed was that the primary schools add over-subscription criteria for children with social and medical needs. This had been supported by the Local Admissions Forum at its meeting on 8th October 2010. The report also gave details of the proposed schemes to co-ordinate admissions to Bromley primary and secondary schools for September 2012.

Members asked about the impact of Academy status on admissions policy; the Council still had a duty to provide admissions coordination, but the picture was still unclear and full details would not be published by the government until February 2011.

RESOLVED that the amended admissions policy, as set out in the report, be approved for formal consultation as required by legislation.

7 CATERING CONTRACT ARRANGEMENTS: EDUCATION
DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
Report DCYP10148

This report was due to be subject to pre-decision scrutiny at a PDS Committee meeting starting at 5.30pm. The PDS Committee meeting had been cancelled due to the severe weather conditions, so the Portfolio Holder agreed to consider the report as a matter of urgency so that the tendering process was not delayed.

The contractual arrangements for the provision of Catering Services at the Education Development Centre were due to terminate in April 2011. The Portfolio Holder received a report setting out the proposals and timetable for the renewal of the catering provision to ensure continuity of service. The proposed contract offered the opportunity to ensure that the catering available at the centre matched the business profile.

It was suggested that the current Civic Centre catering provider should be included in the tendering arrangements to achieve any benefits from links between the two sites. The proposed contract would be for three years, and it was anticipated that this would include annual break clauses.

RESOLVED that the proposals for the future catering arrangements at the Education Development Centre be endorsed.

8 MEMBERSHIP OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES
Report DCYP10149

This report was due to be subject to pre-decision scrutiny at a PDS Committee meeting starting at 5.30pm. The PDS Committee meeting had been cancelled due to the severe weather conditions, so the Portfolio Holder agreed to consider the report as a matter of urgency so that the appointments were not delayed.

The Portfolio Holder considered a report outlining Local Authority Governor appointments to two schools in the Borough.

RESOLVED that the following LA Governor appointments be approved, subject to CRB checks:

Oaklands Primary School - Rev Jeanette McLaren

St George's, Bickley, CE Primary School - Cllr Colin Smith

9 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (VARIATION) ORDER 2006, AND THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

RESOLVED that the Press and public be excluded during consideration of the items of business listed below as it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that if members of the Press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.

10 RESTRUCTURING: LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT SERVICE
Report DCYP10165

The Portfolio Holder considered a Part 2 report, submitted by the Director of Children and Young People Services, and approved proposals for a significant restructuring within Learning and Achievement Division as reported to the Executive at its meeting on 8th December 2010 (DCYP10161).

11 COOPERS TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE REQUEST FOR FUNDING TO SUPPORT COSTS IN RESPECT OF REDUNDANCIES ARISING FROM A RESTRUCTURING

The Portfolio Holder considered the report and approved a request to support the cost of redundancies.

12 PROPOSED RESTRUCTURE OF BROMLEY CHILDREN AND FAMILY PROJECT

The Portfolio Holder considered a report outlining proposals for restructuring the Bromley Children and Family Services and approved the recommendations.

The Meeting ended at 5.38 pm

Chairman