

Subject:	One Choice is No Choice: Extract from the proceedings of the Council Meeting held on the 26 January 2017		
Date of Meeting:	6 March 2017		
Report of:	Executive Lead for Strategy, Governance & Law		
Contact Officer:	Name: Mark Wall	Tel: 01273 291006	
	E-mail: mark.wall@brighton-hove.gov.uk		
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

Action Required of the Children, Young People & Skills Committee

To receive the item referred from the Council for consideration.

Recommendations: That the petition be noted and considered by the Children, Young People & Skills Committee.

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL

5.30pm 26 JANUARY 2017

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

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

66 PETITIONS FOR COUNCIL DEBATE

(b) ONE CHOICE IS NO CHOICE

- 66.1 The Mayor stated that where a petition secured 1,250 or more signatures it could be debated at the council meeting. He had been made aware of two such petitions and would therefore take each in turn.
- 66.2 The Mayor then invited Samantha Fern as the lead petitioner to present the petition calling on the Council to ensure that children across the city were given at least two secondary schools in their catchment area so that all children had a choice.
- 66.3 Ms. Fern thanked the Mayor and confirmed that the petition had 1,350 signatures and stated that the current situation was unfair and needed to be addressed to ensure that all children had the opportunity to attend a school in their area. As the situation stood, some children only had one choice and could then be faced with having to travel across the city, whilst by-passing other nearby schools. The petitioners believed that there should be a choice of schools within each catchment area and that children should then be guaranteed a place at a school in their area. She therefore called on the council to take action and to resolve this matter so that all children had at least two secondary schools in their catchment area and thereby a choice.
- 66.4 The Mayor thanked Ms. Fern and called on Councillor Chapman to respond to the petition.
- 66.5 Councillor Chapman thanked the petitioner and stated that he had been invited to meet with parents last year during the review of the arrangements that the cross-party Working Group was undertaking. He also noted that 90% of the schools across the city were either good or out-standing which was a positive situation for all parents. He stated that the question of admission arrangements was a difficult one to resolve. The need for a new secondary school had been identified and the council was working with the University of Brighton to find a suitable location. There had been an extensive consultation exercise and the Working Group had not reached a consensus in terms of the arrangements for catchment areas. However, once a suitable location was found, it was intended to review the proposals for catchment areas and to consult further on possible arrangements so that a workable solution could be found.
- 66.6 Councillor Brown stated that the current situation whereby some children had a choice of 3 schools and others only 1 was not viable and the need to know where the new school would be located was becoming imperative. There was a need for the Working Group to meet and to be able to put forward proposals for the revised catchment areas that would ensure a choice of schools for all children. She noted that the new school was likely to have a city-wide catchment area for its first year; but that would need to be taken into account when determining the catchment areas for the other schools.
- 66.7 Councillor Phillips welcomed the petition and stated that the need for broader catchment areas was evident so that a greater mix of children in schools would be achieved which would enable them to fulfil their potential.
- 66.8 Councillor Page stated that he was grateful for the petition as it had focussed councillors' minds on the issue and the unfairness of the current situation. He believed that every child should have a choice of schools within their catchment area and hoped that this could now be achieved.

- 66.9 Councillor Chapman noted the comments and stated that he hoped a meeting of the cross-party Working Group could be held shortly so that a way forward could be discussed and agreed.
- 66.10 The Mayor noted it was recommended to refer the petition to the next meeting of the Children, Young People & Skills Committee and therefore put the recommendation to the vote which were carried unanimously.
- 66.11 **RESOLVED:** That the petition be noted and referred to the Children, Young People & Skills Committee for consideration at its meeting on the 6th March 2017.

