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Scrutiny Panel A

Educational Attainment for Children with Special Needs Inquiry

Thursday, 4th November, 2010
at 6.00 pm

PLEASE NOTE TIME OF MEETING
Committee Room 1 – Civic Centre

This meeting is open to the public

Members

Councillor Fitzgerald (Chair)
Councillor Kolker (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Mrs Damani
Councillor Morrell
Councillor Odgers
Councillor Turner
Councillor Willacy

Contacts

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PUBLIC INFORMATION

Role of Scrutiny Panel A

The Panel has responsibility for:-

- providing an independent assurance to the Standards and Governance Committee on the adequacy of the risk management framework and the internal control and reporting environment including (but not limited to) the reliability of the financial reporting process and the statement of internal control;
- satisfying and providing assurance to the Standards and Governance Committee that appropriate action is being taken on risk and internal control related issues identified by the internal and external auditors and other review and inspection bodies; and
- specifically, the oversight of, and provision of assurance to the Standards and Governance Committee on, the following functions:-
 - ensuring that Council assets are safeguarded;
 - maintaining proper accounting records;
 - ensuring the independence, objectivity and effectiveness of internal and external audit;
 - the arrangements made for co-operation between internal and external audit and other review bodies;
 - considering the reports of internal and external audit and other review and inspection bodies;
 - the scope and effectiveness of the internal control systems established by management to identify, assess, manage and monitor financial and non-financial risks (including measures to protect against, detect and respond to fraud).

Southampton City Council's Six Priorities

- Providing good value, high quality services
- Getting the City working
- Investing in education and training
- Keeping people safe
- Keeping the City clean and green
- Looking after people

Public Representations

At the discretion of the Chair, members of the public may address the meeting about any report on the agenda for the meeting in which they have a relevant interest.

Smoking policy – the Council operates a no-smoking policy in all civic buildings.

Mobile Telephones – please turn off your mobile telephone whilst in the meeting.

Fire Procedure – in the event of a fire or other emergency a continuous alarm will sound and you will be advised by Council officers what action to take.

Access – access is available for the disabled. Please contact the Democratic Support Officer who will help to make any necessary arrangements.

Dates of Meetings: Municipal Year

2010	2011
3 June	19 January
8 July	3 February
2 September	3 March
7 October	7 April
4 November	

CONDUCT OF MEETING

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference of the Audit Committee are contained in Article 8 and Part 3 (Schedule 2) of the Council's Constitution.

Business to be discussed

Only those items listed on the attached agenda may be considered at this meeting.

Rules of Procedure

The meeting is governed by the Council Procedure Rules as set out in Part 4 of the Constitution.

Quorum

The minimum number of appointed Members required to be in attendance to hold the meeting is 3.

Disclosure of Interests

Members are required to disclose, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, **both** the existence **and** nature of any "personal" or "prejudicial" interests they may have in relation to matters for consideration on this Agenda.

Personal Interests

A Member must regard himself or herself as having a personal interest in any matter

- (i) if the matter relates to an interest in the Member's register of interests; or
- (ii) if a decision upon a matter might reasonably be regarded as affecting to a greater extent than other Council Tax payers, ratepayers and inhabitants of the District, the wellbeing or financial position of himself or herself, a relative or a friend or:-
 - (a) any employment or business carried on by such person;
 - (b) any person who employs or has appointed such a person, any firm in which such a person is a partner, or any company of which such a person is a director;
 - (c) any corporate body in which such a person has a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £5,000; or
 - (d) any body listed in Article 14(a) to (e) in which such a person holds a position of general control or management.

A Member must disclose a personal interest.

Continued/.....

Prejudicial Interests

Having identified a personal interest, a Member must consider whether a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably think that the interest was so significant and particular that it could prejudice that Member's judgement of the public interest. If that is the case, the interest must be regarded as "prejudicial" and the Member must disclose the interest and withdraw from the meeting room during discussion on the item.

It should be noted that a prejudicial interest may apply to part or the whole of an item.

Where there are a series of inter-related financial or resource matters, with a limited resource available, under consideration a prejudicial interest in one matter relating to that resource may lead to a member being excluded from considering the other matters relating to that same limited resource.

There are some limited exceptions.

Note: Members are encouraged to seek advice from the Monitoring Officer or his staff in Democratic Services if they have any problems or concerns in relation to the above.

Principles of Decision Making

All decisions of the Council will be made in accordance with the following principles:-

- proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome);
- due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers;
- respect for human rights;
- a presumption in favour of openness, accountability and transparency;
- setting out what options have been considered;
- setting out reasons for the decision; and
- clarity of aims and desired outcomes.

In exercising discretion, the decision maker must:

- understand the law that regulates the decision making power and gives effect to it. The decision-maker must direct itself properly in law;
- take into account all relevant matters (those matters which the law requires the authority as a matter of legal obligation to take into account);
- leave out of account irrelevant considerations;
- act for a proper purpose, exercising its powers for the public good;
- not reach a decision which no authority acting reasonably could reach, (also known as the "rationality" or "taking leave of your senses" principle);
- comply with the rule that local government finance is to be conducted on an annual basis. Save to the extent authorised by Parliament, 'live now, pay later' and forward funding are unlawful; and
- act with procedural propriety in accordance with the rules of fairness.

AGENDA

Agendas and papers are now available via the City Council's website

1 APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN PANEL MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)

To note any changes in membership of the Panel made in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.3.

2 DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS

In accordance with the Local Government Act, 2000, and the Council's Code of Conduct adopted on 16th May, 2007, Members to disclose any personal or prejudicial interests in any matter included on the agenda for this meeting.

NOTE: Members are reminded that, where applicable, they must complete the appropriate form recording details of any such interests and hand it to the Panel Administrator prior to the commencement of this meeting.

3 DECLARATIONS OF SCRUTINY INTEREST

Members are invited to declare any prior participation in any decision taken by a Committee, Sub-Committee, or Panel of the Council on the agenda and being scrutinised at this meeting.

4 DECLARATION OF PARTY POLITICAL WHIP

Members are invited to declare the application of any party political whip on any matter on the agenda and being scrutinised at this meeting.

5 STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIR

6 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING)

To approve and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Inquiry Meeting held on 7th October 2010 and to deal with any matters arising, attached.

7 SECOND MEETING OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS INQUIRY

Report of the Head of Corporate Policy and Performance, providing details on first hand experience of those involved with primary school educational attainment for children with special needs, from a school's, child's and parent's perspective, attached.

WEDNESDAY, 27 OCTOBER 2010

SOLICITOR TO THE COUNCIL

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SCRUTINY PANEL A
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS INQUIRY
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7TH OCTOBER 2010

Present:

Councillors Kolker (Vice-Chair), Morrell, Osmond, Thomas, Turner and Willacy

Also in attendance:

Councillor Holmes – Cabinet Member for Children’s Services

Lesley Hobbs – Strategic Lead for Special Educational Needs (SEN), SCC

Paul Nugent – Head of Standards

Julie Wharton – SEN Inspector

Julia Katherine – Principal Educational Psychologist

Jamie Schofield – Service Manager – Solent Healthcare

15. APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN PANEL MEMBERSHIP

Apologies were received from Councillor Damani and Councillor Odgers and the Panel noted that in accordance with the provisions of Procedure Rules 4.3 and 4.4, Councillor Thomas replaced Councillor Damani and Councillor Osmond replaced Councillor Odgers, for the purposes of this meeting.

COUNCILLOR KOLKER IN THE CHAIR

16. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS

Councillors Morrell, Turner and Willacy declared non-prejudicial interests in relation to the scrutiny inquiry in view of their relationships with members of their family who were in receipt of or provided special educational needs.

17. INTRODUCTION TO THE PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS INQUIRY

The Panel considered the report of the Head of Policy and Performance, providing papers outlining the current definitions and strategies in place for special educational needs (SEN), attached.

The Panel received a presentation from officers from Southampton City Council and Solent Healthcare highlighting key issues around the support, provision and commissioning for children with special educational needs as well as the local context of current performance with trends, national context and problem areas in relation to particular special needs or areas.

The Panel noted that:-

- the SEN Inquiry had been well-timed as the Southampton Strategy for Special Educational Needs was due for renewal and the Government’s SEN and Disability Green Paper on the revised guidelines and focus for SEN would be made public in November;
- one in five pupils – 1.7 million school-age children in England had been identified as having special educational needs and this was categorised by the 2001 Special Educational Needs Code of Practice into 3 categories. **School Action**, requiring additional support from within the school, **School Action**

- Plus** requiring support from outside specialists and **Statement of Special Educational Needs** requiring intensive support;
- there were two models of SEN which required different approaches:
 - * medical model – the result of a medical condition which was fixed, unlikely to change and required early diagnosis to minimise the impairment through medical interventions and therapy; and
 - * social model – where children and young people were disabled/disadvantaged by socially created barriers in attitude, organisation and environment and which required the removal of barriers to learning;
 - the social model highlights the need to build good models of language, the potential issues with labelling and the differences between impairment and disability;
 - the allocation of resources for SEN in the medical profession and in education were different;
 - Southampton had a good range of quality provision for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities at mainstream schools with support and resourced provision and Special Schools, the latter which only catered for children and young people with statements;
 - Springwell School’s specialist services can also be utilised by other schools;
 - Ofsted reports on the Southampton schools providing SEN provision were on the whole very good;
 - the Ofsted Special Educational Needs and Disability Review had highlighted a number of issues which needed to be addressed;
 - wherever possible children were educated in mainstream schools rather than Special Schools, but it depended on the specific circumstances and requirements of the child and a thorough assessment was undertaken prior to moving a child to a Special School;
 - all children were entitled to education and if a child had been excluded an appropriate assessment of their educational needs is undertaken so that the correct provision is made for them to return to school;
 - difficulties at school were often inextricably linked to the pupil’s home environment
 - Solent Healthcare and their commissioners, Southampton NHS, provided very early information on children with possible medical special educational needs issues, whilst behavioural and learning difficulties often came to light when children started school;
 - children were more likely to have their special educational needs identified at primary school when they were required to sit still and listen;
 - there is evidence emerging that the Surestart project is improving levels of incoming pupils;
 - some SEN issues could be solved by teachers manipulating the learning situation/environment, but there were also SEN issues as a result of the home environment which could adversely impact on schooling and there was a range of services and professional expertise, including family support workers who worked together to assist in this regard;
 - schools that had a number of pupils with English as a second language would provide bilingual support;
 - all schools required to have a Special Educational Needs Coordinator who was also senior teacher.and
 - multi-disciplinary locality teams played a large part in tackling the issues within an area but as they have not been in operation for long their impact and understanding of the opportunities to work together are only now beginning to emerge;

RESOLVED

- (i) that the following requests and comments from officers be noted :-
- that as the authority was at the pivotal point with SEN and an imminent new code of practice, it was important that there was dialogue with members on how SEN issues could be taken forward in the new environment;
 - that the present excellent database needed to be built on;
 - that there was a need to work preventatively and not reactively;
 - that although the range of provision at Special Schools was good they were very full;
 - there was a good spectrum of provision for SEN in Southampton and one of the principles was to keep children in Southampton for SEN provision; and
 - Southampton also provided SEN provision for a number of other authorities for which they recouped the money.
- (ii) that the report of the Head of Policy and Improvement and the comments and presentation received from officers from Southampton City Council and the Solent Healthcare, along with the ideas and suggestions contributed by Members of the Panel , be placed in the register of evidence of the Inquiry into Educational Attainment for Children with Special Needs.

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Agenda Item 7

DECISION-MAKER:	SCRUTINY PANEL A		
SUBJECT:	2 nd MEETING OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS INQUIRY		
DATE OF DECISION:	4 NOVEMBER 2010		
REPORT OF:	HEAD OF CORPORATE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE		
AUTHOR:	Name:	Dorota Goble	Tel: 023 8083 3317
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

None

SUMMARY

The second meeting of the inquiry into primary school educational attainment for children with special needs will focus on the first hand experience of those involved from a school's, child's and parent's perspective. The information will be in the form of verbal presentations and a video with no background information necessary.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) The panel is recommended to consider the discussions at the meeting and use the information provided as evidence in the inquiry.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To enable the panel to compile a file of evidence in order to formulate findings and recommendations at the end of the inquiry process.

CONSULTATION

2. Stakeholders are being consulted throughout the inquiry process. The Head of Standards, the Principal Officer for Prevention and Inclusion, the NHS Commissioner for Children's Healthcare and Associate Director for Children and Families, Solent Healthcare were involved in developing the agenda for this meeting.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

3. None

DETAIL

4. The 2nd meeting of the inquiry will be separated into two main sections based on the direct experiences of those involved. Following a brief introduction, there will be an outline of the school's perspective of special needs followed by the parent's and child's perspective of support for children with special educational needs.

5. The school's perspective will be presented by head teachers from Springwell School (a special school) and Bassett Green Primary School (a mainstream school). There will be an opportunity for members to ask questions about the issues identified.
6. The parent and child perspectives will be introduced firstly by a short video of a child with special needs talking about their experiences of support for their special needs through out primary school including their move to secondary school. This will be followed by two brief presentations from the parent's perspective: the first from the Southampton ADHD Awareness Group and the second from the Parent Partnership. There will be an opportunity for members to ask questions about the issues identified in these presentations.
7. The panel is invited to have an open discussion on the school's, children's and parents experience of special educational needs in primary schools, supported by the witnesses giving evidence.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital

8. Not applicable

Revenue

9. Not applicable

Property

10. Not applicable

Other

11. Not applicable

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

12. The duty to undertake overview and scrutiny is set out in Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

Other Legal Implications:

13. None

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

14. None

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

	None
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Documents In Members' Rooms

	None
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Background Documents

None

Relevant Paragraph of the
Access to Information
Procedure Rules / Schedule
12A allowing document to be
Exempt/Confidential (if
applicable)

	None	
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Background documents available for inspection at:

FORWARD PLAN No: Not applicable **KEY DECISION?** No

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	Not applicable
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