

**JOINT ADVISORY SUB COMMITTEE FOR
CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

9 JUNE 1999

Present: Councillors Barnard (Chairman), Miss Haydon, North, Mrs Shillcock, Ward and Wheaton.

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings of the Sub Committee held on 17 February and 22 March 1999 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2. Children's Services Plan

The Director of Social Services and Housing reported on the final draft of the updated version of the Children's Services Plan which had recently been circulated for consultation to the statutory agencies, independent and Voluntary Sector providers and other departments working with children. A feedback from the consultation process was included in the draft plan. Attendance at the two public meetings to discuss the plan had been low although there had been some good discussion and feedback from the meeting held in Times Square.

Members discussed the level of resources that should be allocated to producing such plans in the future. Guidelines in producing plans were set down by the relevant Government Departments and by following these the resulting document tended to be bulky and not very user friendly. To produce a summary of a plan could prove useful but there was a resource implication. A possible solution could be to produce a concise directory of all services provided by the department and how the public could access these.

The Sub Committee was of the opinion that an overall objective should be to improve the quality of life for everyone in the Borough including children in care. As a result there was a need to develop links with Leisure Services. A strategy for the future would be developed and this would include the cost of improving the availability of Leisure facilities.

RESOLVED that the plan be received.

3. Improving the Educational Attainment of Children "Looked After"

The Director of Social Services and Housing reported on the challenges to the Authority in improving the life chances of children in the care system in the Borough with particular reference to their educational attainment. Having identified the problem there was a need to identify the children concerned in order that their progress could be monitored and targets set for the future.

After a lengthy discussion on educational standards generally the Sub Committee noted that it could be difficult to meet specific targets in view of the relatively small number of children involved.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

4. **Format of Future Meetings**

The Chairman suggested that, as an experiment, the time and venues for future meetings be changed to allow more opportunities for relevant people to attend.

It was **RESOLVED** that the next meeting should be held in an appropriate Community Centre and commence at 2.30pm.

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm
and concluded at 9.20pm

CHAIRMAN