

Committee **EDUCATION**

Sub-Committee

Place of Meeting **County Hall, Oxford**

Please address any general enquiries on this agenda to Julian Hehir, County Hall, Oxford OX1 1ND (Tel: Oxford 815673). Press enquiries should be directed to the Press Officer on Oxford 815266.

Day **TUESDAY**

Date **3 JUNE 1997**

Time 10.00 am

A G E N D A

NOTE: Those items marked * have been circulated to Members and Officers of the Council only and are available for public inspection.

1. **Election to Chair - (Liberal Democrat Group).**
2. **Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**
3. **Minutes**

Minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 1997 **(ED3)**.

4. **Matters arising from the Minutes**

5. **Petitions and Public Address**

6. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The terms of reference of this Committee are set out on page 9 of Section C of the Council's Standing Orders and Manual.

MAJOR FINANCIAL AND POLICY ITEMS

7. **PROVISIONAL REVENUE OUTTURN 1996/97**

Report by Chief Education Officer & County Treasurer **(ED7)**.

The report presents the provisional revenue outturn for the Committee and identifies the variations in 1996/97 to be carried forward to 1997/98 under the Council's budget management arrangements. The report also presents the provisional capital outturn for 1996/97.

REPORT TO FOLLOW

No recommendation appears under this item because the report was not received in time for it to be processed by the Corporate Services Unit in the usual way. If the report is received, efforts will be made to have it processed and circulated to members before the meeting, but this cannot be guaranteed..

8. **IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY AND BUDGET PLANS 1997/98**

Report by Chief Education Officer **(ED8)**.

In the light of the County Council's budget decision, the report assesses how various Education Services during the year can be provided in relation to budget provision.

REPORT TO FOLLOW

No recommendation appears under this item because the report was not received in time for it to be processed by the Corporate Services Unit in the usual way. If the report is received, efforts will be made to have it processed and circulated to members before the meeting, but this cannot be guaranteed.

9. **EDUCATION DEPARTMENT DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The Chief Education Officer reports as follows:-

At the last meeting of the Education Committee a draft Education Department Development Plan was approved for consultation with schools, centres and representative groups. A revised draft has been

circulated separately to Members of the Committee (and a copy is available for public inspection). An attached commentary to the draft considers comments on the Plan and the revised draft incorporates amendments which it is considered can be adopted within the Plan.

The Committee are RECOMMENDED to consider the revised plan and approve it as the Departmental Development Plan for the 1997/98 academic year.

10. **OXFORD DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION**

The Oxford Diocesan Board have drawn up a "Partnership Undertaking with the County Council as LEA" (circulated separately to Members and available for public inspection). The document sets out the context within which the Council and Diocese operate and the partnership arrangements for finance, premises, religious education, governance, appointments, inspections and appeals. The partnership and document are also referred to in the draft Development Plan.

The Committee are RECOMMENDED to approve the Partnership Undertaking as a statement of how the Council collaborates with the Diocese.

11. **OXFORD CITY DIVISION SCHOOLS' REVIEW**

The Chief Education Officer will report briefly on the future review of the three tier schools' structure in Oxford City.

12. **MEMBER/OFFICER WORKING GROUP ON CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

Report by the Director of Social Services and the Chief Education Officer (**ED12**).

In the last Committee cycle, the Social Services Committee and the Education Committee endorsed a proposal to establish a joint Education/Social Services Member/Officer Working Group on Children's Services. A further report outlining proposals was requested.

The report provides background information regarding working relationships between officers of Social Services, Education and Health, and makes proposals to establish a Member/Officer Working Group on Children's Services.

The Committee are RECOMMENDED to:

(a) **note the report ED12;**

(b) **agree to establish a joint Education/Social Services informal Member/Officer Working Group on Children's Services, to include representation from the Health Authority, the purpose of which will be to consider areas where the agencies have common concerns and responsibilities; and that attendance should be an 'approved duty' for the purposes of Members allowances.**

13. **THE HEYFORDS CE (C) PRIMARY SCHOOL - FUTURE VIABILITY**

Report by the Chief Education Officer (**ED13**).

Following the governors' meeting and a public meeting called by the governors, the Governing Body of the Heyfords CE (C) Primary School has asked to set in motion the procedure for closure. The decline in the school roll (likely to be less than 20 in September 1997) and a forecast significant budget deficit from April 1997 have precipitated this move. The Governing Body expressed the wish that the closure should take effect at the end of the current school year, or as soon as possible thereafter.

The Urgency Sub-Committee on 25 April 1997 agreed to formative consultations being carried out on the proposal of the Governing Body that The Heyfords CE (C) Primary School be closed from September 1997, or as soon as possible after that date.

The report outlines the results of the formative consultation and gives details on the financial and staffing implications of closure. It concludes that The Heyfords CE (C) Primary School should close and that Fritwell CE (C) Primary School should be designated as the receiving school for Caulcott, Lower and Upper Heyford.

The Committee are RECOMMENDED to:

- (a) **authorise the publication of statutory notices under Section 167 of the Education Act 1996, to cease to maintain The Heyfords CE (C) Primary School, from August 1997 (or as soon as possible afterwards), and submit the proposal to The Secretary of State for Education for his approval;**
- (b) **nominate the receiving school to be Fritwell CE (C) Primary School and to incorporate Caulcott, Lower and Upper Heyford into Fritwell CE (C) Primary School catchment area;**
- (c) **agree to free transport being provided to Fritwell CE (C) School for pupils from Caulcott, Lower and Upper Heyford;**
- (d) **support a proposal from the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education that one new school in any future housing development in the Heyfords should be a church school.**

14. **MOLLINGTON CE(VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL - FUTURE VIABILITY**

Report by Chief Education Officer (ED14).

Following the governors' meeting, and a public meeting called by the governors, the Governing Body of Mollington CE (C) Primary School has asked that the procedure for closure be set in motion. The decline in the school roll and a forecast significant budget deficit from April 1997 have precipitated this move. The Governing Body expressed the wish that the closure should take effect at the end of the current school year or as soon as possible thereafter, believing this to be in the children's best interests.

The Urgency Sub-Committee on 25 April 1997 agreed to formative consultations being carried out on the proposal of the Governing Body that Mollington CE (C) Primary School be closed from September 1997, or as soon as possible after that date.

The report outlines the results of the formative consultation and public meeting held on 8 May 1997, and gives details on the financial and staffing implications of closure. It concludes that Mollington CE (C) Primary School should close and that Cropredy CE (C) Primary School should be designated as the receiving school for Mollington village and Bourton Fields.

The Committee are RECOMMENDED to:

- (a) **authorise the publication of statutory notices under Section 167 of the Education Act 1996, to cease to maintain Mollington CE (C) School, from August 1997 (or as soon as possible afterwards), and submit the proposal to The Secretary of State for Education for his approval;**
- (b) **nominate the receiving school to be Cropredy CE (C) School and to incorporate Mollington village and Bourton Fields into Cropredy CE (C) School catchment area;**
- (c) **agree to free transport being provided to Cropredy CE (C) School for pupils from Mollington village and Bourton Fields.**

15. **PROPOSAL BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF CARTERTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO CHANGE THE CHARACTER OF THE SCHOOL TO ADMIT PUPILS 16-18.**

Report by Chief Education Officer (ED15).

The governors of Carterton Community College have requested that the character of the school be changed, under Section 35 of the Education Act 1996, to admit pupils aged 16-18. If agreed by the Education Committee (and the Secretary of State, if appropriate), this would change Carterton Community College from an 11-16 school to one for pupils 11-18.

This report outlines the procedure and timescale for changing the character of a school. It also considers the preliminary implications of such a change with regard to accommodation, curriculum, staffing and financial matters.

The report recommends that formative consultation takes place with local schools and colleges on the request that Carterton Community College should become a school for pupils aged 11 -18 from September 1999 and that a further report be presented to the September 1997 meeting of the Education Committee.

The Education Committee are RECOMMENDED to:-

- (a) **consult with local schools and colleges on the formative proposal that Carterton Community College should become a school for pupils aged 11-18 from September 1999;**
- (b) **ask the Chief Education Officer to present a further report to the meeting on 23 September 1997.**

16. **DRUGS STRATEGY FOR OXFORDSHIRE**

The Chief Education Officer and the Director of Social Services report as follows:-

The purpose of this report is to seek Committee endorsement of a draft drugs strategy which has been proposed by the Drugs Action Team (DAT). The Strategy is set down at Annex 1.

The Drugs Action Teams were established by the Government in 1995 to become the strategic bodies that both co-ordinated action and provided leadership for drug abuse prevention work within defined areas of the country. In the case of Oxfordshire, the defined area is the county itself. Members of DAT include representatives of the County Council, District Councils, Police, Health and Voluntary Agencies. For the information of the Committee, the membership of Oxfordshire DAT is set down at Annex 2. After a somewhat hesitant start, DAT's are now beginning to prove their worth in the co-ordination of local initiatives and bidding for external sources of funding. However the absence of a common agreed strategy has hampered development. The strategy document stems from detailed consultation carried out by the Health Authority with all DAT members.

This drugs strategy will be incorporated into the general Community Safety Strategy of the Education Department which will be presented to the Education Committee on 23 September for approval.

External funding will be sought to progress action identified as a result of the strategy.

Given the connection which sometimes exists between poverty and the use of drugs (whether for the purposes of recreation or because of addiction) the strategy, if successful, has the potential to benefit both the health and economic stability of some people living in poverty.

The Committee are RECOMMENDED to approve the drugs strategy and adopt it as the basis of anti drugs abuse work throughout the County Council.

OPERATIONAL ITEMS

17. **LMS FORMULA FUNDING FOR 11-16 SCHOOLS**

At the request of Councillor Robertson and with the consent of one of the Political Group Spokespersons in accordance with Standing Order 19(4) the following item has been included in the agenda:

' That the Education Committee evaluate and report back on the following matters:-

- a review of the LMS formula in particular the funding of 11-16 schools;
- develop a strategic plan to ascertain the minimum and optimum size for secondary schools, removing surplus places and utilising efficiently the valuable investment in teaching staff and facilities in all parts of the County;
- examine an extension of protective funding to schools to enable them to cope with spasmodic variations in rolls.'

18. **REVIEW OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION IN OXFORDSHIRE**

Report by Chief Education Officer (**ED18**).

This report reviews the work of the informal member/officer working group on the review of Community Education.

REPORT TO FOLLOW

No recommendation appears under this item because the report was not received in time for it to be processed by the Corporate Services Unit in the usual way. If the report is received, efforts will be made to have it processed and circulated to members before the meeting, but this cannot be guaranteed.

19. POLICY AND BUDGET PLANS 1997/98 - POST 16 TRANSPORT

Report by Chief Education Officer (ED19).

The Council in February resolved that in the event that Parliament redetermined the Council's budget at the capping level, the provision of post 16 transport should end. Before a final decision is to be taken, Strategy & Resources Committee asked that the views of students and parents should be taken into account. The report sets out the full implications of the proposal and the results of the consultation process.

In the absence of a decision from the Government on the Council's budget, and having taken into account the views of students and parents during consultation, the Committee are RECOMMENDED to determine whether to implement the proposal for the withdrawal of post 16 transport from September 1997 and to advise Strategy & Resources Committee accordingly.

20. SCHOOL WELFARE & CATERING CONTRACT

Report by Chief Education Officer & Assistant Chief Executive (ED20).

REPORT TO FOLLOW

No recommendation appears under this item because the report was not received in time for it to be processed by the Corporate Services Unit in the usual way. If the report is received, efforts will be made to have it processed and circulated to members before the meeting, but this cannot be guaranteed.

21. OFSTED "ADDITIONAL INSPECTOR PROJECT": EFFECT OF EARLY TERMINATION OF CONTRACTS

The Chief Education Officer reports as follows:-

The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) initiated the Additional Inspector (AI) Project to help them meet the target of completing inspections of Primary and Special Schools within a four-year cycle. There appeared to be a shortage of suitable bids from outside contractors and the AI Project involved recruiting experienced Headteachers and other senior staff on one-year secondments to help carry out inspections.

During the current academic year six Oxfordshire Heads and senior staff were recruited in this way. Their governing bodies agreed to release them and made arrangements to cover their work in the interim.

In February OFSTED wrote to all the staff concerned telling them that their contracts would be terminated early because of a sudden increase in the number of suitable bids from independent contractors. They were entitled to terminate early giving three months notice.

The Education Urgency Sub-Committee on 25 April asked for a short report on the financial effects of this on some Oxfordshire Schools.

Financial Effects and Effects on Staff

Of the six staff concerned, four were due to work for OFSTED until 31 August 1997 and have been told that their contracts will instead terminate on 31 May. Three of these have applied for, and been granted, premature retirement on grounds of efficiency of the service: one with effect from 31 May and two on 31 March (at their own request). The fourth Head does not wish to retire and has been seconded to other work for the Curriculum and Inspection Branch until 31 July. His salary for August will certainly incur some cost (estimated at £3,250) to the Local Education Authority or to the school, who are committed to paying his temporary replacement until 31 August. OFSTED have refused to make any recompense.

The two staff who should have worked for OFSTED until 31 December will return to their schools on 1 September without further cost to the school or the LEA.

It is clear that, if a similar request is made by OFSTED in the future, there must be better safeguards in place to prevent a repetition of these problems including some financial guarantees from OFSTED.

The Committee are RECOMMENDED to receive the report.

PROCEDURE

22. **APPOINTMENTS TO SUB-COMMITTEES**

The Committee are **RECOMMENDED** to approve the following nominations for co-opted membership on the Education Sub-Committees:-

Schools Performance & Quality Sub-Committee

Cassie Northfield - Representing Parents.

Community Education Youth & Adult Sub-Committee

Derek Holland - Representing the Voluntary Sector.

Steve Nyman - Representing Youth Workers.

23. **APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

The Assistant Chief Executive & Solicitor to the Council reports as follows:

The schedule (**ED23**) gives details of those Outside Bodies relevant to the work of the Committee to which the County Council appoints or nominates members or representatives.

There are four categories of Outside Bodies:

Category	Type of Body	Allowances
A	Bodies essential to the work of the County Council	attendance, travel & subsistence
B	Bodies useful to the County Council's work	travel & subsistence
C	Bodies which request County Council representation, or are of primary value to local members and/or the local community	none
	Other Bodies	
D		allowances paid by the Outside Body

Appointments to Categories A, B and D are made by the appropriate Committee, and to Category C by the Chief Executive under delegated powers or, exceptionally, the relevant Committee. (Members may find it helpful to refer to Section S of the Standing Orders & Manual).

The Schedule deals with appointments to categories A, B & D. (There are no category A or D bodies for this Committee).

The Committee are RECOMMENDED to appoint or nominate members or representatives as appropriate to the Outside Bodies shown in the Schedule (ED23).

24. **AUDIT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

The Assistant Chief Executive reports as follows:-

At their meeting on 25 March 1997 the Audit Consultative Sub-Committee considered a report (AUD6) on the issues and implications arising for the County Council from "Called to Account" - an Audit Commission publication on the role of Audit Committees in local government. The Sub-Committee wished to draw to the Committee's attention the Sub-Committee's terms of reference and their role as set out in the report AUD6. (The Audit Commission publication and AUD6 are available in the Members' Resource Centre). In particular, they wished to highlight the fact that matters of concern to the Committee could be referred to the Sub-Committee directly where appropriate and/or where the support of internal/external audit would be helpful.

25. **INFORMAL OFFICER/MEMBER WORKING GROUPS**

The Assistant Chief Executive/Solicitor to the Council and Chief Education Officer report as follows:-

From time to time committees and sub-committees are faced with issues which require detailed analysis and assessment but for which the formal committee structure is not necessarily the most conducive environment. The concept of ad hoc "member/officer working groups" has been developed within Oxfordshire County Council to meet this need. These are entirely private and informal bodies in which officers and members participate on an equal basis, and do not fall under any of the statutory or internal regulations affecting formal committee and sub-committee meetings. Their remit is entirely deliberative: they cannot exercise delegated powers or act in any way on behalf of the Council; nor can they report formally as a body - the product of their deliberations will normally be in the form of officer reports to the parent body, compiled in the light of the group's discussions.

Normally the setting up of a group responds to a perceived need for exploration of a specific issue on a one-off basis, with a view to officers reporting back within a finite time to the parent committee or sub-committee. Sometimes, however, a group may have a longer term, possibly cyclic, existence.

This Committee have appointed the following member/officer working groups, for which officers see a continuing need for the time being:

- (a) Special Education Needs Working Group comprising 3 members each from the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups and one member from the Green Group, together with officers from the Education Department;
- (b) Education Planning & Development Working Group comprising 3 members each from the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups and one member from the Green Group, together with officers from the Education Department;
- (c) Review of Community Education Working Group comprising 1 member from each political group, together with appropriate officers from the Education Department.

It is RECOMMENDED that the following member/officer working groups continue for the time being, and members be appointed thereto as indicated:

- (a) **Special Education Needs Working Group comprising 3 nominees each from the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups and one nominee from the Green Group, together with officers from the Education Department;**
- (b) **Education Planning & Development Working Group comprising 3 nominee each from the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups and one nominee from the Green Group, together with officers from the Education Department;**
- (c) **Review of Community Education Working Group comprising 1 nominee from each political group, together with appropriate officers from the Education Department.**

26. **BREACH OF STANDING ORDER 34**

The Assistant Chief Executive & Solicitor to the Council reports as follows:-

Standing Order 34(1) requires that:

"Where papers issued to any member or officer are marked "Confidential" or "Not for Publication"; and when the public is excluded from any meeting by resolution under Part V of the Local Government Act 1972, a member or officer shall not except with the consent of the Council or relevant Committee or Sub-Committee disclose information contained in such papers or disclosed at such a meeting."

Any breach of this Standing Order has to be reported to the next meeting of the relevant Committee or Sub-Committee in accordance with Standing Order 34(2).

A complaint was received from an employee of the Council concerning the disclosure, by a member of the Education Committee of exempt information relating to the employee in the Education Urgency Sub-Committee Minutes which were submitted to the 18 March Committee. The Employee reported that the

decision on an early retirement application had been disclosed to a third party. The officers have investigated the circumstances. The member concerned has explained the nature of the disclosure, that the relevant information was disclosed inadvertently, and has apologised for any distress or inconvenience this might have caused to the employee.

The Committee are RECOMMENDED to note this report.

MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES

27. **URGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE***

Minutes of the meetings held on 7 March 1997 , 24 March 1997 , and 25 April 1997 (**ED27**).

28. **EARLY YEARS SUB-COMMITTEE***

Minutes of the special meeting held on 3 March 1997 (**ED28**).

29. **EDUCATION MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE***

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 1997 (**ED29**) (*To follow*).

The Committee are asked to consider the following recommendation:

Pupils out of School (Children educated other than at School)

The Committee are RECOMMENDED to adopt the draft policy on pupils out of school (children educated other than at school) and to receive a report evaluating its effectiveness within the next 12 months setting out the number of pupils in mainstream schools, that schools considered should be in Pupil Referral Units and were not.

30. **TEACHERS JOINT COMMITTEE***

The Assistant Chief Executive & Solicitor to the Council reports as follows:-

Any recommendations to the Education Committee arising from the Joint Committee on 22 May 1997 will be reported at the meeting. The Minutes will be submitted to the Education Committee on 23 September.

31. **ETHNIC MINORITIES CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE***

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 1997 (**ED31**).

EXEMPT ITEMS

The Committee will be invited to resolve to exclude the public for the consideration of the following exempt items (marked E) by passing a resolution in relation to each such item in the following terms:

"that the public be excluded during the consideration of the following items in the Agenda since it is likely that if they were present during those items there would be a disclosure of "exempt" information as described in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 and specified below each item in the Agenda".

THE REPORTS RELATING TO THE EXEMPT ITEMS HAVE NOT BEEN MADE PUBLIC AND SHOULD BE REGARDED AS STRICTLY PRIVATE TO MEMBERS AND OFFICERS ENTITLED TO RECEIVE THEM.

32.E **URGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE**

Exempt Minutes of the meetings held on 7 and 24 March, and 25 April 1997 (**ED32E**).

JOHN HARWOOD
Chief Executive

June 1997

Education Committee

URGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE - 7 MARCH 1997 - MINUTES of the meeting commencing at 4.00 pm and finishing at 5.10 pm

Present:

Voting Members:

Councillors J.A. Cochrane, Brian Hodgson and D.L.B. Spencer.

Ex Officio:

Councillor Dermot Roaf.

Officers:

Whole of meeting: T. Stock and J.A. Dean (Chief Executive's Office); S. Collins, R. Smith and J. Vallis (Education Department).

The Sub-Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, together with supplementary information and recommendations circulated at the meeting copies of which agenda, reports and additional papers are attached to the signed Minutes, and in relation thereto the Committee determined as follows:-

14/97 ELECTION TO CHAIR

RESOLVED: that Councillor Hodgson (Labour) be elected to chair the meeting.

15/97 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 1997 were approved and signed.

16/97 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

(a) School Meals - Price Increase

The Sub-Committee were asked to consider as an item of urgent business a proposal to maintain the existing price of a school meal at £1.20 for the duration of the summer term 1997 and to increase the price to £1.25 with effect from September 1997.

In accordance with Standing Order 19(3) and the provisions of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the Chair declared himself satisfied that this item was urgent in order that schools could be told of the decision as soon as possible to enable parents to be informed. The item was thus added to the published agenda.

RESOLVED: to agree to the price of a school meal remaining as £1.20 for the duration of the Summer term 1997 and for that price to be increased to £1.25 with effect from September 1997.

(b) School and Welfare Catering

The Sub-Committee were asked to consider as an item of urgent business a request by the Commercial Services Urgency Sub-Committee on 14 February 1997 to agree to the termination of the existing school and welfare catering arrangements, and, subject to approval of this request, the Sub-Committee were requested to determine whether to re-tender on the existing basis or to request a report for submission to the next Education Committee on 18 March 1997 on available options for revising the specification.

In accordance with Standing Order 19(3) and the provisions of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the Chair declared himself satisfied that this item was urgent in order that officers could receive guidance from the Sub-Committee as to the direction in which they should

proceed. The item was thus added to the published agenda.

RESOLVED: to determine this matter at item 9E on the agenda.

17/97 EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: that the public be excluded during the consideration of items 6E, 7E, 8E and 9E in the Agenda since it was likely that if they were present during those items there would be a disclosure of "exempt" information as described in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 and specified below each item in the Agenda, i.e. information relating to:

- (a) a particular employee, former employee or applicant to become an employee of, or a particular office holder, former office holder or applicant to become an office holder under the Authority (Agenda Items 6E, 7E and 8E);
- (b) any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the authority in the course of negotiations for a contract for the acquisition or disposal of property or the supply of goods or services (Agenda Item 9E).

18/97 EXEMPT MINUTES
(Agenda Item 6E)

The exempt part of the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 1997 were approved and signed.

19/97 SCHOOL AND WELFARE CATERING
(Agenda Item 9E)

The Sub-Committee had before them a report which sought approval to a request by Commercial Services Urgency Sub-Committee on 14 February 1997 to agree to the termination of the existing school and welfare catering arrangements, and, subject to the approval of this request, to determine whether to re-tender on the existing basis or to request a report for submission to the next Education Committee on 18 March 1997 on available options for revising the specification.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) agree to the request by the Commercial Services Urgency Sub-Committee to terminate the existing school and welfare catering arrangements; and
- (b) request the officers to submit a report to the 18 March 1997 meeting of the Education Committee on options for revising the specification.

.....in the Chair

Date of signing1997

* (The reports relating to the exempt items have not been made public and should be regarded as strictly private to those members and officers entitled to receive them.)

BELOW IS A SUMMARY OF THE EXEMPT MINUTE ARISING FROM AGENDA ITEM 8E

PREMATURE RETIREMENTS
(Agenda Item 8E)

The Sub-Committee considered a report detailing requests for early retirement from 26 teachers and the decisions are set out in the exempt minutes, of the meeting.

Education Committee

URGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE - 24 MARCH 1997 - MINUTES of the meeting commencing at 12.30 pm and finishing at 12.45 pm.

Present:

Voting Members:

Councillors Brian Hodgson, Dermot Roaf (in place of Councillor J.A. Cochrane) and D.L.B. Spencer.

Officers:

Whole of meeting: J.A. Dean (Chief Executive's Office); J. Vallis (Education Department).

The Sub-Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, together with supplementary information circulated at the meeting copies of which agenda, reports and additional papers are attached to the signed Minutes, and in relation thereto the Committee determined as follows:-

19/97 ELECTION TO CHAIR

RESOLVED: that Councillor Roaf (Liberal Democrat Group) be elected to chair the meeting.

20/97 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 1997 were approved and signed.

21/97 ITEM OF URGENT BUSINESS

Premature Retirements

The Sub-Committee were asked to consider as an item of urgent business 6 requests for early retirements.

In accordance with Standing Order 19(3) and the provisions of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the Chair declared himself satisfied that this item was urgent in order that schools could take immediate action to implement arrangements for the replacement of the 6 applicants for premature retirement, if approved. The item was thus added to the published agenda.

RESOLVED: to determine this matter at item 9E on the agenda.

22/97 EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: that the public be excluded during the consideration of items 6E, 7E, 8E and 9E in the Agenda since it was likely that if they were present during those items there would be a disclosure of "exempt" information as described in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 and specified below each item in the Agenda, i.e. information relating to:-

- (a) a particular employee, former employee or applicant to become an employee of, or a particular office holder, former office holder or applicant to become an office holder under the Authority, (Agenda Items 6E, 7E, 8E and 9E);
- (b) any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the authority in the course of negotiations for a contract for the acquisition or disposal of property or the supply of goods or services (Agenda Items 6E and 7E).

PROCEEDINGS FOLLOWING THE WITHDRAWAL OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

23/97 EXEMPT MINUTES*

(Agenda Item 6E)

RESOLVED: the exempt part of the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 1997 were approved and signed.

.....in the Chair

Date of signing1997

* The reports relating to the exempt items have not been made public and should be regarded as strictly private to those members and officers entitled to receive them.

BELOW IS A SUMMARY OF THE EXEMPT MINUTES ARISING FROM AGENDA ITEMS 8E AND 9E

PREMATURE RETIREMENTS - REQUESTS TO REVISE DATE OF RETIREMENT
(Agenda Item 8E)

The Sub-Committee considered requests received from 50 teachers to revise their date of retirement from 31 March 1997 to 31 August 1997 and the decisions are set out in the exempt minutes of the meeting.

PREMATURE RETIREMENTS
(Agenda Item 9E)

The Sub-Committee considered 6 requests for early retirement and the decisions are set out in the exempt minutes of the meeting.

Education and Social Services Committees

EARLY YEARS SUB-COMMITTEE - 3 MARCH 1997 - MINUTES of the meeting commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 4.55 pm

Present:

Voting Members:

Councillors Mrs A. Davis, S. Dhall (in place of Councillor Caroline Lucas), Mrs C. Fulljames, Janet Godden, MacKenzie, Julie Mayhew-Archer, Keith Mitchell (in place of Councillor M.D. Badcock), Betty Roberts, Mary Smith and Vanessa Thomas.

Non-Voting Members:

Ms E. Place.

Ex Officio:

Councillors J.A. Cochrane (in place of Councillor Dermot Roaf) and Jack Steer (in place of Councillor R.J. Langridge).

Officers:

Whole of meeting: G. Malcolm, V. Johnson and J.A. Dean (Chief Executive's Office); J. Fisher and R. Harmes (Education Department); P. Hodgson and M. Simm (Social Services Department); C. Wright (County Treasurer's Department).

By Invitation:

Councillors David Barbour, Mrs Humphries and Margaret Ferriman (for Agenda Item 7).

The Sub-Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, together with the following additional papers:

- A letter entitled 'Proposed Early Years Unit Scheme' from G. Thompson on behalf of the Oxfordshire Pre-School Learning Alliance. Agenda Item 6
- 'Presentation to the Early Years Sub-Committee re: the Closure of the Kidlington Family Centre'.)
- 'Samera Hussain's Memories of CHUFF 1989-1996') Agenda Item 7
- Report by the Director of Social Services and the Chief Education Officer - 'Review of Family Centre Provision : Responses to Consultation')

Copies of the agenda, reports and additional papers are attached to the signed Minutes, and in relation thereto the Sub-Committee determined as follows:-

19/97 ELECTION TO CHAIR

RESOLVED:that Councillor Mayhew-Archer (Liberal Democrat) be elected to chair the meeting.

20/97 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

Apologies for absence, temporary appointments and Group Leader substitutions were reported as follows:

Apology from	Temporary Appointment/Substitute
Councillor Badcock	Councillor Mitchell

Councillor Langridge
Councillor Lucas
Councillor Roaf
Councillor Shouler

Councillor Steer
Councillor Dhall
Councillor Cochrane
-

21/97 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 1997 were approved and signed.

22/97 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

Mr Malcolm reported:

(a) the receipt of two petitions in the following terms:

(1) Kidlington Family Centre:

"Please sign below if you want the Kidlington Family Centre to stay open!"
(168 signatures)

(2) Florence Park Family Drop-In Centre:

"Oxfordshire County Council are planning to turn our drop-in centre into one for referred families ONLY. This will mean that not everybody can use it whenever they like. Many people will lose what has become a valuable place for finding support and friendship. For some this has become an essential lifeline. Help us to keep our centre as it is, a place that welcomes everyone."

(1,730 signatures)

(b) that the following requests to address the meeting had been agreed:

Request from	Agenda Item
Mrs S.J. Fisher (Kidlington Family Centre User)))))
Mrs N. Hussain (Centre for Hardwick under Fives and their Families (CHUFF) - User)) 7 -) The Future Shape of) Family Centre Provision
Andrew Sivewright (Florence Park Family Centre - User)))))))

23/97 EARLY YEARS UNITS
(Agenda Item 6)

The Sub-Committee considered a number of revised recognition guidelines for Early Years Units (EYU) which had been drawn up in response to a request made at the last meeting for more flexible use to be introduced into the guidelines (Minute 9/97).

A letter was circulated from Mr G. Thompson on behalf of Oxfordshire Pre-School Learning Alliance which outlined their main concerns with regard to the implementation of the Early Years Unit Scheme (a copy of which is attached to the signed Minutes).

RESOLVED: to approve the key guidelines for Early years Units subject to:

(a) (on a motion by Councillor Godden, seconded by Councillor Mrs Fulljames and carried nem con) in

the definition of an EYU, the addition of "by themselves or" before "together"; and the deletion of "nor should they cater just for 4 year olds on their own", to read as follows:-

"an Early Years Unit is a primary school class in which four-year-olds are taught by themselves or together with children of reception age. Early Years Unit's do not include three-year-olds."

- (b) (on a motion by Councillor Godden, seconded by Councillor Roberts and carried by 8 votes to 2) in the sentence introducing the guidelines, the substitution of "work towards being" for "to be", to read as follows:-

"Early Years Units are expected to work towards being staffed and resourced to the levels set out below:"

- (c) (on a motion by Councillor Mrs Fulljames duly seconded and carried by 9 votes to 1) the substitution in the Staffing Guidelines of "all mornings/afternoons each day", for "all day, each day", to read as follows:

"* either 1 Nursery Nurse or equivalent or 1 Learning Support Assistant (LSA), provided that this person has early years experience; makes a commitment to appropriate training; is the same person all mornings/afternoons each day."

24/97 THE FUTURE SHAPE OF FAMILY CENTRES PROVISION
(Agenda Item 7)

Prior to the consideration of this item the Committee were addressed by the following members of the public and local members:

Mrs Fisher - spoke on behalf of the users of the Kidlington Family Centre. The text of her address was made available to the Sub-Committee and a copy is attached to the signed Minutes.

Mrs Hussain - spoke on behalf of the users of the CHUFF Centre; in particular, those who experienced difficulties in making friends. She paid tribute to staff members at the Centre who had made her feel very welcome. She circulated photographs which illustrated some of the activities that had involved Mrs Hussain and her family over the last seven years, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes. Mrs Hussain described the various Community Education activities she had undertaken at the Centre and expressed concern that if the Centre was to close, she believed there would be no community education provision within the Hardwick and Ruscote areas. She urged the Sub-Committee, therefore, not to abandon the Centre, but to help it to grow.

Mr Sivewright - spoke on behalf of the users of Florence Park Centre. He described his involvement with the Centre since 1971 and the various problems which families had faced in the past and which the Centre had helped to alleviate. He believed that a solution was to be found in a mix of user groups. He described the anger that people felt at the proposal to change facilities offered at the Centre, particularly as staff had organised the Centre into one which catered for a multiplicity of needs.

Councillor Barbour addressed the Sub-Committee in support of the ACE Centre, Chipping Norton. He explained that the Centre was situated in a rural working town which suffered from a degree of poverty and deprivation. The Centre was viewed by the Countryside Commission as addressing need in an isolated rural hinterland. He believed the Centre to be still in the process of development and was both well run and well resourced. The Centre also conformed to all the required key principles for family centres as set down by the Sub-Committee on 6 February 1997.

Councillor Ferriman addressed the Sub-Committee on behalf of the Neithrop Centre, Banbury which, she considered, served a vital purpose to members of the community. She had received many representations opposing the proposals from users of the Centre. The Family Centre provided services for many poor and deprived families living in the area. It not only fulfilled all of the required key principles for family centres as set down by the Sub-Committee on 6 February 1997, but it also served as a substitute for a women's respite centre, an amenity which was lacking in Banbury. She queried the rationale behind the entry into a five year service agreement only the previous year in view of its proposed closure. She ended by reading out a letter from a local headteacher in opposition to the proposal.

Councillor Mrs Humphries - spoke in favour of the CHUFF Centre remaining open. She said that she had received many letters and telephone calls opposing its closure. The Centre was situated on a new development within a large, densely populated area which had more than average numbers of children on

the 'at risk' register. She urged the Sub-Committee to keep the Centre open as its closure could, in the long term, generate more problems and costs for Social Services. She expressed concern at the apparent lack of consultation entered into with interested parties regarding the proposals, such as the local schools. She ended by quoting from some of the correspondence she had received from users of the Centre.

The Sub-Committee considered a report (EY7) which provided details of responses received from staff, Divisional Liaison Panels, and users of Family Centres and which briefly summarised the key issues raised. Annex 1 to the report set out the financial implications relating to the proposals provisionally agreed at the last meeting for the future shape of family centre provision (Minute 7/97), which had been revised in the light of the County Council's 1997/98 Budget decisions.

Ms Wright amended the note immediately below the table at EY7 - Annex 1 as follows:-

"Note: In 1999/2000 the savings will increase to £130k as the 1998/99 figure still includes £20k of set up costs."

Councillor Smith moved and Councillor MacKenzie seconded the words recorded in (a) and (b) below.

Councillor Godden moved and Councillor Mayhew-Archer seconded an amendment to add the words recorded at (c), which was further amended with the leave of the Sub-Committee at the suggestion of Councillor Mitchell, and (d) below. On being put to the vote the amendment was carried by 6 votes to 2, Councillor Thomas abstaining.

Councillor Mitchell then moved and Councillor Mrs Fulljames seconded an amendment to add the words recorded at (e) below. Upon being put to the vote the amendment was carried by 7 votes to 0, Councillors MacKenzie and Thomas abstaining.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and it was

RESOLVED: (by 7 votes to 1, Councillor MacKenzie abstaining) to:

- (a) approve the final shape of proposals as provisionally approved in EY13, paragraphs 13 and 17 as amended and to RECOMMEND the Social Services and Education Committees accordingly; and subject to such approval
- (b) ask the Chief Education Officer and the Director of Social Services to explore with staff and users in those communities affected by the closure or reduction of existing family centres, new proposals for providing alternative forms of family support, making use of the remaining resources within Education and Social Services, and if possible, newly-generated resources from the voluntary sector and from the local communities themselves, and to report on developments to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee;
- (c) continue the service agreement with the Children's Society for the Neithrop Family Centre and to review the provision in a year's time, and consider uses for the £40,000 thus released from the proposals at the next meeting of the Informal Member/Officer Working Group on Family Centres;
- (d) enhance provision, in 1997/98 only, at the Grimsbury Family Centre by £16,000, and consider uses for the £16,000 thus released from the proposals at the next meeting of the Informal Member/Officer Working Group; and
- (e) as a first charge on the resulting savings, to provide one-year funding of up to £25,000 to facilitate continuation of Chipping Norton and Kidlington Family Centres on a self-help basis and without on-going County Council funding; a detailed scheme to be worked up urgently by officers following consultation with the Early Years spokespersons and drawing on expertise of the Early Years Development Team.

.....in the Chair

Date of signing1997

Education and Social Services Committees

ETHNIC MINORITIES CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE - 24 FEBRUARY 1997 - MINUTES of the meeting commencing at 7.30 pm and finishing at 9.55 pm

Present:

Voting Members:

Representing Oxfordshire County Council

Councillors Hugh Cundall, Margaret Ferriman, Janet Godden, Bob Johnston, Rita Milne (in place of Councillor Betty Roberts), Mrs Delia Smith and Mary Smith.

Representing the Ethnic Community

Mr M. Alam (in place of Mr A. Aziz) (Pakistani Community); Mr J. C'apek (Jewish Community); Mr M.K. Hasrat (Pakistani Welfare Association), Ms J. James, Mr J. Obhiozele (African Caribbean Association); Mrs E. Packwood (Hong Kong Community).

Observers from the District Councils

Councillor Pam Johnston (Vale of White Horse District Council) and Councillor Betty Standingford (Oxford City Council).

Officers:

Whole of meeting: Mr D.N. Bishop and Mr G. Malcolm (Chief Executive's Office); Mr J. Christie and Ms P. Moss (Education Department); Ms A. Burn and Mr I. Moss (Environmental Services); Ms J. Carr (Social Services Department).

Also present: Mr A. Harper-Smith (Oxfordshire Racial Equality Council); Mr A. Mitchell (African Caribbean Association).

The Consultative Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, copies of which agenda and reports are attached to the signed Minutes, and in relation thereto the Committee determined as follows:-

1/97 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apology from	Substitute
Mr A. Aziz	Mr M. Alam
Mr Bhandari	-
Councillor Roberts	Councillor Milne
Councillor N.A.S. Matthews	-
Councillor Thomas	-
Ms T. Widener	-

2/97 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Consultative Committee held on 25 November 1996 were approved and signed.

3/97 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Minute 44/96 - Section 11

Mr Christie confirmed that information on ethnic minority pupil exclusions in Oxfordshire was being collected. A report would be made to the Committee's next scheduled meeting.

Minute 45/96 - Post of Joint Commissioning Manager for Ethnic Minorities

Ms Carr reported that the County Council, as part of their budget decisions, had approved the transfer of funding for the post of Commissioning Manager for Ethnic Minorities from County Council (Social Services) to Joint Finance, as agreed by the Oxfordshire Councils / Health Authorities Joint Consultative Committee in November 1996.

4/97 ORDER OF BUSINESS

RESOLVED: to consider Agenda Item 8 immediately before Item 6.

5/97 DECISIONS OF THE EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEES
(Agenda Item 5)

RESOLVED: to note the decisions of the Education and Social Services Committees.

6/97 GYPSY COMMUNITY - LEGISLATION
(Agenda Item 8)

Anne Burn, Gypsy Liaison Officer and Ivan Moss, Assistant Property Officer, Gypsy Sites, gave a short presentation about the gypsy community. Anne spoke about the origins of gypsies and their history and culture. Ivan covered the development of gypsy related legislation and the County Council's policies which encouraged a tolerant attitude and co-operation.

The officers responded to questions. Mr Bishop confirmed that the constitution of the Consultative Committee, including membership, would be reviewed following the County Council elections in May 1997. At Members' request, Anne Burn undertook to discuss with the Gypsy community their representation.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) thank Ms Burn and Mr Moss for their presentation; and
- (b) note that the officers would report to the next scheduled meeting on the Committee's constitution and membership.

7/97 SECTION 11 - UPDATE
(Agenda Item 6)

Mr Christie reported that the Home Office had confirmed Section 11 funding, but only at existing cash limited levels, until August 1998 for the Language and Curriculum Project, and explained the implications of the decision. In view of this, and the uncertain position in relation to the County Council's budget, he suggested that a special meeting of the Consultative Committee be arranged to reconfigure the Project, including the distribution and deployment of resources, and to consider the options for change. He undertook to consult ethnic minority representatives before the Project was brought back to the Committee.

Mr Bishop reminded Members that the Section 11 budget at national level had been top-sliced in order to provide funding for the Single Regeneration Challenge Fund (SRB) Programme. He suggested that the Secretaries to the Partnership Boards of the Barton, Blackbird Leys and Grimsbury SRP Projects be invited to present their Annual Reports to this Committee, highlighting in particular their provision for ethnic communities in this area.

At Members' request Mr Bishop undertook to circulate to all co-opted Members the County Council's resolution and agreed 1997/98 Revenue Budget, together with the further reductions and savings that the Council would be required to implement if the Secretary of State and Parliament were to impose a budget on the Council at provisional capping level.

Mr Christie reported that external funding was being sought for the Refugee and Non Bilingual Programme, which was due to end on 31 March 1997.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) receive the report and note the present position; and

- (b) arrange a special Consultative Committee Meeting on Tuesday 8 April commencing at 7.30 p.m. at County Hall in order to consider the Language and Curriculum Support Section 11 Project prior to its submission to the Home Office.

8/97 A PROPOSED FAMILY SUPPORT STRATEGY FOR THE EDUCATION SERVICE
(Agenda Item 7)

The Consultative Committee considered a report ETHCC7 which introduced a draft Family Support Strategy for the Education Service as a contribution towards an overall County strategy: "Family Support Within the Education Service". The draft was for consultation initially with the Education Service, and then with Social Services, the Health Authority and voluntary family support agencies. The Consultative Committee were invited to comment on any matters relating to the ethnic communities in Oxfordshire as part of the consultative process.

Pat Moss introduced the report and invited Members to submit comments to her at The Centre for Parent / Teacher Partnership, 15, Norham Gardens, Oxford OX2 9PG (Tel. 274036).

Members welcomed the opportunity to comment on the draft strategy and undertook to liaise with their communities in the County, and with the Oxfordshire Racial Equality Council.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) receive the report ETHCC7;
- (b) (on a motion by Councillor Johnston, seconded by Councillor Smith and carried nem con) refer the report and draft strategy to the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education for comment; and
- (c) consider initial responses at the next meeting.

9/97 CAMPSFIELD HOUSE
(Agenda Item 9)

At their September 1996 meeting the Consultative Committee had urged Members to write to their local Member of Parliament setting out their concerns about an alleged lack of healthcare for detainees at the Immigration Detention Centre, Campsfield House.

The Committee considered a response received from the Home Secretary, via the Right Hon. Michael Heseltine M.P. to representations made by Councillor Hugh Cundall (ETHCC9). Members also had before them a letter from Mr A. Hornsby-Smith which set out his response to the points in the Home Office letter and inviting this Committee to express to the Home Secretary their disappointment that it did not accord with their views.

Mr Bishop confirmed that the County Council had asked the Home Office for representation on the Campsfield House Visiting Committee, so far without success. However, it was understood that the Social Services Committee Group Spokespersons were seeking an informal meeting with Mr D. Rowley, Chair of the Visiting Committee, where these matters could be raised.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) note the position; and
- (b) ask the officers to report to a future meeting the outcome of the Spokespersons informal meeting.

10/97 DATE OF NEXT MEETING
(Agenda Item 10)

RESOLVED: to note that the next scheduled meeting of the Consultative Committee would take place on 1 September 1997 commencing at 7.30 p.m. at County Hall.

.....in the Chair

Date of signing1997

Education Committee

URGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE - 25 APRIL 1997 - MINUTES of the meeting commencing at 2.30 pm and finishing at 4.10 pm

Present:

Voting Members:

Councillors J.A. Cochrane, Hugh Cundall (in place of Councillor D.L.B. Spencer), Brian Hodgson.

Ex Officio:

Councillor Dermot Roaf.

By Invitation:

Councillor David M. Turner (for item 7).

Officers:

Whole of meeting: J.A. Dean (Chief Executive's Office); J. Vallis (Education Department).

Part of meeting: J. Crouch (Education Department).

The Sub-Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, together with supplementary information relating to agenda item 10E circulated at the meeting copies of which agenda, reports and additional papers are attached to the signed Minutes, and in relation thereto determined as follows:-

26/97 ELECTION TO CHAIR

RESOLVED:that Councillor Cochrane (Liberal Democrat Group) be elected to chair the meeting.

27/97 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

Apologies for absence, temporary appointments and Group Leader substitutions were reported as follows:

Apology from	Temporary Appointment/Substitute
Councillor Langridge	-
Councillor Shouler	-
Councillor Spencer	Councillor Cundall

28/97 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 1997 were approved and signed.

29/97 THE HEYFORDS CE(C) PRIMARY SCHOOL - FUTURE VIABILITY (Agenda Item 6)

The Sub-Committee had before them a report (EDU6) seeking approval for formative consultations to be carried out with parents and relevant others on a request received from the Governing Body of The Heyfords CE (C) Primary School to close the School, to take effect at the end of the current school year, or as soon as possible thereafter.

RESOLVED: to agree to formative consultations being carried out on the proposal of the Governing Body that The Heyfords CE(C) Primary School be closed from September 1997, or as soon as possible after that date.

30/97 MOLLINGTON CE(C) PRIMARY SCHOOL - FUTURE VIABILITY
(Agenda Item 7)

The Sub-Committee had before them a report (EDU7) seeking approval for formative consultations to be carried out with parents and relevant others on a request received from the Governing Body of Mollington CE(C) Primary School to close the school, to take effect at the end of the current school year or as soon as possible thereafter.

Prior to the consideration of this item, the Sub-Committee were addressed by Councillor David M. Turner, the Local Member and a former Governor of the school. He provided the Sub-Committee with further background information on events and discussions with various bodies which had led to the request for closure. Whilst wishing to remain neutral on the issue, Councillor Turner expressed a wish by the local community to retain the school, and also their concern about the future use of the school's premises should the school be closed. He described interest expressed at a recent public meeting for affordable new housing to be built in the village to suit young people with young families. He added that in the light of the recent fair OFSTED report there had been some enthusiasm expressed locally for efforts to be made to encourage more parents to send their children to the school in order that closure could be avoided. He expressed concern, however, that some parents had taken their children out of the school at Easter and that some planned to do the same at the end of the Summer term, thus contributing to the lowering of the school roll even further.

In response to requests made by the Sub-Committee, Mrs Crouch undertook to include in the report to the 3 June Education Committee, an assessment of the alternative options open to parents, should the closure proceed, in terms of space available in neighbouring schools. This would take into account information about nursery vouchers, rising fives etc; and, in addition, information, as far as it could be known, about numbers and the destination of children who had already left the school or whose parents had expressed their intention to take their child out of the school.

RESOLVED: (By 2 votes to 0) to agree that formative consultations be carried out on the proposal of the Governing Body that Mollington CE(C) Primary School be closed from September 1997 or as soon as possible after that date.

31/97 EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: that the public be excluded during the consideration of items 8E, 9E and 10E in the Agenda since it was likely that if they were present during those items there would be a disclosure of "exempt" information as described in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 and specified below each item in the Agenda, i.e. information relating to a particular employee, former employee or applicant to become an employee of, or a particular office holder, former office holder or applicant to become an office holder under the authority.

PROCEEDINGS FOLLOWING THE WITHDRAWAL OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

32/97 EXEMPT MINUTES*
(Agenda Item 8E)

RESOLVED: the exempt part of the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 1997 were approved and signed.

.....in the Chair

Date of signing1997

* The reports relating to the exempt items have not been made public and should be regarded as strictly private to those members and officers entitled to receive them.

BELOW IS A SUMMARY OF THE EXEMPT MINUTES ARISING FROM AGENDA ITEM 10E

PREMATURE RETIREMENTS

(Agenda Item 10E)

The Sub-Committee considered 21 requests for early retirement and the decisions are set out in the exempt Minutes of the meeting.

POLICY AND BUDGET PLANS 1997/98 - POST 16 TRANSPORT

Report by the Chief Education Officer and County Treasurer

Introduction

1. At its February meeting, Council resolved that in the event that Parliament redetermined the Council's budget at the capping level, the provision of post 16 transport should end. The proposal was forecast to save £874,000 in 1997/98 and £1.5m per annum thereafter. The Strategy & Resources Committee were informed in March of the need to take into account the views of students and parents before making a final decision on the withdrawal of transport at this meeting of the Education Committee. This report sets out the full implications of the proposal and the results of the consultation process.

Current Provision

2. Transport is currently provided for 2,875 post 16 students, attending their catchment area school or college, where this is more than 3 miles from home. The majority of provision is through coaches, though mini buses and taxis are used to transport 80 special educational needs (SEN) students attending FE colleges. In Oxford City few students receive free transport and the majority of those students are provided with season tickets. Students attending mainstream school sixth forms are transported alongside younger pupils attending the same school. Students (or their parents) contribute £25 per term towards their transport costs, except where they or their parents are on income support or other means tested benefits, in which case the contribution is waived. The budget provision for 1997/98, before any reduction, is as follows:

	Pupil Nos	£
(a) Home to College		
Coach Provision	1,988	898,400
SEN Provision - Taxis and Minibuses	80	249,000
		1,147,400
Income from Contributions	1916	143,700
		1,003,700
(b) Home to School		
Provision	807	364,700
Income from Contributions	778	58,300
		306,400

Consultation Responses and Other Issues Arising

3. All students, parents, schools and colleges were informed by letter of the Council's intention to end post 16 provision. All were invited to comment on the proposals by 16 May 1997. At the time of writing this report, 99 responses have been received, the content of which are summarised at Annex 1. The position will be updated at the Committee meeting on any further responses received before the deadline.
4. All but 2 of the responses were against the proposals. The issues raised, plus others identified following further research and discussion are as follows.

- (a) Maximum saving is below target level

From the previous paragraphs, it is clear that whilst the total cost of provision exceeds £1.5m, the net cost to the Council, after allowing for contributions, is £1.3m. The maximum potential saving therefore falls some £200,000 below the full year target. The discrepancy has arisen due to an overstatement of the share of the £2.8m secondary transport budget previously attributable to post 16 students.

Furthermore, the Transport Section of the Education Department has now had the opportunity to analyse fully the patterns of provision to secondary schools, and finds it impossible to cut all 807 places and reorganise the remaining transport without creating unreasonable journey times for some pupils. A maximum of 7 of the 200 coaches currently going into secondary schools can be cut, though this would leave hardly any room for margin of error or flexibility for new students

arriving within year. The net saving is estimated at £70,400 after allowing for the loss of contributions income from those who do lose their seat. Additional income of £50,400 can be raised by increasing the contribution rate from £25 to £60 (the current concessionary rate for post 16 pupils not entitled to transport) for those students who retain their seats. The maximum potential saving, therefore, is:

College Provision		£
School Provision	-	1,003,700
	-	70,400
	-	50,000
	-	1,124,500

i.e. a shortfall in a full year of £375,000 - estimated £219,000 for 1997/98.

(b) Potential legal challenge on grounds of discrimination

The withdrawal of post 16 transport will impact differentially on a number of groups in terms of their future access to post 16 educational provision. As such, the proposal could be subject to legal challenge. Groups adversely affected that have been identified to date are:

- (1) students with a statement of Special Educational Needs - many require specialist or individual transport, which, at a current average cost in excess of £3,100, could not be met by the family. Maintaining provision for the current 80 students would reduce the potential full year saving by £249,000;
- (2) students in receipt of mean tested benefits - currently 101 students have their £25 termly contribution waived. Many would find difficulty in continuing their education if they have to pay full transport costs, especially if they also fall within a second group adversely affected. In some cases, free seats will still be available on continuing school transport;
- (3) students in rural areas/limited public transport - in many cases there will be no alternative to the Council organised transport run, and the opportunity for further education will have to be foregone;
- (4) students in areas of no alternative provision - the high incidence of consultation responses from the Henley area reflects the lack of alternative provision to the FE College as none of the local schools have sixth forms. This, combined with (3) above, will limit severely educational opportunities for these students. Students from the Henley area have pointed out that as the Council reorganised provision, there are no local sixth forms but only a tertiary college, then there is a continuing obligation to provide free transport.

If post 16 transport is withdrawn, the Council cannot fetter its discretion and refuse all requests for assistance. It still must consider individual requests on grounds of hardship, lack of public transport, etc. At present there is only a sum of £5,000 in the discretionary awards budget to meet such requests.

(c) Potential Legal Challenge from Second Year Students

Students due to start their second year, but who are unable to do so as a result of the withdrawal of their transport, may bring a case of breach of contract, especially as they may have made alternative arrangements if they had been aware of the proposal before their first year. West Sussex withdrew their original proposal to end all post 16 transport from September 1997 due to the uncertainty of legal challenge from second year students, and will now end first year provision only. Hampshire also resolved to phase out transport over two years.

In relation to (b) and (c), if any further advice is given by the Solicitor to the Council following the publication of this report, it will be reported at the meeting.

If the transport is to be phased out, it is likely that first year savings will be considerably reduced as many coaches will be required to run to transport second year students. Due to the wide catchment area of the FE colleges, it is unlikely that many routes can be merged without resulting in unreasonable journey times. Charging full concessionary fare of £60 per term to first year

students would only produce additional savings of £190,000.

(d) Impact on Schools/Colleges

It is likely that the withdrawal of transport will result in the reduction of post 16 staying on rates. This would impact on the Council's longstanding policy of working to maximise the post 16 participation rate in education. As both schools and colleges (and, indeed, the Council itself) receive their funding based on student numbers, budgets will have to be reduced. This may require redundancies, for which, in the case of schools, the costs would fall to the Council. The reduction in staff and student numbers would also lead to a reduction in the curriculum choices that could be offered.

(e) Environmental Implications

The reduction in the number of coaches is likely to lead to a switch to private vehicles to get to school/college. This will be most marked in rural areas where suitable public transport is not available. Even assuming a 50% drop in staying on rates, and 4 students sharing a car, the increase in traffic volume will be sevenfold.

(f) Alternative Proposal to Increase Charges

To achieve the same level of savings as the withdrawal of all transport, i.e. £1,124,500, would require a termly charge of £165, compared to the current £25 (assuming existing exemptions apply - £155 if no student is exempt). It should be noted that at the previous charge of £50 per term, take up of transport reduced significantly, with students switching to private vehicles and public transport where a season ticket was cheaper. A charge of £60 for all students (equal to the current concessionary fare) would raise only an additional £315,000 in a full year.

Responses have said as an alternative, charges should be raised. Even if the final decision is not to end post 16 transport, it may be sensible to increase charges given the continuing financial pressures on the Council.

The Need for a Decision Now

5. At the time of writing this report, there has been no indication from the new Government in respect of a decision on the Council's budget. Whilst the initial proposal was dependent on the Government's decision, the delay caused by the timing of the general election now causes major difficulties. If a decision to implement the proposal is not made today, but deferred until the final Government decision on the budget, there will be insufficient time to inform all students, for them to revise their options accordingly, for the schools and colleges to revise their timetables and staffing levels accordingly, and for the Transport Section to revise all the school routes to achieve the savings assumed. The potential for legal challenge will grow significantly if the decision is not made in sufficient time for implementation at the start of an academic year. Conversely, the degree of planning involved for all parties would also make it very difficult to reinstate provision if withdrawn now, if money is later made available.

Conclusions

6. Whilst the initial proposal to withdraw post 16 transport to save £1.5m in a full year was made, on the best evidence available at the time, as achievable, with minimal redundancy implications, it is now apparent that the maximum potential saving is £1,124,500. The achievement of this saving is dependent on the absence of any successful legal challenge from any group on the grounds of discrimination. The timing of the savings is dependent on any successful legal challenge from second year students. To achieve any savings in 1997/98, the decision to implement the proposal must be made now. Implementation of the proposal is likely to reduce educational opportunities for all post 16 students.

Financial Implications

7. The financial implications for the Council are uncertain, as they depend on the final determination of the Council's budget. The potential range of budget figures are -£874,000 to +£656,000 in 1997/98, and -£1,500,000 to +£1,124,500 in a full year, as follows:

1997/98		Full Year
Council	Budget	Council

Budget		Budget	At Cap	Budget	At
Cap					
		£	£	£	£
Post 16 Transport Withdrawn	+656,000	-219,000	+1,124,500	-375,000	
Post 16 Transport Maintained	0	-874,000	0	-1,500,000	

Negative figures represent new reductions to be identified.
Positive figures represent excess savings available to support further expenditure.

Staff Implications

- As the majority of provision is with external contractors, there are limited direct staffing implications for Council employees. Three staff currently employed as escorts on SEN transport to colleges would need to be made redundant. In addition, the Transport Section of the Education Department would not fill a current vacancy, presently filled on a short term contract awaiting resolution of this issue. Any delay in reaching a decision beyond mid June will entail extra work for the Transport Section because students will have to be contacted at home rather than via the college. There may be indirect implications for sixth form teaching staff if there is a significant drop in the post 16 staying on rate.

Environmental Implications

- As covered in paragraph 4(e) above, there is likely to be a significant increase in traffic volumes, especially in rural areas if post 16 transport is withdrawn.

Implications for People Living in Poverty

- As covered in paragraphs 4(b)(1) and (2) above, the withdrawal of post 16 transport is likely to impact hardest on those living in poverty, particularly where associated with special educational needs, with the potential loss of any educational opportunity post 16.

RECOMMENDATION

- In the absence of a decision from the Government on the Council's budget, and having taken into account the views of students and parents during consultation, the Committee are RECOMMENDED to determine whether to implement the proposal for the withdrawal of post 16 transport from September 1997 and to advise Strategy & Resources Committee accordingly.**

G.M. BADMAN
Chief Education Officer

CHRIS GRAY
County Treasurer

Background papers: Replies to consultation exercise.

Contact Officers: John Christie, Tel. 01865 815146
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May 1997

PROPOSAL BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF CARTERTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO CHANGE THE CHARACTER OF THE SCHOOL TO ADMIT PUPILS 16-18.

Report by the Chief Education Officer

Introduction

1. The governors of Carterton Community College have requested that the character of the school be changed, under Section 35 of the Education Act 1996, to admit pupils aged 16-18. If agreed by the Education Committee (and the Secretary of State, if appropriate), this would change Carterton Community College from an 11-16 school to one for pupils 11-18.
2. This report outlines the procedure and timescale for changing the character of a school. It also considers preliminary implications of such a change with regard to accommodation, curriculum, staffing and financial matters.

Procedure and Timescale

3. The Chair of Governors of Carterton Community College wrote to the Local Education Authority on 20 March formally requesting the above change (see Annex 1 for the Chair of Governors' letter and accompanying papers). Carterton Community College is the only secondary school in West Oxfordshire without 6th Form provision of its own. (See details in Annex 2 of Provision in Oxfordshire - circulated separately to Members of the Committee and available for public inspection) Pupils from Carterton Community College aged 16 currently transfer to a variety of institutions, including West Oxfordshire College of Further Education, Henry Box and Wood Green Schools in Witney, and Burford School. Details of previous staying on rates and destinations are included in the submission from the governors.
4. Members of the Education Committee are invited to consider this application. They may then either:-
 - (a) reject the proposal;
 - (b) instruct the Chief Education Officer to initiate formal consultation with those listed in the Department for Education & Employment Circular 23/94;
 - (c) instruct the Chief Education Officer to initiate formative consultations on a more limited scale to ascertain the views of local schools and others.
5. The advice of the LEA officers who have been involved in discussions with Carterton Community College and in preparing information for this report, is that it would be appropriate to initiate formative discussions as described in (c) above. Amongst issues which may be considered are:
 - (a) the future population growth of the Carterton area;
 - (b) the performance of small 6th Forms;
 - (c) possibilities for inter-school co-operation at 6th Form level.
6. If the Education Committee were to agree in principle to formative consultations on the change of character of Carterton Community College, a possible timetable for consultation and submission to the Secretary of State (if appropriate) might be as set out below.

June/July 1997	Formative consultations with local schools and colleges, OSSHTA
23 September 1997	Report to the Education Committee on the outcome of the formative consultations
October 1997	Formal public consultation (if appropriate). This would be with: Parents FEFC Any school subject to the proposal Other schools in the area that may be affected by the proposal

Any other interested party, eg the local TEC and any others suggested by the Education Committee. These could include the local Member of Parliament, District Council Unions.

- * December 1997 Education Committee considers results of consultation.
- * February 1998 County Council considers the recommendations of Education Committee following consultation.

7. If the County Council wish to propose formally the change of character, the timetable might be as follows:

- * February 1998 Publication of proposals under Section 35 of the Education Act 1996.
- * February 1998 Submission of proposals to the Secretary of State.
- * March 1998 Deadline for objections to the proposals to be received by LEA.
- * April 1998 Deadline for submission to Secretary of State of statutory objections and LEA comments
- * July(?) 1998 Date by which the Secretary of State would intend to decide proposals.
- * Autumn 1998 Publication of changed admission arrangement for Carterton Community College
- * September 1999 Admission of Year 12 pupils to Carterton Community College.

Curriculum and Staffing Implications

8. Carterton Community College proposes to extend its curriculum provision post 16 by offering A level, GNVQ and Extension Skills courses.
9. The plans include offering A levels in up to 14 subjects: English, Geography, History, Religious Studies, Economics, French, German, Art, Drama, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Design and Technology. It is intended to include a Tutor Period for all 6th Form students in the weekly timetable. In addition, GNVQs would be offered in Art and Design (Advanced), Information Technology (Advanced), Business (Intermediate) and Leisure and Tourism (Intermediate). Tutor groups will mix students on academic and vocational courses. If this programme is established, the overall balance of provision, complemented by the Extension Programme (Key Skills/Community Service/Recreation) and Tutor Periods, would provide a broad and appropriate curriculum offer. It will be necessary to ensure that Religious Education and Physical Education are also offered as a core entitlement to all students.
10. The proposed time allocations for all courses marginally exceed the recommended minimum.
11. In the opinion of the headteacher, staff are generally qualified to teach all the courses offered, although most lack recent experience of teaching A levels. There would be a need to participate in Inset opportunities and network meetings, provided locally and through examination boards and awarding bodies regionally, in order to compensate for this lack of experience. A Senior Adviser suggests that it might also be helpful for staff to establish contact at an early stage with more experienced teachers of A level courses in their own subject. Carterton Community College is a GNVQ Part 1 pilot school which means that Art and Design and Information Technology will be offered at KS4 from September 1997. Support networks will be established for this initiative for pupils of 14-16, and thus experience will be gained for the development of GNVQ courses post 16.
12. Following the Dearing Review of 16-19 Qualifications, major changes will be made to the structure and assessment of A levels, AS and GNVQ qualifications. Key Skills will need to be integrated into courses for all students. These changes will take effect from September 1998. Schools and colleges currently offering post 16 courses are already addressing the planning and training issues to meet the new requirements. Commitments and registrations for new courses will have to be made early in 1998. Teachers at Carterton Community College will need to be aware of the implications of the changes. (Involvement in training courses and networks to prepare for these changes will have immediate financial implications for the school's Inset budget even if registration cannot be made at this stage.)

Building implications

13. The governors have identified an area within the school's permanent accommodation as their preferred site for the new 6th Form. As this area is currently occupied by the Learning Support Department, the school will need to relocate this facility to another part of the school. The Headteacher has requested that the three class temporary unit, which was provided after the last major fire at the school, is retained. This request has been agreed pending the outcome of the Committee's determination of the 6th Form proposal. A further planning permission will be needed if the buildings remain on site beyond February 1998.
14. It should be noted that the LEA does not own these temporary classrooms. If the buildings are retained, the LEA would need to purchase them from the insurance company at a cost of approximately £60,000.
15. The school has indicated that there would be no conversion costs associated with the move for either the new 6th Form or the Learning Support Department. Additional science and technology equipment, and library/study centre facilities would need to be provided. It is understood that the governors have agreed to lease the specialist equipment they require for the new 6th Form.

Financial Implications

16. The current LMS scheme does not provide a mechanism for funding new students for the autumn and spring terms if a school opens a new 6th Form in the September of an academic year. Funding on an AWPU basis would only be available from April of the following financial year based on the spring term January count. The LMS scheme would need to be revised to allow for such funding. There is a problem with the source of this funding. If students attend the new 6th Form, who would otherwise have gone to an FE College (as in the case of the Carterton proposal for a significant number of the projected students), then the funding is not reflected in the LEA's SSA for these students until the following financial year. If funds are to be allocated to a new 6th Form part-way through a financial year, then in a regime of capping and SSAs the extra funds would need to be found from within the existing budget allocation identified for other needs.

Environmental Implications

17. There would be a potential slight reduction in vehicle use between Carterton and Witney and Carterton and Burford.

18. Staff Implications

These are referred to in paragraphs 11 and 12 above.

Implications for People Living in Poverty

18. Should the cost of post 16 transport be transferred to parents, poorer families in Carterton would not have to provide the transport costs for their children, since post 16 education would be available in their community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

19. **The Education Committee are RECOMMENDED to:-**
 - (a) **consult with local schools and colleges on the formative proposal that Carterton Community College should become a school for pupils aged 11-18 from September 1999;**
 - (b) **ask the Chief Education Officer to present a further report to the meeting on 23 September 1997.**

GM BADMAN
Chief Education Officer

Background Papers: Nil

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Joan Crouch, Senior Education Officer Tel: (01865) 815178

May 1997

THE HEYFORDS CE (C) PRIMARY SCHOOL - FUTURE VIABILITY

Report by the Chief Education Officer

Introduction

1. On 28 January 1997 the governing body of The Heyfords CE (C) Primary School resolved that the school could not continue in its present form beyond the end of the summer term 1997 because of the small number of pupils on roll. They held meetings with Finance Officers and Education Officers, when a variety of options were considered. They also held a consultative public meeting which took place on 13 February 1997. As a result of this, the governing body resolved on 25 February 1997 to seek temporary funding to keep the school within budget for three years. Having failed to achieve this, the governing body resolved that it was now appropriate to ask the Local Education Authority to carry out the necessary procedures to close the school at the earliest date. The Urgency Sub-Committee on 25 April 1997 agreed to formative consultations being carried out on the proposal of the Governing Body that The Heyfords CE (C) Primary School be closed from September 1997, or as soon as possible after that date.

2. This report details the outcome of these consultations and gives information on the financial and staffing consequences of closure.

Pupil numbers, educational and financial viability

3. When governors decided to recommend the closure of the school there were 21 pupils on roll. At the end of the summer term 1997 it is anticipated that the roll will be less than 20 pupils.

4. Before considering that the most appropriate course of action was to close the school, the governing body considered in detail the implications of:

(a) The Upper Heyford's Airforce base site:

The future of the site is unlikely to be decided until Year 2000.

(b) The possible siting of the British Academy of Sport:

The number of potential primary school entrants from permanent staff families considered to be too low.

(c) Becoming an infant school:

The procedure for changing the character of the school to an infant school (Education Act 1996, Section 41) having been outlined, the governors felt this was unlikely to be a financially viable option.

(d) Amalgamation with Fritwell CE (C) School:

Some preliminary discussion of this option involving the local member and the then Chief Education Officer had taken place in 1995, but had not been pursued. The aim had been to retain some form of educational provision in the Heyfords. The issue of costs across the two sites remained a problem.

The procedure for an amalgamation (Education Act 1996, Section 167) having been outlined, the governors concluded that it would be unreasonable to make such a proposal to Fritwell CE (C) School as it would involve closing both schools and opening a new one.

(e) Closing the school:

The procedure for ceasing to maintain a school (Education Act 1996, Section 167 (1)) having been outlined, the governors noted that such a decision would in no way prejudice decisions about future school needs in the Heyfords if demographic changes occurred.

Preliminary Consultations

5. All the above options were discussed at a public meeting held in the village hall on 13 February 1997. Approximately forty people attended: members of the community, parents, governors including the Chairman of the Parish Council.
6. The clerk to the Governing Body outlined the financial position of the school. For the year 1997/98 a deficit budget of £17,000, including contingency funds, was predicted. A balanced budget would require all pupils from rising five to age eleven being in one classroom, taught by one teacher; a situation in which the national curriculum could not be delivered. In addition, given the nature of the premises this situation would represent a safety hazard for both staff and children.
7. Notwithstanding this, the Governing Body made a final effort to raise the cash shortfall to keep the school open. Having failed in this objective, the governing body expressed their wish that the closure should take effect at the end of the current school year or as soon as possible thereafter (Annexes 1, 2 and 3).

Formative Consultations

8. All parents and interested parties were in receipt of the attached consultation document (Annex 4). There have been two written responses received: one from the planning officer of Cherwell District Council and one from the Oxford Diocesan Director of Education. Both have been placed in the Members' Room.

Financial and staff implications

9. Individual discussions have taken place with the staff at The Heyfords CE (C) School. Staff have been made aware of their position should the school close, and the Education Department will use their best endeavours to help displaced staff find suitable employment.
10. LMS means that it is relatively easy to calculate the financial implications of closing The Heyfords CE (C) Primary School.
11. The pupil-related elements of the school's budget would transfer to any new school receiving Heyford pupils. Other budgetary elements may be seen as available for general reinvestment by the LEA. Current County Council policy is to add this amount to the Partnership Development Fund. The relevant figures are:

Pupil-related elements	£30,005
Other elements less transport costs total	£25,776

12. In addition, the receiving school would, of course, have increased disposable income available as a result of receiving extra pupils.

The School Buildings

13. The school buildings are owned by the Diocesan Trustees (except the prefabricated classroom which was provided by the Education Committee in 1994 on land owned by Oxfordshire County Council). No discussions have yet been held about the future of the school premises.

The Diocesan Board of Education

14. The Diocesan Board of Education understand the dilemma faced by the Governing Body and support the proposals outlined in this report. They are, however, concerned that consideration be given to the continuation of Church of England education presence in the Heyfords area by the inclusion of a church school in any new housing development in Upper Heyford.

Alternative Arrangements for the pupils

15. The Heyfords CE (C) Primary School serves three settlements: Caulcott, Lower and Upper Heyford. However, in recent years several families have chosen to educate their children elsewhere (A total of 24 pupils within the Heyford's catchment area are currently being educated in 6 other local authority and church schools.)
16. If the closure of The Heyfords CE (C) Primary School goes ahead, it is proposed that Fritwell CE (C) School should be named as the alternative school for the children of Caulcott, Lower and Upper Heyford. Free transport to Fritwell CE (C) School will be provided by the County Council under its normal policy (children

under 8 years where they live more than two miles from the school, and children over 8 years three miles).

17. Fritwell CE (C) School has a capacity for 189 pupils. The current roll, including Rising 5s is 125. 11 Year 6 pupils leave this summer and a further 7 pupils are expected to join the school in September 1997.
18. The present area links with Bicester Community College would be preserved by this designation as both The Heyfords CE (C) Primary School and Fritwell CE (C) Primary School are part of the same partnership of schools.

Environmental and Poverty Implications

19. There could be a small amount of additional use of transport for any children living in this area in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

20. **The Committee are RECOMMENDED to:**
 - (a) **authorise the publication of statutory notices under Section 167 of the Education Act 1996, to cease to maintain The Heyfords CE (C) Primary School, from August 1997 (or as soon as possible afterwards), and submit the proposal to The Secretary of State for Education for his approval;**
 - (b) **nominate the receiving school to be Fritwell CE (C) Primary School and to incorporate Caulcott, Lower and Upper Heyford into Fritwell CE (C) Primary School catchment area;**
 - (c) **agree to free transport being provided to Fritwell CE (C) School for pupils from Caulcott, Lower and Upper Heyford;**
 - (d) **support a proposal from the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education that one new school in any future housing development in the Heyfords should be a church school.**

GM BADMAN
Chief Education Officer

Background Papers: Correspondence between the Diocesan Director of Education and Chief Education Officer dated 5, 17 March 1997 and 9 and 21 April 1997.
Letter from Tony Williamson, Oxford Diocesan Board of Education, dated 25 April 1997
Report EDU6 to Education Urgency Sub-Committee - 25 April 1997.

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Martine Moon, Education Officer, North Division Tel: (01865) 815259

May 1997

MOLLINGTON CE (C) PRIMARY SCHOOL - FUTURE VIABILITY

Report by the Chief Education Officer

Introduction

1. On 9 April 1997 the Governing Body of Mollington CE (C) Primary School reluctantly resolved that the school could not continue in its present form beyond the end of the Summer term 1997 because of the budget situation, combined with low numbers of 29 pupils on roll. The parents of another 7 pupils have indicated that their children will leave by half-term, leaving 22 on roll. Others have also visited neighbouring schools. A further 6 Year 6 pupils leave Mollington CE (C) School at the end of the summer term for secondary education. The governors held meetings with the school's advisers and Education officer and Diocesan Adviser. The Finance Officer was consulted when a variety of options were considered. They also held a consultative parents meeting which took place on 15 April 1997. As a result of this, the Governing Body resolved that it was now appropriate to ask the Local Education Authority to carry out the necessary procedures to close the school at the earliest date, believing this to be in the pupils' best interests. The letter from the Chair of Governors is attached at Annex 1, for information. The Urgency Sub Committee on 25 April 1997 agreed that formative consultations be carried out on the proposal of the Governing Body that Mollington CE (C) Primary School be closed from September 1997 or as soon as possible after that date.
2. This report details the outcome of these consultations and a public meeting held on 8 May 1997, and gives information on the financial and staffing consequences of closure.

Pupil numbers, educational and financial viability

3. The governors have faced difficult budget decisions for the past few years. One solution they found was to loan the previous Headteacher to Adderbury CE (A) Primary School where the Head was on long-term sick leave. Mollington CE (C) School was then led by the Head of Cropredy CE (C) School (as joint head of her own school and Acting Head of Mollington) since 1 October 1995. This has enabled Mollington CE (C) School to provide a satisfactory curriculum and to run successfully, but the arrangement has to come to an end at the end of this term, as previously agreed between the governing bodies. The governors considered in detail a number of possibilities:

- (a) Exploring a continuing federation arrangement

This would only be possible with full agreement of all concerned. Mindful of the strain already experienced by their Head, the Cropredy Governors have declined to continue with this informal arrangement.

- (b) Establishing an early years' unit at Mollington

Having considered the timescale and practical difficulties which changing the character of a school would imply (Education Act 1996, Section 41), the governors felt that both organisationally and financially this was not likely to be a viable option.

- (c) Amalgamation with Cropredy CE (C) School

The aim of this suggestion would have been to retain some form of educational provision in Mollington. The issue of costs across two sites would have remained a problem. Also, once the procedure for an amalgamation (Education Act 1996 Section 167) was considered, the governors concluded that it would be unreasonable to make such a proposal to Cropredy CE (C) School. This would entail the closure of both schools and the opening of a new one.

- (d) Appointing a Headteacher and continuing to run as a 2 class school

Although it was hoped that this option might be pursued, close examination of the budget when it was known in March revealed that there was not enough money to do this. Even assuming that a Head could be found at short notice (s)he would have been :

- paid at the bottom of the scale

- expected to have maintained a full time class teaching commitment
- employed against the background of needing to build the school up if it was
to remain financially viable beyond April 1998
- faced with implementing the school's post-OFSTED Action plan

There were also serious concerns that pupils could not receive their full National Curriculum entitlement under these circumstances.

When the arithmetic had been done, to appoint such a Headteacher with one other full-time equivalent teacher revealed a budget shortfall of £8,213 and used the school's total reserves of over £12,000. This would imply a likely shortfall of more than £20,000 in 1998 assuming a standstill budget

(e) Closing the school

The procedure for ceasing to maintain a school (Education Act 1996 Section 167 (1)) was outlined to governors. They noted that if a proposal to cease to maintain Mollington C E (C) School was approved, pupils from its catchment area would be transported to a receiving school. Due to its geographical position, it would seem likely that this would be Cropredy CE (C) School (the nearest school).

Preliminary and formative consultations

4. The governors met parents on 15 April with representatives of the LEA and Diocese. A summary of the meeting appears at Annex 2. Subsequently, all the above options were discussed at a public meeting held in the school on 8 May 1997. Approximately 50 people attended: members of the community, parents, governors, including the Chairman of the Parish Council. All had been in receipt of the attached consultation document (Annex 3). A note of the meeting is available in the Members' Resource Centre (Annex 4). There have been 17 written responses to the consultation document: 9 parents, most of whom attended the public meeting, 1 resident from the village, the founding Chair of Governors of the 'new' primary school, the Chairman of Mollington Parish Council, a former headteacher of Mollington School, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire County Councils, the Oxford Diocesan Director of Education and the Cherwell District Council planning officer. Copies of these letters are lodged in the Members' Resource Centre.

Financial and Staff Implications

5. Individual discussions have taken place with the staff at Mollington CE (C) School. Staff have been made aware of their position should the school close, and the Education Department will use their best endeavours to help displaced staff find suitable employment.
6. Local Management of Schools means that it is relatively easy to calculate the financial implications of closing Mollington CE (C) School.
7. The pupil-related elements of the school's budget would transfer to any new school receiving Mollington pupils. Other budgetary elements may be seen as available for general reinvestment by the LEA. Current County Council policy is to add this amount to the partnership development fund. The relevant figures are:

Pupil-related element	£33,460
Other elements less additional transport costs	£18,980
8. In addition, the receiving school would, of course, have increased disposable income available as a result of receiving extra pupils.

The School Building

9. Mollington CE (C) School building and the immediate surroundings are owned by Oxfordshire County Council but are likely to need to be transferred to the Diocesan Trustees under the appropriate Education Act (1996, Section 60 (2)). The large playing field to the rear is also owned by the County Council. The adjacent village hall that the school shares with the community, and uses for PE and dining, is owned by the Parish Council. This hall is also used by a local playgroup.
10. No discussions have yet been held on the future use of the school premises. These are likely to await the

outcome of Government decisions on early years provision once nursery vouchers are abolished. However, the Education Committee should be mindful that under existing legislation (Local Government Act 1972 Section 123) Local Education Authorities cannot dispose of property for less than the best consideration, except with the specific consent of The Secretary of State.

11. These issues may also be influenced by the outcome of discussions with officers of the Oxford Diocese.

The Diocesan Board of Education

12. The Diocesan Board of Education understand the dilemma faced by the Governing Body and support the proposals in this report.

Alternative arrangements for the pupils

13. Mollington CE (C) School serves the area of Mollington village and Bourton Fields.
14. If the closure of Mollington CE (C) School goes ahead, it is proposed that Cropredy CE (C) School should be named as the alternative school for the children from Mollington and Bourton Fields. Free transport to Cropredy CE (C) School will be provided by the County Council under its normal policy (children under 8 years where they live more than two miles from the school, and children over 8 years three miles).
15. The present area links with Drayton School would be preserved by this designation as both Mollington CE (C) School and Cropredy CE (C) School are part of the same partnership of schools.
16. Cropredy CE (C) School has a capacity of 116 places. The current roll including Rising Fives is 108. 11 Year 6 pupils are leaving this summer. The roll in September will be 101. The school anticipates that a further 7 pupils will join the school in January 1998. The Headteacher is confident that all Mollington pupils who wish to transfer to Cropredy CE (C) School can be accommodated during the academic year 1997-98. Additional accommodation could be needed at Cropredy for the 1999-2000 academic year as numbers within Cropredy's existing catchment increase. Details of capacity and pupil forecasts for all primary schools in the Drayton partnership are available to Members in the Schools' Forecast booklet in the Members' Resource Centre and in the Education Committee box file (Annex 5). At present no pupils from the Mollington CE (C) School catchment area attend any of these schools other than Mollington. An unknown number of pupils are being educated privately (a further 2 from the school left recently) and 6 currently attend The Dasset Primary School in Fenny Compton, Warwickshire. A further 5 pupils currently attending Mollington School have indicated they will transfer to this school at half-term.

Environmental and Poverty Implications

17. There could be a small amount of additional use of transport for any children living in this area in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

9. **The Committee are RECOMMENDED to:**
 - (a) **authorise the publication of statutory notices under Section 167 of the Education Act 1996, to cease to maintain Mollington CE (C) School, from August 1997 (or as soon as possible afterwards), and submit the proposal to The Secretary of State for Education for his approval;**
 - (b) **nominate the receiving school to be Cropredy CE (C) School and to incorporate Mollington village and Bourton Fields into Cropredy CE (C) School catchment area;**
 - (c) **agree to free transport being provided to Cropredy CE (C) School for pupils from Mollington village and Bourton Fields.**

GM BADMAN
Chief Education Officer

Background Papers: Report EDU7 to Education Urgency Sub-Committee - 25 April 1997.

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May 1997

MEMBER/OFFICER WORKING GROUP ON CHILDREN'S SERVICES
Report by the Director of Social Services and the Chief Education Officer

Introduction

1. In the last Committee cycle, the Social Services Committee and the Education Committee endorsed a proposal to establish a joint Member/Officer Working Group on Children's Services. A further report outlining proposals was requested.

Background

2. In recent years several single issue informal Member/Officer Working Groups, involving officers and Members from both Social Services and Education, have been established. The Working Group on Youth Strategy ran for nearly three years and ranged widely, despite its title, over children's services issues. More recently a similar Working Group on Family Centres systematically reviewed all such provision in the county. In addition, the Early Years Sub-Committee (formerly the Early Years Working Party) brings together the two Departments, along with representatives of voluntary organisations, and is at the heart of the Divisional Early Years Panel system.
3. Working relations between Social Services and Education officers have become closer in recent years and a number of common agendas detailed in report SS14 which was submitted to Social Services Committee on 11 March 1997 have been developed. Health Authority involvement at both a strategic and operational level has increased. This was given further impetus by the requirements of the Children's Services Plan guidance and led in Oxfordshire to the establishment of the Children's Strategy Group, which brings together senior officers of the three agencies, to co-ordinate not only the production of the Children's Services Plan, but of the joint strategies (frequently extending to other agencies) that underpin it. The Children's Services Plan will be published at the end of June 1997 as a joint document.
4. The Children's Strategy Group addresses areas of common concern. It is not intended that it should address issues that are the core business of each agency and do not have an inter-agency dimension. In that respect, the proposed Working Group has clear parallels. What is clear, however, is that there are substantial areas where all three agencies have overlapping concerns and responsibilities.
5. The inter-agency priorities identified by this group were discussed at the final meeting of the informal Member/Officer Working Group on Youth Strategy on 17 March 1997. A motion was passed unanimously to submit these to the first meeting of the new Council's Social Services Committee and Education Committee; and that these would form the basis of the initial discussions of the new Working Group of Children's Services.
6. The Youth Strategy Working Group recommended that the Working Group on Children's Services should endorse the principle of early intervention as the underlying strategy in relation to four priority areas:
 - (a) Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and provision for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties;
 - (b) Pupil achievement and the engagement (or re-engagement) of disaffected pupils, in particular in relation to looked after children;
 - (c) Family support and diversion from youth crime. There is a need to refocus attention, and resources, from an over-emphasis upon child protection and persistent offenders;
 - (d) Children with disability: the development of a continuum of service that is prioritised in accordance with need.

Joint Planning

7. The publication in July 1994 of the Audit Commission's "Seen But Not Heard: Co-ordinating Community Child Health and Social Services for Children in Need", focused attention on the need for more effective collaboration between Social Services, Health and Education.

8. The 1990's have seen major legislative changes affecting Health, Education and Social Services. The Children Act 1989, the NHS and Community Care Act 1990 and the Education Act 1993 all reflect the need for greater co-operation and joint planning between agencies.
9. The benefits of Joint Planning are already established in the following areas:
 - (a) The Oxfordshire Area Child Protection Committee ensures agency co-ordination in relation to child protection.
 - (b) The Early Years Sub-Committee has ensured joint planning between Education, Social Services and voluntary agencies for children under eight years old.
 - (c) The Joint Commissioning Reference Group for Children with Special Needs has improved joint planning for children with special needs.

Proposal

10. It is proposed that a joint Member/Officer Working Group on Children's Services, be established to meet on a quarterly basis. If this proposal is agreed, officers will develop terms of reference for the Working Group to consider, and adopt, at its first meeting.
11. It is suggested that any newly established Member/Officer Working Group on Children's Services should include representation from the Health Authority.

Staff and Financial Implications

12. Whilst there are none identified at present, the process of joint planning could be beneficial in more effective use of staff and financial resources.

Environmental Implications

13. There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

Implications for People Living in Poverty

14. Whilst there are no immediate implications for people living in poverty, improved co-ordination and planning between Social Services and Education Departments and the Health Authority may improve services for this group.

Implications for Carers and Ethnic Minorities

15. It is anticipated that improved collaboration between the three agencies will improve services to carers and people from ethnic minority groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS

16. **The Committee are RECOMMENDED to:**
 - (a) **note the report SS15;**
 - (b) **agree to establish a joint Education/Social Services informal Member/Officer Working Group on Children's Services, to include representation from the Health Authority, the purpose of which will be to consider areas where the agencies have common concerns and responsibilities; and that attendance should be an 'approved duty' for the purposes of Members allowances.**

MARY ROBERTSON
Director of Social Services

G. N. BADMAN
Chief Education Officer

Background Papers: Nil

Contact Officers: Phil Hodgson (Assistant Director - Children & Families) Tel: (01865) 815355

John Christie, Assistant Chief Education Officer Tel: (01865) 815146

20 May 1997

APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Outside Body	Category	Appointment , Nomination or Unspecified	Number	Current Membership
Cherwell Division Youth Committee	B	A		4Ms C. Arakalian (Lab) Mr M. Beale (Lab) 2 vacancies
Oxford City Divisional Youth Committee	B	N		3Zoe Kurtz (Con)* Cllr Dermot Roaf Cllr Sylvia Tompkins
South Division Youth Committee	B	N		4Cllr Anne Purse Mr I. Russell-Swin erton (Lab) 2 vacancies
Vale Division Youth and Community Committee	B	N		3M.D. Badcock (Con)* Mr P.J.E. Lang (L/D) 1 vacancy
West Oxfordshire Divisional Youth Committee	B	N		4Cllr Brenda Churchill Mr K. Mumfor Mr M. Watkinson 1 vacancy
Adult Literacy Fund Management Committee	B	N		3Cllr Brenda Churchill Cllr Sylvia Tompkins Mrs Janet Todd (Con)*

Outside Body	Category	Appointment , Nomination or Unspecified	Number	Current Membership
Reading University: Members of the University's Court and Council	B	N		1John E. Jones*

* Former County Councillors

C.J. Impey
Assistant Chief Executive & Solicitor to the Council

Background Papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Geoff Malcolm, Corporate Services Unit, Chief
Executive's Office (Tel: (01865) 815904).

May 1997

MEMBERSHIP OF DRUGS ACTION TEAM

Mr Frank Sullivan
Superintendent, Thames Valley Police HQ

Mr Ray Fishbourne
Assistant Chief Probation Officer

Mr John Harwood
Chief Executive, Oxfordshire County Council

Mr Michael Taylor
Chief Executive, Oxfordshire Health Authority

Mr E. Church
Chair of West Oxford Drug Reference Group, West Oxfordshire District Council

Mr Robert Block
Chief Executive, Oxford City Council

Mr Grahame Handley
Chief Executive, Cherwell District Council

Ms B. Cook
Environmental Health, Oxford City Council

Dr Jonathan McWilliam
Oxfordshire Health Authority

Mr John Cann
Governor, Bullingdon Prison

Mr Terry Stock
Chief Executive, Vale of White Horse District Council

Mrs Christine Gore
Chair of South Oxfordshire District Council Drug Reference Group
South Oxfordshire District Council

Mr G. Badman
Chief Education Officer, Oxfordshire County Council

Tony Woolman
Director
Oxfordshire Council on Alcohol & Drug Use (OCADU)

Ms Mary Robertson
Director of Social Services, Oxfordshire County Council

EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 13 MAY 1997

MINUTES of the meeting commencing at 12.23 pm and finishing at 12.26 pm

Present:

Voting Members:

Councillors Anne Baker, E.A. Clements, A.D. Crabbe, M. Evans, Robert Evans, Neil Fawcett, Margaret Godden, Neville F. Harris, Mrs J. Heathcoat, Brian Hodgson, Shereen Karmali, Norman Matthews, Janet Morgan, David Nicholson, R.S. Rose, G.A. Sanders, Craig Simmons, D.L.B. Spencer, Olive Stedman, Jack Steer, Roy Tudor Hughes, David G. Turner and B.V. Wood.

Ex Officio:

Councillors David Buckle, Dhall, Bob Langridge, Dermot Roaf and C.H. Shouler.

Officers:

Whole of meeting: Chief Executive, C.J. Impey and A. Lowe; R. Smith (Education Department).

The Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, copies of which agenda and reports are attached to the signed Minutes, and in relation thereto determined as follows:-

32/97 ELECTION TO CHAIR

RESOLVED:that Councillor Janet Morgan (Liberal Democrat) be elected to chair the meeting.

33/97 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

Apologies for absence and temporary appointments were reported as follows:

Apology from	Temporary Appointment
Father Armstrong	-
Revd Dr John Gay	-

34/97 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18 March 1997 were approved and signed.

35/97 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Minute 17/97 - Capital Programme : Basic Need Provision

In response to a question from Councillor Hodgson, the Chief Executive confirmed that any matter still pending at the time of the General Election would be passed automatically by civil servants to the appropriate Minister to be dealt with.

36/97 APPOINTMENT OF SUB-COMMITTEES
(Agenda Item 5)

RESOLVED:

(a) to appoint the following sub-committees with the following number of places:-

Education Urgency Sub-Committee	3	
Education Management Sub-Committee	10	plus 5 co-opted
Education Management Urgency Sub-Committee	3	

Schools Performance & Quality Sub-Committee	9	plus 8 co-opted
Schools Performance & Quality Urgency Sub-Committee	3	
Awards Sub-Committee	6	plus 1 co-opted
Awards Urgency Sub-Committee	3	
Community Education (Youth & Adult) Sub-Committee	9	plus 7 co-opted
Community Education (Youth & Adult) Urgency Sub-Committee	3	
Education Early Years Sub-Committee	10	plus 3 co-opted
Education Early Years Urgency Sub-Committee	3	

- (b) to appoint to the Sub-Committees named above the members as set out in the Schedule attached to these Minutes.

.....in the Chair

Date of signing1997

EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 13 MAY 1997 - MINUTES - SCHEDULE OF SPOKESPERSONS TO SUB-COMMITTEES

* denotes Group Spokespersons

EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEES

EDUCATION URGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE (3 - being relevant Group Spokespersons)

Conservative (1)	Labour (1)	Liberal Democrat (1)
Spencer	Hodgson	Janet Morgan

EDUCATION MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE (15)

Conservative (4)	Labour (3)	Liberal Democrat (3)
Dempsey M. Evans Fulljames * Wood	Harris MacKenzie * Steer	* Baker M. Godden Horton

Co-opted Members (5)

Voting Co-opted Members (2)

Church of England - Rev K. Reeves
Roman Catholic Church - Mr P. Bean

Non-Voting Co-opted Members (3)

Teacher Representatives (2) - 2 Vacancies
Person of Experience - Mrs M. Randolph

EDUCATION MANAGEMENT URGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE (3 - being relevant Group Spokespersons)

Conservative (1)	Labour (1)	Liberal Democrat (1)
Wood	Steer M. Godden	

SCHOOLS PERFORMANCE & QUALITY SUB-COMMITTEE (17)

Conservative (4)	Labour (3)	Liberal Democrat (2)
Crabbe M. Evans * Matthews Rose	* Green Karmali Richardson	* Fawcett Nicholson

Co-opted Members (8)

Voting Co-opted Members (2)

Church of England - Mrs R. Peacocke
Roman Catholic Church - Mr P. Bean

Non-Voting Co-opted Members (6)

Free Churches - Mr Tranter
 Persons of Experience (2) - Mr J. Lilly and Mrs T. Smith
 Teacher Representatives (2) - 2 Vacancies
 Parents' Representative - 1 Vacancy

SCHOOLS PERFORMANCE & QUALITY URGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE (3 - being relevant Group Spokespersons)

Conservative (1)	Labour (1)	Liberal Democrat (1)
Matthews	Green	Fawcett

AWARDS SUB-COMMITTEE (7)

Conservative (2)	Labour (2)	Liberal Democrat (2)
* Davis * Matthews	* Humphries * Tompkins	* Fawcett * Johnston

Non-Voting Co-opted (1)

Dr Yee

AWARDS URGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE (3 - being relevant Group Spokespersons)

Conservative (1)	Labour (1)	Liberal Democrat (1)
Matthews	Tompkins	Johnston

COMMUNITY EDUCATION (YOUTH & ADULT) SUB-COMMITTEE (16)

Conservative (3)	Labour (3)	Liberal Democrat (2)
* Dempsey * Fitzgerald-O'Connor Tudor Hughes	* R. Evans Stedman Steer	* Horton * Nicholson

Green (1)

* Simmons

Co-opted Members (7)

Voting Co-opted Members (2)

Church of England - Mr A. Gear
 Roman Catholic Church - Sister Vianney Moore

Non-Voting Co-opted Members (5)

Adult & Community Education -)	
Voluntary Sector -)	
Adult & Community Education Workers -)	5 Vacancies
Youth Sector -)	
Youth Workers -)	

COMMUNITY EDUCATION (YOUTH & ADULT) URGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE (3 - being the Group Spokespersons)

Conservative (1)	Labour (1)	Liberal Democrat (1)
Fitzgerald-O'Connor	R. Evans	Nicholson

EDUCATION EARLY YEARS SUB-COMMITTEE (13)

Conservative (4)	Labour (3)	Liberal Democrat (3)
* Davis * M. Evans Ludlow Mitchell	Campbell Clements * MacKenzie	Baker Marchant * Mayhew-Archer

Non-Voting Co-opted Members (3)

Ms E. Place
Ms S. Ruane
1 Vacancy

EDUCATION EARLY YEARS URGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE (3 - being the Group Spokespersons)

Conservative (1)	Labour (1)	Liberal Democrat (1)
M. Evans	MacKenzie	Mayhew-Archer

PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 1996/97

Report by the Chief Education Officer and County Treasurer

Introduction

1. This report sets out the provisional revenue and capital outturn for the Education Committee, and identifies the variations in 1996/97 to be carried forward to 1997/98 under the Council's budget management arrangements.
2. Figures reported at this stage are provisional and subject to amendment up to the production of the Council's audited Statement of Accounts. There is also a need to review those variations to be carried forward to the same budget heading and those that need to be transferred elsewhere to assist the implementation of the committee's policy and budget plans.
3. Figures from individual schools are still being collated and a full report on the schools' outturn position will be reported to a later meeting.

Presentation

4. Details of the committee's provisional outturn are contained in the following annexes:

Annex 1 A comparison of budget with provisional outturn 1996/97

Annex 2 Analysis of carry forwards

Annex 3 Virement during 1996/97

Annex 4 Provisional capital outturn 1996/97

Variations

5. The committee's year end revenue position for 1996/97 can be summarised as follows:

You may have trouble in reading this section because our current systems cannot convert tables effectively - it is included only as a guide.

	£000	£000
Budget for 1997/98	194,442	
Provisional outturn	195,193	
		751
Brought forward from 1995/96		-9,468
Total underspend	-8,717	

6. This variation is analysed further below, and is more fully explained in the ensuing paragraphs.

		£000	£000
(a) Operations Sub Committee		-355	
(b) Returned to Council		231	
(c) This Committee	Same Budget Head	44	
	Different Budget Head	282	326
(d) Schools' Delegated Budget		-8,919	
			-8,717

Operations Sub Committee (Annex 1, Column 6)

7. These variations are carried forward by the Operations Sub Committee which manages and controls the expenditure on behalf of this committee. The total variation relates to the repairs and maintenance of Education buildings.

Returned to Council (Annex 1, Column 7)

8. These variations are excluded from the committee carry forward total because they are recognised under the Council's budget management arrangements to be outside the control of this committee. The total variation relates to rates payments made in respect of Education buildings. Part of this overspend relates to District

Councils invoicing church schools without allowing for charitable relief. Negotiations are continuing with the Districts, and it is hoped that this sum can be recovered in 1997/98.

This Committee - Non Delegated Expenditure (Annex 1, Column 10)

- 9. The total variation under the direct control of this committee is a net overspend of £326,000, or 0.8%. This figure is after allowing for the repayment of the £1,417,000 overspend brought forward from 1995/96.
- 10. The variation needs to be analysed further into those variations to be carried forward to 1997/98 on the same budget heading, to be recovered or spent as appropriate, and those variations for which alternative savings need to be identified or are available to assist in meeting policy and budget plans savings.

Committee Carry Forward to Same Budget Head (Annex 2, Column 4)

- 11. Within the committee's overall variation, there is a net overspending of £44,000 which needs to be carried forward and recovered on the same headings in 1997/98. This figure comprises the following variations:

You may have trouble in reading this section because our current systems cannot convert tables effectively - it is included only as a guide.

		March	
QFR		£	£
(a)	Premature Retirement Compensation/Redundancy -500,000	-259,000	
(b)	Home to School/College Transport - No. of Days 38,000	39,000	
(c)	Non Delegated Institutions - Capitation Budgets 0	-48,000	
(d)	School Specific Contingencies 212,000	305,000	
(e)	Paramedical Services 0	7,000	
		44,000	
	-250,000		

- (a) The final spending on redundancy/lump sum payments during 1997/98 was £1,270,000, involving payments to around 120 ex-employees. The figure is higher than that reported to the last committee meeting, as 15 school staff brought forward their redundancy due to the changes in the Council's PRC scheme. The underspending needs to be carried forward to meet the expected costs in 1997/98 as schools continue to struggle to balance their budgets.
- (b) The variation in transport expenditure, reflecting the number of school days in the financial year, is carried forward, to be recovered in a short school year. (1997/98 financial year consists of 196 school days, i.e. 6 above average due to the late Easter in 1998.)
- (c) This variation reflects the underspendings on supplies and services budgets which, traditionally, have been under the direct control of heads of institutions. These are carried forward and made available to the heads to spend in 1997/98. This provision covers nursery schools, family centres, special needs units, etc.
- (d) The variation on school specific contingencies arises from the late notification of changes in formula data, in particular new floor areas and rent repayments, some of which came to light only in preparing the 1997/98 budget allocations for schools, or in closing the 1996/97 accounts. This committee has agreed previously to carry forward any variation and recover it from the delegated budget, from which it would have been met if all the information was available when the school budgets were set initially.
- (e) This small overspending on paramedical services is on those headings where responsibility is devolved to individual special schools. This sum will be carried forward and recovered in 1997/98 by reducing the devolved allocations accordingly.

Committee Carry Forwards to Different Budget Head (Annex 2, Column 5)

- 12. The following net overspending of £282,000 comprises overspendings which cannot be recovered from the

same heading without a policy decision to cut the service, and underspendings which can be clawed back without affecting service delivery in 1997/98. The detail of the variations is as follows:

You may have trouble in reading this section because our current systems cannot convert tables effectively - it is included only as a guide.

QFR			March
		£	£
(f)	Relocation of Northfield School -100,000	-100,000	
(g)	1995/96 Unfinanced Overspend 431,000	431,000	
(h)	School Meals/Milk -455,000	-453,000	
(i)	School/College Transport 382,000	348,000	
(j)	FE Recoupment 59,000	30,000	
(k)	Youth Service 34,000	50,000	
(l)	EBD Project -113,000	-75,000	
(m)	Advisory Teachers -100,000	-111,000	
(n)	SEN - Statementing Fund 130,000	188,000	
(o)	SEN - Out County 50,000	156,000	
(p)	SEN - Chinnor 89,000	75,000	
(q)	SEN - Pupils off Roll -75,000	-76,000	
(r)	Legal Unit Charges 29,000	26,000	
(s)	Nursery Schools -30,000	18,000	
(t)	Mandatory Awards 30,000	30,000	
(u)	Other Pre Primary 11,000	0	
(v)	Other Schools Support 0	-10,000	
(w)	Adult Education -1,000	0	
(x)	Ex Careers Buildings 0	-34,000	
(y)	Discretionary Awards 0	-94,000	
(z)	Residential Centres 0	58,000	
(aa)	Music Service -31,000	0	
(bb)	Joint Sports Agreements 0	-82,000	
(cc)	Education Department 0	63,000	
(dd)	CSL Charges -10,000	0	
(ee)	DES Charges 12,000	0	
(ff)	Family Services -78,000	0	
		282,000	
	420,000		

(f) The saving on the relocation of Northfield is the money put aside in 1995/96 and 1996/97 to assist the movement of this special school to a new site. This provision has now been deleted due to the relatively small proportion it could contribute towards the costs of a future project, and to enable the establishment of a new Emotionally and Behaviourally Disturbed (EBD) Outreach Service (see 1 below).

(g) This figure represents that element of the 1995/96 overspend for which no provision was made in the 1996/97 budget. It therefore fell to be met from new savings in 1996/97.

(h) The saving on school meals/milk stems from the new tender price agreed in September 1995 and a reduction in the level of free school meals. As reported elsewhere on this agenda, Commercial Services have made losses

in 1995/96 and 1996/97 on the catering contract.

- (i) The overspending on home to school/college transport has resulted from increased tender prices resulting from market forces and the need to fit seat belts, new coaches following the ending of the 3 to 2 seat rule, new costs to meet new EC and health and safety legislation, the need to transport separately some EBD pupils previously transported together, and, finally, the increase in pupil numbers in the county's schools for which no additional budget provision is allowed. The reduction in the estimated overspend since the last report reflects a number of new initiatives undertaken on SEN transport following a major review of the service.
- (j) The expenditure on FE recoupment reflects late claims submitted by other LEAs for which no budget provision has been retained.
- (k) The overspending on the Youth Service reflects the difficulties of the individual centres in meeting their income targets under the contribution scheme. Some compensating savings have been made since the last report, so reducing the overall overspend. For future years, it has been agreed to delete the contribution scheme, to be financed by the restructuring of the management of the service.
- (l) £100,000 of this underspending reflects the difficulties in getting the new secondary EBD project up and running during 1996/97. The remaining underspending related to the existing primary scheme. Staff are now in place to provide the service during 1997/98.
- (m) The saving on the advisory teachers heading stems mainly from an additional Government grant given under the GEST programme which could be set against existing work.
- (n) The overspending of £188,000 represents 13% on the total annual budget of £1,420,000 available to supplement school funding for pupils with special educational needs. The majority of the overspend reflects increasing demands for support from Oxford City schools. Members should note that this budget is not increased in line with the increase in pupil numbers, or the growing proportion of pupils with statements of special needs. Refusal of support can result in parental demands for more expensive provision outside the mainstream setting, which, if supported by the SEN Tribunal, the LEA has an obligation to meet.
- (o) The use of statementing funds has not entirely prevented the demand for new out county placements, and this budget shows a £156,000, or 9%, overspend. This budget was cut by Council by £100,000 in 1996/97 and a further £82,700 in 1997/98. The increase in the overspend since the last report reflects the difficulties of predicting the costs of out county hospital placements where the LEA may have no prior notification of the provision, and establishing which LEAs have responsibility for children in care under the Government's "belonging" regulations. Discussions are continuing with Social Services to develop a better monitoring system.
- (p) The overspending of £89,000 at the Chinnor Autistic Unit reflects a growing demand for placements above the original establishment for the unit. Again, the alternative would be to place pupils out county at a significantly greater cost.
- (q) The saving shown of £76,000 under the pupils off roll heading offsets in part the overspending detailed in (n) to (p) above. In future, budget provision initially held under this heading will be transferred as the pupils off roll on Form 7 day are found educational provision.
- (r) The overspending on Legal Unit charges reflects the increased incidence of parental appeals against special needs decisions.
- (s) The underspending on nursery school results from the identification of GEST grant support, previously omitted in error.
- (t) The overspending on mandatory awards reflects the need to write off bad debts in cases where it has not been possible to recover awards from students who have failed to complete their courses, having exhausted all legal avenues. The Government does not reimburse the LEA in these cases.
- (u) The overspending on other pre primary services reflects a series of minor over and underspendings across the services.
- (v) The underspending on other school support services also reflects a series of minor over and underspendings, including underspendings on clothing grants, swimming instructors and Insurances and overspendings on pupil referral unit provision and outreach services.

- (w) The adult education service has remained within budget during 1996/97 with management action taken to vire resources between projects to balance over and underspends.
 - (x) The £34,000 savings on careers buildings stems from the disposal or rental out of buildings previously held for the careers service. This saving will be ongoing in 1997/98.
 - (y) The saving of £94,000 on discretionary awards reflects the difficulty in predicting take up each time the awards criteria are worsened to achieve budget savings. Many students are discouraged from applying given the publicity surrounding the cuts in the awards budget.
 - (z) The £58,000 overspend on residential centres can largely be attributed to the failure to meet the £700,600 income target for the year. This has come about due to last minute cancellations and visits that have not utilised the full occupancy of the centres. There was an overspend on employees of £9,000, brought about by the need to cover staff absent on sick leave during the year, but this was offset by minor underspends on transport and supplies.
 - (aa) The underspending on the music service reflects the improved financial procedures that have been introduced and the considerable effort that has been put in to secure all relevant income. There have also been savings on staffing due to turnover of staff.
 - (bb) The £82,000 underspending on joint sports agreements stems from a series of minor underspends on repairs and maintenance across various sports centres, plus a one off contribution of £60,000 from the Vale of White Horse District Council for works undertaken in previous years.
 - (cc) The £63,000 overspend on the Education Department against a net expenditure budget of over £3.5m is due to a number of factors. The Cricket Road site has exceeded budget by £20,000 as a result of caretaking and cleaning costs being substantially higher than anticipated. Removals and relocation expenditure, a difficult area to budget for, has overspent by £16,000. The remaining £27,000 is as a result of a lower level of turnover than budgeted for in setting the staffing budget.
 - (dd) The reduction of £10,000 on the CSL charge reflects the reduction in payroll and creditor transactions as services are reduced and the switch to local cheque payments in schools.
 - (ee) The £12,000 overspend on the negotiable recharge from the Department of Environmental Services reflects the growing pressures on managing a declining building stock, combined with a declining capital programme and the increased need for one off projects, e.g. the review of school kitchen provision in light of the need to retender the contract.
 - (ff) The savings on family services (pre school teacher counsellors, educational psychologists and education welfare officers) results from part year staffing vacancies and some savings on supplies and services.
13. The overall overspending of £282,000 compares to budget provision made in the 1997/98 budget, based on the December position, of £353,000. There is, therefore, a provisional sum of £71,000 that can be allocated. The first call on this sum will need to be to meet any difficulties in balancing the 1997/98 Education Committee budget (see paragraph 20 below). In addition, a number of requests have been received from Education Officers who manage those budgets which have under spent in 1996/97 to carry forward the underspend to meet Committee agreed priorities in 1997/98.
14. At this stage, therefore, whilst the figures remain provisional and the budget for 1997/98 remains uncertain, especially in relation to the capping position, it is recommended that no action is taken regarding the £71,000 reduction in allowed overspend.

Schools' Delegated Budgets

- 15. At the time of writing this report, a number of replies on bank account positions are still outstanding from schools. The schools' outturn position must be regarded as provisional, therefore, and balances may fall further when data on commitments against the money held in bank accounts on 31 March is received.
- 16. It is clear, however, that whilst schools have over spent by £2m against their 1996/97 formula allocations, they have under spent against their budget submissions from this time last year. Compared to the projection, whereby schools spent to budget, including all short term reserves, the provisional outturn report indicates an underspending of £4.4m or 3%.
- 17. At this stage, it is too early to draw firm conclusions as regards to this underspend, although it is clear from

information held centrally that the majority of the underspend is not on staffing budgets. Schools have again delayed replacing curriculum materials/equipment and programmes to repair/maintain the school environment, partly due to the uncertainty surrounding the 1997/98 budget position during the autumn and early spring terms.

18. Once final data is in from all schools, it is proposed to produce a full report on schools' outturn and 1997/98 budgets for this committee. It is hoped that this report will include survey data collected from individual schools about future use of balances (based on the 15% primary/special and 10% secondary thresholds set by committee last year), and reasons for significant variations against initial budget plans.

Balance Sheet Items

19. As reported to the last meeting of this committee, there are significant problems with the supply teacher insurance scheme, the accounting entries for which go through the fund held on the balance sheet, rather than through the revenue accounts. The March report indicated a likely deficit on the fund of £770,000. The latest information suggests a deficit of £750,000 on the sickness scheme fund and £45,000 on the maternity leave fund. It has been agreed that these sums will be recovered in future years by a reduction in the delegated budget. Premium charges to schools have been increased for 1997/98 to prevent the deficit growing and a regular position statement will be incorporated into future Quarterly Financial Reports.

The Position for 1997/98

20. As indicated above, there is provisionally £71,000 excess provision in the 1997/98 budget if managers are not allowed to carry forward their underspends. This needs to be considered in the context of managing the 1997/98 budget and implementing the 1997/98 policy and budget plans.
21. Many of the 1996/97 variations were known about when Council determined its budget in February and as such have been addressed already. Others were one off in nature, resulting from temporary vacancies or prior year adjustments. However, for the following items it is prudent to assume that problems will continue into 1997/98.
22. The total overspending on SEN provision, after offsetting the savings on pupils off roll, was £357,000. In addition, against officer advice, the Council resolved to reduce further the out county budget by £82,700. Whilst every effort is being taken to contain expenditure within budget, there is growing demand, backed up by legislation and the SEN Tribunal process. Capping budgets in one area may simply lead to greater problem elsewhere. A zero based review is planned for this year to review SEN provision in its entirety and this may identify scope for potential savings.
23. The overspending on residential centres of £58,000 is due to the under achievement against a 100% occupancy income target for 43 weeks of the year. Pressures on school budgets has meant that schools are less able to contribute to the cost of providing free places for pupils on income support. Whilst every attempt will be made to ensure optimum occupancy, no guarantee can be given that this budget can be brought back into line in 1997/98.
24. The overspending on the Education Department of £63,000 needs to be seen in the context of a further cut of £115,000 specifically included in the Council's budget, and a further £88,000 included as administrative savings to be identified. Whilst part of this target has been offset from the savings on disposal of the ex careers buildings, the rest will require changes in working practices and the continuation of holding vacancies whenever staff leave. This places tremendous pressure on the remaining staff, especially when having to manage the challenges stemming from budget/service reductions and the requirements of a new Government and new Council.
25. In addition to the issues identified in 1996/97, new pressures likely to surface in 1997/98 include the problems associated with the school meals contract (see elsewhere on this agenda), the continuing uncertainty over the future of nursery vouchers and the funding of early years provision, and the ability to maximise OFSTED income from inspections whilst maintaining the appropriate advisory presence in Oxfordshire schools to improve standards.
26. Finally, there is potential difficulty in delivering a number of the Council's policy and budget plan targets, although the extent of this is dependent on the Government's decision on the Council's budget and the timing of this decision. As covered elsewhere on this agenda, there are major issues associated with the proposed deletion of post 16 transport. Delays on the final determination of the Council's budget will also create difficulties in respect of the discretionary awards proposal, with students and colleges/universities needing to make final decisions on placements. The implementation of the reduction on the training budget

has led to difficulties where the courses are a requirement of health and safety legislation, e.g. at the residential centres and where there are commitments carried forward from 1996/97. Under the At Cap budget, there may be a potential under achievement of £100,000 in relation to the heading LEA Initiatives, again due to commitments. Compensating savings will need to be identified if the At Cap budget is implemented.

27. The above issues indicate the potential scale of the problems of managing this committee's budget in 1997/98. Members need to note this position in determining priorities over the coming year. The position will be updated regularly through the Quarterly Financial Report.

Capital Outturn 1996/97

28. Details of the capital expenditure in 1996/97 as compared with the provision made for payments in the approved capital programme are provided at Annex 4. In total there is a net underspending of £2,934,000 largely due to slippage. The net figure includes various overspends on schemes which have been treated as the first call on the minor works budget for 1997/98.

Financial Implications

29. These are contained within the body of the report, which considers solely the financial position for this committee.

Staff Implications

30. There are no direct implications for staff arising from this report, but the report does emphasise the pressures on staff in managing this committee's budget given the continual need to find savings.

Environmental Implications and Implication for People Living in Poverty

31. There are no direct implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

32. **The Committee are RECOMMENDED to note the report, the potential improvement of £71,000 in the level of the overspend reported previously, subject to no manager being allowed to carry forward underspends, and the significant potential difficulties in delivering the 1997/98 budget.**

G.M. BADMAN
Chief Education Officer

CHRIS GRAY
County Treasurer

Background papers: None

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May 1997

REVIEW OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION IN OXFORDSHIRE

Report by the Chief Education Officer

Introduction

1. This report sets out the background to the current review and the position that has been reached so far. It recommends members to endorse the ongoing work of the member/officer/staff working group to take the review forward to the next stage.
2. If a decision on the composition of the group can be taken at this meeting, a first meeting of the group can be arranged before the summer holidays.

Background

3. In July 1996 the Community Education Sub-Committee agreed that there should be a full review of Community Education in Oxfordshire. A working group of elected members, officers, and staff and union representatives was established. For information the terms of reference of the group are set out in **Annex 1**.
4. The group met four times between October 1996 and March 1997. The group considered full audits of the current work of the adult education service and youth service. On the basis of these audits, the Working Group made a number of proposals, which, being put forward by the Chief Education Officer (CEO) were endorsed by the Community Education Sub-Committee:
 - (a) that Community Education is best serviced by having strong focused youth and adult sectors within it. If both sectors are clear as to their role and responsibility, they will be better able to work together as fellow professionals with clear areas of expertise;
 - (b) that the role and boundaries of Community Education Councils and Management Committees should be reviewed and the possible development of community fora explored;
 - (c) that the recommended restructuring proposals for the Youth Service should now be established and that proposals should be developed to create a new management, staffing and salary structure for the Adult Education service.
 - (d) that the pay, conditions and employment status of part-time adult education tutors should be urgently addressed.
 - (e) that a Youth Council for young people should be explored in Oxfordshire with full consultation with the voluntary sector.
 - (f) that after the County Council elections, visits for elected members should be arranged to a wide range of Community Education provision in the County, to be followed by a conference of all those involved in Community Education to explore and confirm future directions for the development of the Service.
5. The group also considered preliminary reports on the development of community schools and on the creation of a new pattern of community forums. These forums could replace many of the functions of the existing Community Education Councils (CECs) and Community Education Management Committees (CEMCs).
6. A selection of papers from the meetings of the Working Group is available in Members' Resource Centre.

Next Steps

7. The next step in the review process is to work up more detailed proposals on the following aspects:
 - the development of community schools across the County to complement and enhance the existing pattern of community education provision;
 - the creation of a new pattern of community forums embracing a wide range of outside agencies,

- organisations and users;
- the creation of a new management and staffing structure for adult education and new arrangements for clarifying the pay, conditions and employment status of part-time tutors.

8. Proposals for all three aspects are being worked on now and will be presented to the next meeting of the Community Education Sub-Committee on 7 July. It is envisaged that there would be full consultation on all proposals approved by the Sub-Committee during the Autumn of this year.
9. It would be useful to renew the mandate of the member/officer/staff Working Group so that it can act as a forum for developing new ideas and for overseeing the review, (see also agenda item). At this stage the CEO is suggesting that the group could usefully involve some representatives of school headteachers and staff, and accordingly they will be invited to the next meeting. A possible structure for the Group is set out in **Annex 2**.

Conclusion

10. The Member/Officer/Staff Working Group has done a useful job so far in 'clearing the ground' and setting the review in motion. The time has come to move ahead more purposefully with the review. During this critical phase, it is important to maintain the spirit of partnership and common purpose that has characterised the review so far.

RECOMMENDATION

11. **The Committee are RECOMMENDED to:**
 - (a) **endorse the continuation of the informal Member/Officer/Staff Working Group as amended along the lines set out in Annex 2 to lead the next phase of the review of community education in Oxfordshire; and**
 - (b) **note that arrangements will be made for the next meeting of the Working Group to take place before the summer holidays.**

G.M. BADMAN
Chief Education Officer

Background papers: agendas, reports and minutes from the previous Member/Officer/Staff Working Group (available in the Members' Resource Centre).

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May 1997.

REVIEW OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION IN OXFORDSHIRE

Report by the Chief Education Officer

ANNEX 2

**REVIEW OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION IN OXFORDSHIRE
(PHASE TWO - SUMMER 1997 ONWARDS)**

Possible structure of the new Member/Officer/Staff Working Group

Elected Members (7)

One member of Community Education Sub-Committee from each of the main political groups.

Group leaders (ex-officio).

Officers and advisers (5)

CEO, Assistant CEO, Heads of Service, Senior Adviser School and Community.

Staff, headteachers and unions (8)

Secondary and Primary headteacher representatives

Adult Education staff and Youth Service staff representatives

Representatives from CYWU, NATFHE and the teacher unions

SCHOOL MEALS SERVICE

Report by the Chief Education Officer, County Treasurer and Assistant Chief Executive

Introduction

1. The Education Committee 18 March 1997 resolved to consult schools on the future of the school meals service.
2. This report provides details of:
 - (a) the analysis of the school responses to the consultation;
 - (b) visits that have been made to other local authorities that have discontinued a paid meals service;
 - (c) a survey that has been undertaken of potential tenderers;
 - (d) key aspects for the contract specification.

Background

3. Details of the circumstances leading up to the decisions to consult schools and the information provided to schools as part of the consultation are provided at Annex A.

Responses to the Consultation

4. An analysis of the replies to the questionnaire from schools is provided at Annex B. The completed questionnaires and the detailed school by school analysis have been placed in the members' resource area.
5. 199 schools (out of a total of 299) had replied by the deadline, a response rate of 67%. Given the importance of the issue, it is disappointing that many schools failed to reply. However, a representative sample of schools has responded and the views emerging are fairly polarised.
6. The analysis at Annex B shows a high level of agreement that the status quo is not viable - 187 schools agreeing and 12 disagreeing. Of those disagreeing, 5 said they would change their response if the additional costs associated with this option had to be met by a corresponding reduction in the Aggregated Schools Budget.
7. Responses in relation to the two options identified were divided equally amongst primary schools (78 for Option A - free meals only; 78 for Option B, hot paid meals service with a reduced number of production kitchens).
8. As one might expect, there was a significant difference in the responses as between those schools that would have their production kitchen converted to a servery under Option B and those that would retain their kitchen:

	Option A		Option B	
Total				
Schools which would lose kitchen	44	71%	18	29%
	62			
Schools which would retain kitchen	34	36%	60	64%
	94			
	78		78	
		156		

9. Secondary school responses were approximately 3:1 in favour of Option B (retaining hot meal) and special schools 6:1 in favour of Option B.
10. In answer to question 5, nearly 70% of primary schools responding accepted that no allowance was included in the costings of Option A for additional staffing to put out and clear away chairs and tables. Just over half of the secondary and special schools responding concurred.

11. Analysis of responses in relation to the level of free school meals, paid meals take up and total meals taken reveals no apparent pattern. Responses from schools in the Oxford City area showed 58% of all schools responding in favour of Option B, increasing to 75% if those schools which would be converted to serveries were excluded.
12. A number of schools raised questions as to why their kitchen had been chosen for closure and not others. (See paragraph 24.)

Visits to Other Local Authorities

13. Visits have been made to three neighbouring authorities in which the LEA has discontinued a hot paid meals service in favour of a free meals service in the form of a sandwich meal. Details of the service provided by each of the three authorities are provided at Annex C. (The names of the three authorities are not quoted by agreement with the authorities concerned.)
14. In practice, a hot paid meals service has been retained in secondary schools, usually arranged by individual schools contracting with private sector providers. Each LEA also has a hot paid meals service for special schools. Therefore, only in the primary sector was free meals provision, in the form of a sandwich meal, the only provision available.
15. Of the three authorities, two pay the contractor(s) a higher price for hot meals, where supplied, than the price currently paid to Commercial Services in Oxfordshire. The third authority is substantially cheaper as a result of arbitrarily fixing the price of a free meal allowance and only specifying a requirement for a one course meal. In relation to sandwich provision, again the prices paid by two authorities, inclusive of transport costs, are much higher than the figures assumed in the costings of Option A for the Oxfordshire service. The third authority has a much lower cost than the figures assumed under Option A, largely due to the lower level service specification.

Consultation with Contractors

16. The visits to the other authorities gave rise to questions about the accuracy of the costings used in the initial examination of options. It was therefore decided to consult contractors so that decisions about the new catering contract could be taken with the benefit of the best available information.
17. Whilst some contractors believe that it is viable to provide a meal at the price originally hypothecated, the majority of the contractors offered the view that the unit cost of the sandwich meals would be higher than the cost of a hot meals service, although the free meal sandwich option would remain the least costly provision overall. However, these views should be treated with caution as contractors may be trying to influence the County Council to opt for the retention of a hot meals service.
18. One contractor offered the view that take up of meals is lower than it should be. A figure of 35% was seen as attainable, compared to the present take up of around 30%, subject to a competitive price being charged to pupils. In this respect, contractors indicated that they would prefer freedom to fix the price of meals to suit the market. Several contractors suggested that the current selling price is too high and will discourage take up.
19. Contractors were also concerned about the uncertainty which now surrounds the Transfer of Undertakings Regulations. In general, contractors are prepared to accept that staff will transfer, but are alarmed about being left with a sizeable redundancy liability should the work subsequently be allocated to another contractor at the end of the contract(s). In consequence, they may well seek an undertaking from the County Council to protect themselves.
20. A copy of the survey and the analysis of responses has been placed in the members' resource area.

Further Considerations in Relation to the Costing of Options

21. It needs to be restated that the original costings produced as part of the Zero Based Review exercise were the result of a desk top analysis and intended to focus attention on the potential for achieving savings. The expectation was that members would consider the findings and then commission further work to refine and confirm the costings.
22. The subsequent visits to the three LEAs that have moved towards the discontinuation of a paid hot meals service, have provided information that leads one to question the assumption used in the costing of Option

A of being able to provide and deliver a sandwich meal of an acceptable specification for an average cost of £1.09. If that figure were raised to £1.24 (the price of a double pack sandwich in one of the LEAs visited), then the cost of free meals would rise by £209,000, reducing the savings assumed of £560,000 per annum to £351,000 per annum. However, if the overriding requirement is to make the maximum level of savings to avoid cuts in other areas of the Education Service, then the information from LEA 3 would suggest that the £1.09 assumed could be achieved. Whatever figures are used, they will only be estimates. The real cost will be known only when tenders are sought.

23. On the basis of the balance of replies from schools, it would be reasonable to assume that it would not be necessary to increase school budgets for putting out and clearing away tables and chairs under Option A.
24. In relation to Option B, further work has been undertaken to review the selection of the 97 school kitchens proposed for closure and conversion to serveries. Detailed costings have been produced, showing for each site the savings in labour costs, repairs and maintenance and improvement costs, and the increased costs of the host kitchens arising from the increased meal production, transport costs from the host kitchen to the servery, non recurrent costs of equipping the servery and redundancy. Whilst this site by site analysis has confirmed the global savings assumption used in the zero based review, it has also revealed that a number of kitchens proposed for closure do not produce an overall net annual saving. It therefore makes sense to retain these schools as production kitchens. Further analysis is being undertaken to explore alternative patterns of production kitchens in order to optimise potential savings.
25. Whilst some of the data used in the original costings has been qualified, this has not changed the nature of the choice open to members, but has merely reduced the scale of potential savings that might be available. The status quo has been accepted by schools as being not viable. The two options therefore remain:
 - A. sandwich lunch provision for free meals only;
 - B. hot paid meals service, but from a reduced number of production kitchens.
26. Whichever option is selected, it is recommended that a hot paid meals service is retained for all special schools.
27. It is feasible to tender on the basis of more than one option, so that the final choice can be made on the basis of known tender prices. However, this approach would complicate the tender evaluation process and it is possible that tender prices for the free meal, sandwich option might be inflated to encourage selection of a hot meals service which most contractors would find more attractive. It might also lead to a legal challenge from an unsuccessful contractor if Commercial Services was awarded the contract as being the lowest price tendered for one option if not also the lowest tenderer under the other option. It is also important to bear in mind that leaving the choice of service until tenders are evaluated would leave schools with inadequate time to organise their own arrangements in the event that the County Council selects a free meal only service.

Tender Specifications

28. Key aspects of the service specification for a hot paid meals service and a free meal sandwich provision are provided at AnnexD.
29. The main changes to the existing specification for a hot meal service include the proposal that the contractor should determine the price to be charged to pupils for paid meals. Contractors will also be asked to tender on the basis of free meals being fixed at £1 per meal (subject to annual indexing) and the contribution they would pay to the Council for the use of kitchens, energy, repairs and maintenance costs, etc. per paid meal sold.
30. It is proposed that contractors will also be required to make appropriate arrangements for the collection of all dinner monies, in consultation with schools, the contractor retaining all proceeds. They will also be required to satisfy the County Council that income is being properly accounted for and that the return to the authority is in accordance with the terms of the contract.
31. These are fairly significant changes to the existing specification which need to be discussed with headteacher representatives to ensure that in trying to address one problem another is not created.

Timetable

32. Under the Compulsory Competitive Tendering legislation, the process for retendering the catering contracts

would take a minimum of a further seven months to complete. Furthermore, a period of three months needs to be allowed for the issuing of redundancy notices should that be necessary. Currently the Section 14 Notice, issued by the Secretary of State for the Environment, requires the contract to be relet by the end 1 April 1998.

33. The various stages of the tendering process are set out at Annex E. It will be seen that providing the Education Committee reach a firm decision on the basis of the specification at this meeting and Strategy and Resources Committee concur, it will just be possible to comply with the CCT tendering requirements, albeit that each stage has been reduced to the bare minimum required.
34. The Secretary of State has been invited to consider an extension of the timetable. Ideally, we would wish any new contract(s) to run from the start of the school year in September 1998. Given the importance of this issue, the Secretary of State has been asked to make his decision prior to this committee meeting.

Financial and Staff Implications

35. Annex A sets out the original estimated financial and staffing implications of continuing the present service and the two options identified as the basis for retendering the service. Further information is provided in paragraph 21 above. Additionally, in relation to Option B, it is necessary to reassess the redundancy costs originally calculated on the assumption that the Council will wish to adopt the policy of seeking volunteers for redundancy, rather than making staff compulsorily redundant. Assuming that 50% of the 126 staff who would need to be made redundant under Option B were volunteers, with long lengths of service, then the redundancy costs estimated originally at £205,000 would need to be increased. It is difficult to assess what this additional cost might be, but a provision of £100,000 might be assumed.
36. In summary, the revised figures for the two options are as follows:

	Original Option A Free Meal Only £000	Revised Option A Free Meal Only £000	Revised Option B Hot Paid Meal £000	
Net savings per annum	560	351		16
One off costs				
Redundancy costs	1,085	1,085	305	
Set up costs	100	100		24
	1,185	1,185		54
Pay back period	2.1 years	3.4 years		3.2 year

37. Both options avoid estimated additional unbudgeted expenditure of £477,000 per annum for improvement of kitchens in relation to maintaining the status quo.
38. In the case of Both Options A and B, there would be additional budget implications in 1997/98 in respect of the redundancy and set up costs identified in paragraph 36 above.

Implications for People Living In Poverty

39. There will be implications for people living in poverty in so far as any staff made redundant are the sole contributor to the family income. The majority of staff affected will be from the lowest paid members of the work force.
40. If the option to discontinue a hot paid meals service is finally decided upon, then for many pupils receiving free meals, this will remove the only hot meal they receive. Whilst from a nutritional viewpoint this need not be detrimental, perceptions of pupils and parents may be different.

Environmental Implications

41. There would be reductions in energy consumption. There would also be implications arising from the potential closure of kitchens and reduced repairs and maintenance of buildings that would need to be identified. In relation to both options, there would be additional transport involved.

Conclusions

42. On the basis of the summary of financial implications at paragraph 34 above, there is little to choose between the two options in terms of the pay back period over which the one off costs of redundancy and set up costs are recovered by annual savings. However, Option A has a much higher level of staff redundancies and, in consequence, redundancy costs. But, Option A will offer higher annual savings than Option B after year 3.
43. Option B savings are critically dependent on Commercial Services, or another contractor, tendering at the level of cost to the Council as assumed. Option A costings are likely to be more robust.
44. The views of schools do not show a majority in favour of discontinuing the hot paid meals service.
45. The tight timetable required by the Secretary of State for tendering does not permit further consultation with individual schools to determine whether they would wish to continue a hot paid meals service themselves if the Council resolved to discontinue it. Indeed, there is scarcely time to check out the revised specification with headteacher representatives. Evidence from the three LEAs visited shows that even where those Councils resolved to provide only a sandwich free meal, that schools in the secondary sector continued to provide a hot meal service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

46. **The Committee are RECOMMENDED to:**
- (a) tender for the school meals contract either;**
 - (1) on the basis of continuing a hot paid meals service, but with a reduced number of production kitchens; or**
 - (2) on the basis of a free meals only sandwich service;**
 - (b) approve the key contract terms specified in Annex D for whichever option is decided upon, subject to consultation with headteacher representatives;**
 - (c) RECOMMEND Strategy and Resources Committee accordingly.**

G.M. BADMAN
Chief Education Officer

CHRIS GRAY
County Treasurer

STEPHEN CAPALDI
Assistant Chief Executive

Background Papers: Completed questionnaires and school by school analysis.
Report (ED11) to Education Committee, 18 March 1997 and
and supplementary information

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May 1997