

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & SKILLS COMMITTEE

4.00pm 26 OCTOBER 2020

VIRTUAL MEETING - SKYPE

MINUTES

Present:

Councillors: Clare (Chair), Hills (Deputy Chair), Allcock (Opposition Spokesperson), Brown (Group Spokesperson), Grimshaw, Hamilton, Lloyd, McNair, Nield and Simson

Co-optees: Ms K James and Mr A Muirhead

PART ONE

28 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

(a) Declarations of Substitutes

28.1 There were none.

(b) Declarations of Interest

28.2 There were none.

(c) Exclusion of Press and Public

28.3 The Committee considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of any of the items listed on the agenda.

28.4 **RESOLVED:** There were no part two in the agenda

29 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

29.1 The Chair gave the following communication:

There has been a lot of conversation over the last few days about free school meals during half term, following a Parliament vote to not fund vouchers.

I know colleagues will agree, and as Chair I want it on record that no one should feel shamed for needing help with food and to stress that the council, and a great many

businesses and volunteers in our city, are here and able to help. Food poverty is a deeply devastating and sad reality for too many families, now being exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. No child should go hungry.

In Brighton and Hove we have had a strong focus on food poverty for a long time and since the early days of the pandemic have been running a food hub out of the Brighton Centre in partnership with Brighton and Hove Food Partnership. They are able to make deliveries direct to families who need it, and our schools and social work teams already do work to support families in need. These services receive direct funding from Brighton and Hove City Council and have also been in receipt of increased support throughout the pandemic as need has increased.

Anyone who needs this who is not already reached by our teams can use the information on the council website, the BH food partnership website or just calling 01273 293 117. Calls before noon will have a same day delivery of a food package.

Chomp have also run food groups during school holidays in our city for a while too, and while they can't do that so much now because restrictions surrounding the pandemic, they have raised an incredible amount of money to assist with local efforts. We have also seen many local businesses come forward to offer support and we are incredibly grateful for that. Holiday hunger is a focus of our corporate plan and we will continue to work with food partners to do all we can to alleviate this in the city.

I am grateful to councillor colleagues and know that so many of us share the disgrace that children are left to go hungry in one of the wealthiest countries in the world. While we remain hopeful that the government may bow to pressure to help children across the UK facing holiday hunger, I would be grateful if colleagues could share this information about the council's existing support services, to help reach more people.

What is important is ensuring that no child goes hungry.

30 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

30(a) Petitions

30.1 There were no petitions.

30(b) Written Questions

30.2 There were no Written Question

30(c) Deputations

30.3 There were no Deputations.

31 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT**31 (a) Petitions**

31.1 There were none

31 (b) Written Questions

31.2 There were none

31.3 (c) Letters

31.3 There were none

31 (d) Notices of Motion

31.4 There were none.

32 HERTFORD INFANT & NURSERY SCHOOL - FORMAL CONSULTATION ON CLOSURE OF NURSERY CLASS

32.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Families Children & Learning regarding the closure of Hertford Infant and Nursery School nursery class and a change to the school's lower age range from three to four years. The report was introduced by the Childcare Strategy Manager and was accompanied by the Chair of Governors of Hertford Infant School.

32.2 Councillor Grimshaw noted that the Hertford Nursery School offered the weekly 15 hours of free childcare without the requirement to purchase additional sessions and asked if other local providers offered the same option. The Childcare Strategy Manager said that two local nurseries Cherry Tree Nursery and St Joseph's Nursery both offered the option to only attend for the 15 hours of free childcare.

32.3 Councillor Grimshaw asked how the consultation had been advertised as she was concerned that people weren't aware that it was taking place. The Childcare Strategy Manager advised that it was through the school and the Council's website, and meetings with parents had been held at the school to discuss the proposals.

32.4 Councillor Nield noted that due to the current pandemic it wasn't known if other nursery providers would be forced to close and asked whether it would be possible to re-open Hertford Nursery in the future if it was needed. The Childcare Strategy Manager said it could and the current process would be undertaken but in reverse.

32.5 Councillor McNair asked if closing Hertford Nursery would benefit the other nearby nursery schools. The Childcare Strategy Manager said that it might, but parents didn't always choose a nursery close to their home, as other issues such as place of work or location of other family members impacted on their choice.

- 32.6 Councillor Hills noted that the Statutory Notice would be advertised in the Brighton & Hove Independent newspaper but understood that the paper was not currently being published and was concerned that people would not be aware of the matter and therefore not take part in the consultation. The Childcare Strategy Manager said that she would check the newspaper and added that there would be a further four weeks of the consultation and therefore still time for people to respond.
- 32.7 Councillor Simson said that many children would apply for a place at the primary school where they had attended a nursery school and asked if the possible knock-on impact to applications for the school had been considered. The Chair of Governors at the school said that it had been considered, but children currently at the primary school had attended many different nursery schools and so it was not felt that closing the nursery would impact on applications to the school. The Childcare Strategy Manager noted that places at the school were allocated in line with the published admission criteria and no priority was given to children who attended a nursery attached to a school.
- 32.8 **RESOLVED** – That the Committee agreed to move to the formal representation period and publication of statutory notices to raise the school's lower age range from three to four years with the formal closure of the nursery class from 1st September 2021.

33 ITEMS REFERRED FOR COUNCIL

- 33.1 **RESOLVED:** That the report not be referred to the next meeting of Full Council.

The meeting concluded at 4.30pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of