

Finance and General Purposes and Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Human Resources Sub Group - MEP Joint Working Party

Report of the key areas covered and outcomes from the meetings held on 8 August 2006, 30 August 2006, 27 September 2006 and 29th November 2006. (Full minutes available on request)

Manchester Education Partnership - review

At meetings of overview and scrutiny committees held in July broad agreement had been given to the general direction of travel with regard to the review of the Manchester Education Partnership, however, issues of concern were identified related to the management of the staffing processes involved, and the need to provide effective support and challenge to officers carrying out the detailed implementation of the review, which constitutes a significant and challenging agenda for change.

In approaching both strands of this work the following key issues were identified through the scrutiny process -

o Delegated budgets

- Rationale for the link to improving attainment and increased district collaboration
- Whether there are different issues in terms of delegating different budgets
- What will be the budgets for each service
- Will the delegated budgets be ring-fenced for particular services
- What are the risks/implications of schools not buying-in traded services

o Traded Services

- Information required about current Traded Services and how it is intended to develop future ones - eg criteria to decide what to trade
- Will there be any element of core funding for all or some of the traded services
- What evidence exists to show that the quality of current services can be maintained and/or improved if they become traded services and the outcomes for children improved.

- **Management Development**

- How will the £0.5M for management development be spent and effectiveness measured.

- **Value for Money**

- Assess whether the schemes being looked at in other authorities are viably benchmarked against the Manchester model.

- **Human Resources issues**

- The need to initiate cultural change at the present time to ensure for example that an effective performance management framework is implemented in Education while service re-design is taking place rather than through the re-design only
- Consequences of staff de-motivation during the change process
- Clarification of processes to ensure an efficiencies competent workforce in re-designed services

Across the course of the meetings, it has been possible to clarify a number of areas. For example, following considerable discussion, officers have presented to members of the joint sub group a paper which sets out a clear pathway to manage the human resources implications of the review, within existing Council policies.

A detailed paper has been presented which demonstrates the critical steps needed to delegate to schools the funding for high incidence/low intensity special educational needs. The discussion about this paper covered the validity of 'proxy indicators' for levels of delegation to schools and highlighted the need for stringent monitoring of what the money is spent on and the outcomes. There was also a recognition that delegation of any service would require the same level of detailed planning and consideration as this area of work. Members also wanted there to be a clear contingency plan for the eventuality that schools did not want to use delegated funds to buy a service currently.

In relation to Traded Services, members of the joint scrutiny sub group had a paper with a detailed exposition of how Hospitality and Trading Services respond to the specification for school meals, which is now a traded service. This was helpful in clarifying the approach required.

Further work is planned;

By 1st December members of the sub group requested clarity in writing about the numbers of staff in which services in MEP as there has been variation in the dates.

A paper has been requested for Finance and General Purposes Committee on 11th January concerning the requirement to find £1m of efficiencies in 2006/7 from the review and progress on this with a risk assessment of the likely end of year position.

Further meetings are planned on;

17th January,
21st February,
21st March, all at 3 pm.

Pauline Newman
Director of Children's services