

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL

4.30pm 28 JANUARY 2021

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, West, Wilkinson, Williams and Yates

PART ONE

90 DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

90.1 The Mayor reported that two deputations had been received from members of the public and that he would invite the spokespersons to introduce their deputation and for the relevant Chair to respond.

90.2 – 90.6 related to the first deputation

90.7 The Mayor then invited Dr Carlie Goldsmith as the spokesperson for the second deputation to come forward and address the council. Dr Goldsmith said that she was presenting the deputation on behalf of the Class Divide campaign, which were a politically independent group of people working together to bring attention to the educational attainment gap between young people from communities in Whitehawk, Manor Farm and the Bristol Estate compared to their counterparts in the rest of the city. Brighton was known as a fair and inclusive city but there were inequalities in the educational attainment of children. A Freedom of Information request showed that in 2019 there was a 32% basic grades gap in Maths and English GCSE between children in Whitehawk, Manor Farm and Bristol Estate and the rest of the city, but there was currently no dedicated transparent plan by the Council to address the disparity. The deputation set out five things they wanted the Council to address.

90.8 Councillor Clare thanked Dr Goldsmith for raising this important issue. The Green Administration has made it clear that improving the lives of disadvantaged young people in our city is a priority – one that has for too long not progressed as far as it should have. It is clear to me that the outcomes for young people from the communities of Whitehawk, Manor Farm and Bristol Estate have for too long been left unaddressed – or that

attempts to address them haven't tackled the issue. We must review the actions we've taken previously so we don't repeat the same mistakes. I have only been Chair of the Children, Young People and Skills committee for six months, but I believe that there is an apology to be made. It's one that's on all of our heads. All Councillors should be willing to admit the truth – that only 37% of young people from Whitehawk, Manor Farm and the Bristol Estate achieve A-C equivalent in English and Maths, compared to 69% across the city. That is a 32% gap. And a gap that needs to be addressed. All Councillors should be willing to admit that it is unacceptable that action has not been taken. All Councillors should be willing to apologise for any part we have played in this. For my part, I say to your community that I am sorry. And I hope I can speak for everyone else too. I hope that our commitment to do something about this now will begin to repair the mistrust and hurt your community has. But ultimately, I believe that what will truly repair that hurt is by making concrete action. In doing this, we are fully committed to working together and co-producing our response to this challenge with communities, schools and other partners to narrow the gap in achievement for young people from these communities. We will do this for young people living in all deprived areas of the city – which includes Whitehawk. I therefore can't, and don't wish to address the aims of your deputation in full yet – because I want the council to work with you on our plans to address the problem you have highlighted. I firmly believe, as I think you do too, that this issue goes wider than education. To improve education outcomes, we need to look wider at the causes of poverty and their impact on families. Looking at the wider picture is an approach I hope we can take as our plans progress. Right now because of the scale and importance of the project, we have delayed the production of a disadvantaged strategy while the recruitment of our Executive Director of Families, Children and Learning is ongoing. This recruitment should conclude in the next few weeks and once the new director is in post, we will be resuming this work with them as a top priority. Finally, I feel it is also important to note that the negative impact of poverty on educational outcomes is a national issue. The council and schools are limited by insufficient funding it receives from central Government to address poverty and addressing disadvantaged outcomes. From inadequate planning to support schools with remote learning, to needing a footballer to challenge them into providing meals over the holidays, this Government needs to wake up to the reality of child poverty in Britain today – rather than slamming charities who step in to help it, like UNICEF. We will continue to lobby Government where their support is inadequate, recognizing that local councils are best placed to take this action – but we cannot do so without the financial backing to do it right.

90.9 The Mayor thanked Dr Goldsmith for attending the meeting and speaking on behalf of the deputation. He explained that the points had been noted and the deputation would be referred to the Children Young People & Skills Committee for consideration. The persons forming the deputation would be invited to attend the meeting and would be informed subsequently of any action to be taken or proposed in relation to the matter set out in the deputation.

90.10 **RESOLVED:** That the deputation be noted and referred to the Children Young People & Skills Committee.