BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

4.00pm 29 SEPTEMBER 2026

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL, NORTON ROAD, HOVE, BN3 3BQ - HTH/CC

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Parrott (Chair) Mackey, McLeay, McNair, Winder, Hill, Oliveira and Thomson

Other Members present: Kendrick Tugwell (parent governor), Lesley Hurst (CoE schools), Anusree Biswas (BRM representative), Joanna Martindale, Adam Muirhead (VCS), Fiona England (PaCC), Sara Fulford (OPC), Ilona Bradley (Youth Council)

PART ONE

20 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

20(a) substitutes

20.1 Cllr De Oliveira attended as substitute for Cllr Shanks
Cllr Hill attended as substitute for Cllr Barton Ahmad
Cllr Thomson attended as substitute for Cllr Cattell

20(b) Declarations of Interest

20.2 There were none.

20(c) The Press & Public were not excluded from the meeting.

21 MINUTES

21.1 RESOLVED – that the minutes of the 14 July 2026 and 04 September 2026 meetings be agreed.

22 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATION

22.1 The Chair gave the following communications.

We have 3 items today. I was anticipating a quite different meeting, but at the end of last week the 17 September Cabinet decision on Wellington House was called in. The Council Constitution says that call-in meetings should be held within 7 working days of receipt of a call-in request and that they should be taken as an item at a scheduled committee meeting if there is one within this timeframe.

Today's meeting is within the timeframe, so we will be considering the call-in request at this meeting. I'm afraid that this may mean we have a long meeting. I'd also like to say sorry for the presenters of the other items on the agenda for the delay in getting to their items.

In terms of the other items, first, I had invited Polly Herbert to present to us. Polly is the independent Chair of the local Inequality and Life Chances Review. This is a really important piece of work and one that's directly relevant to the work of People Overview & Scrutiny Committee. I wanted to give Polly the chance to meet committee members and to give committee members the opportunity to learn more about the work that Polly is leading. I hope that in the next few months, this committee's work will be influenced by Polly's findings and will play a role in driving implementation of her recommendations. Unfortunately, I really don't think that we'll have the space to do this item justice today now that we also have to consider the call-in. I've reluctantly decided to take this at a later date – we'll invite Polly either to attend the November People meeting or we'll arrange something additional.

Second, we have a presentation by Cllr Gill Williams on what the council plans to do to end long-term rough sleeping in the city. Getting entrenched rough sleepers off the street and into sustainable alternative accommodation is a massive challenge, but one we need to focus on if we are serious about improving the lives of our most disadvantaged people.

Finally, we have a report and presentation from Cllr Emma Daniel on the development of an Education Equity Framework. I'm really pleased that this has come to scrutiny at an early stage so that members can input into the development of the Framework. Although there are very many things to celebrate about schools and education across the city, we have not been successful in supporting young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds to achieve as they should and we really must do more to address this. As well as Emma and council officers, we are joined today by some local headteachers. I'm really grateful that they have found the time to attend today's meeting.

23 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

23.1 There was a public question from Mr Kieran Stringer. Mr Stringer asked

Given the projected growth in SEND need in Brighton & Hove, and the importance of supporting disabled young people as they move into adulthood, will the Council undertake or commission an integrated 5-, 10- and 15-year assessment of future demand for adult disability support — including day opportunities, respite, supported living, residential care and the impact of family-carer breakdown and compare that projected demand with the capacity the city expects to have available?

23.2 The Chair responded

Thank you for bringing this question to us. I do appreciate the difficulties that families of children with disabilities face, particularly when young people are transitioning from youth to adult support services.

As I am the Chair of a scrutiny committee rather than the Cllr directly responsible for services, I wasn't able to directly answer your question, but I did ask officers to provide a response. This is the response they gave me:

"The council recognises the increased numbers of young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in the city, and the requirement to strategically plan for their progression to adulthood. This includes planning for a range of outcomes, including pathways into further education, day opportunities, supported employment, a range of accommodation-based support, and respite options for parents and carers. The council's Transition to Adulthood Strategy has, as two of its four key deliverables an objective in relation to getting a single view of the data on young people with additional needs across the city, and an objective on successful assessment, planning and commissioning. These elements of the Transitions to Adulthood Strategy Delivery Plan will ensure that the relevant services are working in partnership across education, social care and health to align future demand with future provision. I am pleased to confirm that last week we successfully appointed the Transitions to Adulthood Programme Manager to take forward this important work, initially over the next two years. The People Overview & Scrutiny Committee have retained an ongoing interest in scrutinising both the development AND implementation of the Transitions to Adulthood Strategy, and it has already been called to People O&S for an update in this regard as part of Scrutiny's 2027 work plan."

As the officer response says, this committee is very interested in the Transitions Strategy. I really welcome your question for the insight it provides into the challenges parents and families face. When we do look again at the Transitions Strategy, I do want the committee to reflect on the issues you have raised.

24 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

24.1 There was none.

25 INEQUALITY AND LIFE CHANCES REVIEW

25.1 This item was postponed and will be taken at a future meeting.

26 BHCC'S RESPONSE TO ENDING LONG TERM ROUGH SLEEPING

26.1 This item was presented by Cllr Gill Williams, Cabinet Member for Housing, and by Harry Williams, Director of Housing (People Services) and Alice Morel, Head of Homelessness and Housing Options.

26.2 Cllr Williams told members that homelessness remains one of the biggest issues facing the city. The council has been successful in building new council housing, but there is still a severe lack of affordable housing in the city. The Government has recently launched a national programme to tackle long-term rough sleeping. The council will receive £4.74 million over 4 years. The aim will be to use this funding to reduce rough sleeping by 50% or more through a series of initiatives, and particularly by adopting a more joined up approach to individual needs. Mr Williams added that the council is working very closely with the Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government on the fast moving national programme. The council's approach to the new programme aligns with the consistent approach it has taken to homelessness, rough sleeping and temporary accommodation which has been developed with significant input from People Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Mr Williams outlined some of the specific initiatives being developed. He stressed that recognising that many long-term rough

sleepers have multiple compound needs is key to understanding why Brighton & Hove has high rates of rough sleeping, and also key to developing effective responses.

26.3 Members asked questions on a range of issues including how to sustain housing placements; the importance of investing in prevention; providing individually tailored support; helping people maintain community links; and co-working with primary and acute care. Mr Williams offered to return to a future meeting to provide more details of progress in tackling rough sleeping and homelessness.

27 EDUCATIONAL EQUITY FRAMEWORK

27.1 This item was introduced by Cllr Emma Daniel, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Youth Services. Also present were Georgina Clarke-Green, Director, Education and Learning; Ashley Seymour-Williams, Senior Adviser, Education Partnerships; Richard Barker, Head of Education; John McKee, Headteacher, Patcham High School; and Lizzy Mullarky, Headteacher, Brackenbury Primary School.

27.2 Cllr Daniel told the committee that the city outperforms the national average at GCSE, with children with special educational needs and disabilities and children from Black and racially minoritised backgrounds also performing well. However, children from deprived backgrounds do not perform as well as those from non-deprived backgrounds, and perform less well than similar children in comparator areas.

27.3 Presenters outlined a number of aspects of educational inequity, including:

- A majority of disadvantaged pupils are also known to social care
- Disadvantaged pupils are more likely to have poor attendance rates – poor attendance is strongly correlated with poor academic achievement
- Low attendance is often linked to mental health issues or neurodiversity
- Disadvantage is a multi-factorial issue that goes far beyond schools; tackling it requires joined up working across education, social care, VCS. Capturing young people's voice is also vital
- Funding for educational equity is limited; it's mainly around how schools use pupil premium. Given the health needs of many of the most disadvantaged pupils, more could potentially be done to access health funding.

27.4 There was discussion of whether the term 'disadvantage' was helpful. Mr Barker agreed that it is a problematic term. However, it is a term used by the Department for Education which makes it hard to avoid.

27.5 There was discussion of whether schools are fully involved in conversations about health or housing. Presenters agreed that work is needed here: there is engagement at points of crisis, but this needs to be more consistent and proactive.

27.6 There was discussion about how educational inequity should be measured, and whether access to culture should be a metric. Members were keen that cultural capital should be captured in addition to measures such as exam success.

27.7 There was discussion of links to employers and of attitudes to technology and AI. Members were eager that the framework should include links to successful city industries.

27.8 Members discussed disadvantages that are due to issues other than poverty, for example additional barriers faced by girls. Presenters agreed that it is important to consider intersectionality here.

27.9 There was discussion of the best ways to capture the voices of disadvantaged young people.

27.10 RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

28 CALL-IN OF CABINET DECISION - DAY OPTIONS FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

28.1 Cllr McLeay presented the call-in letter on behalf of the Councillors who signed it. Cllr McLeay outlined the concerns of Councillors, including lack of consultation with heads of special schools, unanswered questions about transport costs, the size of realisable savings, risk in the event of the breakdown of future placements in the independent sector, maintenance costs, and whether the award of contracts prior to the 17 September Cabinet decision was evidence of predetermination.

28.2 Cllr Alexander, Cabinet Member for Communities, Equalities, Public Health and Adult Social Care, responded. Cllr Alexander explained why she believed the Cabinet decision had been properly made.

28.3 Members asked questions about current and future demand for day services; consultation with and potential deployment opportunities for Wellington House staff; the rationale for outsourcing specific services rather than retaining them in-house; the timeline for recommissioning adult day service provision; how the risks to service users of making changes in day service provision were evaluated; impacts of the proposed changes on parent carers; and engagement with special schools.

28.4 RESOLVED – that People Overview & Scrutiny Committee determines that the challenge to the decision called-in should be taken no further and the decision may be implemented.

The meeting concluded at 7.44pm

Signed Chair

Dated this day of

6