

Subject: Extract from the Proceedings of the Children & Young People Committee Meeting held on the 15 October 2012 – Options for Providing Additional School Places between September 2013 and September 2016

Date of Meeting: 25 October 2012

Report of: Monitoring Officer

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Wards Affected: All

Action Required of Council:

To receive the item referred from the Children & Young People Committee:

Recommendation:

1. That Council agrees to the publication of the updated School Organisation Plan 2012 to 2016 and Consultation Document by end of October 2012.

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE

**4.00 pm 15 OCTOBER 2012
COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL**

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: Councillor Shanks (Chair) : Councillor Buckley (Deputy Chair), Duncan, Gilbey, Mac Cafferty, Lepper, Pissaridou, Pidgeon, Simson and Wealls (Opposition Spokesperson)

Non Voting Co-optees: Chief Superintendent Bartlett, Sussex Police; Eleanor Davies, Parent Forum; Rachel Travers Amaze/Voluntary and Community Sector; Geraldine Hoban, Clinical and Commissioning Group; Alan Bedford, Local Safeguarding Children Board; Soaad Eldayok, Youth Council

PART ONE**20. OPTIONS FOR PROVIDING ADDITIONAL SCHOOL PLACES BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 2013 AND SEPTEMBER 2016**

- 20.1 The Committee considered a report of Interim Director of Children's Services setting out options for providing additional school places between September 2013 and September 2016. It was noted that a revised copy of the report had been circulated as a supplement and it was to this report which members needed to refer.
- 20.2 The Strategic Commissioner Planning and Contracts explained that extra classes were being added to many schools across the Country in order to cope with a rapid rise in the birth rate particularly in the South East. Official figures showed that an extra 450,000 places would be needed in primary schools in England by 2015. Brighton and Hove had identified a similar trend to other authorities and had been working in recent years to expand schools.
- 20.3 Current and projected pupil numbers for the city as a whole showed that there continued to be a need for additional permanent primary places in the city, particularly in the south, central Hove and on the Brighton/Hove border. Current and projected pupil numbers for the city as a whole showed that by 2016 secondary numbers would begin to exceed existing capacity. To meet the projected future growth in primary numbers the LEA needed to be looking to provide a minimum of 120 places by 2015 in Hove, and a further 30 places in the south of Brighton by 2014. To meet the projected future growth in secondary pupil numbers the authority should be looking to provide a minimum of 150 places by 2017. The report set out the options available to meet the increase in demand for pupil places in the city and asked the Committee for permission to formally consult on the following permanent expansions at :

2013

- The Connaught Building, West Hove Infants (from 3 FE to 4 FE)
- Stanford Infants (from 3 FE to 4FE);

2014

- St Mark's C.C. Primary (from 1 FE to 2 FE)
- Aldrington C.E. Primary (from 1 FE TO 2FE)

- 20.4 The report also recommended that should these consultations go ahead that consultations also take place with the linked Junior Schools
- Stanford Junior School (from September 2016)
 - Connaught Junior School (from September 2017)
- 20.5 The Strategic Commissioner Planning and Contracts explained that the LEA were also keen to expand a number of other faith primary schools and intended to continue its discussions with both the Anglican and Catholic Diocese.

- 20.6 The final recommendations in the report asked for agreement to continue to explore other potential opportunities with the DfE including possibilities for new primary and secondary schools and for the Committee to recommend to Full Council the publication of the updated School Organisation Plan and consultation document. All proposals would be dependent on capital funding being made available.
- 20.7 In answer to questions it was explained that the option of converting Hove Police Station into an extension to Connaught Primary school was still being actively pursued as were potential sponsorships e.g., Whitehawk Academy by City College. The Head of Capital Strategy and Development Planning explained that at present there was a shortfall of £5m. Permanent building works were dependent on full capital funding being achieved. Architect designed permanent extensions/buildings would be provided. It was not intended to provide temporary “portacabin” style structures.
- 20.8 Councillor Simson referred to the requirement placed on voluntary aided schools to provide 10% of the costs of works and enquired regarding arrangements made if schools were unable to meet that. The Head of Capital Strategy and Development explained that the LA did not always require voluntary aided schools to provide this sum citing the works carried out at St Nicholas School, Portslade as an example.
- 20.9 Councillor Pissaridou sought clarification that the buildings provided would be permanent extensions rather than temporary extensions/buildings. The Head of Capital Strategy and Development reiterated that dependent on the availability of funding all buildings would be architect designed permanent structures. There were no concrete plans as to design or siting at present but buildings were always designed as a coherent and complimentary extension to the existing, although precisely how they would be configured on site had yet to be determined.
- 20.10 Councillor Duncan enquired regarding the accuracy of the predictions given and whether they could be impacted by Government Policy in relating to funding to set up for free schools.
- 20.11 The Strategic Commissioner, Planning and Contracts explained that whilst making projections was not a precise science the data collected to date was very accurate and whilst the number of places required would reduce if further free schools/academies were created, arrangements needed to put in place to ensure that a sufficient number of places was created in the city. The LEA was ahead in its planning, but had a responsibility to plan for 5 years ahead in the knowledge that a significant number of school places would need to be created overall and in particular in those areas of the city where they were most needed.
- 20.12 Councillor Wealls enquired regarding the level of preliminary consultation which had taken place with schools, the level of further detailed consultation which would take place and whether there was a maximum size for a primary school. Councillor Wealls also referred to sites indicated in the School Organisation Plan e.g., Patcham Court Farm enquiring whether all of the sites

identified represented realistic options. The Strategic Commissioner explained that whilst initial consultations had taken place the breadth of consultation required by school organisation legislation was wide and included schools, parents and a number of others. There was no maximum proscribed size for a primary school what was important was the delivery of first class education. It was possible that the creation of additional free schools could change the focus of where parents wished to send their children to school. The potential sites identified represented a “wish list” and further exploration as to feasibility would be undertaken. Ultimately, some of them would be deliverable and some would not.

- 20.13 Rachel Travers, Amaze/Voluntary and Community Sector stated that parents were very concerned regarding the pressure on existing school places referring to that fact that many schools were unable to hold whole school assemblies and had to have staggered lunchtimes, this could be daunting for very young children first entering school, she stated that design solutions used, for instance, separate school entrances could be effective in making schools more welcoming. Ms Travers also enquired regarding how the needs of children with special educational needs (SEN) would be factored in to future provision. The Head of Capital Strategy explained that the amount of dining/outdoor amenity space to be provided had recently been reduced downwards by government and whole school lunch periods/assemblies were not a requirement, the area of play space to be provided per child had also been reduced recently. The provision of places at Special schools was sensitive and needed to be given careful thought. The Lead Commissioner, Schools, Skills and Learning explained that SEN provision was assessed annually on a needs basis to ensure that effective use was made of available provision.
- 20.14 Eleanor Davies, Parent Forum asked whether the Forum would receive information and be involved in the consultation process if agreed and it was confirmed that they would.
- 20.15 Councillor Gilbey enquired whether the proposed King’s school site in Portslade High Street would be 4 or 5 form entry, as information available about this matter appeared to be conflicting. The Strategic Commissioner Planning and Contracts stated information circulated (all arrangements in relation to the school yet to be confirmed and finalised), indicated that the school would admit 125 children in September 2013 with that figure rising to 150 by 2015.
- 20.16 Councillor Lepper enquired regarding the proposed architectural design arrangements and it was explained that the Council’s in-house team had an established track record of designing and managing school building projects which were cost effective and resulted in schemes which were fit for purpose and complemented the existing buildings on site; the recent works at Goldstone Primary School being an example of this.
- 20.17 Councillor Pissaridou enquired regarding the potential costs involved in rebuilding as opposed to extending on an existing site referring specifically to the Hove Police Station site. It was more expensive to build a new school than

to expand schools on existing sites. The Head of Capital Strategy and Development Planning explained the LEA investigations carried out had shown that the Police Station could be converted for use as a school. Expanding schools on their existing sites was generally cheaper than having to acquire new sites and then constructing a school from scratch.

20.18 **RESOLVED**

- (1) That the Committee notes the possible options for providing additional pupil places within the City and recognises that all proposals will be dependent on capital funding being made available;
- (2) That the Committee agrees that Officers will consult with schools and their communities on the proposal to permanently expand the following primary schools from September 2013 by one form of entry (FE) each;
 - The Connaught Building, West Hove Infants (from 3 FE to 4 FE)
 - Stanford Infants (from 3 FE to 4 FE)
- (3) That the Committee agrees that Officers will consult the school, their community and the Anglican diocese on the proposal to permanently expand the following primary school from September 2014 by one FE
 - St Mark's C.E. Primary (from 1 FE to 2 FE)
- (4) That the Committee agrees that Officers will consult with schools, their community and the Anglican diocese on the proposal to permanently expand the following primary school from September 2014 by one FE
 - Aldrington CE Primary (from 1 FE to 2 FE)
- (5) That the Committee agrees that Officers will consult with schools and their communities on the proposal to permanently expand the following junior schools, should their relevant infant school to expanded as proposed above by one FE each
 - Stanford Junior School (from September 2016)
 - "Connaught" Junior School (from September 2017)
- (6) That the Committee agrees Officers will consult with schools and their communities on the proposal to expand places at Hove Park School;
- (7) That the Committee recognizes that Kings School Free School (5 FE) is planned to open in September 2013 and that officers will assist the proposers in their search for a permanent site;
- (8) That the Committee agrees that Officers will continue to explore other potential opportunities for primary and secondary schools. This will require engagement with the Department for Education with regards to the future provision of new schools; and

- (9) That the Committee recommends to Council the publication of the updated School Organisation Plan 2012 to 2016 and Consultation Document by the end of October 2012.