

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & SKILLS COMMITTEE

4.00pm 10TH JANUARY 2022

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present:

Councillors: Clare (Chair), John (Deputy Chair), O'Quinn (Opposition Spokesperson), Brown (Group Spokesperson), Grimshaw, Hamilton, Lloyd, McNair, Meadows and Powell

Co-optees: Ms L Brown, Ms D Boyd, Mr T Cristin, Mr A Muirhead and Mr S Parr

PART ONE

43 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

(a) Declarations of Substitutes

43.1 Councillor Powell declared that she was attending as a substitute for Councillor Nield.

(b) Declarations of Interest

43.2 There were none.

(c) Exclusion of Press and Public

43.3 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.

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

44 MINUTES

44.1 **RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 8th November 2021 be agreed as a correct record.

45 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

45.1 The Chair gave the following communication:

In the interests of keeping this meeting brief – I will keep my communications brief also. However, I cannot ignore one issue and that is – why we are in this room.

While the conservative government declares everyone should work from home, they don't mean that if you're a councillor in England. Every other nation in the United Kingdom has recognised the farce nature of councillors being dragged into council chambers when it is clear the public health risk is high, and that doing so by a virtual meeting is no less effective. But this Conservative government is content on putting us all at risk.

As someone who caught covid-19 last autumn from attending meetings related to my role, let me be clear that the risk is very real. On this committee we have members who are clinically vulnerable and one member who is heavily pregnant. Today she is putting herself and her unborn baby and her other small children at risk because, alongside the Conservative Government putting their fingers in their ears, so are opposition groups here. Ahead of this meeting, I requested that all groups drop to two per group – but this request was refused.

There is a petition put together on change.org by the Association of Democratic Services Officers and Lawyers for Local Government. Because let me be clear - it is not just councillors who are at risk, but our staff too, and on a national level the organisations that represent them are making that very clear. I have tweeted the Jackie Weaver backed petition and I urge you to sign it.

There is no use pretending that the pandemic is over and doesn't need strong measures to curb it. The more the Government puts in half-baked measures, the longer this pandemic will go on. Learning to live with covid cannot mean ignoring the risks. We have already seen schools in other parts of the country close as they face a shortage of teaching staff, with no plan from government to address this – so the lack of measures is clearly stands to impact education across the country too.” In all settings, for the safety of our children and young people, and their families, I urge stronger measures.

I would like this meeting to be a place where we keep people safe and as a result of opposition councillors refusing to drop their numbers by one I am therefore going to:

- Only allow one speaker per group per item, alongside any co-optees who wish to speak
- Limit the length of contributions so they do not go on beyond 5 minutes

- Ask all officers presenting to be as brief as possible, and no longer than 5 minutes
- Ask officers responding to questions to be as brief as possible also

If councillors have unanswered questions, then the email addresses of officers are easily accessible to them and I would encourage the use of them ahead of the meeting in future. If you are unsure who to contact, then please do contact Deb Austin who I am sure will be happy to provide you with a response from the relevant officer.

When we undertake the call over, if you are intending to call an item just so you can abstain could you please indicate that. I expect the fees and charges report today is one of those items, and I am happy if it reduces the length of time we have to spend putting ourselves at risk in this chamber to simply note the abstention rather than hearing the report.

46 CALL OVER

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

- Item 50 – Education Disadvantaged Strategy
- Item 51 – Annual Update SEND Strategy
- Item 53 – Power of Youth Charter Update
- Item 54 – Permission to use Crown Commercial Services RM6255 Framework
- Item 55 – School Ofsted Presentation

46.2 The following item on the agenda was agreed without discussion:

- Item 52 – Fees and Charges

46.3 An abstention for the Conservative Group and Labour Group was noted in relation to Item 52 – Fees and Charges.

47 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

47.1 The Chair stated that one petition had been received. Mr Adrian Hart was invited to present his petition which had been signed by 3,933 people and called for Brighton and Hove City Council to “Stop the council teaching our kids that they are racists or victims of their classmates”.

47.2 Councillor Quinn expressed concern that councillors did not have access to the critical race theory teaching materials and made a recommendation that this information be provided. Councillor Grimshaw formally seconded this request, supported by Councillor McNair. This was put to the vote and agreed by the Committee.

47.2 The Executive Director Families, Children & Learning informed Members that the teaching materials were not owned by the council and as such were deemed commercially sensitive and therefore could not be publicly shared by

the council. She advised that Members would receive an update on the strategy by way of a report at the next meeting on 7th March 2022.

47.3 **RESOLVED:** The Committee agreed to note the petition.

48 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

48.1 There were no Petitions, Written Questions, Letters or Notices of Motion

49 HOLIDAY SUPPORT FOR SEND CHILDREN

49.1 Members received a presentation from the manager of the Outreach Service, describing holiday activities during summer and October 2021 for children and young people with SEND.

49.2 Councillor Hamilton was impressed with the provision. He asked how the scheme was advertised and whether children who were home schooled were notified of the activities. The Outreach Manager said it was advertised through schools and promoted through Social Services, however, they were aware that individuals who were learning from home had not been targeted and this would be explored.

49.3 Councillor O'Quinn asked about future plans for the scheme as she felt there was a substantial need for it. The Outreach Manager confirmed that funding discussions about future provision were ongoing and they were working closely with the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) team to provide activities under the HAF remit.

49.4 Ms Boyd felt the advertising had been focused on children in receipt of free school meals and that perhaps it was no longer seen as a SEND activity. The Outreach Manager explained the emphasis was on SEND children and she would ensure this was made clearer going forwards.

49.5 Councillor Grimshaw asked if there were any activities that were oversubscribed. The Outreach Manager said that all the children who attended the sessions had the opportunity to access each of the activities.

49.6 **RESOLVED:** The Committee agreed to note the presentation.

50 Education Disadvantaged strategy

50.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Families Children & Learning which provided an update on the Education Disadvantaged Strategy. The report was presented by the Head of Standards and Achievement, supported by the Senior Education Advisor and the Headteacher of St. Nicholas Primary School.

50.2 In response to questions from Councillor John, the Head of Standards and Achievement stated that "young people" was a strand of the strategy and they were obligated as part of the strategy to consult young people on the actions

contained within. With regard to the attainment gap, literacy was lower than the national average at the point of starting school, and attendance was also lower. The reasons for this were complex and far reaching and included wider socio-economic issues.

- 50.3 The Headteacher of St Nicholas Primary School said that the pupil places crisis and underfunding had disproportionately impacted schools that were attended by higher numbers of disadvantaged children.
- 50.4 The Assistant Director (Education and Skills) explained the strategy specifically picked up the work that needed to be done within schools and education partnerships. A strategy dealing with the wider aspects of disadvantage, for example unemployment, housing and poverty, would be brought to the next meeting of the CYPS Committee. A lot of work was also being done around the impact of the pandemic.
- 50.5 Councillor Brown felt it was important to understand what would be done differently than previous attempts to support these children and requested more detail about this. She asked if other Authorities with higher outcomes had been consulted. She was keen to ensure that teachers, teaching assistants and governors were fully involved, and for regular reports to be presented to the CYPS Committee once the strategy was implemented.
- 50.6 The Assistant Director (Education and Skills) confirmed that other Authorities were being consulted and the strategy would be tightly monitored. Further, that the Committee would be provided with regular updates.
- 50.7 Cllr O'Quinn was concerned about the low scores presented in the report and felt there was a lot of work to do. She requested updates and impact studies and for the actions to be properly measured.
- 50.8 Councillor O'Quinn said there was an issue engaging children with virtual learning and asked how this engagement would be increased.
- 50.9 The Assistant Director (Education and Skills) explained that the strategy had been developed with the Education Partnership and the themes and issues raised by Councillor O'Quinn would be developed throughout the life of the strategy. An officer had been employed to look at the Hidden Children agenda and children who were on part-time timetables. The officer would gather data and work with schools. Feedback would be provided to the Committee.
- 50.10 Mr Muirhead was concerned that the scope of the strategy was too narrow and felt there could be more input from education providers, community groups and parents. He asked if there would be a commitment on schools to silo their focus and how this would be achieved.
- 50.11 The Headteacher of St Nicholas Primary School agreed this had been an issue in the past and was keen that education did not sit siloed.

50.12 Ms Boyd said the hardest hit groups who do not make good process are those who have SEND and are disadvantaged. It was essential to focus on specific needs and have this articulated. It was very important that SEND was included in the strategy.

50.13 The Assistant Director (Education and Skills) advised that feedback and updates on SEND would be included going forwards.

50.14 The Assistant Director (Health, SEN & Disability) agreed the overlap between the two strategies was very apparent and officers and headteacher would need to work closely together.

50.15 **RESOLVED:** The Committee agreed to:

(i) Note the work of Brighton and Hove Education Partnership;

(ii) Offer feedback on the attached final draft of the strategy;

(iii) Approve and endorse the Education Disadvantaged Strategy that had been developed by Brighton and Hove Education Partnership.

51 ANNUAL SEND STRATEGY

51.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Families Children and Learning which provided an update on progress made towards the SEND Strategy. The report was introduced by the Assistant Director (Health, SEN & Disability).

51.2 Councillor Brown was particularly concerned about the mental health of young people and the continuing problem with CAMHS and requested more detail on the Neurodevelopmental Pathway (NDP). Councillor Brown also requested an update on how the new employment hub was helping SEND children in terms of careers advice.

51.3 The Assistant Director (Health, SEN & Disability) introduced Sue Franklin, Educational Psychologist.

51.4 Sue Franklin would follow up with more specific detail about the NDP pathway as she did not have this information to hand.

51.5 The Assistant Director (Education and Skills) said it was widely recognised there was more work to be done to support young people with careers. This work was being developed. The Employment Hub did amazing work targeting young people and providing bespoke support. She would be happy to provide the Committee with a report on what the hub was doing at a future meeting.

51.6 Councillor O'Quinn asked from which location the NDP would be offered.

- 51.7 The Assistant Director (Health, SEN & Disability) confirmed the NDP was being led by the Clinical Commissioning Group who were providing a written response for Councillor O'Quinn in readiness for the next meeting of the CYPS Committee.
- 51.8 Councillor O'Quinn asked about translations referenced on page 54 of the report.
- 51.9 The Assistant Director (Education and Skills) said this was about ensuring that parents received translations of what they needed and about working with different communities and parents who did not speak English as a first language.
- 51.10 In response to a question from Councillor Powell, the Assistant Director (Education and Skills) said they were working with the Yes and Set team and Employment Hub to ensure the needs of young people were understood and supported.
- 51.11 Ms Boyd hoped for more progress by the next meeting in terms of the amber RAG ratings. This was supported by the Assistant Director (Health, SEN & Disability) who was working hard with the Transitions team and Interim Head of Service.
- 51.12 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee note the progress made under the six workstreams.

52 FEES AND CHARGES

- 52.1 This item was agreed without discussion.
- 52.2 **RESOLVED:**
- (i) The position on fees charged for nurseries as detailed in section 3.3 be agreed;
 - (ii) The position on fees and charges for Childcare Workforce Development as detailed in section 3.4 be agreed;
 - (iii) The position on fees and charges for the Early Years Quality Improvement Programme as detailed in section 3.4.6 be agreed;
 - (iv) The position on the charges for school meals as detailed in section 3.5 be noted;
 - (v) The position on fees and charges for Adult Education Courses as detailed in section 3.6 be agreed.

53 POWER OF YOUTH CHARTER UPDATE

- 53.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Families Children and Learning which provided an update on progress made towards the action points within the Power of Youth Charter Action Plan. The report was introduced by Debbie Corbridge.
- 53.2 Councillor Powell confirmed that the Children in Care Awards had been moved to September 2022 to facilitate the event taking place in person.
- 53.3 Councillor Meadows felt the report was very positive. She asked for clarification on page 82 of the report which stated that Green councillors would be offering mentoring to young people. She asked if this should state “all” councillors. The Chair stated this was a drafting error. This was confirmed by the Executive Director (Families, Children and Learning) who offered apologies.
- 53.4 Councillor O’Quinn welcomed the report and was delighted that decisions made by the Children in Care Council and Youth Council would be included. She thanked the Executive Director (Families, Children and Learning) for all her work in this respect.
- 53.6 Councillor Lloyd echoed Councillor O’Quinn’s comments.
- 53.6 The Youth Council Representative said it would be lovely to see more youth engagement and she was very excited about the Youth Council celebration event. She thanked Committee Members for inviting her to sit on these meetings.
- 53.7 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee note the progress made in the report against the action points to increase young people’s voices and empower them to make decisions on issues that impact on them.

54 PERMISSION TO USE CROWN COMMERCIAL SERVICES RM6255 FRAMEWORK

- 54.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Families Children and Learning which requests authority to use the RB6255 Crown Commercial Services Framework Agreement to procure an end-to-end retail voucher platform contract(s) for the distribution of government grants to residents (food, clothing, white goods, fuel) including food vouchers to families with children eligible for free school meals, who qualify for free childcare places, are eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium, use the children’s centre food bank or are in similar circumstances. The report was introduced by the Head of School Organisation.
- 54.2 Cllr Meadows referred to page 86 of the agenda which stated “Officers are seeking authority to spend up to £1m of government grant funding under the framework agreement to provide food, clothing white goods and fuel vouchers to eligible children and families”. She asked why this was not listed as a recommendation and proposed this sentence be moved to 2.2. of the report. This recommendation was seconded by Councillor Brown.

54.3 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee:

- (i) Agree to the recommendation as set out by Councillor Meadows;
- (ii) Grant authority to the Executive Director Families, Children and Learning to use the RM6255 Crown Commercial Services Framework Agreement to procure and award an end-to-end retail voucher platform contract(s) to facilitate the distribution of government grants to eligible families and children as detailed within the grant conditions;
- (iii) Grant authority for officers to spend up to £1.0m of government grant funding under the Framework Agreement to provide food, clothing and white goods, fuel vouchers to eligible children and families should further government funding come in 2022.

55 SCHOOL OFSTED PRESENTATION

- 55.1 The Committee considered an update on the latest Ofsted inspections since the last committee meeting. The item was introduced by the Head of Standards and Achievement.
- 55.2 Only two reports had been published. These were for St Nicholas Church of England Primary School and Cardon Primary School which both achieved a “Good” rating. Inspections reports for the remaining six schools were expected in due course.
- 55.3 The Service Manager (Children’s Centres) reported there had been eight inspection reports for Early Years since August 2021. 98% of Early Years providers were judged as Good or Outstanding which was higher than the national average.
- 55.4 Councillor McNair and Councillor Powell congratulated the schools for the outcome of their Ofsted inspections.
- 55.5 Cllr Powell noted from the report that St Nicholas may not achieve such a good grade on its next inspection. She asked what would be done to support the school.
- 55.6 The Head of Standards and Achievement advised that a School Partnership Advisor was working with the school. The report asked for improvements with phonics and they were providing support to achieve this. A programme was taking place across the City to support all schools with Phonics as it had been recognised this was a national problem.
- 55.7 In response to concerns raised by Councillor O’Quinn regarding Homewood, The Head of Standards and Achievement confirmed an inspection was likely to take place within one month.
- 55.8 **RESOLVED:** That the presentation be noted.

56 ITEMS REFERRED FOR COUNCIL

56.1 **RESOLVED:** That no items be referred to the next meeting of Full Council.

The meeting concluded at 6.01pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of