

Subject:	The Review of Post 16 (school-based) provision in Brighton & Hove		
Date of Meeting:	3rd October 2016		
Report of:	Executive Director for Families, Children and Learning		
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

1.1.1 On 12th October 2015, the Children, Young People, Children and Skills Committee voted to carry out a review of post 16 provision in the city aligned to the Sussex Area Review. The Sussex Area Review was completed in May 2016 and will report in autumn 2016. It was designed to ensure that colleges are financially sustainable and well positioned to meet the present and future needs of individual students and demands of employers. The intention of the local post 16 review was to review existing provision in schools with sixth forms and the two academies, to assess whether it is fit for purpose and meets the local needs of both students and employers. This report outlines a summary of the review.

1.1.2 It is important to note that in March 2016, updated guidance was issued by the Department of Education which states:

“The Area Review encourages school sixth forms to collaborate to a greater extent to help drive efficiencies. Similar provision in sixth forms is often duplicated in relatively small geographical areas, when it could be delivered in a more joined up way. This may be particularly the case where sixth forms are very small, as some evidence raises concerns about costs, breadth of offer and outcomes for these providers.”

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

The actual decision making lies with the governing bodies of the schools and colleges. The recommendations are that:

2.1 The governing bodies of schools and academies consider the future financial viability of their sixth form provision

- 2.2 Where the long term financial circumstances of a sixth form is likely to be challenging, then each school or academy should have a plan to address these challenges. Strategies might include realistic plans for securing greater numbers via collaboration with aspects of provision with other institutions, or possible merger with another provider to achieve scale of provision.
- 2.3 Governing bodies and schools review their specialisms to meet needs of their learners, especially more vulnerable young people
- 2.4 Schools and academies continue to build stronger relationships with local employers to ensure students have the skills needed for future employment

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 To carry out the local review a number of activities took place. These included:
 - Meetings of the leaders and chairs of governing bodies, of schools with sixth forms, academies and colleges in Brighton and Hove
 - Meetings with organisations such as the Coast 2 Capital Local Enterprise Partnership.
 - An analysis of the curriculum offer of the schools
 - An analysis of provision for pupils with Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) and Free School Meals (FSM) students post 16
 - A summary of the strengths and challenges of existing provision

The following section of the report outlines the themes and summaries of the sessions

- 3.2 The leaders of schools with sixth forms and colleges in Brighton and Hove met several times to explore existing provision, with view to addressing the following objectives-
 - To review existing provision to assess whether it meets the local needs, including quality of provision.
 - To consider future needs as the number of learners continue to increase, particularly post 2021
 - To ensure continued choice and range of provision
 - To ensure the long term viability of provision in the area
 - To consider employer needs in the area
 - To explore opportunities for collaboration and rationalisation of existing provision.

3.3 Skills Gaps and opportunities

- 3.4.1 In Brighton and Hove and Lewes, the Coast 2 Capital Local Enterprise Partnership is keen to see significant growth in the numbers of people with

technical skills in digital/IT. They have identified the following areas of specific need and concern:

- A closer alignment between skills needed by employers and the skills of young people coming forward.
- Work readiness of young people, particularly their soft skills such as customer handling and organisational skills.
- Higher level STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) related skills eg. advanced engineering
- The potential for people to be trapped at entry level and low level employment.
- The demand from Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and micro businesses is likely to be for different skills requirements compared to the requirements from larger employers.
- There is a need for growth in more technical apprenticeships in the priority sectors such as financial and business services and environmental industries.
- There is a continuing demand from care and tourism sectors for suitable applicants.

3.5 The current offer in schools with sixth forms –curriculum gaps and needs analysis

3.5.1 Research has been conducted regarding the key areas of industrial growth within Brighton & Hove, and how the Sixth Form providers reflect this in their study programmes (see Data Pack and Appendix 2). When looking at the subjects offered in Brighton & Hove, in general there is a wide range of provision. However, there are some limitations in subjects in the Environmental Industries group, and concerns that the new Ebacc will cause detrimental effects on arts subjects. Additionally, in reality some of the courses offered across all the growth areas may not run due to low uptake. At the time of writing this report that information was not available.

3.5.2 There are also potential difficulties regarding very small class sizes when there is a low uptake in a subject. Research has shown that very large class sizes can be detrimental to learning, but there are also reasons why learning can be less efficient in very small class sizes as well. Issues range from how small classes have the potential to be dominated by one person, to how young people perform best academically when they have the opportunity to work with students of a similar ability, which can often be denied in a very small class size. Details of the research into this can be found in the appendix.

3.5.3 The Post 16 Data Pack (Appendix 1) contains analysis on the A Level results in 2015 and provision for 2016/7.

3.5.4 Appendix 2 shows the key areas of industrial growth in Brighton & Hove, and the provision offered by Sixth Form providers.

Provision for pupils with Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) and Free School Meals (FSM) students post 16

- 3.5.5 In 2016, 19.7% of post-16 students in Brighton & Hove schools were registered as having SEN which was a decrease from 22.5% in 2014. Looking at age 19 students achieving level 2 and Level 3, the gap has narrowed for the Brighton and Hove SEN cohort compared to the national non-SEN cohort over the last 5 years.
- 3.5.6 In 2015, the FSM attainment gap for 19 year olds achieving Level 2 or higher was 22.2%, short of the national average of 16.5%. However the gap between Brighton & Hove FSM children and national non-FSM children has narrowed over the last 10 years. (See appendix 3 for full details)
- 3.6 The Quality and Quantity of current provision
- 3.6.1 There were 978 students studying at school based Sixth Forms when the census was taken in January 2016, 58% in Year 12, 34% in Year 13 and 8% in Year 14. Cardinal Newman are expecting an increase of about 60 students, and BACA an increase of 50 students. Hove Park and BACA are expecting little change for 2016, although referrals and offers are continuing until the end of September 2016, due to an increase in demand.
- 3.6.2 In general, students at school-based Sixth Forms have increased over the last five years, although there has been a slight decrease between 2015 and 2016. The numbers are expected to increase year-on-year from 2019 to 2031 based on census and school planning data, which anticipate an increase of around 20% more students entering secondary school education by 2021. (See appendix 4 regarding number of students and strengths below)
- 3.6.3 Retention data in the Data Pack (Appendix 1, page 27) shows that both overall retention (from start of Year 12 to end of Year 13) and transition retention (from end of Year 12 to start of Year 13) are higher at Sixth Form Colleges than at School Sixth Forms. In 2013/4, at BHASVIC the overall retention was 81%, at Varndean 83% and at City College 90%. This compares to an average across the school based Sixth Forms of 62%. Further research will need to be carried out to identify the reasons behind the lower retention rate at school based Sixth Forms and the destinations of the students who leave.
- 3.6.4 In 2015 Brighton & Hove providers were above the national average for A Levels resulting in a grade of A*, A or B, and better than the national figure for students not achieving A*-E. Over 40% of AS Level entries in Brighton & Hove resulted in an A or a B grade. All of the educational providers had students studying for vocational qualifications, although some providers had limited numbers. (Appendix 6 shows full details on the above information.)
- 3.6.5 Looking at the provisional results for 2016 (Appendix 7), BACA and PACA have both had success at A Level, with 100% of exams taken being passed at grade A*-E, and the two colleges achieving the best average points per entry for those

students at the end of Key Stage 5 in Brighton & Hove maintained settings. It should be noted that the cohort size for academic subjects at BACA and PACA is small, with 19 learners completing A Levels at PACA and only 4 learners completing A Levels at BACA in 2016. For vocational results at Level 3, both colleges once again achieved a 100% pass rate, with 65% achieving D or D* at PACA and 73% achieving D or D* at BACA.

- 3.6.6 In 2016, Blatchington Mill have had a decrease from last year in learners achieving A*-B at A Level, but have still achieved an overall pass rate of 96%. At AS Level there has been an increase in those achieving the top grades, and in vocational qualifications there has been a 100% pass rate with 65% achieving a D or D*.
- 3.6.7 Cardinal Newman have had similar A Level results this year to last year, with a slight but not significant decrease in those achieving top grades A*-B, and an overall pass rate of 98.0%. At AS Level there has been great success and improvement, with 64.8% achieving A*-B (up from 33.7% in 2015) and 95.2% achieving A*-E (up from 89.9% in 2015).
- 3.6.8 in 2016, Hove Park achieved 39.0% of A Levels resulting in A*-B, up from 29.7% in 2015. The overall pass rate slightly decreased, standing at 97.3%. The number of students achieving A level grades at AAB or higher in at least 2 facilitating subjects increased by one percentage point. At AS Level there was a decrease in students achieving A*-B, but an increase in pass rate from 65.1% to 71.4%.
- 3.6.9 BHASVIC has a slight decrease in those achieving A*-B at A Level, but still achieved 62.7% in 2016, well above the national average. The overall pass rate was 99.1%, again above national average. AS results were also impressive, with 57.1% achieving A*-B (up from 50.6% in 2015) and 94.0% achieving A*-E (up from 92.9% in 2015). 90% of vocational learners achieved a D or D*.
- 3.6.10 Varndean achieved 56.0% of A Levels resulting in A*-B, up from 52.6% in 2015, and a 98.1% pass rate, up from 97.4% in 2015. AS Level results were slightly down on last year, with a 2.2% reduction in those achieving A*-B.
- 3.6.11 In terms of progress, Brighton & Hove have had a positive trend in terms of value added scores for both academic and vocational qualifications over the last 3 years. In 2015, Hove Park, BHASVIC and City College had positive value added scores in both measures. Appendix 6 shows value added scores for each provider in 2015. Data for 2016 will be available from mid-October.

3.7 Findings of the Review: Strengths of the current offer in the city

- 3.7.1 There are increasing numbers of learners in the city, with more than 20% increase in students locally coming through schools by 2021. Brighton & Hove is a destination for learners with 37% coming from outside the authority.

- 3.7.2 There is a strong partnership of schools and colleges eg. Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG), 16-19 curriculum and quality group, and schools and continuing education school leaders. There have been recent meetings between schools with sixth forms and colleges to strengthen the communication and IAG for all learners with a commitment to ongoing communication to ensure young people can make informed choices in their post 16 options, to include vocational and apprenticeship pathways.
- 3.7.3 There is engagement between education and employers with school and college representatives taking part in the Learning, Skills and Employment Partnership, the City Employment and Skills Plan action groups and the work of the Employer Skills Taskforce.
- 3.7.4 Every school will have an Enterprise Adviser by Easter 2017, as part of the national Careers and Enterprise Company programme, to help each school and college develop a schools Skills strategy. This will also include alternative provision such as the Pupil Referral Units and Special schools, supporting more vulnerable young people.
- 3.7.5 There is a range of providers in the city, both schools and alternative providers, to meet differing needs including vulnerable learners and those with SEND. There is innovative and creative provision, particularly from the academies, to meet the varying needs of learners and employers, locally.
- 3.7.6 Meetings have taken place with heads of sixth forms to review 16-19 study programmes and the non-qualification activity, in particular the softer skills and building experience of the world of work. This work is ongoing and has support of an external consultant to support the schools and academies to ensure they meet the new OFSTED framework

3.8 Findings of the Review: challenges and potential barriers of the current offer in the city

- 3.8.1 There is a question as to whether there is sufficient capacity across the city to meet the need as numbers are predicted to increase. The two sixth form colleges in Brighton and Hove report limited capacity for further growth. This will need to be monitored carefully.
- 3.8.2 Due to the Apprenticeship Levy which will be introduced in April 2017, and an increase in apprenticeship opportunities and demand from employers, the challenge will be whether there are enough training providers and indeed apprenticeship standards to meet the vocational demands. This is being monitored and opportunities identified for proposing new apprenticeship standards.
- 3.8.3 There are still lower than average levels of take up by young people of apprenticeship opportunities. The responsibility is on schools and colleges to

promote alternative pathways and to engage with parents and students to view apprenticeships as a desirable route. A schools programme to promote apprenticeships will commence in September, to raise the profile of apprenticeship opportunities and vocational pathways.

- 3.8.4 High rental costs and a lack of suitable training accommodation has created challenges for new and existing providers who are keen to offer courses for entry and level 1 & 2 qualifications. NACRO have already left the city and Road to Success have reduced their offer. Access To Music announced their withdrawal and are likely to stop their provision in September 2017 unless a sustainable and affordable location can be secured.
- 3.8.5 The quality and range of provision for students with SEND needs to be addressed, with specialist, smaller provision both in schools and alternative provision. Blatchington Mill has continued to increase its provision for students with SEND, aged 11-16 and there needs to be appropriate provision and support post 16. It is recognised that not all learners thrive within large institutions and the role of the smaller school sixth forms is critical in supporting these learners.(Appendix 8 on Effect of class sizes on Learning)
- 3.8.6 Historically there has been a perception of competition between schools and colleges. A process has started for a more joined up and collaborative approach, putting the learner first and the existing partnership groups succeed in addressing some of these perceptions.

3.9 Recommendations for a sustainable future

The Sussex Area Review used the following criteria to assess local provision, which have been applied to the sixth forms in their response to their future viability.

1. Meets the needs of current and future learners and employers
2. Is feasible and generates financial sustainability
3. Raises quality and relevance of provision, including better outcomes
4. Achieves appropriate specialisation

Newman College, the Sixth Form of Cardinal Newman Catholic School, Hove

- 3.9.1 Newman College anticipates enrolment to increase to 520 in Autumn 2016 from 440 in 2014, which puts the college in a financially sustainable position going forward. The target number is 600 by 2019. The college has broadened its range of vocational qualifications to meet demand, including the introduction of BTEC in IT at level 3 and Sport, alongside the launch of the Rugby and Girls Football Academies, which are specialist offers.
- 3.9.2 In December 2015 OFSTED graded the sixth form as “Good” stating “The learners following traditional A-level subjects attain results that compare favourably with other learners nationally and are broadly in line with expectations.

There are particular strengths in mathematics, physics, religious studies and fine art. Good proportions of learners achieve high grades. Currently about two thirds of pupils transfer from year 11 to 12. Others opt to pursue studies post-16 with other local providers.”

- 3.9.3 Over 82% of student leavers (2015) went to university, many others starting apprenticeships. Newman College continues to promote alternative pathways and held an Enterprise week for year 12 students in June 2016, and is intending to work with other school sixth forms to promote alternative career pathways, in 2017.

PACA and BACA

- 3.9.4 Across both academies, the ambition is to have between 500-550 learners by 2017, with the increase being secured by both in-school provision but also a network of satellite academies, including a partnership with Sussex Cricket, a Football Academy and a partnership Academy with South East Dance. This builds on the existing Digital Academy and the new Construction Academy launching in September 2016. The intake for September 2016 for BACA has increased significantly with a recognition that a sustainable future is critical for the success of the two academies.
- 3.9.5 Future plans include partnerships with a creative education provider and a local financial organisation to support building financial acumen. Negotiations are currently underway. These specialisms reflect the growth sectors locally and the engagement with employers helps achieve local employment needs.
- 3.9.6 In the past, student numbers have been recognised as being too small to be sustainable, hence the diversification and innovation, with a focus on improving the local offer for young people.

Hove Park and Blatchington Mill

- 3.9.7 Hove Park School, including the 6th form is graded as good by OFSTED, with current post 16 outcomes confirming this judgement. The 6th form has introduced a foundation year and consistently has numbers around 200. Hove Park expects there to be growth long term given the projected demand in post 16 provision. The provision has shifted to become more academic.
- 3.9.8 Blatchington Mill has established schools of specialism, in creative arts, business and social sciences which fit well with the citywide picture of need.
- 3.9.9 Both schools are collaborating effectively in order to maintain a broad curriculum offer, which started in September 2016. With the change in leadership in both schools in 2015, it was quickly recognised that the size of the respective 6th forms was both a challenge and an opportunity for the two schools. As a result both timetables were written for the current school year to accommodate students across both institutions, providing a blended offer and giving students a wider curriculum choice with a healthy class size. Courses have been closed

where there were not sufficient numbers and the target is to have 15-20 students in each class. This joint offer will continue in future years, playing to the strengths of each school. Plans for quality assurance and joint accountability structures are under way with lesson observations across both schools to ensure an ongoing high quality provision, meeting the needs of all learners.

3.9.10 There is no intention to create a joint federation however with numbers in excess of 320 across the two 6th forms, the economies of scale have helped consolidate the financial position of both 6th forms.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1 The 'do nothing' approach represents a risk for young people in Brighton and Hove, as there is a need for continual challenge and support of post 16 provision, to ensure sustainable solutions that meet local needs.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

5.1 All schools with sixth forms and the chairs of their governing bodies, plus local post 16 colleges have taken part in meetings in November 2015, February 2016 and late summer 2016. Individual meetings have been held with each of the schools.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 Committee is asked to note the recommendations contained in this report, in order to ensure a sustainable future for post 16 provision in Brighton & Hove.

6.2 Committee is asked to note that governing bodies of the respective schools with sixth forms are being asked to consider the future viability of the provision of their institution.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

7.1 Post 16 funding is delegated to schools and academies through a national funding formula via the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) which is part of the Department for Education (DfE). The funding is participation based and dependant on a number of criteria, including pupil numbers, courses and retention. Post 16 school and college funding have been funded at different rates in the past, and over the past few years these rates have been brought into line, meaning school funding has been squeezed. Schools have delegated funding for 11-15 pupils and post 16 funding and in theory should not subsidise the funding of each from the others resources.

7.2 Schools with small numbers, 250 or less in their sixth forms, appear to result in financial difficulties for the overall school. Blatchington Mill and Hove Park schools have had declining and/or static post-16 pupil numbers over the past few years. They are currently co-operating by running less popular courses between

them, rather than both running courses with small numbers. Cardinal Newman have expanded their popular sixth form by building a new sixth form centre – Newman College – which aims to have around 600 pupils in the long term.

Finance Officer Consulted: Andy Moore

Date: 21/9/16

Legal Implications:

- 7.3 Responsibility for making decisions regarding provision in school sixth forms lies with the individual governing body of the school as part of their strategic management functions. Members are able to make recommendations regarding sixth form provision in schools, however ultimately it will be the decision of each governing body as to how sixth form provision within their school is shaped.

Lawyer Consulted: Serena Kynaston

Date: 30/08/16

Contact the Democratic Services Officer responsible for the committee for advice.

7.4 Equalities Implications:

As part of the consultation, consideration has been given to the needs of more vulnerable young people, those with SEND and those who have been identified as needing additional support.

7.5 Sustainability Implications:

Access to education links impacts on the future contribution of young people to the local labour market, and to meeting local employers' needs.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Area Review data pack- see below
2. Key Areas of industrial Growth in Brighton & Hove and the provision offered at sixth form
3. Provision for SEND and FSM students post 16
4. Quantity of current provision
5. Value for money
6. Quality of provision
7. Early Information from the schools and colleges, A level results day 2016
8. Effect of Class Size on Learning

Background Documents

1. Sussex Areas Review Summary document (not available until at least late September 2016)

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 1.1 Studies have repeatedly linked unemployment to rising crime and the deterioration of health. Education and skills development can play a role in reducing crime rates and unemployment in the city.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications

- 1.2 The risk of taking action is that schools continue to experience financial challenge and their offer in post 16 becomes unsustainable.

Public Health Implications

- 1.3 High levels of unemployment in the 16-24 category can contribute to lower level of wellbeing, as seen in the Office of National Statistics research.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 1.4 The recommendations support the council's priority of "A good life- ensuring a city for all ages, inclusive for everyone and protecting the most vulnerable."
- 1.5 The recommendations support the directorate objectives " we will continue to raise educational standards, achievement and access for all children and young people with a focus on the more vulnerable" and also "enabling access to high quality skills development and potential for employment for all children and young people".
- 1.6 The recommendations support the service objective "to widen the vocational, academic and apprenticeship pathways pre and post 16 so that more young people participate in good quality education and training, and gain the relevant skills and qualifications to progress into the workplace".

Report Version 2

