

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE

4.00pm 11 JUNE 2012

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Shanks (Chair)

Also in attendance: Councillor Brown, Duncan, Gilbey, A Kitcat, Lepper, Pissaridou, Powell, Simson and Wealls (Opposition Spokesperson)

Non Voting Co-optees: Representatives were present on behalf of the Parent Forum, the Clinical Commissioning Group, Sussex Community Health Trust, the Community and Voluntary Sector, Youth Council (2) and the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board

PART ONE

1. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

1(a) Declaration of Substitutes

1.1 Councillor Duncan was present in substitution for Councillor Buckley.

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 Community Safety Forum 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 nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press or 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 100I of the Act).

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

2. MINUTES OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S CABINET MEMBER MEETING

- 2.1 **RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meetings of the Children and Young People's Cabinet Member meetings held on 6 March and 4 April 2012 (circulated for information) be received and noted.

3. CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

- 3.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director, Resources providing information on the committee's terms of reference and related matters including the appointment of its Urgency Sub Committee.
- 3.2 Councillor Simson enquired whether the Membership of an Urgency Sub Committee would need to be politically balanced. The Democratic Services Officer confirmed that a balance would always be sought as it was envisaged that an Urgency Sub Committee would consist of the Chair of the Committee and two other members nominated by the Group Leader or Leaders as appropriate to meet the requirements for the allocation of seats between political groups. Whilst it was not anticipated that an Urgency Sub Committee would need to be convened it was important to have the necessary arrangements in place should one need to take place.
- 3.3 It was noted that the programme of meeting dates set out in the report would need to be amended should a change of date for the Autumn cycle (to be proposed under Item 8), be agreed.
- 3.4 Councillor Wealls referred to the Committees Terms of Reference stating that it would be useful if the Committee could also be kept informed of issues which had been raised in tandem with the Scrutiny Process as had been the case in the past. There was general agreement that this would be desirable and it was confirmed that the Scrutiny Team had been requested to ensure that such items were notified.
- 3.5 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the committee's terms of reference as set out in the report, be noted; and
- (2) That the establishment of an Urgency Sub Committee consisting of the Chair of the Committee and two other Members (nominated in accordance with the scheme of allocation for seats for committees), to exercise its powers in relation to matters of urgency, on which it is necessary to make a decision before the next ordinary meeting of the Committee be approved.

4. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

4a. Appointment of Youth Mayor

- 4.1 The Chair stated that arrangements were being put into place to appoint the City's first Youth Mayor later in the year, this was seen as a very positive development and was welcomed.

4b. Adoptive Services

- 4.2 It was noted that the Adoptive Services Team had been recognised as amongst the top ten in the country.

4c. Education Inequality Conference

4.3 The Chair referred to the Education Inequality Conference which was due to take place later in the month, 22 June and which she would be attending.

4.4 **RESOLVED** – That the position be noted.

5. START TIMES OF MEETINGS AND DATE OF NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

5.1 The Chair stated that some Members and Non –voting Co-optees had indicated that they could find it difficult to attend meetings which started at 4.00pm. The Chair stated that she considered it was important for these meetings to be inclusive and enquired whether attendees would find it more convenient if meetings were to start a different time.

5.2 There was no consensus on this matter although Councillor Simson suggested and, there was general agreement that the finish time of meetings was equally important particularly during the winter months. Councillor Lepper stated that a number of bus services across the city ran at a reduced frequency after 6.00pm and that it would be helpful if the start/finish times of meetings could reflect this.

5.3 Councillor Powell stated that it be helpful if the start time and venue for meetings could be rotated e.g., a 2.00pm start with some meetings taking place in Brighton Town Hall. It was agreed that the feasibility of doing this could be looked at but that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on 15 October from 4.00pm in the Council Chamber at Hove Town Hall.

5.4 **RESOLVED** – That the position be noted.

6. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**6a. Petitions**

6.1 There were none.

6b. Written Questions

6.2 There were none.

6c. Deputations

6.3 There were none.

7. ISSUES RAISED BY COUNCILLORS

7.1 There were none.

8. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE - BUSINESS PLANNING

- 8.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director, People setting out the Committees proposed Business Plan for 2012/13.
- 8.2 The Strategic Director explained that the revised constitution allowed for a number of committees to direct and oversee work with children. These included the Children and Young People's Committee, The Corporate Parenting Sub Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Board. Public and community health matters relating to children could also be considered at the Adult Care and Health Committee. The work of these various committees was overseen by the Strategic Director, who also served as the Council's Statutory Director of Children's Services (DCS). Scrutiny of decisions by these various boards and committees would be the responsibility of a revised scrutiny process.
- 8.3 The Committee report was intended to help committee members ensure that their programme of work did not duplicate that of related committees or groups. The various responsibilities of the committees mentioned in the body of the paper were also included as appendices to the report.
- 8.4 Councillor Wealls stated that whilst in full agreement that an unnecessary duplication should be avoided it was also important that the Committee were aware of work being undertaken in other areas (for instance in relation to on-going scrutiny work) which was germane to the role. Other Members of the Committee were in agreement with that view and. The Chair, referred to a survey relating to autism which was currently underway suggesting that it might be appropriate for a progress report in respect of this matter to come forward to a future meeting. The Strategic Director confirmed that this would occur.
- 8.5 The Strategic Director explained that as it stood the next meeting of the Committee was scheduled to take place on 17 September, however, that presented practical difficulties in preparing reports for a September cycle as the deadlines for receipt of key information (some to be provided by schools and other key partners) and report preparation fell within the August recess and more importantly during the school summer holidays. To address these problems it was proposed that the September meeting be cancelled and that this be replaced by one to take place on 15 October. It was recognised that this would result in a tight turn around time between the October and November meetings, this would however facilitate in an even flow of business between meetings across the year. It should also be noted that the meeting to which any given item was referred could change throughout the year. For example it was possible that the Annual report on the Music and Arts Service might go to the November, rather than October Committee meeting.
- 8.6 Members agreed that it would be appropriate to reschedule the meeting which had been due to take place on 17 September and to hold it on Monday 15 October from 4.00pm instead.
- 8.7 **RESOLVED** – (1). That the draft annual plan as given in 3.7, and reflecting the Corporate Plan should be used to direct the work of this Committee and the officers servicing it; (it is noted that the meeting originally scheduled for 17 September is now cancelled and that a meeting will take place in its stead on 15 October 2012) and

(2) That Chairs of the various children's committees should meet bi-annually to agree a common forward plan.

9. REVIEW OF THE SECONDARY ADMISSION PROCESS FOR 2014/15

- 9.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director, Place seeking approval that a Review of the Secondary Admissions process be carried out as detailed in the report.
- 9.2 It was noted that the present Secondary School Admissions system had been agreed at the full Council Meeting held on 27 February 2007 this had included a recommendation by the Working Group set up to consider this that a review of the whole secondary school admissions system take place in 2012. A cross party working group had been set up to look at school places and had proved a useful vehicle for seeking consensus in a difficult area. The report detailed the criteria for this review, its timescales and the expectation that any proposed changes to the existing process that were agreed would be adopted for September 2014/2015.
- 9.3 Councillor Simson referred to the table set out at Paragraph 3.2 of the report and enquired whether this data took account of recent appeal decisions and it was confirmed that it did not. Councillors Simson and Wealls also referred to the recent decision agreed by the then Cabinet Member and ratified at full Council in relation to the boundaries of the Dorothy Stringer catchment area. It was noted that the implications arising from this would be factored in to the consultation process.
- 9.4 Councillor Brown considered that it was important to the process proceed in concert with the decision agreed by full Council.
- 9.5 Councillor Pissaridou referred to the projections in relation to secondary schools places, referring to the need to provide up to another 500 places by 2018/19 and to the fact that if any new school was to be provided it would have to be a free school or an academy. The Chair responded confirming that as part of the review process it would be necessary to consider where these schools would be likely to be established and the potential impact of this on existing catchment areas.
- 9.6 Councillor Lepper referred to need to look carefully at the provision of places to both infant and junior/primary schools and how that could impact on where secondary school places were provided.
- 9.7 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the Committee agree that a Review of the Secondary Admissions process is carried out as detailed in the report;
- (2) That the Review of the Secondary Admissions Process will be concluded by the end of 2012 and any recommendation will be presented to Committee in February 2013 for potential implementation in September 2014/15; and
- (3) That the cross party group meets monthly with the Strategic Commissioner, Planning and Contracts, to oversee progress with this review.

10. BRIGHTON AND HOVE SCHOOLS STANDARDS REPORT 2010/11

- 10.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director, People detailing standards and achievements in Brighton and Hove schools in 2010/11.
- 10.2 The report provided information on the standards achieved in 2010/11. In particular it was intended to inform the Committee of progress in establishing ways of working with the secondary schools and academies, through the agreement of a compact with the secondary schools and a Memorandum of Understanding with the Aldridge Foundation.
- 10.3 Councillor Simson referred to the significant progress which had which had been made over recent years especially in respect of the arrangements for partnership working which appeared to be firmly established. Councillor Brown concurred in that view, particularly welcoming the improvements that had been witnessed in respect of KS3 results.
- 10.4 Councillor Lepper asked questions in relation to absence levels and it was explained that this was slightly above the national average in respect of the city's secondary schools and slightly below in the case of its primary schools. It was widely acknowledged that work missed was rarely made up and strategies were in place to address this issue in a consistent manner, particularly in to seeking to discourage parents from making holiday arrangements during school term time.
- 10.5 Councillor A Kitcat referred to the compacts which had been put into place with the City's secondary schools and the Aldridge Foundation stating that this underlined the strength of relationships between the LEA and these other partners.
- 10.6 Councillor Wealls stated that whilst it was pleasing to note that standards were continuing to improve, he considered that it was important to make parents and others aware of the diverse and very high quality of "value added" activity across the city's schools. He considered that this should be emphasised to a greater extent, particularly as some schools which appeared to be less popular were very strong in this respect.
- 10.7 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the Committee has considered, commented on and notes upon the standards achieved in Brighton & Hove schools, colleges and settings in 2010/11; and
- (2) Approves the Compact and Memorandum of Understanding which have been developed and agreed to underpin the authority's work with the secondary schools and Academies.

11. CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORK - CASE MANAGEMENT

- 11.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director, Place summarising the policy context which had led to the setting up of the Social Work Task Force by the Department of Health and the DCSF to undertake a comprehensive review of frontline social work practice to make recommendations for improvement and reform of the whole profession, across adult and children's services.
- 11.2 It was noted that the current Task Force arrangements had been set up following the Baby Peter case in recognition that the profession was in crisis of confidence both internally and externally. The social work reform Board had devised eight key standards for Employers of Social Workers in England which it had been recognised made a significant contribution to the delivery of excellent services. The Committee were asked to agree that these standards be adopted for future governance reports.
- 11.3 Councillor Pissaridou enquired regarding the date at which these new initiatives would come into place. It was confirmed that Brighton & Hove had one of the highest levels of bombardment in the country and that other partners including schools and the NSPCC were fully engaged in this process.
- 11.4 Mr Bedford, Chair of the local Safeguarding Children Board commended what he considered to be an excellent report requesting that copies of it be made available to other partners.
- 11.5 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the Committee agree the eight key standards for future governance reports as follows:
1. Have in place a social work accountability framework informed by knowledge of good social work practice and the experience and expertise of service users, carers and practitioners;
 2. Use effective workforce planning systems to make sure that the right number of social workers, with the right level of skills and experience, are available to meet current and future service demands;
 3. Implement transparent systems to manager workload and case allocation in order to protect service users and practitioners;
 4. Make sure that social workers can do their jobs safely and have the practical tools and resources they need to practise effectively. Assess risks and take action to minimise and prevent them;
 5. Ensure that social workers have regular and appropriate social work supervision;
 6. Provide opportunities for continuing professional development, as well as access to research and practical guidance;
 7. Ensure social workers can maintain their professional registration; and

8. Establish effective partnerships with higher education institutions and other organisations to support the delivery of social work education and continuing professional development; and

(2) In future this social work governance report will report on the above eight key areas.

The meeting concluded at 6.00pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of