

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5.00PM 24 MARCH 2010

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Older (Chairman); McCaffery (Deputy Chairman), Allen, Hyde, Phillips, Smart and Wakefield-Jarrett

Statutory Co-optees: with voting rights: Mike Wilson (Diocese of Chichester)

Non-Statutory Co-optees: Carrie Britton (Children's Health) (Non-Voting Co-Optee), Joanna Martindale (Community Voulntary Sector Forum) (Non-Voting Co-Optee), Mark Price (Youth Services) (Non-Voting Co-Optee), Kenya Simpson-Martin (Youth Council) (Non-Voting Co-Optee) and Azdean Boulaich (Youth Council) (Non-Voting Co-Optee)

Apologies: Councillor Pat Drake and David Sanders

PART ONE

45. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

45a. Declaration of Substitutes

45.1 There were none. Councillor Pat Drake and David Sanders (Diocese of Arundel & Brighton) sent their apologies.

45b. Declarations of Interest

45.2 There were none.

45c. Declaration of Party Whip

45.3 There were none.

45d. Exclusion from the Press and Public

45.4 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.

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

46. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- 46a1 A Member pointed out that paragraphs 35.20 and 35.26 of the meeting on the 5 January, 2010 minutes appeared to contradict one another. Officers explained that this was not in fact the case, but that the minutes should be made clearer.
- 46a2. The minutes of the meeting from the 5 January, with the amendment detailed above were accepted.
- 46b1. The minutes of the meeting from the 20 January, 2010 were accepted.

47. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

- 47.1 The Chairman informed the Committee that there was a change to the Agenda and that Di Smith, the Director of Children's Services and Councillor Vanessa Brown, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People had attended the meeting to update CYPOSC on the recent events at Portslade Community College (PCC). Councillor Kevin Allen had requested this additional item be added at late notice.
- 47.2 The Committee was informed that the Government agenda was to raise educational attainment and that PCC had been below target of 30% 5+A* to C including English and Maths for a long period of time. Conversations with the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Office for the Schools Commissioner (OSC) indicated that there was insufficient diversity in terms of types of secondary schools in Brighton and Hove. The OSC indicated that this would need to be addressed as part of preparations for BSF. Therefore the proposal for an Academy at PCC had been driven by the need to improve standards and offer more diversity in secondary school provision.
- 47.3 In answer to questions regarding concerns on what other choices there were for the PCC and the involvement of Rod Aldridge sponsoring this Academy in addition to Falmer, the Committee were informed that these were; to close the school; to become a National Challenge Trust School; or to Federate with a nearby high achieving secondary school. The only viable option was for the College to become an Academy.
- 47.4 In response to an answer on whether secondary heads had been consulted, the Committee were advised that this information was shared with secondary heads through the ongoing dialogue of Building Schools for the Future and the possibility of a further Academy was first mentioned in July 2009.
- 47.5 The Academy will have Rod Aldridge as the sponsor, the local authority as co-sponsor and the University of Sussex as Education Partner.
- 47.6 It was noted that there was strong support for the Headteacher at PCC (who was previously the Headteacher at Falmer, before it became an Academy) and there were concerns over his future if the College was to become an Academy.
- 47.7 In relation to a question on why Councillors were not contacted directly about the Statement of Intent, it was indicated that communication had been complicated by the death of a member of staff and the subsequent deferment of the school's Ofsted.

47.8 Azdean Boulaich (representative for the Youth Council) asked what would happen if the proposals were not successful; the Committee were informed that of the options available, becoming an Academy was the only viable one.

47.9 The Chairman thanked the Director of Children's Services and the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People for updating CYPOSC on PCC, in response to Councillor Allen's request.

47.10 RESOLVED-

(1) Members requested a timetable of future events for PCC as the proposals progress to the Expression of Interest stage.

47.11 The Chair informed Members that the Agenda would be altered to the following order: 49,50, 52, 51, 48 and 53.

47.12 The Committee were updated on the following Scrutiny Panel's:
The School Exclusion Scrutiny Panel have come up with some recommendations and have a further meeting with Jo Lyons, the Assistant Director for Learning, Schools and Skills.

The Children & Culture Scrutiny Panel had their scoping meeting where Cllr. Melanie Davis was elected as the Chair and the Panel have arranged 4 public meetings.

The Children & Alcohol Scrutiny Report went to Licensing Committee on the 4 March where it was endorsed and it will be going to Full Council on the 13 May 2010.

47.13 The Chair informed the Committee that Adult Social Care & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee have agreed to have a Scrutiny Panel on services for people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders, and the Panel are not looking for any further involvement from CYPOSC other than to be made aware that how Children's services link into Adult services will be key here.

47.14 The Chair welcomed Joanna Martindale (representative for the CVSF) who is covering Rachel Travers maternity leave.

47.15 The Chair told Members that there would be a new parent governor representative who was called Amanda Mortensen, who would stand for 4 years and that she would be here for the next meeting.

48. THERAPY SERVICES FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

48.1 This Item was taken after Item 51 – School Examination and Test results.

48.2 Jenny Brickell, Head of Integrated Children's Development & Disability Service and Jo Lyons, Assistant Director, Learning Schools and Skills presented the report.

48.2 In relation to a question on the 33 week, long waiting lists for Occupational Therapists, Members were told that since the recommendations from the Consultancy Service the Primary Care Trust (PCT) increased funding by £50,000 to try and reduce the waiting

lists. Members were informed that the Service is going through some transformational changes and parents felt that their concerns were being addressed.

- 48.3 The Committee were informed that the renegotiations for the Section 75 arrangements with the PCT, which looked at spending of resources had been finalised and these changes would take time to put in place.

From April 2010 the PCT would be a firmly part of the Children's Trust and the arrangements would be to ensure improving the provider and commissioning functions of the Trust.

- 48.4 The Committee were told that Jo Lyons, the Assistant Director, Learning, School and Skills was now responsible for Therapy Services and that the service was looking at doing things differently and that this service was a top priority for her.

- 48.5 The Committee agreed to have an update on the progress of the recommendations made within the report and a how the recent Lamb Inquiry on Improving Educational Confidence had impacted the service, later on in the year.

- 48.6 In response to a question on speech therapists the committee were told that much work had been done to look at Health and education budgets to improve support by building capacity, training Teaching Assistants and other staff to provide speech and language support where it is needed.

- 48.7 The Committee were informed that the proposed savings of £318,000 to the Aiming High Grant had been reviewed and that no savings would be made to the Aiming High Grant and that the Parent Carers' council were informed of this too.

- 48.8 RESOLVED-

(1)The Committee agreed to have an update on the progress of the recommendations made within the report and a how the recent Lamb Inquiry on Improving Educational Confidence had impacted the service, later on in the year.

49. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- 49.1 There were none.

50. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

- 50.1 There were none.

51. SCHOOL EXAMINATION AND TEST RESULTS (INCLUDING RESPONSE TO LETTER FROM COUNCILLOR HAWKES)

- 51.1 This report was heard after Agenda Item 52 – Traveller Education Report.

- 51.2 Linda Ellis – Head of Advisory Service (11- Adult), Hilary Ferries, Head of Advisory Service (Early Years – Primary) and Jo Lyons, Assistant Director, Learning, Schools & Skills presented the report and response to Councillor Pat Hawkes' letter.

- 51.3 The Committee thanked the Officers for their presentation which they found helpful, clear and showed what different methods of monitoring were in place.
- 51.4 In answer to a question on who School Improvement Partners were, the Committee were informed that these were mostly Headteachers, or ex- Headteachers who worked with underperforming schools. The School Improvement Partners were there to support, and challenge the school that they were working with. There is one School Improvement Partner per school.
- 51.5 In response to a question on pupils entering a large number of exams and whether they could perform better if they took less exams, the Committee were informed that pupils could take as many as 15 exams and that pupils would be judged on their best 8 results. Different schools have different stances on the number of subjects that pupils take.
- 51.6 Members agreed that schools that were underperforming were right to be challenged to raise future exam results.
- 51.7 The Committee were informed that schools that were causing concern, had action plans, these plans were monitored and if the school continued to underperform, the school would be issued with a Warning Notice.
- 51.8 In relation to a question on poor standards of behaviour that was referred to in Cllr. Hawkes' letter; which stipulated that the Oneplace" report said that "*Fewer than average schools have a good standard of behaviour*". The Committee heard how slightly more than 50% of schools had satisfactory behaviour and no schools had poor behaviour.
- 51.9 In answer to a question on why the performance from Early Years-Primary to Secondary schools had dropped, the Committee were informed that 8% of Year 6 did not transfer to Brighton & Hove schools; these pupils either went onto private schools or schools outside of the area. It was found that 20% of the pupils in Year 11 were not from Brighton & Hove Primary schools.

Performance of pupils in Brighton & Hove was better than some coastal cities which share many of the same problems e.g. Portsmouth

Schools are working on more interesting curriculums and this could be one of the reasons that Falmer has performed so well.

- 51.10 In response to a question on the presentation and why girls were not progressing, the Committee were informed that girls that do not perform as well as boys in maths. Girls performed better than boys, but were not progressing as much as they should have been and it was uncertain as to why this was happening.

The Committee heard that the transition from Primary into Secondary was difficult and that schools were looking at this by having fewer teachers and a smaller environment in Year 7; to help support this transition.

51.11 In answer to a question on whether schools monitored the achievement of SEN pupils, it was confirmed that Special Schools track their progress in the same way as mainstream schools. Special Schools also have a School Improvement Partner to ensure that pupils progress at the right rate. That the progress of children with SEN needs in mainstream schools are monitored and are pupils expected to make good progress.

51.12 In response to a question on ethnic groups, referred to in Councillor Hawkes' letter and that there was an anomaly relating to Chinese children's performance in the report, to the presentation. The Committee heard that the statistical presentation was monitored over 3 years and that the Chinese children were performing better than white children.

51.13 RESOLVED-

- (1) The Committee agreed to have a Working Group to look at responding to the letter from Councillor Pat Hawkes and to ask Councillor Pat Hawkes for her comments. The Working Group would be set up after the election.

52. TRAVELLER EDUCATION

52.1 This Item was heard after Item 50- Letters from Councillors.

52.2 Jackie Whitford, Head of Traveller Education Service (TES) and Hilary Ferries, Head of Advisory Service (Early Years and Primary) presented the report.

52.3 The Committee watched a video called "Coming and Going" which was about the Aspects of Identity: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History and Culture.

52.4 Kenya Simpson-Martin (Youth Council representative) asked whether Traveller children had their own personal logbook system for each young person to take with them when they moved around, so their education can continue where it left off and the young person also has an opportunity to make notes each time on the tuition they receive. The Committee heard how due to moving around the area that families were encouraged to go to the same schools that they started at.

52.5 In response to a question on how services i.e. Environment, Police, Schools and Eviction coordinated and worked together with Traveller families, the Committee heard how issues of Common Humanity take into account the families' length of stay, Education and Speech and Language support. Children in Secondary education do not wish to stay in education and would rather go and work with their parents and earn a living for their families. In cases such as these the Education Welfare Service are sent into speak to these families, as parents have a duty to send their children to school, if they do not do this it could lead to legal proceedings.

The length of stay for Traveller families can vary from 1 week to more than 7 days.

52.6 In relation to a question on how traveller children affect the Not in Education, Employment and in Training (NEET) statistics, the Committee were informed that culturally traveller children would learn the family business from their teenage years. One of the aims of the TES was to open up aspirations for traveller children, to give them a wider choice of career pathways.

The TES often hear that travellers regret not making use of previous opportunities to learn a trade.

- 52.7 The Committee heard how the parents made the decisions on when to move on. Some traveller families parked inappropriately, which meant they would be moved on and in that travellers tended to be disliked by local communities for this reason. The Local Authority has to provide sites, which help to build community cohesion, where the Travellers can stay longer and their children are educated through distance learning.

Distance learning packages mean that the traveller children can meet up with teachers by informing them of where they will be in advance.

The TES speak to parents about the different courses available to their children which could help develop their self employed businesses.

- 52.8 Azdean Boulaich (Youth Council representative) asked how many Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people there currently were in Brighton & Hove, the Committee were informed there were 35+ traveller young people.

- 52.9 TES confirmed that they had 2 years of funding and it was uncertain whether there was a shortfall in funding and that there were discussions with East Sussex about future funding.

- 52.10 RESOLVED-

(1) Members noted the report.

53. CYPOSC WORK PROGRAMME

- 53.1 The Committee were presented with the Work Programmes for June 2009 - March 2010 and June 2010 – March 2011.

- 53.2 Members were concerned that many of the reports from June 2009 to March 2010 were for noting and that no action was being taken by CYPOSC. Members were advised that sometimes Scrutiny committees would request a report to monitor how services were progressing or to look into a specific issue within a service and it maybe once the report has been heard by the Scrutiny committee, that the Scrutiny committee feels content that appropriate measures were in place to improve the situation, that they note the report and no further action is taken. Members were informed that this was part of the scrutiny function.

- 53.3 There was a discussion around the CYPOSC Agenda and how it should mirror the CYPT Board, Members were informed that there were reports that did this already such as Safeguarding, Performance Improvement Reports, the School Examination Results, the Budget and the Section 75 report that was on the June 2010 – march 2011 Work Programme.

53.4 The Committee heard that the Director of Children's Services and the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People were coming back to CYPOSC to inform the Committee of changes to the governance arrangements later on in the year.

53.5 The Committee asked for a structure chart to be included in the "Changes to the CYPT Section 75 arrangements and CYPT governance" report.

53.6 The Committee requested an update on when the child poverty task sub-group of the city's Local strategic Partnership (LSP) were meeting.

53.7 RESOLVED –

(1) A meeting date was requested for the child poverty task sub-group of the city's Local strategic Partnership (LSP).

54. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO CABINET, OR THE RELEVANT CABINET MEMBER MEETINGS OR FULL COUNCIL

54.1 There were none.

The meeting concluded at 7.30pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of