

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2010

Present:

Councillor Robert Evans (Chairman)
Councillors Judi Ellis, Anne Manning, Karen Roberts and
Stephen Wells

Dolores Bray-Ash, Anton Herzog and Brian James
Alison Regester

Also Present:

Councillor Brian Humphrys and Councillor Ernest Noad

**144 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF
ALTERNATE MEMBERS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Michael Turner,
Councillor Martin Curry, Mrs Karen Nicholson, Reverend Canon John Smith
and Mrs Joan McConnell.

145 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Karen Roberts, Councillor Judi Ellis, Mr Brian James and Mrs
Alison Regester declared that their personal interests were the same as those
declared at previous Committee meetings.

**146 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE
PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING**

No questions were received.

**147 MINUTES OF THE CYP PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON
25 MARCH 2010**

The Democratic Services Officer reported that minutes 132f had been
amended to reflect that 67% of pupils received their first preference for
secondary admission.

Mr Brian James requested that minutes 132g be amended as it did not adequately reflect the point he had been making. The Committee agreed that the paragraph should be amended to reflect that funding for pupils with SEN from the Bromley Youth Music Trust Contract should not be additional sponsorship but a fair share of the budget allocated.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 25th March 2010 be agreed subject to the amendments outlined above.

148 PROGRESS ON MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Committee reviewed a report providing an update on recommendations from previous meetings.

The Chairman reported that that he had intended to ask Mrs McConnell about Catholic Representation on SACRE. He asked that this be followed up at the next meeting.

The Chairman also requested an update on the capital investment scheme at Bullers Wood. The Head of CYP Finance reported that Officers were awaiting further information from Langley School for Girls'. Once this had been received, a further report would be provided to the Committee.

With regard to Minute 132f, the Assistant Director Access and Inclusion had provided the analysis of pupils exported to Kent schools that had been requested by Members:

115 Bromley residents offered Kent Schools on 1 March 2010

Of these, 104 were offered grammar school places (55 girls and 49 boys)

The remaining 11 were all girls, of whom 9 applied for single sex and 2 mixed. However, the single sex school, Tthe Bradbourne, amalgamates with the Kent boys' school, The Wildernesse, in September 2010 and parents should have been made aware of this upon application as technically the 11 are all going to mixed schools.

Mr James reported that he had been in email contact with Officers regarding Information, Advice and Guidance services offered to young people with SEN. A meeting would take place in the coming weeks.

The Director CYP reported that she had been in touch with the Monitoring Officer regarding her query to the publication of the Children and Young People Plan. This query had been the result of a recent legislative change as ownership of the Plan lay with the CYP Trust Board but there had been an issue around the agent responsible for publication of the Plan. The Director CYP was still awaiting legal advice regarding this issue.

Councillor Humphrys highlighted a rumour he had heard regarding possible plans for Kent and Bexley to change their admission criteria for out-of-borough pupils. Councillor Humphrys questioned whether, if the rumours were true, the proposals could be challenged as they would go against the Greenwich judgement. Councillor Humphrys also suggested that the issue should be referred to the Admissions Forum. The Director CYP undertook to pursue this issue and obtain legal advice, as Local Authorities had to consult with neighbouring authorities before changing admission criteria, assurances were also provided that this would be added to the work programme for the Admission Forum.

Brian James reported that with reference to Minute 132f, he would be meetings with Heads for detailed follow-up on funding for Special Schools.

RESOLVED that progress on recommendation made at previous meetings be noted.

149 QUESTIONS TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS ATTENDING THE MEETING

No questions were received.

150 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO - PREVIOUS DECISIONS

The decisions taken by the Children and Young People Portfolio Holder since the last meeting on 25th March 2010 were noted.

151 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF REPORTS TO THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER

A) MEMBERSHIP OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

Members considered nominations for the appointment of LA Governors at eleven schools in the Borough. The Portfolio Holder noted that Crofton Infant School had four vacancies with nominations to three of these vacancies meaning that one vacancy would carry forward.

The Chairman noted that Mr Peter Woods had served on the Governing Body of Crofton Infant School for over 30 years and congratulated Mr Woods for his long service.

A Member stressed the importance of ensuring that when Parent Governors were nominated as Local Authority Governors by the governing body, they were aware of the difference between the two roles. The Committee recognised that considerable efforts had been made over the past year to clarify the difference in roles on governing bodies and to ensure that Local Authority Governors were representing the interests of the Local Authority.

RESOLVED that the proposed appointments be recommended for approval subject to CRB checks.

B) IMPROVING LIVES - SUPPORTING FAMILIES: DISABILITY STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN BROMLEY

The Portfolio Holder introduced a report outlining the Disability Strategy adopted by the Children's Trust on 23 November 2009, with the recommendation that it be submitted for scrutiny by the Children and Young People PDS Committee and for approval by the Children and Young People Portfolio Holder. The Portfolio Holder highlighted that the forward to the strategy had been agreed some weeks before the meeting, but that the strategy had not yet been approved.

The Assistant Director (Access and Inclusion) outlined that consultation had taken place with parents and young people, and that a lengthy action plan had been developed to address the priorities outlined in the report.

A Member expressed surprise at the large proportion of disabled young people who came from the more deprived parts of the Borough, and highlighted that some referrals received by the Early Support Pre-School Panel had not previously been known by the Panel, questioning the role of GPs in making referrals. The Assistant Director explained that the figures referred to by the Member related to children and young people who claimed Disability Living Allowance. With regard to referrals to the Panel, the Assistant Director explained that the young people referred to were identified early, in many cases between 0-2 years of age rather than reflecting a failure to identify children and young people with disabilities.

It was also suggested by a Member that it may be helpful to record within the strategy that the first Speech and Language Centre in the borough would be opening in September. The Assistant Director reported that the strategy had been written before the opening date of the centre had been finalised, but that this would be included in future updates.

A Co-opted Member suggested that it may be beneficial to highlight the vision of the Authority that disabled young people within the Borough have an experience of family life, and that this could have been emphasised more within the strategy. The Assistant Director reported that the Action Plan resulting from the strategy contained a number of actions with respect to this but it would have been very challenging to articulate this within the report and strategy. The Committee was assured that the majority of young people had family-based experiences. The Co-opted Members responded that whilst he accepted that it would be difficult he felt that it was nevertheless necessary as children with disabilities needed social, family-based interaction.

The Co-opted Member also reported that under the "Enjoying and Achieving" work stream, he had hoped that there would have been a commitment to link children who go to special schools with neighbourhood schools, as this would

help to develop a sense of community for disabled children. The Assistant Director gave assurances that this issue would be pursued by officers.

A Member who was a school governor in one of the more deprived areas of the borough reported that the strategy had not been provided to governing bodies for review. It was requested that the Committee recommend that geographical strategic planning was undertaken in order to ensure that schools did not act in isolation.

The Committee considered the accommodation available for Community Vision and Members highlighted the need to ensure that investment was secured to enable the excellent services provided by the Parent Partnership Service to continue.

A Co-opted Member also requested that when Officers consulted parents they ensured that a wide cross section of parents with children of a range of ages were included in consultation. The Assistant Director acknowledged that this had been recognised as a problem, as parents of older children tended to be more involved in consultations.

The Portfolio Holder stressed that the strategy was an evolving document and would be referred to the SEN Working Party for review.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to approve the disability strategy as the overarching document for improving services to disabled children and their families in Bromley.

C) COMMISSIONING INTENTIONS 2011/2012

The Portfolio Holder introduced a report providing details of the intended commissioning priorities for the Council's Children and Young People Service from April 2011, with the priorities reflecting those included within the Bromley Children and Young People's Plan (2009-2011). The report highlighted planned new areas of commissioning for 2011/2012; recurrent areas of general commissioning for 2011/2012 such as ongoing placement commissioning for Looked After Children and Children with Special Educational Needs; recurrent areas of commissioning for specific contracts and service level agreements with private, voluntary and other statutory agencies, with a whole of life value of £50,000 or higher that are due to end between 31 March 2011 and 31 March 2012.

A Member expressed surprise regarding the large number of providers for looked after children. The Strategic Commissioning Manager reported that placements were sourced from a number of providers in order to meet the wide range of needs that were catered for. The Strategic Commissioning Manager reported that Officers were reviewing provision in order to see how this could be improved.

A Co-opted Member raised the issue of developing the use of the third sector. The Director CYP reported that where a voluntary sector organisation was

able to deliver the required outcomes, services from the voluntary sector would continue to be utilised and new providers developed. The purpose of the paper being considered by the Committee was to formalise arrangements through the commissioning intentions outlined.

Another Co-opted Member reported that a number of pre-school providers were not aware of services provided at Children and Family Centres and requested that the advertising of services be reviewed. The Strategic Commissioning Manager reported that further guidance on how such opportunities were advertised would be provided.

Councillor Humphrys requested that Appendix 1 to the report be forwarded to the CYP Trust, as greater cross-working by partners would help ensure that services were not being duplicated.

The Chairman raised the issue of new commissioning arrangements for post-16 education and the Strategic Commissioning Manager clarified the arrangements that would be in place.

The Head of CYP Finance notified the Committee that a briefing paper had been prepared for the Committee in advance of the next meeting in June 2010. The briefing regarding the Transfer Of Funding & Commissioning To Bromley From The Learning And Skills Council (attached at Appendix 1 to the minutes) outlined that the Local Authority was currently making payments because of a statutory duty, but that a formal decision from the Executive and Full Council was required in order to transfer funding to the CYP budget.

The Portfolio Holder reported that he intended to refer the report to the CYP Trust Board for consideration.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to approve commissioning intentions for 2011/2012.

D) FUTURE SCHOOLS FUNDING 2011-2012 ONWARDS

The Portfolio Holder introduced a report providing information on the current consultation on school funding from 2011/2012 onwards.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to approve the response to the current consultation on school funding 2011-12 onwards.

E) CYP ROLLING WORK PROGRAMME 2009/10

The Committee considered the forward rolling work programme for the year ahead, based on items scheduled for decision by the Children and Young People Portfolio Holder and items for consideration by the Children and Young People Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee.

A Co-opted Member requested that as part of the first meeting a formal induction process take place to allow all Members on the Committee to develop an understanding of the areas of expertise of other Members. The Chairman reported that it had already been agreed that this would take place as part of the formal Member induction process.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio holder be recommended to approve the work programme for 2010-2011.

152 FOSTER CARER RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

The Committee considered a report commissioned by the CYP PDS Chairman in response to a Co-opted Member's request. This report provided information as to the progress of recruiting foster carers in general, and of the work being undertaken specifically to recruit foster carers for children and young people with complex needs. A comparison of costs associated with the provision of supporting children and young people through the fostering service against the cost of providing support through residential provision was also considered.

The Head of Social Care, Care and Resources reminded Members that the report should be considered within the context of a national shortage of foster carers of around 10,000 cares. This had meant that with the increase in the numbers of looked after children within the Borough it was a challenge to maintain services at the current level.

The Committee was told that there were 15 looked after children with disabilities supported by the borough. 4 were in foster care, 2 were in 38 week school placements returning home at weekends and school holidays, 1 was in a 38 week school placement including weekends but returning home for school holidays, 4 were in 52 week residential provision providing schooling and care, 3 were children's homes attending specialist schools local to their placements and 1 was in a children's home attending a specialist school returning home for two days a week. Of the 4 children who were in foster care, 3 were placed in-house with Bromley approved foster carers and one was placed with an independent fostering agency foster carer.

The Chairman referred to Appendix 1 of the report highlighting the difference in cost between in-house and agency foster carers. In response to a question from the Chairman regarding the action taken by the Council to increase the numbers of in-house foster carers, the Head of Social Care, Care and Resources reported that there was a range of media used to recruit foster carers such as posters, adverts in the local press, adverts on the back of supermarket till receipts and redesigned promotional materials. The Committee was also told that rates of remuneration in Bromley were more than comparable with other local authorities. Bromley foster carers were also paid a retainer to keep them within the Borough.

A Co-opted Member questioned the factual accuracy of the notes contained within Appendix 1 of the report. He spoke from personal experience as a

foster carer, highlighting where he felt support for foster carers should be improved in the future and suggesting that the issues could only be addressed with focus and creative thinking.

Another Co-opted Member underlined that local authority employees working with children and young people with special needs received additional remuneration, as it was recognised that this type of work was a unique vocation which required additional skills and talents.

A Member requested that the issue of the recruitment of foster carers be referred to the Corporate Parenting Group for further review. The Committee also requested that the Independent Chairman of the Foster Panel be made aware of relevant issues on the CYP PDS agenda by the Committee Administrator.

A Member asked that the objectives of the Fostering Strategy be reviewed as part of a future report to the Committee.

The Committee recognised that more training on foster placements for young people with disabilities needed to be offered in order to encourage more foster carers to come forward.

The Director confirmed that the issues raised would be followed up. That further analysis of the Fostering Strategy in respect of children with complex needs and disabilities could be undertaken and brought back into a relevant member working party – either the Executive Working Party SEN or Children's Social Care. That would include a business case to address any capital and revenue implications. The Director reminded the Committee that the agenda for foster care was currently being driven forward in the context of finite resources but also provided assurances that the issues would continue to be pursued in order to improve services.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

153 CYP ROLLING WORK PROGRAMME - FUTURE ITEMS FOR THE CYP PDS COMMITTEE

This item was considered at minute 151e.

154 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (VARIATION) ORDER 2006, AND THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

RESOLVED that the Press and Public be excluded during consideration of the items listed below as it was likely in view of the nature of the business transacted or the nature of the proceedings that if members of the press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.

**155 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE CYP PDS COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON 25 MARCH 2010**

RESOLVED that the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 25th March 2010 be agreed.

**156 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO - PREVIOUS
PART 2 DECISIONS**

The Committee noted exempt decisions taken by the Portfolio Holder since the last meeting held on 25th March 2010.

**157 EXTENSION OF THE CATERING CONTRACT AT THE
EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT CENTRE**

Members considered and supported the recommendations in the report.

**158 BROMLEY MENCAP CHILDMINDING NETWORK - CONTRACT
EXEMPTION PROPOSAL**

Members considered and supported the recommendations in the report.

The Chairman concluded the meeting by thanking all Members for their help and support over the past year. The Chairman also thanked Officers for the excellent reports that had been presented to the Committee and highlighted the high volume of work that was undertaken by the Department and the large volume of reports that were presented to the Committee.

Members of the Committee also thanked the Chairman and Vice-chairman for their leadership of the Committee over the past year.

The meeting ended at 8.47pm

Chairman