

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & SKILLS COMMITTEE

4.00pm 9 NOVEMBER 2020

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Clare (Chair) Hills (Deputy Chair), Allcock (Opposition Spokesperson), Brown (Group Spokesperson), Hamilton, Lloyd, McNair, Nield, Simson and Williams

Other Members present: Councillors

PART ONE

34 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

(a) Declarations of Substitutes

34.1 Cllr Williams was present in substitution for Cllr Grimshaw
Mr S Parr was present as a substitute for Ms B Connor

(b) Declarations of Interest

34.2 Councillor Simson declared that she was a trustee of the Deans Youth Project

(c) Exclusion of Press and Public

34.3 The Committee considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of any of the items listed on the agenda.

34.4 **RESOLVED:** There were no part two in the agenda.

35 MINUTES

35.1 RESOLVED:

- (i) That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2020 were agreed and signed as a correct record;
- (ii) That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 October 2020 were agreed and signed as a correct record

36 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

36.1 The Chair gave the following communication:

Welcome to this virtual meeting of the Children Young People & Skills Committee. Please note that this meeting is being webcast and is capable of repeat viewing.

At the special meeting of this committee a few weeks ago, I discussed food poverty and the provision of meals over half term. Since then, some of our officers have been working towards providing an offer for the winter break. This work may have now been overtaken – as the Government announced some very welcome funding late on Saturday night – so I look forward to us announcing soon how that funding will positively impact the lives of children and families in our city, once we have more detail.

However – I'm not celebrating too much. We are not out of the woods in protecting the lives of the most vulnerable children and families in our city yet.

A few weeks ago, the LGA made a call for central government to restore £1.7bn funding to children's services. And it's clear why. Not only have the services that support vulnerable children and families been some of the worst affected by ten years of Tory cuts, but the impact of Covid-19 has been profound.

At TBM 5 – this council reported a £20m deficit in our budget this year. Indications show this deficit is now going down and I hope TBM 7 reported at Decembers Policy & Resources Committee will show a further narrowing of our budget gap. But that narrowing won't be enough.

There could be cuts to services for children and families in our city in February's budget if we do not have intervention from Government to help us manage our budget deficit. This may mean that we lose some of those crucial preventative services. This is a false economy. To cut preventative services would be short sighted. But it is a challenge councils like ours are staring straight in the face, now more than ever, because of the impact of the pandemic.

In our second lockdown period, children and staff in our city are continuing to keep schools, colleges and universities open due to government directives to do so. So we don't take the idea of a second school closure lightly – but of course, we are constantly reviewing the situation and would support our schools and governing bodies in closing schools should we get to the point where they feel they need to close.

Having had an earlier lockdown period this year, I would be worried about the impact on the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people. It is partially for this reason that the Green Group put forward a notice of motion at October's full council to review the impact of the pandemic on the wellbeing of all. Having previously worked in a school myself, I also know that staff are often the people who spot early warning signs among some of the most vulnerable children, and intervene to protect their welfare.

Our schools and colleges have done an incredible amount of work to make our schools safe over the summer. Our officers have also just issued a new revised risk assessment to schools in the city which addresses the challenge of the winter period – how you ventilate a classroom while keeping staff and students able to learn.

We will keep this under review; and if the situation changes, we will look again. But while schools are working incredibly hard, they could still do with more support. That's why I have today written to the secretary of state for education to ask him to:

- Provide more funding to schools to help them manage the impact on their budget from increased costs
- Ensure that schools and colleges have access to regular, rapid testing whether people are symptomatic or not
- Fund the necessary PPE that staff and students are using and provide assurance the government is looking at sustainability with provision
- Support the wellbeing of senior staff in schools, including by committing to issuing guidance in good time in future and issuing guidance on whether schools and colleges should be preparing for a future scenario of blended or rota learning
- Cancel GCSE, SAT and A Level examinations in May and June 2021, as was done in this years exam period. The longer we wait for this cancellation, the more likely it is schools and colleges will be unprepared for this cancellation – so we'd welcome cancelling them now, rather than later.

37 CALL OVER

37.1 The following items on the agenda were reserved for discussion:

- Item 40 - Launch of SEND Strategy 2020-2026
- Item 41 - Home to School Transport: Findings of the Members Policy Panel
- Item 42 - Progress Report on Home to School Transport Service
- Item 43 – Youth Participation
- Item 44 – Youth Service Grants Programme
- Item 46 – Anti-racist Schools
- Item 48 – Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Support in Schools

37.2 The following items on the agenda were agreed without discussion:

- Item 45 – School Ofsted Presentation
- Item 47 – Additional Condition Funding Allocation
- Item 49 – Complex Adolescent Strategy 2020-2021

38 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

38(a) Petitions

38.1 There were no petitions.

38(b) Written Questions

38.2 Ms Pearson-Klein asked the following question:

Carbon emissions come from animal farming (including egg and dairy farming). Today's children need to move towards a more plant based diet to have a future on this planet, and we need to be encouraging them to do so. Therefore, I am asking the committee to ensure veganism is no longer side-lined as a 'special diet' in schools and that a vegan choice is available every lunchtime to all children in all schools, to enable them to make more responsible food choices.

38.3 The Chair gave the following response:

You're absolutely right about the climate impact from animal products. It's what encouraged me personally to switch to a vegetarian diet a few years ago. My partner is vegan and I know from eating with him the importance of widening the number of vegan options available – because it's astounding how much I can eat as a vegetarian that he can't. I want us to make this better.

The number of vegan children registered in the city currently is 40 children although there will likely be more children following a plant-based diet who don't access the school meals service. To ensure that no child is inadvertently fed dairy or eggs we register these children as receiving a 'special diet' but this is not to side-line this choice or treat the child as different but to ensure they receive appropriate foods. We will look at reviewing our use of language around this with our catering contractor. We will also review how we inform parents about the option of a vegan meal so that students and parents keen to make a choice to move to a plant-based diet can do so easily.

Brighton & Hove is a diverse city and we provide a school meal service that meets the needs of as many of our children as possible. Vegan options can be made available at each primary and special school, under our joint contract with Caterlink – our school meal suppliers. Eight of the Fifteen vegetarian dishes on the menu are already vegan but we need to do more to encourage a greater choice. Council officers have recently asked Caterlink to consider using Quorn products that have recently been made without egg white, making them suitable for all. This will hopefully further widen the vegan options available. We will also discuss with Caterlink how the request for more vegan options and a shift of emphasis towards a plant-based diet can be introduced. We will also review how the tender for a school meals contract is specified to enhance the vegan option when it comes to re-tendering the service in the coming years.

38(c) Deputations

38.4 There were no Deputations.

39 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

39 (a) Petitions

39.1 There were none

39 (b) Written Questions

39.2 There were none

39.3 (c) Letters

39.3 There were none

39 (d) Notices of Motion

39.4 There were none.

40 LAUNCH OF SEND STRATEGY 2021-2026

40.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Families Children & Learning which provided an analysis of the feedback from the recent consultation of the City's draft new SEND Strategy. The report was introduced by the Assistant Director - Health SEN & Disabilities, the Head of SEN Statutory Services and was accompanied by Ms F England (PaCC), Ms D Boyd (PaCC) and Ms K Chipping (CCG).

40.2 Councillor Hills asked with regard to a consultation point of view, what had been learnt from this which could be applied to other strategies. Officers said it was important to listen to your target audience.

40.3 Councillor Hills referred to paragraph 3.19 and suggested that the reason why 30%, neither agreed or disagreed with the governance arrangements was that they didn't understand the question and the notion of governance, and asked how that could be

made clearer for future consultation. Officers agreed that the meaning of governance could be clearer and said that that word had been removed from the final document.

40.4 Councillor Brown asked if the Committee would receive an update on the delivery of the strategy and was advised that the intention was to provide an annual report to the Committee.

40.5 RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the feedback from the consultation and endorsed the final SEND Strategy which includes a new timescale for delivery.

41 HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT: FINDINGS OF THE MEMBERS POLICY PANEL

41.1 The Chair said that as Item 41 '*Home to School Transport: Findings of the Members Policy Panel*' and Item 42 '*Progress Report on the Home to School Transport Service*' were linked there would be one discussion on both reports, with the reports' recommendations being taken separately.

41.2 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Families Children & Learning '*Home to School Transport: Findings of the Members Policy Panel*' which set out the findings and recommendations from the Member Policy Panel and which was introduced by Councillor Allcock, Chair of the Member Policy Panel, and the report of the Executive Director Families Children & Learning '*Progress Report on the Home to School Transport Service*' which provided an update and progress on the Home to School Transport (HTST) service and was introduced by the Assistant Director - Education & Skills.

41.3 Councillors Mears and Wares, as members of the Policy Panel, were invited to the meeting and the Chair asked if they wished to speak on the reports. Councillor Wares thanked everyone involved in the Policy Panel and for the report and was pleased that due to the issues raised the service was improving but noted that it still had some way to go. He noted that the report was silent on the judgement of Councillors and the inaction of the previous administration. The former administration had refused proper questioning and scrutiny when the problems were first raised, had wanted the Member Policy Panel disbanded before it had finished its work, had not supported the request for the service to be placed on the Corporate Risk Register and the former Chair of the Audit & Standards Committee had initially only authorised a desk-top survey of the concerns raised and had later refused an independent audit as it would be frivolous. Without the proper review the LGA may not have raised concerns over children's safeguarding and welfare and would not have criticised the Council for not understanding the risks that existed. Councillor Mears agreed with Councillor Wares' comments and said that it had been difficult to get Councillors and officers to take the matter forward. Whilst the service was now improving it was important to ensure that the recommendations in the report were taken forward and that this situation were not allowed to happen again.

41.4 The Chair accepted that the Green Group had been slow to recognise that the issues raised needed further investigation, but that a lot had been learnt from the review and was pleased that it had been undertaken.

41.5 Councillor Williams said that this matter showed how important it was that Councillors were fully informed when making decisions.

41.6 Councillor Brown thanked everyone for the very thorough review, said that it was important to rebuild trust with those affected by the HTST issue and for all departments to take the recommendations in the report forward.

41.7 Councillor Hills thanked Councillors Mears and Wares for pursuing the matter and said that it was important to vulnerable families that the correct service was provided and was pleased that 80% of parents now rated the service as Good. She noted that one principle from the review was supporting people with independent travel and asked how that was progressing. Officers said that they were currently speaking to two possible providers and a business case was being prepared as funding needed to be secured.

41.8 RESOLVED: That the Committee -

- (i) Noted and accepted the findings of the Member Policy Panel, given in appendix 1
- (ii) Noted the officer response, given in appendix 2
- (iii) Agreed that the findings and recommendations of the Members' Policy Panel were incorporated into the existing co-produced Home to School Transport (HTST) action plan
- (iv) Agreed that a further report come to a meeting of the CYPS Committee in the Spring of 2021, which would include progress on the implementation of agreed recommendations from the November 2020 report of the HTST Member Policy Panel. Then further updates to come every six months until Spring 2022.

42 PROGRESS REPORT ON HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT SERVICE

42.1 This item was considered with Item 41.

42.2 RESOLVED: That the Committee –

- (i) Noted this report on the Home to School Transport Service;
- (ii) Agreed that a further report comes to a meeting of the CYPS Committee in the Spring of 2021, which will include progress on the implementation of agreed recommendations from the November 2020 report of the HTST Members' Policy Panel.

43 YOUTH PARTICIPATION

43.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Families Children & Learning which provided information on current youth participation practice in the city and put forward a proposal that would further involve young people in making decisions on services in the city that impact on them. The report was introduced by the Integrated Team for Families Manager and the Youth Work Co-ordinator and were accompanied

by Charlotte Pemberton, a young person from Trust for Developing Communities (TDC)

- 43.2 The Youth Work Co-ordinator said that she had been working with young people on the Youth Review and the Youth Led Grants Programme. The Youth Participation Action Plan was all about what young people are telling us and their views on how the work currently being undertaken could be improved, and Charlotte had been invited to the meeting to have a brief question and answer session. They asked Charlotte how she had been involved in youth participation, whether she felt that she had been listened to, if she had had any barriers to overcome and how the Council could improve. Charlotte said that she was a young volunteer with TDC in Mouslecoomb and had been involved with projects on Youth Led Grants, she felt that she and other young people had been listened to, she had autism and suffered with anxiety and migraines and had been able to overcome that to enable her to participate and with regard to improvement it was important to ensure that more young people were involved in decision making.
- 43.3 Councillor Lloyd asked how equalities groups were involved in the Action Plan and was advised that they were currently working with equalities groups, but due to the current pandemic it was taking longer to be able to communicate with young people from those groups.
- 43.4 Councillor Allcock asked if there were more opportunities for young people to be involved in the decision-making process, and officers suggested that more young people be involved with this committee.
- 43.5 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee noted and agreed the action plan developed by young people that would increase young people's involvement in making decisions that impact on them

44 YOUTH SERVICE GRANTS PROGRAMME

- 44.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Families Children & Learning which provided information on the current Youth Service Grants Programme, outlined the challenges regarding completing the recommissioning process within timescale and put forward a proposal to extend the current programme for a further 6 months. The report was introduced by the Integrated Team for Families Manager.
- 44.2 The Chair noted that the Conservative Group had submitted an amendment to the recommendations and asked Councillor Simson to propose the amendment.
- 44.3 Councillor Simson said that the report seemed to imply that the provision of a Central Hub was a given rather than something which was still in consultation. Therefore, the following amendment to Recommendation was proposed (changes in bold italic) to include the option to look at all future youth provision:

2.3 That this Committee is presented with various options ~~regarding developing a central youth hub along with detailed costings and financial implications and a decision made regarding how the Council proceeds~~ ***for future youth provision including the possibility of developing a central youth hub, along with detailed costings and***

financial implications so that a fully informed decision can be made regarding how the Council proceeds.

- 44.4 Councillor Brown seconded the proposed amendment.
- 44.5 Councillors Lloyd and Allcock both agreed with and supported the proposed amendment.
- 44.6 Councillor Williams said that when the options were considered issue such as the provision of food and accommodation were included.
- 44.7 The Committee agreed the proposed amendment.

44.8 RESOLVED: That the Committee

- (i) Acknowledged the challenges in completing the recommissioning of the Youth Service Grants Programme within the required timescale.
- (ii) Agreed with the proposal to extend the current Youth Service Grants Programme for a further 6 months (until 30th September 2021).
- (iii) Agreed that the Committee is presented with various options for future youth provision including the possibility of developing a central youth hub, along with detailed costings and financial implications so that a fully informed decision can be made regarding how the Council proceeds.
- (iv) Agreed that a framework for the Youth Service Grant recommissioning process is presented to this Committee in March 2021

45 SCHOOL OFSTED PRESENTATION

- 45.1 The item was agreed without discussion

45.2 RESOLVED: That the Committee agreed that the presentation be noted.

46 ANTI-RACIST SCHOOLS

- 46.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Families Children & Schools which provided an update on the progress made since the Notice of Motion calling for more anti-racist action in schools was agreed at the meeting held in June 2020. The report was introduced by the Partnership Adviser Health & Wellbeing. Also in attendance to talk about the Brighton & Hove Educators of Colour Collective and the experiences of educators of colour in our schools were: Ms K Jordan (Patcham High School), Ms A Visvalingam (St Luke's Primary School), Ms F Sparham (Goldstone Primary), Ms L Soper (PaCC member and parent/carer of SEND child) and Ms P Knowles (Middle Street Primary School).
- 46.2 Councillor Simson said that it was important that school governors reflect the diversity of the schools and asked how the Council could promote that. Ms Jordan agreed that there should be better representation on governing bodies and that school governors should

focus on preparing anti-racist strategies. Officers agreed and said that the recruitment of a more diverse governing body would be discussed at the next Governing Body Forum.

- 46.3 Councillor Nield said that the strategy was important and was pleased that it was being led by people of colour, and asked what steps were being taken to widen the consultation to bring more diverse voices in such as those who were Jewish. Officers said that the strategy was still in its early stages and an Advisory Group was being created and when in place they would look at how to include other minority groups.
- 46.4 Councillor Brown noted that nationally 17% of male teachers were from a BAME group and asked what the percentage was in schools in the City. Officers said they believed the number locally was less, but would find out the number.
- 46.5 Councillor McNair said that BAME included groups such as Travellers, Chinese etc and wanted to ensure that they were all included in the strategy. He said that it was important to teach children that they were all individuals and their voices counted.
- 46.6 Councillor Allcock welcomed the strategy and said that pupils did better when their voices were heard and hoped that this would help social cohesion and so improve educational standards across the city.

46.7 RESOLVED: That the Committee -

- (i) Support the development of a strategy for anti-racist schools, which will be developed over the next three months, supported by engagement with educational settings and community partnerships;
- (ii) Agreed the principles of the draft strategy outlined in Appendix 1.

47 ADDITIONAL CONDITION FUNDING ALLOCATION

47.1 The item was agreed without discussion.

47.2 RESOLVED: That the Committee -

- (i) Agreed that the level of additional School Condition Allocation funding totalling £2.262 million for investment in improving the condition of school buildings be noted;
- (ii) Recommended that this allocation be added to the council Capital Investment Programme for expenditure in 2021/22;
- (iii) Agreed to recommend to Policy & Resources Committee that they grant delegated authority to the Assistant Director of Property & Design to procure the capital maintenance and basic need works and enter into contracts within these budgets, as required, in accordance with Contract Standing Orders in respect of the entire Education Capital Programme. With a focus upon the additional funding securing works which are, wherever possible, sustainable in their use of materials and method of delivery.

48 EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT IN SCHOOLS

- 48.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Families Children & Learning which updated the Committee on emotional well-being and mental health support in Schools. The report was introduced by the Council's Principal Educational Psychologist and the Team Lead (Schools Wellbeing Service).
- 48.2 Councillor Allcock noted that some performance measures were detailed in the report, but that it had not been possible to gather complete data on all areas as not all service users were completing the sessions required to monitor the activity. He asked how that was likely to develop and how challenges ahead would be addressed. Officers said that it was important to respond when there was a critical need, such as suicide or self-harm. Performance Measures were based on data captured by Care First (and would be moving to Eclipse). To measure the impact of the service provided pre and post measures of involvement was assessed, but not all service users gave feedback on completion of any intervention.
- 48.3 Councillor Allcock asked if the Committee could have a progress report for a future meeting, and the Chair agreed that that would be useful.
- 48.4 Councillor Brown asked if the time mental health workers were allocated to schools was sufficient. Officers said that the time allocated was reasonable, but all school leaders would welcome more time but to do that it would be necessary to have increased funding.
- 48.5 Councillor Nield asked if there were Performance Indicators to measure the outcomes on the CAMHS waiting lists. Officers said that the Performance Indicators was not a measure of the CAMHS waiting list, but was looking at successful intervention and meeting needs early to prevent people needing specialist CAMHS and other services
- 48.6 RESOLVED:** That the committee noted the work being delivered in schools and colleges in Brighton and Hove.

49 COMPLEX ADOLESCENT STRATEGY 2020-21

- 49.1 The item was agreed without discussion.
- 49.2 RESOLVED:** That the Committee approved the Complex Adolescent Strategy for Brighton & Hove 2020 - 23

50 ITEMS REFERRED FOR COUNCIL

- 50.1 RESOLVED:** That no items be referred to Full Council being held on 17 December 2020.

The meeting concluded at 7.15pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of