

Overview & Scrutiny

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Report OSB/10/05 of the Overview and Scrutiny Board to the meeting of the Executive to be held on 14th June 2005

REVIEW OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES IN TORQUAY

1. Following receipt of a call-in notice, the Board considered Report 111/2005 on the review of primary school places in Torquay that had previously been considered by the Executive. The Board also had before it an earlier report on the subject (Report Chi/4/04).
2. The decision had been called-in by five members of the Council to consider the way in which the consultation on the review of primary school places in Torquay had been undertaken.
3. Representatives of the parents of pupils at Upton St James Primary School and of the Governing Body of the School attended the meeting and gave their views about the consultation process.
4. The Strategic Director (Children) and the School Organisation Manager also attended the meeting and answered the questions and points raised during the debate.
5. Following the debate, the Overview and Scrutiny Board resolved that the decision of the Executive in relation to the review of primary school places in Torquay should be referred back to the Executive for reconsideration. The concerns of the Board are set out below:
 - (i) The scope of the consultation was not wide enough in that a wider range of questions should have been asked of a wide range of people (in line with the Statutory Guidance for Decision Makers).
 - (ii) Insufficient information about each school was included in the consultation pack.
 - (iii) The model of consultation used failed to consider how the process could be open to manipulation by the various parties involved in the consultation.
 - (iv) Formal consideration by the Executive should have been given to the letter from the Diocese of Exeter dated 12th May 2005.
 - (v) The method of future consultations should be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.