

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE

4.00pm 14 OCTOBER 2013

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

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

Non Voting Co-Optees : Graham Bartlett, Chair, Local Safeguarding Children Board; Rachel Travers, Amaze; Eleanor Davies, Parent Forum; Paul Belluscio, Youth Council and Bethan Winstanley, Youth Council

PART ONE

20. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

20(a) Declaration of Substitutes

20.1 There were none.

20(b) Declarations of interest

20.2 Councillors Simson and Wealls declared personal but not prejudicial interests in Item 32 by virtue of their positions as trustees of Impact Initiatives, which provides services as lead organisation in the Youth Collective.

20 (c) Exclusion of Press and Public

20.3 In accordance with section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 ("the Act"), the 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 business to be transacted or the nature of proceedings, that if members of the press and 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 100(I) of the Act).

20.4 **RESOLVED-** That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Item 26, the Self Managed Learning Centre (SMLC).

Note - Members did not consider the exempt appendix when considering the above report as ultimately they did not make a decision thereon at that meeting.

21. MINUTES**21 .A MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 JUNE 2013**

- 21.1 It was noted that paragraph 1.1 of the minutes ought refer to Councillor Geoffrey Bowden being present in substitution for Councillor Stephanie Powell.
- 21.2 **RESOLVED** - That subject to the amendment set out above the Chair be authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2013 as a correct record.

21 .B MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON 16 JULY 2013

- 21.3 Councillor Pissaridou referred to paragraph 17.11 stating that she felt it should be expanded to reflect the comments she had made in more detail. She had requested confirmation and legal guidance regarding whether the decision to fund SMLC had been a Committee decision and had also sought legal advice regarding equality issues. The Chair, Councillor Shanks, stated that she had confirmed that the Committee did not exist at the time that the decision had been taken by the previous Strategic Director under his delegated powers as at the time as set out in the report the Local Authority had been able to claim any monies back from the Department of Education (DfE).
- 21.4 Councillor Kitcat referred to paragraph 17.14 of the minutes stating that she had requested that the language in the report should be “tightened” to make the position regarding past arrangements and future options absolutely clear, highlighting that she did not consider that had been done. She considered that the report before Committee that day still failed in that respect. Language used in the report continued to be misleading, for instance that any decision by the LEA would not result in closure of this establishment which was not a school.
- 21.5 **RESOLVED** - That subject to the amendments set out above the Chair be authorised to sign the minutes of the special meeting held on 16 July 2013 as a correct record.

22. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS**GCSE Results**

- 22.1 The Chair stated that she was pleased to note that GCSE results had continued to improve as evidenced by the results that summer commending the measures detailed in the suite of reports appearing under Item 28 on that days agenda which focused on closing the gap in educational achievement for vulnerable groups in the city.
- 22.2 **RESOLVED** – That the position be noted.

23. CALL OVER

- 23.1 All of the reports on the agenda were called for discussion with the exception of Item 33, Terms of Reference for Cross Party Working Group on School Organisation. The recommendation set out in the report was agreed without discussion.

24. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

24(a) Petitions

24.1 There were none.

24 (b) Questions

24.2 Ms Wilson was called forward to put her question.

“Would the Council agree that Acts of Parliament have confirmed that education for children should be at school ‘or otherwise’ and that, in the context of such specification, there is no mention of ‘otherwise’ as being solely home education and nothing else? (Note – in making reference to ‘Acts of Parliament’ we mean solely legislation enacted by Parliament and not guidance notes, letters, etc. that may have come from Government departments).”

24.3 The Chair responded in the following terms:

“The statute regarding the legal basis by which a parent must ensure their child is educated is very clear. There are essentially two options:

Under S7 Education Act 1996 the parent of every school age child shall cause them to receive “efficient full time education, suitable to their age and aptitude and any special educational needs they may have” – either by :

- attendance at school, OR
- by “education otherwise”.

These are the only options in law.

The concept of “education otherwise” is more commonly described as home education because if a parent does not enrol their child in a registered school, they are responsible for ensuring they receive efficient full time education.

How this is done is a matter for the parent but it is commonly described as home education, it does not mean that all the education provided needs to take place at home.

The interpretation of the term “education otherwise” has been long confirmed in common law, case law, and also needs to be understood with reference to government guidance.

The young people about whom the committee is making a funding decision were regarded in law as being home educated as the funding decision before the committee only applies to children who are not enrolled with a registered school. The SMLC was not a school. It was a private provider of alternative education.

As indicated in the body of the report the relevant Guidance to local authorities (“Elective Home Education: Guidelines for Local Authorities”) provides that when parents choose to provide education otherwise than at school – also known as elective

home education- they assume financial responsibility for their children's education. In law it is a matter for the discretion of the local authority as to whether financial support is offered to facilitate that parental choice."

- 24.4 Ms Wilson put a supplementary question referring to the fact that the SMLC was approved by East Sussex County Council as a provider of alternative education, had appropriately trained staff was not considered "not fit for purpose".
- 24.5 In responding the Chair explained that whilst the college was also cited by this authority as a provider of alternative education it was not a school under the law, was not DfE registered and was thus not subject to Ofsted inspections. She re-iterated that in law children not enrolled with a registered school were considered to be home educated.

(ii) Madelaine (Maddie) Turner:

Ms Turner was called forward to put her question.

"Does the Committee accept that in all guidance from the DfE on the use of Alternative Provision Funding there was no use of the word 'conduit' nor any intimation that the Council was merely a conduit for passing on applications for funding to the Department for Education? If the Committee does not accept this interpretation will it please cite the evidence for its assumption that the Council was merely acting as a conduit and will it please quote the exact guidance where the Department for Education specifies the Council's role as purely a conduit and nothing else?"

- 24.6 In responding the Chair referred Ms Turner to the report before the Committee that day and also covered this point and also made the following response which is set out below:

The use of the word "conduit" in this context is not referring to the guidance from the Department of Education, but is referring to the basis upon which the local authority was previously prepared to agree to provide any significant funding towards the cost of alternative education provision in respect of children who are in receipt of education otherwise than at school, also known in law as "elective home education".

The local authority has no legal duty to provide funding for children whose parents elect not to send them to school. However in January 2012 the then Director of Children Services was willing to exercise his discretion to fund the cost of some alternative providers of education to home educating parents (including the SMLC). This was expressly in circumstances where it was possible to reclaim the money from central government, via a scheme the government had introduced which allowed local authorities to include such pupils on their claim under the Alternative Provision Census.

Specifically, at the time this decision was made the government Guidance on groups to include in the local authority claim under the Alternative Provision Census provided the following definition of pupils to be counted as alternative provision:

“Children who are electively home educated by their parents and are receiving significant financial support by the LA to attend a college of further education or other “alternative provider...””

Thus the decision was made to offer this funding upon the basis that there was a legitimate conduit to central government funding which meant that the exercise of discretion to provide financial support towards electively home educated children receiving education from the SMLC was at nil cost to the authority.

Earlier this year, with little notice, and with effect from the current academic year central government ended the capacity of the local authority to claim these funds. The local authority no longer has a conduit to central government funds for this form of education for children who are electively home educated. The scheme was specifically changed to allow colleges rather than the LA to claim funding as follows:

FE and sixth form colleges can admit pupils aged 14 or 15 and receive funding for them direct from the Education Funding Agency. This includes not only specific provision for groups of pupils but also individual admissions of pupils who would otherwise be home educated, and who may well be educated with young people aged 16-18.

In fact the guidance went further and says this:

“We would therefore not expect local authorities to be paying fees to the colleges for these pupils.

The Department recognises that some local authorities will have been paying fees to colleges in respect of home educated children in 2012-13 in the expectation that they would be able to reclaim a unit of DSG in 2013-14, *which will no longer happen under the new funding system.*’

24 (c) **Deputations**

24.7 One Deputation had been notified by Dr Ian Cunningham. The Co Deputies were:

Dr Graham Dawes, Gillian Trott and Madelaine (Maddie) Turner. The Deputation had a 5 minute period in which address the Committee in support of their Deputation. The two sides of A4 submitted in support of the Deputation had been circulated to Members in advance of the meeting.

The wording of the Deputation was as follows:

“This Deputation requests that the LA continue its existing level of financial support for current students at SMLC.”

24.8 The Chair in receiving and noting the Deputation stated that the points raised would be covered by the officers when giving their presentation in respect of Item 26 on the agenda.

24.9 **RESOLVED** – That the content of the Deputation be noted and received.

25. MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

25. There were no items.

26. SELF MANAGED LEARNING COLLEGE (SMLC)

26.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Children's Services which provided information regarding the funding of pupils at the Self Managed Learning College (SMLC) in Brighton who had been home educated at parental request. The report provided details of the consultation which had taken place with parents and pupils who had been attending the SMLC, also giving information on current and future funding arrangements for these children following advice received from the Department of Education (DfE) and setting out options for Members to consider for future funding for these placements.

26.2 The Head of Behaviour and Attendance explained that as the children who attended the SMLC were not registered at a school and were not on a school roll they were classified as "home educated" as parents have assumed responsibility for their educational provision, even if this was delegated to someone else. New guidelines issued by the DfE stated that the local authority was now no longer able to access funding through the Alternative Provision Census and that such providers must apply directly to the DfE, local authorities were not able to do this on their behalf. The local authority would instead need to give consideration to funding home educated pupils directly through the High Needs block within the Dedicated Schools Grant. The same DfE guidance went on to explain that local authorities did not receive funding to support home educating families. These changes had come into effect for the 2013/14 financial year. It was reiterated that the current arrangement had been agreed on the basis these students had been withdrawn from school to be educated at home, or had always been home educated, and that the local authority were able to act as a conduit to central government funding. As the SMLC was not a registered school it was not able to access the funding directly and required the LA to fulfil this role on their behalf. Now that the LA could no longer access this funding a consultation process had been undertaken to determine whether the LA could assume these costs from within its own funds.

26.3 The Acting Assistant Director, Education and Inclusion responded to issues raised by the Deputies who had queried the accuracy of the data set out in the report that this had been uploaded from the original admission forms received from parents. Every effort had been made to ensure that the information provided was accurate. An inspection of the college had not taken place as the college was not a school and was therefore not subject to Ofsted. Two visits had been paid by the LA and it was noted that the SMLC was registered with East Sussex County Council as an alternative provider. The value of this offer as an alternative was not questioned, however in view of the changes referred to above the officer recommendation was that funding of placements

to the SMLC should cease. The Acting Assistant Director stated that the local authority took allegations of bullying very seriously and would work with individual parents where this was considered to be an issue, where children were considered to have special needs or instances where they wished to explore alternative educational provision for their children. One of the report recommendations was that the Committee considered proposals to support the SMLC in pursuing routes to enable it to continue to provide its current levels of provision. It was important to note that the existing arrangements did not apply to all SMLC students. 11 were funded at present via that arrangement and of those, 2 would be in the equivalent of Years 10 (entering GCSE's) and 1 would be in the equivalent of in Year 11, Key Stage 4. It should be noted that unlike DfE registered schools the SMLC is not required to deliver the national curriculum, there was no evaluation against key stages, students were only entered into examinations if they choose to be. The SMLC was not an examination centre, did not offer full time provision and had shorter terms than maintained schools.

- 26.4 Councillor Wealls stated that it was his understanding that as provision had been made from the Dedicated Schools Grant, should a decision be made to provide funding for SMLC pupils for a further period, the Conservative Group amendment suggested until the end of the 2013/14 financial year (July 2014), he enquired whether this could be funded from the High Needs Block or from elsewhere, bearing in mind that provision had already been made to roll the existing arrangement forward for a period. If that was the case he queried whether the necessary budgetary provision already existed. The Executive Director, Children's Services responded that moving monies between dedicated budgets was complex. The High Needs Block covered funding provision for high needs pupils and students from birth to 25 and was managed by the local authority within the parameters set down by the Government. As part of this process officers had investigated the extent to which any of the current cohort met the criteria for funding under the High Needs Block and it had been established that none of the pupils currently attending the SMLC met the criteria for funding to be applied in that way.
- 26.5 Councillor Lepper enquired regarding the numbers of children who were home educated in Brighton and Hove. The Head of Behaviour and attendance responded that there were 169 young people of whom the authority were aware, however this figure was not necessarily accurate (the actual figure was likely to be higher as in instances where parents chose to make alternative provision for their children they were not obliged to notify the local authority. The Legal Adviser to the Committee confirmed that this was the case.
- 26.6 Councillor Lepper also sought clarification of the financial implications for other children across the city if the local authority continued to fund this provision directly, noting that the majority of "home educated" children across the city sought alternative provision which was not funded by the local authority. It was clearly stated in the report that there was no legal requirement for the local authority to pay fees for pupils to attend the SMLC or any other private education provider and that no budget was available to make such a payment. Parents who chose to home educate their children were responsible for ensuring that they received an appropriate education. To continue to fund such provision could have a negative impact on other children attending local authority schools.

- 26.7 Councillor A Kitcat stated that she remained of the view that the language used in the report was in places inappropriate, was not sufficiently clear and did not reflect the situation as it stood. Prior to the decision taken in 2012 provision for these young people had not been funded via the local authority. It was also important to make the distinction that funding had been made via *not* by the authority.
- 26.8 Councillor Buckley noted that the SMLC was now listed as an alternative provider querying how any such alternative provision had been funded in the past. The Head of Behaviour and Attendance explained that this had been discretionary and would have taken account of a number of factors including statements of special educational needs and medical needs. Councillor Buckley referred to the waiting period for a CAMHS assessment, currently 13 weeks plus seeking confirmation whether this might impact on funding available for some students currently attending the SMLC. The Acting Assistant Director, Education and inclusion explained that this would not have changed the levels of funding available as within officers' review of the current cohort of pupils it had been established that none had been assessed as requiring a Statement of Special Educational Needs. The Legal Adviser to the Committee stated that there was a need however to satisfy the authority that they had high needs which would merit such funding.
- 26.9 Councillor Pissaridou stated that she remained of the view that the current situation was unsatisfactory. It did not appear that the decision to fund in 2012 had been subject to a Committee decision, at that time it had been considered that the college provided educational provision to an acceptable standard and met the necessary health and safety and child protection criteria. That position appeared to have changed and it now appeared to be suggested that might not be the case, notwithstanding that the SMLC was acknowledged as an alternative provider by East Sussex County Council. The Acting Assistant Director explained that the previous arrangements had been made on the basis of this local authority acting as a conduit to DFE funding in the terms set out in the report. The visits that had taken place were not formal inspections as the college was not DfE registered as a school and did not therefore fall within the criteria for Ofsted inspections. The SMLC had been utilised by maintained schools as an alternative provider of education and schools could choose to use this provision to support young people where it is felt appropriate. Schools would be responsible for funding the alternative provision and for ensuring that the provision is appropriate and that all necessary safeguarding and child protection procedures were in place.
- 26.10 In terms of involvement with other Local authorities, the SMLC was registered as an 'approved non commissioned training provider' with East Sussex County Council. Under this arrangement schools in East Sussex can directly refer and fund their students to attend the college. East Sussex County Council had advised that they had commissioned 3-4 places directly in 2008/09 but that they had not commissioned any places directly since then. The college also appeared on this local authority's list of alternative providers.
- 26.11 Councillor A Kitcat sought confirmation as to whether the SMLC would be able to apply to the DfE for direct funding and the Acting Assistant Director, Education and Inclusion explained that although there was provision for that by the DFE in order to do so they would need to meet criteria as a school/academy. The SMLC was not a school under the law and did not hold itself as such. It was an institution offering private education to

children who were educated at home. It described itself as a college providing educational programmes for 7-16 year old's who chose not to be at school.

- 26.12 Councillor Wealls referred to the proposed Conservative Group amendment, seconded by Councillor Simson stating that their group had concerns about the potential adverse impact on students, funded under the current arrangement, particularly those in Years 10/11, Key Stage 4. He considered that the amount of money required to fund 11 students (16 students in total were registered at SMLC), to the end of the summer term 2013/14 was relatively small and would provide them and their parents with a reasonable timeframe within which to access alternative provision and for the local authority to work with the SMLC and to support it to pursue routes to enable it to continue to provide current levels of provision. Councillor Brown also concurred in that view.
- 26.13 The Chair, Councillor Shanks referred to the volume of correspondence received via e mail and by other means in relation to this issue. Her group did not feel able to support the Conservative Group amendments in full and were therefore putting forward proposals of their own. They considered that it was appropriate to fund those students (3 in total) who were at Key Stage 4 to the end of their studies. Councillor Buckley stated that they considered their amendment to represent a reasonable way forward and Councillor Powell concurred in that view.
- 26.14 Councillor Wealls expressed disappointment that the Green group did not feel able to support his group's proposed amendment in full, considering that to do so would remove the current uncertainties and provide a reasonable timeframe for alternative options to be exploredt little cost to the authority.
- 26.15 Councillor Pissaridou stated that she considered it inappropriate for additional amendments to be in effect "tabled" from the floor without the Committee having the opportunity to consider their implications properly. She was very concerned regarding the manner in which this matter had been dealt with, in her view inconsistent and muddled. If either of the proposed amendments were approved she confirmed that her group would request that the matter be called in for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee.
- 26.16 Councillor Lepper concurred in that view stating that in her view the amendments put forward would result in public money being used to fund a private education establishment. The local authority was charged with providing a good standard of education for all children within the city and private provision should not be funded at their expense.
- 26.17 Following debate on the matter the Committee then moved to consideration of the recommendations set out in the report and the two amendments which had been put forward.
- 26.18 The Recommendation set out at Paragraph 2.1 of the report was as follows:

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 It is recommended that:

- (i) the committee notes the issues raised and the consultation with the affected parents and pupils;
- (ii) a decision is made to cease the funding of placements at the SMLC;
- (iii) the committee consider the proposals to support the SMLC to pursue routes to enable it to continue to provide current levels of provision;

26.19 The Committee then proceeded to consider the two amendments put forward:

Conservative Group Amendment: Proposed by Councillor Wealls and seconded by Councillor Simson

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 It is recommended that:

- (iii) the committee notes the issues raised and the consultation with the affected parents and pupils;
- (iv) ~~a decision is made to cease the funding of placements at the SMLC;~~ ***a decision is made to continue funding the students who have begun Key Stage 4 (from September 2013) for two years as it is accepted that these pupils would not have had an opportunity to select their GCSE options elsewhere;***
- (v) the committee consider the proposals to support the SMLC to pursue routes to enable it to continue to provide current levels of provision;
- (vi) ***a decision is made to cease funding for all non-KS4 pupils currently financially supported by the authority at the SMLC with effect from the end of the current academic year 2013-2014.***

Green Group Amendment: Proposed by the Deputy Chair, Councillor Buckley and seconded by Councillor Powell:

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) the committee notes the issues raised and the consultation with the affected parents and pupils;
- (ii) ***a decision is made to cease the funding of placements at the SMLC with the exception of those students who have begun Key Stage 4 (from September 2013) for two years as it is accepted that these pupils would not have had an opportunity to select their GCSE options elsewhere;***
- (iii) the committee consider the proposals to support the SMLC to pursue routes to enable it to continue to provide current levels of provision.

- 26.20 The Two separate amendments set out above were put and a vote was taken on each of them in turn.
- 26.21 The first which was put by the Conservative Group was lost by a vote of 3 to 7 (Conservative for, Labour and Green against), the second amendment which was put by the Green group was upheld by a vote of 7 to 3 (Conservatives and green for, Labour against). This second set of amendments was then incorporated and became the substantive recommendations on which a formal vote was taken. The amended recommendations were rejected by a vote of 6 to 4 (Greens for, Conservative and Labour against).
- 26.22 Following a brief adjournment the Committee reconvened and it was determined that following the rejection of the recommendations the default position was that the status quo applied. This meant the current policy as to funding the attendance of children in receipt of home education at the SMLC remained as it was prior to the vote, with funding agreed until the end of December. The Chair stated that in order for the Committee to determine the matter unequivocally it was anticipated that a further report would be submitted to the next scheduled meeting of the Committee on 18 November 2013.
- 26.23 **RESOLVED** – (1) That no decision was taken.

27. PROPOSED EXPANSION OF WEST HOVE JUNIOR SCHOOL: STATUTORY NOTICE

- 27.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Children's Services the purpose of which was to report the representations and objections received during the statutory notice period, and to seek a decision from the Committee confirming the proposed expansion of West Hove Junior School.
- 27.2 In response to the growth in primary school numbers over recent years, the Council had already expanded West Hove Infant School on to a second site in Connaught Road in Hove. This site had opened with three forms of entry in September 2011 and had required bulge classes to be added to reception in 2012 and again in 2013. The site was to be expanded to four permanent forms of entry from September 2014 in space to be vacated, subject to consultation, by the Adult Day Care Centre on the same site.
- 27.3 The proposal was now to provide three forms of entry for junior age children (7-11) from September 2014, increasing to four forms of entry in September 2015 on the former Hove Police Station site in Holland Road, to complement the places at the Connaught site of West Hove Infant School. At its meeting on 16 July 2013 the Committee had considered the outcomes of consultation on the preferred option for providing these places as an expansion of West Hove Junior School on the second site at Hove Police Station and agreed to publish the required statutory notice.
- 27.4 Councillor Buckley commended the report. The site was in her Ward, and a lack of school places there was an issue which she had raised on a number of occasions. Some of the schools in Goldsmid Ward were church schools, which some parents did not want for their children. Because of the proposed "linked school" arrangement with the Connaught site of West Hove Infant there were no guarantees that other local children would be allocated a place at the new West Hove Junior School site.

- 27.5 Councillor Brown stated that she was aware that approval had been given by the Adult Social Care Committee for the Day Care Centre to be vacated. She sought clarification regarding the current status of the negotiations. It was explained that whilst agreement had been reached with Adult Social Care over sites and building works, final confirmation could only be given after consultation with the Day Centre clients had ended on October 25.
- 27.6 Councillor Pissaridou sought confirmation that the figures provided were reliable stating that in the case of Portslade Infant School and the proposed expansion of Stanford Infant School the data provided had been considered to be flawed. The Executive Director responded that the proposals recommended by the report were intended to address a lack of school places in that part of the City. A report dealing with school places would be brought to the Cross Party Working Group in November. Overall, the problem across the City was in seeking to provide sufficient places rather than there being too many.
- 27.7 **RESOLVED** - That the Children and Young People Committee confirms the proposal contained in the statutory notice and resolves to expand West Hove Junior School by three forms of entry in September 2014 and four forms of entry from September 2015.

28. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT 2013

28 .A BRIGHTON & HOVE CLOSING THE GAP IN EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS 2013-2017

- 28.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Children's services setting out an analysis of the gaps in educational achievement in the city. Analysis showed that the achievement gap between pupils living in disadvantage widened from KS1 to KS2 and again from KS 2 to KS4. The data showed that this was a major area of concern and a key priority for the city
- 28.2 Correspondence received recently from her Majesty's Chief Inspector had made it clear that although schools were being given increased levels of autonomy, Local Authorities had direct responsibility for the standards achieved in all of the schools in their area, including academies, including progress made by vulnerable groups of learners. Ofsted would be making judgements about the impact schools were making through use of the Pupil Premium on closing the gap in educational achievement for vulnerable groups. Ofsted were also placing an increased emphasis on the involvement of school governors in monitoring the progress of pupils, particularly those from vulnerable groups. There was a clear expectation that Governors would influence the decision making surrounding use of the Pupil Premium.
- 28.3 Councillor Wealls stated that he considered it was important to be more robust in emphasising the excellent value added contribution provided by a number of the city's schools. It was important not to focus solely on GCSE results. He also welcomed the training which had been given to Members in relation to use of the Pupil Premium. Councillor Wealls also considered that it would also be helpful if information could be

provided regarding young carers. It was explained that information was not necessarily held by schools unless individuals had identified themselves as such.

28.4 Rachel Travers, Amaze welcomed the continuing priority to use funding to close the attainment gap and to raise the attainment levels of young people from disadvantaged or vulnerable groups. There was an overlap between those in receipt of free school meals and who also had special educational needs. This group could be doubly disadvantaged and it was important therefore to bring forward targets as suggested. Once those children had been identified work could then be undertaken to work out the best strategies for them and to focus on the different ways in which the available resources could be used.

28.5 **RESOLVED** – That the Committee notes the Closing the Gap in Educational Achievement Strategy. This had been developed in partnership with a steering group of headteachers and Local Authority staff and had been discussed and consulted on with schools.

28 .B BRIGHTON & HOVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY (2013-2017)

28.6 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Children's Services setting out the School Improvement Strategy 2013-2017 for approval. The Strategy itself was appended to the report.

28.7 It was noted that the Local Authority had a statutory duty to promote high standards in schools and to intervene when there were significant concerns about children's progress or their well being. Ofsted had a clear expectation that the Local Authority would know schools in the City well and would support and challenge as appropriate and intervene where necessary. The School Improvement Strategy had been reviewed in light of the changing landscape in education.

28.8 Councillor A Kitcat welcomed the improvements that had been achieved considering that it was also important to look at other ways in which learning could be delivered, for example the Montessori model which used a visual approach to learning. The Strategic Commissioner, Standards and Achievements explained that work on this was currently underway with the University of Brighton.

28.9 **RESOLVED** – That the Committee accepts the School Improvement Strategy 2013-2017 as set out in the appendix to the report.

28 .C BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY WIDE MATHS PROJECT PLAN 2013/14

28.10 The Committee considered a report setting out an analysis of the maths outcomes in the city which had show that standards and progress in maths fell well below those nationally from Key Stage 2 onwards. As a result the 2013-14 academic year had been identified as he "Year of Maths and the Local Authority would be looking to raise standards and achievements in maths across the city.

- 28.11 Councillor Pissaridou welcomed this piece of work, especially the value added work that was taking place. Currently pupils started off well early in their school careers but their performance tended to drop off later on, this needed to be addressed.
- 28.12 Councillor A Kitcat referred to her earlier comments in relation to the differing ways in which pupils learned considering that this was particularly true of Maths where it could be beneficial for different approaches to be used.
- 28.13 **RESOLVED** - That the Committee notes the summary of the Maths project for the Year of Maths. This has been developed in partnership with a steering group of headteachers and maths specialists, representatives from the University of Brighton and the University of Sussex and a member of Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI).

29. BRIGHTON & HOVE DRAFT EARLY HELP STRATEGY

- 29.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Children's Services detailing the Draft Early Help Strategy 2013-17. The Draft Strategy itself was attached as an appendix to the report. The strategy and all the actions that came out of it would support the whole partnership of children's services to work together to refocus the local authority's activity on Early Help and to reduce the need for use of high cost specialist services.
- 29.2 In Brighton and Hove a strategy has been devised to support the widespread recognition that it was better to identify and deal with problems early rather than respond when difficulties become acute and when action by services may be less effective and more expensive. There is a belief that preventing problems by building resilience and reducing risk factors via universal and Early Help services, a broad set of support which aimed to increase the protective factors helps to decrease the risk factors facing children, young people and families. It was noted that following consultation on the strategy it would be finalised, agreed and launched on 5 November.
- 29.3 Graham Bartlett, Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board stated that he welcomed the approach being taken and the opportunity for partners to have input into the strategy and to work together to deliver better outcomes for vulnerable young people in across the city. As the level of child protection in the city was at higher levels than in some other areas the strategy seeks it also sought to achieve better interventions.
- 29.4 Rachel Travers, Amaze concurred seeking clarification as to how funding would be targeted to drive the strategy in future. The Executive Director, Children's Services explained that this was an on-going piece of work. It was anticipated that it would be possible to reduce costs to other budgets over a period of several years by investing in a range of early help interventions. This work needed to be evidence based and no decision to move monies to/from other budgets would be made in the short term and there was a need to dovetail with other priorities for example in relation to NEETs.

- 29.5 The Chair stated that not all authorities operated an early help strategy similar to that used in Brighton & Hove. Whilst no one was complacent about the structures in place they appeared to work well and to provide a firm basis for further refinement and improvement.
- 29.6 Councillor Simson referred to the financial support put into place to fund the strategy and enquired how the £60,000 to fund a co-ordinator and admin support would be used. It was explained that this would be made available to support a range of partnerships and projects to support vulnerable children within schools. She considered it was important to have measures in place to challenge and re-assess what was being delivered.
- 29.7 Councillor Wealls welcomed the report stating that he hoped that the strategy would build on the collaborative models already in place. He asked whether the option of using different models or outsourcing some elements of its delivery had been explored. He was aware that in the delivery of adult social care a number of different models had been explored. Reference was made to the work of Child Poverty Task Group and it was explained that its work was now included in the stronger families programme.
- 29.8 The Chair, Councillor Shanks explained that schools were being encouraged and supported in re-focusing their work as necessary. The Executive Director explained that a broad based multi-agency approach would continue to be used in moving the strategy forward.
- 29.10 Rachel Travers, Amaze, explained that alternative models were used in the city, by the Community Voluntary Sector (CVS) for example stating that it was important that there was input from the third sector. It was noted that the CVS was fully involved in the process and had been given the opportunity to provide input into the final document.
- 29.11 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the Draft Early Help Strategy will be shared with all partners as part of an extensive consultation;
- (2) That the Committee considers and comments upon the Draft Early Help Strategy;
- (3).A final version of strategy will be launched and agreed in November; and
- (4) The strategy will be supported by an action plan with key milestones that will be monitored by the Children & Young People’s Partnership Forum, annual reports on press will be presented to the Children & Young People Committee.

30. REDUCTION IN NUMBERS OF YOUNG PEOPLE NOT IN EDUCATION EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING (NEET) 2012/13 AND YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY SERVICE (YES) WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14

- 30.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Children's Services detailing the progress made in reducing the city's NEET percentage and seeking their endorsement in relation to future priorities for the work of the Youth Employability Service.
- 30.2 It was noted that through its Youth Employability Service (YES) the city had achieved its lowest ever level of young people aged 16-18 who were "Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)". This document complied with the Department for Education Statutory Guidance on the Participation of Young People in Education and was an important indicator which formed part of the Corporate Plan. The work of the YES team also impacted directly on the council's child poverty and the Stronger Families, Stronger Communities strategies. NEET young people in workless households had worse educational outcomes than their peers and the work of the YES team would form part of the emerging Early Help Strategy within Children's Services.
- 30.3 Councillor Pissaridou asked why the take up of apprenticeships within the city appeared to be low and it was explained that there were a number of reasons for this, in addition schools also needed to publicise these alternative options more widely.
- 30.4 Councillor Simson commended the work that had been undertaken stating that it was important to continue to work with harder to reach communities, stating that successful work had been achieved in her own ward.
- 30.5 Rachel Travers, Amaze stressed the importance of working with those who had special educational needs to seek to ensure that adequate measures were in place to support them along the pathways that were most appropriate to their individual needs.
- 30.6 Councillor Powell welcomed the work undertaken and achievements to date expressing particular interest in the work being undertaken by all agencies to support NEET young people to work within the agreed Single Partnership Pathway for Brighton and Hove,. Councillor Powell requested that further details about the arrangements in place and the number of young people involved in apprenticeships form the subject of a report to a future meeting of the Committee, it was agreed that this would be done.
- 30.7 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the Committee notes the progress in reducing the 16-18 NEET percentage; and
- (2) That the Committee endorses the future priorities of the work of the Youth Employability Service as set out in paragraphs 3.8 and 3.9 of the report.

31. HOUSING AND SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 16 -15 JOINT COMMISSIONING STRATEGY

- 31.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director. Children's Services seeking their approval to the Housing and Support for Young People aged 16-25 Joint Commissioning Strategy set out in Appendix 1 to the report.
- 31.2 It was noted that a separate report had been and considered and agreed at the meeting of Housing Committee held on 25 September 2013. The Strategy followed the Housing and Support for Young People Needs Assessment prepared in October 2012 which had agreed an action plan based around 3 key strategic outcomes:
- Increasing the numbers of young people prevented from homelessness;
 - Seeking to ensure that there is a more positive transition to adulthood through the provision of a young peoples' accommodation and support pathway;
 - Better use of resources through a Joint Commissioning approach to accommodation and support for young people.
- 31.3 The Assistant Director, Stronger Families, Youth and Communities explained that the Department of Communities and local Government (DCLG) had been working with local authorities and national homelessness agencies to assist them to improve their response to young people who need housing and support. This includes the creation of a 'Young Peoples' accommodation pathway'. The concept of a local pathway had also been promoted in the Ministerial Working Group Report 'Making Every Contact Count'. The pathway approach required and promoted an integrated approach across councils and with all agencies working with young people.
- 31.4 Councillor Pissaridou stated that this represented a valuable piece of work integrating as it did the work of a number of agencies in providing support to vulnerable young people within the 16-25 age group.
- 31.5 Councillor Wealls referred to the financial situation outlined in the report seeking clarification regarding where savings would come from. The Assistant Director explained that the total budgetary costs of provision had reduced from the previous year as a result of more efficient provision having been achieved. It was anticipated that further cost savings could be achieved in the current financial year as a result of a reduction in the number of high cost places and improved procurement.
- 31.6 **RESOLVED** – That the Committee approve the Housing and Support for Young People aged 16-25 Joint Commissioning Strategy;
- (2) That the Committee approves the procurement of new services as outlined in section 4.3 of the report; and
- (3) That the Committee grants delegated authority to the Director of Children's Services to award the contract following the recommendations of the evaluation panels and the results of the tendering processes.

32. SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLES COMMISSIONING STRATEGY : PROGRESS AND FUTURE

- 32.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Children's Services the purpose of which was to provide an update on the services for Young People Commissioning Strategy summarising progress made to date, challenges and future priorities.
- 32.2 It was noted that the Commissioning Strategy set out four strategic actions:
- Jointly commissioning services for young people;
 - Commissioning integrated youth work and youth;
 - Empowering young people to engage with their communities ; and
 - Procuring services in a fair and consistent way.
- 32.3 Councillor Wealls referred to the budget in place for the service enquiring whether additional funding had been secured. It was confirmed that alongside centres in Portslade, Whitehawk, Moulsecomb and the city centre, detached provision was also provided in by the Youth Arts Project s, Duke of Edinburgh service and the Youth Participation Service. There were no additional financial implications as a direct result of the proposals and recommendations of the report.
- 32.4 Councillor Simson welcomed the report stating that she was pleased to note the progress made and arrangements which had been put into place for the future.
- 32.5 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the Committee notes the progress in implementing the Services for Young People Commissioning Strategy; and
- (2) That the Committee notes the challenges set out in paragraph 3.3 and notes the future priorities set out in paragraph 3.4.

33. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR CROSS PARTY WORKING GROUP ON SCHOOL ORGANISATION

- 33.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Children's Services requesting that the Committee agree the status of the Cross Party Schools Capital Working Group be strengthened to that of a Group commissioned by the Committee to consider issues of school organisation and places planning and to advise the Committee accordingly.
- 33.2 **RESOLVED** – That the Committee approve the Terms of Reference set out in Appendix 1 to the report for the Cross Party School Organisation Working Group.

34. ITEMS REFERRED FOR COUNCIL

- 34.1 There were none.

35. SELF MANAGED LEARNING COLLEGE (SMLC) - EXEMPT CATEGORY 1

PART TWO

SUMMARY OF ITEMS CONSIDERED IN PART TWO

35. SELF MANAGED LEARNING COLLEGE (SMLC)

35.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Children's Services in relation to the Self Managed Learning College (SMLC)

35.2 Members noted the contents of the appendix but did not make a decision and therefore did not consider or discuss its content in closed session.

36. PART TWO PROCEEDINGS

36.1 There were none.

The meeting concluded at 6.55pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of