

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
PERFORMANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 19 NOVEMBER, 2008 AT 4.00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK
PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors

Mawle, D.L. (Chairman)
Yates, Ms. W. (Vice-Chairman)

Ansell, Mrs. P.A. Mitchell, C
Beddows, J. Morgan, C.W.J.
Jones, R. Thomas, D.

By Invitation:

Grocott, M.R. (Access to Skills, Economic Development and
Enterprise Leader)
Williams, Mrs. P. (Member of Access to Skills, Economic
Development and Enterprise Policy Development
Committee)

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D.I. Dixon and M.J. Holder).

18. Declaration of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restriction on Voting by Members

<u>Member</u>	<u>Nature of Interest</u>	<u>Type</u>
Jones, R.	Employed by City of Wolverhampton College and Sutton Coldfield College	Personal

19. Minutes

Arising from consideration of the Minutes held on 8 October, 2008 Members raised concern in relation to the Warm Front Government Funded Initiative and other energy efficiency schemes. It was reported that from the information received the average waiting time for heating was 180 days and 90 days for loft insulation, Members considered that this was unacceptable.

The Chief Executive reported that he would liaise with the relevant officers and partners to provide information to Members at the next meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (A) That the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 October, 2008 be approved as a correct record.
- (B) That the relevant officers and partners be invited to the next meeting to provide information in respect of the waiting time for energy efficiency schemes.

20. Education Section of Quarter 2 Performance Monitoring Report 2008/09

Consideration was given to the Education Section of the Report of the Chief Executive (Enclosure 6.1 – 6.6 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Chief Executive, Stephen Brown provided background information in respect of the educational attainment of young people living within the District. He indicated that young people living within the District achieving five or more GCSE's at grades A*-C had risen over the last four years but was still below the rate for the West Midlands and when compared Nationally. Furthermore, the performance gap was widening especially in relation to young people achieving five or more GCSE's at grades A*-C including Maths and English.

21. Presentation on the Action Plan to improve Educational Attainment in the Cannock Chase District

The Chairman and Members welcomed Mr. Richard Worth, District Strategic Improvement Manager for Cannock Chase from Staffordshire County Council's Education Department.

Mr. Worth reported that a number of schools within the District were performing well whilst intervention schemes were required for others. Every school in the District was assigned an Inspector who carried out visits and School Improvement Partners in Staffordshire would liaise with school Governors and provide reports raising any issues.

Mr. Worth stated that Ofsted inspections were carried out in order to provide an assessment of how well a school was performing. He stated that a common grading system was used and if a school was rated as being unacceptable they would be issued with a notice to improve, and were allocated a school improvement partner where Service Level Agreements were agreed and imposed within the school before a re-inspection took place. He stated that in the Cannock Chase District 3 Schools had been rated as good, 18 rated as satisfactory and 2 schools given notices to improve which were Moorhill and Etchinghill Primary Schools in Rugeley. Members requested to be supplied with detailed information on this matter. Furthermore, the majority of schools within the Cannock Chase District were of a satisfactory standard however, there were pockets of underperformance within schools.

He stated that the Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) had been removed from Key Stage 3; tests would then take place at the age of 14 with progression onto the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) level. He also provided an indication of the predicted levels of progress in accordance with Government targets and a detailed analysis would be supplied to schools throughout Staffordshire each year based on the

outcome of the results from GCSE's. This would provide an indication on the levels of progress within schools.

It was reported that the Surestart scheme was originally formed a number of years ago in Redhill, Rugeley to alleviate problems of under achievement before children started school. Members were concerned with under achievement in schools and questioned whether Surestart had helped to alleviate any of them. Mr. Worth reported that the level of learning and social skills of young children in the Cannock Chase District was very modest before they started full time education. It was likely that children would have very different starting points in terms of activities prior to starting school. He also stated that a certain level of responsibility had been placed on early year's providers in an attempt to help each child to achieve specific standards by the time they finished school at 16.

Members asked for information about a tracker system used by the County's education department which was used to track a child's educational achievements throughout their schooling. The tracker was used to identify when a child was falling below the required standard and appropriate action would be taken to ensure a child was at the required educational level before starting Secondary Education.

Mr. Worth reported that a tracking system was used by the County up to Key Stage 2. He advised Members that in order to raise standards children at Blake Valley Technology College were being monitored and tested on a 6 weekly cycle and re-grouped according to the results achieved.

Members raised their concerns about the deterioration in performance at Etchinghill Primary School as in recent years this had been considered to be an outstanding school, but more recently had received a notice to improve. It was also noted that one Ward had been identified as a deprived area however; both Etchinghill and Moorhill Schools had the same inspection rating.

Mr. Worth advised Members that the deterioration was due to a number of issues experience by the school. However, he stated that a very experienced teacher had been bought into the school and was making great contributions and it was hoped that this would resolve the problems quickly.

Mr. Worth reported that there was a gap across the Country in respect of the number of children that achieved 5 A-C* grades. However in 12-18 months time the standard was expected to improve. Furthermore, the pace at which children worked was different and it was therefore inevitable that different results at GCSE level would be achieved.

He informed Members that work was currently being undertaken on various schemes to help children. A school in Rugeley currently opened on a Saturday morning to help children with coursework and catch up sessions. He also stated that Consultants were helping with English, Maths and Science at both Hagley Park Sports College and Blake Valley Technology College to try and identify those children that needed help.

The Chairman queried current progress and was keen to know why previous ideas were not tested and implemented a number of years ago. Mr. Worth stated that the ideas were not new and different schools had different allocations depending on what their needs were.

Members raised concern with the standard of education being offered in the Cannock Chase District as according to statistical data this was failing them and little progress was being made. These problems were also being experienced in other areas of the County.

Members pointed out that Etchinghill Primary School was classed as being inadequate when it was not in a deprived Ward and also indicated that there were problems with the transition from Year 7 to secondary education for children.

Mr. Worth reported that if improvement for example was not sustained over a term, then there was more flexibility in addressing needs. He stated that in other Local Authorities areas and where research had been undertaken, the grades of children could be dependent upon factors such as gender and race.

The Chief Executive asked if funding given to Schools was being used to finance the use of Consultants. Mr. Worth stated that Consultants were not funded using funding given to schools and it was anticipated that Consultants being used would alleviate some of the problems faced by schools in this District.

The Chief Executive stated that there were Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets and priorities to meet and asked if there was anything as a partnership that could be done to help schools and try to help with some of the pressures. Mr. Worth stated that he would be happy for teachers and secondary Headteachers to be involved in the conversations taking place about the concerns raised regarding schools. He also stated that English and Maths specialists and mentors would make a difference for the children.

The Chairman suggested that school teachers, secondary Heads and the County Council lead for the LAA Children and Lifelong Learning Block could be involved in discussions in an attempt to provide some help for schools.

In response to the discussion Members were keen to view an action plan which detailed how the needs of schools in the area were being identified. Mr. Worth stated that he would endeavour to make the information available to Members.

RESOLVED:

- (A) That a meeting be arranged between the Council and Staffordshire County Council to discuss the Improvement Plan for Education on 11 December 2008, following which, Members wish to receive the Improvement Plan at the next Performance and Partnership Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting on 14 January, 2008.
- (B) That an invite be extended to Councillor Robert Simpson (Staffordshire County Council) to a future meeting of the Performance and Partnership Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

22. Quarter 2 Performance Monitoring Report – 2008/09

Consideration was given to the Report of the Chief Executive (Enclosure 6.1 – 6.6 of the

Official Minutes of the Council).

The Chief Executive introduced Katie Cairns, Performance Manager to Members of the Committee and then provided a brief outline of the performance in respect of each LAA Block.

The Local Indicator in respect of BVPI 170c, the total no. of rounds of golf played at Cannock Park Course was referred to and in particular the annual target for 2008/09 which had almost been reached. Members questioned whether the charges were set too low and whether or not they should be changed. The Performance Manager reported that the quarter 2 figure (July-September) was seasonal and both quarters would give a cumulative figure which was just under the annual target for 2008/09.

It was reported that the Scrutiny Committee on 11 November, 2008 considered the Value for Money Review of the Cannock Golf Course FSR and it had been noted that the usage of the golf course and the income was expected to increase.

Members referred to the Safer and Stronger Communities Indicator in respect of NI15, serious violent crime rate and queried the way in which the figures were represented under the comments section. The Performance Manager stated that she would try and revise the way in which the comments section was worded.

RESOLVED:

That the Performance Outturn for Quarter 2 of 2008/09 as detailed in appendix 1 of the report, be noted.

CHAIRMAN