

Brighton & Hove City Council

People Overview & Scrutiny

Agenda Item 19

Subject: Pre-decision Scrutiny of Wellington House

Date of meeting: 4th September 2026

Report of: Chair of People Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer: Name: Luke Proudfoot
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Ward(s) affected: All

Key Decision: No

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 At the Council's annual budget setting meeting of 26th of February 2026 an indicative saving of £400,000 was agreed which would see the proposed closure, subject to consultation, of Wellington House, a day facility for adults with learning disabilities in Brighton & Hove.
- 1.2 Following the consultation this report presents the cabinet report on the final decision regarding the future of Wellington House to People Overview & Scrutiny for pre-decision scrutiny.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 People Overview & Scrutiny Committee notes the cabinet report and its appendices.
- 2.2 People Overview & Scrutiny Committee to comment on the cabinet report and its appendices.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 Wellington House day centre is a council run facility providing activities for 21 individuals with learning disabilities and complex needs in Brighton & Hove, with 21 members of staff providing support. Eight of the attendees have complex behavioural support needs. Some individuals within this group are autistic and have additional needs, including communication difficulties, sensory processing differences, mental health needs, epilepsy, and sight loss. They require a high level of support. Other attendees have Moderate level support needs.
- 3.2 During the People Overview & Scrutiny Committee budget scrutiny meeting held on 19th of February 2026 members raised questions about the proposals to close Wellington House day centre, which would provide the

council with a £400,000 budget saving. A full consultation and statutory review of all service users' needs under the Care Act 2014 was to be carried out before any decision to close and re-provision found within the independent and non-profit sectors within the city. Assessment staff would be relocated to office space elsewhere and the building repurposed or a capital receipt created.

- 3.3 Following pre-budget scrutiny, it was requested that the committee be given the opportunity to carry out pre-decision scrutiny on the final decision regarding Wellington House.
- 3.4 At the Budget Setting Council on 26th of February a £400,000 saving was agreed in the Adult Social Care Budget from the proposed closure of Wellington House, subject to a 12-week consultation period, as well as engagement with staff and affected families.
- 3.5 The 12-week consultation period ran from 14th of April to 7th of July 2026. During this time two 'Your Voice' surveys were shared. One was for families and carers and one for other stakeholders. There were 23 paper and online Family and Carers surveys submitted, and 56 paper and online Stakeholder surveys submitted. A detailed summary record of Your Voice Consultation was captured in Cabinet Appendices 9 and 10.
- 3.6 **Families and carers survey.** The Survey was provided in both online and paper format for families and carers.
- 3.7 **Stakeholder survey.** Responses came from a range of stakeholder organisations linked to adult social care, and the voluntary sector. The organisations named most often were SCDS (Specialist Community Disability service). Responses also came from: NHS Trust Clinicians, carers, families, staff, and community organisations, Speak Out, Learning Disability Partnership Board, Speak Out Link Group, Parent and Carer Council (Pacc) and Amaze, Children's OT Team, UNISON, Grace Eyre, Hill Park school Head of Governors and The Rocket Artists.
- 3.8 Following analysis of the consultation Cabinet is due to decide on the closure of Wellington House on 17th of September 2026.
- 3.9 The Cabinet report is included in Appendix 1 with a recommendation to proceed with the closure of Wellington House.
- 3.10 The rationale for the recommendation made in the cabinet report includes the overall higher costs that a local authority pays compared to external providers. Local authority costs are higher as they include central support services such as HR, finance, IT, legal and governance requirements. Also, higher pension contribution and staff policy benefits. External providers typically operate with leaner management structures, lower employment costs (and minimise voids), with more flexible operating models.
- 3.11 A further reason is that the building is no longer considered fit for purpose as a contemporary day opportunities facility. A substantial Victorian building, it

was not designed to support the range and complexity of needs seen today and would require significant investment to adapt it to modern standards. The ageing infrastructure also requires increasing levels of maintenance, reducing the flexibility and efficiency of service delivery and limiting the building's capacity to meet future requirements.

- 3.12 Due to falling attendance, reduced demand and the associated high unit costs of running the Wellington House service, which currently averages £244.00 per day per person, it is no longer operating as an efficient, flexible, modern, day service to meet the needs of adults with learning disabilities in the city.
- 3.13 Further details of the rationale behind the recommendation are included in the cabinet report at Appendix 1.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 Members are asked to comment on and note the cabinet report included in the appendices. Members may choose to make specific comments or recommendations to cabinet, or they may note the report making no specific comments to cabinet. Minutes of this meeting will be shared with Cabinet.
- 4.2 A number of alternative options for the future of Wellington House are included in the cabinet report at Appendix 1.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 None for this scrutiny report. For full details of community engagement and consultation see the cabinet report at appendix 1. A 12-week consultation closed on 7th of July 2026 with further details in appendix 1.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 The full financial implications for the recommended decision are included in the Cabinet report on 17th September 2026.
- 6.2 The annualised saving of £336,563 is lower than the estimated £400k savings in the council's MTFP for 2026/27. However, this still represents a significant saving of £1,009,689 across the remaining term of the MTFP to 31 March 2030.

Name of finance officer consulted: Brian Smith Date consulted: 26/08/26

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 At Budget Council on 26 February 2026 an indicative resourcing decision for savings was made that included a proposal to close Wellington House and re-provide day services. No decision was made to close Wellington House; any decisions taken as part of the budget setting process are subject to

compliance with relevant legal requirements, where appropriate, and do not constitute final approval of what sums of money will be saved under the budget proposals.

- 7.2 As described in the body of the report to Cabinet and its appendices, a consultation on the proposal to close Wellington House and re-provide day services was undertaken over a period of 12 weeks (in keeping with Government guidance). Established common law legal principles of fairness require that consultation must take place (i) when the proposal is still at a formative stage, (ii) sufficient reasons must be put forward for the proposal to allow for intelligent consideration and response, (iii) adequate time must be given for consideration and response and (iv) the results of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account.
- 7.3 The Council has a legal obligation to both manage public funds and meet eligible care and support needs of people living in its area (as defined in the Care Act 2014). As described in paragraph 5.3 in the body of the report, the Care Act 2014 Statutory Guidance provides that financial resources are relevant when deciding how needs are met with the result that if there are two or more ways of achieving agreed outcomes and meeting the person's eligible needs, the Council can choose the option that represents the best value for money. Section 5 of the Care Act 2014 requires the Council to promote the efficient and effective operation of a market in services for meeting care and support needs, ensuring people have a variety of providers to choose from who provide a variety of services.

Name of lawyer consulted: Sandra O'Brien

Date consulted: 19/08/26

8. Risk implications

- 8.1 None specifically for this scrutiny report. See the cabinet report at appendix 1 for further details of risks to the cabinet decision.

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 None specifically for this scrutiny report. See the cabinet report at appendix 1 for further details of equalities implications to the cabinet decision. An Equalities Impact Assessment is included as Appendix 3 of the cabinet report.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 None specifically for this scrutiny report. See the cabinet report at appendix 1 for further details of sustainability implications to the cabinet decision.

11. Health and Wellbeing Implications:

- 11.1 None specifically for this scrutiny report. See the cabinet report at appendix 1 for further details of health and wellbeing implications to the cabinet decision.

12. Conclusion

- 12.1 People Overview & Scrutiny Committee are asked to comment on and note the cabinet report and its appendices ahead of the decision being made by cabinet.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices

1. Cabinet report
2. Cabinet Appendix 1 – Extract from previous council report
3. Cabinet Appendix 2 – Formal Consultation Document
4. Cabinet Appendix 3 – Equalities Impact Assessment
5. Cabinet Appendix 4 – Parent Carer and AMAZE response
6. Cabinet Appendix 5 – Speak Out Link Group response
7. Cabinet Appendix 6 – Unison response
8. Cabinet Appendix 7 – Hill Park School response
9. Cabinet Appendix 8 – Council Response to Consultation feedback 1.
10. Cabinet Appendix 9 – Your Voice detail summary Parent and Carers
11. Cabinet Appendix 10 – Your Voice detail summary Stakeholders
12. Cabinet Appendix 11 – Council Response to Consultation feedback 2.

