

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE

4.00pm 2 JUNE 2014

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Shanks (Chair)

Also in attendance: Councillor Littman (Deputy Chair), Wealls (Opposition Spokesperson), Brown, Cox, Gilbey, A Kitcat, Mitchell, Powell and Robins

Other Members present: Councillors

PART ONE

1 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

1(a) Declaration of Substitutes

1.1 Councillor Cox was present in substitution for Councillor Simson, Councillor Mitchell was present in substitution for Councillor Pissaridou and Councillor Robins was present in substitution for Councillor Lepper.

1(b) Declarations of interest

1.2 There were none.

1(c) Exclusion of Press and Public

1.3 In accordance with section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 ("the Act"), the Committee considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during an item of business on the grounds that it was likely, in view of the business to be transacted or the nature of proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present during that item, there would be disclosure to them of confidential information (as defined in section 100A(3) of the Act) or exempt information (as defined in section 100(I) of the Act).

1.4 **RESOLVED-** That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting during consideration of any item on the agenda.

2 MINUTES

- 2.1 Councillor Wealls referred to paragraph 64.2 of the minutes stating that he wished to clarify that he had declared a non pecuniary personal interest in items appearing on the previous agenda by virtue of the fact that he was a trustee of the Impact Initiative.
- 2.2 Councillor Powell referred to the footnote appearing beneath paragraph 73.8 stating that she had not voted against the recommendations and therefore wished her name to be removed.
- 2.3 **RESOLVED** – That subject to the amendments set out above the Chair be authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10 March 2014 as a correct record.

3 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

- 3.1 The Chair noted she had attended a challenge event with the Executive Director and other agency partners about the safeguarding audit carried out by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.
- 3.2 The Chair stated that on 15 May Council voted to make changes to the constitution of the Health & Well Being Board and Children & Young People Committee. These changes came into immediate effect. In addition to its previous delegated functions, the Health & Wellbeing Board was given full delegated powers from the Council to discharge all of its public health, adult social care & health and children & young people functions. This meant some changes to the constitution and function of the Children & Young People Committee.
- 3.3 The functions the Committee were also now comprised in the delegations to the Health & Wellbeing Board, which will mean that they had concurrent delegations. The focus of the Committee would be on matters relating to education and youth services. The Director for Children's Services would recommend what issues should be referred to the Children & Young People's Committee with the presumption being that all business, except matters relating to education and youth services will, as far as possible, be referred to the Health & Wellbeing Board.
- 3.4 The Chair stated that she would be consulted on any matters affecting Children and Young People in her role as the Lead Member. The ways of working with the Board would provide for her being able to attend and speak at the Board meeting on matters affecting children and young people. In addition to the changes of the function of the Committee it was agreed by Council to move the statutory education co-optees from the Health & Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee to the Children & Young People Committee.
- 3.5 These co-optees would be entitled to vote as members of the committee on any matters relating to *education*. As a consequence of the four additional co-optees joining the committee and two moving to the Health & Wellbeing Board (CCG representative and Chair of LSCB) further thought would need to be given to the current co-optees on the Committee. In future the agenda would identify which specific items were available for the statutory co-optees to vote upon.

4 CALL OVER

4.1 All of the reports on the agenda were called for discussion and debate.

5 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

5a Petitions

5.1 There were none.

5b Written Questions

5.2 There were none.

5c Deputations

5.3 There were none.

6 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

6a Petitions

6.1 There were none.

6b Written Questions

6.2 There were none.

6c Letters

6.3 There were none.

6d Notices of Motion

6.4 There were none.

7 BRIGHTON AND HOVE YOUTH COLLECTIVE - INNOVATIONS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES (PRESENTATION)

7.1 The Committee were given a presentation by Caroline Parker and her colleague from Brighton & Hove Youth Collective. The presentation covered matters in relation to: the work of the collective; the co-ordination of services; the methodology of engagement and how the work of the collective built on existing community structures.

7.2 The Chair welcomed the work of the Collective and thanked them for attending and presenting to the Committee.

8 BRIGHTON AND HOVE INTER-AGENCY THRESHOLD DOCUMENT FOR CHILDREN IN NEED

8.1 The Committee considered and debated this item together with Item 9 and the discussion is headed under that item in these minutes.

1.1 **RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

9 EARLY HELP PATHWAY AND HUB

9.1 The Committee considered two reports of the Executive Director for Children's Services in relation to the Brighton and Hove Threshold Documents and the Early Help Pathway Hub. The first report related to the responsibility of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board's (LSCB) need to ensure that there was a common understanding across professionals in relation to the circumstances whereby they should be making a referral to Children's Social Work services for a child in high need or at risk of significant harm. The second report asked the Committee to note the key principles underpinning the design, consultation and implementation of an Early Help Pathway and Early Help Hub for Children's Services as part of the Brighton & Hove Early Help Partnership Strategy 2013-17.

9.2 In response to a query from Councillor Wealls the Interim Assistant Director explained that it was the intention to locate all the staff in the hub together. The current accommodation was not large enough; however, the Police had offered some space and following some initial expenditure this would be suitable.

9.3 In response to Mr Glazebrook from the Community Voluntary Sector Forum it was explained that the children of people in prison could come into the pathway, and the pathway would be looking very closely at individual needs.

9.4 Councillor Gilbey asked how all professionals would be involved in undertaking early help assessments and the Interim Assistant Director explained that there were currently a 'family' of assessments that would be clarified as 'early help' – the threshold document would ensure that these were all properly working together.

9.5 Mr Glazebrook asked a further question in relation to what work the authority was undertaking in relation to the national cross-party manifesto around 'critical days'. The Assistant Director for Children's Services explained that there had been discussions about these interventions and locally this service was provided in part through family assessments; however, there were conversations with the CCG about how this work might be commissioned.

9.6 The Chair then put the recommendation to the vote.

9.7 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee note the contents of the report.

10 CONSULTATION ON CHARGING FOR SOME CHILDREN'S CENTRE SERVICES

10.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director of Children's Services in relation to Consultation on Charging for Some Children's Centre Services. The agreed

budget for 2014/15 included a commitment to consult on proposals for charging for some Children's Centre services. The aim was to use the income from charging to continue to provide services that would otherwise have to be reduced. The budget proposal was to raise £20k and to ensure sufficient time for detailed consultation the changes were proposed to be introduced from January 2015.

- 10.2 In response to Councillor Wealls it was explained that the costs of the transaction would be in the region of £2k each year, but the charges would be different based on how people paid – 'multi-buys' would be encouraged to help reduce the charges for service users.
- 10.3 In response to Councillor Brown it was confirmed that monitoring would take place when the changes were implemented to assess to impact of the uptake of the services.
- 10.4 Councillors Robins asked about families in receipt of benefits and it was explained that, and it was clarified they would still be eligible for these services free of charge.
- 10.5 The Chair noted that the consultation process would look at the specifics of charging schemes.
- 10.6 The Chair then put the recommendation to the vote.
- 10.7 **RESOLVED** – That the Committee agree to a consultation on charging for drop-in, open access Children's Centre services for parents.

11 BRIGHTON & HOVE YOUTH JUSTICE STRATEGY 2014-2016

- 11.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director for Children's Services in relation to the Brighton & Hove Youth Justice Strategy 2014-16. The Committee were asked to approve the Youth Justice Strategy for Brighton & Hove 2014-16. By way of introduction the Service Manager (Youth Offending Services) gave a presentation detailing an overview of the work of the team.
- 11.2 Councillor Mitchell welcomed the strategy and the partnership working detailed within it, but expressed concerns in relation to the reduction in funding. In response the Service Manager noted that reoffending was an issue in the city, and this was also increasing nationally. The service worked to identify young people on a trajectory into the Criminal Justice System, and worked to find alternative measures for resolution. It was added that different types of bail packages were also considered for example more young people coming out and going into care.
- 11.3 Councillor Wealls noted he had concerns in relation to; the lack of targets; a lack of engagement with the 'not for profit' sector and a concern about the level of finance input in this area when compared with other authorities. The Service Manager noted that the management board had made a very clear decision not to include targets, and instead felt consideration of the business plan was more appropriate to be clear about the aims of the service. There were reports each quarter to the management board, and close work with colleagues in education and health services who were able to set their own targets. In relation to funding it was clarified that this was multi-agency and difficult as the emerging year's budget was often not clear.

- 11.4 Councillor Cox also noted the context of falling crime and the 10 year low in relation to drug use, and highlighted that this was not mentioned in the report. He went on to suggest that more payments could be made to third sector bodies to deliver results, and queried if some innovation was missed through a fully in-house service.
- 11.5 In response to Councillor Robins the Service Manager explained that if a young person went into custody they were more likely to re-offend, and managing young people through the community was considered important to addressing reoffending.
- 11.6 In response to Councillor Gilbey the Service Manager noted that the city had small cohort of young offenders, but the cohort had a high level of re-offending. A joint project with East and West Sussex County Council was underway to measure re-offending locally.
- 11.7 The Chair then put the recommendation to the vote.
- 11.8 **RESOLVED** – That the Committee approves the Youth Justice Strategy for Brighton and Hove 2014-16.

12 HOVE PARK SECONDARY SCHOOL ACADEMY CONVERSION CONSULTATION

- 12.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director for Children's Services in relation to Hove Park Secondary Academy Conversion Consultation. On the 31 March 2014 the Governing Body of the Hove Park Secondary School resolved to begin a process of consultation regarding the possibility of the school converting to become an academy. It was proposed that the consultation would involve both current and prospective parents of pupils at the school, students, staff and the local authority.
- 12.2 The Chair introduced the report, and stated it was important to ensure the consultation was as wide ranging as possible, but the outcome of the ballot would not be binding on the decision of the governors at the school.
- 12.3 Councillor Mitchell stated that she would be supporting holding the ballot, but had some concerns in relation to the process. She felt the ballot would have been better agreed at the beginning on the consultation process and was mindful that the role of local education authority (LEA) remain impartial. Councillor Mitchell requested more information on who would be counted the ballot papers. She went on to add that this could potentially add further tensions to the situation and felt Members should avoid lobby for either side.
- 12.4 Councillor Wealls stated he would not support the ballot and felt that the politicisation of the issue had been such that it would be difficult for any ballot to be reasonable, and he was concerned that the best interests of the young people at the school had been lost in the debate. The school had already made significant efforts in terms of their consultation and he noted that the national trend was towards schools becoming academes.
- 12.5 In response to some of the points made the Executive Director explained that the covering letter would reference the school's website and the website of the opposition

group, and the count of the ballot would be undertaken by Officers in Children's Services and Democratic Services.

- 12.6 Councillor Brown noted that the final decision would be made by the governors and she was of the view that the Council should not be funding the ballot on the basis that the decision would be made elsewhere. She also added that some of the comments from the groups calling on staff and students to strike were irresponsible.
- 12.7 One of the representatives from the Youth Council stated that those making the decision would need to carefully think about the impact on the education of those at the school, and the pupils should be balloted.
- 12.8 Councillor Gilbey asked if Members of the Committee could see a draft of the letter prior to it being issued as her Group had made it clear how important consultation with parents would be. She stated there were many students from Portslade whose parents had made a conscious decision to not send them to the local academy, PACA – which would otherwise have been their catchment school.
- 12.9 Councillor Littman noted that he agreed with the comments made by Councillors Mitchell and Gilbey and felt that the letter accompanying the ballot would be crucial to the exercise. It was important to LEA were able to facilitate the consultation without being drawn into the debate.
- 12.10 Councillor Cox stated that the Council should not facilitate the ballot as the decision was with the governing body of the school; proper consultation had already taken place and he had confidence they would decide in the best interests of the students. He went on to add he was concerned about the negative nature of some of the campaigning and the language that had been used. In summary he added that the national trend was towards academies.
- 12.11 Councillor Robins noted that it was important parents were properly consulted through the process.
- 12.12 The Chair then put the recommendation to the vote.

12.13 **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That having considered the Chair's request that as part of the consultation process the Council should administer a ballot asking parents whether they agree with the governing body's proposal that Hove Park School should convert to academy status. It is proposed that all parents of pupils currently attending the school together with parents of those pupils offered places for September 2014 should be invited to take part in the ballot; and,
- (2) That the Committee agree to the council undertaking a parent ballot. That the ballot be in paper form including a short covering letter to parents. It is proposed that the ballot asks one simple question; "Do you agree that Hove Park Secondary School should convert to become an Academy – Yes or No". It is proposed that the ballot is circulated via the school with a pre-paid envelope provided by the council for parents to return their response to the council who will

analyse and communicate the results. Reference to the ballot will be referred to on the council website.

13 SEN ANNUAL REPORT AND PROGRESS REPORT ON THE SEN STRATEGY

- 13.1 The Committee considered two reports of the Executive Director for Children's Services in relation to the SEN Annual Report and Progress Report on the SEN Strategy and the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Review. The first was the report of Special Educational Needs (SEN) Performance for the 2012/13 academic year incorporating progress on the SEN Partnership Strategy and the SEN Pathfinder Project, and the second set out the terms of a review of SEN and disability service in Children's Services including relating Health Services. The Chair welcomed the vision of better integration.
- 13.2 Councillor Wealls requested that future reports contain information on how many children were making the appropriate level of focus, and expressed concern that some of the comparisons were not entirely statistically robust.
- 13.3 Councillor A. Kitcat welcomed the report and was pleased to see figures demonstrating the success which suggested there was some closing of the gap.
- 13.4 In response to Mr Glazebrook from the Community Voluntary Sector Forum it was explained that the definition of SEN was made by schools and the Council was encouraging schools to take a consistent approach in relation to this. At City College the Council was hoping for more post-19 provision; if this were not provided there then the Council would have to consider how this could undertaken in the private sector.
- 13.5 In response to Councillor Powell it was explained that work was being undertaken in relation to foundation courses, and in particular there was now a move against separate courses. In relation to educational plans there had been some very positive parental feedback and there needed to be more moves to engage with the young people in the same manner.
- 13.6 The Chair then put then recommendation to the vote.
- 13.7 **RESOLVED** – That the Council agrees to the publication of the final draft of the SEN Annual Report 2012/2013.

14 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) REVIEW

- 14.1 The Committee considered and debated this item together with Item 13 and the discussion is headed under that item in these minutes.
- 14.2 **RESOLVED** – That the Board notes the commencement of the review and approves its scope, vision and aims.

15 SCHOOL OFSTED PRESENTATION

15.1 It was updated that five OFSTED visits had taken place since the last Committee. Of these five; two schools had achieved the same rating; one had improved and the remaining two and received a lower rating.

15.2 **RESOLVED** – That the Committee note the update.

16 ITEMS REFERRED FOR COUNCIL

16.1 There were none.

The meeting concluded at 6.35pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of