

Subject:	Possible relocation of West Hove Infant School (Connaught Road site)		
Date of Meeting:	13 September 2021		
Report of:	Executive Director Families, Children and Learning		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Richard Barker	Tel: 01273 290732
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

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

- 1.1 The report seeks approval for a public consultation to be undertaken to consider the possible relocation of the West Hove Infant School (Connaught Road) classes to the Hove Junior School (Holland Road) site.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the committee agrees to a public consultation on the proposal to relocate the West Hove Infant School (Connaught Road) classes to the Hove Junior School (Holland Road) site with effect from January 2022.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 West Hove Infant School is currently a 6-form entry school located on two sites. The Portland Road site has accommodation for four forms of entry and is predominantly full. The Connaught Road site has capacity for a further four forms of entry, but the Published Admission number is currently two forms of entry.
- 3.2 The governing body of West Hove Infant School have been concerned about the financial impact on the school's budget of maintaining the current provision at Connaught Road for a period of time. Especially as they have encountered a reduction in the number of parents making applications to the school and an increase in parents opting to move their children mid-year when places at other primary schools have become available.
- 3.3 The governing body have identified that parents make a choice to move their children from the school not because of the quality of education their children receive but the logistical issues of the linked infant and junior school sites being some distance apart.
- 3.4 The governing body have requested that the council consider the relocation of the Connaught Road pupils to the Holland Road site to address the negative impact on the school's budget of the current arrangement.
- 3.5 Since discussions began, the governing bodies of both West Hove Infants and Hove Junior schools have agreed to federate. The Hove Learning Federation will

be created on 10 September and will be one governing body responsible for both schools. Both governing bodies support the proposal to relocate to one site and this change to governance does not affect the proposals being made.

- 3.6 Hove Junior School is currently a 7-form entry junior school. There are four forms of entry at the Portland Road site and a further 3 forms of entry at Holland Road, although the site has the capacity to admit 4 forms of entry.
- 3.7 The Holland Road site was designed as a 4-form entry junior school which means it has 16 classrooms and a net capacity of 480 pupils, the table below shows the number of pupils in both the infant and junior schools at the present time which totals just 408.
- 3.8 If this proposal were to proceed and both the infant and junior elements were to co-locate on the Holland Road site, there would be the need for 14 classrooms to accommodate the 420 pupils which is less than the Holland Road site was initially designed to accommodate.
- 3.9 For admission arrangements, the two schools operate as linked schools with children in the infant school (Connaught Road site) having a higher priority for places at the junior school (Holland Road) than other children.
- 3.10 The number of existing classrooms at the Holland Road site and the availability of more outside space than is available at Connaught Road mean that a move to the current Hove Junior site is most appropriate.
- 3.11 Currently the numbers of pupils at West Hove Infant (Connaught Road) are:

Year group	Number of pupils
R	60
Year 1	48
Year 2	55
Total	163

- 3.12 Currently the number of pupils at Hove Junior School (Holland Road) is:

Year group	Number of pupils
Year 3	63
Year 4	47
Year 5	62
Year 6	73
Total	245

- 3.13 There are no proposals to make any changes to the accommodation at the Portland Road site.
- 3.14 [Statutory guidance](#) on making significant changes to maintained schools states that where the main entrance of the proposed new site for a school would be

more than two miles from the main entrance of the current school site the Local Authority can propose the transfer to an entirely new site following a set process.

- 3.15 The statutory process for making prescribed alterations to schools has four stages:

Stage 1 Publication – when proposals are launched

Stage 2 Representation - formal consultation which must be for 4 weeks

Stage 3 Decision - the Local Authority should decide a proposal within 2 months

Stage 4 Implementation – there is no prescribed timescale to when agreed alterations must happen.

- 3.16 It is calculated that the walking distance between the main entrances of West Hove Infant (Connaught Road) and Hove Junior (Holland Road) sites is 1.0 mile. The statutory process therefore does not apply. However, it is proposed that a consultation process is followed.

- 3.17 It is proposed that the consultation would start on 20 September and close on 25 October. Allowing a 5-week consultation period. A report will then come back to the Children Young People & Skills committee on 8 November 2021 with a summary of the responses received and a recommendation as to the next steps to take.

- 3.18 It is proposed that information events will be held during the period of consultation so that the proposals can be explained and any questions answered. In addition, the events will be an opportunity to receive comments from the public.

- 3.19 At the time of writing the report it is not clear whether these events will be held in person or online or a mix of both and will be dependent upon any restrictions in place regarding Covid. However, it is anticipated that events will be held at different parts of the day during the consultation period to allow for maximum participation from the public.

- 3.20 It is anticipated that events will be held on the following days at the times stated:

Wednesday 22 September	10:00
Thursday 23 September	18:00
Tuesday 28 September	13:30
Thursday 30 September	10:00
Wednesday 6 October	18:00
Thursday 7 October	13:30

- 3.21 It is recognised that this proposal is being made at a time when the future number of surplus primary school places in the city is a cause of concern. However, the need to consider a change to support the current financial position of West Hove Infant school is required. This does not mean that should a change be made; the school may not be affected by any future proposals put forward by the council.

- 3.22 Both Headteachers and governing bodies support these proposals and do not consider that a change of location will affect the provision of education that the

children receive. It is seen as an opportunity to enhance education delivery by providing a continuous learning provision from Reception through to Year 6 underpinned by a common ethos, vision and values.

- 3.23 It is expected that a move to the Holland Road site would require some minor changes to the outdoor space so that it is suitable for Reception aged children and some modifications to the existing internal space. Whilst the work is yet to be costed, it is not expected to exceed £100,000. This cost can be met by the education capital funding available.
- 3.24 If the consultation shows that there is support for the proposal the school will work with transport colleagues to update the School Travel Plan for the Holland Road site. The potential impact on the ongoing School Street road closure in place at Brunswick Primary School on Somerhill Road which prohibits general traffic at school drop off and pick up times will also be kept under review.
- 3.25 It is expected that the council's Health, SEN and Disability and Education & Skills services will be able to utilise the accommodation vacated at the Connaught Road site to better support pupils with additional needs and more details will be provided in due course.
- 3.26 It is not expected that the council will propose any change of use to the accommodation at Connaught Road.
- 3.27 There are no proposals to change the status of either West Hove Infant School or Hove Junior School. If changes are made the Holland Road site will accommodate classes of both schools on one site.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 This report seeks approval for a public consultation on proposals to relocate the West Hove Infant School (Connaught Road) classes onto the Hove Junior School (Holland Road) site.
- 4.2 If no change was proposed the governing body of West Hove Infant school have identified that the school budget would move into a deficit that they would struggle to clear without a significant impact on the education provision of pupils at the school. It can be expected that this will then create budget pressures in the junior school and a similar impact on the education provision in future years.
- 4.3 A desktop exercise has demonstrated that the Connaught Road site could not accommodate the pupils currently on the Hove Junior (Holland Road) site without significant capital investment that has not been allocated within the capital plan.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 This report seeks permission to undertake a public consultation on the proposals. Both governing bodies of West Hove Infant School and Hove Junior School support to the proposals to consider the re-location of the Connaught Road site.

- 5.2 A public consultation is proposed to run between 20 September and 25 October 2021. This will include a response form hosted on the council's website <https://consultations.brighton-hove.gov.uk/>.
- 5.3 In addition, there will be six public events scheduled at various times of the day between 22 September and 7 October. These will be an opportunity for the proposal to be discussed in more detail, answer any questions that people may have and allow for comments about the proposal to be captured.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The report proposes that a public consultation is undertaken to consider the re-location of the west Hove Infant (Connaught Road) site to the Hove Junior School (Holland Road) site with effect from January 2022.
- 6.2 Whilst the statutory guidance does not require a public consultation it is proposed that a 5-week community engagement event regarding these proposals is held between 20 September 2021 – 25 October 2021. A further report will come to the November CYP&S Committee providing an update on the outcome of the consultation and proposing next steps.
- 6.3 Both governing bodies are supportive of a proposal that it is expected will help to address the unfavourable budget position for West Hove Infant School forecast if the separate provision remains at the Connaught Road site. Which can be expected to transfer to the junior school over time.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The only costs associated directly with running a public consultation are officer time. The wider financial implications in terms of the benefit to the West Hove Infant School budget, and capital funding requirements are referred to in the body of this report.

Finance Officer Consulted: Steve Williams

Date: 02/08/21

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 Paragraph 14 of Schedule 2 of the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) Regulations 2013 provides that a Local Authority is only required to go through the statutory process to transfer a school to a new site if the main entrance of the new site is more than two miles from the main entrance of the current site. As the Connaught Road site and Holland Road site are one mile apart there is no need to go through the formal statutory process outlined in paragraph 3.12 above.
- 7.3 DfE Guidance "Making Significant Changes ("Prescribed Alterations") to maintained schools (2018) makes clear that when making changes outside of the statutory process LA's are nevertheless required to adhere to the usual requirements of public law and must (i) follow a fair procedure which includes

open and fair consultation with parents and other interested parties, (ii) act rationally, and (iii) take into account all relevant and no irrelevant considerations.

Lawyer Consulted: Serena Kynaston
Equalities Implications:

Date: 02/08/2021

- 7.4 The public consultation will seek to understand what implications there will be for current or future parents/carers of children who attend West Hove Infant School. The schools are linked and as such parents would expect to attend both the Connaught Road and Holland Road sites as part of their child's primary school education.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.5 The report proposes a consultation on a change that may reduce the journeys between the infant and junior school sites for families with children at both schools and staff who may need to attend both sites.

Brexit Implications:

- 7.6 There are no Brexit implications in relation to this report.

Any Other Significant Implications:

None