



Brighton & Hove

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

PROPOSED EXPANSION OF SOMERHILL JUNIOR SCHOOL TO FOUR FORMS OF ENTRY FROM SEPTEMBER 2011

- inviting you to have your say -

Why are we consulting you?

This document is published by Brighton and Hove City Council and is intended as a basis for consultation with governors, staff, pupils, parents and other interested groups about a proposal to expand Somerhill Junior School to four forms of entry.

This document sets out the reasons for the proposal, identifies the issues for consideration and explains the arrangements for consultation. At the end you will find details of a public meeting to which you are invited and a reply slip for you to let us know what you think. There is also some information about what happens after consultation.

Some background facts

Brighton and Hove City Council has a legal requirement to provide sufficient school places for all school age children in the city. School places should be provided in such a way that parents and pupils can access a local school wherever possible.

The current position

Somerhill Junior School is a highly successful and popular school in Somerhill Road in the heart of Hove immediately adjacent to Davigdor Infant School. It caters for children primarily living in the BN3 1, BN3 2 and BN3 3 postcode areas of the city. Apart from Davigdor Infant School the nearest community primary phase schools to the east are Stanford Infant and Junior Schools and to the west are West Hove Infant and Junior Schools. Also to the west is St Andrews, a Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary school.

Over the last few years there has been year on year growth in the number of pre-school age children registered with General Practice

(GP) Surgeries in the city. This increase seems particularly acute in the area of the city served by Somerhill Junior School. It is anticipated that this situation is going to continue. Information on GP registration data shows that the number of children registered in this part of the city has increased from 150 in 1999 / 2000 to 350 in 2006/2007.

It is recognised that not all of these children will enter the maintained education sector, some will opt to attend church schools or private school, it is also recognised that parents of pre school age children tend to be most geographically mobile in the first four years of a child's life. However even taking these figures into account the increase in the number of pre school age children in this part of the city is significant.

The Council has a statutory duty to provide a maintained school place for any child that wants one. We are committed to working with schools to make them centres for community learning, and supporting them in meeting the wider needs of the community by engaging social services, health, the police, and the voluntary sector. For this to be successful it is important that children can access a primary school that is local to their home.

What is proposed?

The proposal is to expand Somerhill Junior School to a four form entry school with a yearly intake of 120, an increase of 30 places per year.

To support the expansion of the school there will be an extension of the school premises that will be funded by a combination of the Primary Capital Programme funding, the schools Devolved Formula Capital and other Council capital funding. This extension will provide additional classrooms to accommodate the extra pupils. There will also be some internal remodelling and refurbishment to provide accommodation that will better fit the needs of current teaching and learning and the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum.

What might be the advantages of expanding the school to four forms of entry?

Expanding the school by one form of entry (an additional 30 places each year) will ensure that more families can access their local school. This means that children will be able to attend school with friends that they have made in the Infant school, parents will not have to travel long distances to deliver their children to school and extended services offered by the school can be tailored to meet the needs of the whole community.

What might be the disadvantages of expanding the school to four forms of entry?

A concern often put forward regarding expansion is that larger schools can be more stressful for the pupils and that staff will not be able to get to know every pupil. Parents are often concerned that the educational outcomes for their children will not be as good in a larger school. Brighton & Hove currently has 6 infant and junior schools that are four form entry schools (the size now proposed for Somerhill Junior School), 3 of these schools have been graded as outstanding in their most recent Ofsted inspections. A further 2 schools have been graded as good and one is expected to achieve outstanding at their next inspection. This suggests that outcomes for children are not necessarily affected by the physical size of the school.

Views of the Governing Bodies

The governing body of Somerhill Junior School has been consulted prior to taking the decision to hold a public consultation. The initial view of the governing body was that providing an additional form of entry at the Junior school would create too large a school with an over demand put on existing facilities. They were also concerned that the school's present high standards may be negatively affected. However they are aware that the proposal could benefit the increasing number of parents and pupils of the community served by the school.

The Governing Body of the Infant School has already agreed to consult on their expansion by one form of entry. This process has now progressed to the statutory consultation stage which will run in parallel with Somerhill should this be agreed.

The views of the governing bodies will be finalised in light of the consultation results.

Consultation arrangements

This consultation will run in parallel with the school's action plan for engaging staff, pupils and parents enabling these groups to have a fair and appropriate input to the consultation process.

If, having read this document, you would like to comment on the proposals, there are several opportunities for doing so:

- You should complete and return (either to the school or Kings House) the reply slip included in this document.

- You can send a letter to the Assistant Director Central Area and School Support, Kings House, Grand Avenue, Hove BN23 2SR. Please mark your letter for the attention of Gil Sweetenham
- In the interests of economy, letters will not be acknowledged or responded to.

- **Replies must be received by 10 April 2009**

- You are welcome to attend the **Public Meeting** which has been arranged for:

Date: 2 April 2009

Time: 7pm

Venue: Somerhill Junior School

- At this meeting parents and others will have the opportunity to put forward their views. Officers from the Children and Young Peoples Trust will be present to clarify points of detail.

The next stage

All of the views put forward during the consultation stage will be reported to the Cabinet Member for the Children and Young Peoples Trust. This will allow an informed decision to be made regarding progression to the next stage in the process.

If it is decided to move ahead with the proposal the next stage is the issuing of a Statutory Notice detailing the proposal. The notice will be in force for a period of four weeks during which time objections to and comments on the proposal may be made by any person or group. Details of how to make an objection or comment will be incorporated within the Statutory Notice.

The Council is empowered to make the decision on whether to implement the proposal contained in the Statutory Notice but in doing so has to take account of guidance issued by the Department of Children Schools and Families. Any comments or objections have to be considered as part of the decision making process. The Final decision regarding this proposed change will be made by the Cabinet Member for the Children and Young Peoples Trust.

The proposals set out in this document are put forward as a basis for consultation only. It is stressed that **no decisions have yet been made** and that none will be made until consultations have been completed and all views carefully considered by Brighton and Hove City Council.

The Children and Young Peoples Trust major objective is to ensure the outcome of this consultation has local support and is in the best interests of pupils in Brighton and Hove.

DO PLEASE LET US KNOW YOUR VIEWS

Gil Sweetenham

Assistant Director, Central Area and School Support
Brighton and Hove Council 01273 293433

Table 1 – Current and forecast rolls for Somerhill Junior School and surrounding schools

		Forecast Rolls assuming proposal implemented						
		Capacity Range	Admission Numbers	Spring 08	Jan 09	Jan10	Jan 11	Jan 12
Somerhill School	Junior	243-270	120	381	379	380	380	480
Stanford School	Infant	243-270	90	270	269	269	270	270
West Hove School	Infant	291-324	120	259	358	360	360	360
Davigdor School	Infant	318-354	120	270	300	330	360	360
Stanford School	Junior	314-349	93	364	362	370	372	372
West Hove School	Junior	432-480	128	493	495	492	500	500

If you require any further copies of this document please request them by ringing 01273 293474 or emailing marie.chesham@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Address for this returning this document:
Marie Chesham Brighton & Hove City Council
Room 320, King's House, Grand Avenue
HOVE, BN3 2ZZ

Please return by 10 April 2009

All responses will be treated confidentially
Thank you for your assistance in our review

The following timetable is proposed:

Publication of Consultation Document	26 February 2009
Public Consultation Meeting	2 April 2009
Last date for responses	10 April 2009
Report back to Cabinet Member for the Children and Young Peoples Trust	19 April 2009
Issue Public Notice	1 May 2009
End of public notice period	29 May 2009
Decision by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young Peoples Trust	6 July 2009

Provisional Opening 1 September 2011

The Councillors for the area are:

Goldsmid Ayas Fallon-Khan, Paul Lainchbury, Melanie
Davis
Brunswick and Adelaide Paul Elgood, David Watkins
Central Hove Jan Young, Averil Older

Please Note: Apart from the public meeting on 2 April 2009 which will be held at the school, all other meetings are held at Hove Town Hall. For the exact times, please contact Marie Chesham on telephone number:

01273 293474

RESPONSE FORM

Please return no later
than
10 April 2009

To: Gil Sweetenham
Assistant Director Central Area
And School Support
Kings House

Tel: (01273) 293433

Fax: (01273) 293596

Proposed Expansion of Somerhill Junior School by one form of Entry

Name

Address

(Please tick as appropriate) I am:

The parent of a pupil:

I support the proposal

A member of staff:

A school governor:
(please state which school)

I do not support the proposal

Other interested party:
(please state which)

My comments are as follows: *(please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)*

