

**PRESENT**

Councillors: P Edgar (Chairman), B Collin, B D Dash, M Kemp-Gee, R J Kimber, Mrs J Porter

Co-opted: D Walker, D White, D Mewes

**76. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from F Cowper, K Evans, R McIntosh

**77. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful that, where they believed they had a personal or personal prejudicial interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting, they should, normally at the time of the debate, declare their interest and, having regard to the circumstances described in paragraphs 9, 10, 1, and 12 of the County Council's Code of Conduct, consider whether to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with paragraph 12 of the Code.

With relation to items on the agenda, Councillor Edgar declared a personal non-prejudicial interest as a life member of the National Association of Headteachers.

**78. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**79. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Chairman informed Members that he had visited the new £8 million pound Endeavour Primary School in Andover and was impressed with the quality of the design and the build. Other members of the Panel commented on similar excellent constructions at Abbots Ann CE and Wellstead Primary Schools.

The Chairman reported on Siskin Junior School in Gosport which faced many challenges in a socially deprived area. This School was being left with the Local Authority and would not become an academy and the Head teacher was making progress. He expected that the School would receive some of the government's Troubled Families Initiative money.

The Deputy Director of Children's Services, John Clarke, commented that the government had identified 1590 'troubled families' in Hampshire, which he felt was a very rough estimate. It was explained that the funding model for this initiative would provide about £4,000 per family, with some payment by results, such as school attendance and a decrease in crime. It was felt that

the challenge would be to have decisive intervention with all agencies working together.

Members were informed that planning permission had been granted for the relocation of the Quayside Education Centre to the Woodcot Primary School site, despite a considerable amount of local protest, which he felt was due partly to a lack of understanding.

The Chairman explained to members that the Capital Maintenance Funding for academies would come from the Young People's Learning Agency, for which they would submit a bid, and that those academies which had bought services from the Local Authority had requested help to submit these bids. The Panel agreed that it was heartening that academies were buying in to Local Authority services. It was commented that there was a disproportion in the allocation of funding between the different types of schools with the maintained schools losing out heavily to the free schools and academies.

Some members asked that there should be close monitoring of children's centres to ensure the continued delivery of services.

Finally, the Chairman drew Members' attention to a letter received from the Department for Education about a new national formula for revenue funding for schools, which would aim to allocate funding on a fair and transparent basis and target pupils in most need. It was noted that academies and maintained schools would both continue to be funded using the Local Authority formula.

#### 80. **DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations made.

#### 81. **ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM**

The Panel considered the report of the Director of Children's Services on the changes to the new Ofsted inspection framework for schools and the implications for Children's Services. (Item 6 in the Minute Book).

The County Manager for Educational Improvement began by thanking Pam Simpson for her work on this report. She introduced her report by explaining that a new and substantially different Ofsted inspection framework had come into force in January 2012 and that the newly appointed Chief Inspector was already proposing further changes which would provide more rigour (2.5 in the report). The intention of the new framework was to focus more heavily on the quality of teaching and leadership.

Members were taken through the report with key elements being highlighted; these included the core purpose of schools of teaching and learning, the three essential functions of Ofsted (4.2), the four key areas which would be judged under the new framework (4.5) and the government's view of the role of Local Authorities (8.7). Attention was drawn to sections 5 and 6 in the report which explained the implications of the changes and the increased focus on teaching and learning, which was generally felt to be a good move. Under the criteria for judging leadership and management a key determining factor would be how effective they are at improving teaching and learning. It was noted that

'outstanding' schools where the teaching was only classed as good would now be inspected.

Members were informed that the continuing role of the Local Authority as the champion of children and their parents was the government's view, despite the difficulties this presented for the Local Authority with the removal of their powers of intervention in academies. The need to retain and enhance the school improvement service in the light of the changes was stressed. It was noted that Ofsted's 'Parent View' website initiative, where parents/carers can complete a questionnaire about their child's school, had suffered some teething problems.

She completed her report by explaining that the English education system had experienced continual improvement over the last ten years, due largely to its accountability to Ofsted as an independent inspection service and the Local Authorities' ability to intervene in and support schools, and that there was some anxiety about what would happen if both of these were removed.

Members discussed the issues raised in the report. There was a consensus that the quality of the English education system and its teachers were continually undervalued. Concerns were raised about how would the Local Authority be able to intervene in academies that were felt to be in need of improvement and that academies would not have to employ qualified teachers. In answering these concerns the Deputy Director stressed that the Local Authority would continue to monitor the results of the academies and question their governors about measures for improvements as part of their role as champions of children and their parents. He also felt that academies would have to employ qualified teachers. Members were informed that the Diocesan Board can refuse to allow their schools to become an academy and that they were encouraging their academies to have a Local Authority governor and to share all their data as previously.

The potential dangers inherent in the use of data without understanding the factors underlying the figures was also raised. Members were informed that there had been an increase in the number of senior managers and teachers absent due to stress and the numbers taking early retirement, and this was unlikely to improve with the more rigorous inspection criteria.

Members expressed concern about the effect that the proposed removal of the 'satisfactory' inspection category would have on the number of schools being served with Notices to Improve. It was explained that with every change in the Ofsted framework there had been 'spikes' in the number of schools 'failing' until the new criteria became embedded, but that it was expected to occur to a greater degree this time as there were more fundamental changes in the new framework.

The Chairman summed up the discussion saying that there was a general feeling that the new framework was too structured and prescriptive and that one size would not fit all as every child, teacher and school was different.

The Panel discussed and agreed an addition to the report's recommendation put forward by Councillor Kemp-Gee and seconded by the Vice-chairman, Councillor Kimber,

**RESOLVED:**

- That the Panel noted the report and recognised the need to harness, encourage and congratulate the head teachers, staff and governors in Hampshire Schools who are leading the year on year improvements overall. It further advises the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services to consider urging the Secretary of State to ensure that the changes to the Ofsted framework should provide for light touch and supportive regulation.

**82. PROGRESS OF SCHOOLS IN WESTERN HAMPSHIRE CAUSING CONCERN**

The Panel considered the report of the Director of Children's Services identifying the schools in Western Hampshire that were causing concern (Item 7 in the Minute Book).

**RESOLVED:**

- To note the schools identified in the report .

**83. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:**

That in relation to the following item the press and public be excluded from the meeting 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 public were present during that item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and further that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information for the reasons set out in the report.

**84. PROGRESS OF SCHOOLS IN WESTERN HAMPSHIRE CAUSING CONCERN**

The Panel considered the exempt appendix of the Director of Children's Services on schools in Western Hampshire causing concern (Item 9 in the Minute Book).

Members discussed in detail issues relating to those schools.

[SUMMARY OF AN EXEMPT MINUTE]