

Subject:	Reduce the Costs of Secondary School Uniform in Brighton and Hove – Items referred from the Council meeting held on 17 December 2020		
Date of Meeting:	11 January 2021		
Report of:	Executive Lead Officer for Strategy, Governance & Law		
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Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 To receive the following petition for consideration which was debated at and referred from the Council meeting held on the 17 December 2020.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.2 That the Committee responds to the petition either by noting it or writing to the petition organiser setting out the Council's views, or where it is considered more appropriate, calls for an officer report on the matter.

3. CONTEXT / BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The petition is detailed below:

REDUCE THE COSTS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL UNIFORM IN BRIGHTON & HOVE

Lead Petitioner – Emma Daniel

In our city, we already had some areas with high levels of child poverty. The economic impacts of the COVID crisis have made this situation even worse. 33,000 people were furloughed in our city and by June 2019 the numbers of households on Universal Credit had risen from 5,860 in February 2019 to 14,180 in May 2019.

Secondary schools in Brighton and Hove have branded items which you can only source from a single supplier. My daughter's school have branded PE socks at £7 a pair, white polo neck shirts with a tiny logo at £8.95 (available for £4 on the high street without the logo). Without the branding you can save nearly £40. In addition, people need to have multiple items such as 2 or 3 polo necks to send their kids to school clean and smart.

We challenge the heads to reduce the number of items with branding on to save hard pressed families money. No new uniform should cost more than £55 for mandatory items.

Poverty means that every penny spent on uniform is taken from something else that child needs. Providing discounts using pupil premium helps, but that could be spent on enrichment such as free school trips.

Please listen to the city's families and act.

- 3.1 An extract from the proceedings of the council meeting held on the 17 December is detailed below for information.

COUNCIL
4.30pm 17 DECEMBER 2020
VIRTUAL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Robins (Chair), Mears (Deputy Chair), Allcock, Appich, Atkinson, Bagaeen, Barnett, Bell, Brennan, Brown, Childs, Clare, Davis, Deane, Druitt, Ebel, Evans, Fishleigh, Fowler, Gibson, Grimshaw, Hamilton, Heley, Henry, Hill, Hills, Hugh-Jones, Janio, Knight, Lewry, Littman, Lloyd, Mac Cafferty, McNair, Miller, Moonan, Nemeth, Nield, O'Quinn, Osborne, Peltzer Dunn, Phillips, Pissaridou, Platts, Powell, Shanks, Simson, C Theobald, Wares, West, Wilkinson, Williams and Yates.

PART ONE

66 PETITIONS FOR DEBATE.

**(3) REDUCE THE COSTS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL UNIFORM
IN BRIGHTON AD HOVE**

- 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 three such petitions and would take each in turn.
- 66.2 He noted that there was amendment to the cover report's recommendation for the third petition which would be taken as part of the debate on the matter in question.
- 66.3 The Mayor then invited Emma Daniel to present the petition concerning the costs of secondary school uniform in Brighton and Hove.
- 66.4 Emma Daniel thanked the Mayor and stated that there was need to encourage schools to review the costs of uniforms and the number of items that were required to make-up a uniform that were branded and

only available from a restricted number of suppliers. She also felt that there should be an upper cost limit for uniforms and hoped that the Council would work with the petitioners to get an agreed change across the city's schools.

- 66.5 Councillor Clare thanked Emma for her petition and noted that the final responsibility for determining the costs of uniforms and their supply lay with the various schools and their governing bodies. She acknowledged the work of her predecessor and that of Councillor Knight as the previous Deputy Chair of the CYPs Committee in seeking to poverty-proof the school day and encourage schools to address the costs of school uniforms. She also noted that the pandemic had impacted on the situation and hoped that different options such as having second-hand uniform available through the schools could be taken forward.
- 66.6 Councillor Allcock moved an amendment on behalf of the Labour Group which sought to reassure the community that the Council wanted to work with Secondary Heads to help parents and to address the high cost of uniforms.
- 66.7 Councillor Hamilton formally seconded the amendment and noted that more parents were now governors of schools and hoped that they could also help to influence change across the city.
- 66.8 Councillors Bell, Knight and Hills spoke on the petition and the amendment and agreed that the matter needed to be looked at with a view to reaching a uniform cost for school uniform across the schools in the city.
- 66.9 The Mayor thanked Ms. Daniel for joining the meeting and presenting the petition and noted that an amendment had been moved.
- 66.10 The Mayor then sought the Council's agreement to put the recommendations as amended to the vote which was agreed and he therefore called on each of the Group Leaders to confirm their position as well as the Groups in turn and each of the Independent Members:

Councillor Mac Cafferty stated that the Green Group were in favour of the recommendations as amended and this was confirmed by the Green Group Members;

Councillor Platts stated that the Labour Group were in favour of the recommendations as amended and this was confirmed by the Labour Group Members;

Councillor Bell stated that the Conservative were in against the recommendations as amended and this was confirmed by the Conservative Group Members;

Councillor Brennan confirmed that she was voting in favour of the recommendations as amended;

Councillor Fishleigh confirmed that she was voting in favour of the recommendations as amended;

Councillor Janio confirmed that he was voting in favour of the recommendations as amended;

Councillor Knight confirmed that she was voting in favour of the recommendations as amended.

66.11 The Mayor confirmed that the recommendations as amended had been carried.

66.12 **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the petition be noted and referred to the Children, Young People & Skills Committee for consideration; and
- (2) That officers prepare a report for the Children, Young People & Skills Committee in March 2021 that:
 - details the uniform policy and associated costs for a child in each local authority secondary school, voluntary sector secondary school and secondary academy in our city;
 - describes the support currently available for any families experiencing economic hardship and struggling to ensure compliance with the uniform policy for their school; and
 - provides options to further reduce the financial burden of school uniform requirements on disadvantaged families (to be explored in partnership with school head teachers and governors).