

Brighton & Hove City Council

Cabinet

Agenda Item 29

Subject: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
Sufficiency Plan 2026-2029

Date of meeting: 16 July 2026

Report of: Director of Governance and Law

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Ward(s) affected: All

For general release

1. Action Required of Council:

- 1.1 That the Minutes Extract of the People O&S Committee meeting held on 14 July 2026 be noted.

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY
COUNCIL PEOPLE OVERVIEW
& SCRUTINY 4.00PM 14 JULY

2026

HOVE TOWN HALL - COUNCIL CHAMBER

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Parrott (Chair) Miller (Deputy Chair), Cattell, Mackey, McLeay, McNair, Shanks, Winder and Guilmant

Co-Optees present: Maria Cowler (Catholic Church diocesan representative), Adam Muirhead (Community Works Rep), Fiona England (PaCC), Dr Anusree Biswas (Community Works), Kendrick Tugwell (Parent Governor Rep), and Ilona Bradley Reijonen (Youth Council Rep)

PART ONE

5 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

5.1 (a) Cllr Guilmant for Cllr Czolak. Apologies received from Lesley Hurst and Sara Fulford.

6 MINUTES

6.1 RESOLVED The draft minutes of the People Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 17th March 2026 were agreed as a correct of the meeting.

6.2 RESOLVED The draft minutes of the People Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 2nd June 2026 were agreed as a correct of the meeting.

12 SCRUTINY OF SEND SUFFICIENCY

12.1 The Chair gave the following statement: Before we take the presentation and questions I would like to make a comment on this item. This report is the beginning of a new and forward-thinking approach, how we work with the increasing complexity and scope of SEND provision in the city. On reading the report and going through it thoroughly I had many questions and concerns. However, I wanted to be clear that I do not see these concerns extending to the level of education and support that is currently being provided. Nearly all of our schools are rated as good or outstanding which is something we should all be immensely proud of. Our children and young people are engaged, safe and being treated well. Of particular note today is the Outstanding given to our two special needs schools- Downsview and Hillpark – they are to be commended that they continue to deliver against an increasingly complex and difficult environment. Their work and expertise will no doubt be immensely influential in the development of our

sufficiency. It is the job of scrutiny to focus on where and how we can improve as I am sure this conversation will demonstrate. I wanted to just take a moment though to reflect on the starting position we find ourselves in, sometimes we need to pause and reflect on where we are before we move forward.

Thank you to all of the council staff involved in SEND, our Heads, SENCOs and all teaching staff who do such a tremendous job.

12.2 Cllr Daniel presented the report to the committee. Her main points were:

- The foundations, including the principles of belonging and ensuring children's voices were heard
- The new national direction for SEND and how the council was responding
- The oversight, finances, and governance
- Data on SEND in the city
- The growth in EHCPs of 57% in the last five years
- Data on SEND population changes
- Information on where children with EHCPs were educated
- The increasing costs driven by providers and inflation
- Budget break downs
- Forecasting data
- Post-16 provision
- Tiers of support
- What has been delivered in the last five years
- Key priorities

12.3 Cllr Cattell asked about children in care and care leavers, and if they were given extra support. Georgina Clarke-Green said that the virtual head was support post 16 care leavers and that the SEND reform included additional mental health support, and that there would be additional transition with preparing for adulthood plans.

12.4 Cllr McNair asked about digital individual plans and if there would be admin support. Georgina Clarke-Green from the Department for Education what these would look like yet. She said that there would be a significant shift from local authority EHCP to schools and that they would need support.

12.5 Ilona Bradley Reijonen asked about consultation with children and young people and what this looked like. Georgina Clarke- Green said that the SEND Sufficiency work stream was driven from principles of belonging that they did with young people including black and racially minoritised people, children and young people with SEND, special school children, and those key themes have been a plank in our provision.

12.6 Kendrick Tugwell spoke about the £8.2m for new special bases, asked about support for mainstream primary schools where some had as many as 40% of children on EHCPs, and asked about support for staff. Cllr Daniel spoke about the alternative provision support team working in Rudyard Kipling school and the support provided for them. Georgina Clarke-Green spoke about the development of provision and the implementation of experts at hand and embedding the ordinarily available inclusive practice which is a co-produced piece of work across the system to create a base line for all schools to use when a school has a child with SEND. She spoke about the experts at

hand investment from the Department for Education of £1.75m in year one, with more promised in the future. She said 80% of the experts at hand resource will be directly accessible by schools. She said that they had added to that a rapid intervention gateway to assimilate other drivers and policies such as families first and best start in life. She said that families with children not in schools can access this rapid intervention gateway. She said that on the inclusive intervention bases there was an application process and that these were scored on a matrix.

12.7 The Chair asked about KPIs and monitoring. Cllr Daniel said that she provided a level of scrutiny, that there were governance arrangements across the programme and that herself and Deb Austin, Corporate Director of Families, Children, and Wellbeing, would be looking at whether they could incorporate some of their KPIs onto the corporate KPI dashboard, but that they would have to choose carefully. Georgina Clarke-Green said that there is also the SEND and AP partnership board, with the ICB, Fiona England from PACC, AMAZE, and others.

12.8 Cllr Shanks spoke about travel training, reforms needed from government, and uncertainty with a new Prime Minister. Georgina Clarke-Green said that they wanted to have as much provision locally as possible to minimise travel across the city for children and young people. She said that they wanted to prevent out of city placements. She spoke about the £1.6b inclusion mainstream fund that would help schools deliver of some of the reforms. She said that they had not had the results of the SEND consultation back yet.

12.9 Cllr Guilmant asked about more SEND children going into mainstream schools and support for staff wellbeing. Cllr Daniel said that many of the children were already in the mainstream schools and being dealt with by those staff and SENCOs. She spoke about involving SENCOs and heads in the consultation response to unpick exactly what support they needed.

12.10 Cllr Guilmant asked about different school doing more than others and if this would create a level playing field. Georgina Clarke-Green said that there were different needs at different schools and that they would use SEND data to ensure the right support where it was needed.

12.11 Cllr McLeay asked about how children that are homeschooled would be re-engaged with. Georgina Clarke-Green said that she was really keen on when developing the expert at hand plans and rapid intervention gateway was those children and young people not at school were able to get wrap around support and engagement. She hoped to embrace those children and young people back into the system.

12.12 The Chair asked about support for parents. Georgina Clarke-Green spoke about the best start in life family hubs, saying that there was lots of support for parents to help them with their children's needs.

12.13 Cllr Mackey spoke about the dream for fully inclusive education and schools. She asked about training for teachers. Cllr Daniel said that the Secretary of State for Education had recently spoken about changes to the PGCE course to include more SEND training. Georgina Clarke-Green spoke about the range of training available for teachers and governors. The Chair spoke about her son who was training to be a

teacher and the huge amount of training on SEND that he was doing.

12.14 Fiona England spoke about the positives of more support for children with autism. She asked questions around SEND reforms and the wider needs within neurodiversity. She said that parent carers in the city were keen to know whether the council would accept other ND needs within autism basis. She spoke about eligibility criteria for bases, and asked about post-16 learners not being sufficiently supported, with only 20 supported internship opportunities. Georgina Clarke-Green spoke about the autism speech and language strand in the Brighton & Hov inclusion support service, experts at hand offer dos include specialist teachers for neurodiversity. On provisions one of them would be around autism and the others would be available for wider neurodiverse needs. They wanted to co-produce the eligibility criteria with parents, carers, schools and SENCOs, so Fiona would be involved in that. On post-16 she said that there was a lot of work to do and that they want to widen the number of entry level courses or post-16 and strengthen the transition planning further. She said that they needed to improve access to information for parents and carers on post-16.

12.15 Cllr Miller if all neurodiversities were classed as autism in the data as there was no reference to ADHD, ODD, or SPD. Georgina Clarke-Green said that this was not the case but that they had to work within the categories provided by the Department for Education and that there wasn't a specific category for ADHD.

12.16 Cllr Miller asked about using expertise in schools to spot and assist earlier. Cllr Daniel said that no support relied on diagnosis but on presenting needs. Georgina Clarke-Green said that they had to be careful as they were not medical so could not diagnose children and young people. Experts at hand is about getting the right support at the right time and the earlier we do so the less those needs will escalate.

12.17 Cllr Miller asked about masking meaning that children and young people were not receiving the right support or diagnosis and said that diagnosis was important to get the right support. She spoke about the difficulty to access EHCPs and if the council was measuring how disadvantage affects accessing them. Cllr Daniel said that the Secretary of State had said that disadvantaged families were less likely to pursue EHCPs. Georgina Clarke-Green said that this was a really good point and that they could use data to recognise intersectionality, which was something that they weren't doing enough.

12.18 Cllr Shanks asked about provision for afterschool and holidays. Cllr Daniel said that this was not covered in the SEND Sufficiency but in the adolescence strategy.

12.19 Adam Muirhead asked about the proposals for bases and how this reconciled with a need for a longer plan, and the plan for covering the high needs block in 2028. Georgina Clarke-Green said that the provisional bases was a three-year plan but that there would need to be a longer-term plan. She said that they would be evaluating and reviewing. On finances she said that they had managed the high needs block well and hadn't overspent until last year or the year before, whereas most councils were overspent by many millions, so it was not massive compared to many across the country. She said that government had said that SEND spending would be covered nationally by 2030 and as long as they carried on as they were then it would be covered.

12.20 Cllr Miller welcomed the direction of travel, said that it would be great to bring

children back into the school system, and asked how this would be done. Georgina Clarke-Green said that it would depend on why they had left the school system, but that the door was always open and they would be supported to come back.

12.21 Dr Anusree Biswas asked what good quality training looked like, what ongoing support looked like, and how parents and young people engage about individual's decisions as some people are not able to navigate or advocating for themselves, because they are experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage or they might be from racialised communities. Cllr Daniel said that on marginalised groups that the massive expansion of early years free child care helped to identify children who may have a learning support need or aren't meeting developmental milestones, as well as support from family hubs. Georgina Clarke-Green said that good quality training was sound evidence based and from good trainers who provided practical work and gave the opportunity to ask questions and clarify. She said that teachers did not always have the time for training, so they had to make it accessible. She spoke about the CVS groups that were involved in the SEND reforms including PACC and AMAZE. Dr Anusree Biswas asked if there were any organisations that focus on race or ethnicity that they might also have spoken with, and special provision becoming smaller. Cllr Daniel said that the Secretary of State, when launching the reform strategy had this in mind, particularly the new tiers before EHCP, so children don't need to go through that process to get the support. She said that the anti-racist schools practitioners were involved and provided challenges.

12.22 Fiona England said that she agreed with Anusree. She spoke about the SEND reform engagement timelines which was not realistic and that this was something that PACC nationally raised with the Department for Education. She said that engagement with marginalised communities takes time and planning to reach out to the right organisations across the city.

12.23 RESOLVED People Overview & Scrutiny Committee notes the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Sufficiency Plan 2026-2029 Report.