

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 60
Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Expansion of Balfour Junior School
Date of Meeting: 1 December 2008
Report of: Director of Children's Services
Contact Officer: Name: Gillian Churchill Tel: 29-3515
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Key Decision: Yes Forward Plan No. CYP6436
Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 As part of the Council's future development of Schools within the city it is proposed to expand Balfour Junior School by one form of entry.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to set out the background and rationale for this proposed expansion and to seek Cabinet Member endorsement to proceeding to the next stage of the statutory process, which is the publication of the required Statutory Notices.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To note and endorse the proposal to expand Balfour Junior School by one form of entry.
- 2.2 To agree to the publication of the required Statutory Notices to progress this proposal.
- 2.3 That the results from the statutory consultation process are referred to Cabinet Member Meeting on 2nd March 2009 for decision.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 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.

- 3.2 There are two Balfour primary phase schools adjacent to each other – Balfour Infant School and Balfour Junior School. Each school operates as a separate institution with its own head teacher, staff and governing body. Children remain in the Infant school until the age of seven, and then are able to transfer to the Junior School in accordance with the City’s admissions criteria. The majority of children wish to transfer from one school to the other in this way. However owing to an historical anomaly while the infant school is a four form entry school, the junior school is only a three form entry school. This means that around 25% of pupils at the infant school are unable to transfer to the junior school with their friends and peers.
- 3.3 The proposal is to expand the junior school so that it becomes a four form entry school with a yearly intake of 128 to match the four form nature of the infant school.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 The governing body of the junior school has been consulted as has the governing body of the adjacent infant school. The proposal was considered by the governing body prior to taking the decision to hold a public consultation. The initial view of both governing bodies was that it was a sensible and desirable proposal that would benefit the community served by both schools.
- 3.6 The views of the governing bodies will be finalised in light of the consultation, Governors will hold a special meeting at the end of the consultation period to determine their final views on the proposal.
- 3.7 In proposing the expansion of Balfour Junior School the following programme is to be followed.

Publication of Consultation Document	1st October 2008
Public Consultation Meeting	6th November 2008
Last date for responses	12th November 2008
Report back to Children and Young Peoples Trust Board	1st December 2008
Issue Public Notice	5 th January 2009

End of public notice period	2nd February 2009
Decision by the Children and Young Peoples Trust Board	2nd March 2009
Provisional Opening	1st September 2010

3.8 In order to achieve the opening date of the proposed expanded school in September 2010 the statutory notices must be published on 5th January 2009. The timetable will allow then allow full analysis of responses to the notice to be prepared and presented to the Cabinet Member Meeting on 2nd March 2009. The report to that meeting will seek the final decision on the proposal.

3.9 A copy of the draft statutory notice is attached to this report at Appendix 1.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 Following the key decision taken by the Director of Children’s Services and the CYPT Cabinet Member on 21st July 2008 to commence public consultation a document outlining the amalgamation process was issued to governors, staff, pupils and parents and carers of both Balfour Junior and Balfour Infant schools and copies were made available to any other interested parties. This consultation document is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

4.2 As part of the public consultation process a public meeting was held on 6th November 2008. This meeting gave parents and carers, governors and others to put forward their views.

4.3 This initial stage of the consultation came to a close on 12th November 2008. The responses to this consultation exercise have been collated and analysed and are shown at Appendix 3 to this report.

4.4 In summary 151 responses were received of which 146 were in favour of the proposal and 5 were against the proposal.

4.5 Those against the proposal cited the potential impact of this increase in size on other local primary schools as the reason they were opposed to the proposal. In addition to this, one objection listed in detail a number of objections including comment on the consultation, the cost of the expansion, concern about the need for additional junior places and the likely social mix of families attending the expanded school.

4.6 Analysis of existing pupil placements suggests that those who do not achieve a place at Balfour Junior School are distributed across a range of other schools. The Council believes the impact of this proposal on other local primary schools will be limited and anticipates that the present trend of rising primary aged pupil numbers in the city combined with potential new developments will compensate for the potential effect on other schools

4.7 The mix of pupils in primary schools generally reflect their local communities hence there is generally a narrower variation of social mix than that found within

secondary school cohorts. The DCSF particularly supports the expansion of popular and successful schools where possible to better provide for parental preferences.

- 4.8 Regarding the argument that there is no need for an increase in places within the City, this year has seen an increase in infant place provision to accommodate a significant rise in numbers within the Hove area. These have been temporary provisions prior to proposed permanent expansion and a desired new primary school in Hove.
- 4.9 The funding for the proposed expansion is from a combination of the Primary Capital Programme funding, the schools Devolved Formula Capital and other Council capital funding. The Primary Capital Programme will provide significant funding for a large number of primary schools within the city over the next fourteen years and enables the Council to address the practicalities of school place planning and parental wishes. The proposal to expand Balfour Junior School forms part of the wider strategy for providing school places across the City.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 Any implications for funding the additional floor area at Balfour Junior school will be met from the Individual School Budget (ISB), which may increase as a result of any additional pupils into the Authority as a result of the expansion. If no additional pupils come into the Authority then the additional funding Balfour Junior school will receive will come from within the existing ISB. Any capital costs arising from the proposal would have to be met from within the Education Capital Programme which includes streams such as the Primary Capital Programme, NDS modernisation and a contribution from the schools Devolved Formula Capital (DFC).

Finance Officer Consulted: Andy Moore

Date: 06/11/08

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 In order to achieve the proposed expansion statutory notices will need to be published in accordance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and associated regulations. There will then follow a period of 4 weeks within in which any person may make comment or objection to the proposal.

At the end of the publication period for the notice a decision will have to made within 2 months of the end of the publication period.

Layer Consulted: Serena Kynaston

Date: 07/11/08

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 Planning and provision of school places is conducted in such a way as to avoid potentially discriminatory admissions priorities or planning processes. The city council and voluntary aided school governing bodies must be mindful of bad practice as described in the Admission Code of Practice.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 Planning and provision of school places are intended, so far as it is possible, to provide pupils, parents and carers with local places where they have asked for them. This is subject to limitations in school capacity, the funding available and the priority order for capital development determined by the Council.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There are no implications for the prevention of crime and disorder arising from this report.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 There are no risk issues in terms of resources or risks to children as a result of this proposal.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 All planning and provision to for school places in the city should be operating on the basis of admission limits and admission priorities which have been the subject of broad consultation. The effective coordination of planning arrangements should lead to sufficient school places in all areas of the city and the removal of excess provision.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 The alternative option is to leave the schools as a three form entry school.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 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. This proposal will provide additional places where they are wanted by parents and carers.
- 7.2 The views of the parents and carers, staff, governors and pupils of the school expressed during the consultation have been considered.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Draft Statutory Notice
2. Consultation document for the proposed expansion
3. Responses to the consultation exercise.

Documents In Members' Rooms

1. Consultation responses

Background Documents

None