

Subject:	Proposed Expansion of Saltdean Primary School to Three Forms of Entry from September 2015: outcomes of consultation		
Date of Meeting:	21 July 2014		
Report of:	Executive Director of Children's Services		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Michael Nix	Tel: 29-0732
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Ward(s) affected:	Rottingdean Coastal		

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

- 1.1 It is proposed that Saltdean Primary School expands by one form of entry to become a three form entry primary school from September 2015.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to report on the outcome of consultation on this proposal and to seek approval to proceed to the next stage of the statutory process, which is the publication of Statutory Notices.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To note the responses to the consultation undertaken regarding the proposal in 1.1 above.
- 2.2 To agree to the publication of the required Statutory Notices to progress this proposal.
- 2.3 That following the statutory notice period the matter is further considered at the meeting of the Children and Young People Committee on 13th October 2014 for a final decision.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 There is a need for more primary school places in the Saltdean area of Brighton & Hove. Saltdean Primary School is currently two forms of entry but in each of the last two years (2013 and 2014) it has been necessary to add an additional 'bulge' reception class in order to accommodate all children living within the area. Because of the location of Saltdean, the nearest alternative schools where there are spare places would be over three miles away for children living there.
- 3.2 East Saltdean lies outside the city boundary within East Sussex. However, Saltdean residents regard themselves as a single community and traditionally all Saltdean children who wish to do so have been able to attend Saltdean Primary School. Under the statutory School Admissions Code, authorities are not

permitted to take their boundary into account in allocating places. Because of this, as the Council's policy for primary admissions is based on distance from home to school, without additional places it could arise that children living in East Sussex were allocated a place while Brighton & Hove children were not.

- 3.3 East Sussex County Council officers have been consulted on the availability of places in the closest schools east of Saltdean, in Telscombe Cliffs and Peacehaven. They have confirmed that there is a shortfall in places in this area also and that Saltdean children would be most unlikely to be allocated places there.
- 3.4 If approved, this expansion will require new accommodation to be provided, including seven new classrooms and improvements to the hall and other social spaces. The opportunity is being taken to design a scheme which will link the existing buildings, which were previously two separate schools. £2.5m has been allocated in the capital programme to fund this project and initial designs have been discussed with senior staff and governors.
- 3.5 The Governing Body has confirmed that it supports the proposed expansion.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 One alternative would be to secure a new one form entry primary school. This would be significantly more expensive as not only would a site need to be purchased but additional school infrastructure would need to be provided for a whole new school. The Council does not own a suitable site itself in the area. The only known site which might be suitable is the former St Aubyn's School in Rottingdean, which is outside the main area of search. The main building on this site was not originally designed as a school and is listed. As a consequence it would be difficult to develop as a modern primary school.
- 4.2 At its most recent Ofsted inspection Saltdean Primary School was judged to be good and it is popular with local parents. There are therefore strong and valid educational reasons for expanding this school rather than to secure a new school.
- 4.3 Another alternative would be to allocate places in other schools to some children from Saltdean. For the reasons set out in paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3 this is considered an unacceptable alternative.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The consultation document (Appendix 1) was issued on 7th May 2014. It was published online and was circulated to the parents, staff and governors of Saltdean Primary School and to Heads of nearby schools and nursery settings in the area. It was also circulated to local Councillors.
- 5.2 As part of the public consultation process a public meeting was held on 20th May 2014 at Saltdean Primary School. The meeting was noted and a copy of the notes is included as Appendix 2 to this report.

- 5.3 This initial stage of the consultation came to a close on 30th June 2014. The responses to this consultation exercise have been collated and analysed and are shown at Appendix 3 to this report.
- 5.4 In summary 21 responses were received of which 13 were in support of the proposal and 8 opposed. Concerns were raised about planning issues and the need to retain existing play areas. Other respondents mentioned parking and traffic congestion. Four parents were apprehensive about changes to the personal ethos of the school. One respondent suggested that a new school should be provided.
- 5.5 Concerns raised at the public meeting included whether a large school could be as successful as Saltdean is now, whether a hall large enough for the whole school would be provided, and access and parking issues. Parents also saw sport as strength at the school and wished to be assured that playing field area would not be lost.
- 5.6 Councillors can view the individual responses by making contact with Roz Scott, Room 312, King's House, extension: 0736.
- 5.7 Subject to the decision of the Committee, it is proposed to publish the Statutory Notice at the beginning of September 2014. A draft Notice can be found at Appendix 4.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The small number of concerns raised in relation to this proposal can mainly be addressed through the design and planning processes for the extension, while the positive commitment of the school's senior leadership and governing body can be expected to ensure that the quality, ethos and popularity of the school can be sustained.
- 6.2 There are no realistically achievable or acceptable alternatives to the expansion of Saltdean Primary School, without which it is forecast in excess of 20 children from the Saltdean community each year could find themselves allocated places in schools many miles away, outside their local community.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 There are no direct implications as a result of the recommendation for publication of the statutory notice. Only if a decision is agreed to extend the intake of the school will there be any revenue and capital financial implications.

Finance Officer Consulted: Andy Moore

Date: 07/07/14

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 If it is agreed to proceed with the proposed expansion of the school it will be necessary for the Council to publish statutory notices in accordance with section 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and associated regulations.

Following publication there will then follow a period of four weeks during which any person or organisation can submit comments on the proposal to the Council to be taken into account when a decision is made.

At the end of the representation period a decision on the proposed expansions will need to be taken within two months.

Lawyer Consulted: Serena Kynaston

Date: 07/07/2014

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 There are no equalities implications arising from this proposal. The City Council as admissions authority must treat all applications openly and fairly in accordance with the statutory School Admissions Code.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 There are no sustainability implications arising from this proposal. Children will be able to attend a local school as now, rather than travel long distances to other schools. The building extension will be completed to high sustainability standards and will not impact to any significant extent on the large amount of green space available to the school.

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.5 None

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Consultation document
2. Notes from the public meeting held on 20 May 2014
3. Analysis of responses to the consultation document
4. Draft Statutory Notice

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. Individual responses to the consultation can be viewed by Members in Room 312, Kings House – please contact Roz Scott, extension: 0736

Background Documents

1. None