

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

SPECIAL MEETING

CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS COMMITTEE

5.00PM – 21 FEBRUARY 2006

COUNCIL CHAMBER BRIGHTON TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Hawkes (Chair), McCaffery (Deputy Chair), Brown (OS), Giebeler, Hazelgrove, John, Kemble, Mallender, Norman and Young.
Also present: Councillor Edmond-Smith and Councillor Watkins

PART ONE

ACTION

70. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

70A Declarations of Substitutes

70.1	<u>Substitute Councillor</u>	<u>For Councillor</u>
	Cllr Kemble	Cllr Hyde

70B Declarations of Interest

70.2 Cllr Giebeler declared that she was a governor at Hove Park School

Cllr Kemble declared that he was a governor of West Hove Infant School

Cllr McCaffery declared that she was a governor at Stanford Infant School and Varndean School

70C Exclusion of Press and Public

70.3 The Committee considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of any items contained in the agenda, having regard to the nature of the business to be transacted and the nature of the proceedings and the likelihood as to whether, if

members of the press and public were present, there would be disclosure to them of confidential or exempt information as defined in Section 100A(3) or 100 1 of the Local Government Act 1972.

70.4 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public not be excluded from the meeting during consideration of item 71.

70a PETITION – ON THE SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY

70a.1 The Chair agreed to allow Councillor Watkins to present a petition to the Committee. Councillor Watkins informed the Committee that the petition had 633 signatures. The wording of the petition was :

“Background

The Scrutiny Panel has referred the decision **not to change** the secondary school admissions policy back to the CFS (Children Families and Schools), because they felt that the consultation **process was flawed** and that the current system is **unfair** and discriminatory.

If you live in central Hove, Goldsmid, Brunswick and Adelaide, Regency, Hanover, Queens Park and other parts of East Brighton, your child may not be able to go to your local secondary school, unless the system is changed.

Please take this opportunity to sign this petition, calling on the CFS to make interim **changes now** that will make the system fairer for the Sept 2007 intake and beyond, so that our children are not discriminated against because of where they live.”

70a.2 **RESOLVED** – That the Petition be noted.

71. SCHOOLS ADMISSIONS REVIEW

71.1 The Committee noted that the decision made at the meeting held on 23rd January 2006 regarding Secondary School Admissions had been called-in under Article 11 of the Constitution. The call-in request had been submitted by Councillor Edmond-Smith and Councillor Pennington, who considered that the Children Families & Schools Committee's decision had not satisfied article 11.02(a) and 11.02(e) of the Constitution which states that council decisions should be made in accordance with the principles of proportionality and clarity of aims and desired outcomes. The matter was considered by the Education Overview and Scrutiny Panel at a meeting held on 7th February 2006. The Panel agreed to refer the matter back to the Children Families and Schools Committee.

71.2 The Committee considered the report of the Director of

Children Families and Schools relating to secondary school admission arrangements. The report informed the Committee of the decision of the Education Overview and Scrutiny Panel to refer the decision on secondary school admission arrangements back to the Children Families and Schools Committee. The Committee was asked to reconsider its decision in light of the arguments put forward by the Panel.

- 71.3 Councillor Edmond-Smith, as mover of the call-in request to Education Overview and Scrutiny Panel, was invited to address the Committee. Councillor Edmond-Smith stated why the decision of Children Families and Schools had been called-in.
- 71.4 The Committee considered the report. Councillor Brown (OS) said that following the 2002 scrutiny review, the admission criteria had been changed. Some members of the city were not happy with the changes and therefore a review group had been set up. When deciding one of the four options, it would be irresponsible to select an option which could either require further consultation or be open to legal challenge. There was currently a period of change with the possible implications from the White Paper and the possibility that Falmer High School might become an Academy. It was important that these issues were considered and a fair just and transparent solution found. Councillor Young said that the city was partly in favour and partly against any change to the admission criteria, and any change would affect the whole city. It was therefore important that a solution was found that was equal and fair to the whole city. Councillor Young would support the first option (5.6 (i)). Councillor Giebler said that there was no new information since the last meeting of the committee. Any decision made should not be party or ward led. The option suggested by the Green Party (5.6 (ii)) of the report, was not feasible and therefore would be supporting the first option. Councillor Hazelgrove agreed that the Working Group should be asked to look again at the decision and come back to the Committee in due course. Councillor Kemble felt the decision the Committee made at its last meeting was correct and would be happy to support the first option (5.6 (i)). Councillor Mallender said that there was a problem within the city and that the adoption of an interim solution for 2007 should be taken. Councillor Mallender confirmed that he would be supporting the third option (5.6 (iii)) notwithstanding

the legal advice given. Councillor McCaffery felt more work was still required at this stage and therefore would support the first option, the Green Party amendment was worth considering and would ask the Working Group to consider it. Councillor Norman noted that if the matter were referred back to the Working Group it would be important for full consultation to take place and for the consultation to be open.

71.5 The Committee considered the four options. The Committee would need to agree one of the options. The Chair suggested that a vote be taken on the first option, if that were agreed that option would be accepted. However, if that option were not agreed the Committee would then consider the second option and so on. The Committee agreed. The Committee considered the first option (5.6 (i)) and voted by a 9-1 majority to accept this option.

71.6 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the referral from the Education Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the reasons thereof be noted.

(2) That it was agreed to confirm the decision made on 23 January 2006 not to change the oversubscription criteria for 2007 and to ask the working group to do further modelling and consultation with a view to making changes in 2008.

David Hawker
Gil
Sweetenham

The meeting concluded at 5.50 pm

Signed

Chair

