

Subject:	Options for additional reception classes for September 2012: Proposed Temporary Expansion of Goldstone, Westdene, Queens Park and Connaught		
Date of Meeting:	19th January 2012		
Report of:	Strategic Director, People		
Lead Cabinet Member:	Cabinet Member for Children & Young People		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Gil Sweetenham	Tel: 29-3474
	Email:	Gil.sweetenham@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Key Decision:	Yes/No	Forward Plan No:	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

Note: The special circumstances for non-compliance with Council Procedure Rule 7, Access to Information Rule 5 and Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act as amended (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) were that the consultation ended on 13 January 2012 and sufficient time was required to properly consider and address the responses within the report.

1 SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 Projected pupil numbers for the city has shown that for September 2012 there is an increase in reception class numbers of approximately 120 children.
- 1.2 These numbers can be accommodated in the city as there are sufficient reception class places in total.
- 1.3 However annual analysis of post code data and demographic changes shows that the majority of the additional places needed are in Hove and on the Brighton/Hove border, areas where there is no spare capacity.
- 1.4 The Council has committed to providing local places for local children wherever possible. Rather than send children out of their local area the Council proposes to extend, for one year only, the intake number at four schools in the area where numbers have risen.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Cabinet note the responses to the consultation undertaken since the Cabinet meeting on 10th November
- 2.2 That Cabinet agree the proposal to temporarily increase the intake of Goldstone Primary, Westdene Primary Queens Park Primary and West Hove infant (Connaught Road site) by one form of entry for September 2012 only.

- 2.3 That Cabinet authorises the Strategic Director People to submit a request to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator for an in year variation in respect of Goldstone Primary, Westdene Primary, Queens Park Primary and West Hove Infant School Connaught Road site.

3 RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The need for additional reception class places in the City over the last three years has been addressed by providing permanent additional forms of entry at Davigdor Infant School, Benfield Primary School, The Connaught Building (through West Hove Infants), Goldstone Primary School, Westdene Primary School and Queens Park Primary School, a total of 8.5 forms.
- 3.2 Currently, the only vacant reception class places are in the East of the City, a significant distance from the post code areas showing increased numbers.
- 3.3 Recent expansions at Queens Park Primary School, Goldstone Primary School, Westdene Primary School and West Hove Infant School (Connaught Building) has given each school a number of new classrooms that will be empty in September 2012. These classrooms will remain empty until the schools have filled up with their natural intake by September 2017.
- 3.4 This will mean that towards the end of the additional intakes primary education temporary classrooms will need to be provided. These proposals are consistent with Government policy of expanding popular schools and the use of vacant accommodation.
- 3.5 The Cabinet meeting on 10th November 2011 agreed to consulting schools and the wider community on these proposals.
- 3.6 This consultation concluded on 13th January 2012 and the purpose of this report is to inform cabinet of the results of that consultation.

4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 4.1 A short consultation document was prepared and sent out to all schools in the city, including the head teacher and chair of governors of the schools subject to the proposals (a copy of this has been placed in the members rooms).
- 4.2 The document was also published on the councils consultation portal.
- 4.3 A meeting was held at Westdene Primary School on Monday 9th January 2012. The meeting was attended by governors of the school, the head teacher and approximately 70 parents of children at the school. The general points to come out of the meeting was that those attending the meeting did not support the proposal on the grounds of traffic and safety issues, the effect on the organisation of the school, a disbelief that the additional pupils will be local to the school, the consequential impact on future sibling links and the impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

- 4.4 There was also a meeting with parents of pupils who would benefit from the proposal being implemented. These parents were very supportive of the proposal on the grounds that it would allow these pupils to access their most local community school.
- 4.5 The governing body of Westdene Primary School submitted a response to the consultation stating that they remain opposed to the proposal for their school. The reasons are the same as those mentioned in paragraph 4.3 above.
- 4.6 There were three petitions started as a result of the proposal as it relates to Westdene Primary School. Two of these were opposed to the proposal, a paper petition received 452 signatures and an on-line e petition received 176 signatures. The third petition, an on-line petition supporting the proposal received 78 signatures.
- 4.6 52 individual responses were received to the consultation. Of these 42 (81%) did not support the proposal and 10 (19%) were in favour. 50 (96%) of these responses related to the proposal for Westdene, 1 related to Queens Park and 1 related to Goldstone. No written representations were received regarding the proposal as it relates to the Connaught. A copy of all responses received have been placed in the members rooms for information.
- 4.6 The Governing bodies of Queens Park Primary School and West Hove infant School (Connaught Road Site) both accepted the proposal.
- 4.8 The governing body of Goldstone Primary school also remains opposed to the proposal on the grounds of traffic and safety issues, the effect on the organisation of the school and the amount of disruption the school have faced over the last few years.
- 4.9 The next stage of the process is to inform the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) of the result of the consultation exercise. The view of the OSA at the time we initially discussed this with them was that that the proposal to temporarily increase numbers as a result of increased pressure in certain areas will fit within the criteria for 'in-year' variations. This would ensure that the temporary increase proposed does not become permanent for future years.

5 FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of the recommendations in this paper although it may be necessary to provide mobile temporary accommodation at the schools as the schools reach capacity.

Finance Officer Consulted: Andy Moore

Date: 06/01/12

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 Under section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 Local Authorities can make an application to the Schools Adjudicator for an in-year variation to school admissions arrangements, where there has been a major

change in circumstances since the time that the arrangements were determined. This report outlines the projected increases in reception class numbers for September 2012, and the potential difficulties in providing local places for local children. As the Authority is under a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places in the city, and also wishes to ensure that they are in the geographical areas which will have no spare capacity, a referral to vary the determined admission arrangements will be necessary in order to make the proposed changes.

Lawyer Consulted:

Serena Kynaston

Date: 10/01/2012

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 Planning and provision of school places is conducted in such a way as to avoid potentially discriminatory admissions priorities or planning processes. The city council and voluntary aided school governing bodies must be mindful of best practice as described in the Admission Code of Practice.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 Providing school places close to the community where the service is required is more sustainable than requiring parents and young children to cross the city to access a school place.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 By including the community in the development and use of the facilities at the schools crime and disorder in the local area will be reduced. This will be further improved by offering extended use of the facilities to the community outside of the school day

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 It is important that this opportunity is taken to ensure the future provision of learning and teaching, and continuing improvement in standards of education in the city

Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 There are no public health implications arising from this report.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 These proposals are an essential element in providing additional places in local areas for local children.

6 EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 The other options available to the Council are:

- To send children outside of their local area to vacant places in the east of the City
- To extend other schools in the area of need by adding mobile accommodation funded from the schools capital programme.

7 REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The proposal represents the best option to satisfy the need for local places for local children and best value in that they use empty classrooms already provided from the Councils schools capital programme

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. Consultation document
2. Copies of all responses received to the consultation.

Background Documents

None

