

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5.00PM – 5 FEBRUARY 2008

HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Young (Chairman); Councillors Alford, Allen, Cobb, Davis, Fryer, Smart, Wakefield-Jarrett and Watkins.

Non-statutory Co-optees without Voting Rights: Dr Carrie Britton – Children's Health Co-optee; Dr Mark Price – Children's Social Care Co-optee.

Apologies: Councillor Peltzer Dunn, Mr Nigel Sarjudeen, Toxi Doyle (Young Persons Representative).

PART ONE

ACTION

38. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

38A. Declarations of Substitutes

38.1 There were none.

38B. Declarations of Interest

38.2 There were none.

38C. Exclusion of Press and Public

38.3 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 Schedule 12A, Part 5A, Section 100A(4) or 100 1 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

38.4 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

39. MINUTES

- 39.1 The Chairman drew members' attention to a copy of the letter received from the Deputy Chairman of the Children and Young People's Trust Board responding to the committee's concerns regarding the potential financial risk to the authority associated with the Falmer Academy proposals that had been circulated to members (for copy see minute book).
- 39.2 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2007 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

40. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

- 40.1 The Chairman informed the committee that Councillors Duncan and Kennedy had forwarded apologies that they were unable to attend the meeting to discuss the request for scrutiny (Item 45 on the agenda). Councillor Wakefield-Jarrett would speak on this item in their absence.
- 40.2 The former education co-optees were welcomed to the meeting, who had been invited by the Chairman as there was a substantial item on schools attainment on the agenda.
- 40.3 The Chairman also drew members' attention to an appendix to agenda item 44 (Inspection of Independent Schools), which had been omitted from the papers circulated to members. The appendix was circulated to members at the meeting (for copy see minute book).
- 40.4 The Chairman proposed that Item 45 (Request for scrutiny of Falmer Academy) was taken first, which was agreed.

41. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- 41.1 There were none.

42. OVERVIEW – "ENJOY AND ACHIEVE"

- 42.1 The Committee considered a report of the Interim Director of Children's Services providing an update on the strengths and areas for development in relation to the "Enjoy and Achieve" theme within the Children and Young People's Plan (for copy see minute book).
- 42.2 The Senior Primary Adviser and Senior Secondary and Special Schools' Adviser gave a presentation on the report and provided responses on the following issues: -
- 42.3 (a) Primary age attainment of girls in Mathematics
- Confidence of girls in mathematics had been highlighted as a barrier to improving attainment. Work was being undertaken in schools in order to encourage achievement, which included

linking with female parents in numerate professions.

(b) Reduction in the number of exclusions

Increased work in schools before the point of exclusions was reducing the need to resort to exclusion. The authority also supported managed transfers for pupils approaching the point of exclusion. The new area teams were working well in this respect, allowing care interventions into schools at an earlier stage. A behaviour support strategy had been developed between the authority and schools and was proving effective.

(c) Home education

The committee received confirmation that the Trust had officers skilled in providing advice to parents electing for home education and other forms of 'education other than at school'. The authority has a responsibility to ensure that adequate standards of education are provided and visit home education settings to ensure this. Social interaction is encouraged and often provided through other activities such as scout movements and youth clubs. A good support network of parents providing home education existed in the area. Where visiting officers had doubts over the suitability of a child's home education, whether relating to standards of education or social issues, there were processes in place to ensure these were picked up. Comparative analysis of standards of home education was limited as the information would have to be provided voluntarily by parents.

(d) Role of unstructured play in schools

The committee requested a short information note to be provided by officers on the role of unstructured play and its use in schools in the authority's area.

42.4 The Chairman thanked officers for preparing a detailed and useful report.

42.5 **RESOLVED -**

That the committee notes the report and the strengths and areas for development in relation to the Enjoy and Achieve theme within the Children and Young Peoples' Plan.

43. SUMMARY OF OFSTED REPORTS

43.1 The Committee considered a report of the Interim Director of Children's Services concerning the outcome of the Ofsted inspections for maintained schools and nursery and early years providers at the end of the Autumn Term 2007 (for copy see minute book).

43.2 The committee commented that all the nursery inspections were particularly praiseworthy, with inspectors only finding minor issues to highlight for improvement.

43.3 Officers confirmed that the grading system for nursery and early years providers was the same as for schools, carrying ratings of 'outstanding', 'good', 'satisfactory', 'inadequate'.

43.4 The Chairman suggested that the committee continues writing to those schools that have received excellent reports or are improving well.

43.5 RESOLVED -

(1) The committee notes the report on the outcome of the school and nursery Ofsted inspections; and

(2) The Chairman writes on behalf of the committee to schools and nursery and early years providers who have received excellent inspection reports or are improving well.

**Scrutiny
Support
Officer**

44. INSPECTION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

44.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Strategy & Governance concerning the inspection regime for independent schools (for copy see minute book).

44.2 The scrutiny support officer introduced the report to the committee. The committee requested that further information be provided on which independent schools in the authority's area had been inspected recently.

**Scrutiny
Support
Officer**

44.3 **RESOLVED** - That the committee notes the report.

45. REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY FROM COUNCILLORS DUNCAN AND KENNEDY - FALMER ACADEMY

45.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Strategy & Governance concerning the request for scrutiny submitted regarding the proposals for Falmer Academy and to decide what, if any, action should be taken (for copy see minute book).

45.2 The Assistant Director, Schools, updated the committee on recent events regarding the proposals for the Academy at the current Falmer High school site. The original sponsor for the project had withdrawn, and local press had reported a possible new sponsor and new partnership

working with the two universities, City College and Brighton and Hove Albion on the project. Much of the detail of the project was now uncertain, as it was likely that a new expression of interest, which would outline the rough proposals for how the academy would operate, would need to be drawn up. This would have the knock on effect of the Outline Business Case being considered far later than originally intended.

45.3 Councillor Wakefield-Jarrett confirmed that the scrutiny request was submitted in order to ensure that adequate scrutiny was given to the project proposals at the most timely stage in that process. Councillors Duncan and Kennedy had expressed concerns that considerations such as continuity of education for students and effects on the admissions system were yet to be addressed in this forum.

45.4 Members of the committee suggested that a full scrutiny review would at this stage not be useful, as proposals would now inevitably change, but suggested that it was the proper role of the committee to monitor the project's progress. The update report that was due in April would allow the committee to keep abreast of the new developments.

45.5 The Assistant Director, Schools, confirmed that a further update to the committee in April had been agreed and that this would be an ideal time for further consideration on the progress of the new proposals.

45.6 **RESOLVED -**

- (1) That the committee notes the recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Organisation Committee to not set up a panel at present but that the committee receives progress reports;
- (2) That the committee notes the criteria for scrutiny reviews, the range of options available to the committee in responding to a scrutiny request, and the available member and officer resources set out in sections 4 and 5 below; and
- (3) That in light of the recent developments with regards to the structure of the project, the committee does not undertake to set up a scrutiny review of Falmer Academy proposals at this stage, but continues to monitor the progress of the project.

[Please note that this item was taken after Item 40]

**46. CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE (CAMHS)
RECOMMISSIONING**

46.1 The Committee considered a report of the Interim Director of Children's Services setting out the actions that have been, or are being taken to further develop the comprehensive Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) for Brighton and Hove (for copy see minute book).

46.2 The Commissioning and Partnership Manager for the Trust introduced the report and responded to questions regarding the following: -

46.3 (a) Financial pressures facing the service

Members of the committee expressed concern about the new funding arrangements, including the new non-ringfenced status of the CAMHS grant and funding streams channelled through the Area Based Grant and Local Area agreement.

The Commissioning and Partnership Manager confirmed that equality of access to services was paramount. There were always new challenges to resources and increasing the number of points of access to CAMHS services was important. Another key development with regards to resources was the inclusion of the authority in Pathfinder funding for CAMHS, which would mean significant amounts of mental health services being provided in schools, and the possibility of earlier interventions.

(b) Counselling services in schools

Ann Antonio commented that counselling services in schools were very well received and the Pathfinder funding would make even more difference. The Commissioning and Partnership Manager informed the committee that referral guidelines were currently being piloted in some schools, which would outline clearly the various referral routes that were available and facilitate a more immediate and effective response from CAMHS. The committee discussed how the new cluster group meetings could provide a useful forum for focusing on and prioritising mental health issues in schools, with views being fed into the CAMHS strategic implementation group.

(c) Personal development and emotional well-being in schools

The committee received confirmation that schools' PHSE programmes included sessions on personal development and emotional well-being.

46.4 The Chairman thanked the officer for producing an informative report.

46.5 **RESOLVED** - That the committee notes the progress being made in the

implementation of the commissioning strategy for CAMHS.

47. ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE

47.1 The Committee considered a report of the Interim Director of Children's Services concerning the services provided to young people affected by substance misuse, either their own or their parents, the current reported levels of use in Brighton and Hove by young people and uptake of services by young people (for copy see minute book).

47.2 The Service Manager for the 'RU-OK?' team presented the report and responded to questions on the following: -

(a) Funding for the service

The substance misuse grant has until recently been ringfenced, but there was currently uncertainty as to how this funding stream would be channelled in the future and the level of future funding.

(b) Working with the police

Substance and alcohol misuse workers work with the police and the community safety team in a variety of settings, both in relation to preventative services and increasingly with the specialist services provided by 'RU-OK?', through referrals and detached outreach work.

(c) Young persons in custody

A young person identified as requiring alcohol or substance abuse interventions, is flagged to RU-OK? workers by adult care workers, but the majority of work with young offenders with alcohol or substance misuse problems is undertaken once they enter the Youth Offending Team process.

47.3 The committee thanked the officer for the report and excellent work their team do.

47.4 **RESOLVED** - That the committee notes the content of the report.

48. CO-OPTED MEMBERS TO CYPOSC FROM THE COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR FORUM

48.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Strategy & Governance outlining the discussions and recommendations of the working group of Members of CYPOSC, convened to consider in further detail the recommendations made to the last meeting of CYPOSC to include within the Committee's membership a representative from the community and voluntary sector (for copy see minute book).

48.2 **RESOLVED** -

- (1) That the committee notes the conclusions of the working group contained in this report.
- (2) That the committee welcomes the opportunity to work closer with the community and voluntary sector and agrees to the inclusion within its co-opted membership representation from the community and voluntary sector; and
- (3) That due to imminent changes to the Council's constitution and decision-making processes brought about by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, detailed further consideration of the optimal composition of the committee be made at a timely stage in that process.

49. SCRUTINY PROVISIONS IN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007

49.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Strategy & Governance concerning the new provisions in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 for overview and scrutiny arrangements that should be in place in Brighton and Hove by May 2008 (for copy see minute book).

49.2 **RESOLVED** - That the committee notes the content of the report.

50. FORWARD PLAN

50.1 The Chairman asked for any comments on or additions to, the forward plan.

50.2 **RESOLVED** - That the committee notes the items included on the Forward Plan.

51. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO COUNCIL

51.1 **RESOLVED** - That no items be recommended to go forward to Council.

The meeting concluded at 7.55pm

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of

2008