

# **Brighton & Hove School Organisation Plan**

**2013 to 2017**

## **Introduction**

The Council's vision for education in the city is that we want to make sure that all our children and young people have the best possible start in life, so that everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential, whatever that might be, and to be happy, healthy and safe. This means making sure that all children and young people in the city have access to high quality education that will provide them with the knowledge and skills to secure employment and be active and responsible citizens.

The purpose of this School Organisation Plan is to describe the place of school organisation and places planning in how the Council intends to fulfil this vision. The plan describes the challenges that the city continues to face in securing sufficient school places for all its children and young people and sets out the short, medium and longer term strategies for meeting these challenges.

The School Organisation Plan is integral to the suite of strategies and plans which underpins the Council's vision for education. It reflects the same key principles of commitment to the well being of all children and young people in the city, the pursuit of excellence, partnership working, and openness and transparency in planning and decision making.

These principles are expressed through the School Organisation Plan in the following ways:

- The needs of children are paramount: we will do all we can to ensure that children are able to attend a local school, which is good or better and accessible
- Whilst we recognise that current national policy promotes the development of a diverse range of provision, we will seek to ensure that any new schools of whatever type are actively committed to working in partnership with other schools and the Authority for the benefit of all children and young people
- Where possible we will look to expand schools which are popular and deliver good education, whilst preserving the essential character of these schools which contributes towards them being successful
- We will continue to work in partnership with other key agencies, including the Anglican and Catholic Dioceses and the Education Funding Agency, in developing proposals to meet the need for new school places
- The authority will be open and transparent with schools, their governing bodies and local people about the challenges for school places planning in the city and the options for meeting these challenges

The Authority has a statutory duty to secure sufficient, suitable school places for all children living in its area of compulsory school age (5 – 16). These places need not be in local authority maintained schools. They may be in voluntary aided faith schools, and different types of academy schools. The Authority also has a duty under the Raising Participation Age policy to ensure

sufficient full year education or training provision for young people aged 16 and from September 2015 this will increase to ensuring education or training provision up to the 18<sup>th</sup> birthday for all young people. This School Organisation Plan takes into account all education provision up to age 18 in the city other than that in the fee paying independent sector.

Brighton & Hove is bounded on one side by the sea and on the other by the Downs, and there are now very few large spaces within the city suitable for new schools. Our green spaces, the city's parks and playing fields, are quite rightly treasured as places for recreation and organised games and sport and are protected by planning regulations. There are also few redundant brown field sites that may be suitable for development as schools.

It is therefore vital that the school places challenge is owned by us all, so that we can together find the best solutions for all our children and young people.

**Pinaki Ghoshal**  
**Executive Director of Children's Services**

## **Summary of key challenges for school organisation and places planning**

### Context

The context for this plan contains several factors:

- Growth in the number of children and young people in the city, which has been a factor for the provision of primary school places since 2003 and which will begin to impact on the secondary sector from 2014 onwards
- The paucity of suitable, available sites, either green field or brown field, for the development of new schools within the city
- The fact that many of our schools, primary and secondary, are already very large and may present both practical and school managerial challenges to any proposal that they are made still larger
- The national policy context, which requires any new school proposal to be advertised first of all to potential promoters or sponsors of an academy or free school – while this offers the potential for increasing the already wide diversity in our school provision, it may also bring elements of delay and uncertainty
- Some of the models currently being promoted by government, such as Studio Schools and University Technical Colleges, are for 14 – 19 year olds only and do not assist in addressing the places challenge for the secondary sector as a whole
- Capital funding made available by government has tended to lag behind demand, although the government in December 2013 announced capital allocations for the three year period from 2014/15 to 2016/17 to help local authorities to plan ahead; this and the size of the allocations in the final two years of this period for Brighton & Hove are

welcome developments but this will need to continue throughout the remainder of the decade if the city is to have sufficient resources to meet the challenge of growth in numbers in the secondary sector, where projects tend to be more expensive

Difficult choices will have to be made if we are to secure the places required for all the children in the city during the period of this plan and beyond. Identifying sites for new schools, especially secondary schools, is very difficult given the location and largely developed nature of the city and the need to preserve the green spaces that we have. Many schools are large or have little or no space for further development.

Under current government policy, proposals for any new schools must first of all be sought from potential sponsors of academies or free schools. The two free schools opened in the city by 2013, the Bilingual Free School and King's School, have added to the diversity of our provision but both are currently experiencing difficulty in finding a permanent site and this is the case for the small number of other potential sponsors known to have expressed an interest in developing new schools here.

### The primary sector

In Brighton & Hove there are sufficient primary places overall to meet the needs of the growing number of primary age children. However they are not all in the right places, and we face challenges in particular in the south of Hove as well as in some localised areas such as Saltdean. On the other hand we have a small number of schools, mainly on the periphery of the city, with spare places which are hard to fill because of their location.

We have worked hard over the last eight to ten years to ensure that there are sufficient primary school places, in the right locations, for the increasing number of children reaching compulsory school age each year. Since 2005 we have provided 345 new reception class places (over 2,415 places in total) in the areas of greatest demand across the city, and more is planned for 2014 with the new form of entry at West Hove Infant School Connaught and places at the Holland Road site to be managed by West Hove Junior School.

However, these permanent places have not always been sufficient and in 2012 and 2013 we have had to add temporary 'bulge' classes to some schools in order to meet local demand.

Beyond three to four years ahead there are no firm figures for numbers of primary age children as they are not yet born. The normal expectation in a demographic cycle is that numbers will after twelve to fifteen years of growth reach a peak and then begin to decline and there is increasingly strong evidence, backed by data from 2013 GP registers, that the increase in the number of children aged 4+ in Brighton & Hove may reach a peak in 2015 and 2016 and that then numbers may possibly reduce.

A judgement must therefore be made about whether more permanent places are needed or whether the continuing high demand should be met through more temporary bulge classes – or a mixture of both. Proposals for bulge classes are often unpopular with schools, their governing bodies and parents of children already at the schools because of the organisation and management issues they present for the school and concerns about overcrowding and safety. On the other hand, if numbers begin to decline beyond 2015, providing too many permanent places now will present other management problems and potential detriment to pupils in future years as some schools struggle to maintain numbers.

### The secondary sector

There has been little change in the numbers of students in secondary schools over the last few years. This will change radically, beginning in 2014, as the increasing numbers of primary age children start to reach secondary school age. The opening of King's School in September 2013 and the additional places in the new building at Portslade Aldridge Community College (PACA) provide some additional capacity. For 2015, the total number of Y7 places available across the city will be 2610.

Against current forecasts there should therefore be sufficient secondary school places across the city as a whole until 2017, but this would require all the schools to be full or almost full.

Current forecasts suggest that in order to provide sufficient secondary school places and allow some margin for parental preference (at least 5% or around 150 places per year group) we must plan for 2900 Year 7 (Y7) places across the city by 2019, an increase of around 300 places compared with planned numbers for 2015. This is equivalent to another large ten form entry secondary school.

There is no obvious site available within the city which is large enough to accommodate a large new secondary school. The need is most likely to be met through a range of smaller additions, including possibly a new medium sized school at Toads Hole Valley, subject to consultation on the draft City Plan, and further thinking on this is set out later in this Plan. In addition, plans for a Studio School sponsored by City College and a University Technical College in nearby Newhaven will contribute to the overall number of places although these developments will only provide for the 14 – 19 age range.

As for the primary sector, there is a 'centre and periphery' challenge. More centrally located schools tend to be full and have already increased in size in recent years, while there are spare places in schools on the periphery, which do not benefit from a 360 degree catchment area. We will need to consider whether there are changes that can and should be made, for example to catchment areas and transport arrangements, which might assist these schools in becoming full.

Secondary admissions arrangements, including catchment areas, must also be kept under review to ensure that they are clear and transparent and provide children and families with a reasonable level of certainty about the school places available to them, as well as ensuring that available places across the city are used to the full. Most recently we have changed the admissions criteria so that siblings living out of the catchment area are no longer given priority, and further changes may need to be considered as numbers in catchment areas increase.

### The 16 - 18 sector

This Plan does not consider the 16 – 18 sector in detail. In Brighton & Hove around 80% of 16 – 18 provision is made by the three colleges, BHASVIC, City College and Varndean College. Around 15% of provision is made by school sixth forms and the remainder is made by smaller education and training providers and apprenticeships.

The three colleges are independent corporations, responsible for the development of their provision and their buildings. All three colleges have capital development plans in place, the most ambitious of these being City College's project to replace its entire City College Central provision in Pelham Street with a new building. BHASVIC has consent and funding in place to construct a new building which will provide additional capacity as well as replacing some of its poorer accommodation. Varndean College is developing new classroom space in its roof space which will also provide additional capacity and replace some of its mobile classrooms.

The five schools and academies with sixth forms all have plans to increase the size of their sixth forms. Most notably, Cardinal Newman Catholic School is investing almost £4m in a new sixth form block to support a planned increase in the sixth form from 450 to 600 students. These sixth form developments may have some impact on the schools' capacity for 11 – 16 year old students.

### **Funding for capital investment in schools**

Funding for the schools capital programme includes:

- 'Basic need' grant allocations from the DfE, made on a formula basis – these allocations are not ring fenced to education
- Additional grant allocations offered from time to time by the DfE, such as the Targeted Basic Need Grant for school places and the Demographic Growth Capital Fund for post 16 places
- Section 106 developer contributions to assist with additional costs arising from residential development
- Revenue contributions to capital

The largest funding element is the basic need grant allocation, through which Brighton & Hove has typically received around £3m - £4m per year in recent years, reflecting the growth in the primary sector. However, the formula by

which basic need allocations are calculated is rarely sufficient to cover the cost of providing new places, especially in the South East. The cost of the most recent example of a one form entry extension to a secondary school in Brighton & Hove, completed in 2010, was around £5m. The DfE is seeking ways to reduce the cost of new school buildings, for example through the commissioning of standard designs for schools and simpler procurement and construction processes.

The basic need allocations for the two financial years 2013-14 and 2014-15 are fully committed to projects already started to provide additional primary school places.

In December 2013 the Secretary of State announced that he wished to assist local authorities in planning ahead for capital investment to meet the need for new places and was therefore publishing basic need allocations for the three years 2014/15 – 2016/17. The allocations for Brighton & Hove are £3.9m for 2014/15 (as previously announced in December 2012), £12.0m in 2015/16 and £12.6m in 2016/17. This significant uplift in the allocations provides a more realistic platform for planning necessary new provision.

The provision of school places forms part of the Council's medium term capital strategy, which sets out the capital investment issues for the Council across the range of its functions and considers how these may be met.

## **Primary schools**

### **Forecasts of pupil numbers**

The number of primary age children in Brighton & Hove has been growing steadily for over ten years. The projections in Table 1 below show that the number of children entering Reception classes appears to peak in 2015 and that it then begins to decline.

The main data source for our primary pupil number forecasts is GP registration data. This provides not only information about the number of pre-school age children in the city but also a broad indication of where they live through post codes. Our analysis of the data takes into account historic trends, for example in the proportion of children who enrol in the state maintained schools sector.

For planning purposes and as required by the DfE's school capacity data returns, we have divided the city into ten broad 'planning areas'. These planning areas are not fixed – they are simply intended to help us to identify areas of greatest pressure on places by reflecting the broad existing patterns of 'travel to school'. They are not 'catchment areas' for admissions purposes and are therefore not published. There is no expectation that children living in an area will attend one of those schools nor any guarantee that children may be allocated a place in the planning area in which they live. There are many children who live in one planning area but actually attend a school in a different area.

Table 1 below shows the current forecasts to 2017 of children expected to need a reception class place, broken down into these planning areas. The table also shows the places available in the schools in the planning areas and the surpluses or shortfalls of places.

**Table 1: Forecasts of pupil numbers and surplus / shortfalls aged 4+ by planning area**

Planning Area	Surplus / shortfall	PAN 2014	Actual	Forecasts			
			2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Portslade		360	321	262 98	247 113	245 115	220 140
South Central Hove		420	421	565 -145	594 -174	599 -179	563 -143
Hangleton and Hove Park		210	211	268 -58	235 -25	213 -3	212 -2
W Blatchington & N Hangleton		150	139	100 50	78 72	85 65	88 62
Westdene to Seafront		240	240	223 17	243 -3	237 3	253 -13
Hollingbury & Preston Park to Seafront		420	417	371 49	405 15	361 59	324 96
Moulsecoomb and Coldean		270	201	203 128	215 115	222 108	185 145
Patcham		150	149	164 -14	168 -18	154 -4	175 -25
Whitehawk and Queens Park		480	447	516 -36	481 -1	507 -27	502 -22
The Deans		270	255	225 45	227 43	198 72	211 59
The Bilingual Free School		60	tbc		n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>TOTALS</b>		3,030	2,801	2,897 134	2,893 137	2,821 209	2,733 297

Notes on Table 1

\* PAN is Published Admission Number, the published maximum number of children for a year group in each school.

\*\* YR is the Reception year group, aged 4+.

\*\*\* Where actual numbers in 2013 and 2014 exceed the PAN for the area, this is because a bulge class was provided in that year for one or more schools in the area.

\*\*\*\* An additional permanent form of entry (30 places) is to be provided at West Hove Infant School Connaught site for 2014.



\*\*\*\*\* The Bilingual Free School is temporarily based at BACA but intends to relocate to a permanent site in Hove (subject to planning consent) and to increase its PAN from 60 to 90. This school draws its pupils from across the city and is therefore not allocated to a Planning Area.

### Comments on primary numbers forecasts

There are sufficient places in the city overall even for the highest forecast numbers in 2015. However, the tables show that the broad distribution of children across the city does not wholly match the location of schools and this inevitably creates pressures in some parts of the city which will be difficult to meet in local schools.

The number of children seeking places in the primary schools in 2014 is forecast to be broadly the same as in 2012, when it was necessary to provide six bulge classes to accommodate all the children. In 2014, there will be two more permanent reception classes available than there were in 2012 – one at Aldrington CE School and one at West Hove Infant School Connaught site.

The number of children seeking primary places in 2015 appears to be very similar to 2014. In the two remaining years for which forecasts are currently available numbers decline by around 70 children city wide in 2016 and a further 90 children in 2017. The figures for 2017 are less reliable, but the evidence that numbers are approaching a peak in 2015 and may decline after this appears now to be stronger. If the forecasts are broadly accurate, there will be around four or five forms of entry fewer to place in 2017 than in 2015.

There continue to be significantly more children in the South Central Hove planning area (the whole of Hove south of the railway line) than there are places in schools within the area, despite the large number of additional places provided in and around this area. Most spare places are around the edge of the city, in Portslade, West Blatchington and Moulsecoomb and this is likely to continue to be the case.

Given the lack of sites for new schools and the size of many of the existing schools, it will continue to be necessary to allocate places at schools in other planning areas to some children living in the South Central Hove planning area, in particular in Portslade, Hangleton & Hove Park and West Blatchington & North Hangleton.

The mix of community (80% of reception class places) and faith (20%) schools in the city adds a further dimension to places planning in the primary sector, because some families prefer to seek out places in faith schools while others would prefer their children not to attend a faith school, even though it may be their closest school.

The Council's primary school admissions criteria, which follow the statutory Admissions Code determined by central government, give priority to children in care or who have been adopted and those with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN), to those with exceptional medical or social

reasons, then siblings of children already attending a school and finally other children. The 'shortest available route' is used to decide who should be allocated a place if the number of children in these categories, taken in priority order, exceeds the places available. This means that as numbers have grown there are parts of the city where children may be unable to attend their nearest school or the school which serves the community to which residents feel they belong. This can be expected to continue throughout the period to 2017, while numbers in the 4+ age groups remain high in some areas.

Closer analysis also shows that numbers of children in Saltdean are likely to exceed the places available at Saltdean Primary School (where a bulge class was provided for 2013/14) and that these higher numbers may continue for the foreseeable future. Discussions with colleagues in East Sussex suggest that they are forecasting a shortfall in places in the neighbouring areas of Telscombe Cliffs and Peacehaven and that it would not therefore be possible to consider placing East Saltdean children (living in East Sussex) in the East Sussex schools.

Where there are schools with significant surplus places, we should seek ways of reducing the Published Admission Number (PAN) so that it more closely matches the number of children in their area. This is most likely to be achieved through identifying other facilities which could appropriately be co-located with the school.

All these factors demonstrate the complexity of places planning, especially where for the very youngest pupils families generally would prefer to be able to walk with their children to a local school. This is not always achievable and it is important to maintain the long term view, in which numbers of primary age children may begin to decline again. Nevertheless, in 2013 84% of children were allocated a place at their first preference school and 95% of children were allocated a place at one of their three preferences. Broadly similar proportions were achieved in previous years.

#### Providing the additional primary places that are needed

In order to secure sufficient primary school places for 2014/15 and 2015/16 the Council will:

- Consult with heads and governors of schools in Hove and the Anglican and Catholic Dioceses on locations for at least one and possibly two permanent new forms of entry: projects would be likely to commence with a further bulge class in 2014/15 and provision of permanent new building for seven classes in time for 2015/16
- Consult with heads and governors of all primary schools and the Anglican and Catholic Dioceses on the provision of at least one and possibly two bulge classes for 2015/16 and provide the necessary temporary classrooms
- Consult with the head and governors of Saltdean Primary School on a possible increase in the size of the school to 2.5 or 3 forms of entry, to

- commence with a further bulge class in 2014/15 and provision of permanent new building for up to seven classes in time for 2015/16
- Continue to work with those schools that have spare places to ensure that they remain or become good or outstanding schools which offer an acceptable alternative for children who cannot be allocated a place in their more local schools
  - Review with West Blatchington Primary School and Hove Park School the success of their pilot project to provide transport to school and consider whether this can usefully be extended to other schools with spare places
  - Plan for the provision of temporary classes in 2016/17 at those schools which received bulge classes in 2012 and accommodated them in new permanent classrooms, which by 2016/17 will be required to accommodate these schools' permanent additional form of entry
  - Keep under review forecasts for the later years of this plan and make decisions about whether further temporary or permanent accommodation is required
  - Keep under review opportunities to reduce the PAN of schools where indications are that it is unlikely that the school will in future receive this number of children, especially where this provides an opportunity to link the school with other relevant services taking up redundant space

This work will be steered and monitored by the Cross Party School Organisation Working Group set up by the Children and Young People Committee to advise it on all school organisation and places planning matters, and there will be consultation as required on proposals for permanent new places.

## **Secondary schools**

### Forecasts of pupil numbers

The number of secondary age children has remained broadly unchanged over the last ten years. However, the increase in primary age children experienced over the last ten years will start to reach the secondary sector in 2014 and current forecasts suggest an increase of between 400 and 500 students entering Year 7 by 2019 compared with 2013.

Forecasts of pupil numbers for the secondary sector can be calculated with a greater degree of certainty than for the primary sector because we can look further ahead and because most of the children for at least six years ahead are already in the primary schools. Nevertheless there is some uncertainty about the proportion of children that will transfer to the maintained sector, and the operation of parental preference and the greater mobility of secondary age pupils are further variable factors that must be taken into account.

As for the primary sector, the starting point for calculating forecasts of secondary school numbers is GP registration data, mapped on to the catchment areas for secondary schools to give a broad indication of the distribution of future Y7 pupils across the city. A factor is applied to these

numbers to allow for the proportion not transferring to the maintained sector – in recent years this has been 84.5%. Allowances are also made for those children transferring to Cardinal Newman Catholic School and (for 2013 onwards) to King’s School as these two schools draw from across the city and do not have their own catchment areas. Finally, an analysis is done of possible Y7 numbers in each of the catchment areas taking into account historic trends in the effect of parental preferences.

Following the opening of King’s School in September 2013 there are now ten secondary schools in the city. King’s School currently provides 125 places for its first Y7 intake and proposes to increase its admission number to 150 in 2015. In addition the capacity at Portslade Aldridge Community Academy (PACA) will increase to 240 when its new accommodation is complete in 2014.

In the last two years, the PANs for Dorothy Stringer School and Cardinal Newman Catholic School have each increased by one form of entry to 330 and 363 respectively.

The Year 7 capacity of the ten schools is therefore 2525 in 2013, rising to 2585 in 2014 and 2610 in 2015.

Table 2 below shows the current forecast of secondary school numbers for the city as a whole. ‘Low’ and ‘high’ forecasts are given to indicate the range of numbers that could come forward based on transfer rates of 84.5% (low) and 87.5% (high). An element of additional capacity should normally be available to allow some flexibility for parental preference and the DfE recommends 5% to 10% for this. Therefore around 150 (5%) should be added to the forecast numbers if we are to have some flexibility – without this there would soon be sufficient space only if all schools were full. This spare capacity is at the lower end of the range recommended by the DfE.

**Table 2: Forecasts of secondary age numbers in Brighton & Hove**

Year	Capacity	Estimate		Surplus/ Shortfall	
		Low	High	Low	High
<b>2013 (actual)</b>	2525	2250		275	
<b>2014</b>	2585	2280	2360	305	225
<b>2015</b>	2610	2320	2400	290	210
<b>2016</b>	2610	2350	2430	260	180
<b>2017</b>	2610	2410	2490	200	120
<b>2018</b>	2610	2550	2630	60	(20)
<b>2019</b>	2610	2660	2750	(40)	(140)
<b>2020</b>	2610	2620	2700	(10)	(90)
<b>2021</b>	2610	2680	2760	(70)	(150)

## Comments on the secondary numbers forecasts

Key conclusions from these figures include:

- Allowing some flexibility for parental preference (150 places), we should plan for 2900 Y7 places across the city by 2019 – around 300 additional Y7 places compared with planned capacity for 2015
- In due course as these higher numbers move through the schools, this will require an additional 1500 Y7 to Y11 places, equivalent to a large new secondary school
- The plan for secondary places must show how these 1500 places will be achieved over time – this runs well beyond the period of this School Organisation Plan
- We should aim to have at least 120 Y7 additional places available by 2017, when a point about midway between the low and high forecasts plus ‘flexibility allowance’ will otherwise exceed the places available
- We should aim to have at least another 120 Y7 additional places available by 2019, with any remaining requirement following by 2021

These conclusions should be kept under review as further data become available, but given the numbers already experienced in the primary schools any changes will be in the fine detail – the need for a broad framework plan implemented in stages is inescapable.

Closer analysis of the distribution of children across the city shows unsurprisingly that there will be increasingly significant pressure on places in the catchment areas for Blatchington Mill & Hove Park and for Dorothy Stringer & Varndean. The most recent changes in catchment areas and the change in the siblings rule so that out of area siblings no longer have priority for admission to our secondary schools were intended to ease some of this pressure but it will continue to grow and the admissions arrangements and catchment areas will need to be kept under review to ensure that all the places available across the city are used as effectively as possible. Any changes would require wide consultation with schools, parents and the local community and approval by the Children and Young People Committee and the full Council.

## Providing the additional secondary school places that are needed

The working assumption is that by the end of the decade we will need to have secured an additional 300 places per year group (10 forms of entry and 1500 places overall). In order to meet this forecast demand and provide some flexibility for parental preference it will be necessary to secure 120 new places in time for 2017/18 and at least 120 more new places in time for 2019/20.

Within these assumptions, it is further assumed that King’s School will increase its PAN to 150 for 2015/16 as planned and that continued performance improvement and the outcomes of any review of secondary school admissions arrangements will ensure that many of the current spare places in some schools will be filled.

In order to secure sufficient secondary school places in line with these assumptions the Council will:

- Consult with heads and governors across the city regarding the development of a range of options which include additional forms of entry at existing schools and the development of satellite establishments which sit under the governance of a current school or schools
- Continue to work with other Council departments and potential developers on the proposed development of a new secondary school for up to six forms of entry (180 places per year group) on the Toads Hole Valley site – subject to outcomes of the consultation on the draft City Plan
- Review secondary school admissions arrangements, including catchment areas, as necessary and consult on any proposed changes
- Keep under review possible sites which could be made available to sponsors of academies or free schools
- Continue to support the development by City College of a Studio School for 14 – 19 year olds – although it is not anticipated that this will release capacity for Year 7 admissions in any of the city's schools

These proposals go well beyond the period of this Plan but need to be included given the longer term development process for secondary school places planning. They will not all be achievable but they all need to be tested. The proposals taken together provide the broad framework of a more formal plan for securing sufficient secondary school places for the next ten years which is to be discussed with the Cross Party School Organisation Working Group, the schools and their governing bodies and completed during 2014.

As for the primary sector, this work will be steered and monitored by the Cross Party School Organisation Working Group set up by the Children and Young People Committee to advise it on all school organisation and places planning matters, and there will be consultation as required on proposals for permanent new places.

### **Other issues**

The main purpose of the School Organisation Plan is to identify the pressures for change in the provision of school places and the capital investment that may be required to resolve these pressures. However, there are related strategic, policy and operational issues which impact upon or are affected by school places planning.

#### Government policy on school organisation

Current government policy promotes diversity among the types of schools within an area and favours in particular the development of Academies and Free Schools. Where a new school is needed, local authorities must arrange a competition so that sponsors may take the opportunity to propose a new

academy or free school. Only if no suitable sponsors come forward may the local authority propose its own school. Capital funding for a new academy or free school is either provided by central government where the new school is adding significantly to the diversity of provision in the area or from the local authority's basic need allocation if it is simply to meet a need for new places.

A further aspect of diversity is the promotion of new types of secondary school, including Studio Schools and University Technical Colleges. These models start at age 14 rather than 11 and tend to be much smaller than most secondary schools. They aim to provide a different kind of curriculum, usually with a specific vocational focus, which may be attractive to particular students by providing a specific focus to their learning whilst ensuring that they follow GCSE courses in English, Maths and Science. Another model is the University Training School, which starts at age 11 and has a particular focus on teacher training, professional development and research through the medium of a successful school.

There are examples of interest in all these models in or near Brighton & Hove, although the only 'new model' schools open in 2014 are sponsored academies and free schools. Planning for new school places, especially in the secondary sector, must take account of this diversity policy and seek to ensure that whatever pattern of schools develops there continues to be a strong sense of the interconnectedness of a set of schools meeting the needs of the city and supporting and challenging each other to improve.

### Catchment areas

Catchment areas were introduced in Brighton & Hove for admission to secondary schools in 2008. There are six defined catchment areas, four with a single secondary school and two with two schools. Cardinal Newman Catholic School and King's School which determine their own admissions do not have catchment areas and draw from across the city and beyond. For the catchment areas where there are two schools there is a system of random allocation which determines the placement of students when one of the two schools is oversubscribed with children living within the catchment area.

The catchment areas were last reviewed in 2012 and as a result two adjustments were made to the existing areas.

As numbers of students in the secondary sector increase over the next ten years it will be essential to undertake further reviews of the secondary school admissions arrangements, including catchment areas, to ensure that all available places are used and so that children and their families can continue to have some certainty about the schools where they have the best prospect of securing a place. It is proposed that the first of these reviews should be undertaken in 2014.

## Housing developments and the impact on planning school places

The Local Development Framework (LDF) is the set of documents which will eventually include all the planning authority's local development documents, one of which will be the City Plan. As these documents are adopted by the Council they will eventually replace the Brighton & Hove Local Plan which was adopted in July 2005.

Planning seeks to ensure that land is used efficiently in the public interest – therefore that there is the right balance between homes, jobs, community facilities including schools, open space and leisure and retail facilities. In addition, it seeks to ensure that attention is given to good design, sustainability and climate change in development.

The City Plan will be the Council's key planning document and will provide the overall strategic vision for the future of the city to 2030.

The draft City Plan:

- Identifies broad locations for development and allocates strategic sites and employment sites
- Sets out the council's strategic approach to housing, the economy, shopping and transport
- Sets a local housing target for the city to 2030 of 11,300 new homes (this is now being re-examined in light of the inspector's initial conclusions)
- Sets clear policies that will guide planning decisions on planning applications on issues such as affordable housing provision, the protection of open space and ensuring new development is built to high standards of design and sustainability
- Sets out the infrastructure requirements for the city up to 2030 and indicates how these will be provided
- Indicates how the plan will be implemented and shows how progress will be monitored.

The impacts of the changes to the LDF will be monitored and reflected in the School Organisation Plan as appropriate. As new homes are built it is essential that the availability of school places is taken into consideration.

## Home to School Transport

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. The local authority has certain statutory duties in relation to home to school transport for 'eligible' children, i.e. those who live beyond defined statutory distances from school and children who by reason of their SEN, disability or mobility problem could not reasonably be expected to walk to school.



In an urban area such as Brighton & Hove with a well developed and well regarded public transport network most children are able to get to school with little difficulty using commercial services. In a small number of cases the Council funds supported services to specific schools where it would otherwise be difficult for children to get to school using the commercial network.

The network of public transport services will need to be kept under review as the number of secondary age pupils increases. The aim would be to work closely with public transport providers to ensure that the commercial network develops to reflect increased demand for the service.

#### Local policy on separate infant and junior schools

Since the establishment of Brighton & Hove as a unitary authority in 1997 a number of 'pairs' of separate infant and junior schools have been converted to all through primary schools, either through the merger of the two schools such as at St Luke's, Moulsecoomb, Balfour and West Blatchington Primary Schools or through changing the age range of schools such as Benfield Junior, Portslade Infant and St Nicolas CE Junior Schools. There remain seven 'pairs' of separate infant and junior schools in the city.

Brighton and Hove City Council has had a policy of supporting the amalgamation of infant and junior schools where appropriate since 2000. Protocols were established following a Scrutiny Panel and report recommendations following the merger of three pairs of infant and junior schools in 1999. The protocol was revised in the light of the creation of the Children and Young People's Trust and its publication of the Primary Strategy for Change. The revised protocol was adopted at the Cabinet Member meeting on 30th July 2008 for implementation in September 2008.

The policy has not been revised since 2008. The practice has continued to be that whenever there is an opportunity to do so, normally when the head teacher of one of the schools is to leave, there is a discussion with both governing bodies about whether there would be benefits for children if the separate schools were to become a single primary school. Each case is considered on its merits. Where it is decided not to consider further the question of amalgamation or change of status, the opportunity is nevertheless taken to explore with both schools whether there are ways in which partnership working and transition arrangements for children can be strengthened.

It is not proposed to change this policy at this stage.

#### Consultation and communication

This School Organisation Plan, if approved by the Council, will be shared with schools and their governing bodies and will be placed on the Council's website. It will be the base document for the work of the Cross Party School Organisation Working Group and of the work with head teachers and others in

further development of the strategy for securing sufficient school places, especially for the secondary sector. The Plan will be kept under review and there will be reports to the Children and Young People Committee when further updates to the Plan are required.

There is a statutory duty to consult on any significant changes to the size, age range or character of an existing school. The definition of significant and the processes to be followed are set out in statutory guidance which local authorities (or sponsors in the case of academies and free schools) must follow. On 28 January 2014 the DfE published new guidance which simplifies the previous guidance and in some respects reduces and/or shortens consultation requirements.

In particular, the statutory process for expanding a school no longer includes a specified consultation period prior to publication of the statutory notice. The guidance states that there is a strong expectation on schools and local authorities to consult interested parties and to consider the timing of any consultation to avoid school holidays. The publication period for a statutory notice is now four weeks for all types of proposal, whereas previously there were some changes that had a four week publication period and some that had a six week publication period. The period for a decision to be reached following the end of a statutory notice period remains two months.

In most other respects, the new guidance requires good practice which Brighton & Hove has already adopted, such as the publication of proposals on the Council's or the sponsor's website. However, the presumption for Free Schools and Academies is strengthened, with a specific section in the guidance about expanding on to an additional site. Proposers are now required to consider whether this is genuinely a change to an existing school or whether in fact there should be a competition for the development of a new school.

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