

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

EDUCATION OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

5.00PM – 25 JANUARY 2005

BRIGHTON TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Hamilton (Chair); Councillors Mrs Norman (Deputy Chair), Bennett, Lepper, Meegan, Simson, Willows and Wrighton.

Non-Voting Non-Statutory Co-optees: Mrs A Antonio – National Union of Teachers; Reverend S Terry – Brighton and Hove Governors Network.

Also present: Elizabeth Wylie – Assistant Director Strategic Planning and Services to Schools; John Heys – Principal Solicitor; Penny Jennings – Scrutiny Support Officer; Julia Riches – Scrutiny Support Officer; Chris Ouellette, Scrutiny Support Officer.

Apologies were received from Cllr Smith, Mr Taylor, Ms Messenger, Mr. Myers.

PART ONE

34. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

34A. Declarations of Substitutes

34.1 There were none.

34B. Declarations of Interest

34.2 There were none.

34C. Exclusion of Press and Public

34.3 The Committee considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of any items contained in the agenda, having regard to the nature of the business to be transacted and the nature of the proceedings and the likelihood as to whether, if members of the press and public were present, there would be disclosure to them of confidential or exempt information as defined in Section 100A(3) or 100 1 of the Local Government Act 1972.

34.4 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public be excluded from the meeting

during the consideration of item 44.

35. MINUTES

35.1 **RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2004 be approved and signed by the Chair.

Monitoring of Service Performance

Standing Items

36. QUARTER 2 BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

36.1 The Panel considered a report of the Director of Children, Families and Schools presenting the 2004/05 quarterly performance indicator (PI) results for all indicators for which Children, Families and Schools is the Service Committee (for copy see minute book).

36.2 The Assistant Director, Strategic Planning and Services to Schools introduced the report and the 'traffic light' system that is used. She explained that the Council were paying close attention to those with red indicators, such as the stability of placements of children looked after and the percentage of children with three or more placements during the year. Cllr Meegan asked about the number of children in placements and the Assistant Director replied that around 380 children were being looked after, excluding respite care. Cllr Simson asked about the Councils' record on adoption and the Assistant Director replied the Council have been successful and have run a concurrency programme that has worked very well. In response to a question from Cllr Norman, the Assistant Director went on to say they have run a continuous adoption campaign for prospective foster carers and there has been a national extension to adoption leave. She also explained that they have recruited over the natural rate of retirement of foster carers. Cllr Wrighton raised the issue of ongoing support for carers of children with behaviour difficulties. The Assistant Director agreed this was an issue but continuing support was provided.

36.3 **RESOLVED** - That the contents of the report be received and noted.

37. SUMMARY OF OFSTED REPORTS FOR THE SECOND HALF OF THE AUTUMN TERM 2004

37.1 The Panel considered a report of the Director of Children, Families and Schools concerning the outcome of the school Ofsted inspections which took place in the second half of the Autumn Term 2004 (for copy see minute book).

37.2 Cllr Simson noted the report on Patcham House was excellent and asked what was the future for Patcham House. The Assistant Director, Strategic Planning and Services to Schools replied that it is being considered within a Special Needs paper that will be put to the Children, Families and Schools

Committee in March. The Chair congratulated Patcham House on its Ofsted report.

37.3 Cllr Lepper praised the Ofsted inspectors for recognising the difficulties Hertford Infants School was operating under. The school had been making great efforts to tackle its attendance problems and had also done a lot of work through Sure Start. Cllr Lepper expressed her pleasure of the recognition of the school's hard work and wished them luck for the future.

37.4 **RESOLVED** - That the contents of the report be received and noted.

One off Reports

Monitoring of Service Performance

38. REMIT FOR THE REVIEW OF THE EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

38.1 The Panel considered a report of the Director of Children, Families and Schools concerning the remit for the review of the Education Welfare Service (for copy see minute book).

38.2 The Assistant Director, Strategic Planning and Services to Schools explained that there would be significant changes in the way the education welfare services would work. A consultation paper would be produced covering the issue of fines for non-attendance. The Council had made significant progress in improving attendance across the city. Cllr Simson raised the issue of the attendance of travellers' children who live in settled areas and the Assistant Director replied she would find out what the situation was. The Reverend Terry asked whether there were any plans to brief school Governors on the issue. The Assistant Director replied new guidance would be disseminated and explained the consultation document suggested five days unauthorised absence in a school year may lead to a fine for parents.

38.3 **RESOLVED** - That the content of the report be received and noted.

Policy Advice and Information

39. CHILDREN'S SERVICES

39.1 The Panel considered a report of the Children's Services Commissioner providing an update on the development of Integrated Children's Services in Brighton & Hove and to brief the Panel on the national policy context for Children's Services (for copy see minute book).

39.2 Cllr Simson asked about the timescales for closing failing schools. The Assistant Director, Strategic Planning and Services to Schools explained that local authorities were expected to take vigorous steps to address failing schools. The Chair asked about Head Teachers helping to improve others; the Assistant Director explained that it was proposed that Head Teachers of successful schools should mentor other Head Teachers. Cllr Simson requested information on refurbishing or rebuilding primary schools. The Assistant Director

replied Brighton and Hove were likely to be in the wave from 2011-2016 as investment is focussed on the worst buildings and worst performing schools and Brighton and Hove had no schools in those categories. The Council will continue to bid for funding. The Reverend Terry raised the issue of the role of school Governors and how they can input into the Children's Trust Board. There was a discussion over the role of the Governors and how they can become further involved and influence the Board's thinking.

39.3 **RESOLVED** - That the content of the report be received and noted.

40. FUTURE INSPECTION OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

40.1 The Panel considered a report of the Director of Children, Families and Schools providing a briefing on the proposed framework for the Inspection of Children's Services, to be introduced under the Children Act 2004 (for copy see minute book).

40.2 The Assistant Director, Strategic Planning and Services to Schools explained that there is to be a single framework for the inspection of Children's Services, both Ofsted and social care inspections. The Chair welcomed the single framework. Mrs Antonio raised the issue of the last SSI inspections and felt it would be useful to have some guidance to ensure they were all using the same common language. The Assistant Director agreed that common 'jargon' was important and hoped that now there would be joint training to ensure a common language was used.

40.3 **RESOLVED** - That content of the report be received and noted.

Scrutiny Requests

41. COMART PFI SCRUTINY PANEL

41.1 The Scrutiny Support Officer gave an oral progress report on the COMART PFI Scrutiny Panel. She explained that they have had two further meetings and were almost at the end of the information gathering process. Cllr Wrighton noted the Panel had a substantial number of papers to go through and they were likely to need a further two meetings to discuss this.

41.2 **RESOLVED** - That the position be noted.

42. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO COUNCIL

42.1 **RESOLVED** – That there were no items to go to Council.

43. FUTURE MEETINGS

43.1 The Chair explained that the January meeting of the EOSP had been added into the original timetable of quarterly meetings. He suggested that in future the January meeting was not required.

43.2 **RESOLVED** – That the EOSP do not meet in January in the future but revert

to quarterly meetings.

PART TWO

44. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 DECEMBER 2004 – EXEMPT PARAGRAPH 11

44.1 **RESOLVED** – The non-public minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2004 were approved.

The meeting concluded at 6.30pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

2005