



**Brighton & Hove  
City Council**

**CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE &  
SKILLS COMMITTEE  
ADDENDUM**

**4.00PM, MONDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2017**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL, NORTON ROAD,  
HOVE, BN3 4AH**



# ADDENDUM

**ITEM**

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**35 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Hertford Infant School Consultation</b> <b>Extract from the proceedings of the Council meeting</b> <b>held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2017</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>13 November 2017</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Lead for Strategy, Governance &amp; Law</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Mark Wall</b>	<b>Tel:</b> 01273 291006
	<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:mark.wall@brighton-hove.gov.uk">mark.wall@brighton-hove.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

***Action Required of the Children, Young People & Skills Committee***

To receive the item referred from the Council for consideration.

**Recommendations:**

- (1) That the petition be given consideration; and
- (2) That the Children, Young People & Skills Committee be requested to:
  - (a) receive a report outlining the options for maintaining the current entry intake for Hertford Infants, including consideration of the outcomes and feasibility of adjusting the numbers of other four-form schools; and
  - (b) That as part of the above report, an Equalities Impact Assessment be carried out on the reduction of Hertford Infant School intake for consideration.

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL****COUNCIL****4.30PM 6 APRIL 2017****COUNCIL CHAMBER, BRIGHTON TOWN HALL****DRAFT MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors Marsh (Chair), Simson (Deputy Chair), Atkinson, Barford, Barnett, Bell, Bennett, Bewick, Brown, Cattell, Chapman, Cobb, Daniel, Deane, Druitt, Gibson, Gilbey, Greenbaum, Hamilton, Hill, Horan, Hyde, Janio, Knight, Lewry, Littman, Mac Cafferty, Meadows, Mears, Miller, Mitchell, Moonan, Morgan, Morris, Nemeth, A Norman, K Norman, O'Quinn, Page, Peltzer Dunn, Penn, Phillips, Robins, Russell-Moyle, Sykes, Taylor, C Theobald, G Theobald, Wares, Wealls, West and Yates.

**33 PETITIONS FOR COUNCIL DEBATE****(b) HERTFORD INFANT SCHOOL CONSULTATION**

- 32.1 The Mayor stated that where a petition secured 1,250 or more signatures it could be debated at the council meeting. She had been made aware of two such petitions and would therefore take each in turn.
- 32.2 The Mayor then invited Jo Wilding as the lead petitioners to present the petition calling on the Council to abandon the proposal to halve the admission numbers for Hertford Infant School.
- 32.3 Ms. Wilding thanked that Mayor and confirmed that the petition had 1,570 signatures and stated that she and other parents had responded to the consultation but wanted the council to hear their concerns. If the proposal to reduce the class intake at Hertford Infant School was accepted it would effectively force children out of their preferred school. The school was successful and had high achievement levels when compared to others, with disadvantaged pupils achieving 12% higher than the city as a whole. If the intake was reduced it would lead to the school having to make cuts and face redundancy costs and yet the school was successfully reducing the gap between levels of achievement for pupils which was the local authority's aim. She hoped that the council would take the petition into account and reconsider the proposal to reduce the proposed admission numbers.
- 32.4 The Mayor thanked Ms. Wilding and called on Councillor Chapman as Chair of the Children, Young People & Skills Committee to respond to the petition.

- 32.5 Councillor Chapman thanked Ms. Wilding for presenting the petition and welcomed the level of interest in the consultation process and assured the council that all views expressed would be taken into consideration by the cross-party Working Group. He stated that no decisions had been made and noted that thirteen public meetings had been scheduled to take place across the city as part of the consultation process. The Working Group would consider all the feedback before submitting a report to the committee in January with recommendations for a way forward. He hoped that those parents who had not yet responded to the consultation would do so, in order to ensure all views could be taken into account.
- 32.6 The Mayor noted that there was an amendment to the recommendation to refer the petition to the Children, Young People & Skills Committee and called on Councillor Phillips to move the amendment on behalf of the Green Group.
- 32.7 Councillor Phillips moved the amendment on behalf of the Green Group and stated that the proposal to reduce the school's intake by 50% was unviable and that there was a need to give full consideration to the equalities impact assessment for the planned changes. She believed that options should be sought to prevent the closure of the school and to maintain the diversity that it had. There was a real concern that children would be forced into larger schools where they would suffer and yet the school was successfully closing the gap between disadvantaged pupils and high achievers.
- 32.8 Councillor Knight formally seconded the amendment.
- 32.9 Councillor Hill stated that she was a Governor of Hertford Infant School and had been granted dispensation to speak and vote on the issue. She was aware that the Working Group were looking at what was a complex matter and that there was a need to manage the situation that there would be too many places for too few children, which would put small schools at risk. She had attended the consultation meeting and had noted the huge level of support for Hertford Infants School in the local community.
- 32.10 Councillor Brown noted that five schools had been recommended to reduce their intake by 1 form entry as part of the pan reduction and of these Hertford Infants and Benfield Infants had expressed concern over the impact of a reduction. She had attended the consultation meeting at Benfield and it was clear how important it was to the community and how parents wished to support it and she acknowledged it was the same for Hertford Infants. She also noted that no decision had been made and that the committee would consider the recommendations of the Working Group in January.
- 32.11 Councillor Chapman noted the comments and stated that he understood the concerns of parents and pupils and noted that any changes to pupil numbers had to be considered in relation to all schools. He was happy to support the amendment but noted that the actions requested would be undertaken as part of the consultation process anyway. He also noted that the consultation concluded later in the month and again urged everybody to respond.
- 32.12 The Mayor noted that an amendment had been moved and put it to the vote which was carried.
- 32.13 The Mayor then put the recommendations as amended to the vote which were carried.

32.14 **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the petition be noted and referred to the Children, Young People & Skills Committee for consideration at its meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2017; and
- (2) That the Children, Young People & Skills Committee be requested to:
  - (a) receive a report outlining the options for maintaining the current entry intake for Hertford Infants, including consideration of the outcomes and feasibility of adjusting the numbers of other four-form schools; and
  - (b) That as part of the above report, an Equalities Impact Assessment be carried out on the reduction of Hertford Infant School intake for consideration.

## Petition

### **We the undersigned petition Brighton & Hove Council to abandon the proposal to halve the admission numbers for Hertford Infant School.**

1. The Infant and Junior Schools are the heart of our community and play an important role in many of the improvements to our neighbourhood in recent years.
2. Reducing the intake in the infant school will feed through to the junior school and mean significant cuts to the budgets of these schools in an area which is already recognised as one of the most deprived in the city, to the disadvantage of children who are already underprivileged.
3. While we acknowledge that there may for (at the moment) a dip in the child population in Brighton as a whole, we do not believe this is the case in Hollingdean.
4. A number of new houses are being built or planned in our neighbourhood, including two- and three-bedroom council houses which will most likely be allocated to families with children, maintaining the child population in this area.
5. We are concerned that no alternatives appear to be under consideration, such as reducing the intake of one of the four-class entry schools to three, instead of halving Hertford's entry and forcing local children out of their closest school.
6. Not all children or families would be comfortable with a four-class entry school, yet many families would be left with no choice. The two Hertford schools offer great green space, dedicated provision for special needs and a small enough school that all adults and all children know one other – but again some children would be forced out into much bigger schools.
7. We request that an Equalities Impact Assessment be carried out before any more consideration is given to reducing the size of Hertford's intake.
8. We request that the entry capacity of both Hertford Infant and Hertford Junior School remain at sixty per year.



**Subject:** Deputations  
**Date of Meeting:** 13 November 2017  
**Report of:** Monitoring Officer  
**Contact Officer: Name:** Lisa Johnson **Tel:** 29-1228  
**E-mail:** lisa.johnson@brighton-hove.gov.uk  
**Wards Affected:** Various

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting of the Council for the hearing of deputations from members of the public. Each deputation may be heard for a maximum of five minutes.

Deputations received:

**1. (i) Benfield Primary School**

Our school is a wonderful caring environment

We are so fortunate to have a brilliant team of staff who truly value each child that walks into the classrooms. Under these proposals, staff jobs would be lost, these wonderful educators would be lost to the children of Portslade.

If, for example you look at Benfield's SATs results you will see they are in the top 25% of the country for pupil progress. That means, that from whatever starting point a child arrives at school on their first day, pupils leave Benfield having achieved the absolute best for them, this is a true measure of a schools success.

How can it be right that the council want to deny children access to this fantastic education, by reducing its intake by 50% ?

Reducing Benfield's intake by 50% will leave just one 2 form entry school in Portslade, severely limiting a parents choice when choosing a school for their child. This 2 form entry school is also a faith school with a faith selection criteria, so what are you supposed to do if you are opposed to a faith education, or indeed that particular faith but would like a larger than one form entry school.

Benfield has seen its number of first choice preferences increasing, if this trend continues, it will become oversubscribed, meaning parents would not get their first choice of school.

Money is important, however, reducing Benfield by 50% will not actually save the council anything. Each child carries a pot of money with them, whichever school they attend. Benfield has forecasted itself to remain on budget for the next 3 years, indeed it has no budget deficit, it manages finances based on what it has. The school if numbers are reduced would see a reduction in funding, but other local schools would see an increase as pupils that would have chosen Benfield are forced to go elsewhere. There is also a question about how viable one form entry schools are long term. We can't help but wonder the longer term game plan is here.

It feels short sighted of the council to be reducing primary schools when set against the number of houses due to be built in the next few years as per the city plan.

We are also concerned that the council has not properly looked at all the options, for example reducing one of the local 3 or 4 form entry schools by a form instead, this would undoubtedly have a lesser impact on those schools than on ours.

Benfield recently became a national teaching school, based on a 2 form entry intake. This is a highly prestigious status and the council should be supporting the school with this, not making it harder for them, this status would come under threat if the numbers are reduced.

The council themselves said of this status

"We have just heard that Benfield Primary School has been awarded national teaching school status. This is excellent news for the school and a recognition of the huge improvements that have taken place in the school in recent years. It is also good news for the city as it provides us with a second teaching school partnership, greater opportunity to access national school improvement resources and more support available for our schools locally". This quote is from the Children Young People and Skills committee meeting on June 19th 2017, the very committee who now are targeting our school.

If they recognise the clear benefits to both the school and the city as a whole that this teaching school status brings, why would they put that status under threat.

This council is making decisions based on statistics. What it is not seeing is the school community, the true diversity of its families and the wide range of abilities that it caters for every day. It feels a little bit like the council are targeting those families, we have asked them to conduct an equalities impact assessment to properly examine how the local community as a whole would be affected by this decision but as yet we have had no response.

The school are actively opposed to this decision, not because they are worried about jobs or funding but because they can see that it would be a truly terrible thing to happen to those and all our children, both currently in the school and those yet to arrive in years to come.

Supported by:

Ms P Rayner  
Mr S Fitzsimons  
Ms J Prior  
Ms E Newman  
Mr S Theobald  
Ms N Donnelly  
Ms S Scerri

## **1. (ii) Secondary School Catchment Areas**

We believe these proposals will not solve the problem of catchments failing to catch in 2019/20 for a number of reasons. Our opposition is not about the quality of one school over another. We recognise that all the city's schools are striving to offer the best education they can. We also recognise that these are difficult issues and the Council's power to act is constrained by national policy.

However, in the short time we have had to study and understand the situation, it is clear that there are alternative changes that might have had more impact on the problem and less impact on families. This process has not given us the option of putting forward or considering these more palatable alternatives. We would be happy to provide details on these different options if asked.

The desire to make so-called 'light touch' changes has resulted in proposals that pick off small numbers of pupils from multiple locations around the edges of the central catchment areas and herein lies the core of opposition. The actual numbers of children moving catchment in each area is tiny, evidenced by the small numbers attending the consultation events. Affected families feel targeted, isolated, split from their historic communities and out on a limb. As a result, the impact on those families and children is huge but the benefit to the overall catchment issue is questionable.

To give just one example, Council data says 30 children currently in Y5 at Elm Grove Primary School will move into the Longhill catchment. However, rather than relying on data projections and spreadsheets, we surveyed one Elm Grove Y5 class and found that, taking into account existing sibling links, there are only 4 children who would actually have to move catchment.

The number of children actually moving catchment are too few to make an impact on the catchment problem, too few to become a cohort that moves confidently together and too few to be given the kind of bespoke transport that would be required for a journey to school that cannot be made on foot. Distances to travel and transport options for those families slated to move

catchment is another major cause of opposition to these proposals and goes against Council policy to encourage walking to school.

We want a decent secondary catchment system that works for the whole city, and agree that something needs to be done, but this is not the right solution. Changes must be made after the situation with the new school is resolved and a long-term, permanent change can be made. For the affected families, the temporary nature of these proposals compounds the anxiety and uncertainty, especially for those with siblings going to secondary school after 2019/20.

We urge the Working Group to consider the offer from head teachers to increase admission numbers at the oversubscribed schools. We appreciate the offer would have been better made before the proposals were formed but we beg you to put aside any frustration with the timing and consider what is best for the children of the city. Children and families are not political or administrative footballs.

We understand that the Council is fearful of legal challenge if it does not move to improve the problem with catchment areas. We regret that should these proposals be recommended, we will be forced to consider all options available including the possibility of a legal challenge.

Finally, we would like it formally noted as part of the consultation response that are two petitions open (from the North of Elm Grove area and in West Hove). Requests have been lodged to present both to full Council on December 14<sup>th</sup>.

Supported by:

Mr D Boyle

Ms J Ryan

Ms S Lillis

Dr C Packham

Ms B Escorihuela