



## **Brighton & Hove**

### **CONSULTATION PAPER**

#### **PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE AGE RANGE OF BLATCHINGTON MILL SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM COLLEGE FROM 11 TO 18 TO 11 TO 16 THUS REMOVING THE SIXTH FORM**

**- Inviting you to have your say -**

#### **Why are we consulting you?**

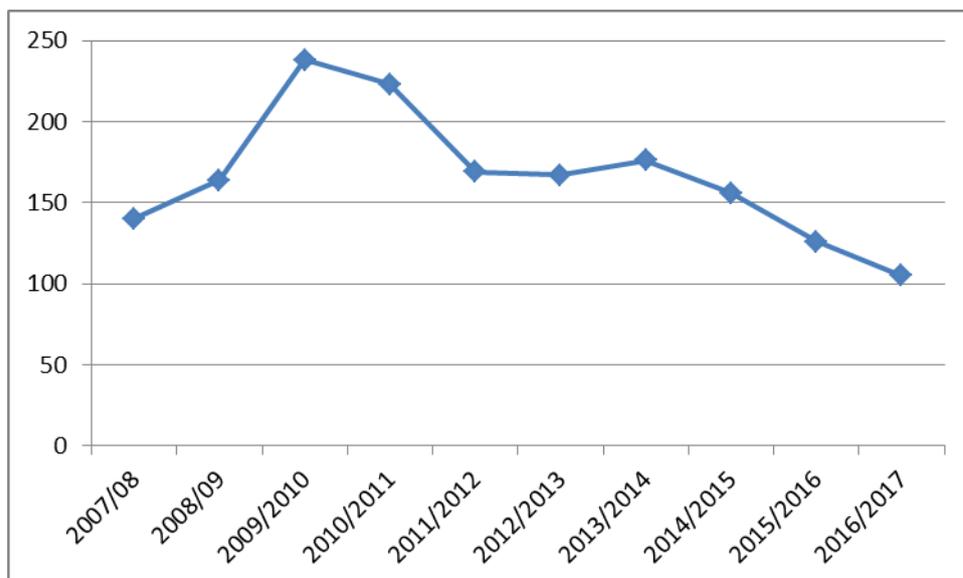
The council wishes to consult on a proposal to change the age range of Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College from 11 to 18 as it is at present to 11 to 16 thus removing the sixth form. The proposal, if implemented will be effective from August 2019 but there will be no admissions to Year 12 in September 2018. This consultation paper is published by Brighton & Hove City Council and explains the reasons for this proposal and the arrangements for consultation. At the end you will find a reply slip for you to let us know what you think. There is also some information about what happens after the consultation. The paper is being distributed to the schools' staff, pupils, governors and parents and other groups who may be interested in the proposal. It is also available on the Council' s website under the consultation portal.

This consultation is being conducted in accordance with the school organisation guidance which can be found by following this link <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools> published by the Department for Education in April 2016.

#### **Some background facts**

Education finances have been highlighted in the media over recent months. There has been a focus in recent years on the state of financial resourcing for post-16 where funding has declined. Within Brighton and Hove Local Authority the average size of the sixth form colleges is around 2500 students, while the average size of school sixth forms is approximately 200. The benchmark figures given for a financially viable Post-16 provision differ, but are generally considered to be in the range of 200-250 students as a minimum.

As a result economies of scale apply which means it is more expensive per student for schools to provide sixth form provision. The Department for Education recognises that sixth forms with less than 250 students are at risk of not being financially viable. Blatch six has always had the capacity to take 250 students but only twice in the past decade have numbers been any higher than 180, the intake of students is shown in the table below and details the gradual decline in numbers.



During both the Sussex Area Review and the Local Area Review, concerns were expressed about the viability of post 16 provision where numbers of students are below 200 students across the 6<sup>th</sup> form.

In March 2016, guidance was issued by the Department of Education which states: “ The Area Review encourages school sixth forms to collaborate to a greater extent to help drive efficiencies. Similar provision in sixth forms is often duplicated in relatively small geographical areas, when it could be delivered in a more joined up way. This may be particularly the case where sixth forms are very small, as some evidence raises concerns about costs, breadth of offer and outcomes for these providers.”

Over the past 20 years Blatchington Mill School has questioned students in the sixth form and Year 11 as to their choices. Studies have been completed using external companies as well as internal staff and the reality of the sixth form, as shown by the surveys is that;

- Students want to study courses that Blatch six is not able to offer
- Students like the social aspect and change of Post-16 environment of local colleges such as BHASVIC, Varndean, MET and other colleges further afield

Blatch six provision, with numbers as they currently stand, is not considered to be sustainable financially. The school needs to consider the consequences on the whole institution as well as on sixth form students when group sizes are not at the optimum for learning.

Changing the age range of the school from 11-18 to 11 to 16, will allow resources to be focused on improving further the outcomes and opportunities for Years 7 to 11, especially as there is currently a “ bulge” in secondary school numbers across the city. This bulge grows ever more in September 2018 through to 2022.

Taking into account the range of factors above, this consultation proposes that the sixth form at Blatchington Mill will close when the current 2017/18 Year 12 students complete their studies in August 2019 and that there will be no further admissions to Year 12 from September 2018.

### **The proposal**

Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College currently offers education to students aged 11-18. The popularity of the main school, for 11-16 year olds, and the outcomes achieved by these students are both very successful. The sixth form phase, Blatch six, of Blatchington Mill School however, struggles to recruit enough students to maintain a suitable course offer, and outcomes in academic subjects are not as good as those in vocational subjects

This consultation is with regard to the proposal to not recruit new sixth form students from September 2018 at Blatch six so that 16-18 education is no longer part of the Blatchington Mill School offer.

This will mean that the sixth form, Blatch six, would close in August 2019; when the current (2017/18) Year 12 students complete their studies. No students will be removed from courses as a result of this closure. All current courses running will be honoured until their end point. The end point is defined as when a student has completed the normal duration of study and been entered for any relevant examinations once. No course currently studied by 2017/18 Year 12 students is due to take any longer than 2 academic years to complete.

### **Alternative Local Provision**

Hove students will still have access to a school sixth form at Hove Park 6 and also in the offer at Newman College and PACA College. Equally across Brighton and Hove the offer from BHASVIC, Varndean College and MET (Brighton) is also popular.

**What will be the impact of these changes?**

No current student will be affected by the proposed changes. All current courses at Blatch six will be taught until their completion; whether this is in July 2018 or July 2019.

**What does this mean if a student is already in Blatch six?**

Students currently in Blatch six will be able to continue their courses. In the event that this proposal is accepted, in September 2018 there will be a Year 13 cohort at Blatch six, but no Year 12. There will not be the option for any student who studied 1 year courses in Year 12 to begin 2 year courses at Blatch six in September 2018. However these kinds of courses will be available at Hove Park 6 and so study could commence at Hove Park 6.

**Can I still apply for a place in Blatch six?**

It is proposed that no applications will be taken for new (to sixth form) students starting in Blatch six from September 2018.

**What alternatives has the school considered?**

The school has considered many alternatives over the decades. In the past joint offers have been explored with 3 other providers. This was not deemed viable, or popular – with geographical distance a prohibitive issue for shared provision outside Hove.

The school has on regular occasions combined Year 12 and Year 13 classes in an attempt to make numbers financially viable. The school has also taught two subjects together previously with a core of common lessons and then further “ break out” lessons on individual subjects. This is not considered to be sustainable, nor does it offer best quality teaching. The option for students to attend Hove Park 6 means that a school sixth form is still available locally for students studying post-16.

**What will be the impact on staff?**

Staff members have been consulted and will be able to continue to teach/work within the 11-16 school at Blatchington Mill.

**The Legal process**

The legal process for removing the sixth form from Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College is to change the age range of the school from 11 to 18 as it is at present to 11 to 16.

As with any process of change, the interests of staff must also be considered carefully, and all staff and their unions will be consulted as part of this consultation.

## **Consultation arrangements**

We have arranged a public meeting to give parents, carers and other local people the opportunity to hear more about the proposal and to ask questions. This meeting will be held at Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College (Nevill Avenue, Hove, BN3 7BW) on Monday 13 November 2017 at 6pm. Anyone with an interest in the proposal is welcome to attend this meeting. The meeting will be attended by council officers and members of the schools' senior leadership teams and governing body.

At this stage, this is a proposal for consultation and no decision has been made. Your views are important. If, having read this document, you would like to comment on the proposal, there are several ways you may do so:

- You can complete and return the reply slip included in this document (either to Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College or to the Local Authority at Hove Town Hall)
- You can send a letter to Richard Barker, Head of School Organisation, Families, Children and Learning (Education and Skills), Brighton & Hove City Council, 1st Floor, Hove Town Hall Norton Road, Hove BN3 4AH
- You can complete a form online on the consultation portal of the Council' s website at [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/blatchington-mill](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/blatchington-mill)
- You can email your response: please address your email to [educationandinclusion@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:educationandinclusion@brighton-hove.gov.uk).

### **Replies must be received by 18<sup>th</sup> December 2017**

In the interests of economy, letters and emails will not be acknowledged or responded to.

## **The next stage**

All the views put forward during the consultation stage will be reported to the Children Young People and Skills Committee at a meeting on 15 January 2018. The views of the governing body will also be made clear in the report. The Committee will decide whether to progress to the next stage in the process.

If it is decided to move to the next stage the council publishes a Statutory Notice which describes the proposal. The notice remains open 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 are explained in the Statutory Notice.

The council has the authority 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 for Education. 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 Children, Young People and Skills Committee at its meeting on 5 March 2018, taking into account the responses to the Statutory Notice and the views expressed by the governors of the school.

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 & Hove City Council and the governors of the school. The consultation is however not a referendum and in reaching a decision at each stage of the process the Children & Young People and Skills Committee will need to take all factors into account, including the responses to consultation.

The table below sets out the timetable for this process.

Date	Action
By 3 November 2017	Decision of Executive Director, Families, Children & Learning following consultation with the Chair of the Children, Young People & Skills Committee to proceed with consultation
6 November 2017	Commence Consultation
13 November 2017	Public meeting at Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College 6pm to 7pm
6 November to 18 December 2017	Consultation period
19 December to 6 January 2018	Analysis of responses received during the consultation
15 January 2018	CYPS to consider outcome of consultation and decide on whether to proceed to the publication of statutory notices.
19 January 2018	If agreed by CYPS, publication of statutory notices in Brighton & Hove Independent
19 January 2018 to 16 February 2018	Four week representation period following publication of statutory notices
5 March 2018	Decision on whether to proceed with closure at Children, Young People and Skills Committee

The Children Young People and Skills Committee' s major objective is to ensure the outcome of this consultation has local support and is in the best interests of children in Brighton and Hove.

The School has a catchment area which spans Hangleton and Knoll, Wish, Westbourne, Central Hove, Brunswick and Adelaide, Regency, Goldsmid, Hove Park and St Peter' s and North Laine wards. The councillors for these wards are:

<b>Hangleton and Knoll</b>	Cllrs Dawn Barnett, Tony Janio and Nick Lewry
<b>Wish</b>	Cllrs Robert Nemeth and Gary Peltzer Dunn
<b>Westbourne</b>	Cllrs Tom Bewick and Denise Cobb
<b>Central Hove</b>	Cllrs Claire Moonan and Andrew Wealls
<b>Brunswick and Adelaide</b>	Cllrs Phelim MacCafferty and Ollie Sykes
<b>Regency</b>	Cllrs Tom Druitt and Alex Phillips
<b>Goldsmid</b>	Cllrs Saoirse Horan, Amanda Knight and Jackie O' Quinn
<b>Hove Park</b>	Cllrs Jayne Bennett and Vanessa Brown
<b>St Peters and North Laine</b>	Cllrs Lizzie Deane, Louise Greenbaum and Pete West

## RESPONSE FORM

*Please return no later than  
18 December 2017*

To: Richard Barker, Head of School Organisation  
Families, Children and Learning (Education and Skills)  
Brighton & Hove City Council  
1st Floor, Hove Town Hall  
Norton Road  
Hove  
BN3 4AH

**Proposed Change of age range of Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form  
College from 11-18 to 11-16 years of age, thus removing the sixth form**

<b>Name and Address</b>	
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I support the proposal

I do not support the proposal

*Please add any comments here and on the reverse of this slip if needed:*

Signature and date:

Are you a: parent or carer / member of staff / governor / pupil / other?  
(Please indicate)