

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5.00PM – 14 NOVEMBER 2006

BRIGHTON TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Battle (Chair); Councillors Young (Deputy Chair), Allen, Giebeler, A Norman, Peltzer Dunn, Simson, and Wrighton.

Statutory Co-optees with Voting Rights: Ms Clare Jackson – Parent Governor Representative; Ms Sophie Ricca-McCarthy – Parent Governor Representative.

PART ONE

ACTION

18. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

18A. Declarations of Substitutes

18.1 Substitute Councillor For Councillor

Ann Norman

Peter Willows

Apologies were received from Cllr Lepper and Mr N Sarjudeen.

Apologies were also received from Ms Rowena Mattacks and Mrs Sandra Messenger, who had been invited by the Chair to attend to contribute to items on the agenda.

18B. Declarations of Interest

18.2 There were none.

18C. Exclusion of Press and Public

18.3 The Committee 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 100A(3)

or 100 1 of the Local Government Act 1972.

18.4 **RESOLVED** - that the press and public be not excluded from the meeting during consideration of any of the items on the agenda.

19. MINUTES

19.1 The Chair notified the Committee that at its meeting on 30 October 2006 the Overview and Scrutiny Organisation Committee had noted the Committee's work programme (item 12 of the minutes) and approved the Committee's proposals for appointing co-optees (item 13 of the minutes).

19.2 **RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2006 be approved and signed by the Chair.

20. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

20.1 There were none.

21. EXPLANATORY NOTE ON POOLED AND NON-POOLED FUNDING UNDER SECTION 31

21.1 The Committee received an explanatory note from the Director of Finance and Property explaining the arrangements for the pooled budget for the Children and Young People's Trust (CYPT). (See minute book)

21.2 Members of the Committee received clarification from the Head of Financial Services, Children and Young People's Trust, on the practicalities of the ring-fenced nature of the non-pooled funds and regarding funding for extended schools' activities.

21.3 A Member of the Committee commented that the explanatory note had clarified the situation. .

21.4 **RESOLVED** – that the paper be noted.

22. OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN'S SOCIAL SERVICES: STAYING SAFE

22.1 The Assistant Director, Quality & Performance gave a presentation on the Overview of Children's Social Services: Staying Safe. (See minute book)

22.2 The presentation explained the place of social care services within the Children and Young People's Trust and introduced the committee to the notion of 'care pathways' – mapping the complex pattern of needs of children and young people; and the Common Assessment Framework – a standardised approach to conducting an assessment of a child's additional needs and

deciding how those needs should be met.

- 22.3 The Assistant Director, Quality & Performance drew Members' attention to the issue of children in need, and referring to the Joint Area Review inspection report, highlighted the importance of this issue both nationally in the Every Child Matters agenda, and in Brighton and Hove as a key driver for setting up the Children and Young People's Trust.
- 22.4 The Committee were also provided with examples of the strengths of and challenges facing the Trust and a brief overview of the performance management and monitoring tasks, and concluded by highlighting that 'Staying Safe' for children should be seen as a continuum and a responsibility shared between everyone.
- 22.5 Following the presentation, Committee Members received responses to questions regarding the new arrangements for Connexions service provision under the Trust; responsibilities to care leavers up to the age of 21; provision of 'lower level support', capacity and recruitment of qualified social workers; and how young carers fit into the work of the Trust.
- 22.6 The Committee also discussed the concept of value for money in the provision of services to children in care, and noted that although overall costs were high, due to high numbers of children in care in Brighton and Hove, the cost of service provision per child in care was good and well managed, with dedicated officer support to ensure high cost placements are minimised.
- 22.7 **RESOLVED** – that the Assistant Director, Quality & Performance be thanked for giving the presentation.

23. SUMMARY OF OFSTED REPORTS

- 23.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children's Services detailing the outcome of the Ofsted inspections which took place in the Spring, Summer and Autumn Terms 2006. (See minute book)
- 23.2 Members discussed the inspections at The Jeanne Saunders Centre, Downs View School, St Margaret's CE Primary School, St. Andrew's CE Primary School, Middle Street Primary School and Rudyard Kipling Primary School.
- 23.3 The Committee noted The Jeanne Saunders Centre and St. Andrew's CE Primary School were both judged to be 'outstanding' overall, with Jeanne Saunders receiving some of the highest praise given to any school in the country. The

Assistant Director, Learning, commented that the schools had worked especially hard to achieve such good results, and Mrs A Antonio forwarded the comments of the National Union of Teachers that no adverse communications had been received about the schools.

23.4 It was agreed the Chair would write on behalf of the Committee to the Head of the Jeanne Saunders Centre and the Head and Chair of Governors of St. Andrews CE Primary School to congratulate them on the outstanding inspection results.

23.5 **RESOLVED** - 1) that the report be noted

2) that the Committee write to congratulate the two schools who were judged to be 'outstanding'.

24. JOINT AREA REVIEW (JAR) INSPECTION REPORT 2006

24.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children's Services concerning the Joint Area Review on services for children and young people in Brighton and Hove. (See minute book). The Committee discussed the JAR and the recommendations in it and made the following suggestions to be taken into account in drafting the Action Plan that is being developed in response to the JAR:

[JAR report paragraph 21] To find ways to encourage more unqualified social care staff to become qualified in order to reduce the number of looked after children currently allocated to unqualified staff. Whilst it is recognised that the use of unqualified staff is a policy decision and a 'managed process', nonetheless action should be taken lower the number bearing in mind the significant variance from the target.

[JAR report paragraph 20] To ensure there is a good mechanism through which the Children's Trust can prove that the new ways of working through the formation of the Trust have reduced the log-jam of access to social services.

[JAR report paragraph 39 / 54] To look again at how to reduce substance and alcohol abuse which are significant problems. The outcomes of the substance prevention service ru-OK are difficult to quantify. Other ways need to be considered to deal with these issues.

[JAR report paragraph 89] To continue to find new ways of reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training.

[JAR report paragraph 79] To look at ways of resolving the issue of the low core Youth Service budget.

24.2 The Committee also expressed concern that the JAR process itself did not appear to give real value for money, or inform the Council and its partners anything they did not already know through the self-assessment and the Children and Young People's Plan. The Assistant Director Quality and Performance reported that the JAR process had been recognised as too labour intensive and was to be replaced by another system of assessment.

24.3 The Committee welcomed the positive comments in the JAR that scrutiny was showing encouraging signs of development and that Members of the Committee were clear and articulate about their commitment to improving outcomes. The JAR had

also reinforced the theme of the work plan of vulnerable children and young people.

24.4 **RESOLVED** – 1) that the Committee's comments, as set out in the minutes, be forwarded to the Director of Children's Services for consideration in connection with the drafting of the Action Plan, and

2) that the completed Action Plan be brought to the next meeting of CYPOSC for information.

25. YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM INSPECTION REPORT 2006

25.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children's Services concerning the Joint Inspection Report on Brighton & Hove Youth Offending Team carried out in April 2006 and the outline draft action plan which addresses the findings of that report. (See minute book)

25.2 The Head of the Youth Offending Team (YOT) outlined the work of the YOT and the main findings of Joint Inspection. The YOT is a multi-agency team, with responsibilities for the often conflicting roles of criminal justice and care. The inspection report commented on the need for greater emphasis on criminal justice work. The report also highlighted the need for more performance management and a greater strategic steer.

25.3 The Head of YOT clarified that a new Youth Justice Strategy Group had been set up in response to the comments made in the Joint Inspection report on the lack of strategic focus provided by the Responsible Authorities Partnership / Drug and Alcohol Action Team.

25.4 The Head of YOT also responded to a question on victims and restorative justice, and confirmed that although there are currently insufficient funds to pursue this as much as the YOT would wish, the matter has already been highlighted as a priority by the new Youth Justice Strategy Group.

25.5 **RESOLVED** – 1) that the Committee welcomes the Joint Inspection report, and

2) that the Committee notes the outline draft action plan without comment.

26. CYPOSC WORK PLAN

26.1 The Committee considered the CYPOSC Work Plan. (See minute book)

26.2 The Chair notified the Committee of an additional item on the work programme. The Overview and Scrutiny Organisation Committee had resolved at its last meeting to refer the issue of overspend on the Home to School Transport budget to the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and will be considered at the Committee's next meeting on 30 January 2007.

26.3 **RESOLVED** – that the work plan as amended be approved.

27. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO COUNCIL

27.1 **RESOLVED** – that no items be referred to Council.

PART TWO

28. ITEMS TO REMAIN EXEMPT FROM DISCLOSURE TO THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

28.1 **RESOLVED** – that no items remain exempt from disclosure to the press and public.

The meeting concluded at 7.00pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

2007