



meeting	EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN SELECT COMMITTEE	
date	30 October 2006	agenda item number

Report of the Chair of the EDP Select Committee

Response to original EDP Study Group report

Purpose of the report

1. To provide Members with the response from the Children and Young People's Services Department to the EDP Study Group report and introduce Ms Anne Allsop who will make a presentation providing the most up to date figures regarding Nottinghamshire school performance.

Background

2. The EDP Study Group was established by the former Education and Lifelong Learning Select Committee and met between 3 November 2005 and 25 April 2006.
3. Its terms of reference were agreed:
 - To consider the current attainment levels and transition arrangements operating across Nottinghamshire schools;
 - To examine "successful" Nottinghamshire schools and to promote good practice across the school fraternity;
 - To liaise with statistical neighbours to identify good practice elsewhere and to suggest recommendations to Cabinet regarding using this practice within Nottinghamshire
4. It visited 4 Nottinghamshire schools, 2 Derbyshire schools and 2 schools in Durham as part of its review and presented its report to the Select Committee on 25 April 2006.
5. The report was debated and voted upon at this meeting, with the outcome being that the Select Committee accepted the report, by a majority vote, and presented it to Cabinet at its next available meeting on 7 June 2006.

6. The Cabinet minutes of the meeting of 7 June 2006 state:

15. REPORT OF THE EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING SELECT COMMITTEE – EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN: ATTAINMENT AND TARGETS

Councillor Martin Suthers, Vice-Chair of the former Education and Lifelong Learning Select Committee, introduced the report, summarised its content and commended its conclusions to Cabinet for consideration.

Cabinet Members raised a number of concerns with regard to the final report. These included factual inaccuracies and the general quality of the report which they felt called into question the robustness of this review and its relevance in terms of improving attainments and targets and raising future standards in respect of the Key Stage 4 issues referred to in the report. For this reason, they were of the view that it would be inappropriate for Cabinet to consider this report and that the issue should be subject to a further, more thorough, scrutiny review.

Other Members were disappointed with this response which they felt undermined the general scrutiny process. For their part, they were content that the findings of the review should be considered at this time and, indeed, circulated widely to all interested parties.

Councillor Suthers accepted the comments about the quality of the report and also made the comment that he had been disappointed at the level of support provided at times during the review. Nevertheless, he felt that the substantive issues raised in the review should be taken forward and considered by Cabinet in terms of the recommendation now before the meeting.

Following full discussion and on a motion by the Deputy Leader, duly seconded, it was:-

RESOLVED:- 2006/087 *That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to urgently reconsider the findings of this scrutiny review in the light of the comments made by the Cabinet Members, as referred to above, and report back to Cabinet with a revised report at the earliest opportunity.*

Issues

7. As a result of the Cabinet decision, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee chose to establish the EDP Select Committee with the following terms of reference:
- *Examine the original Committee report and identify areas which require clarification and/or further examination before a conclusion can be reached;*

- *Obtain factual and up to date information on the Local Authority's work and statistics in areas such as vocational education;*
 - *Cross reference the findings of previous reports with the conclusions of this review;*
 - *Widen the intake of evidence from schools by visiting more Nottinghamshire schools and seeking follow up information where necessary from those already visited.*
8. Ms Anne Allsop, Head of Secondary Improvement 10-19, Children and Young People's Services Department has agreed to support this Select Committee throughout its review and will present a response to the original report and an update on figures released since April. (Appendices 1 and 2 are supporting documentation provided by Ms Allsop).
 9. Ms Allsop has also been arranging visits for Members of this Select Committee to Nottinghamshire schools to allow Members to see first hand the practices underway in our schools and compare their initiatives with those found on previous visits in other County's schools by the Study Group. She will present the visit dates and the schools selected at the Select Committee meeting.
 10. Members of the Select Committee in consultation with Ms Allsop and the Scrutiny Officer will be asked to draft up a series of questions or key themes which they will seek answered from the visits to schools. This information will be forwarded to schools in advance of our visit to ensure that schools are fully briefed regarding our purpose and the outcomes we are seeking.

Recommendations

11. It is recommended that the EDP Select Committee:
 - a) accept the presentation from Ms Allsop and then ask relevant questions regarding the previous report and on the most current data she has provided;
 - b) discuss and agree which Members will attend each of the school visits as presented;
 - c) appoint one Member from each visit group to feedback on the findings of that visit to the Select Committee at its next meeting (20 November 2006);
 - d) Members draft up and agree a set of questions or key criteria for their visits to schools.

Councillor Edward Llewellyn-Jones
Chair of the EDP Select Committee

Background papers:
 EDP Study Group final report – April 2006