

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 100

Brighton & Hove City Council

(i) Primary School admissions, East Brighton area

We wish this letter to be placed on the agenda of the next Children, Families and Schools Cabinet Member Meeting and for one of us to be able to attend to speak to it.

On the 2nd March this year, a sizeable group of parents from the Kemp Town area of our ward of East Brighton met with senior officers from the Children, Families and Schools Directorate along with ourselves to discuss the issue of Primary School admissions. The meeting had been arranged by the ward councillors and the parents to discuss the perceived lack of opportunity for parents in this area of Kemp Town to be able to express meaningful a preference for Primary School places for their children.

The local schools in the area that admit primary age children comprise; Brighton College, the Steiner School, two Church Aided schools and just one state, secular Primary School that is some distance from this area of Kemp Town and not on a direct bus route. Other state Primary Schools adjacent to Kemp Town are now filling up with children living in their immediate locality. In other words, the 'golden halo' effect is beginning to be felt in relation to Primary School admissions in this area in the same way that it was for Secondary School admissions.

At the meeting there was some discussion as to how in the short term parents could be supported through the process of finding a school place for their children. The purpose of this letter is to ask what consideration can be given to a long term resolution of this problem through the use of measures such as the Primary Capital Programme to make more state funded Primary School places available for children in this particular area of the city.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Gill Mitchell

Cllr Warren Morgan

Cllr Craig Turton

(ii) Davigdor Infants and Somerhill Junior Schools' Expansion Plans

I would like this letter to be placed on the agenda of the next Children, Families and Schools' Cabinet Member Meeting and for me to be able to attend to speak to it. I am writing in my capacity as Ward Councillor although I am also a school governor for Somerhill Junior School.

I am writing to express the considerable concerns that governors, parents and local residents have about the proposed Davigdor and Somerhill School expansion proposals. Many of these concerns centre around the perceived lack of consultation with governors and parents that has been exacerbated by the short timescale given for the proposed expansion programme. Those who are concerned seek to have the following assurances from the relevant Cabinet Members and the officers involved.

- That a new openness and willingness to collaborate is assured for all aspects of the consultative process for the proposed expansion, ie at all of the planning, approval and building stages for both schools on a shared site.
- As it is the Cabinet Member and officers' wish to determine both schools' expansion programmes together, that it is recognised by them that feedback from both schools should also be treated together and coordinated. This is especially important where the two schools are sharing facilities; e.g. kitchens, reception areas and outside space.
- That all of the current outside space for the two schools, i.e. play and sports areas, will be protected and every attempt made to maximise the existing space and to increase it where possible.
- That B&HCC will apply a strategic and 21st century vision for schools and include this proposed expansion to ensure that every opportunity for innovation and improvement is seized.
- That B&HCC's architects and planners will involve and consult with the two schools' appointed working parties to seek their approval and to achieve the highest quality building that befits these two schools and the site they share.
- That all residents in surrounding streets affected by the building programme will be consulted by B&HCC's Planning Department and be invited to view the architect's plans at an early stage in the planning process.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Melanie Davis
Labour, Goldsmid ward