

minutes



Meeting DRUGS EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE

Date Monday, 17th December 2007 (commencing at 10.30 am)

Membership

Persons absent are marked with 'A'

COUNCILLORS

Councillor Edward Llewellyn-Jones (Chair)

Councillor Joe Lonergan (Vice Chair)

A Peter Barnes
A Steve Carr
John Carter
A Bruce Laughton

A Sheila Place
Lynn Sykes
Parry Tsimbiridis

CO – OPTEES

A Mrs P Burbridge
A Mr E Hayes
A Mr D Richards
A Mrs L Wooding

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor Andy Freeman
Councillor V Dobson
Councillor Y Woodhead

Wes McDonald – Nottinghamshire Constabulary
Tim Spink – Nottinghamshire Constabulary
John Morris - School Improvement Services
Nick Romilly – Notts PCT – Healthy Schools
DonnaMarie Donnelly – Young Persons Drug and Alcohol Services

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from:-

Councillor Steve Carr
Councillor Bruce Laughton
Councillor Sheila Place
Mrs P Burbidge
Mrs L Wooding
Mr E Hayes

Mr D Richards

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no declarations of interest.

WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor Llewellyn-Jones welcomed everyone to the meeting. Before hearing from the representatives who had been invited to give evidence to the Select Committee he gave a brief scene setting summary of the committee's interests and concerns.

Councillor Lonergan referred to a meeting that had taken place between himself, the Chairman and Dr Max Biddulph, at the Nottingham University. A significant point raised by Dr Biddulph was the fact that once teachers became qualified, they only did one evening session of PSHE during their 16 week post graduate course. Councillor Llewellyn-Jones stated that a summary of their meeting would be presented to the January meeting of the Select Committee.

Wes McDonald from Nottinghamshire Police informed the Select Committee of the support they provided to secondary schools. He said that Youth Issues Officers worked around the county. Their work included the delivery of PSHE. He pointed out that these dedicated officers were used according to the Divisional Commander's requirements and that resources were managed according to risk. A key part of their work was building relationships with schools and the local community.

He referred to two projects ran by the Police involving other partners, "Outside In" and "Last Chance" that provided young people with reality checks. Councillor Lonergan asked for further information on the two projects.

Tim Spink introduced himself and briefly explained his role. He said that the ten year Drug Strategy, due to end on 31st March 2008, had been good at identifying those with heroine and crack cocaine habits. He said that drugs education was a national problem which required consistent messages to be reinforced and developed to try and stop the conveyor belt of drug users.

Councillor Llewellyn-Jones commented on problems in the Ashfield area due to vacancies in neighbourhood policing and there being no point of reference. It was explained that staff were moved around frequently due to the nature of their demand led work.

There was discussion in relation to the school curriculum and the PSHE not being a statutory subject. This could be seen as a problem for some smaller schools where no one had taken the lead on drugs education. It was pointed out that schools had the resources to buy in drugs education and there was a variety of resources available. The local authority also provided professional development programmes for teachers to take it up as a specialism.

Nick Romilly, Nottinghamshire Healthy Schools elaborated on the Healthy Schools programme, which was a national programme. He pointed out that there had been a significant take-up from schools within the last 3-5 years. In Nottinghamshire there

were 7 Healthy Schools Advisors. Schools had criteria to work towards. A toolkit was available to all Nottinghamshire schools that offered guidance, support and information. He explained his role in meeting with schools to support and engage teachers, governors and parents. 95% of schools in Nottinghamshire were working towards the healthy schools requirements. The remaining 5% had not due to either a change in the head teacher or the smaller schools having no one to take up its ownership.

The Select Committee were informed of the different crime types produced through the taking of drugs or alcohol. In Nottinghamshire, the Police had local indicators for the arrest and seizure of drugs, which was critical for taking out acquisitive crime. Alcohol predominantly was the driver for violent crime.

In response to a question from Councillor Lonergan, Mr Romilly said that schools in receipt of at least 20% free school meals had been taken on board first. He intended to work with school governing bodies on the Healthy Schools agenda, and recognised that there might be a hardcore of those who might need some pressure placed on them to welcome their support. It was suggested that since schools were represented on the local crime and reduction agenda, these meetings might prove a useful mechanism for engaging schools in drugs education.

It was acknowledged that some local authority powers had been taken away through the introduction of Local Management of Schools (LMS), which had empowered school governing bodies.

The Select Committee heard about the important work carried out by the FACE IT team who offered advice, support, information and treatment for young people who were at risk of using/abusing drugs or alcohol. The team consisted of 15 workers across the county. This specialist service was aimed at working with young people to make healthier choices around substance mis-use.

Their work included working with inclusion units on a one to one basis, detached work on streets targeted at truancy and those not attending school, also education to employment for 16 year olds who would not engage in education.

Work was in progress on the transition between Young People's Services to Adult Services. There was a pilot scheme operating in 9 secondary schools that consisted of a minimum of 6 contracted sessions and included contracts being set up between the pupil and parent. Seven referrals had been received from schools since September 2007. A screening tool had been introduced to help pinpoint the right service for an individual. It was hoped that this would be made universal in 2008.

John Morris, School Improvement Officer informed the Select Committee of his views on the drugs education agenda. He said that consistency was vital across all schools and that the DARE programme in primary schools needed to be built into secondary schools. There was a need to tackle life skills issues in the secondary phase of education.

He acknowledged the positive and useful work of FACE IT and the positive work done by schools in identifying pupils for referral to the Education Welfare Service. He referred to SEAL (Social Emotional Attitudes to Learning), a primary programme being piloted in 6 secondary schools which the PDL team was linked into.

Mr Morris commented on the difficulty with identification in schools, with the possession of a drug being a legal issue and the presence of it not being a legal issue. He said that schools should do something to support youngsters.

In terms of training and support for Healthy Schools, Mr Morris referred to the effective work led by Anne Trout which was well received by governors. He was concerned that the post may cease being part funded by the DAAT at the end of March 2008.

During discussion the Select Committee felt that schools would also benefit from the support of outside agencies to enhance their drugs education. They felt it important for the police to go into schools. This was already happening in the Ashfield area on a demand led basis according to the Divisional Commander's requirements.

The Chair had to leave the meeting and Councillor Lonergan took the Chair.

In response to a question regarding how the magistrate courts fit into the equation, Mr Morris said that he would ask Anne Trout for clarification on the matter.

Councillor Lonergan thanked everyone present for attending and giving their evidence to the committee. He referred to the next meeting on 14 January 2008 at which the final draft report would be presented for comment.

The meeting closed at 12.40 pm.

CHAIR

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