

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2.00PM 25 JANUARY 2012

COUNCIL CHAMBER, BRIGHTON TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Powell (Chair); Lepper (Deputy Chair), Brown, Buckley, A Kitcat, Pissaridou, Wealls and Cox

Statutory Co-optees: with voting rights: David Sanders (Diocese of Arundel & Brighton) and Amanda Mortensen (Parent Governor Representative)

Non-Statutory Co-optees: Liam Dunne (Non-Voting Co-Optee), Rachel Travers (Community Voluntary Sector Forum) (Non-Voting Co-Optee) and Rohan Lowe (Youth Council) (Non-Voting Co-Optee)

Apologies: Councillor Jayne Bennett, Mike Wilson and Mark Price

PART ONE

27. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

27a. Declarations of Substitutes

27.1 Apologies were received from Mike Wilson & Mark Price. Councillor Graham Cox substituted for Councillor Jayne Bennett.

27b. Declarations of Interest

27.2 The chair declared a personal interest as she works part time at the Friends Centre (which provides careers advice for all age groups), is a Governor at Queens Park Primary School and is a Trustee for Allsorts (project based in Brighton to support and empower young people under 26 who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or unsure (LGBTU)).

27c. Declarations of Party Whip

27.3 There were none.

27d. Exclusion form the Press and Public

27.4 In accordance with section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, it was considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of any items contained in the agenda, having regard to the nature of the business to be transacted and the nature of the proceedings and the likelihood as to whether, if members of the press and public were present, there would be disclosure to them of confidential or exempt information as defined in section 100I (1) of the said Act.

27.5 **RESOLVED** – That the press and public not be excluded from the meeting.

28. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

28.1 Further information was requested on the annual feedback in the increase in gaps of pupils with SEN and all other pupils in English, maths and science for all the key stages.

28.2 The resolutions on page 7 were e-mailed out to all members. Any queries members can contact the officers directly.

28.3 On point 24.7 point 4 – The Chair confirmed she had written to Westdene School to congratulate them on being selected as one of the 100 Teaching Schools, for the Government's new Education Policy.

28.4 The minutes from the 9 November 2011 were approved by the Committee.

29. CHAIRS COMMUNICATIONS

29.1 The Chair welcomed Hayyan Asif a new Youth Council representative.

29.2 The Chair summarised that since the last CYPOSC meeting members attended the 28 November, final private workshop on the draft Youth Services Strategy. The Strategy had been approved at the 20 January Cabinet Member meeting. The Chair thanked Officers for the work put into this significant piece of work.

29.3 A collective response was sent from CYPOSC on the 11 January on the home to school transport for catholic schools consultation.

The Chair thanked the committee for their input into both items.

29.4 The response to Councillor Mitchell's letter on the calculation of home to school distances for school admissions was circulated to members and therefore is not included in the agenda.

29.5 The Chair and Deputy Chair attended a collective meeting of Special Headteachers at ACE Queensdown Road. The Minutes of this meeting would be distributed to the committee for information.

29.6 The Chair had written to the Cabinet Member with the salient points of the last meeting.

29.7 It was confirmed that the next meeting would be at Hove Town Hall at 4pm to ensure that the Youth Council representatives could attend the meeting.

29.8 The Youth Justice Plan Workshop would be attended by the Chair, Deputy Chair and Councillor Wealls and was programmed in for Monday 13 Feb. at 10am.

29.9 An update was given on the Autism survey. Members noted:

- 1) A record of the minutes were *“Members resolved to request that an independent user satisfaction survey be carried out with the results to be reported back to CYPOSC at the earliest opportunity”*
- 2) The survey had been designed and questions agreed
- 3) It would be distributed shortly
- 4) The survey was going to be independently carried out – would be anonymous and returned to the Research & Analysis team in the council
- 5) Results would be publicly available
- 6) Discussions were taking place with commissioners and providers to see how this could be progressed in the future.

Members requested to see the final draft of the survey, thought that it was positive that the survey was being carried out independently and the Research & Analysis team were involved in this. Concerns were raised as to whether accurate data would be captured from families who had been utilising the service for one year or longer and previous users who had left the service and were no longer supported. It was noted that resources were limited to carry out this initial survey.

29.10 The Chair announced that the order of the meeting would change to 32, 31 and 33.

30. QUESTIONS AND LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS AND THE PUBLIC

30.1 Councillor Morgan’s letter would be discussed within Item 34 of the Work Programme.

31. HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD UPDATE

31.1 Steve Barton – Lead Commissioner, Children & Families presented the update on the Health Welling Board (HWB). The 2011 Health & Social Care Bill required the setting up of a HWB for the city. The HWB would be established in shadow form by April 2012, to be ready to go live in April 2013.

31.2 Members raised a number of points:

1. It was important that there was a scrutiny committee to hold the HWB to account. Members noted that the committee system would come into operation in May 2012 and discussions were still taking place as to the governance arrangements of these committees including scrutiny.
2. Concerns were raised as to how GP’s would be held to account as they were members of the HWB. Further clarification was needed as to how this would function. The HWB would have a public health function that would be succinct. Holding GP’s to account would be dealt with through the council and their commissioning strategies.
3. Concerns over the removal of the Children and Young People’s Trust Board (CYPTB) as children’s health matters would not be dealt with by the HWB. A late paper would be heard at Monday 30 January CYPTB meeting which should address such issues and also child protection, looked after children this accountability should go to the new children’s committee.

4. That the membership had the opportunity to include co-optees, the committee were told that the HWB may increase its membership but to start of initially it wanted to keep membership to a manageable level.
5. Why was it called a Board, members noted that Boards had more power which also had democratic accountability.

31.3 The Lead Commissioner was thanked for presenting the report and answering questions.

31.4 RESOLVED-
(1) The Committee noted the report.

32. BRIGHTON & HOVE CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY 2012-2015

32.1 Sarah Colombo – Childcare Strategy Manager presented the report highlighting the accountability diagram which showed the role, membership and the reporting structure of the Child Poverty Task Group plus the 4 strategic outcomes. Progress of the task group would be reported back to the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). Monitoring would take place by speaking with the most vulnerable families.

32.2 Members raised a number of points including:

1. How did the Child Poverty Strategy tie into the Youth Services Strategy and the Joint Commissioning Group? Members were told that it was important that work was not duplicated, that the two strategies worked along side each other and would have their own targets to work to.
2. How would there be ongoing commitment to the third sector on the delivery of services and advice with the challenges of budget savings? It was noted that services that were commissioned would continue delivering services. Data capture could be improved significantly to reach out to the correct families, simple improvements such as ensuring forms had tick boxes to collate parental status ie. single/ couple.
3. What were the reporting timescales of the Task Group? Members were told how information would be used intelligently and would feed into the indicators. There would be sufficient time to develop how the group operates and review gaps such as educational attainment.
4. A Youth Council representative asked why Black Minority and Ethnic (BME) families were more prone to being in poverty. The Committee heard how statically this wasn't always the case. Traditionally patterns of living were that families were large and just one parent would work. Statistics showed that Bangladeshi and Pakistani families may experience child poverty out of the BME group. Changes over the generations showed a difference in living cultures.
5. Members agreed that the strategy had real value. Members voiced their concerns that child poverty was still present and that it was unacceptable how school trips were not made available to all children. School contingency funds should be used for children who were not able to go on such trips. Members were told that there

was some good work in schools but further engagement was still needed ie. with the Parent Teachers Association, Governors to improve their relationship with parents and eradicate the social stigma around child poverty by raising awareness. It was unknown how long this process would take and when feedback would be given to the LSP on this. It was agreed that schools were fundamental in the success of the strategy.

6. A Youth Council representative asked how would the Council support families wanting to claim disability benefits, as it was felt the government were cutting back nationally. The committee heard to help reach the most vulnerable families, for instance those with disabilities where access to all eligible benefits can make a substantial difference to family income.
7. How were non local authority schools being encouraged to work with this strategy, members were told that academies would need to be involved and they were usually located within communities that were disadvantaged.
8. Simple steps within schools could be taken, for example unclaimed lost and found uniforms could be distributed to most vulnerable children within the school.
9. A Youth Council representative asked for more clarification about how the Council plans to make public transport more affordable to young people in the city. The Council could not guarantee they could deliver this but would be investigating whether there were avenues to do this. It was noted that during the consultation families had commented on how expensive transportation was within the city.
10. Concerns over loan sharks, the Committee heard that there had been an increase in loan sharks. The Council are working collaboratively with the regional office for the prevention of loan sharking
11. A Youth Council representative enquired around increased access to affordable good quality food, further clarification to explain what exactly this meant and examples of how this could be made possible? Members were told that the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership have strategic outcomes to get fresh affordable produce to more local outlets. The strategy could bring up various opportunities and these were being mapped.
12. An increase in childminders may give more disadvantaged families the opportunity to use more affordable child care, plus provide employment for parents, the committee heard that nationally there was a decrease in childminders. Childminders in the City have vacancies.
13. The transition from primary to secondary schools could be challenging for the most vulnerable children how would the fall out be managed; members were told that the Education Commission were focussing on preparedness for the most vulnerable students.

32.3 The Chair thanked the Officer for a significant piece of work.

32.4 RESOLVED - CYPOSC noted the report and made suggestions.

33. OFSTED UNANNOUNCED INSPECTION OF CONTACT, REFERRAL AND ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS WITHIN BRIGHTON & HOVE

33.1 Nigel Hancock- Operational Social Work Service Manager introduced the unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements. Ofsted had completed a 10 day inspection 18 months ago which showed 11 areas of strengths, 9 areas of satisfaction and 3 areas of development. The unannounced inspection on the 22 and 23 November was a follow up on the last inspection.

33.2 Members raised a number of points including:

1. How was the service going to work through the areas of development identified in the report? Members were informed that that a Service Improvement Plan had been completed which had actions, milestones and deadlines. This plan connected up with all areas of the service. The Plan was monitored by Managers.
2. Members agreed that further clarification was needed on each of the development areas highlighted in the report. The committee noted that this was the only document that the authority received and there was no further information available from Ofsted. Additionally, the service had gone through a restructure from 3 points of entry to 1 point of entry. The unannounced inspection took place 2 weeks after these changes. There was no supervision evidence available, as managers were supervising new teams.
3. CYPOSC had previously heard that the thresholds were at the correct level however this report identified that thresholds were inconsistent. Members were told that the inspection results were saying to deliver more carefully in a more structured way through the children in need plan rather than a child protection plan. Although the thresholds were correct it meant working differently. There could be a decrease in child protection numbers if cases were to be processed through the children in need pathway rather than the child protection one as previously operated.

The Officer suggested that it maybe useful for CYPOSC to see the Service Improvement Plan and the 9 areas of development that had been achieved from the previous announced inspection

4. The CAF had insufficient focus and was central to two areas of development in the last inspection. Ofsted had reported back that the CAF was a worthwhile process and it did not raise criticism other than to increase the frequency of these.

Additionally there were 2 tiers of the common assessment framework (CAF) which included the team around the family (TAF). Both processes involved various professionals including adult services. Both processes worked together with a good use of resources. Other authorities did not have this two tier approach.

5. A Youth Council representative questioned why there was such a delay between the date of inspection and the awarding of the rating to children's services? Members

noted that the process was long, from the inspection taking 2 to 3 days. A verbal response would first be given back to the children's services. The Ofsted adjudicator would check the draft report to ensure it was written to the right standard; with comparisons being made to other reports. The draft report would then be sent to the authority for it to be checked for accuracy and to give the authority a chance to appeal. The final report would then be sent out after.

6. Why the individual needs as defined by race, culture, language and religion were not identified and considered in casework practice or planning in all cases. Members were informed that the teams would collate this information if they noticed a difference in culture or race. For families or children from another city this information was not collated.
7. A youth council representative asked how the process could be more efficient for complex cases, members noted that managers were assessing how effectively cases were being processed and whether there were sufficient triggers.

33.3 The Officer was thanked for presenting the report and answering questions.

33.4 RESOLVED-

(1) The committee requested a concise report on the Service Improvement Plan, highlighting which actions had been completed and which were outstanding.

34. CYPOSC WORK PROGRAMME

34.1 Members were informed about the future governance arrangements for Scrutiny:

- A members working group consisting of Councillors Kitcat, Morgan & Peltzer-Dunn were developing proposals
- The council would be moving to a committee system with decisions being made at cross party committees
- The final arrangements would be agreed at Governance Committee and Full Council in April 2012
- There was likely to be 2 scrutiny committees; Overview & Scrutiny Commission and the Health & Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee. CYPOSC would not exist.
- Scrutiny would undertake panel investigations and policy development
- There was no clear legislation for statutory co-optees at present
- Scrutiny would look to involve as many co-optees as possible in its work.

34.2 Members raised a number of points including:

1. Concerns over the elimination of the CYPT Board and CYPOSC. Where would young people's issues, the development of policies and the scrutiny of council services in a non-political way, be heard if CYPOSC was removed?
2. The recommendations and comments CYPOSC made have had implications to children and young people in the city. Priority must be given to children and young people and their matters to be heard effectively in a non political forum. What assurance was there that the monitoring and outcomes that CYPOSC have approved would be sustained and in which forum? It was understood that the roles of scrutiny would be different one. Who would be specifically dealing with

children and young people's matters? Members we informed that there would be a children's committee.

3. The committee heard what effective input members of CYPOSC had put into all the issues covered by the committee and how valuable they had found the process.
 4. Would there be a forum for discussion over education? The diocesan representative for catholic schools commented that CYPOSC was a valuable way in which schools were represented as there were limited forums that the diocese was involved with.
 5. A Youth Council representative commented how fundamentally important CYPOSC was to young people and having their voice heard.
 6. Members unanimously asked how they could put their case forward? The Chair asked the Lead Commissioner to report back.
- 34.3 Councillor Morgan had written to the Chair asking that Academies be invited to CYPOSC as both the city's Academies had high increases in their GCSE results. CYPOSC to examine how the council could work with current and potential academies to ensure that good practice was shared across all schools so that the city and young people could benefit from strong partnership working and educational innovation which would help build the local economy.

Members agreed to invite both Academies to their next meeting and asked that topics such as child poverty and special educational needs be highlighted within the discussion.

- 34.4 The other items on the work programme were agreed.

The meeting concluded at 4.30pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of