

Brighton & Hove City Council
Children, Young People & Skills Committee

4.00pm 7 November 2022

Council Chamber, Hove Town Hall

Minutes

Present: Councillor Allbrooke (Chair) John (Deputy Chair), O'Quinn (Opposition Spokesperson), Brown (Group Spokesperson), Grimshaw, Hamilton, Lloyd, McNair, Meadows and Nield

Co-optees: Mr T Cristin, Mr A Muirhead, Mr S Parr and Ms B Robinson

Part One

15 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

(a) Declarations of Substitutes

15.1 There were none

(b) Declarations of Interest

15.2 Cllr John declared that the two primary schools discussed in agenda item 23 were in her ward and that she had a child at one of the schools.

15.3 Becky Robinson declared that she also had a child at one of the schools discussed in agenda item 23.

15.4 Cllr O'Quinn declared that she was a Governor at the Central Hub.

(c) Exclusion of Press and Public

15.5 There were no Part Two Items and so the press and public were not excluded from the meeting.

16 MINUTES

16.1 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

17 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

17.1 The Chair gave the following communication:

Firstly, attendees will note that Deb Austin, Executive Director for Families, Children and Learning is not here today. This is because it's her birthday and she is taking some very well-deserved leave. In her absence, Jo Lyons is here to provide assistance, and of course, will be able to answer any questions. I'm sure everyone here would like to wish Deb a very happy birthday.

We have a few new Committee members joining us today. Becky Robinson is the new chair of PACC, and Matilda Whisker is our new youth representative. Thank you to both Diana Boyd and Louise Brown for their contributions to the Committee. Alongside Matilda and Becky, I'd also like to welcome Emma, who is our new Democratic Services Officer for this Committee – so welcome to you all and thank you for joining us.

Government turmoil over the last few months has meant considerable delays to projects which have a real impact on the city. We await further information on the so called 'Local Authority' Multi-Academy Trusts, which we had intended to bring to the January Committee, but now can no longer given that we don't have that information, as well as more than the initial response for the Government to the Care Review, or indeed, whether those plans will go forward at all.

There are some urgent things that children and young people need resolving and so far, dither and delay has meant that urgency hasn't been met. I am also concerned about the impact of cuts to services in the planned budget next week for children and young people. Twelve years of austerity has not only let our city down, but it has failed. As we head into our own budget setting process over the next few months, I urge the Government to answer calls from the Local Government Association to Save our Services – many of which, support children and young people.

When local councils are trusted and funded to deliver services for our communities – we deliver. Last month I visited our Adult Education Hub, which opened last July. Here we deliver lots of courses for adult learners – whether that is ESOL, digital, maths, wellbeing, or employability. In that visit I also met with some of those who've used the centre – including refugees from Ukraine and other parts of the world. If I ever needed convincing further, it's clear that we are doing excellent work there that we can all be proud of, and I want to commend the team on their excellent work. You can view the range of courses we offer at <https://adulteducation.brighton-hove.gov.uk>.

I've also visited our Adolescent Service and met with some of the young people who are using that service. This team includes our Youth Offending Service, who were inspected as Outstanding last year, and ru-ok? They all do great work, working with young people, who are both victims and perpetrators of crime, and really are a team to be proud of.

I was really pleased that at the last Committee we had such a good discussion about children in care and fostering placements. As corporate parents, we all have a responsibility for our children and young people who are in care or care experienced, and we have to do everything we can to support them. To that end, I am looking forward to Corporate Parenting Board next week, which we sadly delayed in September due to the passing of Her Majesty the Queen, and I hope to see you there.

I also wanted to highlight that this week we have launched a new website for Our City, Our World, our environmental education programme showing what pioneering work is

being done in Brighton and Hove schools. I want to thank all of those involved in delivering that, not least, Katie and Mita. If you would like to visit that website and see the offer that we provide to schools, and some of the work that schools are doing on the topic of environmental education, you can go to ourcityyourworld.co.uk.

I expect we may hear more about this later – but I also wanted to highlight and congratulate Georgia and Deneb, who were in the House of Commons chamber last Friday as our members of UK Youth Parliament. I am sure they had an excellent day – and I know from watching parts of the debate that they represented the city and our young people well. Councillors can watch the debates back on the UK Parliament YouTube channel – it's about two and a half hours and I recommend watching bits of it if you can.

Councillors will remember that last year, this Committee heard a report on our response to the Power of Youth Charter. Part of that commitment included mentoring being offered by Councillors to young people. I'm delighted to say that the finer details of this scheme have now been worked out and Councillors on this Committee will very soon receive an invitation to take part in a pilot with members of youth council. This pilot will enable us to fine tune the scheme, ready for wider roll-out, both of Councillors and of young people, after the May 2023 local elections, and I hope that you would all take part in that scheme.

Finally, this week is Youth Work week and I want to both celebrate that, and encourage Councillors, if they can, to attend some youth work sessions that are happening this week across the city to see the real impact of youth work on our young people.

18 CALL OVER

18.1 All items, with exception of 24 and 25, were reserved for discussion.

19 ITEMS REFERRED FROM COUNCIL

19.1 There were no items referred from Full Council.

20 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

20.1 There were no Petitions, Written Questions or Deputations.

21 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

21.1 There were no Petitions, Written Questions, Letters or Notices of Motion.

22 ETHNIC MINORITY ACHIEVEMENT SERVICE (EMAS) UPDATE

22.1 The EMAS Team Leader and Pashto Home School Liaison Officer introduced the presentation for the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) update.

22.2 Cllr McNair was advised that the bilingual assistants were trained in child development and school strategies and worked with the child in the classroom for two to three hours a week, focusing on key areas highlighted in the teacher's plan. The EMAS Team

Leader stated that the wellbeing of the child was also assessed, rated, and shared with an outside agency to ensure this was monitored. Further, they advised that the English language acquisition of the children was aided through immersion within the curriculum as they learnt alongside their social and academic interactions, whilst maintaining their home language.

- 22.3 Cllr Brown was informed that all nurseries and pre-schools were aware that they can refer children and families to EMAS, and Speech and Language Therapists referred children that were identified as having delayed development. For those not already in nursery, the Home Liaison staff helped facilitate this and EMAS liaised with all children's centres to review eligible children for funded two- and three-year places to support families in up taking pre-school places. The EMAS Team Leader confirmed that there were cultural and other reasons why families chose not to send children to pre-school, however, the number of black and minority ethnic families accessing pre-school places had increased.
- 22.4 Cllr Grimshaw was advised that EMAS were not involved with unaccompanied asylum children living in hotels as they moved from the hotels within two to three weeks. Instead, unaccompanied children who had arrived in the city and been taken in and cared for by social services and placed in a foster care placement were supported. The EMAS Team Leader also advised that while home liaison was a universal service for primary schools, bilingual support was purchased and so, where EMAS could not provide free support, they were required to sell it to schools. Therefore, if EMAS had the finances to delegate bilingual support where it was most needed, it would be more equitable, as not every school had the resources to fund the service.
- 22.5 Cllr O'Quinn was notified that the early years aspect was funded by the designated schools grant and de-delegated funding was agreed by the schools forum, which allowed a core service to be provided to all primary schools. Additionally, funding was received from the virtual school for unaccompanied young people and for Afghani, Syrian and Ukrainian children, meaning schools were not charged. The EMAS Team Leader advised that they were unaware of any absconding from the hotel for children living with their families and, within foster care, the rate was also very low as it was more secure, and the children had autonomy to voice concerns if they felt their placement was not working.
- 22.6 Cllr McNair was advised that there was a professor who was the main lead for the area of research around children's language acquisition and the teaching provided by EMAS offered pre-teaching of texts and scaffolded the language the children may require, to ensure they received additional support to approach tasks. Further, training was also provided to class teachers to ensure they could differentiate the work, so the children could engage with it at the level they were at, and specialist teachers covered specific aspects of language with the children prior to them being in the classroom.

23 SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2024-25

- 23.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Families Children & Learning which detailed the proposed school admission arrangements for the academic year 2024-25 for the schools in the city where the Council is the admission authority.

- 23.2 Cllr O’Quinn was informed that several meetings had taken place with the bigger schools to articulate the context and need to address this issue in the future. The Head of School Organisation also advised that continuous conversations were ongoing with both head teachers and governing bodies to determine their requirements in terms of support, consideration, advice and information around contributing to the need to reduce Published Admission Numbers (PAN).
- 23.3 In response to a query regarding the rationale behind the numbering of the reduced PAN for Hove Junior School, the Head of School Organisation confirmed that Junior Schools were not restricted by Infant Class Sizes Regulations, therefore, up to thirty-two places could be admitted. They advised that given the longstanding evidence that those schools could accommodate more children, if the PAN was restricted to a multiple of thirty, it could be challenged.
- 23.4 Cllr Brown was advised that dialogue remained open with both diocese of our voluntary aided schools regarding the PAN and how those schools could work collectively and collaboratively together. Further, as there were fewer children in the city, the schools would continue to discuss and demonstrate how they operate efficiently.
- 23.5 Cllr Meadows was informed that these proposals related to primary schools, which did not have catchment areas linked to them. The Head of School Organisation confirmed that conversations had begun with them, though there was more time to engage with headteachers and school governing bodies to address this matter, whilst recognising the additional complexity of catchment areas.
- 23.6 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee –
- i. Agreed to make no changes to the council’s admission arrangements (other than the changes listed below) or school catchment areas (where applicable).
 - ii. Agreed to consult upon a change to the Published Admission Number (PAN) of Downs Infant School from 120 to 90 pupils.
 - iii. Agreed to consult upon a change to the Published Admission Number (PAN) of Hertford Infant School from 60 to 30 pupils. As part of an overall approach to securing the future provision of a ‘Hertford’ education offer, with the vision to create a one form entry, single site, primary school in the future.
 - iv. Agree to consult upon a change to the Publish Admission Number (PAN) of Hove Junior School (Holland Road site) from 96 to 64 pupils to reflect changes previously made to Hove Infant School (Connaught Road).
 - v. Agreed to make no changes to the “relevant area”.

24 **SIXTH FORM PROVISION**

- 24.1 The recommendations were agreed without discussion.
- 24.2 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee –

- i. Noted the proposal of the Headteacher and Governing Body for Hove Park School and Sixth Form Centre to suspend the admission of pupils into Year 12 from September 2023.
- ii. Noted the intention of the sixth form provision remaining closed in the academic years 2024-25 and 2025-26 and the governing body to review the decision in relation to admissions from September 2026.

25 PROPOSAL TO RELOCATE THE PRIMARY PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT PROVISION TO THE FORMER WEST HOVE INFANT SCHOOL, CONNAUGHT ROAD SITE

25.1 The recommendations were agreed without discussion.

25.2 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee –

- i. Agreed to the relocation of the Primary PRU provision to the former West Hove Infant School site at Connaught Road with effect from Easter 2023, subject to minor capital works being concluded.

26 EARLY YEARS STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

26.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Families Children & Learning outlining a new framework for early years strategic thinking.

26.2 Ms Robinson was advised that that when it was raised with the Early Years Team that a child with SEND couldn't access nursery provision, they were supported to find a sufficient place. The Head of Family Hubs also stated that the Family Information Service was utilised to ensure that there was provision that supported those children and young people.

26.3 Cllr O'Quinn was informed that work was being undertaken on two pathways to ensure there was early assessment to support early years children. Resultantly, the age two progress check process would be reviewed to identify its efficiency and amendments that may be required. Speech, language, and communication would also be considered, to establish how consistent assessment and interventions could be utilised early on to reduce the demand on those specialist services down the line. In terms of finances, the Head of Service – Family Hubs confirmed that we have responded to the Department for Education's consultation regarding early years funding and were awaiting the outcome.

26.4 Cllr Grimshaw was advised that the consultation regarding the recommendation to increase mandatory staff to child ratio in early years settings had also been responded to.

26.5 Cllr O'Quinn was notified that our Council nurseries were staffed to meet the needs of the children that were attending, based on the required ratios. The Head of Family Hubs also advised that all nurseries had spaces for children, but if numbers fell, then considerations would be given to the number of children that were interested in taking up those places.

26.6 RESOLVED: That the Committee –

- i. Agreed the Early Years Strategic Action Plan for the transition period in implementing the Brighton and Hove Start for Life Strategy in March 2024.
- ii. Agreed the four priority areas for the Early Years Strategic Action Plan as further detailed in section 3 of this report:
 - 1) To ensure sufficient and appropriate support for early years children identified with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
 - 2) To ensure clear and consistent assessments and pathways for early years children.
 - 3) To ensure there are sufficient early years childcare places in the city so that all children can take up their early years free entitlement and parents can work.
 - 4) To ensure early years provision is good quality and supports outcomes for disadvantaged children with the aim of closing the gap between them and their peers.
- iii. Requested an update on the Start for Life Strategy to come to a future meeting of the Children, Young People and Skills Committee.

27 FAIRER BRIGHTON & HOVE - NOVEMBER 2022 UPDATE

- 27.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Families Children & Learning which provided an update on A Fairer Brighton & Hove – our strategy framework for children, young people and families at risk of disadvantage.
- 27.2 Cllr Nield was informed that Patcham High School had adopted specific alternatives to fixed term exclusions for the past couple of years and had begun sharing their practice with other schools in the city. The Service Manager – Policy & Business Support advised that the restorative practice model, was a continuation of that work, to improve inclusion in the city's schools.
- 27.3 Mr Muirhead was advised that the Council's community and voluntary sector colleagues were integral to this work and their role would be key throughout the lifetime of the framework. Particularly to continue to engage, challenge, influence, and work collaboratively with the Council to ensure the voices of those in the communities were heard.
- 27.4 In response to Cllr O'Quinn, the Service Manager – Policy & Business Support confirmed that data transformation had played a key part in successfully securing the Family Hubs Transformation Programme fund money. They also advised that significant work had been done with the police in recent years to reduce the criminalisation of young people. Additionally, the Youth Offending Service was also inspected as Outstanding, which signalled good practice across the board, however, the area remained a focus. In relation to school attendance, the Head of School Organisation advised that over the COVID-19 period, the permitted attendance of the city was in line with the national average, and we now awaited the publication of the last academic year's data to confirm if this level had been sustained since schools returned to regular opening.

27.5 Cllr Grimshaw proposed the Council purchase drying racks for schools to ensure children turning up in damp clothes, had an opportunity to get them dried. Given the bleak financial situation of the Council and limitations of the current budget, Cllr Grimshaw stated she would donate the remaining money from her ward budget towards the drying racks and that her Labour colleagues would do so too. The Assistant Director - Education & Skills advised that they would review the potential costs further and have a discussion with schools about the suitability in terms of space, and what children would wear while their clothes are drying.

27.6 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee –

- i. Noted the update on A Fairer Brighton & Hove – our disadvantage strategy framework.
- ii. Noted the Framework recommendations provided at 3.11 below.

28 YOUTH COUNCIL - MAKE YOUR MARK UPDATE

28.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Families Children & Learning which outlined the outcome of the national and local results of the 2022 Make Your Mark vote, progress made on the Youth Council's existing and latest campaigns, and an update on the youth manifesto event held at Brighton Youth Centre and other youth voice opportunities Youth Councillors have supported.

28.2 Cllr Allbrooke was advised that the Youth Council were encouraging pupils from more schools to join, which should increase engagement and the response rate to the Make Your Mark survey. Further, where applicable, the use of QR codes in schools and the inclusion of the survey in form time, would continue to be used to increase engagement.

28.3 Mr Muirhead was notified that the pilot work experience scheme to shadow a Councillor would initially focus on giving young people the opportunity to learn about power, decision making, and politics, whilst offering a first-hand experience of the life of a Councillor. The pilot would, therefore, provide further insight as to how we could offer the opportunity to more young people.

28.4 Cllr Grimshaw was informed that there was an open Brighton & Hove Youth Council WhatsApp page, but work was ongoing to increase the public profile, both in terms of when meetings were held, and holding meetings which were accessible online. The Lead Youth Participation Worker also confirmed that a Comms Team had been appointed to ensure the work of the Youth Council was communicated externally.

28.5 Ms Robinson was advised that inclusion was a highly important aspect of the Youth Council, therefore, anyone who expressed an interest to be involved was supported to do so. Further, if a young person didn't want to join the Youth Council but had questions or thoughts, these could be submitted to the Youth Council's Instagram page via direct message or the Google form link.

28.6 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee –

- i. Noted the local outcomes of the 2022 Make Your Mark vote and subsequent local campaign.

- ii. Noted the Youth Council's progress on their campaigns and future plans.
- iii. Requested this report is referred to the Health and Wellbeing Board and Environment Transport and Sustainability Committee for information.

29 SCHOOL OFSTED PRESENTATION

- 29.1 The Head of Education Standards & Achievements and Head of Service – Family Hubs provided an update on the latest Ofsted inspections for early years settings and schools in the city.
- 29.2 Cllr O'Quinn was notified that there were various areas of the inspection, therefore, while the overall scale for many schools was Good, there were many that had achieved Outstanding in several areas.
- 29.3 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee noted the report.

30 ITEMS REFERRED FOR COUNCIL

- 30.1 No items were referred to the next meeting of Council.

The meeting concluded at 6.25pm