

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE

4.00pm 14 JANUARY 2013

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Shanks (Chair) Buckley (Deputy Chair), Wealls (Opposition Spokesperson), Pissaridou (Opposition Spokesperson), Brown, Gilbey, A Kitcat, Lepper, Powell and Simson

Non Voting Co-optees: Andrew Jeffery, Parent Forum, Rachel Travers, Amaze/Voluntary Sector Forum, Alan Bedford Local Safeguarding Children Forum; Geraldine Hoban, Clinical and Commissioning Group and Sue Bricknell, Sussex Community NHS Trust

PART ONE

39. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

39(a) Declaration of Substitutes

39.1 There were none.

39(b) Declarations of Interest

39.2 Councillor Buckley stated that she had been advised that as a prospective parent of a child who might be attending Stanford Infant School in September 2013 that she should declare an interest in item 50. She had sought legal advice and it had been confirmed that this did not constitute a prejudicial interest, she would therefore remain present during consideration of this item. Councillors Powell and Wealls referred to the fact that they had a non-prejudicial interest in Item 45 by virtue of their involvement as Council appointees on SACRE.

39(c) Exclusion of Press and Public

39.3 In accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 ('the Act'), the Children and Young People Committee 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).

- 39.4 **RESOLVED** – That the press and public be not excluded during consideration of any item on the agenda.

40. MINUTES

- 40.1 **RESOLVED** - That the Chair be authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2012 as a correct record.

41. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

GCSE Examination Update

- 41.1 The Legal Adviser to the Committee provided an update in relation to the GCSE examination results. All of the re-sits had now taken place and the on-going legal challenge in concert with other local education authorities was continuing.

Ofsted Results

- 41.2 Councillor Pissaridou queried the recent reference made to the status of Brighton and Hove in the HMC1 report. The Lead Commissioner stated that she would look into this matter and clarify the position for Councillor Pissaridou .

42. CALL OVER

- 42.1 It was agreed that all items would be reserved for discussion with the exception of Item 45., "Annual Report of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) 2011/12".

43. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

43a Petitions

For Saltdean/Rottingdean Based Local Toddlers and Babies Support Groups for Mums/Carers

- 43.1 The Committee considered a report of the Interim Lead, Executive Services detailing a petition received and referred from Full Council. The Lead Petitioner was unable to attend in person however, their joint e and paper petition which was set out in the following terms was considered in their absence and it was agreed that the Chair's response would be set out in the minutes.

"Please sign below to support this petition against funding cuts to discontinue our much loved and used Toddlers and Babies Support Group at The Saltdean Children's Centre.

This is the second *funding cuts* to such local group, which means mums are expected to rely on travelling to groups in other areas of Brighton and Hove, where funding is still given. Also,

one voluntary Group at the Lido was closed (Sunday Kids café and play), and another (St Nick's Chicks) at St Nicholas Church is due to close due to higher fees needed to run and more voluntary staffing." (119 signatures)

43.2 The Chair responded in the following terms:

"The Children's Centre service includes both groups and home visits. In planning services the Children's Centre must ensure that the families with the highest level of need get the most support.

Due to the geography of the Deans the Children's Centre team based at Hazel Cottage in Woodingdean have offered groups from different venues across the area. The venues for the groups are The Deans Children's Centre at Rudyard Kipling, Hazel Cottage in Woodingdean, Saltdean Children's Centre, Woodingdean Library and St Margaret's Hall in Rottingdean.

In 2011 there were two groups taking place in Rottingdean, a weekly Baby and You group and a Crawlers and Toddlers group running straight afterwards. In the autumn of 2011 a decision was made to stop the Crawlers and Toddlers group and extend the Baby and You group, to allow the team more time to offer sufficient home visits to families with the greatest level of need. As a result an increasing number of parents began to attend the group at Saltdean Children's Centre. Saltdean is a small Children's Centre and the group was set up as a closed group for families who had been assessed as having high level of need. In the summer when the parents attended the group they were able to expand into the garden. As the weather turned colder the venue was not big enough for the number of parents attending.

A proposal regarding the groups in the Deans area was discussed at the Deans Children's Centre Advisory Group meeting in October. The parents at the meeting accepted the need for the group to move to a larger venue. The original proposal for the Saltdean group was that the Parent Involvement Worker would encourage the development of an independent parent led group in the area including identifying possible premises, such as Saltdean Lido or the library.

Following this discussion the Children's Centre were made aware that the library in Woodingdean was closing for refurbishment. The Children's Centre has moved a Stay and Play group from the Woodingdean Library to the Rottingdean Library so that it can be accessed by both Rottingdean and Saltdean parents. This group started in January. The group at Saltdean will close at the end of March.

Finally I would like to encourage parents to get involved in volunteering for the Children's Centre and consider running groups themselves. There are parent led groups in other areas of the city. Parents have found running the groups

43.3 **RESOLVED** – That the contents of the petition and the Chair's Response to it be received and noted.

Proposed Stanford Infant School Expansion

- 43.4 The Committee considered a report of the Interim Lead, Executive Services detailing a joint petition and e petition received. The Lead Petitioner, Mrs Lewis presented their joint e and paper petition which was set out in the following terms:

Paper Petition

“We the undersigned, object to the council’s planned expansion of Stanford Infant School. We implore the council to conduct an open, honest and accessible consultation before any decision is taken”

(300 signatures)

E Petition

“We, the undersigned, object to the council’s planned expansion of Stanford Infant school. We implore the council to conduct an open, honest and accessible consultation before any decision is taken.

The proposal is to expand Stanford Infants to a four-form entry school, increasing yearly intake from 90 to 120 per year in September 2013. By 2015, the total number of pupils will rise from 270 to 360. No additional land will be purchased.

We oppose the current planned expansion because:

- any planned expansion of Stanford Infants must be supported by viable expansion plans for the Stanford Junior school. Otherwise, children will not be able to transfer with their cohort.
- communal hall space and outdoor play areas will be reduced.
- the nurturing and family feel of the school will be in jeopardy.
- expansion will have an adverse impact on traffic, environment and could compromise safety.
- it is possible that children will spend a significant part of their primary education on a building site with inevitable class disruption.
- outstanding performance could be impaired by the changes.
- access routes and parking spaces are already inadequate.
- expansion has an impact on the entire school community and the Junior school currently has no permanent head to lead through significant change.

We understand the school place issue in the city. However, we believe that the consultation process has failed to engage the community because:

- it is not clear or well-publicised – local residents have not been consulted.
- it is not accessible – online responses were invited too late in the process.
- it provides insufficient information. The consultation document and poorly-attended public meeting did not address any of the above concerns.

We are concerned about the impact of these measures on the quality of education, environment and experience for the city’s children. This proposal does not have the full support of our community. The council is required to give sufficient information for the community to engage. We would like the council to address our concerns, explore options and to work with our community to find a better solution.”

(350 signatures)

43.5 Mrs Lewis spoke in support of both petitions and the Chair welcomed her input. It was agreed that as there were a number of questions and a report appearing elsewhere on the agenda (Item 50) in respect of this matter, that the contents of the petition would be noted and received.

43.6 **RESOLVED** - That the content of the petition be received and noted.

43b Written Questions

43.7 Prior notification had been received of the questions set out below: The Chair responded to each question in turn, each of those asking the questions were permitted to ask one supplementary question if they so wished to which a response was given:

(1)“We assume that any planned expansion of Stanford Infant would have to be coupled with an expansion of Stanford Junior School; in order to avoid major problems as experienced by Balfour School in a related situation. Given that this issue is not mentioned in the current proposal; this has not been consulted on by relevant stakeholders; and the Junior School School site poses major restrictions due to its listed building status, limited playground space, protected air raid shelters and asbestos issues, what are the council’s plans with regard to an expansion of Stanford Junior?”

Meike Fechter

43.8 The Chair responded in the following terms:

“Should it be agreed that the proposal to expand Stanford Infant School goes ahead we will then consult on the expansion of Stanford Junior School for September 2016.

Officers have discussed the proposal to expand the Infant School and the implications for the Junior School with representatives from both Governing Bodies and are at present pursuing possible opportunities for additional space.”

(2a)“I cannot find examples of any other 3 form, let alone 4 form entry schools in the city with as little outdoor space as Stanford Infant school, and suggest this proposal will result in Stanford being the most overcrowded school within the Authority. Even if Stanford is not the smallest school, what actual research have officers and members done to satisfy themselves that the lack of outdoor space in expanded schools will not have a detrimental impact on schools or the children who attend them?”

Claire Donaldson

(2b)“As there is no new land in the proposal, is this not a 'contraction' rather than an 'expansion' since the intention is to squeeze 90 more children into an already capacity-constrained school which has staggered lunch times and extremely small school entrances and play-ground space?”

Andrew Staib

43.9 The Chair responded in the following terms:

“Officers have undertaken initial surveys at the Infant School and are confident that should the proposal go ahead the restructuring of the school buildings will ensure that education of pupils at the school will continue at the highest level.

At the Infant school the initial plan suggests an opportunity to increase the existing outside space.”

(3)“We understand that there is a backlog of £34m of repairs for schools across the City. Will funding that backlog take priority over building work to expand a school site?”

Adele Yaron

43.10 The Chair responded in the following terms:

“Repairs to School buildings are identified by a rolling programme of surveys carried out by NPS. Funding in recent years has only been sufficient to carry out the most urgently needed repairs thus leaving an increasing backlog. However funding to address repairs is allocated separately to the funding provided for new places”.

(4) “How is it possible to run the school applications process and this consultation concurrently? The deadline for school applications is 15 January. The final decision on any Stanford expansion is 11 March, with allocations to be notified on 19 April. Taking account of the Easter holiday, this leaves a maximum of 2 weeks for allocations to be checked and processed. Are members satisfied applicants have been treated fairly, and how can they assure us that school allocations are not already being made having pre-supposed the outcome of future decisions to be made by this Committee?”

Sophie Lewis

43.11 The Chair responded in the following terms:

“The Council identified the possibility of additional places being made available in the Admissions Booklet 2013. Members are satisfied that applicants are being treated fairly and confirm that allocations cannot be made to any new places until Committee confirms that proposals have.”

43c Deputations

43.12 There were none.

44. MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

44a. Petitions

44.1 There were none.

44b. Written Questions

44.2 There were none.

44c. Letters

44.3 There were none.

44d. Notices of Motion

44.4 There were none.

45. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) 2011/12

45.1 This report was not subject to callover and therefore the report recommendations were agreed.

45.2 **RESOLVED** – That the Committee notes the content of the Annual Report of the SACRE.

46. PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH TO PARENTING

46.1 The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Public Health and the Interim Director of Children's Services detailing the proposed public health approach to parenting.

46.2 It was explained that evidence based parenting programmes had been proved to be effective in reducing adverse childhood experiences and behaviour problems. This approach had been instrumental in producing better outcomes for children, reduced mental health problems in parents, improved work performance and reduced sickness absence in working parents. Adverse childhood experiences had been linked to higher mortality rates in adults due to social and psychological factors such as violence, suicide, drugs and alcohol misuse. This scheme was targeted at all parents and participation was not seen as indicative of weakness or failure.

46.3 Two parents who had participated in the triple p scheme had been invited along and gave details from their own perspectives of how this had worked for them and the benefits which had resulted for them and for their families.

46.4 Councillor Wealls sought confirmation regarding the efforts that were taken to ensure that all parents would be given access to this. Lydie Lawrence explained that by rolling the scheme out this would make it more accessible to all parents.

46.5 Councillor Brown considered that the insight provided had been very informative and enquired regarding training given to staff in schools. In answer to further questions it was explained that training was given to parents who wished to train in order to train other parents, to attend repeat sessions and to progress through to Level 3 or ultimately Level 4.

- 46.6 Mrs Bricknell, Sussex Community Health Trust referred to the beneficial effects of this, which provided better outcomes for parents and families and ultimately resulted in significant savings too. The work between all partner agencies including training for health visitors would be ongoing.
- 46.7 Andrew Jeffery, Parent Forum referred to the fact that the input given by both parents who had spoken publicly regarding what this had meant for them was inspiring. Rachel Travers, Amaze concurred stating that it was important to be aware of this approach and the ability to direct parents to it.
- 46.8 Councillor Pissaridou welcomed this positive approach which she considered should be made available widely across the city.
- 46.9 Councillor A Kitcat stated that this work was impressive and uplifting.
- 46.10 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the Committee approve a joint public health and children’s services approach to the promotion of positive parenting. This will consist of:
- engagement with key partners and stakeholders;
 - a “Big Debate” that will help the local authority and partner agencies to ascertain the public’s views on impact of parenting in the community and support needed for parents;
 - a media parenting information campaign that will aim to get key messages and information about services to parents and professionals; and

(2) The Committee approve the development of an implementation strategy for a whole population public health approach to parenting, informed by the consultation process above. This would mean aiming to reach 60% of parents over a two year period, giving brief information and advice progressing to intensive support depending on need. It is estimated that about 10% of the population will benefit from intense services (e.g., an 8 week group).

47. CHILDREN'S SERVICES FEES AND CHARGES 2013/14

- 47.1 The Committee considered a report of the Interim Director of Children’s Services reviewing and seeking approval to the proposed Children’s Services fees and charges in accordance with corporate policy.
- 47.2 As part of the budget setting process Heads of Service were required to agree any changes to fees and charges through relevant Committee Meetings. The management of fees and charges was fundamental both to the financial performance of the City Council and also the achievement of the Council’s corporate priorities, in particular making better use of public money.
- 47.3 There were several distinct areas of fees and charges income for Children’s Services, some of which were approved by other bodies such as the Music Trust. The recommendations reflected the areas that needed approval and those which were for noting.

- 47.4 Councillor Brown referred to the outstanding provision by the music service and expressed concern that this could be compromised in the face of reduced funding. The Lead Commissioner, Schools, Skills and Learning stated this service was outstanding and that strong partnership arrangements were in place and it was not anticipated that there would be any reduction in the existing standard of provision in consequence of the changes in the way that funding was provided.
- 47.5 Councillor Pissaridou stated that she was disappointed to note that 100% subsidy was not available to those in receipt of welfare benefits, she was also concerned that the level of fees charges at Portslade Sports Centre had reached a tipping point. The Lead Commissioner, schools Skills and Learning explained stated that the levels of subsidy provided to targeted groups were assessed on an ongoing, a significant level of subsidy was provided however.
- 47.6 The Strategic Commissioner Planning and C ontracts explained that the fees and charges levied at Portslade Sports Centre were consistent with those charged elsewhere across the City.
- 47.7 In answer ti questions by Councillor Simson in relation to the fees charges at Council run nurseries it was explained that reviews of staffing structures were taking place in line with that being undertaken by other providers. Turnerland School operated as a separate entity and set its own fees. In relation to the provision of free/subsidised provision all nurseries sought to maximise occupancy rates and confirmation of these criteria was awaited from central government. A sliding scale of assistance which would help some working families was expected to be in place by September 2014.
- 47.8 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the position on fees and charges in nurseries as detailed in section 3.3 of the report be agreed;
- (2) That the position on fees and charges for the Music and Arts Service as detailed in section 3.4 and Appendix 1 to the report be noted;
- (3) That the position on the charges for school meals as detailed in section 3.5 of the report be noted;
- (4) That the position on fees charged by the Portslade Aldridge Community Academy – Adult Learning in section 3.6 of the report be noted; and
- (5) That the position on fees charged by the Portslade Sports Centre in section 3.7 and Appendix 2 be noted.

48. SHORT QUALITY SCREEN OF YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE

- 48.1 The Committee considered a report of the Interim the Director of Children’s Services detailing the outcome of the Short Quality Screening of the Youth Offending Service Inspection which had started in November 2012 with Brighton and Hove being the first YOS to be inspected in the Country.

- 48.2 It was noted that Inspection of Youth Offending work under the new arrangements identified by the Ministry of Justice in 2012 and consisted of the following four elements
- i. A full Joint Inspection Programme will be targeted at a number of Youth Offending Services (YOS) each year where performance gives particular cause for concern, together with some YOS where published performance is strong and worth sharing.
 - ii. A themed programme will undertake a focussed Inspection of specific aspects of work across a range of YOS.
 - iii. HMI Probation will contribute to the forthcoming (May 2013) Ofsted led Inspection of child protection arrangements.
 - iv. There will be a short screening programme targeted at about 20% of YOS each year focussing on the start of sentences.
- 48.3 The Chair, Councillor Shanks welcomed the improvements which had been effected over the last twelve months, which indicated that the service was on track, and showed how it would be delivered operationally in future.
- 48.4 Councillor Powell welcomed this follow up report and asked whether it would be possible to receive further update reports in future showing how areas identified were being addressed, perhaps by reference to anonymised case studies. It was confirmed that this could be done and that this could be timely following completion of the exercise currently underway to redesign the risk management procedures.
- 48.5 **RESOLVED** - That the Committee note the contents of the Youth Offending Service Inspection Report and note the Action Plan identified as a consequence of this inspection.

49. FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCE REVIEW PROPOSALS

- 49.1 The Committee considered a report of the Interim Director of Children's Services providing information and detailing options for the future delivery of Family Group Conferences for decision by the Committee.
- 49.2 It was noted that Family Group Conferences are an internationally recognised and evidence-based method of family based decision making for children and young people in crisis where a plan needs to be made for their welfare. They are now required under the Public Law Outline, the legal procedure to be followed when considering whether children should be brought into the care of the local authority.
- 49.3 In Brighton & Hove Family Group Conferences (FGC) had been provided by a specialist independent provider since October 2002. Family Group Conferences aim to divert children and young people from public care and maintain them within their families and communities. This is a key objective in improving outcomes for children and young people, and the Value for Money programme in Children's Services.
- 49.4 The Interim Head of Delivery, Children and Families stated that there were advantages and disadvantages in opting to tender for this service or to bring the service in house and these were set out in the report. The yearly rate of referral had been high with half the years allocation used within the first four months of the year. The current provider

had agreed to accept 105 referrals during 2012/13, this had indicated however that there was an issue with the current arrangements.

- 49.5 On the basis of cautious comparative cost indicators, the initial review had indicated that Brighton and Hove could provide a higher number of FCG s in house than provided for within the existing contract and would support the value for money prevention outcomes of stopping situations escalating, maintaining children safely with their families and communities and preventing children ending up in care.
- 49.6 Subsequently, the potential cost and outcome analysis had been shared with the current provider, who had offered to make management efficiencies to increase the number of proposals which could be taken and managed. This was not currently a contract proposal, but if it were to become one would need to be tested on the open market, it would deliver a lower unit cost than the one currently a in-house service. Advice of the Commissioning and Procurement teams had been that the current contract could not simply be extended again as it had been in place for 10 years and required significant updating. The choice was either to move to in house provision, which did not require a tender process or to develop a full re-tendering process. In consultation with the Strategic Commissioner, an estimate had been made of the costs of the tender process, including officer time which would be 10,500.
- 49.7 Councillor Simson sought clarification regarding the potential costs of the tender process and as to the potential number of providers. It was confirmed that there were between 5 - 10 providers in the south east region. The detailed costings document set out the various comparators, the costs would include the costs of drawing up a spec, advertising following consultation with focus groups.
- 49.8 Rachel Travers, Amaze stated that she was of the view that an independent provider was ultimately preferable as they were independent of the authority and could be viewed as "neutral" by families who might be less willing to deal with statutory agencies. The Interim Head of Delivery, Children and Families confirmed that if this service was placed in house it was intended that it would be delivered by the Friends and Families Team which would enable recipients to access a range of services whilst maintaining a degree of separation. A number of local authorities had this service provided by independent providers, it was important to maintain a vibrant voluntary sector and to protect jobs within that sector too.
- 49.9 The Chair, Councillor Shanks stated that ultimately this was a political decision. A decision had been taken by the Cabinet Member Meeting to explore whether or not the contract could be brought in house and the previous report and this follow up one indicated that as a viable option.
- 49.10 Councillor Simson stated that she considered that it would be preferable to tender as by doing so providers could provide details regarding the full range of services/number of cases they could take on within the spec drawn up.
- 49.11 Councillor Pissaridou stated that she was concerned that it was difficult to compare the pros and cons of providing an outsourced or in house service as it was difficult to compare them financially it was like comparing apples and pears. She considered

however, that the perceived independence of an external provider by service users was important. Councillor Gilbey and Wealls concurred in that view.

- 49.12 Councillor Powell enquired whether consideration would be given to Tupeing Day Break staff across if the service was brought in house. It was explained that if this service was tendered externally that would be an open process and Day Break might not provide the winning bid. If this work was brought in house, whether any staff would be Tupied over would depend on who was employed and their role, this would not be automatic but would need to be considered.
- 49.13 Councillor Buckley was of the view that there were benefits to both options, however, on balance she considered it was preferable for the service to be brought in house as this would enable the service to be streamlined and she considered that the independence of the service could be still be maintained in house.
- 49.14 A vote was taken and on a vote of 6 to 4 Members voted that the service should be retendered for.
- 49.15 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the Committee has considered the financial and comparative information between the current outsourced arrangement for Family Group Conferences, against the financial and comparative information on the provision of an in-house service, alongside demand and quality indicators, discussions with other services across the local authority, and further information from the current provider (set out in appendix 1 to the report); and
- (2) The Committee resolves to retender the service to external providers on the current financial allocation, with the Director of Children’s Services having delegated authority to determine the outcome of the tender; and
- (3) Once the decision of the Committee is known, a timetable be developed to ensure continuity of provision.

50. OPTIONS FOR PROVIDING ADDITIONAL SCHOOL PLACES IN 2013 AND 2014

Note: The special circumstances for non-compliance with Council Procedure Rule 3, Access to Information Procedural Rule 5 and Section 100b (4) of the Local Government Act 972 (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) are that the timeframe for the statutory consultation process did not expire until 4 January 2013 which was after the report deadline.

- 50.1 The Committee considered a report of the Interim Director of Children’s Services setting out the options for providing additional school places in September 2013.
- 50.2 The Strategic Commissioner, Planning and Contracts stated that current and projected pupil numbers indicated that there was an immediate and ongoing need for additional school places in the city as a whole and that the need was most acute in the west of the city. To meet the projected future growth in primary pupil numbers the authority should be looking to provide a minimum of 120 places in Hove, and a further 30 places in the south of Brighton by 2014.

- 50.3 The Committee had agreed at its meeting on 15 October 2012 on the preferred option for providing an additional two forms of entry that were needed by September 2013. The purpose of this report was to advise of the outcome of the initial consultation undertaken in November and December 2012 and to seek the Committees' endorsement to proceeding with the publication of the necessary statutory notices. Representations received up to and including 7 January 2013 had been taken into account in preparing the report. Additionally, detailed background documents detailing the consultation process and detailed responses received had been lodged in the Members Rooms.
- 50.4 The Legal Adviser to the Committee explained that the Committee were not being asked to make a decision on the expansion of the schools in question, they were only being asked to agree to the process proceeding with to the next stage of formal consultation via the publication of statutory notices. This was a statutory requirement and statutory notices had to be published on set timescales before any final decision could be taken on whether the expansion could go ahead. In this case the decision to expand could not be taken by this Committee, as this issue was reserved to full Council. If the committee agreed to proceed with the recommendation the matter would be referred to full Council for a decision on the proposed extension, after the publication of the notices on the date set out in the report.
- 50.5 The Chair, Councillor Shanks referred to the notification (immediately prior to the meeting) of a proposed Joint Labour and Co-operative Group and Conservative Group amendment, late advice of the amendment was very disappointing in view of the fact that cross party briefing sessions had taken place in order address any queries and concerns. Copies of the amendment were made available to all members of the Committee and the Chair confirmed that it would be considered during debate.

The Joint Labour and Cooperative Group and Conservative amendment (to recommendations in the circulated report) read as follows:

Proposer – Councillor Pissaridou
Seconder – Councillor Wealls

(1) Paragraph 2.1 That the Children and Young People Committee endorses the preferred option of expanding Aldrington Church of England Primary School by one form of entry from September 2013;

(2) Paragraph 2.2 That the Children and Young People Committee agree to the publication of the required statutory notice to progress this proposal;

(3) Paragraph 2.3 That the Children and Young People Committee recognizes the concerns of the Board of Governors of Stanford Community Infant School as expressed in their response to the consultation and the Council commits to working with them to address these concerns; and

(4) Paragraph 2.4 The Children and Young People Committee does not agree the expansion of Stanford Infant School unless/ until the Ministry of Defence agrees to release/ sell an appropriate amount of adjacent land to allow adequate outdoor space for children attending that school and the satisfactory resolution of the other concerns referred to in 2.3.

- 50.6 The Legal Adviser to the Committee confirmed in the interests of clarity, that should the proposed amendment be agreed, the consequence of it would be, that only those proposals relating to the expansion of Aldrington Church of England Primary School by one form of entry would go forward for approval by Council and the number of additional school places being sought would not be achieved by September 2013. The powers of the local education authority were not such that it could address any demand for additional places by building a new school.
- 50.6 In answer to questions, the Head of Capital Strategy explained that there were insufficient school places in those areas of the city where there was greatest pressure, the main reason for putting forward the proposal in respect of Stanford Infant School was in response to the need for additional places in that locality. Although there was considerable opposition to the proposal, there had also been a comparable level of expressions of support. There was an acute need for local places in that part of the city and that needed to be balanced against any other considerations. Without the additional places this proposal would provide it was highly likely that parents would have to travel some considerable distance across the city in order to access school places for their very young children. A number of children were likely to need to journey to Coombe Road Primary School or West Blatchington Primary School as the closest schools where there would be spaces. If the recommendations in the officers report were agreed the proposed building works could proceed at the same time as the statutory process and would provide greater clarity for those who had expressed concerns. Discussions which had taken place with the Roman Catholic Diocese (its own admission authority) into the possibility of it creating additional places had not been successful to date, indeed, the diocese had indicated that it was unwilling to do so.
- 50.7 Councillor Lepper referred to difficulties which had arisen in the past at a time when the admission number at Balfour Infant School had been greater by one class intake than that for the then junior school. This had led to a number of pupils not being able to transfer from the infant school to the junior school, she had always understood that measures would be taken in order to avoid this happening in future and asked therefore whether/what arrangements had been put into place to expand Stanford Junior School should the proposal to expand the infant school be agreed. It was explained that discussions would be carried out formally once agreement had been obtained to proceed to the next stage, publication of the statutory notices. Councillor Lepper considered that such discussions should have reached a more advanced stage in tandem with the proposals for the infant school.

Discussion, Debate and Decision Making Process

- 50.8 Councillor Pissaridou stated that she whilst she had sympathy for parents who might need to travel to access their nearest school having had the opportunity to visit Stanford Infant School the previous week, she considered that it was untenable to create additional places there at the present time taking into consideration the size and configuration of the existing site. She did not consider that expansion on this site was an option until/unless the Ministry of Defence who owned land next to the school could be persuaded to release that land. The existing outside space was inadequate in her view.

- 50.9 Councillor Pissaridou further stated that an overcrowded school with an overcrowded playground was not in the interests of any child. Parents of children already attending the school and the governors had significant and in her view valid concerns in this respect, supported by the large number of signatories to the one of the petitions; these concerns should be headed. Although she had been advised that signatories to the petition in support of expansion of the school also appeared to live locally, Councillor Pissaridou considered having visited the school that a compelling case not to expand at the present time had been made.
- 50.10 Rachel Travers, Amaze stated that her children who attended Goldstone Primary School had staggered lunchtimes, this could result in very young children having insufficient time to eat their lunch, lack of playground amenity space was also a problem. When she had referred to this issue at an earlier meeting of the Committee she had been advised that there was no requirement as to the minimum amount of outdoor space which should be made available. She considered it might be helpful if this could be confirmed. The Strategic Commissioner, Planning and Contracts confirmed that this was the case and that this was not specified by the DfE.
- 50.11 Andrew Jeffery, Parent Forum stated that all parents wanted what they perceived to be in the best interests of their children. Clearly parents of children already attending the school had major concerns regarding the pressures on space and potential safety issues which would result if additional pupils were admitted, the school governors had also expressed similar concerns.
- 50.12 Councillors Gilbey and Lepper concurred with Councillor Pissaridou stating that other options should have been investigated, for instance the setting up of free schools/academies. Negotiations and investigations into all options should continue. The Strategic Commissioner, Planning and Contracts confirmed that on-going negotiations would continue to take place with all interested parties in any event.
- 50.13 Councillor Gilbey stated that as lunchtimes/playtimes etc were already staggered to bring more children into an already cramped space was unacceptable. Even if you created more space by extending the existing buildings upwards you would not be able to extend the existing playground which would then need to accommodate 30 further children.
- 50.14 Councillor Buckley echoed the Chair's expression of disappointment considering that children's education was being used as a political football. The necessity for creating additional places and rationale for the proposals before the Committee that day had been clearly set out. Councillor Powell concurred in that view.
- 50.15 Councillor Wealls stated that he had wrestled with this issue following his visit to Stanford Infant School the previous week, the amendments had been put forward immediately prior to Committee following discussions in order to try to seek a way forward. Notwithstanding that he entirely understood the need to provide additional school places and the potential implications if they were not, he did not consider that extending Stanford Infant School at the present time represented a viable option. He considered that the consultation process had been rushed and had in consequence been confused and confusing.

- 50.16 Councillor Wealls further stated, that, if the adjacent Ministry of Defence land could be made available then, expansion of Stanford Infant School could be considered for 2014. On balance Members of the Committee putting forward the amendment had considered it necessary to reject the expansion proposals as they stood, rather than to agree them in principle because to do so, would in their view result in uncertainty; discussions needed to continue to resolve the outstanding issues.
- 50.17 Councillor Simson referred to the proposed expansion of Aldrington Church of England Primary School by one form of entry (30 pupils per year), about which the Committee appeared to be in agreement. She enquired whether it would be possible to ensure that the majority of places would be made available to local children. The Strategic Commissioner, Planning and Contracts explained that the school could not be compelled to do this as the diocese acted as its own admission authority and applied its own admission criteria. However, the parish boundary and local catchment area were broadly aligned and increased numbers of local children who met those admission criteria and took up places at Aldrington would ease the pressure on places at other schools in that locality.
- 50.18 Councillor Simson also referred to Cottesmore St Mary's Roman Catholic School which was located in relatively close proximity to Stanford Infant School. Notwithstanding the stance currently being taken by the Catholic Diocese she enquired whether negotiations were continuing to see whether it could be persuaded to create some additional places at that school. It was confirmed that discussions would be ongoing.
- 50.19 The Chair, Councillor Shanks re-iterated her concerns in respect of the proposed amendment, which if approved would result in insufficient additional school places being created where they were needed in the city by September 2013. This would result in a lot of parents having to make convoluted cross city travel arrangements (perhaps two bus journeys in each direction) to take and collect very young children to/from school, it was also probable there would be a consequential increase in the number of infant school (4+) appeals. If the proposals had been permitted to proceed to the second stage of the statutory process as recommended in the report, there would have been the opportunity for all current concerns to be fully addressed and resolved.
- 50.20 The Committee voted on the recommendations set out in the circulated report, which were lost on a vote of 6 to 4.
- 50.21 The Committee then proceeded to vote on the joint Labour and Cooperative Group and Conservative amendment proposed by Councillor Pissaridou and seconded by Councillor Wealls. On a vote of 10-0 resolutions 1 and 2 set out below were agreed. Resolutions 3 and 4 were agreed on a vote of 6 to 4. The wording of the amendment which was agreed in its totality is set in Paragraphs 50.22 and 50.23 below. It was noted that the consequence of agreeing these recommendations was that only resolutions (1) and (2) relating to Aldrington Church of England Primary School could be referred to Council for approval to the next stage which would enable the required statutory notice to be published in order to progress that proposal.
- 50.22 **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL – (1)** That the Children and Young People Committee endorses the preferred option of expanding Aldrington Church of England Primary School by one form of entry from September 2013;

(2) That the Children and Young People Committee agree to the publication of the required statutory notice to progress this proposal;

50.23 **THE COMMITTEE FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** - (3) That the Children and Young People Committee recognizes the concerns of the Board of governors of Stanford Community Infant School as expressed in their response to the consultation and the Council commits to working with them to address these concerns; and

(4) The Children and Young People Committee does not agree the expansion of Stanford Infant School unless/until the Ministry of Defence agrees to release/sell an appropriate amount of adjacent land to allow adequate outdoor space for children attending that school, and the satisfactory resolution of the other concerns referred to in (3) above.

Note 1: Councillors Shanks (Chair), Buckley, A Kitcat and Powell voted against Resolutions 3 and 4 as set out above. These resolutions were however agreed on a vote of 6 to 4.

Note 2: Councillor Buckley referred to the fact that she had been challenged as to whether as a potential future parent of a child at Stanford Infant school it was appropriate to speak and vote on this issue. She was given unequivocal legal advice that this did not constitute a prejudicial interest and she therefore remained present at the meeting during consideration and determination of this item.

51. REVIEW OF THE SECONDARY ADMISSIONS PROCESS FOR 2014/15

51.1 The Committee considered a report of the Interim Director of Children's Services in relation to the work of the cross party working group which had been set up in 2011 to look at the availability of school places. In June 2012 the remit of that group had been expanded to review the secondary schools admissions policy and relevant catchment areas.

51.2 The report detailed the results of this review and the Strategic Commissioner, Planning and Contracts confirmed that stated that no changes were recommended to the present catchment areas for the academic year 2014/2015.

51.3 Councillor Gilbey stated that as a member of the Cross Party Working Group she had been notified of dates of future meetings, these had been scheduled on a six weekly basis rather than termly, in her view this was preferable. The Strategic Commissioner, Planning and Contracts confirmed that it had been agreed that meetings would be held six weekly in future.

51.4 **RESOLVED** – That the Committee notes the summary details of the Review into the Secondary School Admissions process for Brighton & Hove and its particular focus on the delineation of catchment areas;

(2) That the Committee agrees that no changes will be made to the existing Secondary Catchment areas for the academic year 2014/15;

(3) That the Committee agrees that the cross party working group will continue to meet on a six weekly basis to monitor the impact of national and local changes related to Secondary Admissions. This will include the creation of new academies or free schools;

(4) That the Committee agrees that the cross party working group will reform its stakeholder group as and when needed to consider proposals for any change beyond 2014/15;

(5) That the Committee notes that the Admissions Team will review its annual publications in the light of concerns over the “equal preference” system and the continuing mis understanding regarding parental “choice”.

52. ITEMS REFERRED FOR COUNCIL

52.1 There were none.

The meeting concluded at 7.10pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of