

**NEIGHBOURHOODS,  
COMMUNITIES & EQUALITIES  
COMMITTEE**

**Agenda Item 48 (b)**

Brighton & Hove City Council

**Subject:** Member Question Received from Councillor Knight  
**Date of Meeting:** 23 January 2017  
**Report of:** Executive Lead for Strategy Governance & Law  
**Contact Officer: Name:** Penny Jennings **Tel:** 29-1065  
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**Wards Affected:** All

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 To consider and respond to the question received from Councillor Knight which is set out below:

Dear Chair of NCE Committee,

Currently the voluntary and community sector services for young people that are in receipt of council funding are outlined for cuts of up to £400,000 a year. This covers a range of services from youth centres, to specific mental health and sexual health support, youth work but also access to days out, a safe space and targeted work with some of the most vulnerable young people in our city.

For many young people youth services will be the difference between them overcoming barriers or slipping through the net, and having the opportunity to succeed with their aspirations rather than ending up in an unsupported or unfavourable situation. Although I recognise the efforts made to protect the statutory youth services that provide care for young people often at the point of crisis, I would like to highlight the Equalities Impact Assessment findings on the youth services cuts to NCE, which shows that eroding non-statutory services will still have an unacceptable impact on equality and community cohesion across our city.

The EIA includes the following:

***“Increased vulnerability of young people, including those with protected characteristics following the closure or reduction of youth work provision where they can access confidential support and guidance from an adult with***

*respect to exploring their identity, finding acceptance or finding out about other services.”*

*“Changes to youth services will **specifically impact on young people and their families**. By stopping the general youth service this will reduce the numbers of young people receiving this support. The provision of confidential advice and signposting to other services will no longer be available.”*

It is our responsibility as a local authority to give every child an equal opportunity and to not knowingly exacerbate discrimination or to further cement social isolation and exclusion.

Non-statutory services provided by the voluntary and community sector are there for all children, not just those ‘in crisis.’ Targeted voluntary and community sector youth services are also offered to combat the discrimination faced by BME, LGBT, disabled and any marginalised young people including our unaccompanied asylum seeking children. These community based services ‘level the playing field’ for our young people because they give each child access to the means to succeed, irrespective of their income, background, orientation or disability.

These are also the findings of the Fairness Commission, commissioned by the city council and brought to NCE committee on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2016. Under the reasons for this Commission being made, the policy context references the Corporate Plan’s objectives (section 1.7) *“The Corporate Plan 2015-19 sets out our purpose, values and priorities. The principles working across the plan include our commitment to increasing equality and ensuring everyone is able to share in the city’s prosperity.”*

The Commission, in its recommendations, details that:

*“... effective youth-led, neighbourhood-based youth work is vitally important not only to outcomes for young people but also to the communities in which they live, increasing understanding and improving relationships between the generations.”*

*“Every child born in Brighton & Hove should have the very best and fairest start in life, especially those who are living in vulnerable circumstances or in poverty, and ensuring the opportunity to realise their potential is the best investment Brighton & Hove can make, for its children and young people, as well as for the city’s future prosperity.”*

In questions to CYPS committee of January 9<sup>th</sup> 2017, young people have explained how cuts will cause some parts of the city to be more disadvantaged than others. Areas of the city with youth centres are generally further out from the centre, located in areas of higher deprivation, so families will be hit with the double impact of travel costs and activity costs if they collapse.

Removing youth provision is likely to increase city wide inequality and concentrate access to particular areas only.

In responding to the Fairness Commission, NCE Committee have selected 15 of the Fairness Commission's recommendations as 'priority areas.' One of these, 'Item 54,' does refer to young people, and states that it is the responsibility of the committee to ensure that:

*"The council's city wide Corporate Parenting Board should find new ways to genuinely include children and young people; especially those in or recently leaving care."*

I note that another recommendation referring to young people, no.56, was not adopted as one of the main priority areas. It states:

*"The council should continue to work with local support projects to ensure policies are inclusive and that all children receive the support they need. (ensuring diversity of CYP voices/participation)."*

As you are the committee with overall responsibility for coordinating the council's approach regarding communities and neighbourhoods, third sector, community safety and resilience, equalities and inclusion, and given the above, I therefore ask the committee to rethink including recommendation no. 56 of the Fairness Commission as a priority area.

This would take the total number of recommendations adopted by NCE to 16.

With kind regards

Councillor Amanda Knight

*Member of Children, Young People and Skills Committee  
Member of Corporate Parenting Board*

