

Brighton & Hove City Council

Council

Agenda Item 23

Subject: Petition for Debate – Save the Baby Room at Bright Start Nursery

Date of meeting: 11 July 2024

Report of: Corporate Director for Corporate Services

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Ward(s) affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 Under the Council's Petition Scheme if a petition contains more than 1,250 signatures and is not petition requesting officer evidence, it will be debated by the Full Council.
- 1.2 The e-petition has resulted in triggering a debate at the council meeting, having exceeded the threshold with a total of 1255 signatures confirmed at the time of printing the report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the petition is noted.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION / CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1 The Petition:

We are calling on Brighton and Hove City Council to stop the closure of the Bright Start baby room.

Background

Bright Start is a much-loved Council-run nursery, currently located in Barrack Yard in the North Laine. In November 2023, Brighton and Hove City Council announced plans to move the nursery to the Turner Centre in September 2023 and to close the nursery's baby room, scrapping all provision for under 2s.

The closure of the baby room will strip the city centre of one of the few affordable nurseries in the area providing care for under 2s. The nursery has a high proportion of children Special Educational Needs and disabilities and a high proportion with English as an additional language, but the Council have

not undertaken a full Equalities Impact Assessment on the impact of the baby room closure.

The Council have also failed to consider other locations for the nursery, particularly co-locating the nursery in the nearby St Bartholomew's School, which the Council is trying to close.

We're calling on the Council to rethink this decision and protect affordable city-centre childcare for under 2s.

4. PROCEDURE:

4.1 The petition will be debated at the Council meeting in accordance with the agreed protocol:

- (i) The Lead petitioner will be invited by the Mayor to present the petition and will have up to 3 minutes in which to outline the petition and confirm the number of signatures;
- (ii) The Mayor will then open the matter up for debate by councillors for period of 15 minutes and will first call on the relevant Cabinet Member to respond to the petition and move a proposed response. The Mayor will then call on those councillors who have indicated a desire to speak in the matter, before calling on the relevant Cabinet Member to respond to the debate;
- (iii) An amendment to the recommendation in paragraph 2.1 of the report or to add additional recommendations should be submitted by 10.00am on the day before the meeting; otherwise it will be subject to the Mayor's discretion as to being appropriate. Any such amendment will need to be formally moved and seconded at the meeting;
- (iv) After the 15 minutes set aside for the debate, the Mayor will then formally put:
- (v) (a) Any amendments in the order in which they are moved, and
(b) The substantive recommendation(s) as amended (if amended).