

To: Children, Families & Schools Committee (via the School Organisation Team)  
For the attention of the Director of Children’s Services Brighton & Hove City Council  
Members of the Children, Families & Schools Committee  
For the attention of Councillor Lucy Helliwell and Councillor Jacob Taylor (Joint Chairs)

Subject: Formal Representation Objecting to the Proposed Closure of Middle Street Primary School

To Brighton & Hove City Council,

We (the Middle Street Community) write to submit a formal representation to members of the Children, Families & Schools Committee to object to the proposed closure of Middle Street Primary School.

We recognise that this decision rests with elected members, and we have framed this representation to assist you in reaching a lawful, fully informed, and robust determination.

We recognise the wider context in which this proposal sits, including the documented decline in primary pupil numbers across Brighton & Hove and the resulting challenge of surplus capacity. We also acknowledge that local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure the efficient use of public resources.

However, our objection is not to the existence of those pressures, but to whether this specific decision has been reached on a sufficiently complete, transparent, and robust evidential basis, in line with statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education.

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## 1. Completeness of the Decision-Making Record

Publicly available information indicates a significant and rapid deterioration in the school’s position between late 2024 and early 2026. Earlier governing body minutes do not clearly signal imminent closure, whereas later documentation concludes that the school has no viable future.

This raises important questions as to:

- when key risks were identified,
- how they were escalated,

- and whether decision-makers and consultees have been provided with a full and consistent account of that chronology.

A lawful decision requires that relevant information is not only considered internally, but sufficiently disclosed to enable meaningful consultation.

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## **2. Consultation Fairness (Substance, Not Form)**

While the statutory consultation process appears to have been followed in form, there is a legitimate question as to whether it has been fair and open in substance.

In particular:

- whether consultees were provided with sufficient information at a formative stage,
- whether confidentiality constraints limited meaningful understanding of the issues,
- and whether the timing and communication of the proposal may have contributed to declining pupil numbers, thereby influencing the outcome.

These factors are directly relevant to whether the consultation meets the standard of fairness required under public law.

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## **3. Consideration of Alternatives**

The published material indicates that alternatives such as federation, academy partnership, and reduced PAN were considered.

However, the evidence base supporting the rejection of these options is not fully transparent. In particular, it is not clear:

- what specific steps were taken to explore each option,
- which organisations were approached,

- what financial or operational assumptions were applied,
- and whether transitional support mechanisms were considered.

Without this level of detail, it is difficult to conclude that closure was the only reasonable option available.

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#### **4. Role of Governance and Oversight Factors**

There is evidence in the public domain of governance instability, including the transition to an Interim Executive Board and references to financial and organisational challenges.

It is important that the decision-maker explicitly considers:

- whether these factors contributed to the school's current position,
- and whether they have been adequately addressed or investigated.

This is not to attribute fault, but to ensure that the current position is not treated in isolation from the circumstances that led to it.

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#### **5. Equality and Community Impact**

The Equalities Impact Assessment identifies disproportionate impacts on several groups, including:

- pupils with SEND,
- families from racially minoritised backgrounds,
- EAL families,
- and vulnerable or disadvantaged households.

Given the significance of these impacts, it is essential that they are not treated as a procedural requirement only, but are given full and conscientious consideration in the final decision.

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## **6. Request for Further Clarification**

Before any final decision is made, we request that the council provides, or makes available in appropriate form:

1. A clear chronology of governance, intervention, and key decision points
  2. A detailed explanation of the alternatives appraisal
  3. Clarification on the extent to which confidentiality limited disclosure during consultation
  4. An assessment of whether the consultation process itself influenced pupil numbers
  5. Confirmation that any considerations relating to the future use of the site have not influenced the proposal
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## **Conclusion**

We are not asserting that closure is necessarily the wrong outcome. However, we believe there is a credible and material question as to whether members currently have a sufficiently complete and transparent evidential basis on which to make a lawful and robust decision.

We therefore respectfully request that members satisfy themselves that these issues have been fully addressed before reaching any final determination. Given school holidays - we have more signatures to come and street addresses are available on request if needed.

Yours faithfully,

The Middle Street Community

Matthew Hollinshead  
Pippa Terry  
Arantza Vilas  
Adrian Toll  
Taressa Brennan Dow  
John Dow

Alice Dewar-Mills  
Simon Mills  
Rosie Hayes  
Dawn Hayes  
Mark Juba  
Risza Lopes da Cruz  
Emma Gallini  
Garry Smith  
Helen Husbands  
Maria Tjäder  
Tom Adam  
Rae Faulkner  
Claire Iacovou  
Emma Rivera Cordero  
Clyde Holcroft  
Rachel MacLachlan

