

## **Agenda Item 36(c)**

### **BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**

#### **COUNCIL**

**4.30pm 15 DECEMBER 2022**

#### **HOVE TOWN HALL - COUNCIL CHAMBER**

#### **DRAFT MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors Deane (Chair), O'Quinn (Deputy Chair), Allcock, Appich, Bagaeen, Barnett, Bell, Brown, Childs, Allbrooke, Davis, Druitt, Ebel, Evans, Fishleigh, Fowler, Gibson, Grimshaw, Hills, Hugh-Jones, Janio, Knight, Lewry, Littman, Meadows, Mac Cafferty, McNair, Moonan, Nemeth, Osborne, Pissaridou, Powell, Robins, Shanks, Simson, C Theobald, West, Williams and Yates

#### **PART ONE**

#### **54 PETITION FOR DEBATE**

- 54.1 The Mayor stated that where a petition secured 1,250 or more signatures it could be debated at the council meeting. She had been made aware of one such petition and invited Mrs Perera to join the meeting and to present the petition concerning the planned closure of Bright Start Nursery in Barrack Yard.
- 54.2 Mrs Perera thanked the Mayor and stated that the petition which had been signed by just under 1,500 people showed how important the nursery was to the Brighton community. She stated that Bright Start was a lifeline to so many families with diverse needs who would not be able to access comparable childcare from alternative providers in the city. That in the midst of a cost of living crisis, many working families were struggling to make ends meet, it was now more important than ever for local councils to provide affordable and accessible childcare that accepts all children regardless of their backgrounds, circumstances and needs. She called on the Council to oppose the closure going forward as it was strongly felt that the loss of Bright Start Nursery would do irreparable damage to the city, and solutions could be found to keep it open.
- 54.3 Councillor Allbrooke thanked Ms Perera for presenting the petition and stated that she agreed that Bright Start Nursery was an incredibly important service that provided support that families needed. She believed in the value of Council run public services as they change communities and she personally cared about services provided for the city's children, young people and their

wellbeing. It was recognised that should the draft proposals be taken forward that it would be a difficult decision to take but that the city faced a budget gap of £18 million in addition to 12 years of funding cuts. The Council by law could not set a deficit budget and had to balance its budget, having to make savings when funding is reduced.

- 54.4 Councillor O'Quinn moved an amendment on behalf of the Labour Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Robins.
- 54.5 Councillor Janio spoke on the petition and noted that the setting of the budget was the responsibility of the administration and not that of the Government.
- 54.6 Councillor Allbrooke confirmed that she would accept the Labour amendment.
- 54.7 The Mayor thanked Mrs Perera for presenting the petition and put the recommendations to the vote.
- 54.8 **RESOLVED:**
1. That the petition is noted and referred to the Children, Young People & Skills Committee for consideration.
  2. That a report comes before the January meeting of the Children, Young People & Skills Committee detailing the reasons for the closure of the Bright Start Nursery, including information on alternative provision and the actions the council will take to enable the timely placement of children in other suitable nursery provision.