

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5.00PM 23 MARCH 2011

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Older (Chair); McCaffery (Deputy Chair), Davis, Deane, Hyde, A Norman and Phillips

Statutory Co-optees: with voting rights::

Non-Statutory Co-optees: Rachel Travers (Community Voluntary Sector Forum) (Non-Voting Co-Optee) and Azdean Boulaich (Youth Council) (Non-Voting Co-Optee)

Apologies: Mike Wilson, David Sanders, Amanda Mortensen, Carrie Britton and Mark Price

PART ONE

44. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

44a. Declarations of Substitutes

44.1 There were no substitutions and apologies were received from David Sander (Diocesan representative for Arundel & Brighton), Mike Wilson (Diocesan representative for Chichester), Amanda Mortensen (Parent Governor Representative), mark price (Youth Services representative) and Carrie Britton (Children's Health representative).

44b. Declarations of Interest

44.2 There were none.

44c. Declaration of Party Whip

44.3 There were none.

44d. Exclusion from the Press and Public

44.4 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.

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

45. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

45.1 A member requested an update on the number of SEN tribunals this year as it was indicated at the last meeting that parents were satisfied with the statementing process.

45.2 RESOLVED –

(1) That the minutes of the meeting of 26 January 2011 were approved.

(2) It was agreed to receive an update on the number of SEN tribunals this year.

46. CHAIRS COMMUNICATIONS

46.1 The Chair informed the Committee that this was her last meeting, and thanked all the members, especially the Youth Council for their commitment, officers from Children's Services, Steve Barton and Scrutiny Officers.

46.2 This was also the last meeting for Carrie Britton (Co-optee for Children's Health) and her input has been valuable in raising the profile of children with complex needs and their parents.

46.3 Information was circulated out on the update of the Youth Council's 3:1 campaign and the restructuring of the Education Welfare Service. If there were any questions, then to direct these to the relevant officers.

46.4 The Chair informed the Committee that due to an Ofsted inspection the order of the agenda would change to the following:

52, 49, 51, and 50.

47. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

47.1 There were none.

48. QUESTIONS & LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

48.1 There were none.

49. CHILD POVERTY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

49.1 This Agenda Item was heard after Item 52.

49.2 Steve Barton, Lead Commissioner for Children, Youth & Families introduced the report and answered questions with Matt Wragg, Acting Central Policy Development Team Manager.

49.3 In answer to a question on what the next practical steps now that needs assessment has been completed, the committee were informed that for example the Tarner Children's Centre was already addressing the impact of child poverty and had just received an outstanding inspection from Ofsted. The next stages were to see how the recommendations from the needs assessment; partnership commitment and capacity,

coordination of services, monitoring improvement plus the further evidence gathering would be put into operation.

- 49.4 In response to a question on how substantial the child poverty issues were and that the problems seem bigger than the service, members were told that child poverty would need be embedded into other services and strategies i.e. Total Place and commissioning across the council, as the issues were not the council's concern alone however the consequences would have to be dealt with by children's services.
- 49.5 A member agreed that this was a significant piece of work for the council to deal with, that the problems had been entrenched for many years however it was important to undertake this work and start somewhere and if the needs assessment and strategy helped to change some children's lives then it shows what value the process gave.
- 49.6 In answer to a question on whether the new strategy would have any additional funding attached to it the committee were informed that the Graham Allen review into early intervention was looking at national policy on new and innovative initiatives for family support , but these were not expected to bring in new government funding.
- 49.7 Members noted that the Brighton & Hove Local Information System (BHLIS) will provide further information to the needs assessment. The Community budget pilot would contribute into the child poverty strategy.
- 49.8 Azdean Boulaich, Youth Council representative asked how it was identified that children and the neighbourhood were deprived, it was confirmed that specific family income data was used to clarify this.
- 49.9 Officers Matt Wragg & Sarah Colombo were thanked for putting together such a complex needs assessment which encompassed the Task Groups discussions and decisions.
- 49.10 **RESOLVED** – The Committee noted and commented on the findings of the Brighton & Hove Child Poverty Needs Assessment.

50. CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY

- 50.1 This Agenda Item was heard after Item 51.
- 50.2 Dermot Anketell, Service Manager for Children, Schools & Families introduced the report and answered questions.
- 50.3 Alex Qiu, Youth Council representative questioned why the monitoring performance of educational attainment wasn't obtained for key stage 3 children, this information would be circulated to the Committee at a later date. Members were told that a virtual school was created for all looked after children across the area to monitor these children.
- 50.4 A member commented that all Councillors and the council should have the responsibility of corporate parenting and that training was difficult to access. The Committee were informed that training could be provided at anytime to members and had been provided in the past.

50.5 In reference to the Scrutiny Panel report on School Exclusion which stipulated that the Local education authority should look into improving their monitoring processes to ensure that looked after children were not excluded; further information was requested for 2009-2010 on exclusions from school of children who had been looked after continuously for at least 12 months.

50.6 **RESOLVED –**

- (1) The Committee noted and commented on the report.
- (2) The Committee agreed to recommend that all councillors should attend the Corporate Parenting training.
- (3) CYPOSC requested to know why key stage 3 information for the monitoring performance of educational attainment was not recorded.
- (4) Further information was requested on school exclusion of children who had been looked after, including the number instances for 2009-2010.

51. LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S BOARD (LSCB) ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2009-2010

51.1 This Agenda Item was heard after Item 49.

51.2 Alan Bedford, Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Independent Chair introduced the report and answered questions with Terry Parkin, Strategic Director, People.

51.3 Members were informed that the number of child protection plans for the city was double to that of comparable cities and that work was being carried out to investigate the reasons why.

51.4 In answer to a question on how the LSCB worked with the Children's Trust Board (CTB) members were informed that there were representatives that were members of the LSCB & the CTB, the statutory Annual report was heard at the CTB and safeguarding items were also taken to the CTB to be discussed and noted. The LSCB can take action and question Chief Executives about their decisions and promoted partnership working and informal networking. A formal protocol setting out the respective roles and duties of the CTB and LSCB, the mutual scrutiny and sharing of information was agreed at the CTB on 21st March 2100.

51.5 **RESOLVED –** The Committee considered the report and agreed to have the LSCB Annual 2010-2011 report on their work programme.

52. CHILDREN & FAMILIES SOCIAL WORK IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

52.1 This Agenda Item was heard after Item 48.

- 52.2 James Dougan, Head of Service for Children, Schools and Families presented the report and answered questions with Terry Parkin, Strategic Director, People and informed members that the service was in the middle of an Ofsted inspection.
- 52.3 In answer to a question on the reduction of activity of social workers from 86% to 32% and whether there was a timescale to reduce this further, the Committee was advised that the service aimed for a high quality work and that the service was recruiting to social worker posts. The service was moving from three front doors (offices) to a one front door approach on the 1 September, so that the specialist teams were all under one roof. Unqualified social workers did give a high quality of service and it was apparent that young people in care responded well to unqualified social workers.
- 52.4 It was noted that the national perspective was to have a one front door approach so that specialist teams worked from one area. A member agreed with this approach. The children in need team would be delivering their services through the Children's Centres.
- 52.5 In response to a question on whether the restructuring of the service from 3 front doors to 1 front door would affect the back office teams and would this mean streamlining the quantity of administration staff currently working in the 3 offices, members were informed that £500k had been invested into the service for social workers which would take the service above the establishment. The service was also trialling a paperless office approach which meant that all documents were scanned in. This trial would give the service a chance to make a proper evaluation of all their administration processes.
- 52.6 Members noted that the service preferred to use unqualified social workers than agency staff as it was felt that they were committed. Recruitment was sourced from the university of Sussex and Brighton University. The council ran a bursary scheme to support newly qualified staff as they were aware that housing costs were a significant issue when recruiting to social workers posts.
- 52.7 Members were told how newly qualified social workers have a protected caseload and individual support compared to a qualified social worker. Brighton and Hove had 4 agency staff on their team which was low in comparison to other local authorities e.g. Islington which had 65% in the past. Other challenges were recruiting social workers to hospital teams.
- 52.8 In answer to a question on how long it took unqualified social workers to become qualified, the Committee were informed that through the bursary scheme social workers would be interviewed for the post this summer and then start employment with the council the following May. These social workers would be unqualified until they received their certificates in September.
- 52.9 **RESOLVED** – the Committee noted the report.

53. WORK PROGRAMME FOR JUNE 2010 - MARCH 2011

- 53.1 Members were informed that the work programme was completed up until the end of March 2011 and a new programme would be put together after the local elections in case there were any changes to the membership of the committee.

The meeting concluded at 6.45pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of