

Special Council

Date: **21 May 2026**
Time: **3.00pm**
Venue: **Council Chamber, Brighton Town Hall**
Members: **Councillors:** Grimshaw (Chair), Asaduzzaman, Atkinson, Alexander, Allen, Bagaeen, Baghoth, Cattell, Czolak, Daniel, Davis, Earthey, Evans, Fishleigh, Fowler, Galvin, Gauge, Goddard, Goldsmith, Guilmant, Helliwell, Hewitt, Hill, Hogan, Lademacher, Loughran, Lyons, Mackey, McGregor, McLeay, McNair, Meadows, Miller, Muten, Nann, Oliveira, Parrott, Pickett, Robins, Robinson, Rowkins, Sankey, Shanks, Sheard, Simon, Sykes, Taylor, C Theobald, Thomson, West, Wilkinson, Winder and Williams.

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Chief Executive
Hove Town Hall
Norton Road
Hove BN3 3BQ

Date of Publication - Wednesday, 13 May 2026

AGENDA

Part One

Page

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- (a) Disclosable pecuniary interests;
- (b) Any other interests required to be registered under the local code;
- (c) Any other general interest as a result of which a decision on the matter might reasonably be regarded as affecting you or a partner more than a majority of other people or businesses in the ward/s affected by the decision.

In each case, you need to declare

- (i) the item on the agenda the interest relates to;
- (ii) the nature of the interest; and
- (iii) whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest or some other interest.

If unsure, Members should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer or Democratic Services Officer preferably before the meeting.

2 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS.

To receive communications from the Mayor.

3 TO RECEIVE PETITIONS AND E-PETITIONS.

To receive petitions related to the item of business on the agenda, to be presented to the Mayor by members of the public and/or Members as notified by the due date of 12Noon 15 May 2026.

4 WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

A list of public questions related to the item of business on the agenda received by the due date of 12noon on 15 May 2026 will be circulated separately as part of an addendum for the meeting.

5 DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

A list of deputations related to the item of business on the agenda received by the due date of 12noon on 15 May 2026 will be circulated separately as part of an addendum for the meeting.

REPORTS FOR DECISION

6 PROPOSED CLOSURE OF MIDDLE STREET PRIMARY SCHOOL

7 - 78

Contact Officer: Richard Barker
Ward Affected: All Wards

Tel: 01273 290732

7 CLOSE OF MEETING

The Mayor will move a closure motion under Procedure Rule 17 to terminate the meeting 4 hours after the beginning of the meeting (excluding any breaks/adjournments).

Note:

1. *The Mayor will put the motion to the vote and if it is carried will then:-*

(a) *Call on the Member who had moved the item under discussion to give their right of reply, before then putting the matter to the vote, taking into account the need to put any amendments that have been moved to the vote first;*

(b) *Each remaining item on the agenda that has not been dealt with will then be taken in the order they appear on the agenda and put to the vote without debate.*

The Member responsible for moving each item will be given the opportunity by the Mayor to withdraw the item or to have it voted on. If there are any amendments that have been submitted, these will be taken and voted on first in the order that they were received.

(c) *Following completion of the outstanding items, the Mayor will then close the meeting.*

2. *If the motion moved by the Mayor is **not carried** the meeting will continue in the normal way, with each item being moved and debated and voted on.*

3. *Any Member will still have the opportunity to move a closure motion should they so wish. If such a motion is moved and seconded, then the same procedure as outlined above will be followed.*

Once all the remaining items have been dealt with the Mayor will close the meeting.

FOR INFORMATION

The City Council actively welcomes members of the public and the press to attend its meetings and holds as many of its meetings as possible in public. Provision is also made on the agendas for public questions to committees and details of how questions can be raised can be found on the website and/or on agendas for the meetings.

The closing date for receipt of public questions and deputations for the next meeting is 12 noon on the fourth working day before the meeting.

Meeting papers can be provided, on request, in large print, in Braille, on audio tape or on disc, or translated into any other language as requested.

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Therefore, by entering the meeting room and using the seats in the chamber you are deemed to be consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for the purpose of web casting and/or Member training. If members of the public do not wish to have their image captured, they should sit in the public gallery area.

Access notice

The Public Gallery is situated on the second floor of the Town Hall and is limited in size but does have 3 spaces designated for wheelchair users. There is an accessible lift to the second floor and an automatic door and ramped access to the public gallery. There is a wheelchair accessible WC close by. The seated spaces available in the public gallery can be used by disabled people who are not wheelchair users, but able to use bench style seating.

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Visitors are admitted on condition that they allow themselves and their belongings to be searched.

You will be asked to sign in upon arrival and may be asked to show proof of identity.

The following items are not permitted at any of our meetings:

- Sharp items e.g. knives (including Swiss army knives) scissors, cutlery and screwdrivers;
- Paint spray or similar items;
- Padlocks, chains and climbing gear;
- Items that make a noise (e.g. whistles, loud hailers, mega phones); and,
- Banners, placards and flags or similar items.

Please restrict the size of bags brought to meetings as there are no facilities for storage of bags or other personal items – all bags will be searched upon entry. You may also be subject to secondary searches once inside the meeting.

Conduct at meetings

Councillors must be able to make themselves heard on behalf of those they represent.

The Mayor or the Chair will not allow behaviour that disrupts council business. Under the Council's Constitution, Part 3A, Council Procedure Rules 16.2 -16.3, at any meeting of the Council, the Mayor has the power to order the removal of any member of the public who:

- interrupts the proceedings
- acts in a way that impacts the proper and orderly conduct of the meeting

In the interest of order during a meeting, the Mayor may suspend or adjourn a meeting. We would ask that you respect these arrangements for the benefit of all those attending and participating and to ensure that Council meetings are able to proceed safely in public.

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If the fire alarm sounds continuously, or if you are instructed to do so, you must leave the building by the nearest available exit. You will be directed to the nearest exit by council staff. It is vital that you follow their instructions:

- You should proceed calmly; do not run and do not use the lifts;
- Do not stop to collect personal belongings;
- Once you are outside, please do not wait immediately next to the building, but move some distance away and await further instructions; and
- Do not re-enter the building until told that it is safe to do so

The Town Hall has a specially designed lift that can be used in the event of an emergency evacuation. The size of the refuge areas (in the fire protected areas where people unable to use the stairs will wait to be assisted from the building via the lift), will accommodate 2 wheelchair users and several standing users.

Further information

For further details and general enquiries about this meeting contact Anthony Soyinka, (01273 291006, email anthony.soyinka@brighton-hove.gov.uk) or email democratic.services@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Brighton & Hove City Council

Council

Agenda Item 6

Subject: Proposed Closure of Middle Street Primary School

Date of meeting: 21 May 2026

Report of: Corporate Director for Families, Children & Wellbeing

Contact Officer: Name: Richard Barker, Head of Education
Email: Richard.Barker@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: All

Key Decision: Yes

Reason(s) Key: Significant impact on 2 or more Wards

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

1.1 On the 19 March 2026 Cabinet approved the publication of a Statutory Notice in respect of the proposed closure of Middle Street Primary School with effect from 31 August 2026. The four week statutory representation period ran from 8 April to 5 May 2026. This report presents the representations received during that period, addresses the matters raised, and seeks Full Council's approval to proceed with the closure.

1.2 In response to the fall in primary numbers both in Brighton and Hove and nationally, and the consequential impact on schools' finances and the Council's own funding position, in addition to specific school based specific factors, it is proposed that Middle Street Primary School is closed. This proposal will assist in addressing the number of unfilled places in the city, having considered the longer-term viability of the school in relation to pupil numbers, financial viability and the availability of places in the surrounding area.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Full Council notes the eleven formal representations received during the statutory representation period (ten individual and one communal) and the Council's response to the matters raised, as set out in Section 4 of this report.

2.2 That Full Council agrees to the proposal to close Middle Street Primary School with effect from 31 August 2026.

2.3 That Full Council notes the arrangements in place to support the transition of pupils, staff and families.

3. Context and background information

School Context

- 3.1 An Interim Executive Board (IEB) was appointed in June 2025 following serious concerns about governance and financial viability. Over seven months the IEB assessed a range of options for the school's future, including continuing as a standalone school, joining a Multi-Academy Trust, and forming a federation with another local school. In December 2025 the IEB voted to pursue federation as its preferred option, subject to financial modelling.
- 3.2 Between December 2025 and January 2026, the school experienced a rapid decline in pupil numbers. By January 2026, 42 pupils had left the school since the start of the academic year and only three first-preference applications had been received for Reception in September 2026, against a planned admission number of 30. The financial model underpinning the federation plan required a minimum annual Reception intake of 15 pupils; the January figures made this untenable.
- 3.3 On 15 January 2026 the IEB unanimously concluded that the school no longer had a viable future and recommended that the Council launch a public consultation on closure with effect from 31 August 2026.
- 3.4 The school currently has 37 children on roll, with more pupils planning to leave in the following weeks, against a capacity of 210 pupils. The school is forecasting a final deficit of around £332,000 for 2025/2026 and there is no financial plan that demonstrates a return to a balanced budget, in a reasonable timescale. Current pupil numbers, by year group, are set out below:

School	Yr R	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6*
Middle Street Primary School	1	2	2	2	1	2	27

**Year 6 pupils will transition to secondary school in September 2026.*

Statutory Process

- 3.5 Middle Street Primary School is a community primary school, and the Council has the power under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to put forward proposals to close the school and to subsequently make a decision on those proposals.
- 3.6 The Department for Education has issued Statutory Guidance (“the guidance”) on the process that must be followed to close a maintained school “Opening and closing maintained schools – Statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers (October 2024)”.
- 3.7 The statutory guidance details some of the reasons why a school closure might be considered including where there are surplus places elsewhere in

the local area which can accommodate pupils requiring an alternative school place, and where there is no predicted demand for the school in the medium to long term and the school is no longer considered viable.

- 3.8 When seeking to close a school the Council is required to follow the processes set out in the Guidance. In particular the Guidance sets out the considerations that should be taken into account by the decision maker when deciding proposals to discontinue (close) a school. It requires that the decision maker should have due regard to all responses received during the representation period and be satisfied that the proposer has carried out the requirements of the statutory process satisfactorily.
- 3.9 As required under the statutory process, a public consultation on the proposals was held and ran from 26 January 2026 to 9 March 2026. Three public meetings were held, and a staff meeting took place on 26 February 2026. Cabinet considered the outcome of the consultation at its meeting on 19 March 2026 and approved publication of a statutory notice, noting that a further report would be brought to Full Council for a final decision. The March 2026 report is included as Appendix 4. The evidence and rationale for the decision to move to the statutory notice period is set out in that report.
- 3.10 The statutory notice was published on 8 April 2026. The representation period ran from 8 April 2026 to 5 May 2026. During this time eleven formal representations were received.

Representations Received

- 3.11 Eleven representations were received: ten from individuals and one submitted on behalf of the Middle Street community and signed by 22 named individuals. The communal representation is a considered and substantive document, and the Council is grateful to those who took the time to prepare it. Its authors expressly acknowledge the wider pressures facing the city’s school estate and do not assert that closure is necessarily the wrong outcome: rather, they ask the Council to satisfy itself that the evidential basis for the decision is complete, transparent, and robust.
- 3.12 The representation raises six broad matters which are addressed below.
- 3.13 **Completeness of the decision-making record** – the representation notes a significant and rapid deterioration in the school’s position between late 2024 and early 2026 and asks whether decision-makers and consultees were provided with a full and consistent account of the chronology of key risks and decisions. The Council accepts that the pace of deterioration was rapid, and that this created difficulties for all involved, including those seeking to understand how the school’s position had developed. The following chronology is provided by the Council for completeness:

May 2025	Warning Notice issued to Middle Street Governing Board by the Council
June 2025	IEB appointed by the Council to replace the Governing Board, follow escalating concerns about governance and financial management

July to November 2025	IEB undertook a detailed assessment of the school's position, including review of finances, staffing, pupil projections and options for the future.
16 December 2025	IEB voted to pursue federation as the preferred option, subject to a financial model requiring a minimum Reception intake of 15 pupils.
January 2026	Pupil numbers fell sharply. Only 3 first preference Reception applications were received for September 2026. The IEB assessed that the December federation model was no longer financially tenable and increased risks that had been previously identified.
15 January 2026	IEB unanimously concluded that the school was not financially viable and recommended that the Council undertake a consultation on closure.
19 January 2026	Ward Councillors and Unions were notified of the intention to consult on a proposal to close the school.
26 January 2026	Staff, parents, Headteachers across the city, the DFE Regional Director and Ofsted were informed of the public consultation. Public consultation was launched.
February – March 2026	Two in-person public consultation meetings were held (10 and 25 February), an in-person staff consultation meeting was held (26 February) and an online consultation meeting was held (4 March).
19 March 2026	Cabinet considered the consultation outcomes and approved publication of a statutory notice.
8 April 2026	Statutory notice was published and the representation period opened.
8 April – 5 May 2026	Representation period of 4 weeks was in place.

- 3.14 The Council acknowledges that the IEB Governing Board minutes prior to 16 January 2026 did not signal imminent closure, however this reflected the genuine position had changed as the financial and admissions picture developed. The December 2025 federation option was the IEB's preferred route at that point, it became untenable in January 2026 once the admissions data was confirmed and the financial assumptions underpinning it could not be met.
- 3.15 The Council is satisfied that the decision-making record is complete and that the chronology above, read alongside the IEB's published minutes and the Cabinet Report of 19 March 2026 provides a full account of the process.
- 3.16 **Consultation Fairness** – the representation raised awareness of whether the consultation met the standard of fairness required under public law. In particular, confidentiality constraints limited meaningful understanding, and

whether the timing of the proposal itself contributed to declining pupil numbers.

3.17 The Council is satisfied that the consultation was conducted in accordance with public law requirements and the DfE's guidance. Three public meetings were held, a staff meeting was convened, written consultation was open for six weeks, and all relevant parties were notified at the outset. The Council acknowledges that some information relating to the school's governance and HR position could not be fully disclosed in a public forum. This was not a decision taken to manage the narrative, but reflected the Council's legal obligations around data protection, employment law, and the fair treatment of individuals. The IEB's published minutes set out as much of the relevant context as could lawfully be shared. The interaction between the statutory proposal process and the admissions cycle is an unavoidable structural feature of school closure processes. Parents facing uncertainty about a school's future need to assess the situation and make reasonable decisions in the best interests of their children. Although the loss of pupils was unfortunate and did not follow the pattern of previous proposed closures, it did not affect the underlying financial position before the consultation was announced and the January 2026 admissions data confirmed a picture that was already emerging.

3.18 **Consideration of Alternatives** – the representation asked for greater transparency about what specific steps were taken to explore alternatives to closure, which organisations were approached and what financial or operational assumptions were applied. The IEB assessed the following options in detail:

- Continuing as a standalone primary school with a substantive Headteacher, this was assessed as not financially viable given the scale of the deficit and the trajectory of pupil numbers.
- Joining a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT), the IEB explored whether a MAT would consider taking on the school. No MAT was willing to absorb a school with a deficit of the scale projected without significant financial underwriting from the Council. The Council's own financial position does not allow for this level of ongoing subsidy.
- Federation with another local primary school under a full-time Headteacher model, this was assessed as potentially viable in principle, but requiring a minimum Reception intake of 15 pupils per year to be financial sustainable. The January 2026 admissions position made this untenable.
- Federation with a part-time Executive Headteacher and Head of School model to reduce costs, similarly assessed as requiring a minimum Reception intake of 15 and additional stability of numbers across year groups that could not be guaranteed.
- A four-class structure, modelled as potentially balancing by 2028 under optimal conditions, but requiring full classes and capped staffing costs. The January 2026 pupil numbers made this unachievable within a reasonable planning horizon.

3.19 The Council is therefore satisfied that the IEB conducted a thorough and

detailed alternatives appraisal. The conclusion that closure was the only viable course of action was not reached without serious and sustained consideration of other options. The IEB's published minutes (attached at Appendix 5) set out this analysis and explored whether a structured transitional period could stabilise the school's position before a more permanent model was put in place. The rapid deterioration in pupil numbers in January 2026 meant that any transitional model would have required the Council to underwrite an escalating deficit with no credible prospect of recovery within a manageable timeframe.

- 3.20 **Role of governance and oversight factors** – the representation asks the Council to consider whether governance contributed to the school's current position, and whether this has been adequately investigated. The Council accepts that the school experienced a prolonged period of governance and staffing instability, and that this had an impact on the school's reputation and on parental confidence. The appointment of the IEB in June 2025 was a direct response to those concerns. One of the IEB's responsibilities was to assess the school's position including the extent to which its current circumstances were the product of identifiable and addressable failures, or whether they reflected structural factors that would persist regardless of any intervention. The IEB's conclusion, reached after seven months of intensive engagement with the schools, was that it was the combination of factors, financial, organisational and reputational that had produced a position from which the school could not recover within a timeframe consistent with financial sustainability.
- 3.21 The Council acknowledges that questions have been raised, both during the consultation and in the formal representation, about the adequacy of the Council's oversight of the school prior to the IEB's appointment. The Council is committed to reviewing the lessons learnt from this process as part of its broader school improvement and governance oversight work. However, the main consideration when considering the closure proposal is the current position of the school and whether there is a credible and sustainable path forward. On the evidence available, the Council is satisfied that there is not.
- 3.22 **Equality and Community Impact** – the representation emphasised the disproportionate impacts identified in the Equalities Impact Assessment on pupils with SEND, families from racially minoritised backgrounds, English as an Additional Language families and vulnerable or disadvantaged households and asks that these impacts receive full and conscientious consideration rather than being treated as a procedural requirement. The Council takes disproportionate impacts seriously and a full Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and appended to this report.
- 3.23 The Council acknowledges that Middle Street Primary School serves a diverse community, including families for whom the school's non-faith status, central location, inclusive ethos, and EAL support were decisive factors in their choice of school. The potential loss of that provision will have a genuine and material impact.

3.24 Of the 10 children remaining in Reception to Year 5 after May half-term, the pupil group breakdown is below:

Indicator	Number	%
EAL	3	30%
EHCP	4	40%
FSM	7	70%
LAC	0	0%

Ethnicity	Number	%
White British	6	60%
Any Other Asian Background	2	20%
Other/Not Stated	2	20%

A transition support group, including educational psychologists and admissions staff are working closely with receiving schools to ensure that the needs of all pupils, including those with protected characteristics, are identified and met.

3.25 **Request for further clarification** – the representation requests clarification on five specific matters. The Council’s responses are set out above.

The representation additionally queried considerations relating to the future use of the site might have influenced the proposal. The Council confirms that the proposal to close the school has been made solely on educational and financial grounds. As a community school, the building and land are the responsibility of the Council and any decisions about the future use of the site are a separate matter that will be subject to its own statutory processes, including the appropriate engagement with Councillors.

3.26 **Representations received via the Your Voice portal** – ten of the eleven formal representations were submitted by individuals through the Council’s Your Voice portal during the statutory representation period. The representations are largely opposed to the closure and raise a consistent set of themes, which the Council has considered carefully. Several respondents emphasise the school’s distinctive central Brighton location, its non-faith and inclusive ethos, its provision for pupils who do not thrive in larger settings, and its support for pupils with SEND and EAL needs. A number of respondents also question the management of the school’s decline, suggesting that earlier intervention and stronger oversight could have prevented the current position, and that the timing of the consultation contributed to the loss of pupils. Other respondents highlight accessibility for families without cars, longer journeys to alternative schools, and the broader value of the school as a community asset. The matters raised through the portal substantially overlap with those addressed in the communal representation above and the Council’s responses on the completeness of the decision-making record, the fairness of the consultation, the consideration of alternatives, the role of governance and oversight, and equality and community impact apply equally to those

representations. The full representations received through the Your Voice portal are appended to this report (Appendix 3).

- 3.27 **Integration and community cohesion** - the statutory guidance requires decision makers to consider the impact of a closure proposal on integration and community cohesion, having regard to the Integrated Communities Action Plan and any local strategies. Middle Street Primary School serves a diverse community, and its non-faith status, central location, and inclusive ethos have been important to many of the families who chose the school. The Council recognises that closure will represent a loss to that community. However, all of the receiving schools within 1.5 miles offer a broad and balanced curriculum, promote fundamental British values, and welcome pupils of all faiths and none. The transition support group, working with admissions staff and educational psychologists, will support displaced pupils to settle into receiving schools and to maintain the relationships and sense of belonging they have built. The Council is therefore satisfied that the proposal does not undermine integration or community cohesion across the city, and that displaced pupils will continue to be educated within welcoming inclusive school communities.
- 3.28 **Travel** – the statutory guidance requires the decision maker to consider how children will travel to school, including journey times and travel costs for families, and to be satisfied that proposals do not adversely impact any particular group, including those with protected characteristics or who are disadvantaged. The Council has considered these matters carefully. There are 442 available places at primary schools within 1.5 miles of Middle Street Primary School, and the Council expects the majority of families to be able to access an alternative school without significantly extending their journey. Several respondents to the consultation and the representation period have raised the importance of the school’s central location to families without cars, and the Council acknowledges that for some families journey times will increase. Transport assistance will be considered for individual families, once an alternative school place is known, in line with the Council’s Home to School Transport Policy and its statutory duties. Where pupils are eligible for free school meals, pupil premium, or have an EHCP, the Council will give particular attention to ensuring that travel arrangements do not place additional burdens on those families. The Council also notes the submission received from the Living Streets Brighton and Hove Group during the consultation and remains committed to promoting sustainable travel to school across the city.
- 3.29 **Special Educational Needs** – the statutory guidance requires the decision maker to consider the arrangements in place to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). At the time of the representation period, six pupils on roll at Middle Street Primary School (13% of the cohort) had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The Council recognises that the school has been valued by families of children with SEND, and that change can be particularly disruptive for these pupils. A bespoke transition plan will be developed for every pupil with an EHCP, and in consultation with parents and the SEN Team will work with receiving schools to ensure that EHCPs are actively reviewed where necessary. Any

pupils on SEN Support will also be supported through the transition, with information shared between schools to ensure continuity of provision. The Council is satisfied that there is sufficient capacity within receiving primary schools to meet the needs of all displaced pupils with SEND, and that the arrangements in place are consistent with the Council's duties under the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice.

- 3.30 **Staffing** - Should the school close, 21 of the 35 staff posts will be at risk of redundancy. A seven week staff redundancy consultation ran from 9 February to 27 March 2026. The Council will recommend that affected staff are given priority consideration for roles in other schools prior to any external recruitment. Individual HR support, including access to the employee assistance programme, will be available to all affected staff.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 Having considered the representations received, the Council remains of the view that closure of Middle Street Primary School with effect from 31 August 2026 is the appropriate course of action.
- 4.2 The school is operating with a significant deficit, forecast at around £332,000 for 2025/2026 with 37 children on roll, with a further number due to leave in the following weeks, against a capacity of 210, with no credible financial plan that demonstrates a return to viability.
- 4.3 The IEB, appointed specifically to assess the school's position and explore options for recovery, concluded after seven months that critical risk factors severely limit the school's ability to recover. That conclusion followed a thorough consideration of all credible alternatives, as summarised above.
- 4.4 Pupil numbers across Brighton & Hove's primary sector do not indicate a future rise in pupil numbers. The Council forecasts 482 surplus places across the city in September 2026, rising to 638 in September 2027. Maintaining the school open in these circumstances would increase pressure on other schools' budgets and risk widening financial sustainability challenges across the estate.
- 4.5 There are 442 available places within 1.5 miles of Middle Street Primary School. The Council is satisfied that sufficient capacity exists to accommodate all displaced pupils.

School	(Metres)	(Miles)	R	1	2	3	4	5
St Paul's CE Primary School	613.65	0.38	6	5	6	14	3	0
St Mary Magdalen's RC School	757.05	0.47	0	8	*2	6	2	1
Carlton Hill Primary School	1136.81	0.71	0	0	*0	0	0	0
Queens Park Primary School	1548.39	0.96	23	10	25	19	19	18
Brunswick Primary School	1576.36	0.98	7	12	4	13	17	22
Stanford Junior School	1762.99	1.1	~	~	~	10	39	0
Hove Junior School - Holland Rd	1765.93	1.1	~	~	~	6	9	21
West Hove Infant School - Holland Road	1766.3	1.1	4	0	14	~	~	~
Stanford Infant School	2136.59	1.33	0	18	0	~	~	~
St Luke's Primary School	2166.3	1.35	0	0	0	0	0	1
Elm Grove Primary School	2211.32	1.37	2	1	*0	7	0	1
Fairlight Primary School	2247.32	1.4	9	0	0	8	4	6
Downs Infant School	2338.95	1.45	0	0	10	~	~	~
St Martin's CE Primary School	2393.53	1.49	3	2	9	10	0	6

- 4.6 A Transition Support Group is in place, including educational psychologists and admissions staff, to support pupils and families through the transition process. The group is working closely with Middle Street Primary School staff and with receiving schools to ensure that transitions are managed in a child-centred, caring and considered way.
- 4.7 Parents who have not yet identified an alternative school place will be contacted by the Schools Admissions Team and supported to submit preferences. Families who have applied to Reception at Middle Street Primary School will be contacted and supported to change their preferences.
- 4.8 Security plans will be developed for the school site from 31 August 2026, alongside arrangements for asset distribution and records storage.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 The Council has followed the Community Engagement Framework throughout this process and has provided extensive opportunities for engagement at each stage. A six-week public consultation ran from 26 January 2026 to 9 March 2026, providing a range of opportunities for families, staff, pupils and the wider community to engage with the proposal and submit their views. Two in-person public meetings were held at the school on 10 and 25 February 2026, and an in-person staff meeting took place on 26 February 2026, with an additional online meeting held on 4 March 2026, to accommodate those who could not attend in person. Written responses were invited via the Council's Your Voice portal, by email, and by post, and consultation documents were made available in accessible formats on request.
- 5.2 At the outset of the consultation, the Council notified ward Councillors, trade unions, the DfE Regional Director, Ofsted, the Headteachers of all schools

across the city and the staff, parents and Governing Board of Middle Street Primary School. The full outcome of the public consultation was reported to Cabinet on 19 March 2026 and is set out in the Cabinet report at Appendix 4. Following Cabinet's approval to publish a statutory notice, the four week statutory representation period ran from 8 April to 5 May 2026, during which any person or organisation could submit formal representations. Eleven formal representations were received and are addressed in full at Section 3 of this report. The Council is satisfied that the consultation and representation period were appropriate, fair and open, and that the views of all those affected by the proposal have been given full and proper consideration in line with the requirements of the DfE statutory guidance and public law.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 School budgets are determined in accordance with criteria set by the government and school funding regulations dictate that the vast majority (over 90% in 2025/26) of the delegated schools block of funding is allocated through pupil-led factors. This means schools with falling pupil numbers are likely to see reductions in their annual budgets.
- 6.2 Middle Street Primary School is currently operating with a licensed deficit, and finished the 2025/26 financial year with a deficit of £332k. With rapidly declining pupil numbers it is likely that this deficit will escalate further in subsequent years.
- 6.3 Where a local authority-maintained school has a deficit at the point at which the school closes this will be a charge to the Council's General Fund. There will also likely be additional costs relating to redundancies and pensions that would result in further costs to the Council's general fund. The Council has made provision for this expenditure as part of its 2026/27 financial modelling.
- 6.4 By reducing the number of surplus places in the city in the longer term there is an expectation that school occupancy rates will increase meaning that school budgets generally are more sustainable. Schools are more likely to be able to balance their budgets if operating with full, or close to full, forms of entry.

Name of finance officer consulted: Steve Williams Date consulted: 30/04/2026

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 imposes a duty on the Council to ensure the provision of sufficient schools for the provision of primary and secondary education in its area.
- 7.2 In order to achieve any reorganisation of school provision the council must comply with School Organisation legislation- the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA), associated regulations, and statutory guidance published by the Department for Education- "Opening and closing maintained schools,

Statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers, October 2024". Both the legislation and guidance set out the steps which the council must take before making any decision on a proposal to close a school

- 7.3 In accordance with Section 15 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 ("the EIA 2006") (as amended) and the School Organisation (Establishment 44 and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013 ("the Regulations"), the Council has completed the required formal consultation, a statutory notice has been published and a four week representation period has taken place. A decision on the proposal to close now needs to be taken.
- 7.4 Under the Council's Constitution, Full Council has reserved decisions on strategic issues relating to school admission arrangements to itself. (Part 3.1.02(a)(ii) of the Constitution). Given the significant nature of this proposal Full Council will act as the decision maker on closure.
- 7.5 The decision maker must have regard to the statutory decision makers guidance contained in the DfE Guidance referred to in paragraph 7.2 above. This sets out the considerations that should be made by the Council when deciding proposals to close a school. In all cases, the decision maker should be satisfied that the proposer has carried out the requirements of the statutory process satisfactorily and should have due regard to all responses received during the representation period. A link to the Guidance is below:

[Opening and closing maintained schools](#)

- 7.6 As the decision maker on the proposal the Council must make the decision within two months of the end of the representation period. When issuing a decision, the decision maker can:
- reject the proposal;
 - approve the proposal without modification;
 - approve the proposal with such modifications as they think desirable; or
 - approve the proposal, with or without modification, subject to certain conditions being met.
- 7.7 In taking decisions the Council must ensure that all required consultations are properly undertaken in accordance with relevant law and guidance. It is important to recognise that a public consultation is not a vote or referendum, but an opportunity to gather a range of insights, views and feedback on proposals before any decisions are made. The Council must make rational, evidence based decisions, take into account all relevant considerations, act for a proper purpose, and be properly reasoned.
- 7.8 The Council is required to have 'due regard' to the duties set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Public Sector Equality Duty) in determining the proposal. In order to comply with the public sector equality duty the Council should have due regard to the analysis of the impact upon those affected by the proposal who have protected characteristics under the Act. This is summarised within the EIA template and the body of the report. Recent government guidance indicates that the general duty requires

decision-makers to have due regard to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to activities such as providing a public service. As indicated in recent government guidance the duty does not dictate a particular outcome. The level of “due regard” considered sufficient in any particular context depends on the facts. The duty should always be applied in a proportionate way depending on the circumstances of the case and the seriousness of the potential equality impacts on those with protected characteristics.

Name of lawyer consulted: Serena Kynaston

Date consulted 07.05.2026

8. Equalities implications

- 8.1 A full Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and is provided at Appendix 1 to this report. The equality implications of the proposal are addressed in the EIA.

9. Sustainability implications

- 9.1 The proposed closure may affect the length of journeys some families make to school. Given the number of available places at schools within 1.5 miles, the Council expects the majority of families to be able to access an alternative school without significantly extending their journey. Transport assistance will be considered for families who apply, once a new school place is known, in line with the Council’s Home to School Transport Policy.
- 9.2 A submission received during the public consultation from Living Streets Brighton and Hove Group raised concerns about the active travel and sustainability implications of consolidating provision away from central Brighton. The Council notes this concern and recognises the importance of supporting active and sustainable travel to school as part of its wider commitments under the Local Transport Plan and the city’s climate change strategy. The Council’s Home to School Transport Policy prioritises walking, cycling, and public transport where journeys are reasonable, and the Schools Admissions Team will work with families to identify alternative schools that minimize the need for car travel wherever possible. The Council also acknowledges that the closure of a centrally located school will, for some families, mean longer journeys, and that this has wider implications for active travel patterns across the city centre. These considerations will be factored into the Council’s ongoing review of school place planning and its broader sustainable travel work, and the Council will continue to engage with Living Street and other interested parties on these matters.

10. Conclusion

- 10.1 Full Council is asked to make a final decision on the proposed closure of Middle Street Primary School with effect from 31 August 2026.
- 10.2 Eleven formal representations were received during the statutory representation period. The Council has considered these carefully and has responded to each of the matters raised in Section 3 above. The Council is

satisfied that the evidential basis for this decision is complete, transparent, and robust, and that the process followed has been lawful and fair.

The Council has considered these carefully and has responded to each of the matters raised in Section 3 above. The Council is satisfied that the evidential basis for this decision is complete, transparent, and robust, and that the process followed has been lawful and fair.

- 10.3 The school is not financially viable. The IEB, after seven months of intensive assessment and a thorough consideration of all alternatives, concluded that there is no credible path to recovery. Pupil numbers have continued to fall and there are 442 available places within 1.5 miles and the Council is confident that all displaced pupils can be accommodated.
- 10.4 Full Council is therefore recommended to approve the closure of Middle Street Primary School with effect from 31 August 2026.

Supporting Documentation

Appendices:

- Appendix 1: Full Equalities Impact Assessment
- Appendix 2: Formal Representation from the Middle Street Community
- Appendix 3: Summary of Your Voice Representations during statutory notice process
- Appendix 4: Cabinet Report for 19 March 2026 Meeting
- Appendix 5: IEB Minutes – 16 December 2025

General Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form

Support:

An [EIA toolkit](#), [workshop content](#), and guidance for completing an [Equality Impact Assessment \(EIA\) form](#) are available on the [EIA page](#) of the [EDI Internal Hub](#). Please read these before completing this form.

For enquiries and further support if the toolkit and guidance do not answer your questions, contact the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) team by emailing Equalities@Brighton-Hove.gov.uk. If your request is urgent, please mention this in the subject line of your email so we can support as required.

Processing Time:

- EIAs can take up to 10 business days to approve after a completed EIA of a good standard is submitted to the EDI Team. This is not considering unknown and unplanned impacts of capacity, resource constraints, and work pressures on the EDI team at the time your EIA is submitted.
- If your request is urgent, we can explore support exceptionally on request.
- We encourage improved planning and thinking around EIAs to avoid urgent turnarounds as these make EIAs riskier, limiting, and blind spots may remain unaddressed for the 'activity' you are assessing.

Process:

- Once fully completed, submit your EIA to the Equalities team by emailing the Equalities inbox and copying in your Head of Service, Business Improvement Manager (if one exists in your directorate), any other relevant service colleagues to enable EIA communication, tracking and saving.
- Your EIA will be reviewed, discussed, and then approved by the assigned EDI Officer and after seeking additional approval as appropriate for your EIA.
- Only approved EIAs are to be attached to Committee reports. Unapproved EIAs are invalid.

1. Assessment details

Throughout this form, 'activity' is used to refer to many different types of proposals being assessed.

Read the [EIA toolkit](#) for more information.

Name of activity or proposal being assessed:	Proposed Closure of Middle Street Primary School
Directorate:	Families, Children and Learning
Service:	Education and Learning
Team:	School Organisation
Is this a new or existing activity?	Existing activity under review – proposed change (closure of an existing school)
Are there related EIAs that could help inform this EIA? Yes or No (If Yes, please use this to inform this assessment)	Yes – EIAs completed for other proposed school closures in Brighton & Hove have been used to inform this assessment.

2. Contributors to the assessment (Name and Job title)

Responsible Lead Officer:	Richard Barker, Head of Education
Accountable Manager:	Head of School Organisation, Education and Learning Service
Additional stakeholders collaborating or contributing to this assessment:	

3. About the activity

Briefly describe the purpose of the activity being assessed:

In response to a sustained fall in pupil numbers across Brighton & Hove, the Council is proposing the closure of Middle Street Primary School. The school has experienced a significant and prolonged decline in pupil numbers which has resulted in a growing budget deficit that is not financially sustainable in the medium to long term. The primary school funding model is predominantly per-pupil, meaning that a school with low numbers cannot generate sufficient income to cover the costs of running a full primary school.

This EIA assesses the potential equality impacts of the proposed closure on: pupils currently attending the school; families of pupils; school staff; prospective pupils and their families; and the wider school community. The EIA has been informed by data from the school census, deprivation indices, SEND records, consultation responses, and engagement with school staff, families, and support services.

What are the desired outcomes of the activity?

To reduce surplus school places in the city in a way that is equitable and sustainable, ensuring the long-term financial viability of the remaining school estate and the quality of education available to all children in Brighton & Hove.

To ensure that every child affected by the closure is supported to secure an appropriate alternative school place that meets their individual needs, and that the transition process is managed with care and proportionate support for all groups, especially those with protected characteristics or intersecting vulnerabilities.

Which key groups of people do you think are likely to be affected by the activity?

Primary school-aged children (aged 4–11) currently attending Middle Street Primary School, including children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and those with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

Families and parents/carers of pupils, including those from Black and Racially Minoritised communities, those for whom English is an additional language, migrant and refugee families, those with disabilities, and those from areas of socio-economic disadvantage.

School staff at risk of redundancy, including teaching and support staff.

Prospective pupils and families who had intended to apply for places at Middle Street.

The wider school community including community groups that use the school buildings and facilities.

4. Consultation and engagement

What consultations or engagement activities have already happened that you can use to inform this assessment?

- For example, relevant stakeholders, groups, people from within the council and externally consulted and engaged on this assessment. **If no consultation** has been done or it is not enough or in process – state this and describe your plans to address any gaps.

A public consultation on the proposed closure of Middle Street Primary School was conducted from 26th January to 9th March 2026. During this period, public meetings were held and an online consultation portal was made available. All stakeholders – including other admission authorities in the city, adjoining local authorities, the school's Interim Executive Board, families of children, and any other interested parties – were invited to respond.

Consultation responses inform this EIA. Where specific equality concerns were raised, these have been reflected in the relevant sections below.

Related EIAs completed for previous school closure proposals in Brighton & Hove have also been used to inform this assessment.

Following Cabinet's decision on 19 March 2026 to publish a statutory notice, a four-week representation period ran from 8 April to 5 May 2026. Eleven formal representations was received, with one submitted on behalf of the Middle Street Community and signed by 22 individuals. That representation specifically raised the equality impacts on pupils with SEND, families from racially minoritised backgrounds, EAL families, and vulnerable or disadvantaged households, and asked that these be given full and conscientious consideration rather than treated as a procedural formality. This EIA has been reviewed in light of those concerns. The Council's detailed response to the representation is set out in the Full Council report of 21 May 2026. The equality impacts and mitigating actions described in this assessment represent the Council's considered position, informed by both the public consultation and the formal representation.

5. Current data and impact monitoring

Do you currently collect and analyse the following data to enable monitoring of the impact of this activity? Consider all possible intersections.

(State Yes, No, Not Applicable as appropriate)

Age	Yes
Disability and inclusive adjustments, coverage under equality act and not	Yes
Ethnicity, 'Race', ethnic heritage (including Gypsy, Roma, Travellers)	Yes
Religion, Belief, Spirituality, Faith, or Atheism	Yes
Gender Identity and Sex (including non-binary and Intersex people)	Yes

Gender Reassignment	No
Sexual Orientation	No
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No
Pregnant people, Maternity, Paternity, Adoption, Menopause, (In)fertility (across the gender spectrum)	Yes
Armed Forces Personnel, their families, and Veterans	N/A
Expatriates, Migrants, Asylum Seekers, and Refugees	Yes
Carers	Yes
Looked after children, Care Leavers, Care and fostering experienced people	Yes
Domestic and/or Sexual Abuse and Violence Survivors, and people in vulnerable situations (All aspects and intersections)	Yes
Socio-economic Disadvantage	Yes
Homelessness and associated risk and vulnerability	No
Human Rights	Yes
Another relevant group (please specify here and add additional rows as needed)	No

Additional relevant groups that may be widely disadvantaged and have intersecting experiences that create exclusion and systemic barriers may include:

- Ex-offenders and people with unrelated convictions
- Lone parents
- People experiencing homelessness
- People facing literacy, numeracy and /or digital barriers
- People on a low income and people living in the most deprived areas
- People who have experienced female genital mutilation (FGM)
- People who have experienced human trafficking or modern slavery
- People with experience of or living with addiction and/ or a substance use disorder (SUD)
- Sex workers

If you answered "NO" to any of the above, how will you gather this data to enable improved monitoring of impact for this activity?

Where data has not been collected (marked NO above), engagement with the school, and relevant support services has been used to identify potential impacts where possible. Gaps in data collection will be noted to the EDI team and considered in future monitoring arrangements. The Transition Oversight Board will monitor outcomes for all groups throughout the transition period.

What are the arrangements you and your service have for monitoring, and reviewing the impact of this activity?

Monitoring of outcomes will be conducted through: the Transition Oversight Board (meeting regularly until all pupils have settled in new schools); tracking of school placement outcomes by the School Admissions Team; SEN Team monitoring of EHCP compliance in receiving schools; HR monitoring of staff redeployment outcomes; and a post-transition review to be completed by October half-term.

The EDI team will be notified of this EIA, and it will be logged on the Directorate EIA Tracker for FIAP monitoring.

6. Impacts

Advisory Note:

- **Impact:**
 - Assessing disproportionate impact means understanding potential negative impact (that may cause direct or indirect discrimination) and then assessing the relevance (that is: the potential effect of your activity on people with protected characteristics) and proportionality (that is: how strong the effect is).
 - These impacts should be identified in the EIA and then re-visited regularly as you review the EIA every 12 to 18 months as applicable to the duration of your activity.
- **SMART Actions mean:** Actions that are (SMART = Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, T = Time-bound)
- **Cumulative Assessment:** [If there is impact on all groups equally, complete **only** the cumulative assessment section.](#)
- **Data analysis and Insights:**
 - In each protected characteristic or group, in answer to the question ‘If “YES”, what are the positive and negative disproportionate impacts?’, describe what you have learnt from your data analysis about disproportionate impacts, stating relevant insights and data sources.
 - Find and use contextual and wide ranges of data analysis (including community feedback) to describe what the disproportionate positive and negative impacts are on different, and intersecting populations impacted by your activity, especially considering for [Health inequalities](#), review guidance and inter-related impacts, and the impact of various identities.
 - For example: If you are doing road works or closures in a particular street or ward – look at a variety of data and do so from various protected characteristic lenses. Understand and analyse what that means for your project and its impact on different types of people, residents, family types and so on. State your understanding of impact in both effect of impact and strength of that effect on those impacted.
- **Data Sources:**
 - **Consider a wide range (including but not limited to):**
 - [Population and population groups](#)
 - [Census 2021 population groups Infogram: Brighton & Hove by Brighton and Hove City Council](#)
 - [Census](#) and [local intelligence data](#)
 - Service specific data
 - Community consultations
 - Insights from customer feedback including complaints and survey results
 - Lived experiences and qualitative data
 - [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\) data](#)
 - [Health Inequalities data](#)
 - Good practice research
 - National data and reports relevant to the service

- Workforce, leaver, and recruitment data, surveys, insights
 - Feedback from internal ‘staff as residents’ consultations
 - Insights, gaps, and data analyses on intersectionality, accessibility, sustainability requirements, and impacts.
 - Insights, gaps, and data analyses on ‘who’ the most intersectionally marginalised and excluded under-represented people and communities are in the context of this EIA.
- Learn more about the [Equality Act 2010](#) and about our [Public Sector Equality Duty](#).

6.1 Age

Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact relating to any particular Age group? For example: older people, people who may be housebound, those under 16, young adults, with other intersections.	YES
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If “YES”, what are the positive and negative disproportionate impacts?

Please share relevant insights from data and engagement to show how conclusions about impact have been shaped. Include relevant data sources or references.

<p>The proposal will primarily affect primary school-aged children (4–11 years) currently attending Middle Street Primary School, as well as families who had intended to apply for places at the school.</p> <p>Children currently in Year 5 face a disproportionately significant impact. Should the school close at the end of the current academic year, they would need to move to a new primary school for Year 6 and then transition to secondary school in Year 7 – meaning three different schools within three consecutive years. This is an exceptional disruption at a formative stage of their education.</p> <p>Children in Reception and Key Stage 1 who have only recently settled into school life may find the prospect of moving to a new and unfamiliar setting particularly unsettling. Younger children may be less able to understand the reasons for the change and may be more affected by the loss of familiar adults, peers, and routines.</p> <p>Parents and carers of children who had expressed a preference for Middle Street for September 2026 entry will be affected, as these families will need to submit preferences for an alternative school.</p> <p>With regard to staff, those who are approaching retirement age may face greater difficulty in securing alternative employment, particularly those on the Upper Pay Scale whose salary protection may be a barrier when competing with less experienced candidates for available posts.</p> <p>The age profile of respondents to the initial consultation was broadly consistent with the profile of parents of primary-aged children, with the majority aged between 30 and 49.</p> <p>Mitigation: The Transition Oversight Board will identify all pupils requiring targeted support during the transition period, with particular attention to Year 5 children and those in early years. The Council’s Vulnerability Index tool, adapted for primary-to-primary transition, will be used to develop individual action plans where needed. The School Admissions Team will proactively contact all families who have expressed a preference for Middle Street to ensure they are aware of the proposal and can submit alternative preferences. Families who are unable to apply online will be supported by the admissions team directly. The Council will ensure a school place is available for every child in every year group.</p>
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Receiving schools to be made aware of impact of transition on these groups of children so appropriate support can be provided.

6.2 Disability:

Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact relating to Disability , considering our anticipatory duty ?	YES
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If “YES”, what are the positive and negative disproportionate impacts?

Please share relevant insights from data and engagement to show how conclusions about impact have been shaped. Include relevant data sources or references.

Middle Street Primary School serves a number of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). As at the most recent school census, 6 pupils have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), representing approximately 13% of the school roll. A further 8 pupils receive SEN Support without an EHCP. The school also has access to an Education Mental Health Practitioner and the Schools Mental Health Service.

Families responding to the consultation raised concerns that the small size and nurturing environment of Middle Street is particularly well-suited to children with SEND and additional needs. The prospect of transitioning to a larger school is a significant source of anxiety for many of these families, who fear that the individual attention and support their children currently receive would not be replicated elsewhere. Any pupils with sensory impairments will have their specific physical accessibility and communication support requirements confirmed at their receiving school before transition.

Neurodiverse pupils – including those with autism, ADHD, and anxiety-related conditions – may find any change of school environment disproportionately challenging. Disruption to established routines, familiar staff, and known peer groups can have a pronounced negative impact on the wellbeing, behaviour, and academic progress of these children.

Parents or carers with a disability may face additional practical barriers in engaging with the admissions process or in managing a change of school journey for their child. Data from the survey identified that 14% identified as having a health condition, illness or disability

Data on the disability status of parents and carers is not routinely collected; identifying details of staff disabilities relies on self-disclosure into the Council's management information system and is treated as sensitive personal data. During the staff consultation process, 1:1 discussions will be available to all staff, and individual circumstances including disability will be considered sensitively.

What [inclusive adjustments](#) are you making for diverse disabled people impacted? For example: those who are housebound due to disability or disabling circumstances, D/deaf, deafened, hard of hearing, blind, neurodivergent people, those with non-visible disabilities, and with access requirements that may not identify as disabled or meet the legal definition of disability, and have various intersections (Black and disabled, LGBTQIA+ and disabled).

All children with EHCPs will be supported by the SEN Team and Brighton & Hove Inclusion Support Services (BHISS) to transition to an appropriate new school. The Council will ensure that the provision specified in each child's EHCP can be met at the receiving school, including any physical accessibility, adaptability, or specialist resource requirements. All children with

EHCP's will have an annual review. Any children currently undergoing an EHC needs assessment will have their assessment progressed as normal.

Pupil premium and SEND-related funding will follow pupils to their new school. All Brighton & Hove maintained mainstream schools are expected to be able to meet the needs of children without EHCPs, with appropriate additional support or resources where necessary.

The Transition Oversight Board will maintain specific oversight of pupils with SEND and will develop bespoke transition plans for those identified as most at risk. BHISS and the Schools Mental Health Service will provide targeted support to identified pupils before, during, and after any transition.

For staff with disabilities, the Council's HR service will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made throughout the staff consultation and redundancy process. Individual circumstances will be discussed sensitively in 1:1 meetings.

Families with disabled children, or parents/carers who themselves have a disability, who may face difficulties travelling to a new school, will be considered under the Council's home-to-school transport policy and may be eligible to apply for transport assistance.

6.3 Ethnicity, 'Race', ethnic heritage (including Gypsy, Roma, Travellers):

Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact relating to ethnicity?	YES
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If "YES", what are the positive and negative disproportionate impacts?

Please share relevant insights from data and engagement to show how conclusions about impact have been shaped. Include relevant data sources or references.

The current pupil group breakdown after May half-term is below:

Indicator	Number	%
EAL	11	24%
EHCP	6	13%
FSM	13	28%
LAC	0	0%

Ethnicity	Number	%
White British	23	50%
White Other	4	9%
Indian	4	9%
White and Asian	3	7%
Any Other Asian Background	2	4%
Black Caribbean	2	4%
Any Other Mixed Background	3	7%
White Western European	1	
White and Black African	1	
Refused	1	
Black African	1	
Arab Other	1	

Evidence from previous admissions cycles across the city indicates that Black and Racially Minoritised families are more likely to apply for school places late, which significantly reduces their chances of being offered a place at a preferred school.

Families from BRM backgrounds who have experienced racism – including those who have sought asylum or fled conflict – may find the process of establishing themselves in a new school community particularly daunting. Concerns were raised through the consultation about whether receiving schools would be adequately equipped and culturally responsive to meet the needs of these families.

No pupils from Gypsy, Roma or Traveller backgrounds have been identified on the school roll; however, should any such families come forward, proactive and culturally sensitive outreach will be provided.

Mitigation:

Proactive support will be offered to ensure all families can understand the need and be supported to apply for a school place by Easter break to ensure they are allocated new school places for September.

The Council will communicate clearly to all receiving headteachers its expectations regarding the welcoming, equitable, and culturally responsive treatment of all displaced pupils, with specific reference to those from BRM and migrant/refugee backgrounds. The Council's Anti-Racist Education Strategy will be promoted to receiving schools, ensuring they have the training and support to build inclusive, welcoming communities. Appropriate cultural provisions – including multi-faith spaces, dietary accommodation, and culturally relevant curriculum content – will be expected of receiving schools. Families who experience discrimination will be signposted to relevant support and advocacy organisations.

All schools are expected to deliver a rich curriculum suitable to all pupils who attend the school. Schools are expected to celebrate the experiences of families in the city and from other areas. We expect the schools to demonstrate understanding of lived experiences of migrants and asylum seekers, and we are committed to supporting schools in further developing their understanding and making reasonable adjustments to ensure curriculum is accessible to all.

6.4 Religion, Belief, Spirituality, Faith, or Atheism:

Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact relating to Religion, Belief, Spirituality, Faith, or Atheism?	YES
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If “YES”, what are the positive and negative disproportionate impacts?

Please share relevant insights from data and engagement to show how conclusions about impact have been shaped. Include relevant data sources or references.

Middle Street Primary School is a non-faith, secular community school. A number of families will have specifically selected the school because of its secular ethos and the absence of a religious character or faith-based curriculum. These families will need to be supported to identify suitable secular alternatives should the school close.

The closure of Middle Street would reduce the number of secular places available in the local area.

Families from minority faith backgrounds – including Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, Sikh and other faith communities – who have had their cultural, dietary, and religious observance requirements accommodated at Middle Street will require assurance that these needs will continue to be met at receiving schools. Families whose faith requires, for example, specific dietary provision, prayer space, or time for religious observance will need to feel confident that any receiving school is responsive to their needs.

No specific data is available on the religion or beliefs of pupils, parents, or staff at Middle Street. During the consultation, a proportion of respondents identified as having no religious belief; others identified as Christian or from other faith backgrounds.

Mitigation:

Proactive support will be offered to ensure all families can understand the need and be supported to apply for a school place by Easter break to ensure they are allocated new school places for September.

The Council will ensure that sufficient secular school places are available within a reasonable distance of Middle Street for families who require a non-faith education. The Council will communicate to receiving schools the expectation that all children are welcomed and that appropriate provision is made for the cultural and religious needs of incoming families, including multi-faith spaces and dietary accommodation where required. Timetabling of any closure-related processes and key deadlines will take account of significant religious observance dates to ensure families are not disadvantaged in their ability to engage with the process.

6.5 Gender Identity and Sex:

Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact relating to Gender Identity and Sex (including non-binary and intersex people)?	YES
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If “YES”, what are the positive and negative disproportionate impacts?

Please share relevant insights from data and engagement to show how conclusions about impact have been shaped. Include relevant data sources or references.

<p>There are no single sex maintained primary schools in Brighton & Hove, and admission arrangements do not take the sex or gender identity of a child into account. As at the most recent census, Middle Street had approximately equal numbers of male and female pupils.</p> <p>The majority of roles at Middle Street Primary School that are at risk of redundancy are held by women, consistent with the wider pattern of female-dominated employment in primary education. The financial and emotional impact of job loss – particularly in the context of cost-of-living pressures – may therefore fall disproportionately on women. Barriers to re-employment, including caring responsibilities and the prevalence of part-time and term-time-only roles in primary education, may mean that some female staff find it harder to secure equivalent employment.</p> <p>Women are more likely to hold primary childcare responsibilities within their households. If closure results in children attending schools at a greater distance from home, this may impose additional travel burdens on women, which may in turn affect their employment options or ability to manage other caring responsibilities. This concern was raised directly by a number of respondents during the consultation, with women making up the significant majority of those who responded.</p>
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There may be children at Middle Street who identify as non-binary or who have gender-related support needs. The transition to a new school community may present particular challenges for these children in terms of having to re-establish their identity, trusted relationships, and any bespoke support they currently receive.

Mitigation: The Council will ensure that appropriate support pathways are in place for any children or young people with gender-related needs. Signposting to voluntary sector organisations will be available.

The HR service will ensure that all staff, including those with caring responsibilities, are supported throughout the redundancy process and that flexible working requests are considered sympathetically in any redeployment context. Home-to-school transport assistance will be provided in line with the Council's policy.

6.6 Gender Reassignment:

Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact relating to Gender Reassignment ?	NO
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If "YES", what are the positive and negative disproportionate impacts?

Please share relevant insights from data and engagement to show how conclusions about impact have been shaped. Include relevant data sources or references.

No specific disproportionate impacts have been identified for this group. Data on gender reassignment is not routinely collected and relies on self-disclosure.

The Council will ensure that any children or young people who are transitioning or questioning their gender are supported sensitively in any school move, with receiving schools directed to the Council's Trans Toolkit and voluntary sector organisations such as Allsorts Youth Project. If any individual indicates a need for support in this regard, bespoke assistance will be provided.

The transition to a new school setting could present risks for transgender or gender-questioning children and young people, particularly if they have established trusted, supportive relationships at Middle Street that have taken considerable time and effort to build. Starting afresh in a new school community may expose these children to uncertainty or, in the worst cases, to bullying or discrimination.

Mitigation: All Brighton & Hove schools are expected to have appropriate policies and practices in place to support gender-diverse children and young people. If any individual pupils or families identify gender reassignment as a specific consideration in their school move, the Council will ensure bespoke and compassionate support is provided. Signposting to specialist support organisations will be made available to all families on request.

6.7 Sexual Orientation:

Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact relating to Sexual Orientation ?	NO
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If "YES", what are the positive and negative disproportionate impacts?

Please share relevant insights from data and engagement to show how conclusions about impact have been shaped. Include relevant data sources or references.

No specific disproportionate impacts have been identified for this group based on available data. Sexual orientation data is not routinely collected for pupils, parents, or carers, and relies on self-disclosure.

The Council recognises that discrimination based on sexual orientation remains prevalent and that LGBTQ+ families may face specific challenges in ensuring their children are welcomed and affirmed in a new school community. Brighton & Hove has a significant LGBTQ+ community, and some families may have specifically valued the inclusive ethos of Middle Street.

Redeployment decisions for school staff will not take sexual orientation into account. The Council expects all receiving schools to maintain an explicitly inclusive and anti-discriminatory ethos with regard to sexual orientation.

Mitigation: Voluntary sector organisations providing support to children and families around sexual orientation – including those who support LGBTQ+ parents and their children – are available in the city and will be signposted as appropriate. Any individual concerns raised will be addressed sensitively and bespoke support arranged where needed

6.8 Marriage and Civil Partnership:

Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact relating to Marriage and Civil Partnership?	NO
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If “YES”, what are the positive and negative disproportionate impacts?

Please share relevant insights from data and engagement to show how conclusions about impact have been shaped. Include relevant data sources or references.

No specific disproportionate impacts have been identified for this group. Data on marital or civil partnership status is not routinely collected, and this issue was not raised as a specific concern through the consultation process.

The Council recognises that single-parent households may face additional pressures during the transition, particularly in relation to managing school journeys, engaging with the admissions process, and arranging childcare. These pressures are considered further under the socio-economic disadvantage section of this assessment.

The Council is mindful that families in same-sex partnerships may have specific concerns about the ethos of any receiving school. If any such concerns are raised, the Council will signpost appropriate support.

6.9 Pregnant people, Maternity, Paternity, Adoption, Menopause, (In)fertility (across the gender spectrum):

Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact relating to Pregnant people, Maternity, Paternity, Adoption, Menopause, (In)fertility (across the gender spectrum)?	YES
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If “YES”, what are the positive and negative disproportionate impacts?

Please share relevant insights from data and engagement to show how conclusions about impact have been shaped. Include relevant data sources or references.

The Council does not hold data on the pregnancy or maternity status of parents or carers of pupils at Middle Street. However, it is recognised that some families will include parents who are currently pregnant or on maternity or paternity leave, and that these individuals may have reduced capacity to engage with the consultation and admissions processes due to the demands of caring for a new or very young child.

Families with pre-school children who are siblings of current pupils may face particular difficulties if an older child needs to travel further to a new school. Concerns about travelling to a new school with a pre-school child or while pregnant were raised during the consultation process.

Prospective families – those expecting a child who had intended to apply for Reception places at Middle Street – will need to reconsider their school preferences and will need early, proactive communication about the proposal.

Staff who are on maternity or paternity leave at the time of the redundancy process will be included in the consultation and their rights will be fully protected in line with employment law. The Council will ensure that every such situation is handled compassionately and that bespoke support is available where needed. HR advice will be provided, and a risk assessment tool is available to support pregnant staff.

Mitigation: The School Admissions Team will work proactively with families where pregnancy or maternity is identified as a factor in their ability to engage with the process. The Council will ensure sufficient places are available within a reasonable distance for families where a pregnant adult or an adult on maternity leave would face difficulty accessing a more distant school. Receiving schools will be asked to accommodate the practical needs of such families wherever possible.

HR advice can be provided for pregnant school staff.

The risk assessment tool is available to support pregnant staff.

6.10 Armed Forces Personnel, their families, and Veterans:

Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact relating to Armed Forces Members and Veterans?	NOT APPLICABLE
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If “YES”, what are the positive and negative disproportionate impacts?

Please share relevant insights from data and engagement to show how conclusions about impact have been shaped. Include relevant data sources or references.

No specific disproportionate impacts have been identified for armed forces personnel, their families, or veterans in connection with this proposal. There is no evidence that Middle Street Primary School serves a disproportionately high number of armed forces families.

The Council acknowledges its obligations under the Armed Forces Covenant and will ensure that any armed forces families who come forward during the transition process are supported appropriately, including through the school admissions process.

6.11 Expatriates, Migrants, Asylum Seekers, and Refugees:

Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact relating to Expatriates, Migrants, Asylum seekers, Refugees, those	YES
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**New to the UK, and UK visa or assigned legal status?
(Especially considering for age, ethnicity, language, and various intersections)**

If “YES”, what are the positive and negative disproportionate impacts?

Please share relevant insights from data and engagement to show how conclusions about impact have been shaped. Include relevant data sources or references.

Middle Street Primary School is not known to serve an unusually high number of migrant, asylum-seeking, and refugee families

The Council is aware that language barriers may make it substantially more difficult for these families to understand the consultation process, the implications of the proposal, the steps required to apply for an alternative school place, and the timescales involved. Based on evidence from similar school closure processes in Brighton & Hove, families with English as an additional language (EAL) are disproportionately more likely to submit late applications for school places, which reduces their chances of being offered a preferred school.

Families from migrant and refugee backgrounds may also hold well-founded fears or anxieties about engaging with statutory processes, particularly those with insecure immigration status or those who have had negative experiences of government or authority in their countries of origin. These concerns may deter engagement with the consultation or admissions process entirely.

Children from migrant and refugee backgrounds who have experienced multiple disruptions to their schooling – whether in their country of origin or since arriving in the UK – may be particularly adversely affected by another unwanted school change. The impact of this disruption on their academic progress, sense of security, and emotional wellbeing could be significant.

Mitigation: proactive and sustained outreach will be provided to all migrant, refugee, and EAL families throughout the closure process and admissions/transition periods. Interpreting support will be made available on request at all meetings and appointments. The Council will write to all receiving headteachers setting out its clear expectation that displaced pupils – including those from migrant and refugee backgrounds – are welcomed with sensitivity, understanding, and appropriate support. The Transition Oversight Board will include specific oversight of this group of families.

6.12 [Carers](#):

Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact relating to [Carers](#) (Especially considering for age, ethnicity, language, and various intersections).

YES

If “YES”, what are the positive and negative disproportionate impacts?

Please share relevant insights from data and engagement to show how conclusions about impact have been shaped. Include relevant data sources or references.

Parents and carers who are themselves disabled, or who care for other family members (such as elderly parents, or disabled partners or other children) in addition to their school-age children, may face additional practical challenges if school journeys become longer or more complex as a result of closure.

Young carers – children who have caring responsibilities for a family member – may also be present in the school community. These children may already be managing significant additional pressures, and the disruption of a school closure could have a disproportionate impact on their attendance, wellbeing, and academic progress at a time when stability is particularly important.

The demands of the consultation and admissions process may be disproportionately burdensome for carers who have limited time and capacity due to their caring responsibilities.

Mitigation: The admissions team and school will be asked to identify any families where caring responsibilities are a specific factor in their ability to engage with the process or to manage a change of school. The Council will ensure that home-to-school transport assistance is considered for eligible families, and that the admissions process is made as accessible as possible. Any young carers identified will be referred to appropriate support services.

6.13 Looked after children, Care Leavers, Care and fostering experienced people:

<p>Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact relating to Looked after children, Care Leavers, Care and fostering experienced children and adults (Especially considering for age, ethnicity, language, and various intersections).</p> <p>Also consider our Corporate Parenting Responsibility in connection to your activity.</p>	<p>YES</p>
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If “YES”, what are the positive and negative disproportionate impacts?

Please share relevant insights from data and engagement to show how conclusions about impact have been shaped. Include relevant data sources or references.

Brighton & Hove City Council has formally adopted Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People as a protected characteristic, reflecting its Corporate Parenting responsibilities. The Council has a demonstrable and collective commitment to ensuring that children and young people with care experience are able to access the same educational opportunities as their peers, and that placement and transition decisions are made with full regard to each child’s individual needs, prior experiences, and circumstances.

Nationally, children in care and those previously looked after are significantly more likely to have SEND, with approximately 66% having an identified need and 35% having an EHCP – compared to 12% of the general population. Around 50% of children in care have a diagnosable mental health condition. These statistics highlight the particular vulnerability of this group to the disruptions and anxieties associated with a school closure.

Care-experienced children are likely to have experienced previous trauma, loss, and transitions. The process of school closure – and the uncertainty it generates – may reactivate these negative experiences and feelings, even for children who are not currently in care, but who have care experience. It can equally be expected that parents who were themselves in care may re-experience the trauma associated with earlier periods of their lives.

Mitigation: Children in care and previously Looked After Children hold the highest admissions priority in Brighton & Hove’s school allocation process. The Virtual School has a specific statutory responsibility to support children in care and those known to a social worker and will provide dedicated support to any pupils displaced from Middle Street. The Transition Oversight Board will include specific planning for children in care and those with social worker involvement, with bespoke individual action plans developed as appropriate. The Council’s

Corporate Parenting responsibilities will be central to the oversight of this group throughout the transition.

6.14 Homelessness:

Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact relating to people experiencing homelessness, and associated risk and vulnerability? (Especially considering for age, veteran, ethnicity, language, and various intersections)	YES
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If “YES”, what are the positive and negative disproportionate impacts?

Please share relevant insights from data and engagement to show how conclusions about impact have been shaped. Include relevant data sources or references.

Families in temporary accommodation or experiencing housing instability are likely to face additional vulnerability during a school closure process. These families may have unstable or frequently changing home addresses, which can create challenges in the admissions process where proximity to a school is a key allocation criterion. They may also have limited capacity to engage with multi-stage consultation and admissions processes.

Brighton & Hove has a significant and well-documented homelessness challenge. Families placed in temporary accommodation may not be close to their preferred schools and may already be travelling longer distances. A school closure that requires an additional school move could compound the instability these families are already experiencing.

Children experiencing homelessness or housing instability are more likely to have multiple adverse childhood experiences and may be at heightened risk of poor educational outcomes if their schooling is additionally disrupted.

Mitigation: The School Admissions Team will work sensitively with families in temporary or insecure accommodation to support them through the admissions process. The Council will ensure that sufficient surplus places remain available in the local planning area so that late-applying or mid-year families can access a local school. Homeless families will be signposted to the Council’s housing support services and other relevant organisations as appropriate.

6.15 Domestic and/or Sexual Abuse and Violence Survivors, people in vulnerable situations:

Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact relating to Domestic Abuse and Violence Survivors, and people in vulnerable situations (All aspects and intersections)?	YES
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If “YES”, what are the positive and negative disproportionate impacts?

Please share relevant insights from data and engagement to show how conclusions about impact have been shaped. Include relevant data sources or references.

The school may currently represent a place of safety, routine, and trusted adult relationships for children and families affected by domestic abuse or other forms of exploitation and violence. The loss of this stability through closure could have a significant impact on these children’s sense of security and on the continuity of safeguarding support.

Families affected by domestic abuse may have made deliberate choices about which school to attend based on proximity to a refuge or safe address, or to avoid areas where an abusive partner might encounter them. A school closure that requires a change of school – potentially to a less familiar area – could create specific safety concerns for these families.

Children who have experienced domestic abuse, exploitation, or other adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are more likely to exhibit emotional and behavioural difficulties and may be particularly sensitive to changes in their environment and trusted relationships. Further disruption to their schooling could have a compounding negative effect on their progress and wellbeing.

Mitigation: The school and partner services will be asked to identify any families known to be in vulnerable situations so that they can receive targeted and sensitive support throughout the transition. The Council’s safeguarding obligations will be fully maintained and will be a central consideration of the Transition Oversight Board. Families will be signposted to domestic abuse support services and other relevant organisations where appropriate. Any specific safety considerations related to school placement for individual families will be handled with the utmost sensitivity and in close liaison with Children’s Social Work.

6.16 Socio-economic Disadvantage:

Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact relating to Socio-economic Disadvantage? (Especially considering for age, disability, D/deaf/ blind, ethnicity, expatriate background, and various intersections)

YES

If “YES”, what are the positive and negative disproportionate impacts?

Please share relevant insights from data and engagement to show how conclusions about impact have been shaped. Include relevant data sources or references.

A significant proportion of pupils are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), which is a key indicator of economic disadvantage.

70% of pupils are eligible for FSM, compared to 25.8% across Brighton & Hove primary schools.

Families from lower socio-economic backgrounds may face greater barriers in engaging with the consultation and admissions process, including limited or no access to digital devices or the internet, reduced capacity due to working multiple jobs or irregular hours, and lower levels of familiarity or confidence with formal council processes.

The school admissions system in Brighton & Hove uses proximity as a key criterion for oversubscribed schools. House prices surrounding popular schools are often inflated due to demand, meaning families from lower socio-economic backgrounds are systematically less able to live close to oversubscribed schools and therefore less likely to receive an offer at a preferred school. This structural inequality is likely to disadvantage Middle Street families disproportionately in seeking alternative placements.

Families on lower incomes are also less able to manage the additional costs associated with a longer school journey, such as bus fares or the cost of additional childcare if drop-off and collection times change. Some families without access to a car may face particular difficulties travelling to a school outside their immediate neighbourhood.

The closure of Middle Street may also affect community cohesion in the local area, as the school may currently serve as a focal point for community activities and support that low-income families rely upon.

Mitigation: Pupil premium and all other per-pupil funding attached to eligible pupils will follow those children to their new schools. The Council will ensure that receiving schools receive full information about the socio-economic profile of incoming pupils and their individual entitlements. Transport assistance will be provided to eligible families in line with the Council’s home-to-school transport policy. The School Admissions Team will proactively support families from deprived backgrounds who may need additional help navigating the admissions process, including by providing non-digital routes to application and additional in-person support. The Council will work to ensure that sufficient places remain available in local schools so that families without transport do not need to travel unreasonable distances.

6.17 Human Rights:

Will your activity have a disproportionate impact relating to Human Rights?	YES
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If “YES”, what are the positive and negative disproportionate impacts?

Please share relevant insights from data and engagement to show how conclusions about impact have been shaped. Include relevant data sources or references.

The proposed closure of Middle Street Primary School engages a number of human rights considerations under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

Article 2 of Protocol 1 of the ECHR – the right to education – is the most directly relevant provision. The Council is satisfied that sufficient alternative primary school places exist within a reasonable distance of Middle Street to ensure that all affected pupils can be offered an appropriate alternative school place, thereby ensuring that the right to education is upheld for every child. The Central City planning area currently has significant surplus capacity, and this is projected to increase in coming years.

Article 8 of the ECHR – the right to respect for private and family life – is also engaged. The closure of a school inevitably disrupts established routines, friendships, trusted adult relationships, and community networks that form part of family and social life. The Council considers this disruption to be a proportionate consequence of the legitimate aim of maintaining a financially sustainable, high-quality school estate across the city. The mitigating measures described throughout this EIA are designed to minimise the extent of this disruption.

Article 14 of the ECHR – the prohibition on discrimination – is relevant when read alongside the other Convention rights. The Council is committed to ensuring that the closure process does not give rise to unlawful discriminatory treatment of any group with protected characteristics, and that mitigating actions are proportionate and effective in addressing the differential impacts identified in this assessment.

The Council has fulfilled its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 by completing this Equality Impact Assessment and by considering the equality impacts of the proposal in its decision-making. The proposal has been subject to both a public consultation and a statutory representation period, ensuring that affected stakeholders have had a meaningful opportunity to contribute to the process.

Mitigation: The Council will keep this EIA under review throughout the closure and transition process and will take further action to address any human rights concerns that are identified. Legal advice has been sought on the human rights implications of the proposal. The Council is committed to the mitigation actions identified throughout this assessment and will monitor their effectiveness.

6.18 Cumulative, multiple intersectional, and complex impacts (including on additional relevant groups):

What cumulative or complex impacts might the activity have on people who are members of multiple Minoritised groups?

- For example: people belonging to the Gypsy, Roma, and/or Traveller community who are also disabled, LGBTQIA+, older disabled trans and non-binary people, older Black and Racially Minoritised disabled people of faith, young autistic people.
- Also consider wider disadvantaged and intersecting experiences that create exclusion and systemic barriers:
 - People being housebound due to disabilities or disabling circumstances.
 - Environmental barriers or mobility barriers impacting those with sight loss, D/deafness, sensory requirements, neurodivergence, various complex disabilities
 - People experiencing homelessness
 - People on a low income and people living in the most deprived areas
 - People facing literacy, numeracy and/or digital barriers
 - Lone parents
 - People with experience of or living with addiction and/ or a substance use disorder (SUD)
 - Sex workers
 - Ex-offenders and people with unrelated convictions
 - People who have experienced female genital mutilation (FGM)
 - People who have experienced human trafficking or modern slavery

Middle Street Primary School serves a community with multiple intersecting vulnerabilities. Children from Black and Racially Minoritised backgrounds who also have SEND will receive specific consideration from the SEN Team and BHISS, given evidence of systemic under-provision for this intersectional group nationally

The consultation period may have placed significant demands on all families, and those with multiple intersecting vulnerabilities – including those with limited literacy or digital access, those who are isolated due to language barriers, and those managing trauma and instability – may have found it harder to engage and may have under-responded relative to their numbers.

The Transition Oversight Board has been established to take a holistic, intersectional view of the needs of affected pupils and families. The Board includes representation from BHISS, EMAS, the SEN Team, School Admissions, and the Schools Mental Health Service. Individual action plans will be developed for children identified as having complex or intersecting needs, using the Council's Vulnerability Index tool adapted for primary-to-primary transition.

Additional funding has been secured within the local authority to support the work of these services during the transition period. The Council is committed to ensuring that no group is further disadvantaged by the closure process and that the most vulnerable children and families receive the most intensive support.

The Council recognises that the lived experience of many families at Middle Street – including those who have experienced war, displacement, poverty, discrimination, and trauma – means

that the loss of a familiar, trusted school community may be felt very deeply. This will be acknowledged throughout the process and will inform the way in which the transition is managed.

7. Action planning

What SMART actions will be taken to address the disproportionate and cumulative impacts you have identified?

- Summarise relevant SMART actions from your data insights and disproportionate impacts below for this assessment, listing appropriate activities per action as bullets. (This will help your Business Manager or Fair and Inclusive Action Plan (FIAP) Service representative to add these to the Directorate FIAP, discuss success measures and timelines with you, and monitor this EIA's progress as part of quarterly and regular internal and external auditing and monitoring)

SMART Action 1: Establish and operate a Transition Oversight Board to provide strategic and operational oversight of all pupil transitions from Middle Street Primary School, ensuring all vulnerable groups are identified, supported, and placed in appropriate schools by September 2026.

- Continue with the Transition Oversight Board from May 2026, to meet at least fortnightly until all transitions are completed.
- Develop individual transition action plans for all pupils identified as vulnerable using the Council's Vulnerability Index tool.
- Ensure representation on the Board from BHISS, EMAS, SEN Team, School Admissions, Schools Mental Health Service, and the Virtual School.
- Conduct a post-transition review by October half-term 2026 to assess outcomes for all groups with protected characteristics.

SMART Action 2: Ensure all families of children at Middle Street Primary School receive accessible, proactive, and where necessary translated information and support to enable them to secure an appropriate alternative school place by the published deadline, with particular focus on families from Black and Racially Minoritised backgrounds, those with EAL, migrants and refugees, and those with children with SEND.

- Produce and distribute key consultation and admissions materials in the main community languages spoken by families at Middle Street.
- EALTS will provide direct outreach and casework support to all EAL and migrant/refugee families throughout the consultation, statutory notice, and admissions process.
- Provide interpreting support on request at all public meetings and one-to-one appointments.
- Ensure the School Admissions Team proactively contacts all families who have not yet applied for an alternative place by Spring Term.
- Ensure all children with EHCPs are supported by the SEN Team to secure a place at an appropriate school and that receiving schools can meet their identified provision.
- Provide HR support to all staff at risk of redundancy, with bespoke arrangements for staff with disabilities, staff on maternity/paternity leave, and staff approaching retirement age.
- Communicate the Council's expectations regarding welcoming and equitable treatment of displaced pupils to all Brighton & Hove headteachers, with specific reference to pupils

from BRM communities, those with SEND, and those who have experienced trauma or displacement.

SMART Action 3: Ensure HR milestones for staff affected by the proposed closure are completed by 31 August 2026, with protected and other relevant individual circumstances identified early, 1:1 meetings offered throughout the process and whenever required, reasonable adjustments implemented, redeployment support provided, and outcomes monitored.

- By 31 May 2026, HR and school leadership will agree and issue a staff consultation and support timetable, including key milestones, named contacts, and review points.
- By 14 June 2026, all affected staff will be offered an initial 1:1 meeting, with staff with protected characteristics offered follow-up 1:1 meetings throughout the process and at any point on request.
- By 28 June 2026, HR will identify and record any required reasonable adjustments and put support arrangements in place for staff who disclose a need, including disability, pregnancy/maternity, caring responsibilities, or other protected characteristics.
- By 12 July 2026, all affected staff will be offered redeployment support, including vacancy matching, application support, and advice on suitable alternative employment where available.
- By 31 August 2026, HR will review and monitor outcomes for all affected staff, including redeployment, reasonable adjustments, and any equality issues arising, and report completion of staff milestones to the relevant Head of Service.

Which action plans will the identified actions be transferred to?

- For example: Team or Service Plan, Local Implementation Plan, a project plan related to this EIA, FIAP (Fair and Inclusive Action Plan) – mandatory noting of the EIA on the Directorate EIA Tracker to enable monitoring of all equalities related actions identified in this EIA. This is done as part of FIAP performance reporting and auditing. Speak to your Directorate’s Business Improvement Manager (if one exists for your Directorate) or to the Head of Service/ lead who enters actions and performance updates on FIAP and seek support from your Directorate’s EDI Business Partner.

Actions identified in this EIA will be transferred to the School Organisation Service Plan, the Transition Oversight Board action log, and the Directorate Fair and Inclusive Action Plan (FIAP) for monitoring. Progress will be reported to the relevant Head of Service quarterly and to the EDI team as part of FIAP performance reporting and auditing. The EDI team will be notified, and this EIA will be logged on the Directorate EIA Tracker.

8. Outcome of your assessment

What decision have you reached upon completing this Equality Impact Assessment? (Mark ‘X’ for any ONE option below)

Stop or pause the activity due to unmitigable disproportionate impacts because the evidence shows bias towards one or more groups.	
Adapt or change the activity to eliminate or mitigate disproportionate impacts and/or bias.	
Proceed with the activity as currently planned – no disproportionate impacts have been identified, or impacts will be mitigated by specified SMART actions.	

Proceed with caution – disproportionate impacts have been identified but having considered all available options there are no other or proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the activity (for example, in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore, you are going to proceed with caution with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.

X

If your decision is to “Proceed with caution”, please provide a reasoning for this:

The proposed closure of Middle Street Primary School will have disproportionate negative impacts on a number of groups with protected characteristics, including children with SEND, Black and Racially Minoritised families, families with English as an additional language, migrant and refugee families, women (as both primary carers and the majority of the at-risk workforce), and families from areas of socio-economic deprivation. Children currently in Year 5 face a particular and exceptional disruption, facing the prospect of three different schools in three consecutive years.

These impacts cannot be entirely eliminated. However, having considered all available options, the Council is satisfied that they are capable of substantial mitigation through the comprehensive programme of transition support, proactive outreach, and individual action planning described in this EIA. The school's financial position is not sustainable and there is no viable alternative to closure that would not require ongoing exceptional and open-ended financial support from the Council. The decision to proceed is therefore considered proportionate to the legitimate aim of maintaining a financially sustainable and high-quality school estate across Brighton & Hove.

The Council is committed to the mitigating actions set out in this EIA and to reviewing their effectiveness through the Transition Oversight Board and post-transition review process.

Summarise your overall equality impact assessment recommendations to include in any committee papers to help guide and support councillor decision-making:

The Equality Impact Assessment for the proposed closure of Middle Street Primary School has identified disproportionate impacts across multiple protected characteristics. The groups most significantly affected are: children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND); pupils and families from Black and Racially Minoritised communities; families with English as an additional language; migrant, asylum-seeking, and refugee families; women (as both the majority of the school workforce and as primary carers); children in care and care-experienced young people; families from socio-economically deprived areas; and pupils currently in Year 5 who face the disruption of three school changes in three years.

The Council considers that these impacts, while serious, can be substantially mitigated through the comprehensive programme of transition support described in this EIA, including the Transition Oversight Board, individual pupil action plans, EMAS outreach and language support, targeted HR support for staff, and proactive communication with receiving schools.

The proposal is considered proportionate to the objective of ensuring a financially sustainable and high-quality school estate across the city. The Central City planning area has significant surplus places and the school's financial position is not sustainable. Councillors are asked to have due regard to the equality impacts identified in this assessment and the mitigating actions proposed when reaching their decision.

9. Publication

All Equality Impact Assessments will be published. If you are recommending, and choosing not to publish your EIA, please provide a reason:

This EIA will be published on the Council's website in accordance with the Council's standard EIA publication process.

10. Directorate and Service Approval

Signatory:	Name and Job Title:	Date: DD-MMM-YY
Responsible Lead Officer:		
Accountable Manager:		

Notes, relevant information, and requests (if any) from Responsible Lead Officer and Accountable Manager submitting this assessment:

EDI Review, Actions, and Approval:

Equality Impact Assessment sign-off

EDI Business Partner to cross-check against aims of the equality duty, public sector duty and our civic responsibilities the activity considers and refer to relevant internal checklists and guidance prior to recommending sign-off.

Once the EDI Officer has considered the equalities impact to provide approval for by those submitting the EIA, they will get the EIA signed off and sent to the requester copying the Head of Service, Business Improvement Manager, [Equalities inbox](#), any other service colleagues as appropriate to enable EIA tracking, accountability, and saving for publishing. Budget and Staffing EIAs secure approval via different templates.

Signatory:	Name:	Date: DD-MMM-YY
EDI Business Partner:	Eric Page	11 th May 2026
EDI Manager:		

Notes and recommendations from EDI Business Partner reviewing this assessment:

Comments and suggestions for further reflections added into doc.

Notes and recommendations (if any) from EDI Manager reviewing this assessment:

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To: Children, Families & Schools Committee (via the School Organisation Team)
For the attention of the Director of Children’s Services Brighton & Hove City Council
Members of the Children, Families & Schools Committee
For the attention of Councillor Lucy Helliwell and Councillor Jacob Taylor (Joint Chairs)

Subject: Formal Representation Objecting to the Proposed Closure of Middle Street Primary School

To Brighton & Hove City Council,

We (the Middle Street Community) write to submit a formal representation to members of the Children, Families & Schools Committee to object to the proposed closure of Middle Street Primary School.

We recognise that this decision rests with elected members, and we have framed this representation to assist you in reaching a lawful, fully informed, and robust determination.

We recognise the wider context in which this proposal sits, including the documented decline in primary pupil numbers across Brighton & Hove and the resulting challenge of surplus capacity. We also acknowledge that local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure the efficient use of public resources.

However, our objection is not to the existence of those pressures, but to whether this specific decision has been reached on a sufficiently complete, transparent, and robust evidential basis, in line with statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education.

1. Completeness of the Decision-Making Record

Publicly available information indicates a significant and rapid deterioration in the school’s position between late 2024 and early 2026. Earlier governing body minutes do not clearly signal imminent closure, whereas later documentation concludes that the school has no viable future.

This raises important questions as to:

- when key risks were identified,
- how they were escalated,

- and whether decision-makers and consultees have been provided with a full and consistent account of that chronology.

A lawful decision requires that relevant information is not only considered internally, but sufficiently disclosed to enable meaningful consultation.

2. Consultation Fairness (Substance, Not Form)

While the statutory consultation process appears to have been followed in form, there is a legitimate question as to whether it has been fair and open in substance.

In particular:

- whether consultees were provided with sufficient information at a formative stage,
- whether confidentiality constraints limited meaningful understanding of the issues,
- and whether the timing and communication of the proposal may have contributed to declining pupil numbers, thereby influencing the outcome.

These factors are directly relevant to whether the consultation meets the standard of fairness required under public law.

3. Consideration of Alternatives

The published material indicates that alternatives such as federation, academy partnership, and reduced PAN were considered.

However, the evidence base supporting the rejection of these options is not fully transparent. In particular, it is not clear:

- what specific steps were taken to explore each option,
- which organisations were approached,

- what financial or operational assumptions were applied,
- and whether transitional support mechanisms were considered.

Without this level of detail, it is difficult to conclude that closure was the only reasonable option available.

4. Role of Governance and Oversight Factors

There is evidence in the public domain of governance instability, including the transition to an Interim Executive Board and references to financial and organisational challenges.

It is important that the decision-maker explicitly considers:

- whether these factors contributed to the school's current position,
- and whether they have been adequately addressed or investigated.

This is not to attribute fault, but to ensure that the current position is not treated in isolation from the circumstances that led to it.

5. Equality and Community Impact

The Equalities Impact Assessment identifies disproportionate impacts on several groups, including:

- pupils with SEND,
- families from racially minoritised backgrounds,
- EAL families,
- and vulnerable or disadvantaged households.

Given the significance of these impacts, it is essential that they are not treated as a procedural requirement only, but are given full and conscientious consideration in the final decision.

6. Request for Further Clarification

Before any final decision is made, we request that the council provides, or makes available in appropriate form:

1. A clear chronology of governance, intervention, and key decision points
 2. A detailed explanation of the alternatives appraisal
 3. Clarification on the extent to which confidentiality limited disclosure during consultation
 4. An assessment of whether the consultation process itself influenced pupil numbers
 5. Confirmation that any considerations relating to the future use of the site have not influenced the proposal
-

Conclusion

We are not asserting that closure is necessarily the wrong outcome. However, we believe there is a credible and material question as to whether members currently have a sufficiently complete and transparent evidential basis on which to make a lawful and robust decision.

We therefore respectfully request that members satisfy themselves that these issues have been fully addressed before reaching any final determination. Given school holidays - we have more signatures to come and street addresses are available on request if needed.

Yours faithfully,

The Middle Street Community

Matthew Hollinshead
Pippa Terry
Arantza Vilas
Adrian Toll
Taressa Brennan Dow
John Dow

Alice Dewar-Mills
Simon Mills
Rosie Hayes
Dawn Hayes
Mark Juba
Risza Lopes da Cruz
Emma Gallini
Garry Smith
Helen Husbands
Maria Tjäder
Tom Adam
Rae Faulkner
Claire Iacovou
Emma Rivera Cordero
Clyde Holcroft
Rachel MacLachlan

Statutory Notice Representations

Participation Metrics


Metric	Value
Visitors	156
Phase participants	10
Participation rate	6.4%
Surveys submitted	10
Completion rate	100.0%

Participation over time



Demographics & Audience

Which ward do you live in?

 No reference census data is available yet for this demographic dimension. [Add it here](#) to understand how representative your data is.

- Phase participants

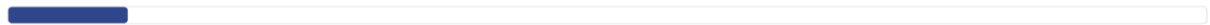
North Portslade

South Portslade

Hangleton & Knoll

Wish

10%



Westdene & Hove Park

10%



Westbourne & Poets' Corner

10%



Central Hove

Patcham & Hollingbury

Brunswick & Adelaide

10%



Regency

10%



Goldsmid

10%



Kempton

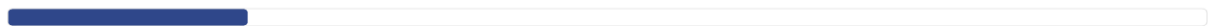
10%



Whitehawk & Marina

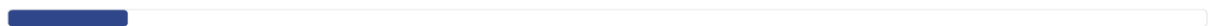
West Hill & North Laine

20%



Hanover & Elm Grove

10%



Round Hill

Hollingdean & Fiveways

Queen's Park

Preston Park

Rottingdean & West Saltdean

Coldean & Stanmer

Moulsecoomb & Bevendean

Woodingdean

I don't live in Brighton & Hove

Questions

Total 10 responses

10/10 responses

1. Please provide any comments or representations you wish to make on the Statutory Notice to close Middle Street Primary School on 31 August 2026.

10/10 responses

Responses

Although on the surface there seems to be a clear logic to the reasons behind the closure there are many unanswered questions. Listing below: -When were the key risks of the rapid decline of the school position identified? -How were these escalated? -Were the decision-makers provided with a full and consistent account of that chronology? -Where consultees provided with sufficient information at a formative stage? -Did confidentiality constraints limit meaningful understanding of the issues? -What specific steps were taken to explore the various alternatives to closure? -Which organisations were approached? -What financial or operational assumptions were applied? -What transitional support mechanisms were considered? Also important to note that the timing and communication of the proposal seems to have contributed to the declining pupil numbers and therefore having direct impact on the outcome. With the uncertainty families were encouraged to leave rather than guaranteeing a non-disruptive transition to other schools after the end of the school year. There is evidence in the public domain of governance instability, including the transition to an Interim Executive Board. There is a need for explicit considerations on the factors that contributed to the school position and lack of clarity on whether these have been adequately investigated. And last but not least the identification of disproportionate impact on several groups, including pupils with SEND, families from minority backgrounds, EAL families and vulnerable or disadvantaged backgrounds.

As the Brighton population is growing, it's best to keep as many schools as possible. Some children cannot cope with bigger schools and having some options that children feel confident to have a school like Middle Street is very important.

Don't close this down!!

How about making 3 form entry primaries 2 form entry!

I strongly object to the proposed closure of Middle Street Primary School and urge councillors to reject this decision. This closure is not an unavoidable outcome — it is the result of failure. Middle Street was not historically an undersubscribed school. It had a waiting list and a strong, positive reputation. It is a unique, central Brighton school offering exceptional opportunities such as beach school and strong SEN provision. It is a vital part of the community. What has happened here is a clear case of mismanagement and ignored warnings. Serious concerns about leadership, governance, and the direction of the school were raised by parents and the wider community, yet these concerns were not acted on in time. Audit findings have since confirmed multiple failures in oversight and financial management. The narrative that falling pupil numbers caused this situation is misleading. The opposite is true. Falling numbers are the consequence of lost confidence — a direct result of inaction and poor leadership. This has created a self-fulfilling downward spiral which is now being used to justify closure. It is unacceptable that children

and families are now being asked to pay the price for systemic failures that were allowed to continue unchecked. This is a political choice. Labour councillors, with a clear majority, have the power to stop this closure. Choosing to proceed regardless would represent a failure of accountability and leadership. It would signal that mistakes can be buried through closure rather than properly addressed. A “lessons learned” exercise after the fact is not enough. Accountability must come before irreversible decisions are made. The community deserves transparency, honesty, and the chance to recover — not a rushed closure process driven by problems that should have been tackled years ago. We are asking for time — time to stabilise, rebuild trust, and implement a credible recovery plan. With proper oversight and support, there is a real opportunity to restore confidence and pupil numbers. Closing Middle Street would not just be the loss of a school. It would be the loss of a thriving, distinctive community asset in the heart of the city — one that has been failed, not one that has failed. Councillors must decide whether they are willing to take responsibility for this situation, or whether they will allow its consequences to fall on children and families. I urge you to reject this closure and commit instead to saving the school.

It is a travesty that the school is being closed. It's is a progressive, nurturing, unique school that serves not only families living in central Brighton but children from further afield that seek a one form entry, secular school. The school has faced attack from every angle and has weathered a very difficult few years. With support from the council to rebuild, I believe the school has a future. The financial difficulties it faces are not unique and senior leadership has been asking for support and guidance to redress this for years. It feels as though the council has given up and has ulterior motives for closing it down, the families and staff are now suffering the consequences.

I'm writing to object to the proposed closure of Middle Street Primary School. The public consultation results speak for themselves. 84% of respondents opposed the closure. That reflects just how important this school is to the community. It offers a unique, inclusive and supportive environment, especially for children with special educational needs and those who don't thrive in larger schools. What's particularly frustrating is that many families feel the current situation didn't have to get this far. The Local Authority should have done more to support, protect and properly manage the school, rather than allowing things to decline and then moving quickly to closure. The process has felt rushed and poorly handled, and that has only made things worse for our children. Middle Street's central location is also vital. For many families living in the city centre - especially those without cars - it's an accessible and practical option. Losing it will mean longer journeys, more disruption, and added pressure on children who are already vulnerable. Middle Street School is part of Brighton's identity and community, and once it's gone, it can't be replaced. Please reconsider this decision, take responsibility for the role the council has played, and properly explore alternatives that could still keep the school open.

My daughter attended Middle Street. It was unlike any other school I had experienced (I worked in education in many schools as an NHS visiting professional for many years). The school's approach to education, academic, social experience and care was not matched in the city or beyond. The location meant that my daughter could stay at the school when we moved, a city centre school with the excellent transport links can make a huge difference to the ease of daily life for many families. A short period of upheaval which appears to be caused at least in part by costly paid management absence (I appreciate I don't have the full picture) when this could be resolved in time with the skilled and stable management team I would hope. The loss of a vibrant and central school is a loss to the city.

We need to encourage family with children in Brighton or it will die. My son attended here and was happy. We lived locally and still do so could just about get there, anywhere else

would have been too far as no car (which is supposedly encouraged), my son was at The Nursery Class and then infants which we desperately need. Populations fluctuate.

do not close

Brighton & Hove City Council

Cabinet

Agenda Item 156

Subject: Proposed closure of Middle Street Primary School

Date of meeting: Thursday, 19 March 2026

Report of: Cabinet Member for Finance and City Regeneration

Lead Officer: Corporate Director for Families, Children and Wellbeing

Contact Officer: Name: Richard Barker

Email: Richard.Barker@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

Key Decision: Yes

Reason(s) Key: Significant impact on 2 or more Wards

The special circumstances for non-compliance with Council Procedure Rule 3, Access to Information Procedure Rule 5 and Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) were that the consultation on the proposal to close the affected school did not end until 9 March 2026. Sufficient time then needed to be allowed for consideration and analysis of all responses received.

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 In response to serious concerns about Governance and financial viability, an Interim Executive Board (IEB) was appointed in June 2025. Having concluded that the school does not have a viable future, the IEB recommended closure with effect from 31 August 2026. This report considers that proposal, following the public consultation.
- 1.2 This report details the response to the recent public consultation on the proposal to close Middle Street Primary School on 31 August 2026 and seeks approval to publish a statutory notice.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet agrees to the publication of a statutory notice in respect of the proposed closure of Middle Street Primary School with effect from 31 August 2026. The committee notes that publication of the statutory notice will trigger a four-week representation period which will run from 8 April 2026 to 5 May 2026 during which interested parties can comment on the proposal.
- 2.2 That Cabinet notes that following the representation period a further report will come back to Full Council on 21 May 2026 at which a final decision will be made.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 The Department for Education has issued Statutory Guidance on the process that must be followed to close a maintained school “Opening and closing maintained schools – Statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers (October 2024)”
- 3.2 Middle Street Primary School is a community primary school, and the Council has the power under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to put forward proposals to close the school and to subsequently make a decision on those proposals.
- 3.3 The statutory guidance details some of the reasons why a school closure might be considered including where there are surplus places elsewhere in the local area which can accommodate pupils requiring an alternative school place, and where there is no predicted demand for the school in the medium to long term and the school is no longer considered viable.
- 3.4 The first step of the closure process is a requirement to undertake a public consultation on the proposals. This has now been completed. Following consideration of the outcome at this meeting, Cabinet has to make a decision whether to proceed with the proposals by publishing a statutory notice. Publication of the notice is followed by a four-week representation period during which interested parties may make further comment on the proposals.
- 3.5 If, having considered the consultation outcome, Cabinet decides to publish a statutory notice, it is proposed that the four-week representation period will start on Wednesday 8 April 2026 and run until Tuesday 5 May 2026. A report will then be prepared for a decision to be made on the proposed closure by Full Council on 21 May 2026.

Public Consultation

- 3.6 On 19 January 2026, Ward Councillors and unions were notified of the proposal to undertake a public consultation on the closure of Middle Street Primary School. Staff, parents, headteachers of all Brighton & Hove City Council schools and Academies and the DfE Regional Director and Ofsted were informed on 20 January 2026.
- 3.7 The consultation ran between 26 January 2026 and 9 March 2026, including three public meetings held on 10 February, 25 February and 4 March. A meeting for staff at the school took place on 26 February.
- 3.8 There were 128 responses on the Your Voice Portal, and 2 submissions received by email. A summary of the 128 responses on the consultation portal is provided below. Only 13 (10%) of the responses strongly agreed or agreed with the Council’s proposals to close the school. 108 (84%) of responses either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the Council’s proposals.

Option	Total	%
Strongly Agree	8	6.3%
Agree	5	3.9%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	6	4.7%
Disagree	10	7.8%
Strongly Disagree	98	76.6%
No Answer	1	0.8%
Total	128	100%

3.9 Reasons provided by responders for opposing the proposals included the following themes:

The school's history, ethos and educational quality. Attendees expressed strong attachment to the school and spoke about the qualities that had led them to choose it. The small, family atmosphere, inclusive culture and the particular suitability of the environment for children with additional needs were all highlighted. Consultees noted that outcomes at the school had historically been strong and that the school had provided a high standard of education. A number of respondents reflected on family members across different generations having attended the school. The school's status as the oldest primary school in Brighton was frequently cited, and a number of respondents reflected on family connections spanning multiple generations.

The school's identity as a non-faith, secular school in a central location was also highlighted as a distinctive and valued feature, particularly by families for whom this had been an important factor in choosing it. Many respondents emphasised the school's diversity and its creative spirit as qualities that set it apart from other provision in the city, and noted that it is the only non-faith, centrally located primary school in Brighton. For a number of families these characteristics had been the decisive reason for choosing the school

The circumstances leading to the school's current position. There was a concern that the school's situation had been caused or compounded by events within the school's recent history including protracted employment issues, high staff turnover, and the resulting periods of leadership instability rather than by any inherent unviability of the school or its community. A related but distinct concern was raised about financial oversight: consultees questioned how the school had been permitted to accumulate a significant deficit without earlier intervention, and whether adequate monitoring had been in place at either Local Authority or governing body level. Consultees called for acknowledgement and accountability of the Council's responsibility for its oversight and for greater transparency about the events that had led to this point.

There was also a widely held view that the consultation and closure process had been handled in a way that was rushed and poorly communicated, and that the resulting instability had itself contributed to families leaving the school, further worsening the roll position. Several respondents suggested that the Council's actions may have been short-sighted, and questioned whether the process had been conducted with a view to financial or property

considerations rather than educational ones. Officers acknowledged the depth of feeling expressed and confirmed that lessons would be reflected upon.

The range of options considered. There were questions raised at consultation meetings as to whether all alternatives to closure had been fully explored and concern was expressed that parents had not been given sight of the options earlier in the process. Officers explained that the IEB had considered a range of options including federation, academisation and standalone models and confirmed that full details were available through the IEB's published minutes.

A number of respondents also questioned whether the timeframe over which the decision had been developed was sufficient given the significance and permanence of the outcome, and whether further time and active support might have allowed a different picture to emerge.

Impact on pupils, particularly those with SEND. Concerns were raised about the disproportionate impact of closure on pupils with special educational needs, and whether alternative schools would be able to replicate the level of support currently provided. Consultees requested that educational psychology support be made available to pupils during the current period of uncertainty, not only at the point of transition. More broadly, respondents highlighted the impact of the closure process on the wellbeing, mental health and educational progress of current pupils, and on the continuity of support for vulnerable families.

Communication. A recurring concern was that communication from both the headteacher and the IEB had been insufficient. Parents described feeling uninformed and, in some cases, having had to rely on social media and rumour rather than official communications. Officers acknowledged these concerns and confirmed that IEB minutes were published on the school website.

In addition to the concerns already noted, several respondents specifically highlighted the reassurance given to parents during the autumn term that closure was not imminent, followed shortly afterwards by the announcement of the proposal. This sequence of events was raised as a particular source of hurt and distrust and compounded the broader sense among some consultees that they had not been kept honestly informed.

The school's city centre location and the loss of provision for central Brighton families. A significant number of responses raised concerns specific to the school's location and community school status, noting that Middle Street Primary School serves families living in the city centre who depend on a school within walking distance, and that its closure, following that of St Bartholomew's CoE Primary School, represents a further reduction in accessible central provision. Concerns were also raised about the implications for young children being required to travel further, and about the additional pressure this would place on already oversubscribed neighbouring schools. A formal submission from Living Streets Brighton and Hove Group

specifically addressed the active travel and sustainability dimensions of consolidating provision away from where city centre families live.

The future use of the school site. A distinct concern raised by several consultees related not to the closure itself but to what would follow from it. Several respondents expressed apprehension that the building would be sold for private development, and some suggested that the site's potential value may have been a factor in the decision to propose closure rather than to pursue alternatives. Calls were made for the building to be retained for community or educational use, and for transparency about the Council's intentions for the site.

Views in support of closure. A minority of respondents expressed support for the proposed closure. Those doing so tended to cite the school's financial unviability and low pupil numbers as the principal reasons, and some acknowledged the sadness of the situation whilst nonetheless concluding that closure was inevitable given current circumstances. The importance of ensuring the sustainability of other schools across the city was also a factor for support.

Community readiness and the potential for recovery. A number of respondents offered a more forward-looking perspective, contending that the conditions for a genuine recovery were now in place. They noted that the current parent community was positive, engaged and actively committed to rebuilding the school's reputation. Evidence of wider community and business goodwill was cited in support of this view, with respondents pointing to practical support already secured from local organisations as an indication of the confidence that existed in the school's potential.

Respondents in this group argued that the school's one form entry size meant that supporting its continuation would not come at a cost to other provision in the city, and that a successful recovery story could have significant value both for the school's community and for the Council's wider standing. Some expressed concern that the decision was being made before sufficient time had been allowed to test whether the school could turn its position around under the current leadership arrangements.

Local authority capability and the quality of support provided to the school. Concerns were raised, informally and on the basis of partial knowledge, about the adequacy of support provided by BHCC to the school in managing a complex set of circumstances over an extended period. Questions were raised about the capability and capacity of officers to support schools facing serious employment and safeguarding matters and whether the advice and guidance available to the school had been consistent with national frameworks and sufficient to enable the school to manage the situation safely and effectively.

It was also suggested that the volume and nature of complaints experienced by the school had been exacerbated by the circumstances described, and that the school had not been given the level of support it needed to manage those complaints within other exceptional pressures.

School Context

- 3.10 In order to address serious concerns about governance and finances, the Council appointed an Interim Executive Board (IEB) in June 2025 to replace the Governing Board of Middle Street Primary School to address serious concerns about governance and finances. The IEB worked intensively over a period of several months to assess the school's position and identify a viable way forward. At its meeting on 16 December 2025, the IEB considered a range of options for the school's future, including continuing as a standalone primary school, joining a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT), forming a federation with another local school under a range of leadership structures, and recommending closure to the Council. Having assessed each option against the school's financial position and admission projections, the IEB voted at that stage to pursue federation as the preferred route to securing the school's future, with a restructured leadership model intended to reduce costs while maintaining educational quality.
- 3.11 However, in the weeks that followed, the school experienced a rapid and significant loss of pupils, driven in part by rumours circulating in the community about the possibility of closure. By January 2026, 42 children had left since the start of the academic year and only three first-preference applications had been received for September 2026, against a planned admission number of 30. The IEB met on 15 January 2026 to consider this changed position. Members noted that the financial model underpinning the December federation plan was dependent on a minimum intake of 15 Reception pupils each year and no further significant losses in other year groups; the January number on roll figures made this untenable.
- 3.12 Having considered the financial implications and all relevant risk factors, the IEB unanimously agreed that the school was no longer financially viable and recommended that the Council launch a consultation on closure with effect from 31 August 2026. All IEB members acknowledged this to be a regrettable but necessary decision.
- 3.13 Middle Street Primary School has the capacity to admit 210 pupils. In the January 2026 census, the school had 141 pupils on roll across Reception to Year 6, but since the announcement of the public consultation on the closure of the school on 26 January the numbers on roll have decreased to 71 pupils.

Reasons to propose to close the school

- 3.14 The Council acknowledges the level of concern in response to these proposals. Nonetheless it is recommended to proceed with publishing a statutory notice to close Middle Street Primary School on 31 August 2026. Closure is considered necessary for the reasons set out below.
- 3.15 The school is currently operating with a significant budget deficit. The forecast deficit for 2025/2026 is in the region of £400k and the school is currently unable to forecast reaching a balanced budget position in the longer term. The declining enrolment, combined with increasing costs and

this challenging budget position, means the school faces an unsustainable financial situation that severely limits its ability to continue operating effectively.

- 3.16 The school has capacity for 210 pupils, but at the end of February half-term have 71 pupils on roll, representing a significant level of surplus places. With pupil numbers in the city projected to fall further, there is no credible financial plan that demonstrates the school returning to a sustainable budget position.

School	Year R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Middle Street Primary – current pupil numbers	7	5	9	9	11	3

There are 27 pupils in Year 6 that will be transitioning to secondary schools in September 2026.

- 3.17 The IEB appointed specifically to assess the school’s position and explore options for recovery, concluded after seven months that critical risk factors severely limit the school’s ability to recover and that closure is the only viable course of action.

Pupils Requiring Alternative Places

- 3.18 The Council is confident that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate pupils requiring alternative places, if the school is to close. While school places potentially fluctuate on a daily basis as at January 2026, there are 534 available spaces in schools within 1.5 miles of Middle Street Primary School, with availability across all year groups as set out in the table below:

School	(Metres)	(Miles)	R	1	2	3	4	5
St Paul's CE Primary School	613.65	0.38	7	11	11	14	7	0
St Mary Magdalen's RC School	757.05	0.47	5	9	3	6	6	1
Carlton Hill Primary School	1136.81	0.71	1	0	0	0	0	0
Queens Park Primary School	1548.39	0.96	26	8	27	19	16	15
Brunswick Primary School	1576.36	0.98	10	19	6	14	19	24
Stanford Junior School	1762.99	1.10	~	~	~	11	39	2
Hove Junior School - Holland Rd	1765.93	1.10	~	~	~	4	13	23

West Hove Infant School - Holland Road	1766.30	1.10	6	1	16	~	~	~
Stanford Infant School	2136.59	1.33	1	17	24	~	~	~
St Luke's Primary School	2166.30	1.35	0	0	0	2	0	3
Elm Grove Primary School	2211.32	1.37	7	2	0	10	3	2
Fairlight Primary School	2247.32	1.40	9	3	0	7	6	4
Downs Infant School	2338.95	1.45	1	0	10	~	~	~
St Martin's CE Primary School	2393.53	1.49	2	2	9	8	0	3

(Year 6 pupils are in their final year and expected to transition to secondary school in September 2026)

- 3.19 Parents who have not applied by the end of the Spring Term for a new school place will be contacted by Schools Admissions Team and asked to submit preferences for new school places. Any families who have already applied for Reception places at Middle Street Primary School will be contacted about the consultation and supported to change preferences.
- 3.20 Children with Education, Health and Care Plans will be contacted by a nominated SEN Casework Officer in order that an annual review can take place and consideration can be given to identifying a new education setting for September 2026.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs

- 3.21 There are currently 8 pupils (Reception – Year 5) with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which is 11% of the current school population. Pupils in Year 6 with EHCPs will be picked up through phased transfers to secondary school.
- 3.22 Through the consultation concerns have been expressed about how other schools will be able to meet the special educational needs of pupils, how these pupils will cope with a transition to another school and whether any receiving school would put in place appropriate interventions to support them.
- 3.23 All pupils with EHCPs will have an individual annual review to inform the decision about future provision. Pupils who are currently undergoing statutory assessment will see no disruption to that process as a result of the proposal to close the school. Evidence collected for pupils in advance of a formal request for statutory assessment will be made available to a receiving school and will be taken into consideration when considering what the appropriate next steps might be to meet a pupil's needs.

- 3.24 The Council is confident that the needs of all pupils can be met within other mainstream settings, subject to updated information obtained during the annual review process. Dedicated support from a senior SEN Casework Officer and Team Manager will oversee the transfer of pupils known to the Council's SEN service.

Supporting Transition

- 3.25 A transition support group will be established, including educational psychologists and admissions staff, to assist families in selecting schools and to support pupils through transitions. This group will work closely with the existing Middle Street Primary School staff and staff at receiving schools to ensure the transition of pupils is managed in a child-centered, caring and considered way.
- 3.26 Information on pupils' needs and on strategies and interventions that work to support pupils in learning will be made available to receiving schools and staff will be encouraged to discuss individual pupils as part of the transition process.
- 3.27 All schools in the city will be reminded of their role in supporting the children who need to move school.

Impact on the Community

- 3.28 The Council recognises that the proposed closure of Middle Street Primary School will have a significant impact on the school community. For pupils, families and staff, the school is not just an educational setting but an important part of their lives and the local area. The closure of any school affects the wider community, and the Council understands the sense of loss and uncertainty this proposal creates.
- 3.29 Middle Street Primary School has a long and significant history in the heart of Brighton. The first school on the Middle Street site was established in 1807 as the Union Charity School for Boys, with a girls' school joining in 1809, making it one of the oldest school sites in the city. The school's location in central Brighton has meant it has historically served a diverse community, including families from a wide range of backgrounds, and has been particularly valued by families of children with additional needs and those who have benefited from its inclusive and nurturing ethos.
- 3.30 During the public consultations, attendees at the meetings spoke with considerable feeling about the school's qualities and its importance to them. Many families described making a deliberate choice to send their children to Middle Street Primary School precisely because of its small, family feel and its supportive environment, qualities they felt were not easily replicated in larger settings. The school's recent investment in its physical environment, including a new playground, rain garden and solar panels, was highlighted by a number of attendees as evidence of commitment to the school's future, and several expressed frustration that this investment had been made so shortly before the proposal to close.

- 3.31 The Council recognises that Middle Street Primary School has provided a high standard of education to many children over many years, and that its closure represents a genuine loss for those who have been part of its community. The Year 6 cohort in particular were noted, both by the IEB and by consultation attendees, as a strong, cohesive group — a reflection of the commitment shown by pupils and their families during what has been a period of significant staffing instability, including considerable teacher turnover across Years 4, 5 and 6.
- 3.32 The consultation process has been designed to ensure that all voices are heard and that the full range of impacts, educational, social and emotional, are properly understood and considered before any final decision is taken.
- 3.33 The timing of the statutory school admissions process created particular difficulties during the period of uncertainty surrounding the school's future. Parents were required to submit offers of places in accordance with the School Admissions Code, at a point when the outcome of the consultation had not yet been determined. Faced with that uncertainty, a number of families made the understandable decision to secure places at alternative schools, accelerating the decline in pupil numbers at a time when the roll was already under significant pressure. This dynamic, whilst an unavoidable consequence of the interaction between the statutory proposal process and the admissions process, contributed to a further deterioration in the school's forward financial position.

Staffing

- 3.34 Should the school close, staff jobs will be at risk. Of the 35 staff posts at the school, 21 staff qualify for redundancy. Estimated redundancy costs are £156,289.88 at basic statutory rates, or £271,633.00 with enhancement for staff under 55, plus additional pension costs for a small number of staff to be calculated.
- 3.35 The Council will strongly recommend that should the school close, the staff affected be given the opportunity to be considered for roles in other schools prior to any recruitment process those schools may undertake. Individual HR support will be made available to staff, including access to the employee assistance programme and support with redeployment opportunities.
- 3.36 A seven-week staff redundancy consultation is running from 9 February to 27 March 2026, with HR and Union support throughout.
- 3.37 Staff who are made redundant will receive their relevant entitlements depending on the role they hold at the school and their levels of continuous service.

Accommodation

- 3.38 As a community school, the school building and land are the responsibility of

the Council. Security plans will be developed for the site from 31 August 2026, alongside arrangements for asset distribution and records storage.

Travel

- 3.39 The government guidance outlines that when proposing to close a school, decision makers should consider whether the proposal will result in unreasonably long journey times or increased travel costs for local authorities or families, as well as any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the discontinuance of the school.
- 3.40 The Council is unable to forecast what preferences parents will have for alternative schools for their children to attend. Most families will be able to choose a school within a reasonable walking distance from Middle Street Primary School given the number of places available in nearby schools.
- 3.41 The Council's Home to School transport policy reflects the legislation and sets out that the Council has a duty to provide assistance with transport for children of compulsory school age between home and school if the child is under the age of 8 and lives more than two miles from their nearest suitable school, or the child is aged between 8 and 16 years and lives more than three miles from their nearest suitable school. Families may therefore be eligible for transport assistance from the Council, depending on their circumstances and once a new school place is known.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 The Council could propose not closing Middle Street Primary School or could propose to close the school over a longer period.
- 4.2 The viability of alternative options to closure are considerably diminished by the current financial position of the school and the numbers of children on roll. The IEB, which was specifically appointed to address the school's financial and governance challenges and to explore options for recovery, concluded after seven months that critical risk factors severely limit the school's ability to recover.
- 4.3 The IEB's assessment was thorough and considered a number of specific alternatives before reaching its conclusion. These included: maintaining the school as a standalone primary with a substantive headteacher; joining a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT), which was assessed as unviable given the scale of the existing deficit; and two models of federation with another local primary school – one retaining a full-time Headteacher and one restructuring to a part-time Executive Headteacher and Head of School arrangement to reduce costs. The IEB also considered different models of school organisation based on different numbers of classes. In particular the IEB considered a four-class school structure and assessed whether this could deliver a financially balanced position over a five year period. While such a model was judged potentially viable by 2028 under optimal conditions, it would have required full classes, capped staffing costs, and a minimum annual Reception intake of 15 pupils, conditions that could not be met given

the pupil numbers recorded in January 2026. The IEB concluded that there was no alternative to closure which offered a credible and sustainable future for the school.

- 4.4 It is reasonable to assume that the risk of greater costs to the Council's General Fund will rise should the school remain open longer. It can reasonably be expected that if a longer closure period were agreed, more families would move their children to alternative schools as the revised closure date approaches, further compounding the school's viability. Therefore, an alternative closure timetable or a proposal not to close the school are not considered appropriate.
- 4.5 By not reducing the number of surplus places in the city in the longer term, school occupancy rates will not increase, meaning that school budgets will remain lower and this may make more schools less viable. Schools are more likely to be able to balance their budgets if operating with full, or close to full, forms of entry.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 The Council undertook a consultation exercise between 26 January and 9 March 2026. Three public meetings were held on 10 February, 25 February and 4 March 2026. A meeting with staff took place on 26 February. Ward Councillors and unions were notified on 19 January 2026, and staff, parents, headteachers, the DfE Regional Schools Commissioner and Ofsted were informed on 20 January 2026.
- 5.2 The online consultation response form received 128 responses and 2 direct responses to the Council by email. A summary of all responses is provided above, and the full responses will be made available to Cabinet members for their consideration.
- 5.3 It will be apparent that this report is published within three days of the consultation closing. By way of reassurance this is because officers have worked to absorb and consider responses as they came in during the consultation, and therefore there were only a reduced number of responses to consider following the closure of the consultation period. All responses received have been fully considered before the drafting of this report was completed.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 School budgets are determined in accordance with criteria set by the government and school funding regulations dictate that the vast majority (over 90% in 2025/26) of the delegated schools block of funding is allocated through pupil-led factors. This means schools with falling pupil numbers are likely to see reductions in their annual budgets.
- 6.2 Middle Street Primary School is currently operating with a licensed deficit, and it is expected that there will be a deficit in the region of £400k at the end

of the 2025/26 financial year. With rapidly declining pupil numbers it is likely that this deficit will escalate further in subsequent years.

- 6.3 Where a local authority-maintained school has a deficit at the point at which the school closes this will be a charge to the Council's General Fund. There will also likely be additional costs relating to redundancies and pensions that would result in further costs to the Council's general fund. The Council is making provision for this expenditure as part of its 2026/27 financial modelling.
- 6.4 By reducing the number of surplus places in the city in the longer term there is an expectation that school occupancy rates will increase meaning that school budgets generally are more sustainable. Schools are more likely to be able to balance their budgets if operating with full, or close to full, forms of entry.

Name of finance officer consulted: Steve Williams Date consulted:
25/02/2026

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 In order to achieve any reorganisation of school provision the council must comply with School Organisation legislation, the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA), associated regulations, and statutory guidance published by the Department for Education "Opening and closing maintained schools, Statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers, January 2023". Both the legislation and guidance set out the steps which the council must take before making any decisions on proposals to reorganise school provision.
- 7.2 In accordance with Section 15 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 ("the EIA 2006") (as amended) and the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013 ("the Regulations"), a formal consultation exercise has now been carried out with all interested parties. If the decision is taken to proceed with the proposed closure of Middle Street Primary School following this consultation, a statutory notice must be published. Publication of the notice triggers a four-week period of representation during which interested parties are able to comment on the proposal. At the end of this representation period a further report will be taken to Full Council for a final decision on closure.
- 7.3 In taking decisions the Council must act lawfully, including acting within its powers and following its own procedures as well as those required by law. The Council must ensure that all required consultations are properly undertaken in accordance with relevant law and guidance. It must make rational, evidence-based decisions, take into account all relevant considerations, act for a proper purpose, and be properly reasoned.
- 7.4 The Council is required to have 'due regard' to the duties set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Public Sector Equality Duty) in determining the proposal. In order to comply with the public sector equality duty the Committee should have due regard to the analysis of the impact upon those

affected by the proposal who have protected characteristics under the Act. This is summarised within the EIA template and the body of the report. Recent government guidance indicates that the general duty requires decision-makers to have due regard to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to activities such as providing a public service. As indicated in recent government guidance the duty does not dictate a particular outcome. The level of “due regard” considered sufficient in any particular context depends on the facts. The duty should always be applied in a proportionate way depending on the circumstances of the case and the seriousness of the potential equality impacts on those with protected characteristics.

- 7.5 The Council is the employer of staff engaged at its community schools. It must take further advice to ensure compliance with employment law if staff become affected by these proposals.

Name of lawyer consulted: Serena Kynaston Date consulted: 24/02/2026:

8. Equalities Implications

- 8.1 When contemplating school closure, the Council must have “due regard” to the duties set out in Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 (the Public Sector Equality Duty). This requires the Council to consider how any decision to close might affect people who are protected under the Equality Act.
- 8.2 This report is accompanied by an Equalities Impact Assessment (Appendix 2).
- 8.3 Pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) are being supported by a dedicated transition support team and their individual transition arrangements are ongoing.
- 8.5 The consultation process has been designed to be accessible to all members of the school community, including support for families where English is not their first language, and for those whose children have special educational needs. Further engagement with affected groups will inform the full Equality Impact Assessment to be presented in May.

9. Sustainability Implications

- 9.1 The proposal to close Middle Street Primary School could affect the length of journey families need to undertake to take their children to school. This could have an impact on the use of private vehicles or the number of journeys undertaken on public transport.
- 9.2 However, given the availability of a significant number of places in schools within close proximity to Middle Street Primary School, it is expected that the majority of families will be able to access an alternative school without significantly extending their journey. Schools are expected to have a School Travel Plan and it would be expected that schools receiving pupils as a

result of a decision to close the school are supported to amend these to take account of the changes that occur.

- 9.3 Due consideration will be given to the circumstances of any families who apply for transport assistance once their child has been allocated a new school place.

10. Conclusion

- 10.1 The Council has undertaken a public consultation on proposals to close Middle Street Primary School on 31 August 2026.
- 10.2 A total of 128 responses were received via the Your Voice consultation portal, together with 2 direct responses to the Council. The majority of replies disagree with the proposals and raised concerns as set out in 3.9 above.
- 10.3 As of February 2026, the school will be operating with 71 pupils on roll, against a capacity of 210, with pupil numbers projected to fall further by Easter.
- 10.4 The school is forecasting a deficit in the region of £400k for 2025/2026 and there is no credible financial plan that demonstrates the school returning to a balanced budget position.
- 10.5 The IEB, appointed specifically to assess the school's viability and explore recovery options, concluded after seven months that the school does not have a viable future and recommended closure. The absence of a viable financial recovery plan and the continued fall in pupil numbers mean any alternative to closure would require additional and ongoing support from the Council.
- 10.6 In recommending that the school closes, the Council is committed to supporting all pupils to find alternative school places, be supported to attend schools if their circumstances mean they are entitled to transport assistance, and to work with receiving schools to meet the needs of the children. A transition support group will be established, and the Council will clearly state its expectations of receiving schools so as to minimise the impact on children having to attend another school.
- 10.7 There are 534 available places within 1.5 miles of Middle Street Primary School and the Council are confident that sufficient capacity exists across the city to accommodate all pupils.
- 10.8 If the recommendations in this report are agreed, a statutory representation period of four weeks will run between 8 April 2026 and 5 May 2026, during which time any person may make further comments on the proposal. Once any further comments are considered a further report will be brought to Full Council on 21 May 2026, at which a final decision will be made.

Supporting Documentation

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Primary School Place Forecast
- Appendix 2 Initial Equalities Impact Assessment
- Appendix 3 Draft Statutory Notice
- Appendix 4 Draft Full Proposal Information
- Appendix 5 Summary of Consultation Phase Responses



MIDDLE STREET PRIMARY SCHOOL INTERIM EXECUTIVE BOARD



Name	MIDDLE STREET PRIMARY SCHOOL INTERIM EXECUTIVE BOARD
Date	Tuesday 16 th December
Time	10am – 1pm
Venue	Middle Street Primary School
Membership	Anne Allison (AA), IEB Chair Ashley Seymour-Williams (ASW) Shelley Baker (SB) Rachel Kershaw (RK) Executive Headteacher Wafa Paton (WP) Louise Hoten (LHO)
Attending	Lynn Hill (LHI), School Business Manager, Varndean School Gaynor Newnham (GN) Clerk
Apologies	Kate Vallance (KV) and Lynn Hill (LHI)

Minutes

No.	Item	Action
1 Welcome		
1.1	<p>Welcome, apologies and introductions</p> <p>The Chair opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. The Board accepted apologies from Kate Vallance and Lynn Hill. The Chair reported that Rachel Burstow has resigned from the IEB, due to other work commitments. The IEB recorded thanks to her for her work for Middle Street Primary School (MSPS) IEB.</p>	
1.2	<p>Review Agenda</p> <p>There were no changes to the published agenda.</p>	
2 Forward Planning		
2.1	<p>Future Options Discussion</p> <p>The local authority has asked the IEB to consider the options for the school moving forward- the Interim Executive Board was put in place for a period of 12-18 months and a clear plan is needed.</p> <p>The working party has met prior to this meeting to explore whether it was possible to model a viable school at Middle Street. A range of options had been explored by the working party and members gave a summary of the options that were explored:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- MSPS remaining as a stand-alone primary school as now 2- Joining a multi-academy trust (MAT) 3- Joining a federation- either retaining a full time headteacher or restructuring with a part time headteacher and Executive Headteacher, or part time Executive Headteacher and full time Head of School 4- Recommending that the LA closes MSPS. 	

	<p>The working party's discussions had been supported by a detailed paper covering all the options. This had been circulated prior to this meeting and received by all members. The Chair explained that option 2- joining a MAT, had been considered by the working party but they felt the significant deficit would prevent a Trust taking on the school at this time. This was agreed by the IEB.</p> <p>To support discussions of each remaining option, ASW presented the paper previously circulated. This included a range of considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The deficit position - Admissions outlook for 2026 - There are now a total of thirteen preferences for MSPS (reception 2026), (1st preference = 2; 2nd preference = 2; 3rd preference = 4; 4th preference = 5). The deadline for applications is the 15 January. By way of comparison, there were sixty-three total applications last year, of which sixteen were first preference. There are currently very few children in the local area. - Pupil numbers forecast across the city/central city capacity - Mobility of pupils- information from the local authority showed that there are currently fifteen children on waiting lists for other schools. Seven other children have been offered places, very likely to be offered places or have accepted an offer for January. <p>Also included in the paper were several models of school organisation based on different numbers of classes. These were considered at length.</p> <p>It is possible to model a four-class model that could be financially viable by 2028. However, the budget leaves minimal contingency and a priority remains addressing the substantial deficit. Viability depends on maintaining full classes, capped staffing costs and stable pupil admissions. The transition into a four-class model needs to be considered, and the budget deficit would be difficult to address within five years. A significant percentage of the budget would be needed to fund the deficit repayments</p> <p>The risks remain high and must be regularly analysed and mitigations explored.</p> <p>The Chair invited the IEB to vote on the following options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue as a stand-alone primary school with a headteacher. 2. Federate as soon as possible with another local primary school, retaining a full-time headteacher 3. Federate as soon as possible with another local primary school. Re-structure to create part time Executive Headteacher and Head of School posts. 4. Recommend closure of the school to the LA. 5. Apply to join a Multi Academy Trust (MAT). <p>The IEB voted on the options and the decision was option 3: Federate as soon as possible with another local primary school to allow time to create a sustainable school. Re-structure to create part time EHT and Head of School posts.</p> <p>Actions: Notify the LA of the IEB recommendation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> : Communicate with staff and parents in January to share the plans. : Review the ongoing risks regularly at each meeting 	
3 Standing items		
3.1	<p>Declaration of Business Interests</p> <p>There were no changes to the previously published declarations.</p>	
3.2	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting:</p>	

	<p>The IEB approved the General Minutes as an accurate record of the meeting. The IEB approved the Confidential Minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>The IEB reviewed the summary of actions, and all were noted to be complete, or in hand, except:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain rationale for the suspension of Beach School to the Beach School Lead • WP to work with RK on slotting the anti-discrimination action plan into the SDP. • Circulate Teachers’ Pay Policy to the IEB • Identify changes to the Teachers’ Pay Policy and share them with the IEB • Check policy review times and share information with the EHT. <p><u>Matters arising</u> Please refer to the confidential minutes.</p> <p>Q: Was the SDP shared with IEB? A: Not yet; this will come to the next meeting. The IEB discussed allocating members to look at the SDP, and to be allocated to classes, which will be actioned in January. The IEB advised telling staff in January that there is a risk Ofsted may visit.</p> <p>Action: Allocate IEB members to SDP areas, classes, etc.</p> <p><i>LHO left at 1200</i></p> <p>Q: Has the SEF (Self Evaluation Form) been written? A: The EHT will write this with the HOS. ASW agreed to support with this.</p>	3.21
4 Strategic Priorities		
4.1	<p>Finance</p> <p>The IEB noted the financial update that had been shared for the meeting. The plans to meet LHI in January to discuss the slightly improved financial position. The current School Finance Officer leaves tomorrow and LHI will be on site more.</p> <p>Q: What was the Finance Officer’s time commitment? A: 2-days/week, which is more than had been planned.</p> <p>Q: Will Varndean replace the member of staff? A: Interviews are in process.</p> <p>Q: Is there a Pupil Premium Report available? A: This will be reviewed in January.</p>	
4.2	<p>Staffing</p> <p>This was partially covered under agenda item 2.1. Please also refer to the confidential minutes.</p>	
4.3	<p>Executive Headteacher’s Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Headteacher’s Report The EHT gave verbal updates under all agenda items. • SEND provision to include SEND review outcomes 	

	This was covered under agenda item 4.2.	
4.4	<p>Communication with Parents and Carers Complaints are now resolved. One former parent reserves the right to escalate but is now more supportive of the school.</p> <p>The IEB agreed they must assure parents the school has a future; there will be a meeting in January to present the SDP. The Chair will write a letter to staff to highlight the positives, community spirit, those who have gone the extra mile during a difficult time of absence etc. and explain that there are budget difficulties, but the team is working to move the school forward positively.</p> <p>Action: Invite parents to a meeting in T3 to present the SIP. Action: Write to staff on behalf of the IEB.</p> <p>Feedback from staff meeting was discussed earlier in the meeting.</p>	4.41 4.42
5 Compliance and Policies		
5.1	<p>Safeguarding Please refer to the confidential minutes.</p>	
5.2	<p>Website and Statutory Requirements: The Clerk will share information for the website.</p> <p>Action: Share information for the website.</p> <p>Statutory compliance and training updates were not discussed.</p>	5.21
5.3	<p>Policies: The IEB noted the Policy Review Schedule . All internal policies have been shared with staff. The EHT will send the current Pay Policy to the Chair, as an action</p> <p>Action: Share current Pay policy with the Chair</p>	5.31
5.4	<p>Health and Safety <u>Health and Safety urgent updates</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two broken fire doors are being looked at today and the list of tasks is being worked through. • A hole appeared on the playground this morning. The area has been cordoned off, and support has been called for. • The new grass was poorly laid and more work will be needed. Q: Is there any comeback on the company that did the work? A: The Admin Lead will be asked to check. • Legionella has been identified in the flat – there will be an update at the next meeting. <p>Q: Can the H&S member visit the school? A: Yes, after January.</p>	

	Action: Check whether the company who laid the grass will accept any liability. Action: Complete H&S Monitoring visit.	5.41 5.42												
6 Other														
6.2	Agenda Items for Next Meeting: Working party update SDP Pay Policy IEB Dates for April to July 2026													
6.3	Next Meeting:													
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date</th> <th>Time</th> <th>Location</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Monday 26th January</td> <td>10-1</td> <td>MSPS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Monday 23rd February</td> <td>10 – 1</td> <td>St Margaret’s, Rottingdean</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Monday 23rd March</td> <td>10 – 1</td> <td>MSPS</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Date	Time	Location	Monday 26 th January	10-1	MSPS	Monday 23 rd February	10 – 1	St Margaret’s, Rottingdean	Monday 23 rd March	10 – 1	MSPS	
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Monday 26 th January	10-1	MSPS												
Monday 23 rd February	10 – 1	St Margaret’s, Rottingdean												
Monday 23 rd March	10 – 1	MSPS												

Closed at 12.46

Attendance Register:	07.07.25 1-4pm	22.09.25 1-4pm	20.10.25 12-3pm	24.11.25 10-1pm	16.12.25 10-1pm	26.01.26 10-1pm	23.02.26 10-1pm	23.03.26 10-1pm
Location:	Middle Street	The Hive	Varndean	Middle Street	Middle Street	Middle Street	St Margaret’s, Rottingdean	Middle Street
Anne Allison	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Shelley Baker	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Rachel Burstow	✓	✓	✓	✓	n/a			
Louise Hoten	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Rachel Kershaw	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Wafa Paton	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Ashley Seymour-Williams	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Kate Vallance	✓	✓	✓	✓	X			
In attendance:								
Rob Cooper Head Teacher	✓	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a			
Lynn Hill SBM, Varndean	✓	✓	✓	✓	X			

Sarah Stokes Clerk	✓				
Gaynor Newnham Clerk	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Andy Richbell Interim Executive Head		✓	✓	n/a	n/a
Sue Pollock – in lieu of LHO	n/a	n/a	✓	n/a	n/a