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17 March 2010

S U M M O N S

MEETING: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
DATE: 25 March 2010
TIME: 5.00 p.m.
PLACE: Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Gosport
Democratic Services contact: Chris Wrein

LINDA EDWARDS
BOROUGH SOLICITOR

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Councillor Forder (Chairman)

Councillor Allen	Councillor Foster-Reed
Councillor Beavis	Councillor Hylands
Councillor Champion	Councillor Mrs Searle
Councillor Dickson	Councillor Miss West
Councillor Mrs Forder	Vacancy x 2

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IMPORTANT NOTICE:

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NOTE:

Please note that mobile phones should be switched off for the duration of the meeting.

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies, if any, for inability to attend the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All Members present are reminded to declare, at this point in the meeting or as soon as possible thereafter, any personal (including financial) or prejudicial interest in any item(s) being considered at this meeting.

3. MINUTES

To confirm the Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 28 January and 17 February 2010 (attached).

4. DEVELOPMENT OF A WORK PROGRAMME

A) REQUESTS FOR SCRUTINY

To consider any requests for scrutiny received by the Borough Solicitor. A copy of the Scrutiny Work Plan Prioritisation Aid is attached.

B) WORK PROGRAMME

To consider the work programme (attached) for the Committee, receive updates and any suggestions from Members for issues to be scrutinised.

C) OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR SCRUTINY

5. REPORTS TO BE RECEIVED

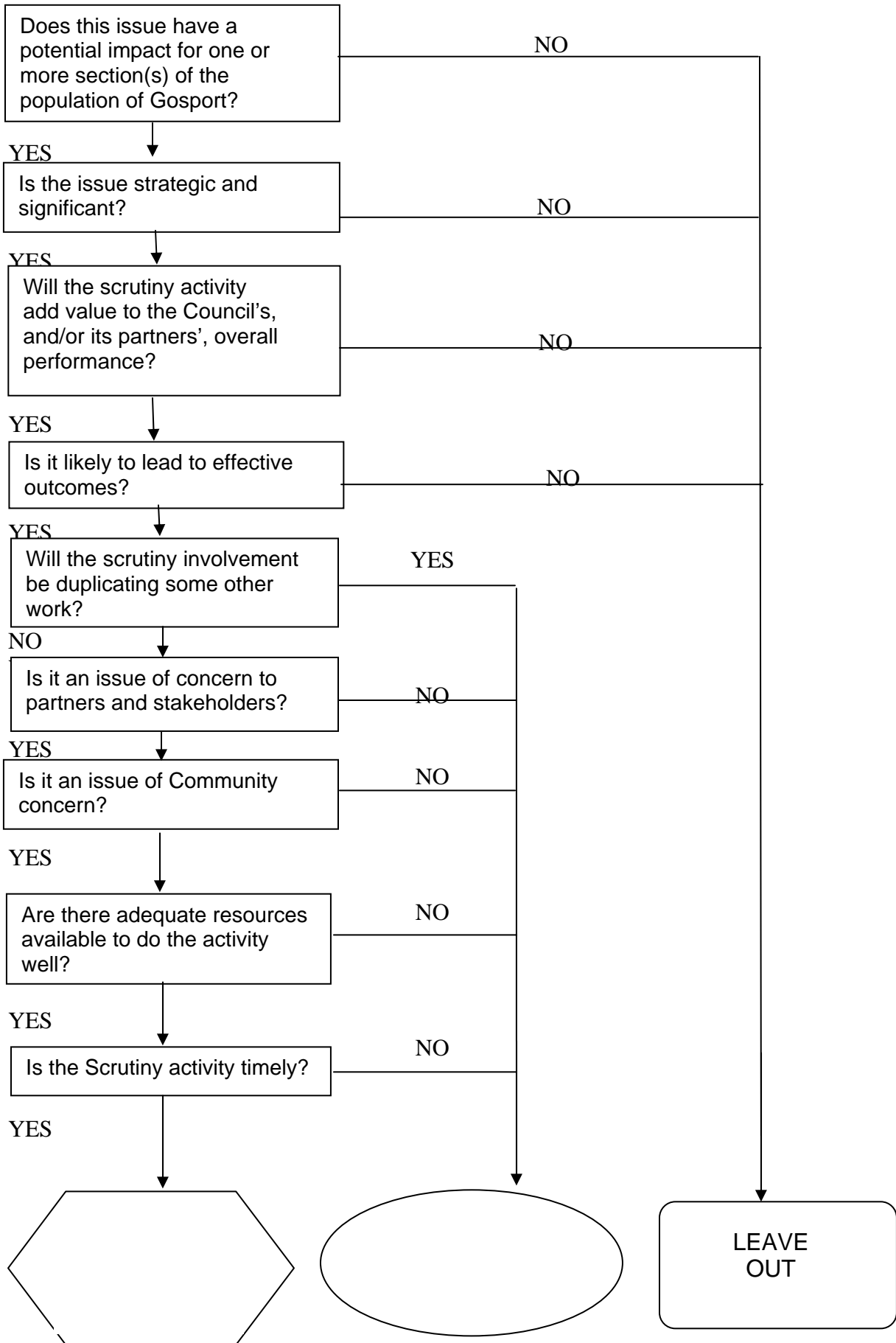
(i) ANNUAL REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

To consider the Chairman's report (attached)

(ii) POST 16 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

To consider the Chairman's draft report (attached)

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: WORK PROGRAMME

Work Area	Lead Member/Officer	Date to be reported to Committee
Annual Report on the Work of the Committee	Chairman	25 March 2010
Performance Information: <i>Consideration of performance information relating to actions agreed by CMT</i>	Ian Lycett/ Des Welbourne	Annually. Next report: July 2010
Community Strategy Action Plan: <i>Policy Framework Document</i>	Julie Petty	At 6-monthly intervals: Next report June 2010
Disability Equality Scheme: <i>Receive progress report on an annual basis</i>	Julie Petty	Annually: Next report June 2010
Race Equality Scheme <i>Receive progress report on an annual basis</i>	Julie Petty	Annually: Next report 28 January 2010
Gender Equality Scheme <i>Receive progress report on an annual basis</i>	Julie Petty	Annually: Next report September 2010
Sustainable Communities Act 2007, Calls for Action and Local Petitions and recent and impending legislation affecting local authorities	Linda Edwards	June 2010
Post-16 Vocational Education Provision in Gosport		25 March 2010
Budget Issues Working Group	Peter Wilson	22 July 2010
Work areas: <i>Review at each meeting</i>		

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
25 MARCH 2010

TITLE: CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2009-2010

AUTHOR: COUNCILLOR FORDER

a) The Committee completed the following reports:

1. Post16 Vocational Education in the Borough of Gosport.

This was a major report involving all Members of the Committee. Nine witnesses were interviewed; formal written reports were received and there was one visit (to South Downs College) organised for all councillors.

In addition the Chairman and Chief Executive were involved in informal discussions with County Councillors and a number of potential and actual service providers.

2. Recruitment and Succession Planning

A working group undertook a brief enquiry leading to a short report that was referred to the Personnel Sub-board

b) The following annual reports were received and debated:

1. Performance Indicators and Council Performance.
2. Sustainable Community Strategy
3. Disability Equality Scheme
4. Race Equality
5. Gender Equality

c) A panel was formed with terms of reference designed to consider ways of improving Councillors' understanding of budget issues and make recommendations as to how the presentation of budget issues could be improved. In consequence some changes have been made to the way documentation is presented and a training session was organised.

d) As a result of concerns raised by Committee members a presentation and report on the Maintenance of Ann's Hill Cemetery was received and debated.

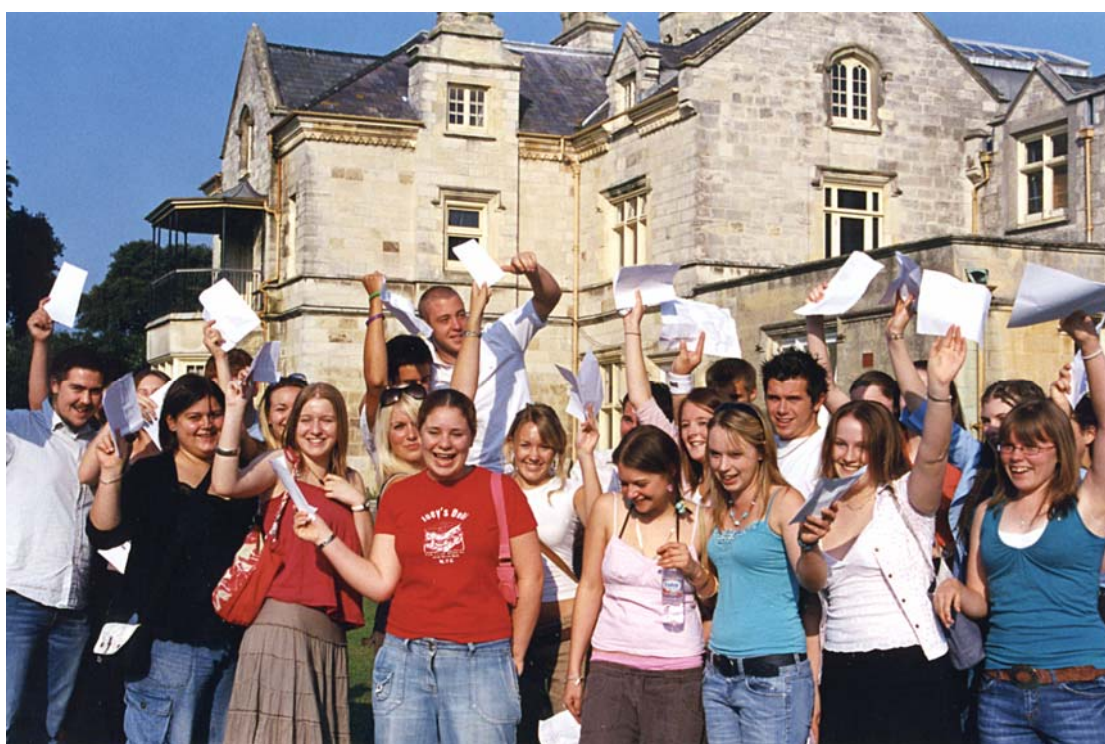
e) The Committee received a report from the Borough Solicitor on new and emerging legislative issues, including the Sustainable Communities Act, 2007; Councillor Calls for Action; Petitions; and The Local Democracy,

Economic Development and Construction Bill. These are issues to which it is likely the Committee will return in the next twelve months.

- f) Following the adoption of the Committee's 2008-2009 Report on 'Older People and the Issues of Loneliness and Isolation' a well-attended Conference was held in October. The conclusions of the Conference are now being taken forward by a Stakeholders' Steering Group.
- g) The Chairman, another Committee Member and a Democratic Services officer attended the inaugural meeting of the Hampshire Scrutiny network in January. As a result the Chairman was elected Chairman of the Network and he hopes that this will benefit Gosport by giving the Borough access to examples of good practice from throughout Hampshire and access to the expertise of scrutiny officers at County Hall.

R.W. Forder

Post 16 Vocational Education Scrutiny Report



Contents

Background
Main Findings
Conclusions
Recommendations

Membership

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Supporting Officers:

Ian Lycett
Chris Wrein

Appendices

Appendix A.

Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 12 October 2009 and documentation submitted by the LSC.

Appendix B.

Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 15 December 2009 and a letter from Dr Ian Johnson (Principal, Brune Park School) dated 9 December 2009

Appendix C

Paper written by Lynda Dine, Gosport Borough's Head of Economic Prosperity 'Post 16 Vocational Education in Gosport: Industrial Perspective'.

Appendix D

Report of a visit of Gosport Borough Councillors and Officers to South Downs College on the morning of Thursday 4 February 2010.

Appendix E

Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 17 February 2010.

Vocational Education Scrutiny Report

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 The possibility of the Committee scrutinising Post-16 Vocational Education in the Borough was first raised at its meeting of 11 June, 2009. The argument was made that provision was inadequate to meet actual and potential demand. At this meeting it was resolved that representatives from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) be invited to meet with the Committee to provide information on education provision for post 16 year olds and to respond to Members' questions. In the event, LSC representatives chose to be accompanied by representatives of the Local Education Authority (LEA) as their responsibilities were soon to transfer to the LEA.

1.2 This meeting took place on 12 October 2009 with the following in attendance:

- 1.3
- Anne-Marie Mountifield: Learning and Skills Council Partnership Director
 - Mike Stoneman: Learning and Skills Council Partnership Manager
 - Melanie Saunders: Hampshire County Council Manager of Educational Improvement
 - Brian Pope: Hampshire County Council Director
 - Bob Eardley: Hampshire County Council: Infrastructure

1.4 The minutes of this meeting, together with a copy of documentation submitted by the LSC representatives, are submitted as Appendix A.

1.5 At the conclusion of this meeting it was agreed to extend the scrutiny by inviting the Heads of the Borough's three secondary schools to a further meeting together with the Principal of St Vincent Sixth Form College to give evidence to

the Committee.



1.6 This meeting took place on 15 December 2009 with the following in attendance:

- Bridgemary School represented by Mr Richard Carlyle, Vice Principal and Acting Head
- Bay House School represented by Mr Ian Potter, Headteacher
- St Vincent College represented by Mr Steve Wain, Principal

Brune Park School was unable to send a representative but the Principal, Dr. Ian Johnson, submitted written evidence.

1.7 The minutes of this meeting, together with a copy of documentation submitted by Dr. Ian Johnson, are submitted as Appendix B.

A report written by Lynda Dine, Gosport Borough's Head of Economic Prosperity is submitted as Appendix C.

A brief report on a visit by Members and Officers to South Downs College on 4 February is submitted as Appendix D.

1.8 On 17 February Councillor David Kirk, Executive Lead Member of Children's Services, Hampshire County Council

gave evidence to the Committee. He had been asked to explain changes in the governance of education in Hampshire from 1 April 2010 and to respond to a document summarising the Committee's initial findings. The minutes of this meeting are submitted as Appendix E.

2.0 MAIN FINDINGS

2.1 In the Borough, educational achievement is substantially below county and national norms for all age groups (see, in particular, the written evidence submitted by the LSC presented as Appendix A). In particular we note the LSC's evidence concerning the achievement of Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications by the age of 19. Since 2004/05 the proportion of young people achieving a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19 has remained static at around 63% which is nearly 20% below the national target of 82% for 2011. Similarly for Level 3, the proportion of young people achieving a Level 3 Qualification by the age of 19 has increased only marginally from 35.6% in 2004/05 to 36.6% on 2006/7; 17% behind the national target of 54% by 2011.



2.2 Although the Committee was initially persuaded that there was no evidence that educational underachievement in the Borough reflected on the performance of the Borough's secondary providers 11-16 contextual value added (CVA) data suggests that two of the Borough's three 11-16 schools are performing below

national average.

2.3 We note the key gaps in provision and the lack of vocational and occupational provision from Entry Level to Level 3 identified by the LSC. These are:

- Construction
- Engineering (including marine)
- Motor vehicle
- Hospitality and catering
- Retail and commercial enterprise
- Creative and cultural industries
- Business and improvement techniques
- Hair and beauty – Entry Level and Level 1

2.4 We are concerned that all three secondary schools argued that gaps in provision worked to encourage disengagement from education and increased the chances that young people would fall into the NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) category.

2.5 It seems arguable that this is a more serious problem than in other regions because of Gosport's well-documented transport difficulties. These make it difficult for young people to access educational and training opportunities outside the Borough. However there is dispute over this issue, with anecdotal evidence indicating that some students travel considerable distances off the Peninsula to access appropriate courses.

2.6 The document submitted as Appendix C deals with industrial perspectives and paints a most disturbing picture of the adequacy of vocational education in the Borough. It suggests that the current shortcomings are having a substantial and negative impact on the Borough's economic prosperity.

2.7 As the scrutiny proceeded we became increasingly aware of the difficulty of examining post-16 vocational education in isolation from educational provision in

general and 14-19 vocational provision in particular. One consequence was that when taking evidence we found ourselves involved with aspects and phases of education other than Post-16 Vocational Education. This may suggest other areas for scrutiny in the future.



2.8 Throughout our scrutiny we were conscious of the differing perspectives of the educational providers. It is not our job to adjudicate and we will not do so, however these differences act as a barrier to cooperation and have been exacerbated by the LSC's failure to satisfactorily address the shortcomings it identified. We also note that the providers presented us with very differing views on how these shortcomings can be best addressed.

3.0 CONCLUSIONS

3.1 We note that amongst witnesses there was considerable consensus about what the problems are (the diagnosis); however solutions have proved elusive. For this reason we believe that there is an urgent need for action and leadership.

3.2 With the transfer of responsibility for the planning of post-16 vocational education from the LSC to the LEA, we believe that an opportunity exists to address the issues and gives rise to the following recommendations.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 That the Leader of the Council and the

Chief Executive engage in discussion with the Hampshire County Council Executive Lead Member for Children's Services and County officers with the purpose of finding ways of addressing issues identified in this Report.

4.2 That the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive report back periodically to the Borough's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and, in particular, advise the Committee as to the new Governance and financial arrangements that will be put into place for Post 16 Education after 1 April 2010 as soon as these are available.



Pictures courtesy of GBC photo library and Brune Park Community College and Bay House School.

**AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE WAS HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2009**

Councillors Ms Ballard (P), Beavis (P), Carr (P), Champion, Dickson (P), Mrs Forder (P), Forder (Chairman) (P), Foster-Reed (P), Geddes, Hylands (P), Mrs Searle, and Miss West.

23. APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Champion and Miss West.

24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

**25. CURRENT AND FUTURE POST-16 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
PROVISION IN GOSPORT**

The representatives from the Learning Skills Council and Hampshire County Council were introduced to the Committee:

- Anne-Marie Mountifield: Learning and Skills Council Partnership Director
- Mike Stoneman: Learning and Skills Council Partnership Manager
- Melanie Saunders: Hampshire County Council Manager of Educational Improvement
- Brian Pope: Hampshire County Council Director
- Bob Eardley: Hampshire County Council: Infrastructure

A background paper from the Learning and Skills Council entitled "Gosport Post 16 Vocational Provision – Overview and Scrutiny: 12 October 2009" was circulated to the Committee and is affixed in the Minute Book as Appendix A.

The Chairman explained that the discussion would revolve around five questions to the representatives which had been notified in advance.

The first question put to the representatives was as follows:

Describe levels of educational achievement at 16 plus in Gosport relative to those in other parts of the county and country. We would also be interested in hearing your theories that might explain variations from national and county norms.

12 October 2009
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Extraordinary)

Anne-Marie Mountifield referred to data set out in the background document relating to those leaving school in August 2008 with five or more GCSE grades A* - C including English and Maths, and Level 2 which included five or more grades A* - C. Also contained was data regarding percentages of young people achieving Levels 2 and 3 qualifications by the age of 19 together with comparators relating to adult skills in the Gosport area.

In all these areas the statistics relating to Gosport did not compare well either nationally or with the rest of the county.

Members were advised that there were key gaps at entry levels 1 and 2 and these were explained by historical configuration of provision, transport, how learners value learning and routes into learning which are not always felt to be natural choices. In some areas participation was very low. Low educational attainment was often as a result of family influence.

Brian Pope advised that there was no OFSTED pre-sixteen educational failure in Gosport. At age five the key indicators were communication and language skills and social and emotional behaviour. In Hampshire 50% of children gained a satisfactory level of attainment in these areas whilst in Gosport the level was only 37%. This 13% gap had closed to 8% by the time the children left school. The key solution for some children would be to remove social and economic factors.

Members stated that the per capita spending in Gosport at Key Stages 3 and 4 (11-16) was less than in Hampshire as a whole and queried whether enough was being done to help. Brian Pope advised that the pre-five system was still very new and funding had been provided for children's centres with a degree of success, but there would always be room for improvement.

The Chairman summed up this part of the discussion by stating that Gosport was a Borough where educational attainment was much lower than the county average. It was suggested that this reflected economic and social deprivation in the Borough but generally schools were doing their job properly.

The second question was put to the representatives:

Explain the possible consequences for the local economy and employment.

Members were advised that, compared to the south-east generally, there were social and economic issues in Gosport. Broadly speaking average earnings were lower and many people had to leave the Borough as they could earn more elsewhere. Benefit dependency was higher as was the claimant count in relation to age group.

More attention needed to be paid to workless people aged 18 to 24 years. In relation to job density there was slightly over 0.5 of a job per resident of working age, indicating that there were not enough jobs in the Borough for the resident population. This did not compare favourably with surrounding areas.

12 October 2009
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Extraordinary)

With regard to entrepreneurial activity, it was noted that the number of VAT level businesses was very low. There were a number of small businesses and self employed people but this was unlikely to generate a great deal of employment.

There was a challenge in relation to the provision of apprenticeships which would require working with public sector colleagues to encourage apprenticeship opportunities. Efforts had been made to give short term assistance with apprenticeships to provide some experience.

Members noted that the Ministry of Defence was a major employer in the area but was reducing in size. This would affect job opportunities and would need to be taken into account.

There were emerging opportunities in the area e.g. the Rowner Renewal scheme where young people would see opportunities to work in the Borough in areas with a positive, tangible future.

Question 3 was put to the representatives:

Outline the Learning and Skills Council's involvement with the subject, its past recommendations and proposals, their fate and the possible reasons for it.

Ann-Marie Mountifield advised that there is considerable movement of people around the PUSH area with large mobility amongst people studying. There were six or seven education establishments within a ten mile radius; Fareham College, St Vincent and Bay House School were the major providers locally.

Since 2002/03 independent reviews had been commissioned, of which all sought a structural solution. This included a public consultation exercise on a proposed merger of St Vincent and Fareham Colleges.

Young people were being adversely affected, especially regarding employment opportunities and there was a need to be mindful that the body responsible for young people would be changing.

Members felt that there was a vocational deficit in Gosport with low educational attainment and this needed to be addressed. It was not always easy for students to travel out of the area to study and students with a record of poor educational attainment were more reluctant to travel substantial distances to further their training and education.

Ann-Marie Mountifield advised that there was a desire to achieve a strategic solution. There were many different views but there was a need for a deliverable, sustainable solution which would be signed up to by all parties. There was also a need to look at geographical areas in isolation and to concentrate on those not in education, employment or training.

12 October 2009
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Extraordinary)

Members were advised that various schools had worked on a number of initiatives to address the vocational deficit. However, these were very piecemeal and would require significant investment to provide solutions.

Question 4 was put to the representatives:

Explain the financial and other implications for Gosport of the 'wind-up' of the Learning and Skills Council.

Ann-Marie Mountifield drew Members attention to page seven of the background paper.

There should be no implication relating to the abolition of the Learning and Skills Council as there would be bodies to succeed it. The drive would be to bring arrangements together in a more streamlined way for the education of those aged between 0 and 19. The Learning and Skills Council was currently responsible for post 19 education and there would be an agency established to carry on this work.

Legislation was currently moving through Parliament and was due to be ratified on 1 April 2010. Education for 16 to 19 year olds would be the responsibility of local authorities. Skills and apprenticeships would be the responsibility of the Skills Funding Agency.

Question 5 was put to the representatives:

Provide an assessment of where we stand now and what needs to be done. For example, how do you see the national agenda for partnership and schools working together playing out in Gosport?

Ann-Marie Mountifield advised that there were insufficient vocational opportunities in Gosport for young people and adults. Members suggested that the problem in Gosport was more serious than other areas of the country due to its low educational attainment and poor transport. Members were advised that the problem was very acute in Gosport. The challenge was to equip people for sustainable employment. There were also challenges relating to opportunities for post 16s and concern regarding the number of young people not in education, employment or training together with those working without having achieved level 2 education and undertaking no training. There were also concerns about the outward migration of workers from Gosport and the lack of level 2 and level 3 achievements by the age of 19 years.

Brian Pope advised of the need to raise attainment at age 16 in Gosport. There had been recent improvements and collaboration between schools would be of assistance. The challenge would be how to intervene and get children on track. Leadership and management of schools together with teaching would be important. There had been some collaboration in the past to help with problems with mathematics which had seen a 3% improvement.

12 October 2009
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Extraordinary)

Consideration needed to be given to the moving of resources around the system when necessary, particularly in anticipation of future challenges.

Members were advised that Building Schools for the Future was critical. £80m would be made available in the first phase and it was hoped that £100m would be provided for the second. However, this would not happen until proper post -16 education proposals had been made.

Bob Eardley advised on Building Schools for the Future which would involve rebuilding, refurbishment and modernisation of every school in the country and would run beyond the year 2020. All authorities had been asked to identify where schools had low academic achievement and social deprivation. Nationally, Gosport was about halfway down the list but the ground rules had changed. Gosport was further ahead in the national programme than had been anticipated. The phase 2 funding would affect Gosport with £50m being available for the three secondary schools. This would be divided by the Partnership for Schools mainly on the basis of pupil numbers.

Members were advised that the allocation of £100m would not be sufficient and therefore funding from other areas would be needed. Details of 16 plus capital funding were not yet known. Obtaining funding through Building Schools for the Future was not considered to be easy and there would be a need to show that there was a proper strategy.

Members were advised that capital funding was still unclear and that demand outstripped supply. Funding for 16 to 19 year olds in schools and colleges had been committed up to 2011 after which there were no guarantees due to the impending General Election and the movement of responsibility from the Learning and Skills Councils to local authorities.

In answer to a question, Members were advised that the position of St Vincent College is the currently the same as for all other establishments.

Members were advised that Central Government was at present bringing in funds on a more modest scale. Building Schools for the Future would be part of a transformation agenda and funding post-16 education would have to respond to increased demand. Funding could be allocated to other areas due to local requirements or desires.

All the reviews had basically concluded the priorities for action shown on page 6 of the background paper. The challenge would be to obtain consensus and for all parties to pull in the same direction. Building Schools for the Future is the only avenue for funding and would need partnership working to be successful.

12 October 2009
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Extraordinary)

Members drew attention to wider issues affecting Gosport e.g. business grants to attract new employers to the town. Members were advised that strategic procurement leading to, for example, apprenticeships were a direct gain for the local population and there was funding available. For example, the Rowner Renewal scheme would require skills and would be beneficial to the local economy.

The representatives were questioned related to the priority given to Havant over Gosport in relation to the Building Schools for the Future. Members were advised that the criteria were:

- a. GCSE results in 2008; and
- b. Tax Credit take up.

Gosport was second out of ten in the area after Havant.

The Chairman thanked the representatives of the Learning and Skills Council and Hampshire County Council, in particular for the paper they had produced. It was felt that none of the parties were satisfied with the current situation and that despite substantial efforts the LSC had failed to find a comprehensive set of answers to what was a very disturbing situation. He hoped that the deliberations of the Committee may contribute to finding a way forward.

At this point the representatives left the meeting.

Members expressed the view that, whilst the provision of education was not a Borough Council responsibility and it could therefore not make any impositions, it ought nevertheless to be possible for it to apply pressure and exert some influence where the need was as clear as in this instance..

Members were advised that Bob Eardley of Hampshire County Council, who had earlier attended the meeting, had approached the Borough Council with a request for officers to sit on the Leisure and Cultural groups. The Borough Council officers nominated were David Martin and Damien Wilson respectively.

It was agreed that the whole Committee scrutiny of this area should continue and that Councillor Edgar, in recognition of his education role within Hampshire County Council, should be invited to attend any further meetings of the Committee where post -16 education was being discussed. In particular it was agreed that the two 11-16 schools, Bay House School and St Vincent College should all be given an opportunity to present their views to the Committee.

12 October 2009
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Extraordinary)

The Chief Executive advised that under the Comprehensive Area Assessment, District Councils were expected by the Government to exert influence in all areas of their community and show leadership. Therefore, the Borough Council would need to form a view on post -16 education, bearing in mind that, if the problems were not addressed, it was unlikely that jobs would be attracted to the area. In the past people had made their voices heard, for example, on the proposed merger and siting of colleges in Fareham.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) the scrutiny of post-16 vocational education provision in Gosport be continued;
- b) the scrutiny be carried out by the whole Committee;
- c) Councillor Edgar be invited to attend the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when post-16 vocational education provision in Gosport is to be discussed; and
- d) other education providers be invited to such meetings as appropriate.

26. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to discuss.

The meeting ended at 8.08 p.m

CHAIRMAN

**Gosport post-16 vocational provision - Overview and Scrutiny
Committee: 12 October 2009**

1. Socio-economic overview of Gosport

General statistics	Gosport
Area (sq km)	25
Proportion of area rural	0.0%
No. dwellings (2006)	35,000
Population mid 2006	78,200
Population density per km2	3,128
Population change 96-06	2.4%
Working age population (mid 2006)	49,000

Source: Fareham and Gosport Key Data Sheet 2008, Hampshire Economic Partnership

As with the rest of the country the unemployment rate has increased. As of August 2009 the unemployment rate was 3.1% compared to 1.5% in June 2008.

The economic activity rate of 86.9% is above the South East average but there are substantial variations. There are high levels of unemployment in areas of deprivation which also have high proportions of young residents. There is a close link between this and second and third generation unemployment, and also the low aspirations and attainment in these areas.

There are 1700 small businesses in Gosport employing 19,000 people. This is a high proportion, with 67% of firms having less than 5 employees. The most significant sectors are public administration, distribution, hospitality and catering and defence related industries. Despite cutbacks in defence spending since 1989 leading to significant job losses, Gosport remains heavily dependent on the defence sector for employment and the MOD owns 25% of land in the borough.

Economic indicators	Gosport	South East
** Mean weekly earnings (residents) 2008	£445.3	£523.2
Mean weekly earnings (workplace) 2007	£423.8	£499.8
** % of working age population drawing key benefits – August 08	11.8%	9.9%
** Claimant count unemployment rate (%) JC+ - August 2009	3.1%	3.1%
3 year business survival rates (2005)	72%	73%
Job density (2006) (local jobs: working age population)	0.57	0.87
** Economic activity rate (July 07 – June 08) ONS	86.9%	82.1%
Entrepreneurial activity (VAT stock per 1,000 head of population) (2006)	20.8	44.3
Self employment rate (2006) (% of working age) BL	7.6%	10.4%

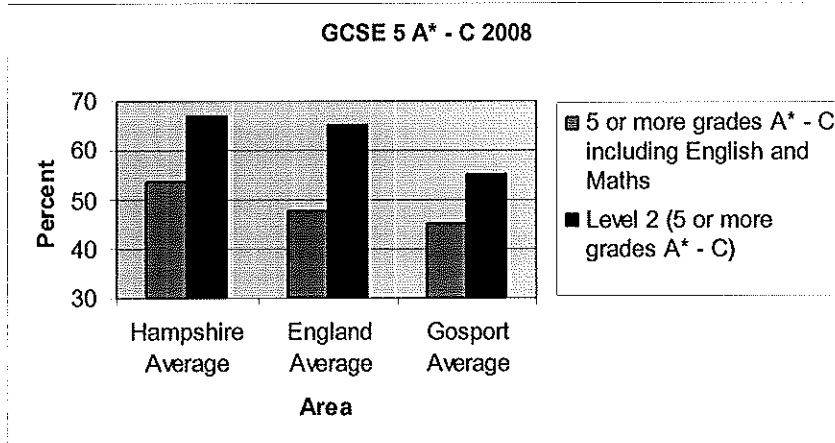
Source: Fareham and Gosport Key Data Sheet 2008, Hampshire Economic Partnership
 ** updated by LSC

Transport links to and from Gosport are limited, with no rail transport and significant road congestion: 56% of residents commute out of the borough adding to these difficulties.

2. Review of qualifications and skill levels in Gosport – young people and adults

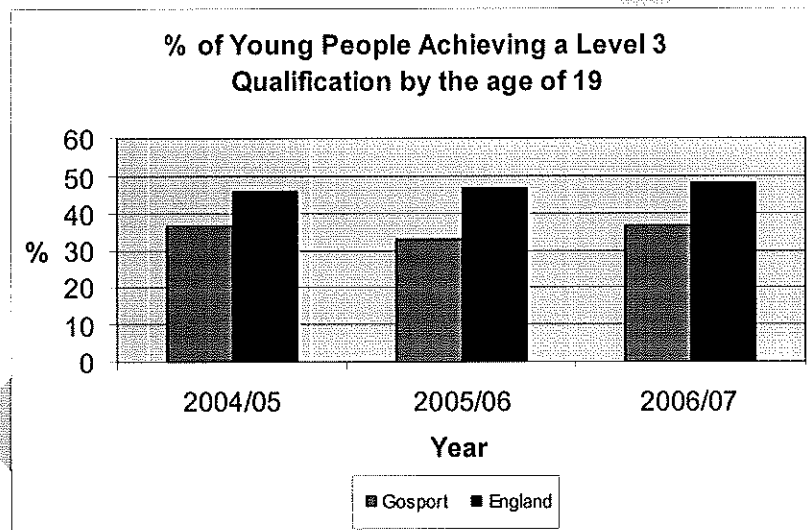
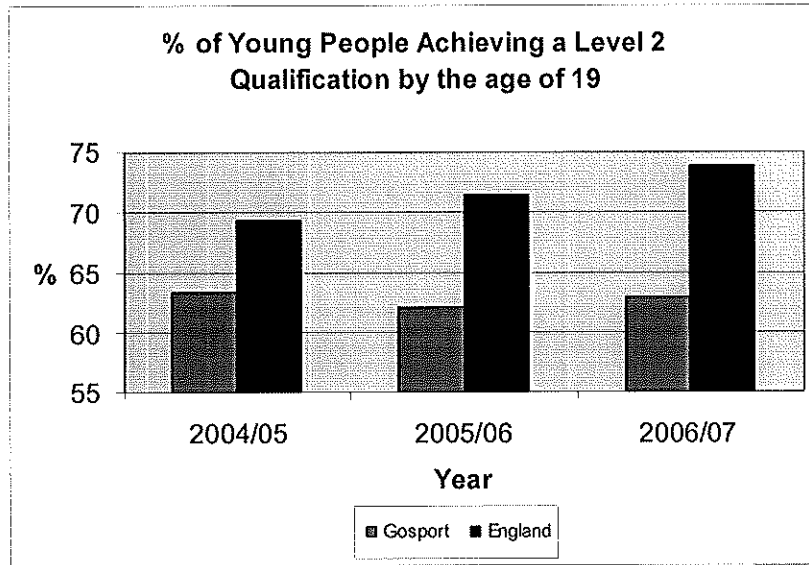
GCSE attainment in Gosport is well below the county average and a relatively low number of young people in the schools achieve 5 or more GCSEs at grade A*-C including English and Maths. In 2008, 55.1% of pupils in Gosport achieved 5+ A*-C GCSEs compared to the County average of 67.2%. With respect to the measure of 5 or more A*-C GCSEs including English and Maths, the average for Gosport in 2008 was 45.3% compared to the County average of 53.8%.

There are relatively low post-16 education and training participation rates. In 2008 the average post-16 participation rate for Gosport was 76%, slightly below that of Hampshire (78%). However, this masks some of the low participation rates that exist in the wards of Bridgemary South, Bridgemary North, Rowner and Holbrook, Grange and Elson.



Source: DCSF Performance Tables 2008

Of particular concern in Gosport is the achievement of a Level 2 and Level 3 qualification by the age of 19. Since 2004/05 the proportion of young people achieving a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19 has remained static at around 63% which is nearly 20 percentage points behind the national target of 82% for 2011. Similarly for Level 3, the proportion of young people achieving a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19 has increased only marginally from 35.6% in 2004/05 to 36.6% in 2006/07; 17 percentage points behind the national target of 54% by 2011



Significant numbers of young people are not in education, employment or training (NEETs). In Gosport, the latest available data (August 2009) revealed that 186 16-18 year olds (9.9%) were not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Adults Skills are also an issue in the area. 15% of working adults in Gosport have no qualifications and only 59% of the working population of Gosport are qualified to level 2, compared to a South East average of 68%. 1 in 4 of working adults in Gosport has poor levels of numeracy and literacy skills.

Skills levels	Gosport	South East
% of working age adults with no qualifications	15%	10%
% of working age adults qualified to Level 2 and above	59%	68%
% of working age adults qualified to Level 3 and above	39%	49%
% of working age adults qualified to Level 4 and above	23%	31%

Source: ONS, Annual Population Survey, 2006

3. Vocational / occupational provision required in Gosport

Key gaps in provision and the lack of vocational and occupational provision from Entry Level to Level 3 have been identified for Gosport. The key gaps in provision include:

- Construction
- Engineering (including Marine)
- Motor Vehicle
- Hospitality and Catering
- Health and Social Care
- Retail and Commercial Enterprise
- Creative and Cultural Industries
- Business Improvement Techniques
- Hair and Beauty – Entry Level and Level 1

Whilst priority should be given to the above, previous reports have identified other gaps in provision at Levels 1 and 2 and the need for more employer-led apprenticeships. These should also be considered as part of a comprehensive offer that will provide choice and progression.

Collaboration with local secondary schools will be a crucial feature of future provision, particularly with respect to the delivery of Diplomas

Current post-16 population forecasts indicate that 16-18 demand will be at best static, but may possibly decline.

In the secondary schools, the move towards a more vocational curriculum has already been introduced at Bridgemary and Brune Park in Gosport. This is likely to increase the demand for vocational courses post-16 in Gosport at levels 2 and 3. This will exacerbate the

vocational / academic imbalance between the north and the south of the peninsula.

4. Historical account of reviews and current recommendations

The Gosport and Fareham area has been the focus of a number of independent reviews undertaken over the past six years on behalf of the LSC and / or the colleges. This has included: the Local Area Review in 2002/03 (KPMG); a Strategic Options Review in 2005 (KPMG); a feasibility study to examine the potential merger of Fareham College with another college in 2006 (KPMG); a review of the post-16 curriculum in 2006 (Bentley Jennison); capital feasibility study for the development of a new college in 2007 (PWC); refresh of the Strategic Options Review in 2008/09 (KPMG).

Between December 2007 and February 2008, the LSC held a public consultation on the proposed merger of Fareham and St Vincent Colleges. Taking into account the response to the consultation the LSC SE Regional Council decided that merger was not deliverable within an acceptable timescale and therefore could not be recommended.

The most recent report by KPMG highlighted five core issues that have been identified by a range of stakeholders as persistent and immediate priorities for action:

- There are insufficient vocational opportunities, especially at Entry Level and Levels 1 and 2 in Gosport with many young people reluctant to travel;
- There are insufficient academic opportunities in Fareham, especially at Level 3 for AS / A2 - there is a strong local desire to expand this provision;
- Lower overall post-16 participation levels in Gosport and little evidence of value added between 16 and 19 overall - many of the needs of the local NEET group are not being met at present by local provision;
- Daily outward migration of post-16 learners from the boroughs of Fareham and Gosport is increasing; and
- The need to improve retention of learners in FE, based on high quality information, advice and guidance, the need to improve the success rates in both colleges and to improve the quality of the overall FE learning environment.

At the most recent meeting of the LSC Regional Council on 19 September 2009, members were asked to consider the deficit in vocational skills provision in Gosport.

They concluded there remained a need to secure vocational provision and recommended that this be done through negotiated commissioning, with providers who have a track record of delivering high quality vocational programmes at Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2 as part of the 2010/11 commissioning cycle. The objective is to ensure that there is some vocational provision to support young people in the Gosport area given the current proportion of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) and the prevailing economic climate. The number of new places would be circa 150 focusing on Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2 provision in the sectors of: construction; engineering (including marine); motor vehicle; hospitality & catering; health & social care; retail & commercial enterprise; creative and cultural industries; business improvement techniques; and hair & beauty.

This was recommended on the basis that it addresses some of the immediate needs and can be taken forward as part of the shadow transition arrangements with the Local Authority. The LSC will need to work in partnership with the Local Authority to take forward this recommendation, and on the understanding that the Local Authority will take the lead from April 2010.

5. Machinery of Government change: 16-19 and post 19 Education and Skills reforms

5.1 Background

In June 2007, it was announced, as part of the Machinery of Government changes, that 16-19 funding would be delivered through local authorities from 2010/2011. In *'Raising Expectations: enabling the system to deliver'*, published in March 2008, the following proposals were set out by Government:

- To transfer responsibility (in 2010) for funding the education and training of young people from the LSC to local authorities, who will be supported by a new Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA), and;
- To the same timescale, to transfer the LSC's responsibilities for adult education and training to a new adult Skills Funding Agency.

The drive to raise the participation age of young people (to 18 by 2015) requires much greater coherence in the services for young people than currently provided. It depends on local authorities taking the lead in making sure young people have access to high quality learning opportunities, including entitlements to Apprenticeships. That is why they will become the single point of accountability for all 0-19 Children's Services and key to the planning, coordination and integration of services in their area.

By transferring LSC responsibilities for planning, commissioning and funding 16-19 learning activity, the Government is creating a much clearer and stronger link between the outcomes for young people and the economic regeneration of regions, acknowledging the critical role local authorities have in local economic regeneration alongside the Regional Development Agencies.

The new adult Skills Funding Agency (SFA) will underpin a flexible and responsive demand-led system. It will seek to ensure funding to colleges and providers is driven by the choices of individuals and employers and facilitate the development of Train to Gain, the new Careers Service, and the National Apprenticeship Service.

5.2 The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill

The legislative proposals are contained in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill 2009. The Bill, which is currently being considered by Parliament, dissolves the Learning and Skills Council and:

- Sets out new duties on local authorities to secure enough suitable education and training provision for 16-19 year olds and 19-25 year olds subject to a learning difficulty assessment. It also places responsibilities on local authorities to secure education and training in public sector young offender institutions (Part 2).
- Establishes the Young People's Learning Agency and sets out its core duties and powers to fund post-16 education and training secured by local authorities, and to support and enable local authorities to carry out their new duties (Part 3).
- Establishes the office of Chief Executive of Skills Funding, who, with his or her staff, will constitute the Skills Funding Agency and will take on responsibility for funding post-19 education and training. The Chief Executive will also have responsibilities relating to the provision of apprenticeship training and the availability of apprenticeship places for all post-16 year olds (Part 4).
- Gives Sixth Form Colleges a distinct legal identity within the further education sector (Part 6).

**A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WAS HELD ON 15 DECEMBER 2009**

Councillors Beavis (P), Carr, Champion (P), Dickson (P), Mrs Forder (P), Forder (Chairman) (P), Foster-Reed, Geddes, Hylands, Mrs Searle, and Miss West (P).

It was reported that, in accordance with Standing Orders, Councillor Allen had been nominated to replace Councillor Geddes for this meeting.

37. APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Carr, Geddes and Hylands.

38. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

39. POST 16 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN GOSPORT

A copy of a letter received from Dr Ian Johnson, Principal of Brune Park Community College, was circulated to Members. A copy of the letter is attached in the Minute Book as Appendix A.

The Chairman advised that, with regard to this issue, he was currently endeavouring to organise a visit for Members to South Downs College. He had also met with County Councillor Kirk and advised him that he would be producing initial findings from this meeting and would invite his comments upon them. It was hoped that Councillor Kirk would be able to attend a future meeting for this purpose.

The education establishments were represented as follows:

- Bridgemary School represented by Mr Richard Carlyle, Vice Principal and Acting Head
- Bay House School represented by Mr Ian Potter, Headteacher
- St Vincent College represented by Mr Steve Wain, Principal

The representatives were asked to respond to the following questions:

- Are you aware of any particular deficiencies in Post 16 Vocational Education and if so what are they?
- What are the particular implications of these deficiencies in your Institution and how are you endeavouring to address them?
- How do you believe the issues can be best addressed bearing in the mind the likely financial climate over the next few years?
- Are there any more general implications for your Institution?

Bridgemary School

Mr Carlyle advised that there was a lack of opportunity for Post 16 year olds and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) were aware of this lack of provision.

The School did have planning permission for a vocational centre and had a partner, Highbury College, which had been chosen by the LSC, not by the school. The lack of provision had been partially addressed by Fareham College but not all the learners with needs were accessing provision.

The transition of responsibility from the LSC to the local authority was being managed and funding for capital build was required. There was a broad curriculum remit which had been successful in addressing level 1 needs.

The local authority had not expressed a preference for Post 16 provision but had indicated that they had funds to support a vocational centre at Bridgemary School.

The vision involved addressing engagement with adult education, encompassing both male and female students and the family engagement philosophy.

With regard to addressing the post 16 issues, the school had a partnership arrangement with Highbury College. A survey had been carried out amongst sixteen year olds regarding the curriculum plan. The classroom environment would support the provision of vocational education. The school had an open attitude but could be certain of nothing at the present time.

With regard to the suggestion of one college to specialise in vocational education whilst another specialised in academic education, Mr Carlyle expressed the view that, to an extent, his school would like to see a centre of excellence for the most able students but advised that this would need to be carefully mapped and thought through.

Mr Carlyle advised that the school intended to support the local community whilst it appeared that other providers were adopting a more aggressive stance.

There was a possibility of £80 million being provided under Building Schools for the Future (BSF) for secondary education provision in Gosport. This had led the school to reflect on communication and the provision of a Gosport Learning Village to support all year learning. If the BSF avenue were pursued, all secondary education institutions would be required to produce a Strategy for Change document. This would have to include Post 16 provision.

With regard to the Federation, Mr Carlyle stated that, economically, it would make sense to provide for a cluster of educational services, with joined up thinking to support health and education services and the community.

There had been no clear information in the recent BSF announcements but, should the area miss out on the £80 million of funding, there may not be further opportunities.

Members raised the issue of the 14 to 19 agenda and the introduction of 17 new diplomas by the end of 2011. Mr Carlyle advised of the Gosport 14 to 19 Collaboration which was at a very mature stage. The level of uptake had been disappointing despite considerable marketing efforts. It could be that people were waiting to see how the arrangements panned out. It was heavily funded at the start but the timeline for the release of diplomas appeared to be causing delays.

The Chairman suggested the intake at Bridgemary School was potentially less aspirant due to social and economic factors in the area and asked whether the relative lack of opportunity affected Bridgemary students more than others. Mr Carlyle advised that all students needed to know what their next step would be in order to be properly motivated. They would need to be able to identify effective progression routes.

The Chairman suggested that there was a need for provision for vocational education in Gosport but this was in the areas where there was least investment and asked whether this could be addressed. Mr Carlyle advised that pre-16 engineering courses had been successful and there had been a 100% double pass rate at GCSE level in Bridgemary School. The school worked well with HMS Sultan and other schools needed to tap into this valuable community resource. The BSF would support a large ICT infrastructure.

With regard to collaboration, Members asked whether there were any problems between schools and colleges. Mr Carlyle advised that it was not true that diplomas were exclusively vocational although some schools had encountered problems in this area. There was a wealth of partners but it was difficult to sustain a financial relationship. Industry in schools worked very well to enable students to relate to the job market and industry specification. It was useful for students to be taken out into the industrial workplace.

With regard to the introduction of the 17 new diplomas by 2011, Members asked whether the schools would lose out if they waited for too long. Mr Carlyle advised that the sport and leisure diplomas would not be coming in for a couple of years but, in the meantime, they would be able to support students in other ways in this subject area.

Mr Carlyle was asked whether the entry level requirements for diplomas would be likely to dissuade students. Some students were happy doing BTEch Engineering and that would be part of their future career. Not all students wanted to specialise too early.

The Chairman thanked Mr Carlyle for his contribution and asked him to pass on the best wishes of the Committee to Cheryl Heron, the Principal of Bridgemary School, who was leaving shortly to take up a new post.

Bay House School

Ian Potter advised that there was a paucity of post 16 vocational education in Gosport which was mainly to do with the lack of routes of progression. Too many students took routes which were determined only by what was available and not by what they would ideally like to do.

Mr Potter advised that the number of students going to Sixth Form College or further education dropped at age 17 and dropped further at age 18. This correlated with the NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) group, the size of which increased as students became older. There was a need to keep students engaged in learning but the size of the NEET group increased because the courses available were not what they wanted. If students did not attain a sufficiently high level at GCSE they would go on to courses that were available but not necessarily ones where they would continue to achieve. Level 2 vocational courses should include areas such as construction and retail.

With regard to the new diplomas, Mr Potter advised that they were successful to an extent but they were not the panacea that had been hoped for. A student would need to be a high flyer to be successful in the diplomas. The foundation was only worth a D grade (level 1) and this was a missed opportunity. It would be possible to map out a route of progress in Gosport i.e. level 1 with some level 2 work but not considered satisfactory for level 3. There could be a menu of vocational courses available and level 2 vocational studies could bring the student up to a level sufficiently high to start level 3 at age 16. Students could be working at levels 1, 2 and 3 at the same time but in different areas. At the moment there was an “eggs in one basket” attitude. The system needed to be more flexible and there was a need for flexible thinking, including the area of collaboration.

Mr Potter advised that at Bay House 120 students out of 350 remained in the school to study for ‘A’ levels. 150 of the 350 were of academic ‘A’ level standard and would be following the correct route of progression. This left 200 students to whom the school felt a commitment and there were concerns about how any transition was managed. There were concerns that students would simply take whatever courses were available but their confidence as learners would be increased if a greater choice were available.

Traditionally adolescents tended to follow whichever course of action would be easiest. This would often involve following their peer group and providers took advantage of this. Bay House remained viable as many students came to the Sixth Form from outside the school. The school’s retention stacked up well and it achieved its fitness for purpose. In many establishments students were taking inappropriate courses and only realised this when they were older.

Mr Potter advised that the Fareham / Gosport Consortium illustrated the destination of those leaving Bay House School. He highlighted the trend for greater numbers to go to Fareham College. However, if it suited a student from Bay House to go outside the consortium because it was the right move for them, the school would encourage this.

Mr Potter advised that, if Gosport could offer the same facilities as Fareham, students would not need to travel to Fareham. Students were often reluctant to make the effort to travel and would only do so if they perceived the need to do so. Greater diversity of provision in Gosport would lead to greater engagement and achievement of learners post-16. Mr Potter advised that the situation could be addressed through curriculum diversification. The perception may be that Bay House was only interested in academic progression but, in fact, it was the most comprehensive provider in the area for 11 to 16 education. Students at Bay House are socially diverse and so offering a diverse and appropriate curriculum provision posed an interesting challenge.

Mr Potter advised that the school's Enterprise Academy which provided for 14 to 16 year olds served the needs of potentially NEET young people. The first cohort were all now in further education. Mainstream education was not serving the purposes of these students.

Vocational provision at Bay House included general vocational courses, BTechs and now diplomas. Four diploma courses had been available since September 2009. Different courses were led by different establishments with Bay House and Brune Park leading the way on diploma provision this year. Next September, Portchester School would be providing diplomas and then Henry Cort School. Bay House would be the only provider of two diploma lines in 2010. In 2011 Fareham College, Henry Cort and Crofton School would also be leading on diplomas. This was evidence of which establishments were active in providing leadership on the vocational agenda, and those institutions that were not.

Mr Potter advised that the solutions to the problems would have to be addressed by leadership and by those that had been involved in engagement, overview and accountability. His vision was for a thriving multi site provision for 14 to 19 year olds. The leadership of this would commission the provision at the Bridgemary Skills Centre and at other sites such as Quayside and the Enterprise Academy. The provision of a centre of excellence for marine studies at the St. Vincent College site would be advantageous and contribute to this multi-site approach. This could all be led by an executive who could promote a joined up approach with apprenticeships and workplace learning.

At Brune Park and Bay House discussions had taken place regarding the use of ex-caretaker houses for such multi-site provision. Provision should fit around the students it served e.g. there should be places for students who were emotionally challenged.

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Mr Potter expressed a preference for a federated joined-up approach in Gosport and the leadership of this approach would be important.

The Chairman endeavoured to summarise the points so far made by Mr Potter in that there were many different answers required, existing facilities were not good or numerous enough and clarity of vision and leadership were needed. He asked whether Mr Potter agreed with this summary, and Mr Potter confirmed that he did.

Mr Potter advised that the LSC were not effective as leaders and it would be interesting to see what the Local Authority would do. He was always in favour of a merger of colleges but not at the Daedalus site as this would put everything under one roof. Currently there was too much of a mentality where establishments simply took interest in their own students and tried to increase student numbers. Consideration needed to be given to young people who may not be likely to undertake further education. The biggest issue was post 16 year olds not attending education and the responsibility for this issue.

Mr Potter advised that the Gosport and Fareham Education Improvement Partnership in Gosport was very effective. For Gosport it was a pre-cursor to the way that Hampshire County Council saw education being organised in the future.

The Joint Partnership for 0 to 14 year olds involved collaborative leadership. This could attract funds and provide early intervention which would improve the situation for students later on. Currently there were meetings being trialled for joint governance at all levels.

There was an issue as to whether resources were deployed in the right way. Gosport was not large enough to sustain provision for 14 to 19 year olds with the roll out of diplomas. Mr Potter supported the idea of a Consortium and joint governorship. Post 16 funding would come from the local authority and the landscape would shift due to the introduction of the diplomas. There could be a 0 to 14 and 14 to 19 years executive structure. The improvement partnership would evolve into a Children's Partnership and the commissioning of services would come to Gosport. An executive would be needed to achieve economies of scale.

A Member raised the issue of how an executive would be made up and whether independent people would be invited to join. Mr Potter advised that executive members would be people involved in the education profession but they would seek a relationship with non-executive members. The body would have to begin with existing personnel but this would not necessarily be maintained ad infinitum. The traits, attributes and strategic abilities of members would need to be identified and they would have to buy into the vision and not wish solely to protect their own establishment.

Members raised the issue of the Enterprise Academy and were advised that this was used to assist “harder to reach” students. Bay House provided for those who did not want, or who were advised not to, study academic routes of progression. It was felt that this provided a different route to success.

With regard to the implications of the lack of post 16 vocational education, Mr Potter advised that Bay House had more to gain by not engaging in this important agenda if the School were to take a narrowly self-interested approach. However, the School did not want to do this. There were now significant opportunities e.g. with the Improvement Partnership and possible BSF funding which may provide an opportunity to move away from the demands of the financial climate and take advantage of economies of scale. The question had to be asked whether the right kind of leadership was available.

The Chairman thanked Mr Potter for his contribution.

St. Vincent College

Mr Wain advised that education in Hampshire had been very successful due to it being organised around the Tertiary Education Model which was envied in other parts of the country. People in Gosport understood the rationale for that system however changes in the 1990s led to the creation of Bay House School Sixth Form.

Mr Wain felt that the tertiary system was the best way of educating post 16 year olds and cited three research papers (1) which demonstrated the following:

- The availability of a sixth form in a local school reduces post 16 participation.
- The overall range of courses in an area falls when a school sixth form opens.
- Schools without sixth forms outperform those with at GCSE

The consequences were clear in that decisions made in Gosport had now created a structure which made addressing Gosport’s educational issues harder than it needed to be. Mr Wain advised that far from wishing to engage in further structural change it was now essential for all education providers in Gosport to work together and support each other.

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Mr Wain advised that he was concerned that the LSC had wanted to close St. Vincent College without having any clear future strategy and thus there was a real danger that the tertiary education system could have folded. The LSC had invested in Bay House and planned to expand post 16 provision at Bridgemary School, the intention being to undermine St. Vincent College and create disharmony amongst the education community. St Vincent had on at least two occasions put proposals to the LSC to increase the range of vocational provision in Gosport, each of which required minimal investment and each had been rejected. Despite this the college has managed to extend the range of vocational courses over the last three years. 26% of students were working at level 2 or below with various courses offered including NVQs. This figure is roughly three times that you would normally find in a sixth form college.

Once vocational courses already offered at St Vincent had been accounted for the remaining gaps are concentrated in the following areas: general engineering (mech / elec), motor vehicle, marine engineering, construction trades, and hospitality and catering. However, it was unlikely that there would be sufficient demand for the later two to make Gosport only provision viable.

The College had been classified as “good” by Ofsted and experienced its best ever A level results in 2009 and students at the college now perform significantly better than their GCSE results predict. This level of performance is achieved whilst providing places for everyone regardless of prior ability or previous success. Ofsted advises that “Educational and Social Inclusion are outstanding” In relation to vocational courses Ofsted advises that “success rates are high on many vocational courses”. Since the potential merger had been taken off the agenda, applications for the College had increased by 20%. Mr Wain advised that he would like to see the four educational establishments working together and supporting each other with the creation of a Gosport Federation focusing on student needs. There were currently 6,000 students aged 11 to 19 to serve in the Gosport area. Gosport should take the initiative when approaching decision making bodies like the LSC or the local authority through working together. Discussions had taken place regarding co-location and there had been some positive dialogue. Similarly positive discussions had been held regarding the development of the St Vincent campus. A federated, co-located college was a future ambition however in the interim the LSC are proposing to create 150 further vocational places in Gosport. The LSC proposal needs to be handled carefully to prevent further local disagreement. St Vincent College advised they were willing to support the building of a new facility on the Mill Lane site.

Mr Wain advised that a Skills Centre would be provided at St. Vincent College with the following advantages:

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- Ample space for the development
- Planning permission should be granted
- Students would be part of the college as opposed to an outreach centre
- Alternative options are available if students changed their minds
- Excellent progression opportunities are available at a college
- Access to friends and role models is better at a college
- Access to support, if necessary is easier on a college campus
- Students from all schools already mix well at St. Vincent
- St. Vincent was in the south of the Borough and would not impact on traffic flow as well as being close to other areas earmarked for development
- The LSC has already identified that the need for vocational provision is in the south of the area.
- Revenue funding for 150 new students alone would equal £6- This revenue combined with land sale income would ensure that any third party gap funding would be manageable.
- The LSC funding revenue would also further benefit other Gosport students and remain within Gosport
- Other training providers could access facilities e.g. for apprenticeships
- The Borough wishes to develop specialist marine engineering facilities and St Vincent has direct access to the sea.
- The current funding climate makes any outreach provision vulnerable to cuts and thus the future of vocational provision would be better assured as part of an existing college campus.

Mr Wain advised that he appreciated that Bridgemaury School may look at proceeding with its plans to open a skills centre on their site. Although this would clearly be an inferior solution to that proposed by the college, St Vincent wants an end to strife. With that in mind it would support this if St Vincent was the schools partner college. College support would not be given to proposals taking income out of the area as this would lead to further fragmentation of education and ultimately lead to reduced choice in the Borough not only for young people but for the significant number of adults we serve too.

Mr Wain felt that there was influence that could be exerted by the Borough Council. The town should be working together on this and he sincerely hoped we all would.

Mr Wain stated that he was encouraged that the Borough Council was expressing an interest and it was good to bring people together. The local education authority was currently in listening mode and is genuinely open, as they themselves said, to ideas.

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Mr Wain was asked about the possible selling off of some areas of the St. Vincent College site. He advised that the estate comprised three parts. It was anticipated that Forton Field and Forton Lake would be sold and a new vocational site built. The £3m-£4m funding gap was an indicative figure but was manageable. Making the creation of a skills centre a realistic proposal

With regard to the Gosport Federation, the Education Improvement Partnership and the 14 to 19 Consortium, Mr Wain advised that he wished to see education governed by representatives of all institutions and that self interest was not to be encouraged. The local education authority felt that there was a need to federate because of future funding issues however there were other compelling reasons to do this.

With regard to co-operation with other establishments Mr Wain advised that there were different views on the configuration of education. He advocated the tertiary system. He felt that there had been consequences related to the expansion of Bay House. There was now an opportunity for the establishments to work together. He was open to ideas but felt that post 16 provision needs to be centralised to increase its range and quality.

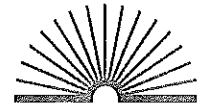
The Chairman thanked Mr Wain for his contribution.

40. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to discuss.

The meeting ended at 7.15 p.m

CHAIRMAN



9th December 2009

Councillor Bob Forder
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee
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Dear Bob

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE INVESTIGATION INTO POST-16
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN GOSPORT**

I reply to your letter dated 4th December 2009 as I am not able to attend the scheduled Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting. My answers to your questions are as follows:

Deficiencies in Post-16 Vocational Education.

There is not enough post-16 vocational education in Gosport. Provision is disparate with strong competition for places. Consequently, the number of Brune Park Community College students achieving places is very limited.

Implications of the deficiencies for Brune Park Community College students.

Many of our students have to travel to other providers outside the Borough, including Fareham College. The potential cost of travel is a disincentive for our youngsters, many of whom are from low income families. As a result of this, some do not travel beyond the Borough and become NEET.

How the issues can be best addressed.

The issues can be best addressed as follows:

1. Establish more vocational course opportunities in Gosport;
2. Investigate use of the planning permission already in place for a small skills centre on the southern edge of the Bridgemary site;
3. Investigate the option of developing the St Vincent site for further vocational opportunities, including marine engineering;
4. Support the provision of post-16 Performing Arts courses on the Brune Park site where specialist facilities already exist.

Other general implications for Brune Park Community College.

More general implications for Brune Park would be:

1. To know as soon as possible when to start developing post-16 Performing Arts courses;
2. To link up with Gosport 11-16 and 11-19 providers regarding the idea of a Student Passport, affording joint access to all sites in order to study a more personalised programme of qualifications;
3. As above, establishing common IT across the Borough to support learning and track student progress.

If I can be of any further help, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Dr Ian Johnson
Principal

Post 16 Vocational Education in Gosport: Industrial Perspective

Despite the loss of businesses and jobs, as traditional manufacturing has declined and Ministry of Defence sites are rationalised, there has been success in attracting new firms to Gosport; particularly since the opening of a number of new business parks since 2004/05.

Whilst this does not detract from the continuing and urgent need to provide more employment opportunities on the peninsula (Gosport's job density is the lowest in the south east); it is relevant to note that many of these new and/or growing employers are operating in industries that require increasingly higher level skills, many of which are of a vocational nature. This reflects the historic employment base of the Borough, which is rooted in the trades and technical skills now commonly associated with the advanced manufacturing, engineering and marine sectors.

As the Council looks to build on these strengths, and other important areas such as care, leisure and construction, it is vital that employers are able to recruit and retain workers that are able to contribute to their continued growth and success; both now and in the future. This requires that young people looking to enter the workplace are equipped with the right attitude and skills that will enable them to compete for opportunities. Similarly, employers need good quality local training provision that will ensure their workers can progress and develop their skills to meet future demands.

A number of surveys and consultation exercises with both young people and employers have been carried out in Gosport during the last few years. Some of the key findings, of relevance to the above points, are listed below:

- Only 37% of employers agree that education providers in Gosport prepare young people well for the world of work.
- 40% of Gosport employers identified barriers that were preventing their employees from developing the skills needed for the business in the future – one of the three main barriers identified was a lack of suitable courses in Gosport.
- Many employers report that training is too theoretical, with recruits having little experience in practical application.
- A lack of technical and specialist skills is the most commonly cited cause of recruitment difficulties amongst SMEs (small and medium enterprises).
- Approximately 17% of employers use on-site external training providers and/or support staff in attending college or university.
- 66% of employers agreed that they could have better links with schools.

Relevant 'cutting edge' vocational training is needed in the Borough (appropriate to business needs and key sectors), alongside better IAG (information, advice and guidance) early in the educational system, to help young people make informed and ambitious choices. Many employers are keen to engage with, advise and broaden the knowledge and experience of young people, who potentially are their future workforce.

LYNDA DINE
HEAD OF ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Report of a visit of Gosport Borough Councillors and Officers to South Downs College on the morning of Thursday 4 February, 2010

Those visiting were Councillors Derek Kimber, Roger Allen, Peter Langdon, Richard Dickson, Ingeborg Forder and Robert Forder. They were accompanied by Ian Lycett (Chief Executive) and Chris Wrein (Democratic Services).

The visit was organised in connection with the Borough Overview and Scrutiny Committee's investigation into Post-16 Vocational Education Provision in Gosport, although all councillors had been invited to take part.

Michael Oakes (Principal) spoke to the party and accompanied it during a tour of the College's vocational departments. Particular departments visited were animal care; catering and hospitality; engineering; exercise, fitness and sports injuries; hair and beauty; motor vehicle; travel, tourism and air cabin crew.

During the tour and preliminary discussion the following points arose:

- The importance of a college environment that is attractive to young people.
- The importance of high quality resources and an appropriate accommodation in which to teach vocational skills. For example, catering was taught in a state of the art industrial kitchen.
- The importance of taking into account students' aspirations, career ambitions and opportunities available when planning and developing vocational programmes.
- The desirability of courses being taught by those with appropriate industrial experience as practitioners.
- That vocational provision was best viewed in a 14-18 rather than 16-18 context.

During discussion the Gosport situation inevitably arose. The Principal agreed with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairman's summary of the Committee's initial findings. That provision on the Peninsula was less than comprehensive, that students may well be encouraged to follow courses that were inappropriate and that appropriate specialist teaching facilities were lacking.

The Principal thought the failure to commission a new college was a huge missed opportunity. However, all agreed that there was little point in harping back; what was needed was a way forward. When pressed on this issue, the Principal suggested that any answers would be best found by carefully studying the provision required and then endeavouring to find appropriate answers. One should start with students' needs rather than the needs of institutions.

The Principal also talked of the 'moral imperative' of addressing the needs of those whose educational achievements at school were limited.

R.W. Forder, 4/2/10

**A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WAS HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2010**

Councillors Allen (P), Beavis (P), Champion, Dickson (P), Mrs Forder (P), Forder (Chairman) (P), Foster-Reed (P), Hylands (P), Mrs Searle, and Miss West (P).

Also in attendance:

- County Councillor Kirk, Hampshire County Council Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
- County Councillor Edgar, Hampshire County Council Assistant to Executive Lead Member for Children's Services (Education)
- Bob Eardley, Hampshire County Council: Building Schools for the Future Manager

It was reported that, in accordance with Standing Orders, Councillor Carter had been nominated to replace Councillor Champion for this meeting.

48. APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs Searle and Champion.

48. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

49. POST 16 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN GOSPORT

County Councillor Kirk, having received the Committee's preliminary findings, attended the meeting, together with County Councillor Edgar, to explain how, from 1 April 2010, Post 16 Vocational Education would be governed in the Borough, how decisions would be made and standards monitored and to comment on the Committee's provisional findings.

Councillor Kirk advised that he would be speaking generally about Post 16 Education in Gosport and explained how, from the 1 April 2010, this would be governed in all the districts of Hampshire. The transition from the Learning and Skills Council to Hampshire County Council was very complicated. Responsibility for commissioning courses would rest with the County Council but revenue funding would be the responsibility not only of the County Council but of the Young Peoples Learning Agency. Capital Funding would be provided from another source.

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Councillor Kirk endorsed the view that the needs and views of the students themselves should be the determining factor when deciding what courses should be provided. From 1 April 2010 courses would be based on the needs of students no matter whether they were of an academic or vocational nature. Vocational courses, in Councillor Kirk's view, encompassed a vast range of subjects including such areas medicine and law. He also stated that he did not want students to be obliged to travel long distances to colleges.

Councillor Kirk advised that students' needs could be ascertained by engaging with schools providing pre - 16 education and there would have to be reliance on effective learning partnerships with secondary schools.

Councillor Edgar advised that the 14 – 19 years agenda was currently being looked at. Some students were undertaking A level courses simply to find career path opportunities.

Councillor Kirk advised that the 14 – 19 agenda spanned schools and colleges. Seventeen new diplomas were to be in operation by the year 2013. Students would begin work on the course at age 14 and the three levels of the diploma would take them up to 19. This entailed a total of 51 new courses and there would be issues surrounding running so many. It would be important for all colleges and schools to work together and Hampshire County Council would have the opportunity to ensure this happened, particularly as no single college would be able to supply all the courses. Courses in the new diploma would not be exclusively new subjects and conventional subjects such as literacy and numeracy would be included as part of the diplomas.

There was an ongoing role for the Borough Council with regard to detailed knowledge of local industry, information which was not held at the County Council. This was happening in Havant and could be seen as good practice.

Councillor Edgar advised that, from his experience, both students and businesses felt the same way in that they wanted students to be trained for jobs that would exist in the future.

Councillor Kirk advised that the Learning and Skills Council had already invited, and were funding, 150 additional learner places for vocational education in Gosport. The County Council would maintain this situation. £4 million of capital investment had been earmarked for the 11 – 19 Education Inclusion Service in Gosport. The first step would be to replace the Quayside Education Centre. The intention would be to base the Inclusion Service on good practice currently in operation in Hampshire e.g. in the New Forest and at Andover.

Councillor Kirk expressed the County Council's wish to work with Gosport Borough Council to improve opportunities for education and training. Statistics showed that secondary and tertiary education in Gosport was not working well.

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He wished to see support for economic development in Gosport and made the comparison that 80% of working people who lived in Andover actually worked in the town. The intention was to assist Gosport to achieve a better employment situation. Opportunities had been lost in the past e.g. shared college at HMS Daedalus, Bridgemary Skills Centre and the Enterprise Centre at Bay House.

Councillor Kirk advised that there was under achievement in Gosport and this was evidenced by the Contextual Value Added score achieved by schools in the area. This method took account of a student's ability and background and was considered to be a useful way to measure a student's educational progress. Brune Park and Bridgemary Schools were achieving considerably under the baseline level (1,000 points) with Bay House reaching slightly over this level. Bridgemary and Brune Park School's Ofsted reports indicated that they were satisfactory which, in Councillor Kirk's view, meant only adequate. A better assessment result was being looked for.

Councillor Kirk drew attention to tertiary education and understood that Gosport Borough Council had lodged an inquiry under the Freedom of Information Act regarding skills assessments. He understood that St Vincent College had had a number of notices to improve issued in various areas.

Councillor Kirk was doubtful regarding travel difficulties encountered by students. A number of colleges which were a considerable distance from Gosport still taught a high number of students from that area. The colleges provided a mixture of courses and some students may be receiving travel assistance. Councillor Edgar advised that he had not observed travel difficulties for students wishing to access courses in the 14 – 19 range where the student actually wanted to do the course. Some students had been found to enjoy the travel element of attending college.

Councillor Kirk expressed concern at mention in the Chairman's report of failure by the Learning and Skills Council. The Learning and Skills Council had been frustrated in many ways by outside influences.

Councillor Kirk expressed concerns regarding views on the per capita spend on education in Gosport. Currently the only area in Hampshire which received a higher per capita spend was Havant. He advised that the per capita spend was the same in all schools but there were varying supplements paid and also transition funding to smaller schools which would affect the total funding.

Councillor Kirk advised that economic and social deprivation were important factors but experiences in Leigh Park had shown that it was possible to overcome these difficulties. If students were approached and encouraged in the right way, those from deprived backgrounds would have higher aspirations than their parents. The role of inspirational teachers was important.

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Councillor Kirk emphasised the importance of the role of good leadership and management and that there would be opportunities to solve the problems associated with friction between heads of schools in Gosport once responsibility for commissioning Post 16 education was handed over to Hampshire County Council.

Councillor Kirk advised that allocations under the Building Schools for the Future were not based on the numbers of pupils. They were based on plans submitted by Hampshire County Council detailing what needed to be done.

With regard to capital funding for Post 16 Education it was not yet clear how this would work. Building Schools for the Future may give opportunities to invest but those establishments with a lower priority would be unlikely to receive funding due to the national economic situation. Mr Eardley advised that Gosport schools would be included in the second phase of this scheme.

Councillor Edgar advised that, nationally, politicians were committed to the modernisation agenda. This would take place over a long period of time commencing in areas with multiple index of deprivation problems.

Councillor Kirk advised that capital funding would not dry up but it was not currently clear what would be allocated on an ongoing basis. There would be a devolved capital element in schools' annual budgets but it was not clear about Post 16 capital funding. This could present problems when deciding how to run courses. With regard to Building Schools for the Future, funding priority in Hampshire had been given to Havant first and then Gosport due to the high deprivation figures.

Councillor Kirk endorsed the view that motivation must come from schools and teachers. Social and economic problems did not necessarily affect motivation but there was a need to help children to follow the right path.

Councillor Kirk advised that the commissioning service would not be carried out in Gosport. It would be carried out by Hampshire County Council but Gosport and the other districts would naturally be taken into account. There would be local childrens partnerships but these would cover a wider area than just education.

Councillor Kirk was concerned that the Chairman's report mentioned an undermining of St Vincent College and expressed the view that he did not feel that this would be the intention of the Learning and Skills Council. It would, however, be useful to have alternative suppliers of any functions.

Councillor Kirk advised that he did not agree that the Skills Centre at Bridgemary School had been an inferior solution but accepted that this was a matter of personal opinion.

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With regard to solutions for Post 16 and 14 – 19 education in Gosport Councillor Kirk felt that the district was no different to any other. All establishments needed to work together to achieve solutions for all in Gosport and everyone had a responsibility to ensure that it worked. Those currently in competition would need to work together.

Hampshire had 11 sixth form colleges in the top 20% of the country, yet only educated 2% of the pupils. This was part of the reason why there were so few sixth forms. Hampshire County Council was pleased that they would be coming back under the jurisdiction of the County.

Councillor Kirk advised of the difficulties encountered with each school and college being self governing. He would be trying to get them to work together consensually by way of partnerships. The establishment of an Executive Headteacher role had been considered in the past but this arrangement depended largely on local circumstances and Councillor Kirk stated that he was not suggesting this situation would lend itself to Gosport.

Councillor Kirk advised that any Executive Headteacher would have to adopt a co-ordinating role. Basingstoke had more schools and colleges than Gosport but they had now started working together and taking joint decisions through good co-operation. There would be difficulties with this arrangement where the district covered a large area e.g. New Forest.

The Chairman advised that the difficulties in Gosport called out for good leadership. Relations in Gosport were currently not good and there was a need to move forward. For this to happen, good leadership was essential.

Councillor Edgar advised that the Consortium of Gosport and Fareham Schools was effective with no duplication of work. Students were prepared to travel to college. There was positive thinking and good timetabling.

Councillor Edgar advised that he had always felt that problems started at pre-school age. Pre-school establishments had been successful and were crucial to the future.

The view was expressed that good teachers made a considerable difference and the question was raised regarding how to ensure that teachers were kept up to date. Councillor Kirk advised that the right leadership would ensure that leaders and teachers were helped to develop. The appointment of the right leader was crucial.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Kirk on behalf of the Committee for his useful input.

50. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no further business to discuss.

The meeting ended at 7.35 pm

CHAIRMAN