

Subject:	Amalgamation of Hangleton Infant and Hangleton Junior Schools		
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:	Hangleton & Knoll		

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

- 1.1 It is proposed that Hangleton Infant and Junior Schools amalgamate to become a three form entry, all through primary school.
- 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 referred back to the meeting of the Children and Young People Committee on 13th October 2014 for a final decision.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Brighton & Hove City Council has had a policy, as set out in its Protocol for the Creation of an All-through Primary School, of supporting the amalgamation of infant and junior schools where appropriate since 2000. This policy was reaffirmed in the new School Organisation Plan 2013 – 2017 adopted by the Council at its meeting on 27 March 2014. The Protocol states that the Council will consider merging linked infant and junior schools when the Headteacher of one of the schools leaves. Each case for possible amalgamation is considered on its merits and any proposals for change are subject to public consultation. The consultation paper (Appendix 1) sets out the main reasons for this policy.
- 3.2 This proposal has come forward now because the Head Teacher of Hangleton Junior School is leaving to take up another headship elsewhere. At present Hangleton Infant and Junior Schools operate as separate institutions within the same building and on the same site, each with its own headteacher, staff and

governing body. The majority of children transfer from the Infant School to the Junior School at age 7+.

- 3.3 Both schools have recent, positive Ofsted judgements, the Junior School being 'good' and the Infant School 'outstanding'.
- 3.4 In accordance with the Council's Protocol, the Council has therefore discussed the future arrangement for Hangleton Infant and Junior Schools with the two governing bodies. The two schools already work very well together and have developed several joint policies, both in the interests of pupils and in anticipation of a possible future all through school development. Both governing bodies in response to the consultation have confirmed that they support the proposal that the two schools should amalgamate.
- 3.5 The proposal is to create a three form entry community primary school for pupils aged 4–11 years by closing Hangleton Junior School and extending the age range of Hangleton Infant School. This should in no way be seen as a 'takeover' of one school by the other. It is the legal means by which a single primary school would be achieved and both schools would work together as equal partners in bringing it about. The Head Teacher of the Infant School would continue as the Head Teacher of the primary school.
- 3.6 A draft Statutory Notice can be found at Appendix 4. If the recommendation of this report is approved, it is proposed to publish the Notice at the beginning of September.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 The alternative option would be for the two schools to continue to operate as separate infant and junior schools. The Council's policy is based on sound educational and organisational reasons and the rationale for the amalgamation has been strongly supported through the consultation.

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 Hangleton Infant and Junior Schools and to Heads of nearby schools. It was also circulated to local Councillors.
- 5.2 As part of the public consultation process a public meeting was held on 3rd June 2014 at Hangleton Junior 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 ended 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 169 responses were received of which 164 were in favour of the proposal and 5 were against the proposal.

- 5.5 Those in support of the proposal commended the very effective staff team of both schools and welcomed the fact that the Head Teacher of the Infant School would continue in post in the primary school. Practical concerns were raised about the need for a common timetable and a nursery. The overwhelming majority of respondents agreed that an amalgamated school would be in the best interests of the children and their families. It would provide an opportunity for both schools to spread and share best practice and ensure continuity in the standards of teaching.
- 5.6 The 5 responses opposed to the proposal raised concerns about the impact on the Head Teacher, staff and ultimately children of a larger school, as well as the disruption caused by any refurbishment of the building.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Public consultation about the amalgamation of Hangleton Infant and Junior Schools has shown that there is overwhelming support from parents, staff and governors for the proposal to amalgamate the two schools. The proposal is in accordance with the Council's policy, most recently affirmed in the School Organisation Plan 2013 – 2017.
- 6.2 Councillors can view the individual responses by making contact with Roz Scott in room 312, King's House, extension: 0736.

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 close one of the schools and extend the age range of the other will there be any financial implications.

Finance Officer Consulted: Andy Moore

Date: 03/07/14

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 In order to achieve the proposed amalgamation it will be necessary to close Hangleton Junior School and extend the age range of Hangleton Infants School to cater for pupils aged from 4 to 11. Statutory notices will need to be published in accordance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006, as amended, and associated Regulations. Following publication of the notices there will be a period of 4 weeks during which any person or organisation can submit comments on the proposal to the Council. At the end of the representation period a decision must be made on the proposal within 2 months.
- 7.3 It is intended that if the two schools amalgamate this should take effect in January 2015. The deadline for expressing preferences for an infant/primary school place is 15 January 2015. In order to provide parents with the fullest possible information regarding the possible change and to avoid a potential breach of the School Admissions Code it is important that the final decision on the proposal is published in good time before the deadline for applications. The recommendation does not allow for a decision to be made in time to be included

in the admissions booklet for 2015/16, due for publication in August 2014. However the admissions booklet can alert parents to the prospect of a decision being made at the Children and Young People Committee meeting in October 2014. It is recommended that in the event that the proposal is agreed every effort is made to ensure that parents are aware of the new arrangement so that they are given the option of including the newly created primary school when expressing a preference.

Lawyer Consulted: Serena Kynaston

Date: 07/07/2014

Equalities Implications:

- 7.4 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:

- 7.5 There are no sustainability implications arising from this proposal.

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.6 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

