

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 71

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Consultation on the extension of the Secondary Catchment Area for Patcham High School		
Date of Meeting:	19 January 2009		
Report of:	Director of Children's Services		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Gil Sweetenham	Tel: 29-3515
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Key Decision:	Yes	Forward Plan No.CYP7241	
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 Following objections made to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator regarding the catchment area of Patcham High School, the Adjudicator required the Council to carry out a consultation exercise to seek the views of both parents in the local area and affected schools, regarding a possible change in the catchment area for the school. As a result of this consultation it is proposed that the Westdene and Brangwyn areas are included in the catchment area for Patcham High School, thus increasing the 'local' student body to nearer the schools admission number.
- 1.2 This would address the issues raised by objectors and recognised by the Council. It would also reduce the numbers within the Blatchington Mill and Hove Park schools catchment area. This change is also likely to increase the number of children who will be able to walk to school.
- 1.3 It is proposed that Patcham High School remains a single catchment area for the purposes of secondary admissions. The new catchment area would be bounded by Dyke Road to the west, Tongdean Lane and Surrenden Road to the South and Lewes Road to the East. The new Patcham catchment area will then include part of BN1 5, most of BN1 8 and part of BN1 9.
- 1.4 The proposal would also change the dual catchment area for Blatchington Mill and Hove Park by removing a number of BN1 5 postcodes. However, even if a change were agreed by the Council, it would not be possible to implement it for admissions in 2009 as parental preferences have already been submitted for the 2009/10 academic year. The proposal would therefore be implemented for admissions in the 2010/11 academic year.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To note the response to the public consultation.
- 2.2 To change the Patcham High School Admissions catchment area by including the Westdene and Brangwyn areas with effect from September 2010.

2.3 That the Council explores the provision of improved pedestrian crossing of the London Road in the vicinity of the junction with Carden Avenue.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1 On 18 July 2008 the Office of the Schools Adjudicator published a decision on an objection to the admission arrangements of Patcham High School for 2009/10

3.2 Objectors were concerned that the new admissions system, in particular the location of catchment boundaries, did not provide Patcham High School with a sustainable pupil base when compared with other parts of the city. Objectors were therefore seeking changes to the catchment boundaries to correct this anomaly.

3.3 One option that would address this issue would be an extension of the Patcham High School catchment to include the Westdene and Brangwyn areas. The adjudicator concluded that a change of the kind proposed would be possible without bringing down the whole system of secondary school admissions. He therefore agreed that parents and schools in all the areas affected should be consulted during the autumn term 2008 about this proposal. The Council took the view that the proposed change would also affect the Hove area, in which catchment Westdene/Brangwynne is currently located, and Patcham, whose catchment area would be enlarged by the proposed change. Consequently they were also included in the consultation.

3.4 If the proposal is adopted the projection of student numbers in the locality for the next four years will be as follows:

Table 1 New forecast rolls for Patcham High School, Blatchington Mill Secondary School and Hove Park Secondary School

	Admission Numbers	Forecast Rolls			
		Sep 09	Sept10	Sept 11	Sept 12
Patcham High	210	203	206	212	189
Blatchington Mill	300	274	274	280	271
Hove Park	300	274	274	280	271

(based on January 08 census and adjusted for Cardinal Newman applications Please note that this data does not take account of out of catchment area sibling links, anticipated numbers of children with exceptional circumstances, or the relative popularity of schools.)

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 Three public meetings were held as follows:

Date	Time	Venue
20 October 2008	7.30 pm	Westdene Primary School
11 November 2008	7.00 pm	Patcham High School
12 November 2008	7.00 pm	Blatchington Mill Secondary School

4.2 Consultation documents were distributed through Patcham High, Cardinal Newman, Blatchington Mill, and Hove Park schools.

4.3 Consultation documents were distributed through all primary phase schools in the Patcham and Blatchington Mill/Hove Park Secondary admissions catchment areas.

4.4 The consultation process followed this timetable:

Publication of Consultation Document 10 October 2008

Public Consultation Meetings:

Westdene Primary School 20 October 2008

Patcham High School 11 November 2008

Blatchington Mill Secondary 12 November 2008

School

Last date for responses 5 December 2008

Decision by the Cabinet Member 19 January 2009

Provisional date of Change September 2010

4.5 The consultation document is attached as Appendix 1 and an analysis of consultation responses is attached as Appendix 2.

4.6 In summary 393 responses were received of which 296 were in favour of the proposal and 97 were against the proposal.

4.7 Objections to the proposal were largely from the Westdene School area and cited the removal of parental choice from this area as the reason for their opposition.

4.8 It is evident from the public meetings and from the consultation returns that the majority of residents of the Westdene/Brangwyn area are not in favour of the proposed change. However the view was also put forward that Hove Park was a far less popular option under the current arrangements because of the home

school journey, and some saw Patcham as a viable alternative preference if they were not allocated Blatchington Mill.

- 4.9 A major concern expressed by the Westdene/Brangwyn residents was that there were no safe pedestrian crossings that pupils could use to cross the London Road if attending Patcham High. This is a key issue if the proposal were to be upheld.
- 4.10 Residents of Westdene/Brangwyn saw their area as being picked out a second time for an unwelcome change following the previous move to catchment areas. A suggestion was made that the area could be included in both the Hove and Patcham catchment areas. However this option could be seen as a precedent in the City, and could also be seen as making no realistic change to the catchment areas, as in effect Patcham was already available to those in Westdene/Brangwyn who wanted it.
- 4.11 The view from the Patcham area was that the proposed change would help to ensure that improvement continued by securing the school's financial future. Responses from the Hove area were limited but broadly in favour of the proposal
- 4.12 The benefits of the proposed change would be to secure the future development of Patcham High School and to promote local attendance for a greater number of pupils. However, this change would be against the wishes of the majority in the Westdene/Brangwyn who are directly affected.
- 4.13 In reaching a recommendation officers have been mindful of the needs of pupils across the City. On balance they take the view that this proposal will be beneficial through supporting the improvement of Patcham High School. It would also ease pressure on places in the Hove catchment area where the number of pupils is rising.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 Any changes to admission arrangements or patterns may impact on the numbers of pupils at individual schools and therefore individual school budget allocations which are largely driven by pupil numbers.

Finance Officer Consulted: Andy Moore, Schools Principal Accountant
Date: 17/12/2008

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 In accordance with the provisions of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, the Council were obliged to comply with the conclusions of the School Adjudicator that it should consult on changes to the catchment area of Patcham High school for the academic year 2010/11.

Lawyer Consulted: Serena Kynaston

Date: 17/12/08

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 bad practice as described in the Admission Code of Practice.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 Planning and provision of school places are intended, so far as it is possible, to provide pupils, parents and carers with local places where they have asked for them. This is subject to limitations in school capacity, the funding available and the priority order for capital development determined by the Council.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There are no implications for the prevention of crime and disorder arising from this report.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 There are no risk issues in terms of resources or risks to children as a result of this proposal.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 All planning and provision for school places in the city should be operating on the basis of admission limits and admission priorities which have been the subject of broad consultation. The effective coordination of planning arrangements should lead to sufficient school places in all areas of the city and the removal of excess provision

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION:

- 6.1 The Alternative option is to leave the secondary admissions catchment areas as they exist pending the full review planned for 2012. This could result in budgetary problems for Patcham High School as the majority of school funding is based on the number of pupils on roll.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The report addresses the issues raised by objectors and recognised by the Council. It would reduce the numbers within the Blatchington Mill and Hove Park schools catchment area. This change is also likely to increase the number of children who will be able to walk to school.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Consultation Document
2. Summary of Consultation Responses
3. Adjudicator Consultation Overview
4. Map – Proposed new Admissions catchment area with Westdene in Patcham

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. Copies of Consultation Responses

