

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW &
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

5.00PM – 25 SEPTEMBER 2007

HOVE TOWN HALL

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: Councillor Young (Chairman); Councillors Alford, Allen, Cobb, Davis, Fryer, Peltzer Dunn (Deputy Chairman), Smart, Wakefield-Jarrett and Watkins.

Statutory Co-optees with Voting Rights: Clare Jackson – Parent Governor Representative.

Non-statutory Co-optees without Voting Rights: Dr Carrie Britton – Children's Health Co-optee; Dr Mark Price – Children's Social Care Co-optee; Kitty Brandon-James and Alex Roland – Young Person Representatives.

Others invited by the Chair to contribute: Ann Antonio – National Union of Teachers; Sue Llewellyn-Powell – Association of Teachers and Lecturers; Rowena Mattocks – Brighton and Hove Governors Network; Jacqueline Sell – NASUWT.

PART ONE

ACTION

12. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

12A. Declarations of Substitutes

12.1 There were no declarations of substitutes.

Apologies had been received from Nigel Sarjudeen and Kevin Reeves.

12B. Declarations of Interest

12.2 There were none.

12C. Exclusion of Press and Public

12.3 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 Schedule 12A, Part 5A, Section 100A(4) or 100 1 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

- 12.4 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

13. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 JUNE 2007

- 13.1 Co-optee Carrie Britton suggested amended wording for paragraph 8.3 of the minutes, to read: -

8.3 CYPOSC discussed the best way forward in considering the performance figures - whether to: look at red indicators; select hotspots in relation to each ECM outcome; look at ambers and greys as well as reds; or to set up a sub group to examine the issues. Following a question, the Assistant Director, **Quality and Performance**, ***explained that the Children and Young People's Trust had recognised that the working relationship with the children's services sector of the community and voluntary sector (CVS) had become a concern. The elected CVS representatives had withdrawn to produce a paper examining the causes and making practical recommendations about how to strengthen partnership working. A constructive dialogue was ongoing.***

- 13.2 **RESOLVED** – That, subject to amendment detailed above, the minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2007 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

14. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

- 14.1 The Chairman notified the Committee that Sophie Ricca-McCarthy had stepped down as Parent Governor representative. The Chairman commented that Sophie had been an excellent and highly valued member of the Committee and the Education Overview and Scrutiny Panel that had preceded it. Arrangements were being made to appoint a new parent governor representative.

- 14.2 There was also a vacancy for a statutory co-optee from the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton, as Frank Myers had now retired. Frank had contributed greatly to the work of the Committee, and its predecessor Committee, over the years and his input would be missed. The Catholic Schools Service was

making arrangements to appoint his replacement.

- 14.3 The Chairman welcomed two young people's representatives from the Youth Council – Kitty Brandon-James and Alex Roland.
- 14.4 The Chairman also welcomed the former non-statutory co-optees, who had been invited to contribute to the meeting as there were several education-related matters on the agenda.
- 14.5 Finally, the Chairman welcomed the Reverend Derek Bastide, who was attending to present the Annual Report of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education.

15. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- 15.1 There were none.

16A. PETITION: USE OF BIOMETRIC TECHNOLOGIES IN SCHOOLS

- 16.1 The Committee received a petition, signed by 45 people, presented at Council on 12 July 2007 by Councillor Elgood.

'I/We call on CYPOSC to investigate the issue of schools within this authority area using biometrics on young people. We demand clarification on the use of the data, security issues on storage and the guidance issued for the schools to follow.'

- 16.2 **RESOLVED** – That the Committee note the petition.

16B. BIOMETRIC TECHNOLOGIES IN SCHOOLS

- 16.3 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children's Services concerning the use of biometric data in schools in Brighton & Hove.
- 16.4 The Committee noted that the report had been drafted in response to a request for information on the issue from Councillor Watkins, and also in response to the petition presented by Councillor Elgood to Council on 12 July 2007.
- 16.5 The Senior Secondary and Special School's Advisor presented the report which addressed issues of the use of the data, security issues on storage and available guidance for schools on the use of biometric data collections systems. The Committee learned that the issue for the authority had first arisen over two years ago when the collection of biometric data had been raised by MPs at a national level. Information on schools in the authority's area had been requested at that time. The Committee were reminded that the Governing Bodies of schools were legally responsible for issues such as these, and therefore there was

limited involvement from the local authority.

- 16.6 In response to a question, the Committee learned that the data collected was a numerical value, derived from measurements taken from a fingerprint that captures the uniqueness of the fingerprint. The systems did not record any image of a fingerprint.
- 16.7 The Committee received information that data that was collected from the prints would not be of any use to the police and therefore there was no possibility of the police demanding access to the systems which store this kind of biometric data.
- 16.8 A committee member noted that the Data Protection Act 1998 required that any personal data collected about pupils must not be kept longer than necessary and raised concerns over whether data could and should be transferred to secondary schools.
- 16.9 Other concerns raised by the Committee included: -
- An incomplete knowledge of which schools have the technology
 - Whether parents and pupils of schools that have the biometric technology have been consulted.
 - Whether there is an opt-out option for those students that do not wish their biometric data to be collected.
 - Whether the identification of pupils via their finger prints would have a negative impact on a pupil's development of being responsible for themselves, which would include looking after a swipecard used for accessing school libraries and meals.
 - Whether the guidance provided by the BECTA that states that parents of pupils *should* be consulted about the introduction and use of biometric technologies in schools, should read *must* be consulted.
 - Whether the collection of biometric data was needed at all and whether the systems were a sensible use of school resources.
 - Whether the systems available from the various providers were subject to regulation to ensure information stored on it was secure.
 - Whether the systems if used for registration purposes would have a negative impact on the contact between

teacher and pupil.

16.10 Reservations were expressed over the limited effect the authority, through any further work by the Committee, could have on the schools as they were legally separate entities in this respect.

16.11 The Committee considered whether to consider the issue any further and agreed that a more detailed report which addressed the concerns as expressed by the Committee, could usefully be received. The Committee discussed whether a visit to a school where the technology is being used could be arranged, and also the possibility of inviting a Head or Chair of Governors of a school where the technology is used to a meeting of the Committee. The Committee also recognised that any conclusions from consideration of the issue at a national level would be useful background information.

16.12 **RESOLVED –**

(1) That the Committee notes the report; and

(2) That the Committee receive a detailed report at a future meeting, which addresses the concerns raised by the Committee at paragraphs 16.6 to 16.9 above.

17. SACRE ANNUAL REPORT

17.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children's Services giving an update on the work undertaken by the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) in 2005/06 and beyond.

17.2 The Chair of the SACRE, the Reverend Derek Bastide, presented the Annual Report to the Committee. The Committee learned that SACRE has a statutory responsibility for advising on religious education and collective worship in schools. It has produced an agreed syllabus, which has been recognised as excellent. SACRE support religious education in schools through training sessions which can be delivered in-house, and through meetings with RE teachers. Web-based resources had been developed to help pupils with learning, and collective worship guidelines had been drawn up, which were due to be published shortly. SACRE has also developed its own monitoring arrangements, as since 2005, Ofsted no longer monitors religious education. The self-evaluation documents which are used for monitoring are helping to provide a clearer picture of religious education in schools in the area.

17.3 In response to a question about Conservative vacancies, Mr Bastide confirmed that these related to the previous municipal

year, and there were now Conservative Member representatives serving on SACRE.

- 17.4 The Committee received confirmation that the involvement of SACRE in the accredited academic areas of Religious Education was normal. The Committee also received confirmation that voluntary-aided schools are outside the statutory remit of SACRE, although all schools can cover all faiths if they wish, and the agreed syllabus reflects all faiths represented in the Brighton & Hove area.
- 17.5 The Committee also discussed the exam results, which Mr Bastide commented were disappointing, and that it was too early to tell whether this is a blip or a deeper issue. However, take up of religious studies at GCSE at both a national and local level is increasing, which is encouraging.
- 17.6 The Chairman thanked Mr Bastide for attending to discuss the Annual Report and expressed the Committee's interest in working with SACRE in the future.
- 17.7 **RESOLVED** – That the Committee note the Annual Report and continue its support for the work of SACRE.

18. OVERVIEW OF YOUTH SUPPORT AND CONNEXIONS

- 18.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children's Services providing an overview on the background to and areas for development in the provision of a Youth and Connexions Service within the Children and Young People's Trust.
- 18.2 The Heads of Youth Support Service (West) and Youth Support Service (Central) outlined the report and drew members' attention to the major changes brought about by the service re-design which now delivers youth support and Connexions services on an area basis to the East, Central and West areas of the city, in line with service delivery in other sections of the Children and Young People's Trust. The Head of Youth Support Service (West) highlighted the excellent performance of the service, especially in the context of its historically comparatively low funding base.
- 18.3 The Committee discussed youth centre provision in the city and learned that there are youth centres in each of the city's east, central and west areas. The centres provided young people with places to go that were outside the academic or work environment, and were places that young people felt were their own and identified with, and also places where skills other than academic and employment skills could be learned.

- 18.4 In response to a question from a young people's representative regarding the publicity of the various youth schemes available to the young people in the city, the Head of Youth Support Service (Central) responded that this was an area that was being worked on, and early developments in publicity had included a web-based resource.
- 18.5 The Committee discussed the use of Connexions Personal Advisors on an area basis and its relation to the Trust's focus on young people not in education, employment and training (NEET), and young people living in one area of the city but being schooled in another. There was a perception that the provision of Connexions advisors on an area basis based on the formula that assessed core, identified, and high risk needs did not reflect the cohorts of the schools in the three areas. In response, the Head of Youth Support Service (West) responded that considerations of young people being schooled in a city area different to where they lived, had been factored in to the formula that determined provision of Connexions PAs.
- 18.6 A question was asked about the shift in focus from prevention to intervention for young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). The Committee learned that of the 500-600 NEET cohort, under a preventative approach, these young people who were most in need of intensive support were only receiving fairly infrequent guidance and support. This had necessitated a move to a more interventionist approach. The Committee were reassured that preventative work was still being undertaken through the Connexions Personal Advisors, as well as specialist interventions.
- 18.7 The Committee also discussed the provision of advisors on teenage pregnancies and confirmed that there were other areas of the Trust's work that complemented the role within the youth support service, including a position and budget for development work from the Primary Care Trust.
- 18.8 The Chairman thanked the officers for the overview session.
- 18.9 **RESOLVED** – That the Committee notes the overview and areas for development in relation to the Youth and Connexions Service.

19. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

- 19.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children's Services providing information on attendance data for the academic year 2006/07, giving a comparison with 2004/05 and 2005/06 data alongside attendance targets for 2007/08.

- 19.2 The Principal Education Welfare Officer introduced the report, stating that education welfare support for school attendance was a success story, but that the service was not complacent and continued to work with primary and secondary schools to further improve attendance.
- 19.3 The Committee learned that new national absence codes and amended pupil registration regulations would have a negative impact on the statistical performance of school attendance.
- 19.4 The authority's education welfare officers work closely with the police and utilise information from police community support officers (PCSOs) and conduct regular truancy sweeps, which are proving an effective means of returning young people to school and acting as a deterrent.
- 19.5 Additional funding had been identified to continue to develop work to further improve attendance in schools in the area.
- 19.6 A question was raised by a young people's representative about the perceived inconsistency within and between schools of the rewards given to pupils with good attendance. The Principal Education Welfare Officer responded that working with schools to develop a consistent approach is key.
- 19.7 In response to a question about analysis of reasons for absence, including taking holidays during term time, the Principal Education Welfare Officer offered to provide further information to the Committee on reasons for absence, including a breakdown and explanation of absence codes, and details of guidance given to schools (and parents by schools) about taking children out of school during term time.
- 19.8 In response to a question about the powers of police community support officers to return truanting young people to school, the Principal Education Welfare Officer commented that although under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 that power is able to be assigned to PCSOs, the local police authority had not chosen to do this. However, the education welfare officers, police officers and PCSOs, all work together to provide effective truancy sweeps.
- 19.9 **RESOLVED -**
- (1) That the Committee notes the report and the progress made to date; and
 - (2) That the Committee notes the strategies outlined in this report, to support building on improvements already made in

order to meet attendance targets across the city; and

- (3) That the Committee receives at a future meeting a report detailing analysis of absence from schools as set out in minute 19.7 above.

**Principal
Education
Welfare
Officer**

20. SUMMARY OF OFSTED REPORTS

20.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children's Services concerning the outcome of the Ofsted inspections which took place in the Summer Term 2007.

20.2 In response to a question about Ofsted inspections of nursery and early years settings, the Committee learned that these are not required to report to the local authority. Members of the Committee raised concerns that as the Children and Young People's Trust provided services to all young people from birth, that it might be useful for the Committee to look also at nursery and early years' Ofsted reports. The Senior Primary Advisor agreed to look into this matter.

**Senior
Primary
Advisor**

20.3 The Committee discussed the Ofsted inspection reports and, observing that a number of schools were judged outstanding or were improving well, to write letters to all such schools' Headteacher, Chair of Governors, teachers and pupils to congratulate them on their achievements.

20.4 **RESOLVED -**

- (1) That the Committee note the report on the outcome of the school Ofsted inspections; and
- (2) That the Chairman write to the schools judged outstanding or improving well to congratulate them on their achievements.

**Scrutiny
Support
Officer**

21. REPORT OF THE PERFORMANCE MONITORING SUB-GROUP

21.1 The Committee considered a report of the Performance Monitoring Sub-Group of the CYPOSC convened to consider the Performance Report of Children and Young People's Plan Annual Review.

21.2 The Scrutiny Support Officer introduced the recommendations of the sub-group, which in summary would place more of a performance focus on the 'overview' sessions the Committee has agreed to receive under each of the Every Child Matters outcomes; would add several extra items to the work programme of the Committee; and would actively seek the views of the community and voluntary sector and other

interested parties to input into discussions regarding the performance of the Trust.

21.3 RESOLVED -

- (1) That the Committee agrees the suggested way forward as detailed in this report.
- (2) That the Committee receives 'performance overviews' under the thematic headings of the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda – Be Healthy, Stay Safe, Enjoy and Achieve, Make a Positive Contribution and Achieve Economic Well-being – which will seek to be both informative sessions and also be more focused on performance and therefore be accompanied by the latest information relating to the performance against targets in the Children and Young People's Plan.
- (3) That the Committee receives 6 monthly 'exception' reports from officers regarding performance against red indicators in the Children and Young People's Plan.
- (4) That the Committee receives detailed officer reports on the following topics: -

(relating to performance monitoring)
 - (i) Data collection issues – grey performance indicators
(relating to issues broader than performance)
 - (ii) Alcohol and substance misuse
 - (iii) Update on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAHMS) re-commissioning
 - (iv) Looked After Children
- (5) That the Committee supports the proposal to seek the views of community and voluntary sector organisations, interest groups and others, to contribute to discussions on performance of services provided by the Trust.
- (6) That the Committee approves the amended work programme for CYPOSC as outlined at Appendix 1 of the report.

22. FORWARD PLAN

- 22.1 Cllr Fryer outlined in more detail some of the aspects that could be covered in the report requested to the next Committee on the Falmer academy, which were: financial risk, consultation with staff, parents and pupils, risks associated with potential building

works (both in terms of health and safety and disruption to learning), and the performance of City Academies in general. Councillor Fryer drew members' attention to the COMART PFI scrutiny report, which although not directly related to the City Academy proposal, did include some useful lessons that were relevant.

22.2 In addition, the Be Healthy themed meeting could usefully include a detailed report on tackling obesity in children, and healthy school meals.

22.3 Councillor Smart requested that information be provided to the Committee on the provision of flood lit areas for sports recreation in the city.

22.4 **RESOLVED -**

(1) That the forward plan be amended to reflect the additional items and comments of the Committee as outlined in minutes 22.1 to 22.3 above.

23. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO COUNCIL

23.1 **RESOLVED** – That no items be forwarded to Council.

The meeting concluded at 7.30pm

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of

2007