

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & SKILLS COMMITTEE

4.00pm 8 MARCH 2021

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Clare (Chair)

Also in attendance: Councillor Hills (Deputy Chair), Allcock (Opposition Spokesperson), Brown (Group Spokesperson), Grimshaw, Hamilton, Lloyd, McNair, Nield and Simson

Other Members present: Councillors

PART ONE

69 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

(a) Declarations of Substitutes

69.1 Mr S Parr was present as a substitute for Ms B Connor

(b) Declarations of Interest

69.2 Councillor Simson declared that she was a trustee of the Deans Youth Project

(c) Exclusion of Press and Public

69.3 The Committee considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of any of the items listed on the agenda.

69.4 **RESOLVED:** There were no part two in the agenda.

70 MINUTES

70.1 Councillor Simson requested that the voting on Item 61 School Admission Arrangements 2022/23 be set out in the minutes.

It is confirmed that for Item 61, Recommendations (i) – (xvi) were agreed. However, it should be noted that:

1. Recommendations (i) – (xvi) - Mr T Cristin and Mr S Parr abstained on all of the recommendations.

2. Recommendation (ix) Councillors, Brown, McNair and Simson voted against the recommendation.

70.2 **RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2021 (as amended) be agreed as a correct record.

71 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

71.1 The Chair gave the following communication:

Welcome to this virtual meeting of the Children Young People & Skills Committee. Please note that this meeting is being webcast and is capable of repeat viewing.

Today, many of our city's children went back to school. I want to thank everyone for their hard work in managing the return to school safely and to who children with home learning during this difficult period. Nobody wants to be in a position where not all children are in school. So I will say this. While we have been presented with a roadmap out of the pandemic, we are not out of the woods yet. The best way to prevent another long period where not all children are in school, and the best thing for our children and young people's wellbeing, is to remain vigilant. Please remember to wash your hands, cover your face and keep to a 2m distance.

Since the last meeting, the council has approved its annual budget. While we saw some cuts to our directorate in this budget – I am pleased to say that also came with some investments. We invested funding into Brighton Youth Centre, which we will address later on this agenda. We invested £100,000 into our anti-racist schools strategy – agreed by this committee in November. This important work can now continue to progress with the level of investment it needs. We invested with the climate crisis affecting the lives of our city's young people in the years to come, I'm pleased we have nearly £100,000 to support with projects to educate and involve young people in the solution. A report on this funding will come to a future meeting of this committee. We invested £25,000 into a city disadvantage strategy too, which will give us the space to get to the root of the issues that we need to address. The class divide deputation on this agenda highlights part of this – and I look forward to reporting back in upcoming meetings with our plans and ideas. And finally, £15,000 into youth voice, to make good of our commitments to support young people.

While we are on the topic of youth voice, may I highlight that our Youth Council are currently looking for more members. If you know a young person aged 13-19, or up to 25 if they have SEND, then please encourage them to get in touch.

Young people are facing more challenges now than ever; and this includes with unemployment. We know that the youth unemployment figures throughout the pandemic have risen. That's why I'm pleased to repeat the news I gave at policy & resources recovery subcommittee last week; that we have been successful in a funding application to open both a physical and virtual youth employment hub. This hub will also include work on the kickstart scheme – providing real-life placements for young people to get into work. All of this is part of the city employment and skills plan, that was presented to the same committee last week. I am looking forward to seeing this plan as it progresses and want to thank our skills team, along with other partners, for all their work on this.

At the next meeting of Policy & Resources Committee in 10 days time, Councillors will also vote on our plans to spend our winter grant funding, that we have recently secured from Government, to provide food support over Easter. This is different to the Holiday Activities and Food Plan on today's agenda.

I know there are some questions ahead on today's agenda, and I wanted to express again how I know and understand that it some families are facing stressful, upsetting and difficult time as a result of national offer day last week.

Our pupils projections suggest that demand for places next year (2022) in the Dorothy Stringer and Varndean catchments will again exceed supply, but by fewer than this year. The extent to which it will be appropriate for the schools to absorb this will depend on the circumstances and factors at the time. Varndean has already permanently increased their PAN by 30. Our expectation is that both schools will still be operating to the maximum number of pupils allocated under the admissions arrangement. The forecast from 2023 is very different. This is something we need to take into account. From 2023 the projections for places needed in the catchment will be below the current PAN of 630. In 2023 the projection is for 601 pupils within catchment. From then the projections continue to be under the PAN, and in 2025 the numbers currently projected are well under the PAN at 581.

In due course the council will need to think about reviewing the catchment areas for all schools to take into account that new reality.

Continually expanding two schools beyond the capacity for which they were constructed, against the analysis of the schools, is not the right approach for the schools or the city.

This is particularly the case in the context of:

- a global pandemic where overcrowding presents a health risk;
- other good schools in the city having spare capacity; and
- knowing that it is projected that any such expansion will not be needed from 2023.

However, I do appreciate that understanding why the decision has been taken offers small comfort for the young people and families involved.

With this in mind we've asked BHISS to link with the schools concerned and explicitly check if any of the 62 children need specific support. We will also be also looking at any transportation issues with families.

Of course, all these pupils still have a right of Appeal. There may be some pupils where there are exceptional circumstances that weren't apparent to us from their application forms. Those cases can be considered by the independent Appeals Panel on their merits.

In previous years some pupils have been allocated places from the Waiting List. But I recognise that it is going to be the case that some pupils will have to attend the school they have been directed to.

These are good schools who will welcome them with open arms. I hope that the council, schools and families can support those pupils together to embark on this new chapter of their school life.

It would be remiss of me to not end on a point of reflection. Today is International Women's Day, and I'm pleased we have a fantastic Families, Children and Learning Directorate led by a team of brilliant women and this committee is lucky to have some brilliant women supporting it to.

To Natasha Watson, our committee lawyer, thank you for keeping us straight and narrow!

To Lisa Johnson, our Democratic Services Manager who services this committee, for not only minuting this meeting but doing all the preparation work too and making it run flawlessly.

To Carolyn Bristow, our Service Manager, thank you for keeping the directorate on track with our plans and strategies.

To Louise Hoten, our Head of Finance, thank you for managing the complexities of the large amount of funding this directorate covers.

To Jo Lyons, our Assistant Director of Education and Skills – thank you for everything you do, not in the least having supported our city's schools through many a challenging period over the last year.

To Georgina Clarke-Green, our Assistant Director of Health, SEN and disability, thank you for your ambition, passion and drive to improve the lives of our city's families, adults and children with SEND.

To Anna Gianfrancesco, our Interim Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Care, thank you for keeping our children open to social work safe and well.

And last but not least, Deb Austin, our newly appointed Executive Director of Families Children and Learning. May I use this opportunity to publicly congratulate you on your appointment. Your passion, expertise and drive to improve the lives of all children, young people and families in our city will be key to addressing the challenges they face going forward.

There are many more brilliant women in our team and across the council; too many to name – but there are some more of our brilliant women who will be presenting reports today too. You all give me great pride in working with you and seeing how every day you make a difference. We will later on this agenda hear a presentation on some of the work done to support young women in our city.

With regard to the order of the agenda I have agreed to move two items:

Item 84 '*International Women's Day*' will be taken as the first substantive item after Public and Member Involvement

Item 82 *'How The Council, Schools and Other Providers Response To The Pandemic is Proceeding and What Could Be Done Better'*. Will be taken after Item 75

72 CALL OVER

72.1 The following items on the agenda were reserved for discussion:

- Item 75 – Children’s Social Work Model of Practice
- Item 76 – Youth Service Grants Commissioning Programme
- Item 77 – Central Youth Hub
- Item 81 – Moulsecoomb Primary School
- Item 82 – Schools Response to the Pandemic
- Item 83 – School Uniforms

72.2 The following items on the agenda were agreed without discussion:

- Item 78 – Holiday Activities and Food Programme
- Item 79 – School Ofsted Presentation
- Item 80 – Education Capital Resources and Capital Investment Programme

73 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

73(a) Petitions

73.1 There were no petitions.

73(b) Written Questions

73.2 There were four Written Questions

73.3 1. Ms I Harris asked the following question:

Children have suffered so much during the past twelve months of the Covid- 19 pandemic and the national lockdown, can the Council advise why the mental health and wellbeing of 62 children is not being prioritised within the decision making process in relation to secondary school places this year?

73.4 The Chair gave the following response:

Your question raises really important issues and so I hope you don't mind if I give a really full answer. I'm going to answer your question in two parts. Firstly, to explain the decision-making process around secondary schools, and secondly to talk about

the wellbeing of young people- because we know how much the period of lockdown has impacted our city's young people.

In relation to the allocation of school places Councillors are very aware of the impact of the allocations. All our secondary schools are good, but we understand the anguish that has been caused for the minority of pupils who have missed out on their preferences. We took this issue really seriously, and so we considered whether bulge classes could be used to address the problem.

The council and the schools in the Dorothy Stringer/Varndean catchment have a duty of care to the intake of 2021. But we also have a duty of care to all the pupils in these schools, as well as the schools across the city. So in considering whether bulge classes are appropriate, the capacity of the schools to safely absorb considerable additional numbers had to be considered.

In previous years Dorothy Stringer/Varndean indicated that with additional resources, including building works (which are still ongoing in the case of Varndean), that they were able to provide additional places above the PAN. The analysis of the schools and the Council this year is different. We have concluded that they cannot safely absorb the numbers required on top of the additional numbers they have already taken, and so the schools do not feel able to make that offer for entry in 2021. As I will explain the reasons for this are well founded.

In 2018 Dorothy Stringer took extra pupils knowing that additional accommodation would be provided in 2019 and 2020 as part of the agreed expansion. This means they currently have three bulge year groups making their way through the school. These are reliant on four temporary classrooms which have had to be crammed into the site.

Varndean has a permanent increase to their PAN – which is why they are having additional building works taking place. These works are not yet complete and add to the logistical burden for the school whilst they are ongoing.

The impact on schools of taking additional pupils is more than providing temporary accommodation, challenging as that is. There are additional planning and practical requirements to be taken into account. These include timetabling, available staff, and very practical logistical implications such as overcrowding in the corridors, the number of toilets and canteen facilities. For example, Dorothy Stringer already has a requirement for additional toilets based on its current numbers, without any additional bulge class.

Schools also have to consider how to manage the movement of pupils within the school site. This is a major consideration this year of all years as we continue to face the pandemic. The council also has to be mindful of the additional traffic around the neighbourhood of the school site.

In addition, the council needs to think about whether the bulge classes are needed for the city as a whole – and whether these additional resources are going to be needed going forward for the catchment.

They are not necessary to meet our statutory obligation. This is because as there are more than enough school places available for all pupils in the City. I would also like to underline here once again the fact that all the secondary schools in the city are rated 'Good' by Ofsted.

In terms of the Dorothy Stringer/Varndean catchment, the forecast from 2023 is very different. This is something we need to take into account. From 2023 the projections for places needed in the catchment will be below the current PAN of 630.

Taking everything into account the Council and the schools have reached a joint decision that making the schools even bigger is not going to be the right thing for the schools or the City.

However I do appreciate that for the young people and families involved understanding why the decision has been taken offers small comfort, which is why BHISS has been asked to link with the schools concerned and explicitly check if any of the 62 children need specific support. We will also be also looking at any transportation issues with families, which brings me to the issue of -

Wellbeing more generally:

There is no doubt that young people have been particularly impacted by the period of lockdown and extended periods of schools being closed to most pupils. The pandemic has impacted on everyone, but for young people in particular the impact on their independence, their social life and ability to keep in contact with friends, or even make new friends, has been huge.

In January's meeting of the Children, Young People and Skills Committee, Green and Labour Councillors proposed a notice of motion which included a request to Government for additional funding issued to NHS Trusts to help children and young people manage the impact of the pandemic – exactly because we know how much the period of lockdown has impacted our city's young people. I'm afraid we haven't received an answer to this request.

However, I know that our schools and our support services are alive to this issue, and so there is help if you need it. Any parent who is concerned about the impact of the decision on their child's mental health should discuss this with their child's current school and GP as necessary. And as I have indicated we are looking at how we can offer additional support for pupils who are allocated schools outside of catchment

Lastly, I would say to any young person who is suffering at this moment, whether it is to do with admissions, or just feeling overwhelmed with everything that is going on, you are not alone. Many of us feel this way. Please ask for support.

73.5 Ms Harris asked the following supplementary:

I am concerned about the psychological impact on this group of children. You are asking children, including my child who is barely eleven, to travel to not just a neighbouring catchment but to travel to a further catchment area. It does not seem that their needs and vulnerabilities have been taken into account to undertake such

long journeys across the City, and nor does it fit the agenda of sustainable and active travel.?

73.6 The Chair gave the following response:

We are alive to the issues and that is why we have asked for additional support to be put in place, and we do understand how hard it is for everyone involved but unfortunately this is the situation we are in. Officers are hoping to arrange a meeting in the coming weeks and this will be linking in with families. I encourage you to take that support when offered.

73.7 2. Mr G Harris asked the following question:

In view of the fact there are 62 families in the Dorothy Stringer and Varndean catchment area whose children have been allocated a school out of the catchment area, will the Council reconsider the number of places available at both schools for the September 2021 intake?

73.8 The Chair gave the following response:

Although our admissions policy has always made clear that there is no guarantee of a place for applicants living within a catchment area, I want to reassure you that the council and the schools have already considered this.

I hope in my earlier answers I have made it clear that the council and the schools have understood the disappointment and stress for some families of allocation outside of catchment, and so we did look to see whether it would be appropriate to offer additional places.

For the reasons I have explained after careful consideration the council and the schools reached a joint conclusion that this would not be the right thing to do this year, with all pupils still being offered a place at good schools in the city.

73.9 Mr Harris asked the following supplementary question:

At the open evening at Dorothy Stringer last year, a Deputy Head Teacher said that they believed that the school would be taking 360 pupils in September 2021, and in a separate session the Head Teacher said that there would be the same number of places for catchment area pupils this year as last year. As we were led to believe that there were the same number of places available, and therefore less risk of not getting a catchment school, do you think it's fair that so many families have not been allocated any of their preferences which were based on misinformation.

73.10 The Chair gave the following response:

I have been made aware of the comments made at the open evening. We have offered places in line with the published admission criteria. I am afraid I cannot speak for the school, but the admission booklet did set out the published admission number. When you applied for places you were asked to read the admission

booklet. I will provide you with a written reply once the Council have looked into the comments of the school more fully.

73.11 3. Ms A Aziz asked the following question:

Can the Council advise when discussions took place, and when a decision was made, to reduce the intake at Dorothy Stringer School by 30 places for the September 2021 intake?

73.12 The Chair gave the following response:

There have been no discussions to reduce the intake at Dorothy Stringer by 30 places. We have admitted up to the maximum number of pupils allocated under the admissions arrangements this September. I think what the question is referring to is that an additional class had been agreed with the full support of the school in the last 2 years, but this was not intended to be a permanent change, and the PAN for this round of admissions was agreed by this committee in 2020.

Overall Dorothy Stringer will be maintaining the same number of pupils at their school as in the current academic year. If the school were to take additional pupils in 2021 not only would they be admitting above the PAN, it would make the school even larger than it is at present, because those temporary bulge classes are still going through the school. This year of all years the implications of overcrowding for all our pupils is an especially serious issue.

After consulting with our secondary schools we all agreed that it would not be the right decision for the school or the city for the school to be asked to accommodate even more than they have already. So for the reasons I talked about earlier, both the council and the school have reached a joint conclusion that places should be allocated in line with our published admissions policies.

73.13 Ms Aziz asked the following supplementary question:

You say that there was joint decision between the Council and schools, but I had an email today from the Head Teacher of Dorothy Stringer which said that as a maintained secondary state school the admission arrangements are made by the Local Authority. So he isn't saying that this was their decision or that it was a joint decision, so can you clarify that.

73.14 The Chair gave the following response:

The admission arrangements are set by this Committee, and the decision that was made by the School Organisation Working Group was made in consultation with the head teachers, and so while it is formally our decision the school was consulted on that decision.

73.15 4. Ms L Murphy asked the following question:

What has happened to the funding that was to be made available to existing secondary schools to enable them to provide additional student places, following the decision in 2018 not to go ahead with the opening of a new secondary school?

73.16 The Chair gave the following response:

As mentioned in the Education Capital Resources and Capital Investment Programme 2021/2022, also on this meeting's agenda, in October 2018 the Policy Resources & Growth Committee agreed to the methodology and allocation of £17.8 million of capital funding to the City's secondary schools from Basic Need funding and Section 106 funding.

Funding has been allocated to Varndean and Dorothy Stringer which has supported them to take an increased number of pupils overall. This has included the permanent increase of places at Varndean school by a form of entry in each year group, and a temporary increase at Dorothy Stringer school in the last 2 years. Building works at Varndean are ongoing and there are plans to permanently increase the amount of toilets facilities at the Dorothy Stringer.

Those facilities are in use and still needed for the 2021 intake. If the schools were to take additional pupils, additional facilities would be needed. As I have explained earlier the council recognises that both schools currently face issues of overcrowding because of their total numbers across all year groups, as the bulge classes work their way through the school.

This funding is to ensure there are sufficient places across the city for all children who need one. Enhancements are taking place across the city in consultation with each school allocated funding, and there are sufficient places at good schools across the city.

73.17 Ms Murphy asked the following supplementary:

In 2018, 2019 and 2020 millions of pounds were spent to allow all children to attend their catchment school. The decision in 2018 was made after the school allocations were announced. In light of this why are our children not worth spending basic needs funding for additional places when Year 7 children in the last three years were worth it, and why have we been told it is too late to take a bulge class this year when it happened at this stage in 2018.

73.18 The Chair gave the following response:

This is not about the worth of children, it really is about the practical and physical implications as outlined earlier. There are health risks of over-crowding, there are physical implications of the amount of space these schools have, there are building works at Varndean and temporary classes at Dorothy Stringer but there is not the capacity to offer more places. This is not about the worth of children and we had to consider many issues when coming to the decisions we had to make.

73(c) Deputations

73.19 The Committee considered a deputation referred from Full Council held on 28 January 2021 regarding Class Divide. Ms C Goldsmith who presented the deputation at Full Council was in attendance to hear the Chair's response.

73.20 The Chair provided the following response:

Thank you once again for coming to the meeting today. The Green Administration has made it clear that improving the lives of disadvantaged young people in our city is a priority – one that has for too long not progressed as far as it should have. I'm pleased to say that since the meeting of Full Council which you attended we have had two things progress. Firstly, we have recruited our Exec Director of Families Children and Learning so are now progressing with work on this and secondly we have agreed our annual budget which includes £25,000 to work on this issue. We will be bringing details to the next meeting of this committee on how this work will be progressing. This is likely to include a cross-party working group to work on the strategy, alongside members of the community and experts in the field.

I look forward to meeting you again over the coming weeks and months.

73.20 **RESOLVED:** That the deputation be noted.

74 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

74 (a) Petitions

74.1 There were none

74 (b) Written Questions

74.2 There were none

74 (c) Letters

74.3 Councillor Allcock presented his letter which said:

On the 22nd January you and Councillor Phélim Mac Cafferty issued a council corporate briefing stating that at Policy & Resources Committee on 21st January, councillors voted to award all council staff a special "Thank You Day", an additional day of leave to be taken in the 2021/2022 business year – April 2021 to the end of March 2022. This was a way of showing appreciation and recognition for the 'care and compassion, dedication to the city and excellent public service to their colleagues, councillors and the communities we serve'.

In para 3.13 of the report to Policy and Resources Committee on 21st January officers reported that:

A key consideration has been the potential impact on schools, where annual leave arrangements are different from those applying to non-school staff. Additional leave is harder to accommodate, and also likely to be less impactful. Feedback from the Schools Block Working Group (a representative group of Headteachers) confirmed that individual

governing bodies would be determining appropriately how to thank staff in schools and using their delegated authority they will determine how to recognise the work of their staff.

Following the announcement of the decision to award the *Thank You Day* to Council staff, trade unions received a significant number of queries from staff in schools who were upset and disappointed that they are not being treated the same as the rest of the Council's workforce and asking why. I believe there is no contractual or statutory reason why an additional day off could not be granted and that this is at the discretion of the school/governing body. I understand that there are operational issues about how this could be managed in a school environment, but that there are definitely ways that the *Thank You Day* for both teachers and support staff could be realised during the 21/22 financial year. The impact of Covid-19 on our city's economy has been profound. We know how tough this time has been for many in our community. We have learnt how much we desperately need good public services. We understand how important it is to value our Public Sector staff including teachers and others who work in schools that have remained open to the children of critical workers and vulnerable children, and also shown dedication and innovation in supporting families with home-schooling and remote learning.

I am calling on Councillor Clare as Chair of the Children and Young People and Skills Committee and the Leader of the Council to:

- Strongly advise Headteachers and Governing bodies to identify a consistent approach across schools to provide the opportunity for all their staff to take the *Thank You Day* at an appropriate time during the next financial year, offering council officer support in achieving this if required.
- Issue a public statement on behalf of the Council thanking all school staff and governing bodies for their incredible work during the pandemic and confirming that it is the council's advice that all school staff be granted the *Thank You Day* to show appreciation and recognition for their commitment.

74.4 The Chair gave the following response:

Thank you for your letter. I understand the concerns raised regarding the thank you day and how the policy & resources report, which you will remember as a member of the committee, referred only to directly employed staff. I know that this has caused some upset – and I wanted to reiterate that the council has apologised to headteachers for how the matter has been handled. We are now in a productive place of working together on a solution. As a result, the asks of your letter are not something that would be helpful to pursue at this juncture.

Officers in our education and skills team are currently in the process of discussing with Headteacher representative groups and offering advice as they consider if and how schools might be able to accommodate the ask from Trade Unions and, if possible, have a consistent approach. The issue is complex as schools have to ensure provision during term time and staff do not usually have the ability to take time out during term time for this reason. In addition to this, schools across the city are a wide range of complex organisations with different circumstances and issues which is why individual schools have the delegated authority to make this decision for their staff and recognise their own individual circumstances.

We know that schools also already recognise and reward their staff in a range of ways in line with their operational requirements. For this reason, it would be inappropriate for the local authority to strongly advise or recommend a course of action in this case when we could not appropriately consider and reflect on the issues affecting each individual school. We of course want to continue to thank and recognise the work and commitment of all staff and governors in schools during this pandemic. They have navigated many challenges and despite this continue to provide high-quality education to our city's young people.

We will continue to explore how our schools can accommodate a thank you day with them in a consistent way.

74.5 **RESOLVED:** That the letter be noted.

74 (d) **Notices of Motion**

74.6 There were none.

75 **CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORK MODEL OF PRACTICE**

75.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Families Children & Learning which updated the Committee on the implementation and progress of the changes that were introduced in children's social work services in October 2015. The report was introduced by the Principal Social Worker Children's Services.

75.2 Councillor Hills said that safeguarding children was an important role of the Council and noted the impressive level of improvement in the service. The latest Ofsted rated the service as 'Good' and asked what could be done to make the service 'Outstanding'. The Principal Social Worker said that two areas were identified in the last Ofsted inspection, one was how we support social workers to record information which would be meaningful for both other practitioners and children and families, and the second was improving support for children in need. To address those areas the Team would be moving to a new recording and IT system in April 2021, and now had a more robust process in place to support children in need which included providing more regular reviews and more managerial oversight of the work.

75.3 Councillor Hills was pleased to note the involvement of families in the evaluation of the service and asked for more information on how families would be consulted and on what aspects. The Principal Social Worker said that there were two pieces of work being taken forward. One was looking at parents leading the next evaluation of the service and the second was involving parents in setting up a peer mentoring project.

75.4 Councillor Allcock noted the change of process in 2015 to not use agency staff where possible and asked how much money had been saved since then. The Principal Social Worker Children's Services said that around £9m had been saved by not using agency staff, and after you had accounted for the salary of permanent staff the saving was around £6m.

75.5 Councillor Brown was pleased to note the high level of continuity of a social workers working with children and families which was good for everyone concerned, the

reduction in use of agency social workers and that vulnerable children were still having face to face contact with their social workers.

75.6 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee noted the report.

76 YOUTH SERVICE GRANTS COMMISSIONING PROGRAMME (1ST OCTOBER 2021 TO 31ST MARCH 2025)

- 76.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Families Children & Learning which provided the them with a proposed Youth Service Grants Programme commissioning prospectus along with timescales for the re-commissioning process and request agreement to proceed. The report was introduced by the Head of Service - Integrated Team for Families, Youth & Parenting.
- 76.2 Councillor Simson noted that there was only a 1% increase in funding for Brighton Youth Centre (BYC) and asked if that would impact on Turner as they received a proportion of BYC's funding. The Head of Service said that there was a new process and so there would be a number of bids from different youth providers and so it was not currently possible to say who would be successful, however, the process would be transparent and fair. Councillor Simson noted that the appendix to the report referred to the 'The Youth Service Grants Programme 2021-2024' whereas it should say 'The Youth Service Grants Programme 2021-2025'.
- 76.3 Mr Muirhead said that youth providers in the City were delighted that the Youth Service Grants Programme had been protected in the budget and were grateful for the timeline for tendering which allowed for full planning.
- 76.4 Councillor Hills noted two of errors in the report. In the appendix, page 55, there was a missing link to the report on the review of youth services, and on page 64 the link to the ward map was out of date. Councillor Hills referred to the traffic light system on page 65 and asked for more information. The Head of Service said that the traffic light system would be used to measure outcomes and confirmed that the Youth Service Grants Programme 2021-25 Framework was a draft document and would be updated.
- 76.5 Ms Brown was pleased that the funding would continue and suggested that the youth groups should be promoted more to encourage as many young people as possible to attend.
- 76.6 Councillor Brown asked if the Hangleton & Knoll youth bus was used by other providers in the city and was advised that it could be.
- 76.7 Councillor Allcock referred to the Quality Standards in the draft Framework and said that it was important to be clear on the outcomes the Council were looking for in performance monitoring standards. The Head of Service agreed and said that the required outcomes were were set out on page of the draft Framework and were based on the National Youth Agency's 'Theory of Change for Youth Work' 2018.
- 76.8 RESOLVED:** That the Committee –
- (i) Noted and agreed the proposed Youth Service Grants

Programme commissioning prospectus and timescales;

- (ii) Agreed that the Council commence the Youth Service Grants Programme re-commissioning process as outlined in the proposed timeline.

77 CENTRAL YOUTH HUB

- 77.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Families Children & Learning which provided information on the option to form a partnership with OnSide and Brighton Youth Centre (BYC) to bid for funding from the Government's Youth Investment Fund (YIF) to develop a Youth Zone in the city and outlined the Council's financial commitment if there was agreement to proceed. The report was introduced by the Head of Service - Integrated Team for Families, Youth & Parenting, and by Mr M Roe (BYC) and Ms C Kanakides (Onside).
- 77.2 Ms L Brown supported the idea of a youth centre but was concerned that if it were located in the centre of the City it may not be accessible for young people living further away, particularly with the cost of bus fares, and suggested that the funding be distributed to a number of projects across the whole City instead. The Head of Service said that was a good point, but data showed that young people did travel across the City to access youth centres. Ms Kanakides said that one of the issues being considered was providing a minibus and/or providing a bus pass to allow people to travel for free.
- 77.3 Councillor Simson noted that there may be an option of selling the Council the land and building and asked what the financial implications maybe for the Council. The Head of Service said that would need to be discussed further before any decision was made. Councillor Simson noted that OnSide Centres worked with 8 -19 yr olds and asked where the funding would come from to work with those aged 8 -11 as currently the funding from the Council that was given to youth provision was from age 11 upwards. Mr Roe said that they already worked with those aged 8-11 as funding came from a variety of sources so there would be no demand on the Council to provide finance for that age group. Councillor Simson was also concerned that having a Centre in the middle of the City could be detrimental to those living in the outlying areas who for various reasons may not be able to access it. The Head of Service said that there was a commitment to retain the neighbourhood projects, which would be linked to the Central Youth Hub and would support access.
- 77.4 Councillor Hamilton noted that this was the first step in a long process, and that a funding application was being made which may or may not be successful. The report said that ideally the venue would be built on land owned by the Council in the centre of the City, but he understood that the only possible sites were in Moulsecomb, Coldean and Portslade and so the Brighton Youth Centre was really the only viable option. He said that recommendation 2.3 was important and asked that the fringe areas were not sacrificed for a central venue.
- 77.5 Councillor Brown said that the Conservative Group did have some reservations, and whilst they fully supported the idea were concerned about the financial implications of such a large project. She noted that the capital investment required from the Council, even with a successful bid to the Youth Investment Fund, had increased from £2.1m to £2.7m since the pre-meet held a few weeks before this meeting, which was a concern.

Only £30m of the £500m of the investment fund would be released and that made our chance of securing the money slimmer. The report said that the land could be bought for a nominal fee but there was no indication of what that fee would be or of the long-term financial implications for the Council. The Head of Service referred to the change to the finances and said that when the papers were prepared for the pre-meet the figure was £2.1m, but it had increased as usually councils would be asked to contribute £400k a year for the three years, and an agreement had been made previously that instead of paying £400k this Council would pay £200k and pay £600k up front in capital, so that was where the difference of £600k came from. The Chair added that the revenue money put in the budget this year covered that funding and that would cover the capital funding and but also some revenue which could be save up to the point that the revenue was available.

- 77.6 Councillor Hills said that it would be good to have a state of the art centre for young people in the City. She noted that the venue may be in the pilot low-traffic neighbourhood and asked if there would be provision to store bicycles and hoped that the building would have a low environmental impact. Mr Roe said that he hoped that there would be places to park bicycles and the building would be environmentally friendly.
- 77.7 Mr Muirhead said that youth investment could only be a good thing and was pleased that BYC would be a key provider.
- 77.8 Councillor McNair asked if the new partnership would work with other groups such as Scouts etc. Mr Roe said that the facilities would be available to all groups and expected there to be more interaction with other youth groups.
- 77.9 Councillor Allcock said that it was important to invest in young people and welcomed the investment from OnSide. It would be important to ensure that the project was as sustainable.
- 77.10 The Committee voted on the recommendations. The Conservatives confirmed that they would be abstaining, and all others were in favour of the recommendations.
- 77.11 RESOLVED:** That the Committee –
- (i) Agreed that the Council could enter into a non-legally binding Memorandum of Understanding with Brighton Youth Centre and OnSide as a basis to submit a funding application and to develop proposals for a Youth Zone in the centre of Brighton;
 - (ii) Agreed to submit a joint funding application with OnSide and Brighton Youth Centre to the Youth Investment Fund;
 - (iii) Noted that any revenue the council commits to this scheme would not detract from the existing neighbourhood focused Youth Service Grants to areas 1, 2 and 3.

78 HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD PROGRAMME

78.1 This item was agreed without discussion.

78.2 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee noted the programme and agreed the proposed approach

79 SCHOOL OFSTED PRESENTATION

79.1 This item was agreed without discussion.

79.2 **RESOLVED:** That the presentation be noted.

80 EDUCATION CAPITAL RESOURCES AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2021/22

80.1 The report was agreed without discussion.

80.2 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee -

- (i) Noted the level of available capital resources totalling £9.916 million for investment relating to education buildings financed from capital grant;
- (ii) Agreed the allocation of funding as shown in Appendices 2 and 3 and recommend this to Policy & Resources Committee on 18 March 2021 for inclusion within the Council's Capital Investment Programme 2021/22;
- (iii) Agreed to recommend to Policy & Resources Committee that they grant delegated authority to the Assistant Director of Property & Design to procure the capital maintenance and basic need works and enter into contracts within these budgets, as required, in accordance with Contract Standing Orders in respect of the entire Education Capital Programme.

81 UPDATE MOUSLECOOMB PRIMARY SCHOOL

81.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Families Children & Learning which provided an update on Moulsecoomb Primary School. The report was introduced by the Head of Education Standards & Achievement.

81.2 Councillor Grimshaw was very concerned that the school could move to an academy, despite the school, parents and the Council all being opposed to it. The school valued and supported every child and continued to improve, which had been acknowledged by an Ofsted/HMI visit last year.

81.3 Councillor Nield was disappointed that the school moving to an academy was now back on the agenda. She noted that the Regional School Commissioner had offered additional funding school improvement support if the school moved to an academy but not if it remained in the control of the Local Authority.

81.4 Councillor Allcock said that recent reports from Ofsted had shown that the school was improving, and yet still wanted the school to move to an academy.

- 81.5 Councillor Hills echoed the comments of other Councillors and despite no local people wanting the school to move to an academy and the school improving, the process was continuing.
- 81.6 Ms Watson (lawyer) said that the Government had changed the statutory guidelines last year to give further examples of what would provoke the Secretary of State to rescind an Academy Order. One example given would be if the school were re-inspected by Ofsted and judged to be Good or Outstanding and the Secretary of State was satisfied that these improvements could be sustained without the support of a strong sponsor. That was something which could be pursued with the Regional Commissioner if members which to do that.
- 81.7 The Chair noted that the school had been visited by Ofsted the week before. The Head of Education Standards & Achievement said that that visit would not give a new grade but was to assess how the school had dealt with the pandemic. There was currently no information on when Ofsted would resume their visits.
- 81.8 The Chair reminded everyone that there would be a Hands Off Mouslecoomb Primary School event at 6pm on 10 March 2021 which people could register to attend, and both she and Councillor Allcock would be speaking.
- 81.9 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee noted the report including the fact that:
- (i) The school currently remains a Local Authority maintained school;
 - (ii) No academy sponsor has been found;
 - (iii) The academy order remains in place.

82 HOW THE COUNCIL, SCHOOLS AND OTHER PROVIDERS RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC IS PROCEEDING AND WHAT COULD BE DONE BETTER.

- 82.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Families Children & Learning which outlined how the Council, schools and other providers were responding to the pandemic. The report was introduced by the Head of Education Standards & Achievement and was accompanied by Ms M Southern (Head Teacher Hove Junior School) and Mr J McKee (Head Teacher at Patcham High School).
- 82.2 Councillor Grimshaw noted that some children had received laptops to assist them in home working and asked if they now had to hand them back. Mr McKee and Ms Southern said that no child had been asked to return their laptops.
- 82.3 Councillor Brown asked how children had engaged with home learning. Mr McKee said that during the first lockdown there had been some difficulty in engaging all children but that had got much better and there were now high levels of engagement, and the school had been able to introduce Parent's Evenings and feedback sessions online. Ms Southern agreed and said that during the first lockdown only 50% of disadvantaged pupils were engaging but that had risen to 85% during the second lockdown.

- 82.4 Councillor Hills noted that initially some parents struggled to engage with online lessons and asked if there were support for them. Ms Southern said that her school had done their best to assist them, and the most vulnerable pupils were still attending the school. Mr McKee said that parental engagement was less important at secondary schools, but support was given where necessary and their most vulnerable pupils were also attending school. The Head of Education Standards & Achievement said that schools were providing a bespoke service for each child.
- 82.5 Councillor Nield asked what steps the schools had taken to make the environment as safe as possible. The Head of School Organisation said the Council had held workshops for all schools and had reiterated the need for cleaning, hand washing and ventilation etc. Mr McKee said that the school had a live risk assessment which was adjusted as and when new guidance was received. The school had protocols on hand washing, social distancing etc, and the layout of classrooms had changed, and all year groups were kept in separate bubbles. All children had been tested and further tests were on going and the results were received within 30 minutes. All staff and pupils wore masks whilst at school. Ms Southern said that there were similar steps in place at her school with risk assessment being constantly updated, support staff not mixing across bubbles and a video had been prepared for parents to explain the school's protocol.
- 82.6 Councillor Hamilton noted that the schools had reopened today and asked what the attendance levels had been. Ms Southern said that there had been 99% attendance at Hove Junior School, and Mr McKee said that there had been 97% attendance at Patcham High School.
- 82.7 Councillor McNair noted that there had been changes in the way that education was delivered and asked which changes the schools would like to keep in place going forward. Mr McKee said that there had technological advances for everyone and Microsoft Teams had been used for remote learning and they would continue to use that method for feedback on students work and to give them other options for doing their homeworking in different formats. Ms Southern agreed and said that student's knowledge of IT had improved hugely during lockdown, and communication with parents had improved as the school could email parents and have online meetings which were quicker and more efficient for all parties.
- 82.8 The Chair noted that there was an amendment from the Labour Group and asked Councillor Allcock to propose it.
- 82.9 Councillor Allcock said that he was pleased with the rollout of vaccines but was aware that some staff were concerned about returning to schools and said that the vaccine for front line key workers should be accelerated. The Council as the employer had a responsibility to protect and support staff and to use its influence to that end which is what the amendment was asking for. Councillor Hamilton seconded the proposed amendment.
- 82.10 Councillor Hills said that the Green Group agreed with the need to protect staff, but the schools were carrying out risk assessments and the roll out of vaccines was continuing and all those aged 50+ would be invited to have their injection in the next few weeks, and so did not think there was value in supporting the amendment.

82.11 The Committee voted on the amendment and the Green and Conservative Groups abstained, others voted for.

82.12 RESOLVED: That the Committee –

- (i) Noted the information in this report;
- (ii) Requested the Director of Families, Children and Learning writes to School Governors and Headteachers across the city, recommending that staff in clinically vulnerable groups are protected through permission to work from home or additional protective measures;
- (iii) Requested the Director of Families, Children and Learning writes to the Minister for COVID Vaccine Deployment, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, and the Sussex Health and Care Partnership – proposing the development of a scheme that allows school and Early Years staff, including those over 50, to be offered vaccinations as a priority, in line with social care staff.

83 SCHOOL UNIFORM

83.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Families Children & Learning regarding the cost of secondary school uniforms. The report was introduced by the Head of Standards and Achievement: Education and Skills.

83.2 Councillor Allcock said that having a school uniform was beneficial for a number of reasons including providing a sense of belonging to one school, reducing inequality amongst the pupils, removing peer pressure to wear the latest clothes etc, but if parents/carers could not afford to buy the school uniform that impacted on the benefits. He noted that many schools had said that they provided support for parents if they could not afford to buy the required uniform but that wasn't always made known to parents.

83.3 Councillor Grimshaw noted that one secondary school did not give any information on help available and one school did make reference to second-hand clothes but did not explain how a parent could access those clothes. She had looked at the required school uniform for one school in the City and the cost for a new Year 7 pupil would be £218. Councillor Grimshaw asked that all schools give information on how parents could receive help and/or buy second-hand uniforms as it could be embarrassing for parents/carers to have to ask the school for help and so the information should be available to them straight away. She asked that a further report on whether schools were providing more information on help for those who were having difficulties buying the necessary clothes come to a future meeting of the Committee. The Chair agreed.

83.4 Councillor Nield was surprised that the report listed both boy and girl uniforms and thought that schools now had a generic uniform. The Head of Standards and Achievement: Education and Skills said that there were options at most schools and pupils could either wear skirts or trousers.

83.5 RESOLVED: That the Committee -

- (i) Agreed that the report be noted and referred to for consideration;
- (ii) Noted that further options to be discussed with secondary school Headteachers and Governors include:
 - More detailed information to be provided on school websites to support families in accessing cheaper school uniform.
 - For secondary schools to consider the number of branded items required, removing these where at all possible so that uniform cost is minimised.
 - That secondary schools do not frequently change their uniform requirements for pupils.

84 INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

- 84.1 The Committee received a presentation on International Women's Day from the Service Manager – Policy & Business Support who was accompanied by Helen Baxter from the Hangleton and Knoll Project. The presentation provided a reflection on work that supported girls and young women in the City.
- 84.2 The Committee agreed to note the presentation.

85 ITEMS REFERRED FOR COUNCIL

- 85.1 No items were referred to the next meeting of Full Council.

The meeting concluded at 7.40pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of