

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (LIFELONG LEARNING)

MINUTES of a meeting held at the Waterfront IT Centre, Barry on 9th October, 2006.

Present: Councillor C.P. Franks (Chairman); Councillor S.C. Egan (Vice-Chairman); Councillors Mrs. M.E.J. Birch, Ms. R.M. Birch, J. Clifford, E. Hacker, Mrs. V.M. Hartrey, F.T. Johnson, Mrs. M. Kelly Owen, C.L. Osborne, A.G. Powell, Mrs. S.I. Sharpe and E.T. Williams.

Also present: Councillors Ms. M.E. Alexander, G. John and A.D. Hampton, together with Mrs. M. Evans (Headteacher, Cowbridge Comprehensive School); Dr. V. Browne (Headteacher, Llantwit Major School); and Mr. B.T. Lightman (Headteacher, St. Cyres Comprehensive School).

405 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE -

These were received from Councillors B.I. Shaw, Mrs. C. Clay and W.C. Vaughan.

406 MINUTES -

RECOMMENDED - T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 11th September, 2006 be signed as an accurate record.

407 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST -

Councillors J. Clifford, F.T. Johnson, Mrs. S.I. Sharpe and A.G. Powell declared an interest in agenda item no. 5 in that they were Members of the Trust Committee.

The following Councillors also declared the nature of their interest, being Governors of schools within the Vale of Glamorgan, it being noted that the Standards Committee on 9th September and 21st October, 2004 and 13th January, 2005 had granted them a general dispensation to vote upon any matters to be considered by the Scrutiny Committee (Lifelong Learning) in relation to matters of a general educational matter in terms of policy, plans, policy framework and budget etc.

Councillors C.P. Franks, S.C. Egan, Mrs. M.E.J. Birch, Ms. R.M. Birch, J. Clifford, E. Hacker, F.T. Johnson, Mrs. M. Kelly Owen, C.L. Osborne, A.G. Powell and E.T. Williams.

408 WELCOME -

Ms. K. Martin, Vice-Principal, welcomed all present to the Waterfront IT Centre.

The Centre demonstrated how partnership could work successfully - the Vale of Glamorgan Council had built the building and had leased it to Barry College.

The College comprised some 9,000 students whose ages ranged from 14 - 86 although most were in the age range 16 - 19.

The College provided courses ranging in complexity from basic skills through to degree level, and courses ranged from hairdressing to aerospace.

Barry College comprised six sites, located at

- Colcot Road
- Cardiff Wales Airport
- The Waterfront IT Centre
- Gladstone School
- Cardiff Construction Centre
- Weycock Cross, although this site was not used at present.

£1m. had been invested at the Colcot Road site this summer, which had resulted in a state of the art centre. New childcare facilities had also been provided.

In conclusion, Ms. Martin advised that Barry College provided students with a chance to learn vocational skills and even progress to degree level.

Members thanks Ms. Martin for her informative presentation.

409 SCHOOL INVESTMENT STRATEGY (DLD) -

Following the decision of Cabinet on 20th September, 2006 to approve the School Investment Strategy, representatives of MACE, the Council's external technical advisers were invited to address the Committee.

Mr. Simon Doyle and Mr. Stuart Green of MACE were present.

Mr. Doyle outlined MACE's brief to deliver three secondary schools and the investment in all other school buildings on a phased basis until 2016.

MACE intended to use best practice principles to produce lower quartile costings and to eliminate complexities to the designs.

MACE would seek to procure all secondary schools in one single procurement process which would result in savings, and would also assist in the cash flows

and timings, although delays to the timetable could result in increased costs of £90,000 per month on a spend of this level.

There was merit in “staggering” the projects in that management teams could move from project to project, which would result in a more flexible approach.

MACE were looking at ways of driving the maintenance programme forward.

MACE’s approach to design would include consideration of community interests, and MACE would ensure that local people were employed by the contractors.

Mr. Doyle stressed that the programme was dependent on its funding package, including capital receipts. The construction projects were “high risk”, and a key factor in minimising the risk was to conduct as many surveys as possible before the construction work commenced.

The Chairman invited Mr. Lightman, Mrs. Evans and Dr. Browne to comment on the proposals.

Mr. Lightman stated that the project represented a fantastic programme. Many stakeholders in Penarth had been consulted, and were sympathetic to the prospect of a “simple” design.

Mrs. Evans agreed with Mr. Lightman and thanked the Council for supporting the scheme. In order for the projects to be completed on time it was essential that work should commence as soon as possible.

Dr. Browne stated that he appreciated the work that had taken place so far.

The following question and answer session ensued:

<u>Question</u>	<u>Answer</u>
Have you considered the installation of sprinkler systems in the three secondary schools?	The use of sprinklers had been considered. MACE was looking for evidence that the use of sprinklers was effective, and consultations would take place with the Fire Service.
MACE, amongst other activities, undertook construction work. Would there be a conflict of interest if it tendered for any work?	MACE would not tender for any construction work.
The construction of three secondary schools would be “bundled”. What assurance is there that MACE would meet the expectations of the Council?	MACE would not actually build anything, otherwise the performance of MACE would be the subject of a legal agreement with the Council. It should be borne in mind that the

	project would not be simple and it was inevitable that things would go wrong. What mattered was, was how things would be put right.
The use of local labour in the construction process was to be congratulated. What about local materials?	MACE would be seeking to ensure that the materials to be used came from within a 50 mile radius of the sites in question wherever possible.
In considering global warming, it must be remembered that the Council did not want low building costs if this meant high running costs.	In preparing the design brief, the consultants would be working with the people who would be working in the new buildings.
Please outline MACE's experience in other "bundled" projects.	MACE was currently managing 40% of the building of new schools in England. Currently, for example, 25 schools were being constructed in Manchester by 2 contractors.
Who will manage the financing?	The financial side of the project would be managed by the Council and will be specified in the project management plan. Regarding capital receipts, a decision would need to be taken by the Council by the summer of 2007.
Regarding the Investment in School Buildings, are you happy with the current state of schools. If not, what will you be doing about it?	<p>A complete survey had been undertaken on all schools and MACE was now considering which works should be given the highest priority.</p> <p>MACE would not be the final arbiter of this process, but would be using the Council's in-house capabilities.</p> <p>MACE's role would be to bundle together packages that would satisfy the repair solution. In doing this, MACE would be fair and open.</p>

Following the presentation, the representatives of MACE and the Headteachers were thanked for attending the meeting, and it was

RECOMMENDED -

(1) T H A T Cabinet be advised of the discussions that had taken place at the meeting.

(2) T H A T the Scrutiny Committee (Lifelong Learning) be regularly updated on progress with regard to the School Investment Strategy.