

EXTRACT FROM THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION AND HERITAGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON 10 APRIL 2002

- Best Value Performance Plan 2002/03.

The Committee considered a joint report of the Chief Executive and the County Treasurer that sought its views on the draft Best Value Performance Plan for 2002/03, before further consideration by the Scrutiny Commission, Cabinet and the full County Council. A copy of the report, marked B, is filed with these minutes.

The following comments and issues arose from discussion:-

- Chapter 4, Capital Programme, Education (p.20): It was hoped that it would be possible to devote capital expenditure to new innovative schemes as well as to schemes for replacing outmoded and/or temporary accommodation. The Director of Education explained that the capital programme was driven by the Asset Management Plan and, consequently, priority had to be given to replacing outmoded and unsuitable accommodation. The opportunity was taken with many schemes not just to replace such accommodation but to enhance the level of facilities provided.
- Chapter 5, Achieving Excellence in Education, para. 5.4: Work was continuing to develop the Connexions Services with a view to it coming into operation from 1st September, 2002. A draft Business Plan was being produced and a Chief Executive had been appointed. 2 Groups of Schools were operating as 'pilots' for the use of Personal Advisors for students. Personal Advisors would act as 'champions' for students and young people between 13-19 years of age, whether at school, college, in employment or unemployed. Some concerns were expressed about the complexity of the arrangements, the number of agencies involved in service delivery and the blurring of responsibility for helping young people with a complex range of problems.
- Chapter 10, Supporting Culture and Leisure, para. 10.2.3. It was noted that discussions would be taking place with the Haymarket Theatre on its service level agreement at the reduced level of financial support from the County Council in 2002/2003.
- Chapter 10, para. 10.2.4. It was noted that the Open Museum concept had arisen from the 1997 Museum Services Review as had the development of a Resources Centre at Barrow for materials that were unlikely to be put on public display but could be accessed for educational and research purposes. The Committee were of the view that it would be helpful for members to receive further information on these developments in due course.

In relation to the Best Value Performance Indicators, the following points were made.

- Reference was made to Best Value and Audit Commission Performance Indicator B6 for 2000/01 relating to the percentage of absence in secondary schools that was unauthorised absence and the high figure for Leicestershire. The Director of Education commented on the difficulties of obtaining truly accurate comparative figures for unauthorised absence but said that a Public Service Agreement target for addressing absence was being considered to tackle this issue.
- It was noted that Leicestershire operated a greater number of museums than many other counties. The Head of Museums pointed out that the operation of museums was more commonly a district council function and relatively few County Councils provided a museums service. The figures given in BV169 a included some operational facilities that were not registered museums.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Draft Best Value Performance Plan for 2002/2003 be noted and endorsed.
- (b) That the Director of Education be requested to submit a report to a future meeting giving more detailed explanations of the schemes included in the Education Capital Programme for 2002/2003.
- (c) That the Director of Education be requested to submit a report on progress with developing the Connexions Service to a future meeting.
- (d) That the Chief Librarian be requested to submit a report on progress with implementing the project for improving access to services and information and its impact on the Libraries and Information Service, in the light of the challenging targets to set for the service.
- (e) That the Head of Museums be requested to submit a report to a future meeting on the outcome of discussions with the Haymarket Theatre relating to the service level agreement and delivery of services in the county area.
- (f) That the Scrutiny Commission and Scrutiny Reference Group be recommended to consider the arrangements for including Members in review processes, including Best Value Reviews and officer-led services.