

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

4.00pm 13 SEPTEMBER 2021

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present:

Councillors

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

Co-optees

Ms B Boyd

Ms L Brown (joined remotely)

Mr T Cristin (joined remotely)

Mr A Muirhead

Mr S Parr (joined remotely)

PART ONE

13 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

(a) Declarations of Substitutes

13.1 There were none

(b) Declarations of Interest

13.2 There were none

(c) Exclusion of Press and Public

13.3 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.

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

14 MINUTES

14.1 **RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2021 be agreed as a correct record.

15 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

15.1 The Chair gave the following communication:

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

I wanted to begin by giving a few updates about this committee. Unfortunately, our parent governor rep positions are both vacant currently and work to recruit these positions is ongoing. But I'm delighted that following a decision at full council in July, we are welcoming Diana Boyd to this meeting as a representative of the Parent Carers Council. At this juncture I wanted to congratulate you on your new role as Chair and also publicly thank your predecessor Fiona England for her work. I look forward to continued strong relationships of challenge and support between PACC and the council.

UASCs

At July's full council, I put forward a motion regarding unaccompanied asylum-seeking children – thanking those who support UASCs in our city but also pushing for the introduction of a mandatory rota. We have a fantastic social work team who do an incredible amount to support UASCs, alongside brilliant foster carers and our community and voluntary sector. Over the summer I was invited to attend the Hummingbird Projects Young Leaders graduation ceremony and it was incredible to see not only the brilliant work being done to support refugees – but also the real achievements of the young people who take part. They are now recruiting for their next group of young leaders so if you are aged 16-25, from a refugee background, ideally living in East/West Sussex and able to speak English to good level the deadline to apply/refer is 29th September.

The Government then delivered us with a visual sign of the need for a mandatory rota. If I was boasting I would say thank you to them for proving my point. A week later with less than 24 hours' notice they had to commission a hotel in Hove as an extension of a transition centre operating from Kent – to temporarily house UASCs awaiting placement by other local authorities through the National Transition Scheme. I remain clear – other local authorities throughout the country are not doing their bit to support unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. According to figures I've seen, less than 20 local authorities are meeting their 0.07% quota. This is not good enough.

The HO need secure placements for these young people without first moving them around the country to transition centres in areas where they will not remain, based in facilities which were not designed for this purpose. I want to urge the Home Office to cease the use of the site in Hove. They have committed to do so and we await a date for this happening.

Youth Investment Fund

This month is the two year anniversary of the government's announcement of the Youth Investment Fund. Yet this £500m, desperately needed investment – has not been

forthcoming. Earlier this year, councillors on this committee agreed to plans to fund a redevelopment of Brighton Youth Centre – linked to government promises for the YIF. Yet we have not yet been able to apply. As a result, I sent a letter to Diana Barran, minister for civil society at the beginning of September asking for details on the fund, when it will become available and whether she would like to visit Brighton Youth Centre. I await a response.

School Covid

As schools returned for the summer break, they returned with a step change in Government guidance for how the pandemic will be contained. No longer do bubbles apply. No longer are masks required. While no one wants to see young people missing school, myself and green colleagues on this committee remain concerned about how young people are going to be protected from the pandemic, should all – even the most minimal – of mitigations be taken away.

We had a last-minute announcement from Government that CO2 monitors will be provided. These will tell us where there are areas of poor ventilation. But they won't help do anything about it. So school based unions have been assisting with excellent risk assessments to schools, we are working tirelessly to address issues of poor ventilation, and to provide robust advice. But we'd urge the government to consider measures similar to that of New York State who have provided HEPA filters to their schools too and I have written to the education secretary to encourage such.

Youth Engagement

I wanted to thank Epping Forest Youth Council for joining members of Brighton & Hove Youth Council in August on a beach clean. I was really excited to attend – not least because one of the workers attending was my old youth worker, who supported me when I was a member of my youth council – but because I am always excited to see young people engaged in social action. This was held to celebrate international day of youth, which is celebrated on 12th August. I spent the afternoon visiting youth projects across the city and meeting with young people. I want to thank Hangleton & Knoll Project, Extratime and Trust for Developing Communities for allowing me to join!

TDC's project was funded by the Governments HAF funding, which we heard details at an earlier meeting of this committee. Young people across the city had a chance to participate in such a huge variety of food-based activities this summer and I'd urge the government to consider this funding in the long term, to help prevent young people from going hungry.

The relaxation of some covid restrictions has enabled activities like these to start up again in person which for many young people has been a welcome return. And as a chair who started my role during the pandemic, I've really enjoyed the chance to go out and about and meet some of the people who work tirelessly to support young people in our city –

not just through a teams call. Of course – all of these visits must be done safely and if not outside, with masks, in order to protect everyone there.

In closing, I wanted to report that at the last Youthwise meeting in July, young people raised a number of points with councillors which I wanted to address here:

How could the council ensure that litter in the city is managed better?

There are a number of steps we could take including - Increase the Environmental Enforcement Team, improving coverage throughout the city. We can also improve awareness of the effects of litter on the environment, signage, social media platforms and finally review litter bins throughout the city, ensuring we have the correct bin and capacity in those locations. We can also do deep cleans of the city and work with volunteers and organisations like Leave no Trace and Surfers Against Sewage to do tidy ups. All of these are things being worked on I'm pleased to say and are regularly reported to the ETS committee.

Is there a possibility of opening up night clubs for young people in the city (for under 18s)?

Whereas the cities nightclubs are private entities they do have to adhere to really strict licensing regulations. I'd encourage young people to perhaps consider contacting the establishments directly with this information to hand to see if they would consider an underage event.

Can young people have spaces to paint murals in Brighton and Hove. Both on hoardings surrounding building sites but also more permanent spaces?

The council are only be able to give permission for murals on buildings or structures that are publicly owned. We are not able to give permission to paint on private property and where this is being sought approval would always be required from the property owner. The majority of hoardings surrounding building sites in the city are not council property. The Prevention workstream of the councils Graffiti Reduction Strategy does aim to provide opportunities and spaces for urban art projects and safe spaces for graffiti. We work with artists and residents in the creation of community murals and also consider and investigate other potential opportunities for legal artwork. Right now community murals are happening at a tagging hotspot on Upper Lewes Road and there's a mural at The Level in conjunction with Octopus Energy, local artists and young people with a focus on environmental issues which will be showcased at COP26.

What help is there for setting up more low cost dance spaces in local areas?

This is tricky without knowing what size space is needed, but we'd be happy to work with young people to identify requirements and see what's possible.

As ever, my inbox is always open for questions and queries regarding how we can improve the city for children and young people, and I look forward to attending the next meeting of Youthwise on 13th October.

16 CALL OVER

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

- Item 21 – Employment and Skills – Youth Employment Hub and Adult Education Hub
- Item 22 – Progress Report on the Home to School Transport Service
- Item 23 – 2020/21 Families, Children & Learning Performance Report
- Item 24 – Harmful Sexual Behaviour and Schools
- Item 25 – Possible Relocation of West Hove Infant School (Connaught Road site)

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

- Item 20 – Annual Update on Ofsted Action Plan
- Item 26 – School Ofsted Presentation
- Item 27 – Use of Urgency Powers School Admission Arrangements

17 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

17.1 There were no Petitions, Written Questions or Deputations.

18 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

18.1 There were no Petitions, Written Questions or Deputations.

Notice of Motion

- (i) Local Government & Schools Pay

18.2 The Notice of Motion had been proposed and debated at Full Council on 15 July 2021 and had then been referred to this Committee.

18.3 The Chair asked the Committee if they agreed to note the Notice of Motion and the issues raised at Full Council.

18.4 Councillor O’Quinn noted that the recommendations of Full Council were to note the report or call for an officer report and proposed that the Committee call for a report on the ‘performance related pay for teachers’ element of the Notice of Motion.

18.5 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee agreed –

- (i) Note the Notice of Motion and the issues agreed by Full Council;
- (ii) Call for a report on performance related pay for teachers.

19 SAFEGUARDING AND CARE ANTI-RACIST PRACTICE.

19.1 The Principal Social Worker gave a presentation on Safeguarding and Care Anti-Racist Project.

19.2 **RESOLVED:** That the presentation be noted.

20 ANNUAL UPDATE ON OFSTED ACTION PLAN

20.1 This item was agreed without discussion.

20.2 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee noted the report.

21 EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS – YOUTH EMPLOYMENT HUB AND ADULT EDUCATION HUB UPDATE

21.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Families Children & Learning which provided an update on the implementation of the Youth Employment Hub and an update on the Council's Adult and Community Learning Provision. The report was introduced by the Head of Skills and Employment.

21.2 Cllr Brown referred to the Youth Employment Hub and asked if there had been a good response from employers, educational providers and voluntary sector organisations to the information and networking sections and asked how the outcomes would be monitored as that would be important to enable access to future funding. With regard to the Adult Education Hub, she asked how the figures for enrolment matched with numbers when the service was managed by the Friends Centre. The Head of Skills and Employment said that they had been overwhelmed by the response from employers, the voluntary sector and providers to the events put on, and agreed that it was important the outcomes were monitored and confirmed that that was being undertaken. With regard to the adult community learning, it was a different programme so difficult to compare exactly with what the Friends Centre had provided but as before were ensuring that the curriculum offer was appropriate for those who were most in need.

21.3 Cllr O'Quinn noted that there were many vacancies in the city and asked how effective the employment hub had been in being able to make placements and to what extent would career advice was given to those attending the hub. The Head of Skills and Employment said that staff were engaging with a number of sectors, such as the NHS, and were mapping out vacancies in the City. Career advice and guidance was given.

21.4 Cllr John noted that the report stated that unemployment numbers had increased by 180% from pre-pandemic and asked what the current figures were. The Head of Skills and Employment said that for the age group 16-24 there were 2,075 on universal credit out of 11,705 which was significantly lower than during the peak last year.

21.5 Cllr Grimshaw asked if the Hub would assist people in getting work experience and was advised they would.

- 21.6 Ms D Boyd asked if the diversity of people using the hub was monitored, whether those with SEND (and their parents) who did not meet the threshold criteria could access the support and whether those with SEND had been consulted on the service. The Head of Skills and Employment said that the diversity of those using the hub was monitored, and officers had worked with the SEND Young People's Network to inform them of the employment hub and explain how it worked and how they could be involved. With regard to thresholds for support a fuller answer would be provided after the meeting, but young people with SEND were certainly involved with the service.
- 21.7 Cllr Nield referred to Revival Work Clothes and asked for more information, and with reference to paragraph 4.12 asked how families were made aware of the option to self-refer. The Head of Skills and Employment said that there was a pool of clothes and young people could request certain clothes/sizes for interviews, With regard to self-referral it was advertised through school bulletins and through the Council services.
- 21.8 Cllr Lloyd asked if ESOL students had targeted learning and was advised they did.
- 21.9 RESOLVED:** That the Committee noted the progress in establishing the Youth Employment Hub and new Adult Learning Hub.

22 PROGRESS REPORT ON HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT SERVICE

- 22.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Families Children & Learning which provided an update and progress report on the Home to School Transport service. The report was introduced by Interim Lead Home to School Transport, the Team Manager Home to School Transport, with additional comments from Ms D Boyd (PaCC).
- 22.2 Cllr O'Quinn noted that the Council were still trying to recruit for the positions of Head of Service and Contracts and Service Development Manager and asked how that was progressing. The Interim Lead Home to School Transport said that it was on-going although it was hoped that one position would shortly be filled shortly.
- 22.4 Cllr John noted that there had been a problem in recruiting Vehicle Passenger Assistants (VPA) and asked if that was being addressed. The Interim Lead Home to School Transport said that was an issue and seven VPAs had been recruited but only one was still in post. The position was not attractive as the hours were only at the start and end of the day, but the matter was being addressed and one plan was to target students when they returned to the universities later this month.
- 22.5 Cllr Lloyd asked if the e-learning training could be sold to other local authorities and was advised that the Council were looking into that and were currently in discussions with East Sussex County Council.
- 22.6 Cllr Brown referred to the training for Operators - drivers and VPAs, and noted that there were four who had still complete the training and the deadline for that to be concluded was August 2021 and asked if that had now been completed. The Interim Lead Home to School Transport said they weren't sure and would confirm after the meeting, but did say that operators had to have completed the training before undertaking the work.

- 22.7 Cllr Nield referred to social distancing in vehicles and asked what the current guidance was. The Interim Lead Home to School Transport said that the Government had never required social distancing on transport, but this Council took the decision to have quite stringent distancing and ensured that there was space in every vehicle. Some vehicles would have around 4-5 children and some with only one child, but every child would be risk assessed.
- 22.8 Cllr Grimshaw asked how many parents were using the online survey, and noted the 'gold star' status for staff completing their training quickly and asked how successful that had been. The Interim Lead Home to School Transport said the Council were promoting the survey and noted the feedback from parties. The 'gold star' had been successful and staff were looking at other ways to recognise good service.
- 22.9 The Chair thanked everyone the report and the work undertaken. There would be financial implications from the report and the Council would be looking at additional SEN funding and raising this with the Government.

22.10 RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- (i) Note the report on the Home to School Transport (HTST) Service;
- (ii) Agreed that a further report comes to a meeting of the CYPS Committee in the Spring of 2022, which will include provide an options appraisal and business case for the re-procurement of HTST services after the current contract expires in August 2023.

23 2020/21 FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND LEARNING PERFORMANCE REPORT

- 23.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Families Children & Learning which provided a summary of the performance of the directorate and an overview of business and improvements for the year ahead. The report was introduced by the Service Manager, Policy & Business Support and the Head of Safeguarding & Performance.
- 23.2 Cllr O'Quinn asked for more information on any impact the pandemic had had on adoption and special guardianship process. The Executive Director Families Children & Learning said that the Council had now moved to a regional agency and were now part of Adoption South East. There had been a reduction in the number of children being placed for adoption or subject to special guardianship orders, as the pandemic had affected court work which meant that there had been a delay in issuing court orders. The guidance was for care proceedings to be completed within 36 weeks and the Council were currently running at 66 weeks and was purely down to court availability. Cllr O'Quinn asked how many adoptions there were in Brighton & Hove last year, and was advised that that information wasn't available at the meeting and would be provided later.
- 23.3 Ms D Boyd asked what percentage of those those who were home educated or were identified as NEET had SEN, whether the Council consulted with service users when providing RAG ratings, and why residential placements were so high. The Service Manager, Policy & Business Support said that they did not have the percentage of SEN young people but would provide after the meeting and would ensure that that information

was included in future reports. With regard to RAG rating, the information used for this report was based on national criteria but different data was captured for each issue and they would look at that how could be provided in future reports. With regard to residential placements there had been a significant increase, with the placements being made for a number of reasons such as criminal or sexual exploitation, significant emotional health and wellbeing issues etc but there was also a national shortage of fostering placements.

- 23.4 Cllr Brown was concerned that there had been an increase in those being home educated and an increase in first time entrants to the youth justice system, but was pleased to note a reduction of the number of children in care, and asked why the music and arts service had a red RAG rating. The Assistant Director Education & Skills said the number of children being home educated, and the reasons for that, were closely monitored and said that other local authorities were also seeing an increase in numbers. With regard to music and arts, the red RAG was due to schools being closed and therefore not being able to use the Artsmark programme. The Executive Director Families Children referred to the increase in numbers to the youth justice system and said that overall the numbers were very low in the City but the increase was being addressed by the Adolescent Board which met
- 23.5 Cllr John noted the number of children being home educated and asked if many chose that option if they weren't allocated a preferred school, and was advised that there were a number of reasons for home education but some children were home educated whilst waiting for a place to become available at certain schools. Cllr Nield asked if a breakdown of the number of children being home educated and the reasons for it, and was advised that would be provided after the meeting. Cllr Hamilton noted that there had been a large increase in the number of children being home educated over the last two years and would also be interested in knowing the reasons why. The lawyer advised that the statutory framework for home education was limited, and the Council relied on parents sharing the reasons why and so any statistics may not be accurate.
- 23.6 Cllr Lloyd noted that emotional health had an amber RAG rating and asked what steps were being taken to address that. The Executive Director Families Children & Learning advised that the pandemic had impacted on provision, but the Foundations for Our Future was now being implemented and the school's Wellbeing Service were looking at ways to support young people.
- 23.7 RESOLVED:** That the Committee –
- (i) Noted the current performance of the directorate;
 - (ii) Noted the business and improvement plans for the year ahead.

24 HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR & SCHOOLS

- 24.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Families Children & Learning which updated the Committee on the work that had been implemented with schools and partners in the summer term of 2021 related to concerns around young people and Harmful Sexual Behaviours. The report was introduced by the Head of Safeguarding & Performance.

- 24.2 Cllr Nield asked if the Committee could be provided with copies of the PHSE education materials and was advised they could.
- 24.3 Cllr McNair noted that there was intervention from professional services but there was no mention of parents and asked how they were involved, and whether that would happen before formal referrals were made. The Head of Safeguarding & Performance confirmed that any referral should be considered with parents unless there was good reason not to. Cllr McNair asked in what circumstances parents would not be involved, and was advised that would be exceptional but would occur if it was felt that it could be unsafe for the child if the parents were aware of an allegation.
- 24.4 Ms D Boyd asked if children with SEN had access to the education material and whether they were adapted to be appropriate for everyone. The Head of Safeguarding & Performance confirmed that the educational material designed to be accessible for all young people. The lawyer confirmed that government guidance was that schools should take the lead and so it was expected that they would ensure that any educational materials was appropriate for their students.
- 24.4 Mr A Muirhead asked whether some schools may not be leading on this issue over concerns over reputation and, if there was a targeted intervention by schools on some individuals, would their parents need to have given their consent. The Head of Safeguarding & Performance said there was no indication that some schools were not fully engaging due to worries about reputation and the feedback from all schools was that they were very interested in this area. With regard to intervention by schools it could be part of a discussion with all pupils but there would be no targeted intervention with individual children without parental consent.
- 24.5 Cllr Grimshaw referred to paragraph 3.7 of the report regarding 1:1 support for boys and young men and asked for further information on how that would be undertaken, asked whether the PHSE was delivered to all pupils or if they could opt out, and if there could be gender-based discussions at schools to allow boys and girls to discuss the issues amongst themselves. The Head of Safeguarding & Performance said that with regard to support for boys/young men the Council's partners in Change Hub supported boys where issues raised were of a more serious nature and the Police & Crime Commissioner were taking a lead on adult men around harmful sexual behaviour, but this was area which the Council wanted to explore further. PHSE lessons were part of the school's curriculum so all children should take part but they would check after the meeting to confirm. The idea of gender-based discussion groups was good and would be discussed with the Schools Working Group.
- 24.6 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee noted this report and its contents including the next steps.

25 PROPOSAL TO RELOCATE WEST HOVE INFANT SCHOOL

- 25.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Families Children & Learning which sought approval for a public consultation to be undertaken to consider the possible relocation of the West Hove Infant School (Connaught Road) classes to the Hove

Junior School (Holland Road) site. The report was introduced by the Head of School Organisation.

- 25.2 Cllr Hamilton referred to paragraph 3.11 and asked if the numbers related to September 2020 or 2021, and was advised it was September 2021.
- 25.3 Cllr Grimshaw referred to paragraph 3.25 and asked if there was a back-up plan for accommodating the Health, SEN and Disability Services if the move was not agreed. The Head of School Organisation the Council would explore what services could be provided and where they could be based.
- 25.4 Cllr McNair asked why the potential move would take place in January 2022, and not in September 2022, and was advised that the date was being proposed by the school.
- 25.5 Cllr O'Quinn asked if there was any indication as to why some parents may not support the move, and was advised that some families may live close to the school or have a number of children who attended schools in different locations and so a relocation could impact on them.
- 25.6 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee agreed to a public consultation on the proposal to relocate the West Hove Infant School (Connaught Road) classes to the Hove Junior School (Holland Road) site with effect from January 2022.

26 SCHOOL OFSTED PRESENTATION

- 26.1 This item was agreed without discussion.
- 26.2 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee noted the presentation.

27 USE OF URGENCY POWERS SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

- 27.1 This item was agreed without discussion.
- 27.2 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee noted –
- (i) The use of urgency powers on 4 August 2021 to vary the council's admission arrangements so that the highest priority is given to: Looked after children and all previously looked after children, including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted;
 - (ii) That previously looked after children are defined within this priority as: such children who were adopted (or subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders) immediately following having been looked after and those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

28 ITEMS REFERRED FOR COUNCIL

28.1 **RESOLVED:** That no items be referred to Full Council on 21 October 2021.

The meeting concluded at 6.55pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of