

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4.00PM 14 SEPTEMBER 2011

COMMITTEE ROOM 1, BRIGHTON TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Powell (Chair); Bennett, Brown, Buckley, A Kitcat, Pissaridou, Wealls and Gilbey

Statutory Co-optees: with voting rights: Mike Wilson (Diocese of Chichester), David Sanders (Diocese of Arundel & Brighton) and Ros Cook (Community Voluntary Sector Forum)

Non-Statutory Co-optees: Liam Dunne (Non-Voting Co-Optee), Mark Price (Youth Services) (Non-Voting Co-Optee) and Rohan Lowe (Youth Council) (Non-Voting Co-Optee)

Apologies: Councillor Jeane Lepper, Amanda Mortensen and Rachel Travers

PART ONE

9. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

9a. Declarations of Substitutions

9.1 Apologies were received from Councillor Jeane Lepper and Amanda Mortensen – Parent Governor Representative. Councillor Penny Gilbey was substituting for Councillor Jeane Lepper.

9b. Declarations of Interest

9.2 The Chair declared a personal interest as she works at the Friends Centre which provides careers advice for all age groups.

9c. Declaration of Party Whip

9.3 There were none.

9d. Exclusion from the Press and Public

9.4 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.

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

10. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

10.1 The minutes from the 4 July 2011 were approved by the Committee.

11. CHAIRS COMMUNICATIONS

11.1 As it was the first meeting in Brighton Town Hall, the Chair requested that feedback on the venue was forwarded to the scrutiny team. The issue of DDA compliance was raised.

11.2 The Chair advised Members that a visit had been arranged to City College for 17 October, at 2pm. All Members should have received an email to this effect.

11.3 It was agreed to hold a workshop session in early October regarding the Youth Strategy review. Dates to be confirmed.

12. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

12.1 There were none.

13. QUESTIONS AND LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

13.1 There were none.

14. CHILD POVERTY UPDATE

14.1 Sarah Colombo, Childcare Strategy Manager (CSM) introduced the report highlighting the key findings of the needs assessment, namely:

- Severe financial pressures
- A significant minority of parents have low skills and qualifications
- Overall educational attainment is below average
- Higher than average numbers of young people not in education employment or training (NEET)
- Higher than average numbers of families with a range of risk factors for child poverty
- Intergenerational poverty with associated low aspirations

14.2 The CSM advised the Committee that the consultation on draft priorities was about to go live. The Draft Strategic Outcomes for the Reducing Child Poverty Strategy that would be consulted upon were appended to the report.

14.3 Future steps were outlined in paragraphs 3.5-3.7 of the report and described in more depth by the CSM. Members were supportive of the process and wished that the minutes of the meeting be used as part of the consultation feedback.

14.4 Members made a number of points and asked questions relevant to the development of the strategy including:

- Geographically focused issues and solutions. Schemes in some areas e.g. Tarnar are doing brilliant work, this needs to be learnt from.

- Work should focus on schemes that have worked in the past, with lessons learnt from those that haven't
- Specific charities and organisations provide excellent support, however it is often limited by funding
- There is an immediate pressure on many families now due to the economic situation and the changes to benefits. Whilst this may be a mid/long term strategy action needs to be taken now to support vulnerable families
- The rising cost of child care was raised as an issue that was causing immediate concern to families and impacting on the viability of some parents working
- There is a limit to what can be done locally and what are national issues that need to be addressed by government
- Consultation needs to be appropriate to the audience; a number of different formats will be required. Members were advised the CVSF would be helping clients complete the survey.
- How would the strategy help provide jobs and training to C&YP in the City? Members were advised that the needs assessment puts the spotlight on a number of issues, training and employment opportunities being one of them. The strategy itself won't be able to solve the problem, rather it will bring together partners and services offered under one banner and bring a focus on this type of issue. It was agreed to distribute the Employment & Skills Plan which goes into detail on these issues. http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/downloads/bhcc/economicdevelopment/CESP_2011-2014.pdf
- It was asked success will be judged and when will we know the aims have been met. Members were advised that there were a wide range of measurable indicators that would show progress within the strategy, the overall child poverty indicator relates to the number of children surviving on less than 60% of median income. There are a number of sub outcomes relating to housing, education etc
- Service should be specifically looking to support the emotional needs of children in poverty; this should be built into the strategy.

14.5 Members thanked Sarah Colombo for her work on child poverty and presenting it to the Committee.

14.6 CYPOSC resolved to forward their comments as part of the consultation on the child poverty strategy.

15. SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISTIC SPECTRUM CONDITIONS

15.1 Alison Nuttall, Strategic Commissioner Children, Youth and Families introduced the report on services for children with autistic spectrum conditions.

15.2 The Strategic Commissioner (SC) advised members that this was a service commissioned by the Council but delivered by a number of different providers. Partners are brought together through a partnership board which has parental representation on it.

15.3 The SC highlighted that all referrals are seen within 4 weeks and a growing number of cases have strength and difficulties questionnaires. There have been 3 complaints since 2009.

- 15.4 The SC advised that CAMHS offers a number of different services, those for children with autistic spectrum conditions being part of this larger service.
- 15.5 The issue of provision of services for children autistic spectrum conditions in private schools was raised. It was explained that the maintained schools, had through the Schools Partnership agreed to fund ASC support.
- 15.6 It was clarified that children not in maintained schools can access support through CAMHS, or schools could chose to opt into the ASC support service. (para 3.9 of the report refers).
- 15.7 Members thanked the Strategic Commissioner for a clear and detailed report and for presenting it in a very understandable manner. Members raised a number of points including:
1. Have spending constraints impacted upon the service provided? Members were advised that staffing levels had not been cut, however as with all areas of local government resources were limited.
 2. In relation to a specific question on speech and language therapy it was agreed to provide a written answer.
 3. If private schools have to opt into the service is there a danger children will miss out on the services they need? Members were advised that schools have a duty to provide support and if the local authority felt this was not occurring they could intervene. It was highlighted that many private schools have dedicated SEN units.
 4. It was raised that a number of Cllrs have received reports of less than satisfactory service provision from parents and carers. Whilst the report provided a considerable level of detail there did appear to be mismatch between the report and user feedback. Members agreed that further work was needed to gain a better understanding of the level of service available. Discussion focused on the best way of achieving this.
 5. It was highlighted how complex the issue was and the manner in which different children may access the service. It was asked whether the local authority should be promoting its services to private/free/non-maintained schools.
 6. Questions regarding the qualifications of staff were answered, with most staff having degrees and postgraduate qualifications.
- 15.8 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.

16. PARENTS' VIEWS ON THE FUTURE OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) IN BRIGHTON & HOVE FROM THE PARENT CARERS' COUNCIL

- 16.1 Debbie Collins, Parent Participation Worker with Amaze introduced the report from the Parent Carers' Council (PaCC). She advised that the PaCC aims to maximise children's opportunities to flourish by working with all organisations to champion equality and raise standards of services and support for carer families. There are now 174 parents who have agreed to become members of the PaCC.
- 16.2 Members were provided with further background to the PaCC and to SEN provision and how it has changed. Ms Collins outlined what action the PaCC would like to see taken, including:

- The government's Green paper, introduced in May, proposing radical changes in the way that SEN is delivered in schools has also meant that progress into the recommendations made in the report have been slow to be realised.
- It has been difficult to engage with head teachers and SENCOs from the mainstream school sector Members recommended that the report be sent out to Headteachers again.
- Commitment from the LA to follow through the recommendations outlined in the report is needed.
- A resourced systematic involvement of parent carers in the strategic delivery of SEN across the city should be aimed for.
- The SEN change board will be a good opportunity for this to happen and for parents to be more involved.

17. REPORT ON 'SUPPORT AND ASPIRATION: A NEW APPROACH TO SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) AND DISABILITY - A CONSULTATION BY THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION (GREEN PAPER) BRIEFING ON THE SOUTH EAST 7- APPLICATION TO BE A PATHFINDER FOR THE GREEN PAPER PROPOSALS

- 17.1 Jo Lyons, Lead Commissioner, Schools, Skills and Learning and Gill Henry, Acting Head of SEN & Specialist Placements introduced the report on the SEN Green Paper and the work of the South East 7 (SE7).
- 17.2 CYPOSC were taken through the main areas of the Green Paper including it proposals regarding:
- a new approach to identifying SEN
 - a single assessment process and a 'Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)'
 - a local offer of all services available
 - parents to have the option of a personal budget by 2014
 - giving parents a real choice of school
 - greater independence to the assessment of children's needs.
- 17.3 Members were advised that the SE7 pilot bid had been successful and that the authority would one of the lead authorities. Whilst it was an ambitious programme that had been put forward there was confidence it could be delivered.
- 17.4 Members were advised that there were 9 core elements to the pathfinder programme as outlined in the report, Brighton and Hove has then prioritised the optional elements in the following way:
1. Personal Budgets
 2. Banded funding models
 3. Support to parents and carers
 4. Support to vulnerable children
 5. Age range and employment.
- 17.5 It is the SE7 intention to test all 5 optional areas with one or two LAs leading on each work strand. The Change Board will have to be established urgently to oversee the programme.

- 17.6 There was general agreement that the work of the PaCC should be used to inform the pilot work going forward and that parents and other stakeholders should be 'round the table' as the pilots developed. Members felt the expertise and knowledge of parents should be utilised more by the council.
- 17.7 There was discussion as to the power of the local authority with regard to statementing and the support offered to children and their carers. Members were advised that the local authority could step in where it was felt the needs of child were not being met. However support offered in schools was felt to be improving.
- 17.8 The timetable for future work was questioned; it was explained that the SE7 had to move quickly, and a draft strategy should be ready by summer 2012.

18. WORK PROGRAMME JUNE 2011- APRIL 2012

- 18.1 The Committee agreed the work plan for the next meeting.

19. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO CABINET, THE CABINET MEMBER OR TO COUNCIL

- 19.1 There were no items to go forward to Cabinet, the Cabinet Member or to Council.

The meeting concluded at 6.00pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of