



**Brighton & Hove  
City Council**

**CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE &  
SKILLS COMMITTEE  
ADDENDUM**

**4.00PM, MONDAY, 7 MARCH 2016**

**FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, SHIP STREET, BRIGHTON**



# ADDENDUM

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Secondary School Admission Arrangements 2018/19</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>Children, Young People and Skills Committee 7 March 2016</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Director of Children's Services</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Richard Barker Head of School Organisation</b>	<b>Tel: 29-0732</b>
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

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

- 1.1 The City Council is the admission authority for maintained schools in the city. The admission arrangements for schools must be determined 18 months in advance of the academic year in which they will take effect. It is proposed that the admission arrangements for the city's secondary schools be revised from September 2018. This paper outlines the intention to undertake an engagement exercise with interested parties to elicit views on some of the proposals for change.
- 1.2 The special circumstances for non-compliance with Council Procedure Rule 3, Access to Information Procedure Rule 5 and Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) were that consideration of detailed proposals to put forward in the report were dependent upon the timing of the Department for Education (DfE) announcement in relation to Free School bids which was later than expected.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the committee notes the progress made by the Cross Party School Organisation Working Group (CPSOWG) and its commissioned task and finish group looking at secondary school catchment areas.
- 2.2 That the committee note the proposals being put forward to a public engagement exercise.
- 2.3 That the committee agree to the engagement exercise starting in March 2016 and running for 6 weeks ending on 22 April 2016.
- 2.4 That the committee agrees that following this public engagement exercise the CPSOWG should develop a final proposal which will be brought back to CYP&S committee with a recommendation that it should go out to formal consultation in the autumn 2016. The results of this formal consultation will be brought back to this committee for consideration before being referred to Full Council for final decision in January 2017.

### 3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION – Current situation

- 3.1 The City Council has a statutory responsibility to ensure there are sufficient school places for all children living in its area who require one.
- 3.2 There has been an increase in the number of primary aged pupils in the city over the last 6 years. These pupils are due to increase the numbers of secondary school age children in the next 5 years, beyond the current capacity of the schools in the city.
- 3.3 The secondary schools in Brighton and Hove can currently accommodate 2555 pupils in each year group.

School	Published Admission Number
Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College	300
Brighton Aldridge Community Academy	180
Cardinal Newman Catholic School	360
Dorothy Stringer School	330
Hove Park School	300
King's School	150*
Longhill High School	270
Patcham High School	215
Portslade Aldridge Community Academy	180**
Varndean School	270
Total	2555

\* King's School is expected to have a Published Admission Number of 150 for September 2018

\*\*PACA may increase its PAN to 240 for September 2018

- 3.4 Currently parents list up to three preferences on their application. Applications are considered against the admission criteria for each of the listed preferences. Places are offered up to the admission number at each school and parents are offered the highest possible preference is offered to each child.
- 3.5 Where there are more applications received than there are places available the five current admission priorities are used to decide who will get a place. These are:
- Children in the care of a Local Authority
  - Compelling medical or other exceptional reasons to attend the school
  - Sibling link
  - Catchment area
  - Other children
- 3.6 If a school is oversubscribed with children in any of the five priorities, the council will use an electronic random allocation system to decide which of the children within that priority should be offered the available places.

- 3.7 According to GP registration records, there are currently primary age cohorts of more than 3100 children in the city. Therefore there is a need to ensure there are additional places in the city's secondary schools.
- 3.8 An independent review of the methodology for forecasting secondary pupil numbers used by the council was commissioned by the CPSOWG to provide assurance on the key data that inform decision making about the provision of new secondary school places.
- 3.9 The report entitled Brighton and Hove City Council: Pupil Number Forecasting System - A report on the methodology and accuracy of the pupil number forecasting system used by Brighton and Hove City Council (Appendix 1) concluded that the approach used in Brighton and Hove is 'remarkably simple', 'operated by relatively senior officers alongside their wider responsibilities, using well understood generic software, without the need for specialist software or external partners'.
- 3.10 The report notes that 'the methodology currently used provides a good short term (three year) forecast for citywide primary numbers. The methodology used is less accurate for secondary forecasts, but improving as a result of recent changes to the approach'. There has been a tendency to over-estimate secondary numbers but this was less than 2% or around 40 pupils across the city for the most recent forecast that could be tested, at the time of the report being written.
- 3.11 The report comments that Brighton and Hove is unusual in not making forecasts at the individual school level, which take into account the effects of parental preference as well as other factors. Instead forecasts are made at planning area level for the primary phase and catchment area level for the secondary phase.
- 3.12 The report's conclusions were welcomed in that they confirm that primary forecasts are good and that secondary forecasts, while less accurate, are improving. The analysis states that there is overestimation in the secondary forecasts, but shows that this is not such as to remove the case for a substantial number of new secondary school places.
- 3.13 It has recently been announced that the University of Brighton (UoB) bid to open a new secondary school in the city has now moved to the pre-opening stage of the process. The DfE will work to try to open the school by the preferred date of September 2018, but the opening date cannot be agreed until the DfE have confirmed the site and assessed the time needed for obtaining planning permission and completing necessary building works or refurbishments. It is anticipated that the school will have a published admission number of 180 pupils.
- 3.14 With this additional number of places making a total of 2735 places in the city it is anticipated that there will be sufficient places available to accommodate the rising number of secondary aged pupils between now and 2026.
- 3.15 As previously stated, all the schools have published admission arrangements which explain how places will be allocated to pupils in the event of oversubscription, when there are more applications than places available.

- 3.16 In the case of Cardinal Newman Catholic School (CNCS) and King's School the schools are their own admission authority and set their own arrangements. The arrangements used by CNCS broadly prioritise children of the catholic faith and those attending feeder primary schools. King's School prioritise children who regularly attend church and then children who live closest to one of two location markers. One of these is the school's current location; the other is a location in Hove.
- 3.17 Both Brighton Aldridge Community Academy (BACA) and Portslade Aldridge Community Academy (PACA) are their own admission authority but have adopted the Council's admission priorities. It is anticipated that the new school will similarly adopt the Council's admission priorities.
- 3.18 Hove Park School and Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College, and Dorothy Stringer School and Varndean School are currently in dual catchment areas. The remaining schools each have their own single school catchment areas.
- 3.19 It is anticipated that with the large number of primary school children moving through to secondary schools some of the current catchment areas will contain more children than can be accommodated by the school(s) serving that catchment area i.e. the catchment areas will no longer 'catch'. It is also expected that the new school will need to have a catchment area. It has therefore been necessary to undertake a review of the current admission arrangements, including the catchment areas.

#### **4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION – The Challenge**

- 4.1 The CPSOWG requested that a task and finish working party of Members, Headteachers and Governors consider the options available for changing the admission arrangements. That group has been working since January 2015 on possible options to change the current catchment areas, seeking to ensure that any proposed new catchment areas will catch all children resident within them and are logical, fair and clear to understand.
- 4.2 The members of the working party are:
- Cllr Daniel Chapman (Chair)
  - Cllr Maggie Barradell
  - Cllr Vanessa Brown
  - Cllr Andrew Wealls
  - Cllr Alexandra Phillips
  - Cllr Amanda Knight
  - Dylan Davies, Principal, Brighton Aldridge Community Academy
  - Paula Sargent, Headteacher Patcham High School
  - Linda Dupret, Headteacher St Paul's CE Primary and Nursery School
  - Martin Andrews Chair of Governors, Longhill High School
  - Andrew Saunders, Governor, Patcham High School
- 4.3 In looking at changing the admission arrangements, the working party also wished to ensure that changes supported the desire to make sure all pupils in Brighton and Hove achieve and raise the attainment of children in the most



deprived circumstances. The group identified that one way of helping to do this is through enabling pupils that live in disadvantaged areas to gain a higher priority to attend a more popular school.

4.4 The considerations mentioned were augmented with the following aims:

- The arrangements should be equitable and transparent, easily understood and communicated effectively
- They should offer choice
- They should provide practicable options which are supported by the public transport network
- They should support a truly comprehensive system of secondary schools
- In a catchment area based system there should be confidence that catchment areas will 'catch'
- They should reflect the importance of ensuring that all schools can be successful and viable

4.5 The working party also sought to provide pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) with a higher priority in admission arrangements. It is proposed that the current oversubscription criteria are amended to give children eligible for FSM living within the city a higher priority than other children living in the catchment area. The working party supported the freedom offered within the School Admissions Code to give admissions priority to children eligible for a sub group of the Pupil Premium which was designed to encourage disadvantaged parents to increase their ambitions and consider schools they might not otherwise.

4.6 It is proposed that a quota of pupils in receipt of FSM will be given priority under this category. The size of the quota will vary for each school and will be determined as a percentage of each school's intake.

4.7 The working party recognised that it is not possible to propose admission arrangements which would meet their priorities and satisfy all of these aims and understood that should any change be proposed that there would be parents who would be dissatisfied. However the group have been seeking to plan strategically for the benefit of all of the city's pupils and provide clear and fair arrangements which accommodate the increasing numbers of secondary aged pupils.

4.8 The working party also considered the findings of the UoB report entitled Stakeholders' perspectives on the secondary school admissions' procedures in Brighton and Hove (Appendix 2) commissioned by the CPSOWG into admission arrangements. The report's recommendations provided the group with further factors to take into consideration.

4.9 The working party now wish to engage the city's residents, school communities, young people and other interested groups with its set of three proposals as detailed in Section 5. The views and suggestions from this engagement exercise

will help the working party develop the final proposal which will be recommended to CYP&S Committee to go out to formal consultation in the autumn.

- 4.10 Pupil projection datasets are based on the GP registrations of children in Brighton and Hove, supplied to us by the NHS (Appendix 3). This data set is used for this work because it allows us to model the pupil numbers for a longer range of years (currently up to 2026) than using the census data of pupils currently in the school system. This data does not provide actual addresses for children but provides us with a partial postcode that allows us to place the pupils in planning areas from which the number of children in catchment areas are compiled.
- 4.11 For the purposes of the design of catchment area maps, the data being used is based on school census data (Appendix 5). This is because it provides us with address data that allows us to better model the impact of some of the options under consideration. Professional judgment is required to modify the figures to take account of certain presumptions. As a result it is understood that there will not be a perfect correlation between the numbers used for each purpose, pupil forecasting is not an exact science.
- 4.12 Neither of these data sets account for planning proposals in Brighton and Hove regarding the number of new homes that could be built between now and 2030. Based on planning information, a forecast for the number of pupils that will be generated from the housing proposals are calculated (Appendix 4). Currently 13,200 housing units are proposed generating over 2,262 additional school age children across all year groups.
- 4.13 As with all the projections there are a number of assumptions made in relation to when proposals will be built, what type of housing that will be and what the 'child product' of each housing type will be. These are used to calculate the number of additional children who will require a school place and when that need will emerge.
- 4.14 As part of the City Plan agreed in February 2016 there are proposals for the development of new homes within Brighton and Hove. It is expected that some of these properties will bring additional children into the city for whom school places will be required. The council has forecast how many additional children are expected to require a place as a result of these developments. The plan outlines developments that could be built up to 2030. There are no definitive timescales for when developments will be built and this can rely on external factors outside of the council's control. Therefore the information in Appendix 4 is an approximation of when the additional homes will be built.
- 4.15 It can be shown that applying the methodology for the planning of school places in Brighton and Hove that there is a need for a minimum of 192 additional places by 2021 (Appendix 3). These additional school places, beyond the additional capacity provided by the new school are planned to be met through the available spare places incorporated into the planning, in part, as a contingency.

## **5. BACKGROUND INFORMATION – The Options**

- 5.1 The working party have put forward three proposals for consideration that change the current catchment areas for the city's schools, excluding King's School and CNCS. These options are explained in more detail in the following paragraphs 5.3 to 5.19.
- 5.2 The first option (option A) has single catchment areas. CNCS and King's School do not have catchment areas as they take pupils from across the city and beyond. The other two options (B and C) have more than one school in each catchment area. The number and combination of schools within each catchment area differs between options B and C.
- 5.3 Option A is illustrated in Appendix 6. The projected pupil numbers for each of the options are included in Appendix 5. This is a single school catchment area option. The option does not address the recommendation of the UoB report that the current geographical catchment area boundaries are redrawn to try to ensure all parents/students have a genuine choice of at least two secondary schools. However single school catchment areas provide parents and pupils with more certainty in their allocation of a school place. It would also provide more certainty that, should they live in the same catchment area, students were able to attend the same school as their close friends. The option also reflects that staff in primary schools considered it was particularly important for vulnerable children to remain within their friendship groups when transferring to secondary school. It would offer reasonable journeys to school for all children within the catchment area, allowing the opportunity for all pupils to attend pre and post school activities. The boundaries are easy to define and understand, such as post code boundaries or significant roads.
- 5.4 Option A produces a wide variation in the projected percentage of children in receipt of FSM attending each school. This could be reduced with the implementation of a FSM quota for each school, as part of changes to the admission arrangements.
- 5.5 Depending upon whether a sibling link is considered or not, there will remain spaces in each catchment area that will mean the option for some out of area pupils to be admitted to popular schools thereby creating additional places in less popular schools.
- 5.6 In the case of oversubscription, the impact of either a distance or random allocation tie-breaker is not likely to be significant. As stated, catchment areas will be drawn to ensure all pupils living in the area can be admitted to their catchment school. Should there be spaces at the school after the allocation of catchment area pupils, with a distance tie-breaker pupils living closest to the school will have priority. This will help to minimise the potential distance of a pupil's journey to school.
- 5.7 In regards to transport, most areas are under the three mile statutory walking distance. Pupils whose family have a low income receive support if the school's location is more than two miles from their home.
- 5.8 All catchment areas are designed to accommodate the children living in the area.

- 5.9 Option B is illustrated in Appendix 7. The projected pupil numbers for each of the options are included in Appendix 5. This is a multi-school catchment area option with two schools in most catchment areas and one catchment area with three schools in it. The option addresses the recommendation of the UoB report that the current geographical catchment area boundaries are redrawn to try to ensure all parents/pupils have a genuine choice of at least two secondary schools. However multi-school catchment areas would not provide parents and pupils with certainty in their allocation of a school place. It would also not provide certainty that, should they live in the same catchment area, students were able to attend the same school as their close friends.
- 5.10 In the case of oversubscription, the impact of either a distance or random allocation tie-breaker is likely to be significant. It is complex to model the impact of random allocation should a school be oversubscribed from within the triple school catchment area. Potentially pupils who live furthest from the school could be offered places at the school, increasing the transport liabilities of the council, although the laws of probability would suggest that at most only half the children would be at risk of this type occurrence. It would mean that children may have to travel past a closer school each day to attend the school allocated through random allocation. The impact of random allocation is likely to include an increase in the amount and length of school journeys when compared to the impact of a distance tie-breaker.
- 5.11 There are currently two dual school catchment areas serving Hove Park School and Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College and Varndean School and Dorothy Stringer School.
- 5.12 A distance tie-breaker is likely to create a priority effect around a popular and therefore oversubscribed school where only those close to a particular school might get a place. This was a concern before the current tie-break arrangements were introduced and the use of random allocation was seen as a way to avoid the effect at the time that catchment areas were introduced.
- 5.13 Transport issues may affect how parents rank their preferences. For example, at present there are no direct service buses between Coldean/Bevendean and Patcham High School and there is no safe walking route between Coldean and Patcham High School.
- 5.14 The variation in the percentage of FSM eligible pupils is more pronounced than option C with three schools in each catchment area. If the tie break used to allocate places in an oversubscribed school in the area was random allocation then it could be expected that more of a balance of FSM eligible children would be achieved at each school. However the principle of a quota could still be applied. Only in the Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College and Dorothy Stringer School catchment area is there predicted to be less FSM eligible children than combined places offered under the quota system. So only in this area would out of catchment FSM eligible children be expected to gain a place through this method.
- 5.15 Option C is illustrated in Appendix 8. The projected pupil numbers for each of the options are included in Appendix 5. This is a multi-school catchment area option with three schools in each catchment area. The option addresses the

recommendation of the UoB report that the current geographical catchment area boundaries are redrawn to try to ensure all parents/pupils have a genuine choice of at least two secondary schools. However multi-school catchment areas would not provide parents and pupils with certainty in their allocation of a school place. It would also not provide certainty that, should they live in the same catchment area, students were able to attend the same school as their close friends.

- 5.16 In the case of oversubscription, the impact of either a distance or random allocation tie-breaker is likely to be significant. It is complex to model the impact of random allocation should a school be oversubscribed from within a triple school catchment area. Potentially pupils who live furthest from the school could be offered places at the school, increasing the transport liabilities of the council, although the laws of probability would suggest that at most only half the children would be at risk of this type occurrence. It would mean that children may have to travel past a closer school each day to attend the school allocated through random allocation. The impact of random allocation is likely to include an increase in the amount and length of school journeys when compared to the impact of a distance tie-breaker.
- 5.17 A distance tie-breaker is likely to create a priority effect around a popular and therefore oversubscribed school where only those close to a particular school might get a place. This was a concern before the current tie-break arrangements were introduced and the use of random allocation was seen as a way to avoid the effect at the time that catchment areas were introduced.
- 5.18 Transport issues may affect how parents rank their preferences. For example, at present there are no direct service buses between Coldean/Bevendean and Patcham High School and there is no safe walking route between Coldean and Patcham High School.
- 5.19 In this model, the variation in the percentage of FSM eligible pupils is less pronounced across the catchment areas. If the tie-break used to allocate places in an oversubscribed school in the area was random allocation then it could be expected that a balance of FSM eligible children would be achieved at each school. However the principle of a quota could still be applied. There are more FSM eligible children in each catchment area than combined places under the quota system so no out of catchment FSM eligible children would be expected to gain a place through this method.

## **6. BACKGROUND INFORMATION – The Next Steps**

- 6.1 Various meetings are being scheduled to provide the public with an opportunity to have the proposals explained in more detail and to gather feedback on the proposals. There will be an opportunity for responses to be received through the council's online consultation portal and time has been set aside for officers to visit community groups and provide more details and gather responses. The working party is incredibly keen to ensure that families living in hard to reach communities are actively engaged in the proposals and respond with their thoughts and comments.
- 6.2 During the summer the working party will analyse the responses received and the conclusions drawn from that work. In the autumn of 2016 a final proposal will

be brought back to CYP&S Committee with a recommendation that it should go out to formal consultation in the autumn 2016. The results of this formal consultation will be brought back to this committee in January 2017 and then agreed at Full Council.

- 6.3 All admission authorities must determine (i.e. formally agree) admission arrangements every year, even if they have not changed from previous years and a consultation has not been required. Admission authorities must determine admission arrangements for entry in September 2018 by 28 February 2017.
- 6.4 Once admission authorities have determined their admission arrangements, they must notify the appropriate bodies and must publish a copy of the determined arrangements on their website displaying them for the whole offer year (the school year in which offers for places are made).
- 6.5 Local Authorities must publish on their website the proposed admission arrangements for any new school or Academy which is intended to open within the determination year and details of where the determined arrangements for all schools, including Academies, can be viewed, and information on how to refer objections to the Schools Adjudicator. Local Authorities must publish these details by 15 March 2017 for admissions in September 2018.
- 6.6 Following determination of arrangements, any objections to those arrangements must be made to the Schools Adjudicator. Objections to admission arrangements for entry in September 2018 must be referred to the Adjudicator by 15 May 2017.
- 6.7 Appendices 7 to 9 provide additional details of the three proposed models which are being put forward by the working group. It would be helpful to explain some of the assumptions that have been required to develop these proposals.
- 6.8 At this time, the location of the new secondary school is not confirmed. Therefore on the maps of the city a representative location has been used, St Peter's Church on the Old Steine. It is anticipated that the new school will be sited in central Brighton which is where the greatest number of additional places are required.
- 6.9 The proposed catchment areas are drawn as illustrations of how the arrangements could work but may not be the exact areas that will form the proposal that goes to formal consultation in the autumn. It is therefore very important that all respondents understand that these proposed catchment areas are merely illustrative and may not be the catchment area in which their home address is situated when the arrangements are finally determined.
- 6.10 Respondents to the engagement activity will be asked for their views on the principles of how the catchment areas are drawn up rather than how the proposals will impact on them personally. When the formal consultation is undertaken in the autumn there will be an opportunity for representations to be made based upon how the proposed arrangements will directly affect them.
- 6.11 It is acknowledged that a change in admission arrangements may mean that families could find that younger siblings are no longer in the same catchment area as their older brother or sisters. It is anticipated that the arrangements from

2018 will include proposals to ensure that a link to the school's catchment area the home address previously aligned to will remain for any younger siblings for the duration of the older sibling attending the school.

- 6.12 At present when a secondary school is oversubscribed, the council uses an electronic random allocation system to determine which applicants should be offered places. Another method used by admission authorities elsewhere is to allocate places using a distance measure to prioritise applications, when a school is oversubscribed. In Brighton and Hove infant, junior and primary school applications are determined by a tie-break which measures home to school distance by the shortest route from the child's home to the nearest of the school's gates. Both of these methods of determination will be considered as part of the engagement activity.
- 6.13 Responses to these proposed options outlined in section 5 will be sought as part of the engagement phase.

## **7. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 7.1 The working party has undertaken extensive analysis of a range of different potential admission arrangements from September 2018. Other than the three proposals detailed in this report the other options, when analysed in relation to the principles that the group have been working to achieve, have not been considered further.
- 7.2 As mentioned in paragraphs 3.5 – 3.9, the methodology used in calculating pupil number forecasts has been independently verified by a consultant commissioned by the CYPS committee. A report on the findings came to the committee in October 2015.
- 7.3 With the confirmation of the UoB's bid to open a new secondary school in 2018 and with the need to make provision for additional secondary aged pupils, it is not possible to retain the current admission arrangements, in particular the current catchment areas from 2018 onwards.
- 7.4 An extensive list of options has been given consideration. Ranging from the incorporation of the new school into an existing catchment area with no other changes, to disbanding of all catchment areas across the city and the creation of different pairings of schools in shared catchment areas. These other options have been discarded due to the strategic impact they would have on the admission arrangements across the city area.
- 7.5 As can be expected, the working party has not always agreed about the viability of the proposals considered but as a group they have referred back to the principles established at the start of this activity to decide whether a proposals required further consideration or not.
- 7.6 It is important to stress that the working party has been working on data that has been projected into the future. They are aware that the reliability of the data cannot be guaranteed the further into the future is projected but they have been assured of the soundness of the methodology behind its creation.

- 7.7 This has been prominent when considering the future transport liabilities created by the different proposals being put forward in this report. It is a complex calculation that will be affected by the impact of parental preference and the effects of random allocation. The working party have been alert to the impact of any additional transport expenditure as a result of the proposals being considered but have recognised that there are other principles to achieve through the changes which are of great importance.

## **8. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 As previously explained, the report recommends that an engagement activity is undertaken to obtain wider views on possible proposals to amend the admission arrangements in the city's schools. This information will then be considered and inform the decision on the final proposal for admission arrangements for the academic year 2018/19, prior to a formal consultation exercise.
- 8.2 Up to this point a working party has been considering the range of options available to the council. That group consists of Members, Headteachers and Governors advised by Officers. The nature of the work has meant that much of their consideration has taken place in private. However discussions on the proposals outlined in this report have taken place with the wider groups that they have represented. It has felt appropriate to wait until the suggested options had been narrowed down to a few before seeking the wider involvement of parents and the general public.
- 8.3 In line with the School Admissions Code the formal consultation process on a single proposal will not be undertaken until the autumn. The responses from this initial engagement exercise will help to shape the proposal that is put forward for formal consultation.
- 8.4 An extensive range of consultation exercises are planned. Events will include formal presentation as well as interactive activities. They will be held at venues across the city and there will also be opportunities for more informal events as well. The aim will be to explain the proposals, answer questions residents and stakeholders may have about the proposals and seek comments and suggestions in response to the options.

## **9. CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 It is recognised that there is a need to amend the existing secondary school admission arrangements for the city. This is because of the rising number of pupils who will be entering the secondary phase of education. The existing number of school places will not be sufficient in the future to accommodate all the pupils and a new secondary free school is anticipated to be opened in September 2018. Therefore the existing catchment areas need to be adjusted to ensure that, where possible, catchment areas do not contain more pupils than school places available and the new school has an identifiable catchment area from which to draw pupils.
- 9.2 As their own admission authorities, it is not anticipated that CNCS and King's School will seek to alter their existing arrangements which do not include the provision of catchment areas. However, it is expected that BACA and PACA, who



since opening have maintained admission arrangements in line with the city's maintained schools will adjust their catchment areas as from September 2018 in line with the outcome of this exercise.

- 9.3 The working party has sought to not only address the issues outlined above but to make proposals that seek to achieve some other objectives in paragraphs 4.3 – 4.5 beyond clear and fair admission arrangements.
- 9.4 The responses to the three options proposed at this stage will inform the development of a final proposal. This proposal will then be formally consulted upon in the autumn 2016. The outcome of that consultation will then be considered by the CYPs committee in January 2017 before the proposed new admission arrangements are determined by Full Council.
- 9.5 It is acknowledged that school place planning is complex and it is inevitable that no proposal will satisfy all stakeholders. At this time there are added complications because the location of the new school has not been finalised and so all the proposals put forward are illustrative. The school catchment areas in the proposals will change and it is important that, when responding, parents understand that where their home (or future home) is located will not necessarily be in the same school's catchment area in the final proposals.

## **10. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### Financial Implications:

- 10.1 The current Published Admission Numbers (PAN) in secondary schools is lower than that of current pupil numbers in primary schools. The modelling of pupil numbers show that either a new school and/or expansions to existing secondary school PANs is needed to meet demand. The main driver of schools' budgets is pupil numbers. Therefore if pupil numbers were to fall in particular schools as a result of expansion in other schools, then this could result in a school having financial difficulties. Following the results of consultation and once a final option is chosen updated financial implications will be provided.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Louise Hoten*

*Date: 04/02/16*

### Legal Implications:

- 10.2 Local Authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient primary and secondary schools to provide suitable education to meet the needs of the population in its area (section 14 Education Act 1996). This report advises that the increase in the number of primary aged pupils means that additional secondary school places will be required in the city in the next five years to accommodate these rising pupil numbers.
- 10.3 School admission arrangements must conform to the provisions of the School Admissions Code 2014 which sets out acceptable and unacceptable admission arrangements and priorities. The Code makes it clear that "in drawing up their admission arrangements, admission authorities must ensure that the practices and the criteria used to decide the allocation of school places are fair, clear and objective. Parents should be able to look at a set of arrangements and understand

easily how places for that school will be allocated” (paragraph 14 of the Introduction to the Code).

10.4 Paragraph 1.8 of the Code provides that oversubscription criteria must be “reasonable, clear, objective, procedurally fair, and comply with all legislation, including equalities legislation. Admission authorities must ensure that their arrangements will not disadvantage unfairly, either directly or indirectly, a child from a particular social or racial group” and “must include an effective, clear and fair tie-breaker to decide between two applications that cannot otherwise be separated.”

10.5 With regard to the drawing up of catchment areas the Code stipulates that they “must be designed so that they are reasonable and clearly defined” (paragraph 1.14 of the Code).

10.6 The report sets out the proposal to amend the current oversubscription criteria to include a quota of children eligible for Free School Meals a higher priority than other children living within the catchment area. The School Admissions Code provides freedom for admission authorities to give admissions priority within their oversubscription criteria to children eligible for a pupil premium.

10.7 DfE Guidance “Using the Pupil Premium, Service Premium or Early Years Pupil Premium in admission arrangements” (Dec 2014) states that admission authorities can:

- specify a number or percentage of their published admission number. For example, this can be representative of the number of disadvantaged children resident in the school’s local area; or they can prioritise a certain percentage of local eligible children;
- limit priority to specific eligible sub-groups. For example, restrict the admissions priority to children currently in receipt of Free School Meals; or children in a catchment area;
- decide the ranking given to the priority (after looked after and previously looked after children)”

10.8 The Council will be legally obliged to provide free school transport to any secondary school age pupil who attends their nearest suitable school, if that school is more than three miles from their home address. The Council’s Home to School Transport policy defines ‘nearest suitable school’ in relation to secondary education as ‘the catchment area school (or schools in a dual catchment area) for those able to attend a mainstream school, except for those children whose family meets the criteria for low income, where the suitable school may be one of the three closest schools.’ For low income families the applicable home to school walking distance is two miles. This report recognises that the multi-school catchment area options (Options B and C) will potentially increase the transport liabilities of the Council, particularly if random allocation rather than distance is adopted as a tie breaker in the event of oversubscription.

10.9 Section 88C of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and the School Admissions (Admissions Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) Regulations 2012 (as amended) require admission authorities to determine their admissions arrangements annually. Arrangements must be determined 18 months in advance of the academic year to which they apply. The

admissions arrangements for the academic year 2018/19 must be determined by 28 February 2017. Where changes are made to admission arrangements the admission authority must first publicly consult on those arrangements. The consultation for the academic year 2018/19 must take place between 1 October 2016 and 31 January 2017 and must last for a minimum of six weeks.

- 10.10 Any person or body who considers that any maintained school or Academy's admission arrangements are unlawful, or not in compliance with the School Admissions Code or relevant law relating to admissions, can make an objection to the Schools Adjudicator. Objections must be referred to the Adjudicator by 15 May in the determination year, i.e. by 15 May 2017 for admissions in September 2018. The admission authority must, where necessary, revise their admission arrangements to give effect to the Adjudicator's decision. The Adjudicator's decision is binding and enforceable.
- 10.11 The constitution of the Council provides that decisions regarding any strategic issues or reviews of the council's school admission arrangements, including any changes to catchment areas, are reserved to Full Council (Part 3.02(a)(ii) of the Constitution).

*Lawyer Consulted:*

*Natasha Watson*

*Date: 29/02/16*

Equalities Implications:

- 10.12 Providing pupils eligible for FSM with a higher priority in admission arrangements seeks to encourage disadvantaged parents to increase their ambitions and consider schools they might not otherwise. This change will be part of efforts to make sure all pupils in Brighton and Hove achieve and raise the attainment of children in the most deprived circumstances by enabling pupils that live in disadvantaged areas to give a higher priority to attend a more popular school.
- 10.13 The City Council and other admission authorities must have admission arrangements which are in line with the School Admissions Code. The operation of the admission process is conducted in such a way as to avoid potentially discriminatory admission priorities or planning processes.
- 10.14 An engagement exercise will provide the community with the opportunity to provide responses to the proposals that have been made. This will provide the council with an opportunity to consider any equality impacts currently unidentified within the proposals.
- 10.15 Engagement exercises will be undertaken to seek to engage traditionally hard to reach groups through providing opportunities to take the information out into the community as well as work with Community Works to seek responses from minority groups.
- 10.16 At this stage an Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix 9) has been carried out and its results have been incorporated into the content of the report.

Sustainability Implications:

- 10.17 School admission arrangements are intended so far as it is possible to provide pupils with local places where they have asked for them. The planning of school places for the city takes into account the changing population pattern and resultant demand for places.
- 10.18 In developing proposals the council has sought to have regard to sustainable priorities and seek to provide local places and places which are accessible by safe walking and where possible cycling routes and public transport wherever this is possible.
- 10.19 Whilst every effort has been made to consider and quantify the sustainability impact of the proposals this activity is limited by the nature of the timescale involved and the modelling of parental preference in the future. The proposals also reflect the conflicting priorities of the council's work in delivering greater school admission options for sectors of the school population.

Any Other Significant Implications:

### **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

#### **Appendices:**

1. Brighton and Hove City Council: Pupil Number Forecasting System - A report on the methodology and accuracy of the pupil number forecasting system used by Brighton and Hove City Council
2. Stakeholders' perspectives on the secondary school admissions' procedures in Brighton and Hove
3. Pupil Forecast City Overview
4. Pupil Forecast for Additional Development
5. Catchment Area Modelling
6. Map of Option A
7. Map of Option B
8. Map of Option C
9. Equality Impact Assessment

#### **Documents in Members' Rooms**

*[List any relevant documents to be placed in the Members' Rooms. This must be done at least 5 clear days before the meeting].*

- 1.
- 2.

## Background Documents

*[List any background / supporting documents referred to or used in the compilation of the report. The documents must be made available to the public upon request for four years after the decision has been taken].*

Appendix 1

### Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 1.1 Balanced school communities with firm parental support contribute to orderly and harmonious communities. At this stage the proposal is to engage the community in considering possible changes to the admission arrangements for secondary schools and no crime or disorder implications are anticipated as a result of this proposed activity.

### Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 1.3 Any change to school attendance patterns and pupil numbers will impact directly on resource allocation both revenue and capital, and on the Council's ability to meet parental expectations on school places. Pupil data and broader population data is used to identify the numbers of school places required and where they should be located. This feeds into the capital programme so that resources are allocated where they will have the most beneficial effect.
- 1.4 At this stage the proposal is to engage the community in considering possible changes to the admission arrangements for secondary schools. An engagement activity will not provide additional risks to manage.

### Public Health Implications:

- 1.3 None known.

### Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 1.5 The allocation of school places affects all families in all parts of the city and can influence where people chose to live. Failure to obtain the desired choice of school can create a strong sense of grievance. The process of expressing a preference and if disappointed, entering an appeal can create intense anxiety for many families in the city. Admission arrangements together with school place planning are framed in such a way as to be mindful of supporting the needs of communities.
- 1.6 The proposals have been designed to deliver a range of requirements including ensuring there are sufficient secondary school places across the city and priorities outlined in 4.4 – 4.6.



# Brighton and Hove City Council: Pupil Number Forecasting System

A report on the  
methodology and accuracy  
of the pupil number forecasting  
system used by  
Brighton and Hove City Council

Andrew Hind MA, MBA, MSc

*Please note: some graphs and tables in the report are colour coded  
It is recommended that the report is viewed on screen or printed in colour.*

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## **Appendices**

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## **Introduction: the assignment**

Brighton and Hove City Council commissioned an independent review into the methodology and accuracy of its pupils forecasting system.

The Council's Head of Education Planning and Contracts, the Head of Education Capital and the Senior Admissions Officer met with me on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July to explain the characteristics of school organisation in the City, including geographical and social factors, the pupil forecasting system used, and the questions they wished the review to address. The system was demonstrated and copies of the Excel spreadsheets used were subsequently provided for analysis. On 20<sup>th</sup> August I had a telephone conversation with the Executive Director of Children's Services. These conversations highlighted that there had been a recent change of political leadership in the Council and a significant number of newly elected councillors. Decisions on major school organisational changes were likely to be required over the next year in response to forecast growing demand for secondary school places. In this context it was felt useful to have an independent review of the pupils forecasting system. This would encompass the methodology used and the accuracy of the forecast.

Copies of the "forecast workbook" spreadsheets were provided, other working documents analysing the rate of transfer between the primary and secondary phases, along with a current admissions handbook and map of the city, DfE school capacity returns and the two most recent School Organisation Plans. These have been analysed and the results presented in this report.

In brief, the methodology currently used provides a good short term (three year) forecast for citywide primary numbers, particularly for the number of Year R (4+) pupils expected to be admitted. The methodology used is less accurate for secondary forecasts, but improving as a result of recent changes to the approach.

The forecasts provided indicate the expected level of demand across the city, and to some extent within smaller planning areas, however no school level forecasts are produced within the system: the forecasts focus on where demand will arise, not where or how it will be met. Officers explained that the forecasts are used as a starting point for making decisions about how and where increased demand would be met. The principal advantage of the methodology chosen is its simplicity and its cost effectiveness – being operated by relatively senior officers alongside their wider responsibilities, using well understood generic software, without the need for specialist staff, specialist software or external partners.

## Methodology

This section briefly describes the methodology used. Appendix A gives a more detailed description of the approach used in each of the forecasts analysed.

It was explained that some years ago as a consequence of budgetary constraints Brighton and Hove Council closed its in-house demography service which had previously managed school number forecasting. This task then fell to staff working within Children's Services with responsibility for planning and delivering school buildings. This included providing the data for Department for Education annual school capacity returns, for the School Organisation Plan, and for any internal management purposes – such as coordinating school admissions, and informing school organisation decision making. The staff within the Directorate had to develop a workable system that provided the required data, within the constraints of available time and resources. Over the period examined the forecasting system has been developed and improved. The more recent forecasts provide a higher level of one year accuracy than previously.

I have looked at three main types of forecast documentation supplied by Brighton and Hove – “forecast workbooks”, School Organisation Plans, and DfE School Capacity (SCAP) returns.

1. “Forecast workbooks” are Excel spreadsheets that are essentially the internal working documents in which the GP registration source data is converted into pupil number forecasts. These have evolved over the years, and are the core of the forecasting system. They are not intended for publication, and have not always been presented in a way conducive to ready understanding – for example cells are not always clearly labelled. However they perform the basic function required – to indicate likely future demand for school places. The “forecast workbooks” are working drafts for the more formally published forecasts. Sometimes the “forecast workbooks” are looked at by senior decision makers to assist in operational decision making – for example consideration whether to create a “bulge year” at a school in response to short term local demand, as well as considering longer term strategic challenges.
2. A School Organisation (SOP) was at one time a statutory requirement of all local education authorities. This is no longer the case, but many still produce one (or an equivalent). Two have been produced in recent years by Brighton and Hove City Council – one for 2012 to 2016 and one for 2013 to 2017. These set out the strategic background for school place planning in the city and include forecasts for the primary and secondary sectors. They include an introduction by the Executive Director and were discussed and formally approved by the Council. They are readily available on the Council website. The forecasts are simply data extracts from the “forecast workbooks”, with interpretive text and conclusions. The School Organisation Plan forecasts are “on the record” and thus can be scrutinised by the public.
3. DfE School Capacity (SCAP) returns have been required by the government for some years, and have become increasingly detailed in the data required. This includes number on roll for all schools, the capacity of all schools and

forecast of future numbers. One of the principal purposes of these returns is to target and prioritise central government capital investment in school buildings. It is a requirement of the return that it is signed off by the statutory Director. Whilst not necessarily “published”, these returns are certainly available on request, and thus are “on the record forecasts”, capable of scrutiny by the public. Because allocations of public money can be directly dependent on them, there is clearly a strong expectation that forecasts are accurate. The DfE has published guidance on what a forecast should comprise and gives examples of good practice. (See **References**).

The description of the forecasting methodology used which follows is based on a) the briefing provided to me by Brighton and Hove officers; b) my own scrutiny of the material provided; and c) the notes on forecasting contained within the SOPs.

Brighton and Hove’s forecasting methodology for the primary phase is based on the observed consistent correlation between the number of children on the GP Register and those requiring a place in a maintained school or academy in the city. At Year R between 88% and 90% of the number on the GP ratio require a place at a school.

It should be noted that this does not necessarily mean that 88% or 90% of Brighton and Hove resident children attend school in the city. Some may cross the border and attend schools in East or West Sussex, just as some children from outside the city may commute in. The GP register may include children who have moved away and not been deleted. What matters is not whether the children in schools are the same children as are registered with GPs, but that there is a consistent and reliable correlation between the two numbers, and that therefore the GP register gives a good indication of the likely number of children requiring a school place in the future.

Apart from the potential differences between the two populations mentioned above, a proportion of children attend independent schools or are educated otherwise than at school. Nationally this comprises about 7% of children of statutory school age. Some Brighton and Hove children will fall into this group. A further complication is that boarding establishments generally register their pupils with a local GP, thus increasing the number of children in an area who do not appear on the roll of maintained schools. As there are several independent schools in the city this is likely to have an effect increasing the number of children on the GP register but not on roll at a maintained school. All of this, however, does not detract from the value of the GP register as a means of forecasting future need for school places. Alternative data to forecast Year R enrolment might include the register of births, however the relatively high rates of internal migration of very young families may not make this a good indication of the number to be admitted to school four years later.

The methodology used gives a forecast of three years likely admissions to Year R. This is at the core of the Brighton and Hove approach. In more recent forecasts this is taken a stage further to forecast the complete primary school population across all year groups from YR to Y6. The methodology used is very simple: each cohort is assumed to remain the same size throughout the primary years, so it has a survival ratio of 1 (or 100%). My analysis of the observed data suggests this is acceptable, as

the variation in survival rates from year to year do not form a clear or statistically significant trend.

GP registration data is supplied to the Council with postcode information. It is analysed to postcode sector level – i.e. the first part of the postcode plus the first digit of the second part of the postcode. This is aggregated to 10 planning areas, reflecting local judgements about natural community boundaries which would be recognised by residents. The postcode sectors themselves generally correspond to recognisable geographical communities (postcodes are built up from the “walks” of delivery staff, who tend to follow rational routes). Using this data and the observed ratio between GP registrations and school numbers, the likely level of future demand for given areas can be calculated, by multiplying the preschool age cohort numbers supplied from the GP register by the observed ratio.

A broadly similar approach has been used for secondary schools. Originally a ratio was calculated between observed numbers of 11 year olds on the GP register and observed numbers in Year 7. This was replaced by an improved system which compared the number of Year 6s recorded in the May school census analysed by catchment area of residence with the number of Year 7s recorded in the same area the following year. This was used to calculate a “drop-out rate” for the whole city, for two large areas (Hove and Portslade, and Brighton), and for six secondary catchment areas: (Portslade Aldridge Community Academy, Blatchington Mill and Hove Park, Dorothy Stringer and Varndean, Patcham, Brighton Aldridge Community Academy, and Longhill).

It should be stressed, however, that these calculations are *not* in relation to the number on roll at the named schools, but for the number of children living in those catchment areas who will require a place somewhere in Brighton and Hove. This could be at the local catchment school, or at a denominational school serving a wide community, or at a school in another part of the city as a result of parental preference. Throughout the city there is a loss of pupils between the primary and secondary phase and the calculation described above is designed to capture the effects of this. This loss could be as a result of parents securing places at maintained schools in neighbouring authorities, or at independent schools, or whole families migrating to other local authority areas. The precise explanation for this drop out is not important for forecasting purposes, providing there is a stable and predictable pattern from year to year.

In the more recent forecasts Cardinal Newman and King’s School are extracted and dealt with separately on the basis that they draw children from a wide area, whose parents are seeking the denominational education they provide – an estimated number of children is deducted from each planning area accordingly. On top of that a percentage figure is deducted to reflect the observed phenomenon of “drop out” between Years 6 and 7.

As previously observed, this results in forecasts for the number of children living in the listed catchment areas who are expected to require a school place, however the place they ultimately secure may not be their catchment school. It also treats children whose

parents seek a denominational secondary school place differently. These children are deducted from the forecast of aggregated local demand. In the case of Cardinal Newman it is assumed that the school will fill to capacity – thus there is an assumed forecast of future numbers for that school built into the system. The forecasting system is designed to predict how many children living in each of the six catchment areas will require a school place (other than those who will go to Cardinal Newman or King's). This means if there is a demographic bulge in a particular area, decision makers can consider how to accommodate it. A potential weakness of the system however is that parental preference means that parents may not want a place at their catchment school, and will prioritise schools in other areas, and it should be remembered that unless a school is over-subscribed its over-subscription criteria are irrelevant (including catchment area) – the place must be offered.

It is very unusual for a school forecasting system not to make forecasts for individual schools. I have not come across such a system in the five local authorities in which I have worked as a permanent member of staff or consultant. An internet search of nearby local authorities, both county and unitary councils (East Sussex, Hampshire, Kent, Portsmouth, Southampton and West Sussex) indicates that all build up their forecasts from school level forecasts. (Links to their respective websites can be found in the **References** section below.) These authorities focus on the number of children who are likely to seek and secure a place at each school, where Brighton and Hove focuses on the number of children living in defined areas who will require a place. This does not mean Brighton and Hove has to adopt a similar approach if it feels that the methodology used meets its needs.

The lack of school level forecasts makes the accuracy analysis of sub-city planning groups quite difficult. If school level forecasts exist it is relatively straightforward to compare the forecast numbers for each school with the observed numbers in the pupil level annual school census (PLASC) conducted each January. Without school level forecasts it would be necessary to analyse the number of children *living* in each planning area *attending any* maintained school or academy in the city. Whilst PLASC has the data to enable this to be done, it is a complex analysis.

Even if the forecasts produced were 100% accurate five years ahead, this approach tends to obscure important facts about the numbers in particular schools. For example the forecast might correctly predict that 800 pupils would be living in School A's catchment area – however in practice 450 might travel across the city to attend School B instead, leaving only 350 in their local catchment school. Brighton and Hove's system is designed only to predict the number of children expected to be living in defined areas who will give rise to demand for a school place somewhere, not necessarily in their local catchment school, as a starting point for decision making about where and how any new places required should be provided. Whilst I am sure that officers and those close to school organisation decision making understand this, it is easily capable of misunderstanding by those not so close to school place planning analysis and decision making.

The strength of Brighton and Hove's approach is that it focusses attention on *the areas of the city* where children live which may require a greater or lesser number of school

places. This may be helpful in deciding where to create additional capacity. However it does not take account of parental preference, which school level forecasting does. It has been suggested that school level forecasts are dependent on arbitrary judgements about the popularity of different schools. However there is ample evidence within the observed data on previous enrolment to make an objective and statistically valid projection of likely future enrolment. The Council may wish to consider developing a simple system to include school level forecasting, perhaps initially for the secondary phase. Apart from its value in relation to school place planning, this would provide useful information at school and local authority level for three year budget and curriculum planning.

### **Accuracy**

In order to assess the accuracy of the forecasts I compared the numbers in the various published and working documents with PLASC figures. I did this for Year R, for Year R to Year 6 (the primary phase), Year 7, and Year 7 to Year 11 (the statutory secondary phase). I did not look at the accuracy of Y12 and Y13 (post 16) numbers. I calculated the numeric and percentage variation between the forecast and observed figures. This report highlights the percentage variation and gives includes a graphic representation of how the forecasts compare to the observed numbers in the PLASC.

It should be remembered that the forecasting methodology has been refined and improved over time, and that the earliest forecasts were much cruder than the more recent ones.

## Citywide forecasts for Year R

Please see the following pages for numeric and graphic analysis of the Year R forecasts. The table showing the percentage difference between the forecast and observed number on roll is colour coded – the shading indicates the absolute percentage variation and the text colour indicates whether it is positive (light text) – an over-forecast – or negative (dark text) – an under-forecast. *It should be remembered that a difference of 1% on a cohort of 2500 represents 25 pupils.*

It can be seen that in general the forecasts for Year R numbers have been accurate for one year ahead and reasonably accurate subsequently. They do however show a consistent upward bias (indicated by white text). The two most recent forecasts for January 2015, made in 2012 and 2013 were reasonably close to the observed figure.

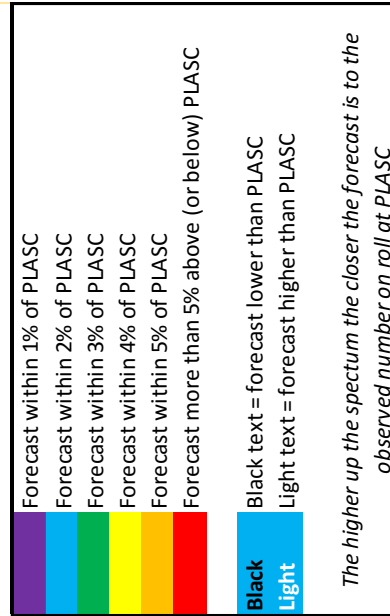
The graph shows that the forecasts generally predicted the observed trend well, including the slight dip in the 2013-14 cohort.

The red line shows the observed PLASC number on roll and the various dotted lines show the different forecasts made at previous times.

Citywide Year R

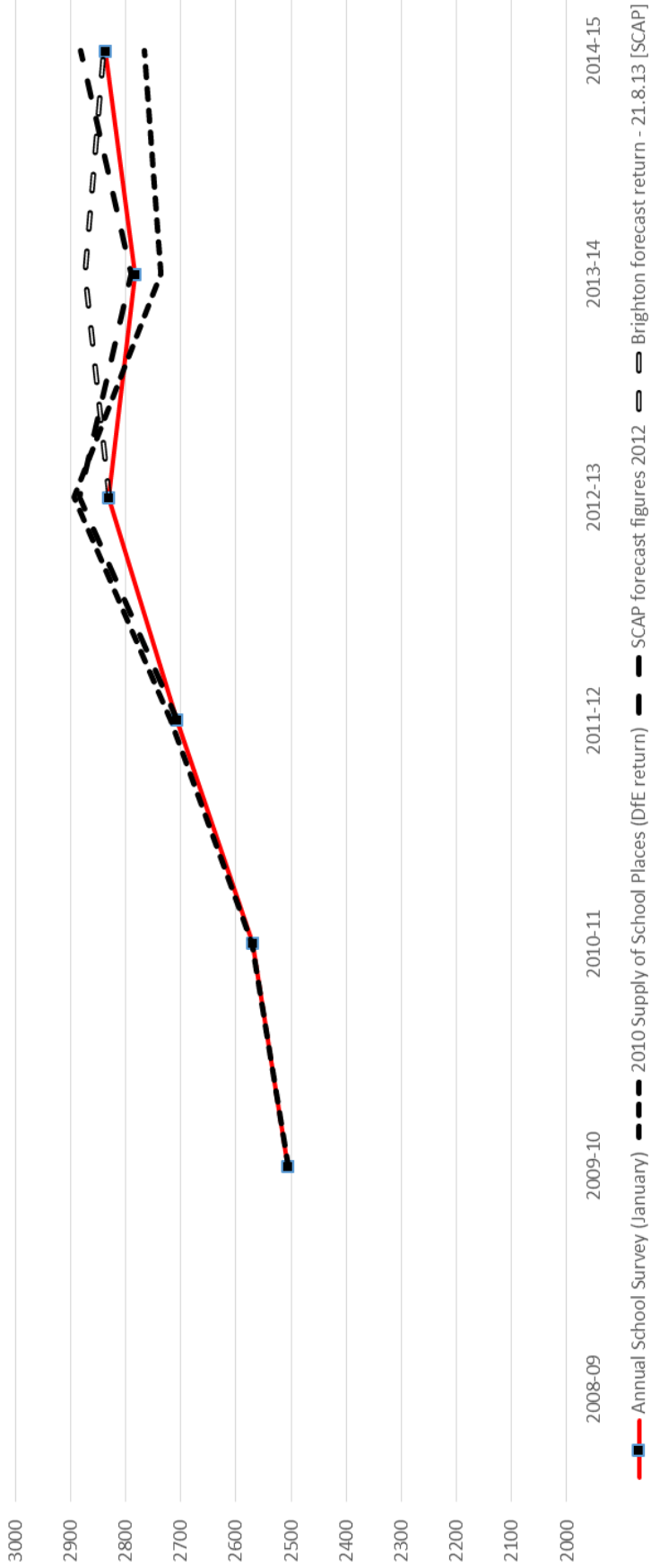
	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Annual School Survey (January)		2506	2570	2707	2832	2784	2838				
2009 Supply of School Places (DFE return)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA				
2010 Supply of School Places (DFE return)		2506	2571	2719	2894	2737	2767				
2010 10 October forecast workbook			2766	2916	2836		2669				
2011 10 October forecast workbook			2711	2883	2790		2881	2851	2850	2800	
2012 09 September forecast workbook					2787		2850	2861	2687		
2013 10 September forecast workbook						2801	2896	2893	2820	2732	
School Organisation Plan 2013-17							2897	2893	2821	2733	
2014 10 October forecast workbook								2819	2752	2690	2507
SCAP forecast figures 2012			2706	2883	2831	2791	2881	2851	2925		
Brighton forecast return - 21.8.13 [SCAP]						2874	2841	2688	2730		

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Annual School Survey (January)		2506	2570	2707	2832	2784	2838
2009 Supply of School Places (DFE return)							
2010 Supply of School Places (DFE return)		0.00%	0.04%	0.44%	2.19%	-1.69%	-2.50%
2010 10 October forecast workbook			2.18%	2.96%	1.88%	1.88%	-5.96%
2011 10 October forecast workbook			0.15%	1.80%	0.22%	0.22%	1.52%
2012 09 September forecast workbook						0.12%	0.43%
2013 10 September forecast workbook							2.05%
School Organisation Plan 2013-17						0.61%	2.08%
SCAP forecast figures 2012			-0.04%	1.80%	-0.04%	0.25%	1.52%
Brighton forecast return - 21.8.13 [SCAP]						1.13%	0.11%





### SCAP forecasts for YR pupils compared to PLASC observed numbers



## Year R to Year 6

Please see the following pages for numeric and graphic analysis of the Year R to Y6 forecasts. The table showing the percentage difference between the forecast and observed number on roll is colour coded – the shading indicates the absolute percentage variation and the text colour indicates whether it is positive (light text) – an over-forecast – or negative (dark text) – an under-forecast. *It should be remembered that a difference of 1% on an aggregate cohort of 17,000 at the primary phase represents 170 pupils across all primary age groups.*

The forecasts for Year R to Year 6 show a greater degree of accuracy. This would be expected as Y1-Y6 are continuing pupils within the primary phase. Apart from 2009 all subsequent forecasts have been very accurate. The 2009 forecast may have been distorted by the nature of the SCAP return required by DfE in that year. Improvements in the DfE SCAP requirements and Brighton and Hove's methodology have resulted in more accurate forecasts in recent years. The 2010 SCAP return was particularly accurate, never varying more than 1% even five years ahead. It should be noted, however, that there is a consistent upward bias: all forecasts since 2010 have slightly overstated the future number of pupils.

The graph shows that all primary forecasts since 2010 have been close to the observed numbers.

**Citywide Year R to Year 6**

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2018-19
Annual School Survey (January)		<b>16610</b>	<b>16919</b>	<b>17320</b>	<b>17663</b>	<b>18103</b>	<b>18496</b>			
2009 Supply of School Places (DfE return)	<b>16405</b>	16500	16550	16650	16700	16720				
2010 Supply of School Places (DfE return)		16617	16824	17304	17839	18257	18637			
2011 10 October forecast workbook				17338	17871	18319	18783	19191	19552	19766
School Capacity (Forecast) XML Template				17402	17962	18462	18714	19034		
SCAP forecast figures 2012				17319	17807	18268	18741	19157	19604	
Brighton forecast return - 21.8.13 [SCAP]					17654	18230	18681	19113	19351	19521

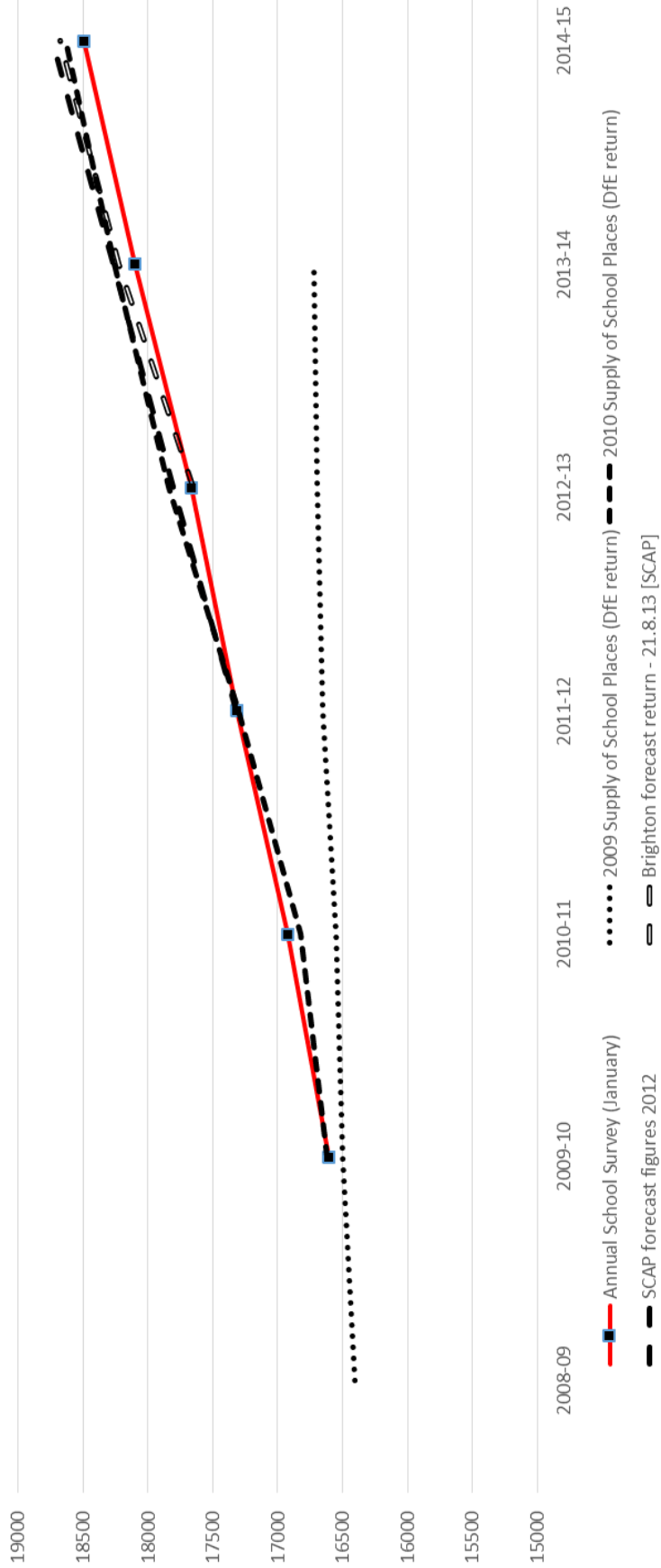
	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Annual School Survey (January)		<b>16610</b>	<b>16919</b>	<b>17320</b>	<b>17663</b>	<b>18103</b>	<b>18496</b>
2009 Supply of School Places (DfE return)		<b>-0.66%</b>	<b>-2.18%</b>	<b>-3.87%</b>	<b>-5.45%</b>	<b>-7.64%</b>	
2010 Supply of School Places (DfE return)		<b>0.04%</b>	<b>-0.56%</b>	<b>-0.09%</b>	<b>1.00%</b>	<b>0.85%</b>	<b>0.76%</b>
2011 10 October forecast workbook				<b>0.10%</b>	<b>1.18%</b>	<b>1.19%</b>	<b>1.55%</b>
School Capacity (Forecast) XML Template				<b>0.47%</b>	<b>1.69%</b>	<b>1.98%</b>	<b>1.18%</b>
SCAP forecast figures 2012				<b>-0.01%</b>	<b>0.82%</b>	<b>0.91%</b>	<b>1.32%</b>
Brighton forecast return - 21.8.13 [SCAP]					<b>-0.05%</b>	<b>0.70%</b>	<b>1.00%</b>

Forecast within 1% of PLASC  
Forecast within 2% of PLASC  
Forecast within 3% of PLASC  
Forecast within 4% of PLASC  
Forecast within 5% of PLASC  
Forecast more than 5% above (or below) PLASC

**Black** text = forecast lower than PLASC  
Light text = forecast higher than PLASC

*The higher up the spectrum the closer the forecast is to the observed number on roll at PLASC*

# SCAP forecasts for YR-Y6 pupils compared to PLASC observed numbers



## Year 7

Please see the following pages for numeric and graphic analysis of the Year 7 forecasts. The table showing the percentage difference between the forecast and observed number on roll is colour coded – the shading indicates the absolute percentage variation and the text colour indicates whether it is positive (light text) – an over-forecast – or negative (dark text) – an under-forecast. *It should be remembered that a difference of 1% on a cohort of 2300 represents 23 pupils.*

Forecasts for Year 7 numbers have generally not been as accurate as for Year R but accuracy has improved since analysis of primary secondary transfer was introduced, rather than using the GP register to forecast the initial year of entry to secondary schools. The exception is the 2012 SCAP which shows a high level of accuracy for three years. 2013 however is not as accurate, so it is not possible to conclude that the methodology has improved to the extent that might be wished. There is a consistent bias towards overestimating secondary numbers. It is notable that most of the forecasts substantially over-estimated numbers in 2013-14 but forecasts for 2014-15 have been better.

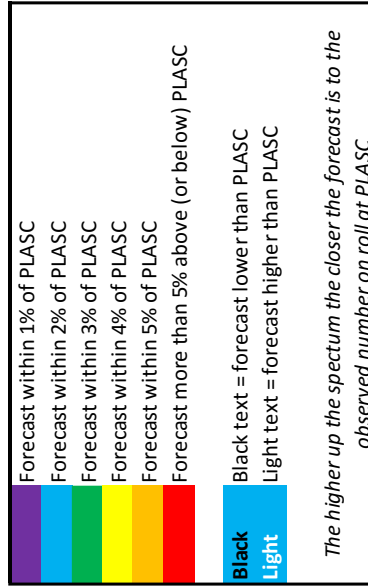
The graph shows that the earliest forecast (2010 SCAP) was substantially high, however it is interesting that it has the same general shape as the observed trend. This could indicate that there was a jump in the number of parents choosing schools outside the city (or the independent sector), thus shifting the primary-secondary survival ratio downwards. Alternatively it could reflect a higher number of GP registrations of children living in the city, but not attending maintained schools. However this is not of great importance as the methodology has changed.

The results improved as analysis of primary secondary transfer was introduced. Instead of using GP registration, recent forecasts have been based on the number of Year 6 children *living* in catchment areas as captured in the May Census, compared to the number of Year 7s living in the same areas the following school year. Future Year 7 cohorts are forecast using data about cohorts in the primary phase, and their rate of transfer to the secondary phase.

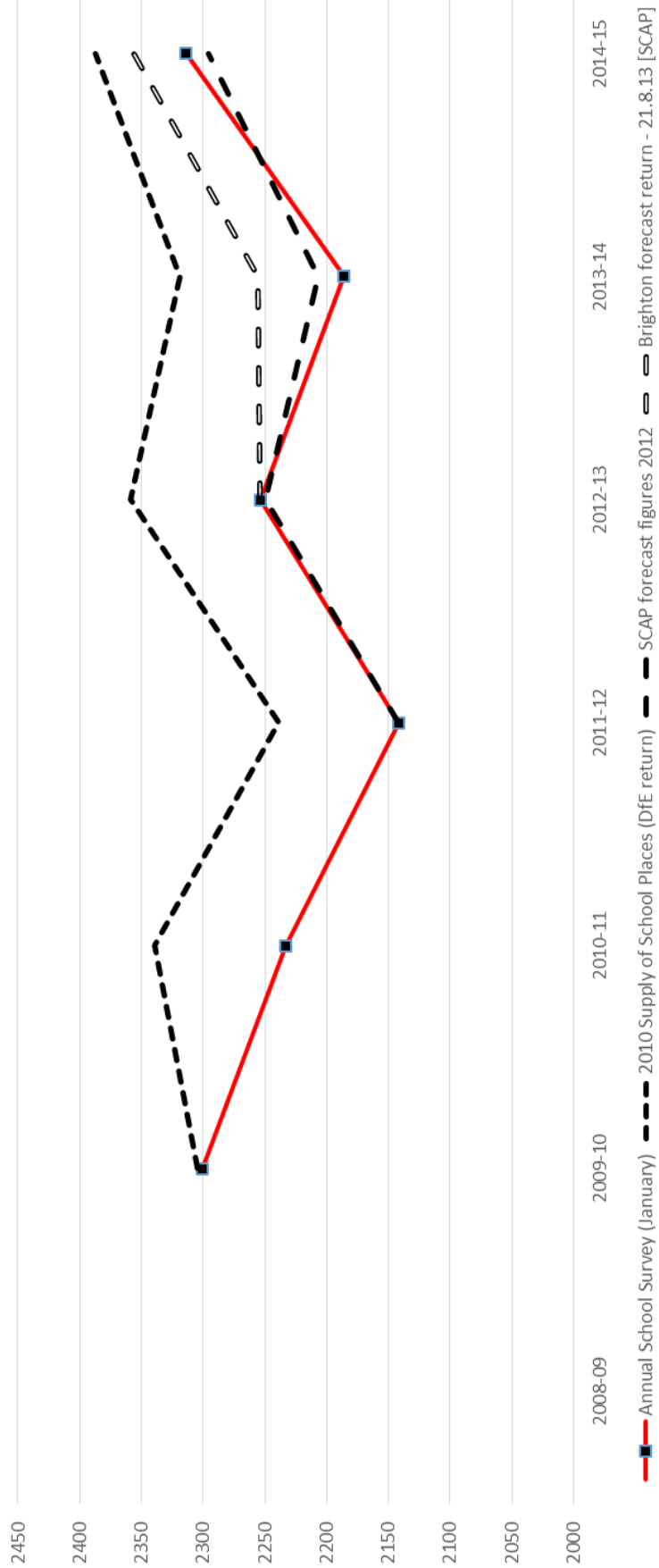
Citywide Year 7

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Annual School Survey (January)		<b>2301</b>	<b>2233</b>	<b>2142</b>	<b>2254</b>	<b>2186</b>	<b>2314</b>								
2009 Supply of School Places (DFE return)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA								
2010 Supply of School Places (DFE return)		2305	2339	2239	2359	2319	2387	2471	2478	2586	2711	2883	2790		
2011 10 October forecast workbook				2145	2350	2342	2417	2443	2489	2486	2631	2750	2703	2764	2774
2012 09 September forecast workbook						2256	2356	2396	2429	2550	2660	2620	2680		
School Organisation Plan 2013-17 (low)					2250	2280	2320	2350	2410	2490	2630	2750	2700	2760	
School Organisation Plan 2013-17 (high)					2250	2360	2400	2430	2490	2630	2750	2700	2760		
SCAP forecast figures 2012				2142	2250	2207	2296	2329	2362	2416	2570				
Brighton forecast return - 21.8.13 [SCAP]					2254	2256	2356	2396	2429	2486	2632	2751			

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Annual School Survey (January)		<b>2301</b>	<b>2233</b>	<b>2142</b>	<b>2254</b>	<b>2186</b>	<b>2314</b>
2010 Supply of School Places (DFE return)		0.17%	4.75%	4.55%	4.66%	6.08%	3.15%
2011 10 October forecast workbook				0.14%	4.14%	7.14%	4.65%
2012 09 September forecast workbook						3.15%	1.83%
School Organisation Plan 2013-17 (low)				-0.18%	4.95%	0.26%	
School Organisation Plan 2013-17 (high)				-0.18%	7.96%	1.77%	
SCAP forecast figures 2012				0.00%	-0.18%	0.96%	-0.78%
Brighton forecast return - 21.8.13 [SCAP]					0.00%	1.70%	1.82%



### SCAP forecasts for Y7 pupils compared to PLASC observed numbers



## Year 7 to Year 11

Please see the following pages for numeric and graphic analysis of the Year R to Y6 forecasts. The table showing the percentage difference between the forecast and observed number on roll is colour coded – the shading indicates the absolute percentage variation and the text colour indicates whether it is positive (light text) – an over-forecast – or negative (dark text) – an under-forecast. *It should be remembered that a difference of 1% on an aggregate cohort of 11,000 at the secondary phase represents 110 pupils.*

The Year 7 to 11 forecasts have improved, the two most recent having a good citywide level of accuracy. Earlier forecasts tended to go awry after a relatively short period. There has been a bias towards over forecasting. It may be that changes to the organisation of secondary education in the city, with the academisation of two schools and the creation of a free school as well as some major rebuilding has disrupted patterns of enrolment. If future forecasts are to be reliable then it is important that there is further work to strengthen the Y7 forecasts, as these will cascade through to future years.

The graph shows that the earlier forecasts were not accurate, substantially over forecasting future numbers. Recent forecasts using a more sophisticated methodology have been much better.

Whilst the tendency to over- forecast should be addressed, this should not detract from the known reality of the bulge in numbers progressing through the primary phase who will need secondary places over the next decade. There can be no doubt that planning how to meet the additional need is a major priority for the city.







Whilst demography will undoubtedly lead to rising secondary rolls, it is clearly important that parents not only have access to secondary school places, but that they express a positive preference for the schools available.



**Year 7 to Year 11**

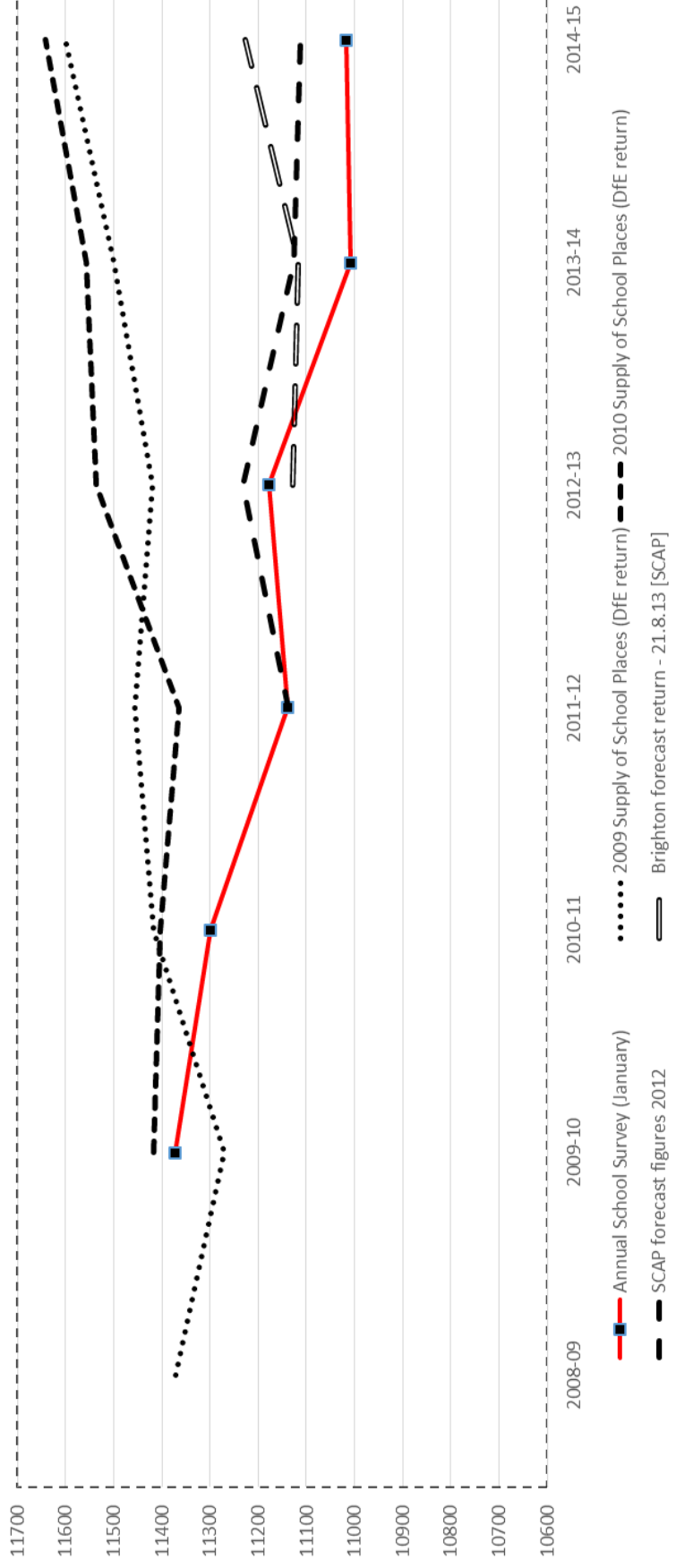
	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Annual School Survey (January)		<b>11373</b>	<b>11299</b>	<b>11138</b>	<b>11178</b>	<b>11009</b>	<b>11018</b>						
2009 Supply of School Places (DfE return)	<b>11371</b>	11270	11417	11457	11420	11500	11600	11650					
2010 Supply of School Places (DfE return)		11417	11404	11364	11536	11557	11643	11775	12014				
2011 10 October forecast workbook				11189	11320	11480	11584	11697	12041	12277	12646	13112	13459
SCAP forecast figures 2012				11138	11231	11127	11113	11223	11444	11610	11973		
Brighton forecast return - 21.8.13 [SCAP]					11128	11117	11227	11336	11557	11923	12299	12694	

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Annual School Survey (January)		<b>11373</b>	<b>11299</b>	<b>11138</b>	<b>11178</b>	<b>11009</b>	<b>11018</b>
2009 Supply of School Places (DfE return)		-0.91%	1.04%	2.86%	2.16%	4.43%	5.28%
2010 Supply of School Places (DfE return)		0.39%	0.93%	2.03%	3.10%	4.50%	5.67%
2011 10 October forecast workbook				0.46%	1.27%	4.20%	5.14%
SCAP forecast figures 2012				0.00%	0.47%	1.07%	0.86%
Brighton forecast return - 21.8.13 [SCAP]					-0.45%	0.98%	1.90%

	Forecast within 1% of PLASC
	Forecast within 2% of PLASC
	Forecast within 3% of PLASC
	Forecast within 4% of PLASC
	Forecast within 5% of PLASC
	Forecast more than 5% above (or below) PLASC
<b>Black</b>	Black text = forecast lower than PLASC
<b>Light</b>	Light text = forecast higher than PLASC

*The higher up the spectrum the closer the forecast is to the observed number on roll at PLASC*

SCAP forecasts for Y7-Y11 pupils compared to PLASC observed numbers



## Conclusion

The Brighton and Hove pupil forecasting system is remarkably simple requiring only GP Registration data supplied by postcode, and current numbers on roll for the primary phase, and the “drop-out” rate between Year 6 and Year 7 at the postcode sector level for the secondary phase.

There is an observed stable relationship between the number of children on the GP register and those who subsequently require a school place. This relationship is sufficiently stable to provide a reasonably accurate forecast. The ratio is adjusted from time to time to reflect any changes that might be observed. Most local authorities use a similar approach as a starting point for Year R forecasts. The “drop out” rate methodology is an improvement on the earlier system for forecasting Year 7 demand, although there is some instability, perhaps due to the changes in the organisation of secondary schools in the city in recent years.

Brighton and Hove then uses a 100% cohort survival rate to forecast older age groups. This too seems good enough to produce reasonably accurate forecasts at citywide level, although many authorities calculate survival ratios based on observed data – often using a three year rolling and weighted average. It may well be that Brighton and Hove’s approach is just as accurate, as there is much unexplained random variation in year to year cohort survival, particularly at school level.

What is unusual about Brighton and Hove’s forecasts is that they do not include school level forecasts. It could be argued that these are unnecessary. They are not currently required for SCAP returns, and neither are they generally published in School Organisation Plans (or similar documents) even by those authorities that produce school level forecasts for their own managerial purposes, and to support decision making in relation to specific school organisation or admissions challenges. Undoubtedly not making school level forecasts makes the whole system much simpler, and presumably saves considerable cost and officer time. However school level forecasts might be valuable for determining where and how additional places should be added in order to take into account parental preference as well as the geographical location of forecast population growth.

The DfE gives advice on the preparation of forecasts (Department for Education (June 2014), School Capacity (SCAP) Survey 2014: Guide to forecasting pupil numbers in school place planning, see **References**). Whilst this does not make explicit reference as to whether school level forecasts should be prepared, this can be inferred from many of its recommended approaches:

You also need historical data to determine past trends, for example, to measure the pattern of how the number of year 6 children historically relates to the number of year 7 children in the following year. **At school level** you could do this by looking at trends of pupil transfer from primary schools or pupils within geographic areas. (p 12 Section 3: Making Your Projections)

The role of school level forecasts is mentioned in the context of the local authority case studies appended to the guidance:

## Cambridgeshire County Council

Schools are sent the forecasts for comment before the authority releases their final forecasts.

...

Individual primary school forecasts are adjusted for expected major changes in house building within the catchment area, where the development(s) have full planning permission. (pp 27-28 Cambridgeshire County Council case study)

## Essex County Council

Tables reporting on accuracy of forecasts at local authority level and **at school level** summarised at local authority and district level are published each year in Commissioning School Places in Essex (a publication available on ECC's website). (p 29 in respect of a case study of Essex County Council's methodology).

## Sheffield City Council

Step 1: change in number on role (NOR) – from each snapshot the NOR was **aggregated to school level** and broken down by national curriculum year group (NCY). The difference is then calculated to give the change in NOR by NCY **for each school**.

...

Step 3: aggregate pupil movement **to school level** – the final step works up the individual pupil in-year movements **to school level**. The procedure counts the number of starters and leavers **for each school**, distinguishing whether pupil is new to the maintained system, transferring internally, or leaving the maintained system.

Whilst there is a spread of in-year admissions across the city, there are clear pockets of high mobility. This is monitored at **individual school level** and updated very frequently. (p. 30-31 Sheffield City Council case study)

It is for Brighton and Hove City Council to decide whether it wants to include school level forecasts within its system, or whether it feels that its citywide and planning area forecasts of expected demand meet its requirements, and no further level of detail is called for.

## Recommendations

1. Senior decision makers (officers and elected members) should agree a specification for the forecasts they require, taking into account the likely school organisation decisions that will need to be taken and the level of public scrutiny this might entail; the requirement to produce an annual school capacity return including forecasts for the Department for Education; continuing to produce a School Organisation Plan; the Council's own strategic decision making around investment in school buildings, agreeing admissions arrangements including permanent or temporary changes to published admission numbers; and planning budgets at school and LA level.
2. The specification should include:
  - a. The frequency of forecasts – I would recommend annual
  - b. The timing of forecasts – I would recommend somewhat in advance of the requirement to produce a school capacity return to the DfE.
  - c. The date to which the forecast refers – I would recommend mid-January to coincide with the PLASC, thereby allowing easy comparison between forecast and census numbers.
  - d. The data to be included – I would recommend as a minimum (as now):
    - i. citywide number expected in YR (for a minimum of three years ahead) and in Y6 (for a minimum of ten years ahead)
    - ii. citywide number on roll in each national curriculum year (same forecast horizons)
    - iii. citywide total number on roll in the primary (YR to Y6), statutory secondary (Y7 to Y11) and post 16 (Y12 and Y13+) phases
    - iv. citywide total number on roll post 16
    - v. demand for places in planning areas, particularly at YR and Y7 (i.e. as at present the number living in specified areas who are likely to require maintained school places)
  - e. I would recommend that the following accompany each set of forecasts:
    - i. a brief factual statement on the accuracy of previous forecasts in the light of observed data and comments on any significant variance
    - ii. A brief statement setting out the methodology used
  - f. In addition I would recommend:
    - i. An estimate of the likely number of future births using ONS population projections, or similar demographic projections, to extend primary forecasts beyond the three year horizon, suitably caveated.
    - ii. An estimate of the additional pupils that may move into the city as a result of housing development, using input from Planning colleagues on housing trajectories, and expressed as an additional number to the main forecast. If no such development is expected, or no additional pupils are likely to arise, then this should be explicitly stated.
  - g. Decision makers should consider whether school level forecasts should be produced at primary phase, secondary phase or for all schools. To do this would require significant additional work, a more sophisticated methodology, and thus additional cost (or the sacrifice of other managerial

activities). However, it would help to identify schools at risk of low numbers, surplus places and consequent unviability; or under pressure from growing populations, or very high levels of parental preference. It could help schools and the council plan budgets by giving them more advance warning of changes in numbers on roll. It would also enable the methodology and accuracy of the forecasts to be more rigorously monitored.

3. The Council should decide if it wishes to produce a School Organisation Plan (or equivalent), and if so its frequency. I would recommend that it does so either every two or three years, with a brief update including revised forecasts in the intermediate years. All these should be put in the public domain and shared (proactively) with schools. The previous Brighton and Hove School Organisation Plans seem entirely appropriate in terms of format and level of detail, but it may be helpful to look at the equivalent documents from other authorities for ideas about how it might be developed. For example, some SOPs attempt to look further ahead. See Appendix B for extracts from the relevant documents. Links are provided in the **References** section.
4. When making or commenting on school organisation proposals the Council should, so far as possible, rely on the annually produced forecast to justify its position. One good robust forecast per school year should be adequate for all school organisation decision making.
5. Further improvement to the secondary school forecasting methodology is recommended to improve the medium and long term level of accuracy. There is a strong case for making secondary forecasts at school level – even if primary forecasts are at city and planning group area only. To some extent this is recognised already in the special treatment given to the denominational schools, where a planning area/catchment area approach does not work well. With some significant changes to school organisation in recent years including the establishment of two academies and a free school, and the disruption associated with some major school building projects, it is not surprising that secondary forecasting has been difficult. However the underlying demography of Brighton and Hove (as well as nationally) clearly indicates that the population bulge currently in the primary phase will move through to the secondary phase over the next ten years. This will inevitably require new school capacity to be commissioned, and thus the need for robust forecasts which are likely to be subject to close scrutiny.
6. A more sophisticated forecasting system would entail additional costs. Options could include developing a new in-house approach based on the methods set out the DfE guidance, (this would depend on there being data and/or ICT staff with the skills to undertake this work); commissioning a bespoke system for Brighton and Hove, which would then be maintained in-house by being populated with the necessary data each year; asking a neighbouring authority to undertake forecasting using its existing staff and systems; or purchasing a commercially available forecasting service. It should be recognised that local authorities with more sophisticated systems generally have one or more dedicated staff assigned to the task. The most elaborate systems, such as that of the Greater London Authority or Essex County Council have a team of staff and use a very broad range of input data, which is time consuming to collect and analyse.

## References

Department for Education (June 2014), School Capacity (SCAP) Survey 2014: Guide to forecasting pupil numbers in school place planning

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/321711/SCAP\\_guide\\_to\\_forecasting.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/321711/SCAP_guide_to_forecasting.pdf)

East Sussex Education Commissioning Plan 2015

<https://new.eastsussex.gov.uk/educationandlearning/management/download/>

Hampshire School Place Planning Framework 2013-2018

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/schools/school-places.htm>

Kent County Council - Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2015-2019

[http://www.kent.gov.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0018/16236/Commissioning-plan-for-education-provision-in-Kent-2015-2019.pdf](http://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/16236/Commissioning-plan-for-education-provision-in-Kent-2015-2019.pdf)

Portsmouth City Council School Organisation Plan 2013

<https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/documents-external/cou-policies-school-organisation-plan.pdf>

Southampton City Council School Organisation Plan 2014

<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/policies/School-Organisation-Plan-2014-2024.pdf>

West Sussex Planning School Places 2015

[https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/learning/west\\_sussex\\_grid\\_for\\_learning/management\\_info\\_services/school\\_organisation\\_and/planning\\_school\\_places\\_2015.aspx](https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/learning/west_sussex_grid_for_learning/management_info_services/school_organisation_and/planning_school_places_2015.aspx)

## **Appendix A**

### **A description of the forecasts supplied by Brighton and Hove City Council**

**This appendix describes the forecasts supplied by Brighton and Hove City Council, explaining the methodology used and outputs produced. They are presented in chronological order, and show how the model has been adapted and improved over six years. A total of 13 forecasts have been provided of which four are SCAP returns to the DfE [two not yet included in this appendix]; two are School Organisation Plans, and the remainder “forecast workbooks” – internal working documents.**

#### **1. 2009 Supply of School Places (DfE return)**

Date: 27 July 2009

General description: a PDF of the annual return on “The Supply of School Places” to DfE.

Detail: A list of all schools with number on roll and net capacity for all schools in 2009 and 2008, and a forecast of total number on roll for: a) Reception to Year 6; b) Years 7 – 11; c) Years 12 and 13; and d) Total secondary. There was the option of giving “LA District” forecasts – not relevant to Brighton and Hove as a unitary authority.

There is also a brief description of the methodology used (live births, GP registration, PLASC, emphasising that it is not based on estimates provided by schools. Primary numbers adjusted downwards to take account of net emigration through the age range. A weighted average for primary secondary transfer plus net emigration. No changes in boundaries or age of transfer anticipated. Housing developments “are taken into account as the department is notified of them.” 4 or 5 large scale housing developments planned – but not taken into account until more definite.

Observation: this only provides citywide forecasts at the level of total YR to 6 (primary), total Y7 to Y11 (statutory secondary), and total Y12 and 13 (sixth form).

#### **2. Summary of School Data (DfE return)**

Date: 2010

General description: an Excel spreadsheet of the annual return on “The Supply of School Places” to DfE.

Detail: A list of all schools with number on roll and net capacity for all schools in January and May 2010 on roll for each national curriculum year group. A forecast for expected numbers in each national curriculum year group is provided to 2014/15 for YR to Y6, and to 2016/17 for Y7 to Y13.

There is also a similar brief description of the methodology used. Interestingly the forecast cohort survival rate is generally shown to be 100% - including primary to secondary transfer.



### 3. 2010 10 October forecast workbook (Excel spreadsheet)

Date: October 2010

General description: an officer working spreadsheet not intended for publication, including citywide data comparing GP registration data with number on roll, and workings relating to two sub-city areas, and three year forecasts for YR only

Sheet 1: "summary"

Number of children on GP register as of 2010 with dates of birth falling into given school year ranges from 1 September 1999 to 31 August 2000, to 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010, compared with total (citywide) numbers of children on roll in September 2011.

A percentage is calculated, **where %age children looking for a school place = YR/GP Reg \* 100** for age groups born to 1 September 2006 to 31 August 2007. These percentages range between a low of 88.09% (born 03 to 04) and a high of 90.04% (born 06 to 07)

Future numbers for age groups born thereafter assume 89.5% of GP registered children will be looking for a school place, i.e. to Year R admissions in September 2014. This figure seems to be based on judgement rather than calculation, reflecting the average take up and the most recent slightly higher figure. Forecasts for three years ahead are provided.

Sheet 2: "Hove"

This sheet copies all the information for the previous sheet plus an analysis of children living in postcode sectors BN3 1 to BN3 8. There is no evident forecast within it (although many columns are untitled).

Sheet 3: "Westdene"

This sheet copies all the information for the previous sheet plus an analysis of children living in postcode sector BN1 5. This sheet includes a three year forecast for the BN1 5 postcode sector. It uses the same percentage of GP registration data (89.5%) as the citywide analysis.

Sheet 4: "school year by postal sector"

This sheet comprises an analysis of GP registration data as of 2010 by school year group and all postcode sectors in Brighton and Hove, and a comparison with 2009 data.

Observation:

This working spreadsheet is clearly intended for internal use only. It provides a three year forecast of the likely number of YRs for the city as a whole, and for one postcode sector. Its method is to compare the number of children on the GP register with the number on school rolls, and assume that a similar proportion of future cohorts will require a school place. It does not forecast

the effect of YR admissions on the total size of the primary school population (YR-Y6), not does it forecast Y7 admissions.

#### 4. 2011 10 October forecast workbook (Excel spreadsheet)

Date: October 2011

General Description: An analysis of GP register by postcode sector, compared with pupils on roll, sub-district analysis and forecast for primary and secondary numbers

Sheet 1: "postal sectors"

An analysis of the GP registrations as of 18<sup>th</sup> October 2011, for school year groups from 1992/93 to 2010/11 by all postcode sectors in Brighton and Hove

Sheet 2: "overall comparison"

An analysis of the same data, but with Y12 and above excluded and calculation of the relative size of younger cohorts in each postcode sector.

Sheet 3: "% pupil places"

Number of children on GP register as of 2011 with dates of birth falling into given school year ranges from 1 September 1996 to 31 August 1997, to 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011, compared with total (citywide) numbers of children on roll in September 2012.

A percentage is calculated, **where %age children looking for a school place = YR/GP Reg \* 100** for age groups born to 1 September 2006 to 31 August 2007. These percentages range between a low of 87.98% (born 00 to 01) and a high of 90.42% (born 06 to 07)

Future numbers for age groups born thereafter assume 89.5% of GP registered children will be looking for a school place, i.e. to Year R admissions in September 2014. This figure seems to be based on judgement rather than calculation, reflecting the average take up and the most recent slightly higher figure. Forecasts for three years ahead are provided.

Sheets 4 to 6: "hove", "westdene" and "portslade"

These sheets contain sub-district analysis including forecasts of expected resident YRs, and a list of the primary schools in the sub-district with the number of forms of entry.

Sheet 7: "forecasts"

This is the principal output worksheet. It contains actual numbers (including YR offers) for the current year (2011/12) and primary forecasts up to school year 2017/18 for all year groups from YR to Y6. To school year 2015/16 Year R forecasts are based on 89.5% of the GP registration data (although not identical with the figures on Sheet 2). An estimate of future YRs (as yet unborn) appears to assume similar numbers to the latest available year.

Subsequent age groups are assumed to have a 100% survival rate for the remainder of their time in the primary phase.

A forecast is also provided for secondary numbers including BACA and PACA to 2021/22. Y7 numbers assume a 100% survival rate from the previous year's Y6. Similar survival rates are assumed through to Y11.

## 5. 2012 09 September forecast workbook (Excel spreadsheet)

Date: September 2012

General Description: An analysis of GP register by postcode sector, compared with pupils on roll, sub-district analysis and forecast for primary and secondary numbers

Sheet 1: "By Postal sector"

A similar postcode sector analysis to previous sheets, based on GP registration data from 25<sup>th</sup> September 2012

Sheet 2: "By Ward"

An analysis of the same data, except by ward rather than postcode sector.

Sheet 3: "Primary planning areas"

An analysis of GP registered and pupil on roll data and a citywide three year forecast assuming on this occasion 90% of GP registered pupils requiring a school place. [Brighton and Hove officers observed: We had noticed an increase in the percentage of pupils on GP registers looking for a school place and therefore increased this percentage accordingly.]

There is then a primary planning area forecast for the 10 primary planning areas: Portslade, South Central Hove, Hangleton and Hove Park, West Blatchington and North Hangleton, Westdene to Seafront, Hollinbury and Preston Park to Seafront, Moulscomb and Coldean, Patcham, Queens Park and Whitehawk, and The "Deans".

Each planning area comprises one or more postcode sectors. The primary schools within the relevant sectors are listed at the head of the column, below which follow the GP registrations by school year of birth for that sector, and a forecast of future need based on 90% of the GP registered number. Further columns give the number of places available at the listed schools and a calculated shortfall or surplus. ***It should be stressed that these forecasts simply relate to the number of children living in specified primary planning areas: it is not necessarily the case that their parents will seek a place in that area (although many will): postcode sectors are invisible on the ground and parents are likely to seek places at schools which best meet their needs and preferences. Indeed there are some postcode sectors where there are no schools, and others where there are several. [Brighton and Hove colleagues observe: The planning areas were chosen because the postcode boundaries tend to be barriers that parents will not cross in terms of expressing a school preference such as a railway line or a particular road etc.]***

#### Sheet 4: “secondary workings”

The first part of the worksheet lists all secondary schools in the City with details of number on roll based on the May 2013 census. Some planning areas comprise one school, others up to three as shown below:

<b>Planning Area</b>	<b>Schools</b>
Portslade	Portslade Aldridge Community Academy
Hove	Hove Park Blatchington Mill Cardinal Newman
Brighton	Dorothy Stringer Varndean
Patcham	Patcham High
The Deans	Longhill High
Moulsecoomb and Coldean	Brighton Aldridge Community Academy

The percentage share of pupils at schools in each planning area in each year group is calculated.

There is then an analysis of offers of places for 2013.

#### Sheet 5: “Secondary planning areas”

These comprise analysis of the number of GP registered children/young people in each planning area (Brighton ACA, Blatchington and Hove Park, Longhill, Portslade ACA, Patcham, and Stringer and Varndean), compared with the total number on roll in the May census. A percentage of GP registered young people at secondary schools in Brighton and Hove is calculated. The percentages calculated range from 82.3% (Y11 in September 2012) to a high of 84.6% (Y10 in September 2012). Forecasts of future Y7 intakes is based on 87.27%, although the reason for choosing this figure is not given. This gives forecasts forward to September 2022.

The first area to be forecast is for the area of Portslade (comprising PACA and Kings School) which is forecast to have 4.43% of those requiring a school place, then for Hove (comprising Blatchington Mill, Hove Park and Cardinal Newman) which is expected to have 43.62% of those seeking a place; Brighton (Dorothy Stringer and Varndean) – 27.75%; Patcham (Patcham High) – 9.44%; The Deans (Longhill) 10.22%; and Moulsecoomb (BACA) – 4.74%. These are then totalled to provide a citywide forecast for the total secondary demand to 2020.

#### Observation:

The forecast relies on there being a stable percentage of GP registered children and young people who require a school place. It does not assume any net migration which might change the size of cohorts before they reach admission age.

## **6. Brighton and Hove School Organisation Plan 2012 to 2016**

Date: unknown

Description: a School Organisation Plan setting out future need for school places. It contains primary forecasts for Year R to Y6 and secondary forecasts for Y7 to Y11. There is no detailed description of the methodology used. Beyond the use of GP registration data. All subsequent year groups after YR assume a 100% survival rate, including transfer from primary to secondary phase.

## **7. 2013 10 September forecast workbook (Excel spreadsheet)**

Date: September 2013 [?]

General Description: An analysis of GP register as of 14<sup>th</sup> November 2013 by postcode sector, compared with pupils on roll, sub-district analysis and forecast for primary and secondary numbers

Sheet 1: "By Postal Sector"

As in earlier forecast workbooks.

Sheet 2: "The Deans"

A three year forecast for YR admissions for the specified area using the methodology previously described, and applying a 90% ratio between GP registration and school enrolments

Sheet 3: "By Ward"

Analysis of GP reg data by ward.

Sheet 4: "By Catchment"

An analysis of the GP reg data by catchment. As Cardinal Newman and Kings School do not have catchments, they are not mentioned, however the Brighton and Hove resident children would be somewhere within the city's GP reg data.

Sheet 5: "Original planning areas"

An analysis of GP reg and forecast of YR numbers based on 90%. Same areas as used in Sheet 3 of 2012 09 September forecast workbook.

Sheet 6: "BN1 to BN4"

A three year forecast for YR admissions for the specified area using the methodology previously described, and applying a 90% ratio between GP registration and school enrolments

Observation: no secondary forecast included

## **8. Brighton and Hove School Organisation Plan 2013 to 2017**

Date: 27<sup>th</sup> March 2014 (approved by Council)

Description: a School Organisation Plan setting out future need for school places. It contains primary forecasts for Year R and secondary forecasts for Y7. It describes the methodology used, explaining the use of GP registration data, analysed by postcodes, and historic trends of enrolment in the state maintained sector. It explains that planning areas are not catchment areas and that there is no expectation that children living in the planning area will necessarily attend a school in that area, it does nevertheless show the surplus or shortfall of places for each area.

It explains the secondary forecast methodology, again using GP registration data by catchment area, and the way in which Cardinal Newman and Kings School are treated, drawing pupils from across the city. Two forecasts are offered: a low forecast based on 84.5% of GP registered children requiring a Y7 place, and a high forecast assuming 87.5%. It is stated that “in recent years [the transfer rate] has been 84.5%. The forecast is presented simply as the total citywide demand for Y7 places.

## **9. 2014 10 October forecast workbook (Excel spreadsheet)**

Date: September 2014

General Description: An analysis of GP register as of 14<sup>th</sup> October 2014 by postcode sector, compared with pupils on roll, sub-district analysis and forecast for primary and secondary numbers

Sheet 1: “By Postal Sector”

As in earlier forecast workbooks.

Sheet 2: “By Catchment”

Forecast for expected Y7 numbers to 2025 by catchment area and for Cardinal Newman and Kings School combined. The forecast assumes a given percentage of GP registered pupils will require a school place in each of the catchment areas and deducts a number from each catchment expected to go to the two denominational schools,.

Sheet 3: “Planning areas”

Forecast for expected number of YRs to 2018 based on 90% of GP registered children requiring a place. An analysis and three year forecast to 2018 follows for each of the planning areas.

## **10.2014 12 December forecast workbook (Excel spreadsheet)**

Date: December 2014

General Description:

This is a reworking of the previous spreadsheet to model various scenarios. It models scenarios based on PACA with a PAN of 240 and with a PAN at 180. It calculates surplus and shortfalls assuming in three scenarios: a) that all places at Cardinal Newman and Kings Schools were offered to Brighton and Hove pupils, b) that a proportion are offered to non-Brighton and Hove pupils; and c) assuming a city wide surplus of 150 is desirable to enable the exercise of parental preference.

**11.2015 05 May forecast workbook (Excel spreadsheet)**

Date: May 2015

General description:

This is a reworking using updated GP registration data, and modelling the same scenarios as previously.

## Appendix B: Extracts from other local authority documents describing their forecasting systems

*[My highlights in italics]*

### East Sussex Education Commissioning Plan 2015

#### 4.2 Schools Forecasting

4.2.1 School place planning predictions in this document are derived mainly from the Council's pupil forecasting model. The version of the forecasts used to inform this plan is the January 2014 Pupil Census Based Projections as updated on 1 July 2014.

4.2.2 The model produces forecasts of the number of children and young people in state funded primary and secondary schools in East Sussex (including voluntary aided schools, free schools and academies).

4.2.3 The model forecasts pupil numbers:

- Countywide
- For each district and borough
- For each primary and secondary school place planning area (based largely on admissions areas)
- *For each individual primary (including infant and junior) and secondary school*

4.2.4 The forecasts are used for a number of purposes. These include:

- Pupil place planning, including inputs to the Education Commissioning Plan
- To prepare the annual School Capacity Return to central government
- To inform S106 development contributions assessments
- To help the Council respond to strategic planning and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) consultations on future infrastructure needs
- To inform decisions on future Published Admission Numbers (PANs) and input to statutory consultations

4.2.5 In producing pupil forecasts a number of key factors are taken into account. These include

- Existing and planned capacities of school places as well as published intake numbers
- Existing numbers of pupils in schools (from pupil census data)
- Future births and resulting primary Reception year numbers



- Parental preference for all-through primary and infant Reception year, junior Year 3 and secondary Year 7 places as expressed through the school admissions system
- Transfer (cohort survival) rates between school year groups
- Transfers and transfer rates between infant and junior and primary and secondary schools
- Staying-on rates into school sixth forms
- Additional pupils arising from new housing development in each area

4.2.6 For academic year 2014/15, Reception year predictions in this plan are based mainly on Admissions Allocations. For 2015/16 and 2016/17 account is taken of both GP registration and live birth data. The 2017/18 Reception year forecasts are based mainly on GP registration data. In the absence of hard data on children already born, reception year predictions for years 2018/19 and beyond are based on ESCC's Policy Based Population Projections of future births.

4.2.7 ESCC regularly reviews and refines its forecasting methodology to ensure that its pupil forecasts are as accurate as possible. The countywide three year forward forecast made in 2011 for Academic Year 2013/14 achieved the following levels of accuracy:

- Primary reception year: (- 0.4%)
- Primary total number on roll :(+0.8%)
- Secondary Year 7: (+1.7%)
- Secondary total number on roll: (+1.2%)

## **Hampshire School Place Planning Framework 2013 – 2018**

### **Forecast:**

The reception year intake is estimated using Small Area Population Forecasts (SAPF) of 4-year-olds produced by HCC Research & Intelligence Group. Other year groups are based on the number of pupils on roll from the January School Census. The expected pupil yield from new housing is also produced by HCC Research & Intelligence Group.

*Our forecasting model works out a participation rate for each primary/infant school, which is the number of Year R pupils as a percentage of the estimated number of 4-year-olds in the catchment area. A weighted average for the past three years is calculated and projected forward to forecast the next 5 years. A similar process is used for junior/secondary schools using the number of Year 3/7 pupils as a percentage of the Year 2/6 pupils in their feeder school(s) respectively. The remaining year groups are rolled forward with an adjustment for historic year-on-year changes and for additional pupils due to any housing developments within the*

school's catchment area during this period. The number of pupils in school sixth forms is assumed to be constant over the next 7 years.

In rural areas, schools' SAPF numbers are relatively small which often results in out catchment children attending these schools. This impacts on the participation rate which, due to the nature of the forecasting model, continues to add these children proportionally when the SAPF rises, thereby inflating numbers beyond reality. Such areas are detailed in the planning area information below.

## **Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2015 – 2019**

### **8. Forecasting Methodology**

8.1 To inform the process of forecasting Primary school pupil numbers, KCC receives information from the Kent Primary Care Agency to track the number of births and location of pre-school age children. The pre-school age population is forecast into Primary school rolls according to trend-based intake patterns by ward area. Secondary school forecasts are calculated by projecting forward the Year 6 cohort, also according to trend-based intake patterns. If the size of the Year 6 cohort is forecast to rise, the projected Year 7 cohort size at Secondary schools will also be forecast to rise.

8.2 It is recognised that past trends are not always an indication of the future. However, for the Secondary phase, travel to school patterns are firmly established, parental preference is arguably more constant than in the Primary phase and large numbers of pupils are drawn from a wide area. Consequently, forecasts have been found to be accurate.

8.3 *Pupil forecasts are compared with school capacities* to give the projected surplus or deficit of places in each area. It is important to note that where a deficit is identified within the next few years work will already be underway to address the situation.

8.4 The forecasting process is trend-based, which means that relative popularity, intake patterns, and inward migration factors from the previous five years are assumed to continue throughout the forecasting period. Migration factors will reflect the trend-based level of house-building in an area over the previous five years, but also the general level of in and out migration, including movements into and out of existing housing. An area that has a large positive migration factor may be due to recent large-scale housebuilding, and an area with a large negative migration factor may reflect a net outmigration of families. These migration factors are calculated at pre-school level by ward area and also at school level for transition between year groups, as the forecasts are progressed.

8.5 Information about expected levels of new housing, through the yearly Housing Information Audits (HIA) and Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategies is the most accurate reflection of short, medium and long term building projects at the local level. Where a large development is expected, compared with little or no

previous housing-building in the area, a manual adjustment to the forecasts may be required to reflect the likely growth in pupil numbers more accurately.

8.5 Pupil product rates (the expected number of pupils from new house-building) are informed by the MORI New Build Survey 2005. KCC has developed a system that combines these new-build pupil product rates (PPRs) with the stock housing PPR of the local area to model the impact of new housing developments together with changing local demographics over time. This information is shared with District authorities to inform longer term requirements for education infrastructure and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) discussions at an early stage.

8.6 Forecasting future demand for school places can never be completely precise given the broad assumptions which have to be made about movements in and out of any given locality, the pace of individual developments, patterns of occupation and not least the parental preference for places at individual schools. This will be a function of geography, school reputation, past and present achievement levels and the availability of alternative provision.

...

8.8 Over the last five years the forecasts for the Primary school roll in Kent have been accurate to within one percent on 19 of these 25 points of comparison

...

8.10 The Secondary forecasts have been accurate to within 1% on 16 of the 20 points of comparison, with three points of the 2010-based outputs being over forecast

## **Portsmouth**

### **5. Current pupil place forecasting methodology**

#### **5.1 Sources of data**

Actual numbers for pupil data are derived from the School Census. The schools produce this information from their Management Information Systems, using guidance provided by the Department for Education with support from the Local Authority.

Pupil forecasts are based upon Small Area Population Forecasts (SAPF) provided by Hampshire County Council Research and Intelligence group in the early spring of each year to determine the population of 4 year old children. These are modified within Portsmouth City Council Geographical Information System (GIS) to reflect primary school catchment areas. Information on new/demolished buildings is obtained from the City Planning Department when forecasting numbers for individual primary school catchments.

Actual and forecast numbers of pupils from the primary forecasts are fed into the secondary forecasts.

In the past the SAPF forecasting model has been highly accurate, at a time when there has been significant surplus capacity within the system to meet the level of demand. Since 2010 this has not been the case due to the impact of increased birth rates both nationally and locally and a number of other economic and social factors that the current forecasting model has not been able to predict.

It is therefore recommended that a 'Social / Economic allowance factor' be built into future forecasting methods to make an allowance for the increased demand against forecast that has been seen in both 2011 and 2012 pupil numbers. This should be continuously reviewed to ensure future pupil numbers are adequately planned for.

The factor applied is based upon a 3 year weighted average of the difference between original forecasts and Actual Year R pupil numbers.

Discussions are continuing with neighbouring authorities and the forecasting methodology will continue to be reviewed to ensure that any predicted change in pupil numbers is captured early to allow for adequate planning of school places

## 5.2 How the raw data is processed to arrive at final figures

Forecasting at the primary and secondary aggregate level, as given here, is based on the cohort survival method that assumes pupil numbers will roll forward from one year group to the next at the end of each academic year. Year on year changes, which may be influenced by such factors as migration, turbulence, demographic and building changes, are projected forward by using a 5-year weighted average.

The general SAPF model produces forecasts of the usually resident population by age and sex in each Census Output Area (OA) in the City and is based on: census; birth and child health data; and dwelling supply information.

## 5.3 Primary forecasts

*At the individual school level*, the primary forecasting system collects the number of 4-year olds within the boundaries of each school's catchment for forecasting. Using data from the historical school censuses, the participation rate (PR) is worked out for each year. The level of participation (as a percentage) is then used to project forward using a 5 year weighted average, adjusted for residuals, to give the expected number of 4-year olds on roll in future years.

The expected numbers of 7 year olds transferring into Junior schools are calculated similarly, using the number of Year 6 pupils in the feeder schools and applying an adjusted 5 year weighted average participation rate.

For other year groups, the adjusted 5 year weighted average year-on-year change is applied to each cohort as it is rolled forward and modified to take account of past and expected changes to dwelling stock in the catchment.

## 5.4 Secondary forecasts

At the aggregate level, as with the primary sector, secondary pupil forecasts are based on 5 year weighted average participation rates based on actual (School Census) and forecast numbers from the primary sector.

With the advent of catchment areas within the Local Authority for the first time in 1999, *individual school forecasts* are now also derived from Geographical Information Systems (GIS) analysis of primary aged pupils living within each school's catchment. This data is adjusted for pupil inputs (e.g. from neighbouring Local Authorities) and outputs (e.g. to other Local Authorities and losses to the independent sector). The values of these various inputs and outputs are derived from analysis of the Secondary Transfer Database which contains details of pupils applying to LA and other secondary schools.

## **Appendix C: The Consultant**

Andrew Hind was a senior officer reporting directly to the Chief Education Officer/Director of Children's Services in two unitary authorities (Reading and Southampton). He has undertaken extended consultancy assignments in relation to school organisation, including validating school forecasting systems, in several authorities including Essex County Council (10 months) and Kent County Council (15 months).

He was awarded an MSc in Demography with Distinction in 2014 by the University of Southampton, and is now a PhD candidate at the same university, researching the impact of education on internal migration in the UK. He is an Associate Member of the Association of Directors of Children's Services, and a Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society.

# **Stakeholders' perspectives on the secondary school admissions procedures in Brighton and Hove**

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**Education Research Centre, University of Brighton**

**February 2016**

## Acknowledgements

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### **Research team**

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## 1. Executive summary

### Introduction

The transition from primary to secondary school is a social and academic turning point for adolescents and, for some, can be a stressful process. It is, therefore, important to understand stakeholders' perspectives and experiences of the procedures which govern the allocation of secondary schools, and for these perspectives to inform the development of school allocation procedures. This research aims to present an informed account of various stakeholders' experiences of Brighton and Hove's secondary school admissions' procedures. It has been commissioned by Brighton and Hove City Council (B&HCC), and forms part of a broader review of the secondary school admissions' procedures within Brighton and Hove.

The report is based primarily on visits to eight secondary schools from five of the six catchment areas within Brighton and Hove, and to five primary schools from five of the six catchment areas, including one primary school within the catchment area not covered by the participating secondary schools. The secondary schools included in the research comprised of schools within dual school and single school catchment areas, and academies and faith schools. Focus group discussions and interviews were held with a total of 29 students who attended their first choice of secondary school; 24 students who did not attend their first choice secondary school; 13 parents<sup>1</sup> whose children attended their first choice of secondary school; 6 parents whose children did not attend their first choice secondary school; and 10 members of staff from secondary schools with responsibility for the transition of students from primary to secondary school. Interviews were also conducted with members of staff within the five participating primary schools who oversaw the transition of students from primary to secondary school.

The report also includes a review of relevant literature, and the following statistical data were collected to provide contextual information for the report:

- For each year from 2006-2014, the percentage of students within B&H who were: allocated their 'first choice' school; allocated their 'second choice' school; and those not allocated any of their first three choices of schools.
- For each year from 2007-2014, the number of appeals submitted/dismissed/upheld within B&H.

### Main findings

Throughout this executive summary and the main report, where words or phrases are written in *italics*, this denotes direct quotes from participating stakeholders.

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'parent' is used throughout the report to denote both parents and carers.

## 1. An overview of stakeholders' perspectives on and experiences of B&HCC's secondary schools admissions process

- Parents and students considered that being able to state their three most preferred secondary schools was a positive aspect of the school allocation process, however, many considered that they had to wait too long between submitting their school preferences and being informed of their allocated secondary school.
- Most parents found the on-line application system straightforward. However, some parents experienced difficulties with the application process, in particular parents who were not able to read well, and those who did not have Internet access or an email account.
- Within some primary schools, each academic year there were cases where parents had not submitted a secondary school application form, and where this only became apparent once other students were informed of their allocated schools.
- Students, parents and school staff expressed uncertainty about how parental preferences were taken into account by B&HCC when allocating secondary schools.

## 2. Factors prioritised when choosing secondary schools

- Students and parents considered school open evenings to be of some help when making final choices about preferred secondary schools. However, they felt that the open evenings and other forms of publicity about the school (in the context of the high levels of marketisation to which schools subscribed) provided information on only the positive aspects of schools, making it difficult to gain a realistic understanding of what it would be like to attend particular schools.
- Students and parents prioritised certain factors, as follows, when deciding upon their preferred secondary school.
  - The most significant priority for students was to attend the same school as their close friends; this was also an important factor for parents, but not their prime consideration.
  - Staff in primary schools considered it was particularly important for vulnerable children to remain within their friendship groups when transferring to secondary school.
  - Parents placed the most emphasis on high GCSE grades and an Ofsted report which commented positively on the academic achievement of the school. Students also placed high priority on a school's academic achievements and, where students were not allocated their preferred school, some students and parents worried that they would not achieve their '*academic potential*'.
  - Parents and staff in primary schools raised concerns about children who had been allocated a primary school geographically distant from their home when they moved into B&H, but were then not given priority to attend the same secondary school as their primary school peers.
  - Students and parents also gave some priority to: schools already attended by elder siblings; schools in close proximity to their home - students prioritised reducing travelling, and some students also expressed concerns about journeys to certain schools being '*unsafe*'.

Priority was also given to schools which were considered to have a positive school ethos, 'good' behaviour and low levels of bullying; and schools which have facilities to accommodate students' extra-curricular interests. A small number of parents and students also favoured '*small schools*' as they considered it would be easier for students to '*settle into*' a small school rather than a large school; and a small number of parents prioritised schools which they considered were '*clean and hygienic*'.

- In the majority of cases students and parents made a joint decision about preferred secondary schools. However, in a small number of cases, where there were disagreements between students and their parents, parents' decisions were usually taken forward.

### 3. Measures taken to secure places in preferred secondary schools

- Several parents took measures to try to secure a place for their child in a particular secondary school. For example, some families/parents:
  - moved house to live within a particular catchment area, or obtained and submitted an address within a preferred catchment area through renting accommodation, moving in with their parents, or giving their parents' address as their own;
  - listed schools which they thought they were unlikely to be allocated, as their second and third choice schools;
  - started attending church to increase their chances of being accepted by one of the faith schools.
- There were also a small number of cases cited in which parents talked of knowing others who had exaggerated their child's medical condition, in an attempt to have their child awarded a statement of Special Educational Needs, and of a parent presenting a forged baptism certificate to try to secure a place for their child in a faith school. Staff in schools also cited cases of parents attempting to persuade the school's transition manager to admit their child to the school, and of parents contacting their 'first choice' school and falsely claiming they had been offered place in the school.

### 4. The reality of available school choices

- Parents and students who lived in dual-school catchment areas tended to favour the current system of allocating schools, primarily because the most '*sought after*' schools were located within these catchment areas.
- The chances of students living outside of the dual-school catchment areas securing a place in one of these schools is very limited; several parents living outside of these areas objected to their children not having the opportunity to attend one of the '*better performing*' schools.
- House prices within the dual-school catchment areas tend to be higher than in other areas of the city, thus limiting the choice of schools available to many students.
- Most parents to whom we spoke who lived in single-school catchment areas objected to their children not having a 'real choice' of secondary schools. However, where parents' and students' 'first choice' school was the only secondary school within their catchment, it was highly likely that they would be allocated a place in that school, which was seen by some as

a positive feature of the current admissions' procedure. In such cases, the secondary school allocation process was relatively *'anxious-free'* for these students as they did not experience the worry or uncertainty of not knowing which school they would be allocated.

- Where it was usual for students from particular primary schools to transfer to specific secondary schools, this allowed the primary and secondary schools to work together to plan the transition process, even before students had been informed of their allocated schools.
- Where children from one primary school transferred to several different secondary schools, this created difficulty in building close working relations with relevant staff in secondary schools.
- Despite many negative views being expressed about the perceived *'unfairness'* of the current school allocation process, the vast majority of secondary school students and parents were satisfied with the schools they/their children attended.

#### 5. Perspectives on and experiences of the Appeals Process

- Many students, parents and school staff considered the Appeals Process to be stressful and, for some parents and students, the prospect of the stress likely to be caused through engaging with the process prevented them from pursuing an appeal.
- Students, parents and some school staff considered the Appeals Process lacked transparency and gave preference to those who *'know the right people'* and *'who are articulate and make a fuss'*, while families who *'lacked the English language skills necessary to understand the system'* were at a disadvantage.

#### Recommendations

It should be noted that the findings report only the perspectives of participating students, parents and school staff, and may not be representative of the wider population of students, parents and school staff within Brighton and Hove. Nonetheless, the findings presented, most of which are based upon triangulated accounts from members of more than one participant group, suggest a number recommendations for future policy and practice in secondary school admissions within B&H.

Key recommendations in relation to B&HCC's review of the secondary school's admissions procedures are for B&HCC to consider:

1. Redrawing the current geographical catchment area boundaries to try to ensure all parents/students have a genuine choice of at least two secondary schools, and to consider, within this, the potential site for a proposed 'new' secondary school within the city.
2. Ensuring head teachers of primary schools are aware, immediately after the secondary school application deadline, of which parents have not submitted an application. Staff in primary schools could then work with these parents to support them in submitting their application.

3. Seeking to provide all stakeholders with a greater degree of transparency about the general criteria used for allocating school places, and the specific criteria relating to the allocation of places to students living outside the catchment area.
4. Providing, and making widely available, neutral information for students and parents about schools within B&HCC to supplement the current marketing and recruitment strategies provided by schools in the form of '*glossy brochures*'.
5. Seeking to ensure that parents, students and school staff are aware that the National Offer Day, on which parents and students are informed about students' allocated schools, is a fixed date throughout England and cannot be brought forward.
6. Implementing measures to synchronise, as far as possible, the date on which electronic and postal information about the allocation of school places is received by parents.
7. Providing all stakeholders with a simplified explanation (possibly a flow chart) of how to take forward a secondary school allocation appeal, and seeking to ensure a greater degree of transparency about the appeals process.
8. Prioritising the maintenance of the current partnership and consensus on admissions represented by the locally agreed and centrally controlled admissions criteria. According to research findings (West, 2006; Pennel *et al.*, 2006; Coldron *et al.*, 2008; Gorard *et al.*, 2013), this is more likely to serve the best interests of **all** children in the city.

Evidence provided in this report, as well as evidence from other research (e.g. Allen *et al.*, 2010), suggests that the interaction between catchment and random allocation can lead to some unequal access to 'good' schools and to social segregation. International evidence (OECD, 2012) also suggests a strong correlation between equity and quality in terms of student outcomes and performance and, where education systems are segregated, the overall performance of students declines. However, the Sutton Trust (2007, 6) reports that ballots in school admissions can play a useful role in cases where other criteria, including catchment areas are 'fair', which we would define in terms of the socio-economic make-up of catchments. Given these potentially conflicting findings, a further recommendation is that B&HCC gives consideration to conducting a more substantial and in-depth analysis of whether the use of random allocation impacts positively or negatively on interaction between catchment areas and on levels of social segregation within the schooling system in Brighton and Hove.

## 2. Background

### 2.1 Purpose and aims of the project

This research forms part of a review of the secondary school admissions' procedures in Brighton and Hove. The research, commissioned by Brighton and Hove City Council (B&HCC), aims to develop an informed account of various stakeholders' experiences of Brighton and Hove's secondary school admissions' procedures. In particular, stakeholders' perceptions of the strengths and limitations of the present admissions' procedures have been sought.

### 2.2. The national context

Various Education Acts and frameworks over the past 35 years have influenced current school admissions' procedures. Since the Education Act of 1980 and the Education Reform Act of 1988, successive governments in England have pursued the concept of parental choice (Allen *et al.*, 2010, 2). The 1988 School Standards Framework Act also established a new legal framework for school admissions through the introduction of two key mechanisms: a 'Code of Practice on School Admissions'; and 'The Office of the Schools Adjudicator', with powers to monitor and require compliance with the Code (Allen *et al.*, 2010, 3-4). In 2007, the School Admissions Code made mandatory certain provisions that had previously been 'guidance'; it also included a duty to 'promote equity' (*Ibid.*, 3). The current School Admissions Code maintains a system of 'equal preference', first introduced in the 2007 Code of Practice (DfES, 2007), whereby all applications are considered equally against the published criteria, regardless of ranking, so that, '*where a place is available for a child at more than one school, the home local authority must ensure, so far as reasonably practical, that the child is offered a place at whichever of these schools is the highest preference*' (DfE, 2012, 19).

#### 2.2.1 From first-preference-first to equal preference

The operation of equal preference replaced a system of first-preference-first and is designed to maximize the number of children receiving a place from their list of expressed preferences. The first-preference-first system is problematic as in some instances a pupil could be denied a place for not putting a particular school first, thus in reality limiting such parents and pupils to only one choice (Coldron, 2005; Coldron *et al.*, 2008). It is also potentially wasteful in that whilst the system of ranking preferences may accurately reflect some parents' choices, in other cases there may be little to separate a first and second preference. In this way, the equal preference system can be seen to maximize the potential equal and fair distribution of the resource against the admissions criteria, being 'blind' to the ranking of preferences in the initial consideration of an application. Coldron *et al.*, however, established that whilst we should be cautious about cause and effect, first-preference-first systems appear to be associated with '*a higher proportion of parents gaining their first expressed preference*' (2008, p.32). They also add the important caveat that this is not necessarily synonymous with greater overall satisfaction as fewer parents and young people may gain their second or third preferences.

Comparing and contrasting equal preference systems against the now prohibited first-preference-first systems, Coldron *et al.* (2008) identify a number of counter-intuitive effects associated with this shift. For example, in admissions areas with significant numbers of grammar schools operating as their own selective admissions authority, the first-preference-first system appeared to mitigate, to some extent, against segregation as parents uncertain about whether their child would be successful in the 11+ were likely to put greater value on their preferred non-selective comprehensive school. In contrast under the equal preference system parents in such a situation can keep their options open, thus bestowing advantage to those who recognise the implications and exploit this advantage. The net value that parents associate with first, second and third preference schools can also be significantly affected in non-selective admissions authorities where there may be popular and unpopular schools (Coldron *et al.*, 2008). Thus, under the now mandatory equal preference system, it is likely that parents' and young peoples' attitudes, values and satisfaction levels are far more complex than what can be distilled from the data available regarding the percentage of first, second and third preferences met. Indeed, such data may even mask important perceptions and experiences of the current system, an aspect of the admissions debate to which the Children's Commissioner has recently drawn attention (OCC, 2014), and which this pilot project is designed to investigate.

### **2.2.2 Segregation: drivers and inhibitors**

The literature on admissions indicates that there is a strong association between areas where there is a mixed economy of different types of schools, in particular a high number of schools operating autonomously as their own admissions authorities, and sustained levels of social segregation (West, 2006; Pennel *et al.*, 2006; Coldron *et al.*, 2008; Gorard, 2014). Caution needs to be exercised in claiming evidence of cause and effect for social segregation in the school system, and it is likely to be linked to a complex ecology of factors, from inherited historical inequities within the system, to wider socio-cultural drivers such as residential segregation (Coldron *et al.*, 2008; Allen *et al.*, 2010). However, Gorard concludes that the most recent reforms towards a mixed economy of autonomous schools, and in particular the acceleration of the academisation programme, are '*not helping reduce segregation*' and that '*homogenous Maintained schools should be preferred for this purpose*' (2014, p.268).

The introduction of the 'random allocation' procedure has promoted much debate locally, nationally and internationally from the perspectives of social segregation and equity (Lauder and Hughes, 1999; Cullen *et al.*, 2003; Thrupp, 2007; Allen *et al.*, 2010). Within the 2007 School Admissions Code, it was argued that random allocation supported the promotion of equity as it '*can widen access to schools for those unable to afford to buy houses near favoured schools and create greater social equity*' (DfES, 2007, para 2.28). Random allocation can also be considered to be a powerful tool '*to achieve a maximally functioning education market and to focus competition and popularity on the quality of provision rather than the social characteristics of the intake*' (Allen *et al.*, 2010, 23). However, the introduction of catchment areas as part of the random allocation procedure has emerged as a contentious issue with some arguing that in theory, parents have a right to express a preference for schools, whether these are located within their catchment area or not. In practice, however, some parents feel effectively



excluded from the schools they believe are most appropriate for their child (Stiell *et al.*, 2008, 5). Allen *et al.* (2010) point out that if the system of random allocation can be seen in any way to lead to unequal access to 'good' schools, this raises great concerns as there is evidence to suggest that where education systems are segregated, the overall performance of pupils declines (*Ibid.*).

An important feature of ballots is that they are 'blind' to background characteristics such as ethnicity, gender, class, social status, religion, and prior educational achievement. Such neutrality appears to render ballots as useful over-subscription criterion. Allen *et al.* (2010, p.1) identify residential segregation or segregation by house price as '*the most important contributor to secondary school segregation*' particularly in proximity-based admissions systems. They also suggest that random allocation has the potential to neutralize the impact of proximity or residential segregation with the caveat that the retention of catchments in Brighton and Hove does not completely eliminate proximity, adding that '*it is the interaction between the lottery<sup>2</sup> and the boundaries of the catchment areas that is key*' (Allen *et al.*, 2010, p.1). However, it could also be argued that the neutrality of the process of random allocation itself is equally problematic as it can render ballots as ineffective in addressing inherited or historical inequalities where only a positive bias could achieve a more socially and economically balanced intake of students. From this perspective, the use of ballots may be perceived to bring a fairer approach to admissions whilst actually merely sustaining existing inequalities (Eastwood and Turvey, 2008). Ballots are never applied as the sole criteria (Sutton Trust, 2007; Noden *et al.*, 2014), in that they are only one aspect within a range of other admissions criteria, not to mention the range of other client-side drivers that also influence and determine the outcome of the admissions procedure. The Sutton Trust report (2007, p.6) into ballots in school admissions concluded that there could be a useful role for ballots in school admissions but that the '*real debate in many senses should concern how fair the other criteria (such as catchment areas or ability banding) are to begin with – not the lottery process itself.*'

## 2.3 The local context

### 2.3.1 Catchments and geography

In line with the latest Department for Education (DfE) School Admissions Code, which came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012 (DfE, 2012), parents within B&HCC are able to express a preference for three secondary schools and are encouraged to apply for one or more schools within their catchment area. There are six distinct catchment areas based on postcode (see Appendix A) for which the Local Authority (LA) has overall control of admissions. Eight schools, whose admissions are controlled by the LA fall within these six catchment areas. Six of the schools are maintained by the LA, namely (Appendix A, East to West); Longhill High; Varndean; Dorothy Stringer; Patcham High; Hove Park (Lower and Upper on split sites); and Blatchington Mill. Two of these schools – Brighton Aldridge Community Academy (BACA) and Portslade Aldridge Community

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<sup>2</sup> Random allocation is often referred to as a 'lottery' in the media. We use the terms random allocation and ballots interchangeably in this report.

Academy (PACA) – are sponsored academies and as such could operate their own admissions criteria, but currently follow the same admissions criteria as all maintained schools in the six catchments, determined and controlled by the LA. There are two other state-funded secondary schools in the city: the long established Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic School, which is a Voluntary Aided school; and the more recently established King’s School, which is a Free School and as such draws its funding directly from central government. Both of these faith-based schools determine and apply their own admissions criteria in accordance with the DfE School Admissions Code (2012), employing supplementary entrance criteria based on the religion of the child (see B&HCC, 2013, 32-37). Whilst these two faith-based schools’ intakes cut across the six catchments and also draw pupils from outside of the city they are included in this review as they impact on the admissions system and are state-funded. It is also noteworthy that four of the catchments are served by a single secondary school whereas the two catchments which fall either side of the border of Brighton and Hove, demarcated by the Dyke Road, are served by two schools and are known as dual-school catchments (Appendix A).

There have been some adjustments to the catchment boundaries since their original inception in 2008. The first adjustment to the catchment boundaries was prompted by an appeal to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (2008) raising the issue that Patcham High School, a single school catchment area (Appendix A), did not have a sufficient or sustainable pupil base (See Argus, 20 January, 2009; and B&HCC Consultation Document, 2008). A second adjustment to catchment boundaries was made in 2013 in response to the LA pupil projections (Brighton and Hove School Organisation Plan 2012-2016). The Blatchington Mill and Hove Park dual school catchment area was made smaller and the Varndean/Dorothy Stringer dual catchment extended by moving the boundary between these two catchments from the North/South railway line to the Dyke Road (Appendix A). However, capacity in these two dual catchments is regularly out-paced by demand as, demographically, Brighton and Hove attracts significant flows of inward migration from Greater London and the South East (ONS, 2013). The wards catered for by these dual school catchments contain higher concentrations of people aged 0-14 than many other wards across the City (Brighton and Hove JSNA, 2013). Such fluid and challenging demographics raise particular tensions in balancing, on the one hand, the promotion in national policies of increasing parental choice and marketisation in the education sector and, on the other hand, the need for fair access and equitable distribution of educational resources.

### ***2.3.2 The use of random allocation (lottery)***

In 2007, Brighton and Hove City Council (B&HCC) consulted on and proposed a move away from the allocation of secondary school places by giving priority to those living closest to the school, to the introduction of distinct catchment areas based on post codes, and the random allocation of school places in cases where schools are oversubscribed. B&HCC was the first Local Authority in England to introduce an element of ‘random allocation’ into secondary school admissions, in response to its introduction as a permissible over subscription criterion in the 2007 School Admissions Code (DFES, 2007). The current School Admissions

Code (DfE, 2012) maintains the use of random allocation as an acceptable mechanism for dealing with over-subscription in admissions, but states that:

*“Local authorities **must not** use random allocation as the principal oversubscription criterion for allocating places at all the schools in the area for which they are the admission authority.” (DfE, 2012, p.14)*

From this perspective, the current arrangements for secondary school admissions in B&HCC remain compliant with respect to the code on the use of random allocation. For example, looked after children and those with exceptional circumstances (e.g. Statement of Special Educational Need) or a sibling link are given priority, followed by those within the identified catchment area. Thus, the procedures are based on the premise that children will attend a secondary school principally within the catchment area in which they live and that where a school is oversubscribed with applicants within the catchment area, ‘...a random allocation process will be used to decide which children should be offered the available places’ as a final resort (B&HCC, 2013). Thus, random allocation is not the ‘principal over subscription criterion’ (DfE, 2012, p.14). This procedure was first used within Brighton and Hove in September 2008 after objections about the initial proposal were raised with, and subsequently rejected by, the Schools’ Adjudicator (Eastwood and Turvey, 2008). Further referrals to the Schools’ Adjudicator and the Local Authority’s internal review procedures led to some adjustment of the catchment boundaries and the sibling link arrangements but the random allocation within catchments remains the key mechanism for allocating secondary school places in the event of over-subscription and has been used in the two dual-school catchments in successive years since its inception in 2008.

### **2.3.3 Trends in preferences and allocations**

As discussed in section 2.2, the statutory replacement of the first-preference-first system by equal preference has counter-intuitively been associated nationally with a decrease in the number of pupils being allocated their first preference (Coldron *et al.*, 2008). Although the percentage of parents and students in Brighton and Hove achieving a place in their first preference school has fluctuated over the years, the overall evidence from Brighton and Hove concurs with this finding. For example, between 2006 and 2008, 84% to 86% of students gained a place in their first preference school, however, in the years following the shift to an equal preference system in 2008 and the introduction of the random allocation within catchments system (Table 1 below), the percentage of those gaining their first preference school has fallen to between 78% and 82%. It is important to enter the caveat that it is not possible to determine the cause for this decrease in allocation of first preferences, however, it is noteworthy, and, as noted earlier, points to the need to understand the qualitative experiences underlying this tendency.

**Table 1: Percentage of pupils receiving 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> preferences in Brighton and Hove**

<b>Year</b>	<b>1st preference allocated</b>	<b>2nd preference allocated</b>
2006-07	86%	7%
2007-08	84%	9%
2008-09	78%	14%
2009-10	82%	11%
2010-11	81%	11%
2011-12	79%	12%
2012-13	81%	13%
2013-14	80%	12%
2014-15	82%	9%
2015-16	80%	11%

### **2.3.4 Trends in appeals**

The data relating to the number of appeals submitted, allowed and dismissed provided by B&HCC cover a nine-year period from 2007-2015 (see Appendix C - it should be noted that in cases where secondary schools within the City are not included in the tables this is because no appeals relating to these schools were submitted). There have been approximately 130-160 appeals cases per year with the exception of the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 academic years where the numbers of appeals relating to these schools rose to 186 and 167 respectively. During these years, there was a sharp increase in the number of appeals submitted in relation to Blatchington Mill and Hove Park Schools (both of which are in one of the dual school catchment areas). It is highly likely that these increases were in direct response to the introduction of catchment areas within Brighton and Hove, which came into effect from September 2008. There was also a sharp decrease in the number of appeals submitted in relation to Dorothy Stringer during the 2008 and 2009 academic years. It is likely that this can be accounted for by the fact that the size of the whole cohort for this catchment decreased from 12,174 in 2008-2009, to 11,357 in 2009-2010, and the creation of additional schools places within the Dorothy Stringer/Varndean catchment area (see report in The Argus, April 2007).

In the 2013-14 academic year there was a sharp decrease in the number of appeals relating to Blatchington Mill (from 72 to 38), and a sharp increase in the number of appeals relating to Dorothy Stringer (from 55 to 81). It is likely that these changes can be accounted for by changes in the catchment area boundaries in 2013 which moved part of one postcode area out of the Blatchington Mill/Hove Park catchment area and into the Dorothy Stinger/Varndean catchment. Alongside these changes, however, additional school places became available at the newly opened King's School in 2013. The 2014-2015 academic year saw an increase in appeals relating to Varndean (from 18 to 45) and Patcham High (from 2 to 26), which can also be partially accounted for by the catchment boundary changes in 2013. Additionally, the increase in appeals relating to Patcham High may be partially explained by steady changes in the academic and socio-economic profile of the school since 2007 (See Appendix B for details of the socio-economic changes).

### 2.3.5 Trends in socio-economic segregation

As discussed in section 2.2, in reviewing education reform of admissions, much attention has been given to longitudinal changes in socio-economic segregation. According to international evidence (OECD, 2012), higher levels of overall segregation within education systems are strongly associated with poorer levels of overall performance. Figure 1 below illustrates the application of Gorard's segregation index<sup>3</sup> (Gorard, 2006) using the annual school census eligibility to FSM data in the case of all schools in Brighton and Hove (DfE, 2015). It shows the trend over a period that preceded the admissions reform beginning in 2005-2006 (data point 1) up until 2014-2015 (data point 10). The raw data (DfE, 2015) that this was calculated from is available in Appendix B.

**Figure 1: Brighton and Hove segregation 2006-2015**

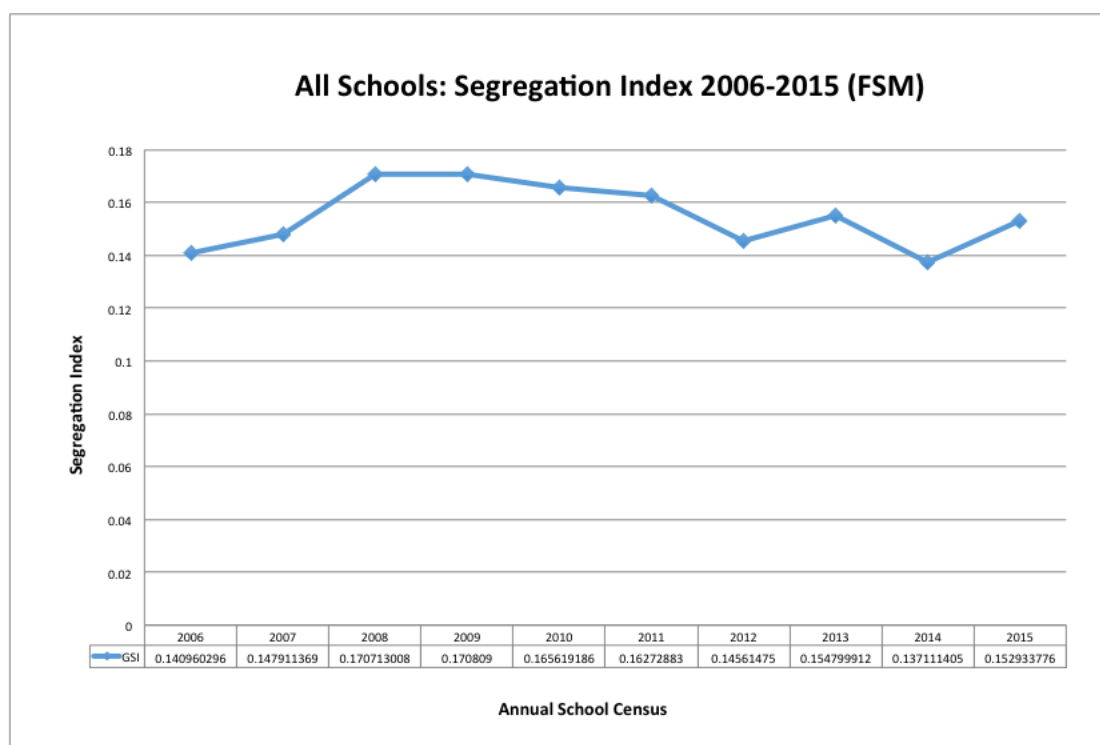


Figure 1 shows that social segregation in school systems is a dynamic and complex phenomenon that cannot easily be reduced to simple accounts of cause and effect. Brighton and Hove is no exception in this matter. For example, in the year immediately preceding the introduction of the new admissions system in the academic year 2007-2008 there was a peak in the segregation index at 0.17 or 17% (Figure 1), which is essentially the percentage of children eligible for FSM who would need to be exchanged with non FSM pupils to achieve an equal distribution throughout the schools (See for example Canning, 2015). This peak in the social segregation index was sustained during the year the new

<sup>3</sup>  $GS = 0.5 * (\sum F_i / F - T_i / T_j)$  Where:

GS = Gorard's segregation

$F_i$  = Number of pupils eligible for free school meals at School  $i$ .

$F$  = Number of pupils eligible for free school meals in the region/geographical area as whole.

$T_i$  = Total number of pupils at School  $i$

$T$  = Total number of pupils in the region/ geographical area as a whole.

admissions system was introduced, 2008-2009 (Figure 1, data point 4). This peak in segregation turns into a downward trend through to the academic year 2011-2012, but then fluctuates between 2012-2015. In other words, despite the admissions criteria remaining fairly constant since 2008 in Brighton and Hove, levels of social segregation continue to fluctuate.

It is not possible to draw any explicit causal links between the introduction of the Brighton and Hove admissions reforms in 2008 and these variations in the segregation index. Changes to an established system are bound to have an impact as they take time for those affected to understand the various nuances involved. The changes were relatively complex with the introduction of new legislation such as equal preference and random allocation (DfES, 2007). Similarly, the period of the Brighton and Hove admissions' reforms presented here spans significant periods of wider economic recession, which are not accounted for within this model. Therefore the impact of any wider or national determinants can only be theorized here. For example, how does the pattern of segregation across this period relate to the wider pattern of school segregation in the country as a whole or in comparison with other Local Authorities? It is noteworthy that with the onset of the 2008 economic recession, Gorard *et al.* (2013), found a sharp decline in school segregation nationally. This differs marginally to the post reform pattern seen in Brighton and Hove, where any impact assigned to the wider economic recession would appear to be more gradual and possibly delayed. In their study of the post reform changes in the composition of schools in Brighton and Hove, Allen *et al.* (2010) carried out a more detailed and in-depth regression analysis and also noted a slight rise in socio-economic segregation when the reforms were first introduced in 2008. They suggest that although not statistically significant, this increase in school segregation could have some basis in '*the design of the catchment areas*' (*Ibid.*, p.17). Taking into account the wide range of potential determinants at play could also suggest that the process of random allocation is a relatively negligible factor in the process of admissions, as already discussed in section 2.2.

This all suggests that closer quantitative analysis of the dual-school catchment areas in which random allocation has been used over a period of time could provide more insight into the interaction between random allocation and catchments, but is beyond the remit of this report. Client-side perceptions, attitudes and values could have the potential to play at least as significant a role in determining admissions' outcomes, such as social segregation, as admissions system factors themselves. This again lends validity to the argument that random allocation, as an over-subscription criterion, is neither inherently fair nor unfair as defined by its potential to achieve a balanced intake of pupils at schools, and that other local or national system and non-system factors are also significantly at play. As Gorard and colleagues note, indicators of potential disadvantage such as FSM can be '*linked to different sets of possible determinants*' (Gorard *et al.*, 2013, p.14).

#### 2.4 The significance of primary to secondary school transition

Much of the literature and the current context relating to admissions in Brighton and Hove points to the importance of understanding children and young people's

qualitative perceptions in relation to the admissions system. A recent report by the Office of the Children's Commissioner (2014) also supports this. The Children's Commissioner investigated children, young people and parents' qualitative experiences of school admissions, after reports of some schools adopting underhand methods of dissuading some pupils and families from applying to their school, in order to manipulate their intakes. Whilst there is no previous suggestion or evidence that such practices occur in Brighton and Hove, the report cited above (OCC, 2014) highlights the significant impact that children and young people's perceptions can have on their aspirations and preferences at a vital time of transition in their lives. This is also supported by other research and evidence into children and young people's perspectives at this important point of transition.

The transition from primary to secondary school is a social and academic turning point for adolescents and, for some, can be the most difficult aspect of a student's school experience, leading to stress and concern (Coffey, 2013; Hanewald, 2013; Topping, 2011). Research evidence suggests that the majority of students express anxieties prior to transfer about a range of issues associated both with the formal school system, such as the size of the school, the timetable and the volume of work, and the informal systems of peer relations, meeting new friends, coping with 'older teenagers', and bullying (Pratt and Gorge, 2005, West *et al.*, 2010). Ashton (2008) found the informal aspects of school transition, including concerns about not getting their first choice of school, to be more important to students than concerns about academic issues. Students' experiences of the transition process can be made more comfortable when teachers work to create a safe and supportive learning environment, and when pupils feel accepted and part of a group (Coffey, 2013). However, given the significance for students of the move from primary to secondary school, it is important to understand stakeholders' perspectives and experiences of the procedures which govern the allocation of secondary schools, and for these perspectives to inform the development of future procedures.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Approach to data collection

The project aims were addressed through the analysis of data generated from different categories of stakeholders within each of the six catchment areas in Brighton and Hove, on their perspective of the current secondary school admissions' procedures.

#### 3.2 Research participants

Research participants comprised of staff responsible for school transition, students and parents from eight secondary schools, and staff responsible for transition in five primary schools within Brighton and Hove. The secondary schools involved were from five of the six catchment areas, and included schools within both dual school and single school catchment areas, academies and faith schools; the primary schools involved were from five of the six catchment areas, including one school from the catchment area not covered by the participating secondary schools.

The stakeholder groups comprised:

- **53 students in Years 7 and 8** comprising 29 students who currently attended their preferred secondary schools, and 24 students who did not attend their preferred secondary schools.
- **19 parents/carers of students in Years 7 and 8** comprising 13 parents whose children attended their preferred secondary school, and six parents whose children did not attend their preferred secondary school
- **15 staff (5 primary and 10 secondary) who had responsibility for overseeing the transition of students from primary to secondary school.** During interviews staff were asked to share their perspectives on the procedures for allocating schools, and the perceived impact these procedures have on students.

Each stakeholder group comprised of participants from single and dual catchment areas, faith schools, and the city's academies. Participating secondary schools were asked to recruit students/parents whose children attended their first choice school, and those who did not attend their first choice school. In most cases the choice of participants was largely determined by those most easily accessible. For example, in some cases the member of staff with responsibility for transition was aware of only a small number of students (and, therefore, parents) who had (or had not) listed the school as their first choice. In other cases, staff invited students to participate if, for example, they knew students were staying late at school on the afternoon the interviews were being conducted and had time to spare between the end of lessons and their extra-curricular activity starting. Similarly, parents were invited to participate if, for example, they had already indicated that they were be attending a school parents' evening on the afternoon the interviews were being conducted.



### **3.3 Data collection methods**

Data was collected mainly through focus group discussions and interviews. Focus group discussions were held with students and with parents, and individual interviews were held with school staff with responsibility for overseeing the transition of students from primary to secondary school. The focus group discussions and interviews purposefully included 'open' questions to allow participants to voice their opinions about aspects of the transition procedures which were of significance to them, e.g. 'Tell me about your experience of applying for secondary school'. At the end of each focus group and interview, the researchers fed back to participants what they considered to be the salient points raised to ensure that there was a clear and common understanding of participants' perspectives.

The data was then analysed to determine the key points raised by each of the participating groups. It was possible to identify common themes across the participants' responses; these are reflected and discussed within section 4.

### **3.4 Ethical considerations**

British Educational Research Association (BERA) and University of Brighton Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Research were followed throughout the research, and ethical approval was sought and secured from the University of Brighton. All participants, and the parents/carers of participants aged 15 or under, received an information sheet about the project and a consent form and gave their consent for their/their child's participation.

## 4. Findings

This section will start with an overview of stakeholders' experiences of, and perspectives on, B&HCC's secondary school admission procedures. Consideration will then be given to stakeholders' perspectives in relation to the following four categories:

- i) Factors prioritised when choosing secondary schools
- ii) Measures taken to secure places in preferred secondary schools
- iii) The reality of available school choices
- iv) Perspectives on, and experiences of, the Appeals Process

It should be noted that while findings represent the perspectives of participating students, parents and school staff, perhaps inevitably, participants more readily made reference during discussions, to aspects of the admissions' process about which they were less satisfied, than to aspects they were happy about. However, participants were also asked specifically about aspects of the process which they considered worked well, and these are reported within the findings.

### 4.1 An overview of stakeholders' perspectives on and experiences of B&HCC's secondary schools admissions process

For students, choosing a secondary school was perceived as a major decision as they considered that the outcome would impact on how well they achieved at school and, therefore, on their future lives.

*It's a really big thing choosing the right school, you want one that is good for your education, because it's like your future depends on it. ... It feels like a beginning for the rest of your life. (Student)*

#### 4.1.1 Application processes and procedures

Within the admission timetable for transition to secondary school in September, parents are asked to list on a Common Application Form their first, second and third 'preferred' secondary schools. This is normally returned to B&HCC by a deadline date in October of the year prior to their children starting secondary school. This constitutes an application to each of the three schools and is the beginning of the allocation process co-ordinated by B&HCC. The B&HCC admissions team then inform each school of who has applied for a place at their school. The school's admission authority must then consider each applicant against their admission criteria and list all applicants in order of eligibility. This list is returned to B&HCC, who are required to allocate each child to the school that is the highest ranked of the parent's three preferences and for which the child is eligible. If a parent does not apply for a school, or is not eligible for any of the schools they list, they are allocated to their nearest school for which they are eligible and that has a spare place. This co-ordination process takes some time. The Admissions Code requires all local authorities in England to inform parents of the allocated school on the same day in March (National Offer Day) of the year they start secondary school. Most parents complete and submit the secondary school application form on-line, though, it is also possible for parents to submit paper application forms.

Parents and students considered that being able to state their three most preferred secondary schools was a positive aspect of the schools' allocation process. Most students, however, described the period immediately after their school preferences form had been submitted, and the weeks leading up to being informed of their allocated school, as both worrying and exciting, while many students and parents considered the time period between submitting their preferences and being informed of their allocated school was too long.

Staff in secondary schools were in favour of the secondary school allocations process being managed and run by the City Council as they considered this made the process '*fairer for all concerned*'. Some parents, however, did not understand the system and contacted their preferred secondary school to enquire how to apply for a school place, while a member of staff in one school reported receiving a secondary school application form which should have been sent to B&HCC.

Staff in primary schools commented that the application process caused difficulties for some parents, in particular those who are not able to read well, and those who do not have Internet access or an email account. In some cases, where parents were known by the primary school staff not to have an email account, schools issued hard copies of the application form; however, some parents still experienced difficulties where they lacked the reading/writing skills necessary to complete the form. Some primary schools invited selected parents into schools and staff helped them to set up email accounts and to complete the secondary school application form. Despite these efforts by staff in primary schools, there continue to be cases where parents do not submit secondary school application forms. However, this does not always become apparent until other students are informed of their allocated school.

*Because of the on-line application system it means we don't know who has and who hasn't completed the [admission] form, we don't see them... It used to be easier when they used to fill in a form and send it to us but now it's done on-line. (Member of staff from primary school)*

*We've just found out that we have two children this year who haven't been allocated a school as their parents didn't submit the forms, and these are two of our most vulnerable children they don't know which school they are going to; they are so worried about this and it's not their fault, this is one of the great difficulties with the on-line system. (Member of staff from primary school)*

*We have had in-year applications this year because parents did not realize or did not know how to apply and were only aware of it when their children's colleagues got the allocation results. I really do think the council should be aware of this problem and there should be a team – either in the council or in primary schools – to help parents with difficulties in applying. (Member of staff from secondary school)*

#### **4.1.2 Informing parents of their child's allocated secondary school**

Parents who submitted their secondary school application on-line were informed of their child's allocated secondary school by email, and those who submitted the application form by post were informed by letter. Those informed by email, however, tended to receive this one day earlier than those who were informed by letter. Thus, some students knew their allocated schools before others, and this caused stress and anxiety for those students waiting to hear which school they had been allocated.

Several students, parents and staff in primary school also expressed concern over the fact that students are informed about the schools to which they have been allocated during their preparation for Standard Attainment Test (SATs), which is a particularly stressful time for them.

*...you spend six months wondering if you're going [to secondary school] on your own or if you'll be with your peer group, it's a worrying and unsettling time, and at the same time, you've got hormone changes and a lot of stress at school with SATS, it's all a bit too much. (Student)*

#### **4.1.3 Confusions and misconceptions**

Many students, parents and school staff found the secondary schools' allocation process to be confusing, and there was uncertainty about how parental preferences were taken into account by B&HCC when allocating schools. Parents, in particular, commented that they did not understand why some students were allocated their first choice of school outside of their catchment area while others were not.

*It's quite a confusing system; it's not clear how the lottery actually works in practice. You don't know what the chances are of getting your first choice or if your children will be with their friends. People don't understand the system. (Parent)*

*The process is completely in the hands of the local authority and we do not really know how it operates. (Member of staff from secondary school)*

*The process seems a bit of a minefield... we know the dates by which each part of the process must be completed but we don't know what happens between these dates. No one knows and no one seems to understand the process. (Member of staff from secondary school)*

There were misconceptions about the schools' allocation process, with a large number of students and some parents believing that schools were allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis. Some students also thought schools were allocated according to which students schools wanted to recruit. One student stated, 'It's really important to make a good impression when you visit the school so that they remember your name and they choose you'. Additionally, some parents were of the opinion that, where applicants had listed schools outside of their catchment areas as 'preferred' schools, those who lived in areas of owner-occupied housing were more likely than those who lived in areas of social housing, to be allocated a school outside of their catchment area.

Some students and parents were aware of a number of the priorities applied by B&HCC when allocating schools; they were in agreement with some of these and disagreed with others. For example, a small number of parents and some school staff cited the 'rule' that *'Looked After children are given preference over other students'*. Either despite, or being unaware of, the fact that all admission authorities must by law put this as a first priority, they expressed disagreement with priority being given to these students on the grounds that a child who had been adopted from a very young age, but who has lived in a stable family for several years, is likely to be *less*, not *more* vulnerable than a child from a family in which there has been a recent divorce or separation.

Several parents and students were under the impression that B&HCC continued to give preference to students on the grounds that an elder sibling attends the school, regardless of whether or not they live in the catchment area. This is no longer the situation, however, as siblings who live outside of the school catchment area are now not given preference over other students. Where parents and students were aware of this change, however, they expressed mixed opinions. In most cases, parents and students considered that students should be given preference to attend the same school as siblings, as this would support the younger sibling in settling into the school. Parents, in particular, favoured siblings attending the same school, especially where the journey to school involved walking through wooded areas.

*My daughter has to walk through some woods to get to school so I walk with her through that part, if I had a child in another school and had to take them some of the way where it might not be safe, I couldn't do it for both children. (Parent)*

One parent cited an example of a family she knew who had moved an elder sibling to the same school to which the younger sibling had been allocated, as the family wanted both siblings to attend the same secondary school, and they were not able to secure a place for the younger sibling in the school attended by her elder sister. A minority of parents, however, agreed that the schools' allocations process should not necessarily prioritise siblings living outside of the catchment area. In particular some parents considered it to be unfair for a sibling to be given preference in attending the same school as their sibling in cases where families have moved out of the catchment area for that school, as *'this would, in effect, be taking up places in the school which would limit places available for those who actually live in the catchment area'*.

There were some individual concerns relating to the allocation of secondary schools. For example, parents and school staff cited examples of a student being allocated one school, and their twin brother/sister being allocated a different school. Additionally, one mother spoke of her child being allocated their preferred school, but then the mother received a telephone call from a different school trying to convince her that their school would be the *'best choice'* for her daughter, with the outcome that the student changed schools. Similarly, a student who had been allocated and was attending one secondary school spoke

about their parents receiving a call from another school asking them if they would rather change schools.

#### 4.2 Factors prioritised when choosing secondary schools

Students and parents found school open evenings helped them, to some extent, finalise their choices of preferred secondary schools. However, both students and parents commented that the open evenings and the 'high levels of marketisation' to which schools subscribed, including the publication of 'glossy prospectuses', provided information on only the positive aspects of schools. It was, therefore, difficult to gain a realistic understanding of what it would be like to attend particular schools, especially where students and parents did not know, and were unable to consult, former or current students at the school.

All students and parents prioritised certain factors when deciding upon their preferred secondary school. The following priorities broadly reflect the order of significance for the different stakeholders.

##### *i) Attended by friends*

For students, the priority to which they gave the most weight was to attend the same school as their close friends.

*I remember going into school the day after the letter came [to inform parents/students of their allocated school], people wanted to know that they had at least one friend going to the same school as them, and if they didn't they were really down and didn't really talk all that day. We tried to comfort them and tell them that they would make new friends but they were still really upset. ...I remember one friend who got allocated a school and she was going on her own and the person just couldn't stop crying.*  
(Student)

Even where students were allocated their first choice of school, where no existing friends from their primary schools had been allocated the same school, they found this extremely upsetting. Several parents also considered that maintaining friendship groups on the transition to secondary school was an important factor.

*Although my son got into his first choice of school, the majority of children at his primary school didn't, and when others didn't get into the same school that made my son not want to go there, even though it was his first choice!*  
(Parent)

Staff in primary schools also considered that it was important for children, especially the more vulnerable children 'not to sever established friendship groups on the transfer to secondary school' as it was too unsettling for them to 'have the worry about having to make new friends, as well as having the general worries about moving on to secondary school'.

There were particular concerns raised by parents and staff in primary schools around priority not being given for students to attend the same secondary school

as the majority of those in their primary school. This was a particular issue where children who had moved into the city had been allocated a primary school geographically distant from their home and were then not given preference over being allocated a secondary school which would enable them to 'move up with their peers'.

*We have a large overseas population coming to Brighton and Hove and they are placed in primary schools with the space and capacity... but this may be a long way from their home, then when it comes to allocating secondary schools it goes back to post codes. But the City Council placed them in this primary school and made them travel to get here, now there're saying that the children have to go to a school in postcode code area, the system varies to suit the Council, not the children. (Member of staff from primary school)*

Moving house to a different catchment area during their time at primary school and then not being allocated the same secondary school as their peers was a particular issues for students who live in social housing, especially students from larger families, who tend to move frequently as and when houses more suited to their family's needs become available.

#### **ii) High levels of academic achievement**

The majority of parents and students prioritised schools with high levels of academic achievement. For parents, high GCSE grades and an Ofsted report which comments positively on the academic achievement of the school, were the prime considerations when choosing a secondary school. In some cases, where students were not allocated their preferred school, students and parents worried that the student would not achieve their 'academic potential'.

*It was very troubling as I picked three choices, but I didn't get any of these. I got one school and it wasn't a good school so I didn't want to go there, it would badly affect my learning. (Student)*

One parent also spoke about a family who home-schooled their child for almost one year as they were strongly against their child attending the school she had been allocated due to the perceived low academic standards of the school. Another parent spoke of parents applying for schools up to 30 miles away from their home in another county, in an attempt to avoid being allocated one particular school. One student also commented that, in order to avoid being allocated the school in his catchment area, he applied to an undersubscribed school outside of the catchment area which his family perceived achieved relatively higher GCSE results. He was successful in securing a place in this school, however, his journey to school takes 45 minutes and involves two bus connections.

#### **iii) Attended by siblings**

For most students and parents it was important to be allocated the same school as elder siblings as students were already familiar with these school and, as a result, considered that they would settle into the school more readily.

#### ***iv) Close proximity to home***

Some parents and students prioritised schools located in close proximity to the student's home. Parents considered that their children would be most likely to *'stay safe on their way to and from school'* if they attended a school relatively close to their home. Some students expressed concerns over particular walking routes to certain schools in the city, especially where this involved walking near a park where there had been reports of *'attacks by paedophiles'*. For most students, however, they favoured attending a school near to their home in order to minimise the time taken to travel to and from school. Some students worried that if they attended a school geographically distant from their home this may prevent them from participating in after-school activities, and that they may need to travel home in the dark and would not feel safe doing so. Students also commented that they would not feel safe if they had to travel to and from school by bus where none of the other passengers were students from their school, and a minority of students worried that if they needed to travel to school by bus, the cost of the bus journey would be a financial burden for their families.

#### ***v) Positive school ethos***

Parents prioritized, *'friendly schools'*, schools where they considered their children would be *'cared for'*, schools where *'teachers seem approachable'*, and schools with a *'positive ethos'*. However, only a small number of students made reference to the school ethos, mentioning the *'quality of care'* teachers had for students as being a significant factor when choosing a school.

#### ***vi) 'Good' behaviour and low levels of bullying***

Parents favoured schools where Ofsted reports commented positively on 'good behaviour' and 'good discipline', and where the school was reputed not to have many 'rough' students. For students, it was important that the school had a reputation for managing and dealing effectively with bullying incidents.

#### ***vii) School facilities which accommodate the extra-curricular needs of students***

School facilities were mentioned as an important factor by only a small number of parents and students. This tended to be in relation to particular interests of the students, for example, where students excelled in performing arts, they/their parents wanted a school which would accommodate and develop this interest.

#### ***viii) Size of school***

A small number of parents and students favoured relatively *'small schools'*. They considered that it would be easier for students to *'settle into'* a small school rather than a larger school, and that students would receive *'more attention from staff'*.

#### ***ix) Cleanliness of school***

A minority of parents prioritised schools which they considered to be *'clean'* and where the *'standard of hygiene is high'*.

In addition to the above priorities, staff in primary and secondary schools were of the opinion that parents also prioritised schools which *'provide a range of after school activities and school trips'*, and where *'students look smart in their uniform'*.



Students and parents also commented that their perspectives, particularly in relation to a school's ethos and the behaviour within a school, were partially based on the reputation of the school and on *'playground gossip'*. Parents also acknowledged that the local media amplified positive and negative incidents within schools, and that local journalists portrayed some schools more favourably than others and this *'coloured peoples' views of schools'*. As stated by one parent, *'the press doesn't help with the snobbery that exists around schools'*.

It was common for most students and their parent to visit open evenings at two or three secondary schools, including the school(s) within their catchment area. A small number of families did not attend any of the school open evenings as they considered they already had sufficient knowledge about their preferred school(s). In the majority of cases students and parents made a joint decision about preferred secondary schools. However, in a small number of cases, where there were disagreements between students and their parents, parents' decisions were taken forward.

#### 4.3 Measures taken to secure places in preferred secondary schools

Parents, students and staff in schools all cited examples of where parents had taken measures to try to secure a place for their child in a particular secondary school. The most common examples were of parents moving house to be within a particular catchment area, or obtaining and submitting an address within a particular catchment area through renting accommodation, moving in with their parents, or giving their parents' address as their own. One parent talked of a family who *'gave up their council house and moved into a tiny rented flat in the catchment area of the school they wanted their child to go to, because they were so against their child going to the one school that was in their catchment area'*. Staff from one primary school also cited examples of *'split'* families *'being creative about the amount of time spent with each parent'*, for example by claiming that the child lived with one particular parent more than was the case.

A minority of parents listed their second and third choice schools as schools which they thought they were unlikely to be allocated. For example, parents listed schools geographically distant from their home, or a faith school, knowing that they did not fit the admission criteria for the school. Examples were also given of parents who started attending church in the hope of increasing their chances of being accepted by one of the faith schools.

More extreme measures taken by parents to increase the chances of being allocated their preferred school were also cited. For example parents talked of cases where others they knew had exaggerated their child's medical condition in an attempt to have their child awarded a statement of Special Educational Needs, and of a parent presenting a forged baptism certificate to try to secure a place in a faith school. Staff in one secondary school also cited cases of parents attempting to persuade the school transition manager to admit their child to the school, and staff in other schools spoke of parents contacting their *'first choice'* school and falsely claiming they had been offered place in the school.

#### 4.4 The reality of available school choices

Parents are required to list three secondary schools, in order of preference, which they would like their child(ren) to attend. Students, parents and school staff all expressed views on the practical realities of obtaining a place in particular 'preferred' secondary schools. They considered the 'real' choice of schools available was *'dependent on where you live, in some areas there is more choice and more likelihood of accessing a place in a school you want, and in other areas, there is less choice and less likelihood of getting into certain schools'*.

There was a strong sense from many parents that they were dissatisfied with the overall lack of 'real' choice of available secondary schools, however, many were unable to offer ideas of how to improve the current allocation procedures, maintaining, *'it's just not fair, but I can't see a better way to do it, given the location of the schools across the city'*.

##### 4.4.1 The reality of choices available for those living in dual-school catchment areas

Parents and students living in the dual-school catchment areas tended to favour B&HCC's current schools' allocation system. This was primarily due to the fact that these parents and students, along with the majority of all students, parents and school staff, considered the most 'sought after' schools to be those in the dual-school catchment areas. These schools are commonly fully/over-subscribed with students from within their catchment area, thus, there is a very limited chance of students living outside of these catchment areas securing a place in one of these schools. Parents considered that the admissions system influenced the housing market, with house prices within the dual-school catchment areas being higher than in other areas of the city.

*the most sought after schools are in the catchment areas with two schools...the choice of going to one of these schools only exists for people with money who can afford to move and live in certain areas... houses in these catchment areas can be up to £100,000 more than similar houses in other catchment areas. (Parent)*

Parents living outside of the dual-school catchment areas felt strongly that their children were excluded from having the opportunity of attending schools reputed to be the 'better performing' schools, and that this reflected the social segregation within the city, especially given that there is a lack of social housing within these catchment areas.

*It's the people with the economic power who have a realistic choice. If you can afford to live in a certain area then your kids can get into the better performing schools.... As always, it's unfair for people in deprived areas... the poor people come out worse...you won't get into one of the good schools, you haven't really got a choice. (Parent)*

A minority of parents living outside of the dual-school catchment areas, however, were of the opinion that the current schools allocation system may lead to

the 'less popular schools improving their standard otherwise no-one will choose them', and that this will eventually 'even out the standard of all schools which is better for the kids.'

#### **4.4.2 The reality of choices available for those living in single-school catchment areas**

Most parents living in single-school catchment areas considered that the current process of allocating secondary schools deprived their children of having a choice of school. As one parent stated, '*you are manifesting a preference and that should be made clear on the form*'. Many parents and students felt they were 'victims' of the system, as the geographical location of where they lived determined whether they had a choice of schools and, if so, which schools they were able to choose from.

Where students and parents lived in single-school catchment areas and favoured the one secondary school within the catchment, it was highly likely that they would be allocated a place in that school, particularly as schools in single school catchment areas tend not to be over-subscribed. In such cases, the secondary school allocation process was a relatively 'anxious-free' time for these students, as they did not experience the worry or uncertainty of not knowing which school they would be allocated.

*If you apply to an undersubscribed school, especially if it's in your catchment area, you're pretty certain of getting it.* (Parent)

*The majority of our children feed into one main secondary school so we can plan for transition and they don't have the anxiety and worry during year 6 of not knowing where they are going.* (Member of staff from primary school)

#### **4.4.3 The perspectives of staff in primary and secondary schools**

Several staff in primary schools also commented that where there is only one school in a catchment area and students/parents list this school as their first preference, this can be beneficial as they '*know they will be allocated this school so will be aware of the school to which they will be transferring*', thus making the transition process relatively straightforward. However, staff from primary schools also acknowledged the difficulties associated with living in a single-school catchment area, especially where the school's academic performance is in decline, as they '*more or less have to go to the school in their catchment area.*'

From the perspective of staff in primary schools, knowing that the majority of their students will be transferring to one or two specific secondary schools was helpful in planning the transition process. In such cases, staff had established positive links and working relationships with the transition managers and Special Educational Need Co-ordinators (SENCOs) in secondary schools.

*95% go to one school, so that works well, and links with the school are very good. We are able to let staff know about children who need additional support, ...we have been able to increase the transition work we do and that helps the children.* (Member of staff from primary school)

*There's a lot of work goes on behind the scenes, especially for the more vulnerable pupils, the SEN children and the emotionally vulnerable children, we know most children will go to one particular school so we start preparing them for that from the beginning of year 6... We have good contacts with the school and are able to transfer a lot of information about the children to the Inclusion Manager. (Member of staff from primary school)*

Staff from secondary school perceived similar benefits to knowing that the majority of children from particular primary schools would transfer to their school. In such cases, staff at the secondary school worked to build links with the primary school students and staff even before students had been officially informed of their allocated secondary school through, for example, contributing to primary school assemblies and working with year 6 class teachers.

Where children from a particular primary school transfer to several different secondary schools, this caused difficulty in terms of staff from primary schools building close working relations with staff in secondary schools to support students through the transition process.

*We deal with so many secondary schools, they don't listen to us as well as they could do, we can't build proper working relationship with the secondary schools as we deal with so many of them... they all want different information in different formats and at different times, and they all have different SENCOs, it's a case of form-filling but we don't have personal contact. ...you might know the transition managers in the schools but you don't know who the best person is to go to to get things moving for a particular child. (Member of staff from secondary school)*

It is important to note that, despite many negative views being expressed about the 'unfairness' of the current school allocation process, the majority of secondary school students and parents were satisfied with the schools they/their children were attending. Of the participants to whom we spoke, only two year 7 students who had not been allocated any of their three 'preferred' schools were particularly unhappy with the secondary school they attended, and intended to move to one of their preferred secondary schools if a place became available.

#### **4.5 Perspectives on, and experiences of, the Appeals Process**

Where students are not allocated their first preference school, parents have the opportunity to appeal against this decision. Students, parents and staff from schools all considered the Appeals Process to be particularly stressful due to parents having to present a case for appeal and, as a result, delaying confirmation of which school their child will attend. Many students and parents, and some school staff also felt that the Appeals Process lacked transparency and was unjust because it was perceived to give preference either to students with 'special needs or issues' or to parents who 'know the right people' and 'who are

*articulate and make a fuss', while families who 'lacked the English language skills necessary to understand the system' were at a disadvantage.*

*The pushy and articulate win their appeals and if you're not, you don't... they can see their way through the system and often get the outcome they want.... but the system doesn't work for those who aren't articulate.*  
(Member of staff from primary school)

It should be noted that the above quotation represents the opinion of a small number of parents and the evidence suggests that it is rare for anyone to be legally represented during the Appeals Process, with approximately five instances of legal representation out of the 300-400 appeals cases which have taken place within the past 4-5 years.

One head of a primary school and the school transition manager also spoke of the unfairness about the system and asserted that, in their experiences, those from their school who won appeals cases were most likely to be families with English sounding names.

In a small number of cases, parents talked of successful appeals and of the positive impact this had on the happiness of their children, for example, one parent commented:

*My son was so upset, he cried a lot as he thought he wasn't going to get one of his choices, but luckily we did through the appeals system...it made such a difference to his outlook, he then started to look forward to secondary school, rather than being very down about the move.*

More often, however, parents and students talked negatively about the process. Some students expressed feelings of anger and depression on learning that their appeal had been unsuccessful:

*After the appeals I felt annoyed, as I didn't even get one of my choices. I was angry. You do the appeal, and that's really stressful; it took about a month to get the information we needed, but we still didn't get our first choice, I was depressed after that, we'd wasted all that time.* (Student)

One parent complained that she did not receive a response to the appeal she submitted, and others spoke generally of how their own and others' experiences of the Appeals Process, whether successful or not, had been very stressful experience.

For some parents and students the prospect of the stress likely to be caused through engaging with the Appeals Process prevented them from taking forward an appeal, and parents were particularly concerned about the stress that it may cause for their children.

*The trauma of not getting any of the schools we'd put down - she [the student] saw me stressed and unhappy about it and that made her unhappy,*

*that's why we didn't appeal as it was affecting us too much, and I know I'd get really stressed and that would stress her out. (Parent)*

*I didn't do the appeals, what really worried me was all the uncertainty... I wanted to, but it was stressful as it meant you still didn't know which school you were going to...it would have been too stressful for my son. (Parent)*

Staff in one of the primary schools commented that for some families, cultural beliefs prevented them from engaging with the Appeals Process to try to secure a place in their preferred secondary school.

*Even if they know the appeals system exists, it goes against their culture to question authority and what you've been told to do, so for some cultures, appealing just isn't an option. (Member of staff from primary school)*

From the perspective of staff in secondary schools, one outcome of the Appeals Process is that the final number of students allocated to a school is not known until late in the summer term. This can create difficulties in knowing the exact number of staff to employ. Staff in secondary schools also commented that the appeals process *'isn't a smooth process, we're always chasing up paperwork'*.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The following points are intended as conclusion to findings from the fieldwork and as recommendations for consideration by B&HCC in their broader review of the current secondary schools' allocations process.

### 1. An overview of stakeholders' perspectives on and experiences of B&HCC's secondary schools admissions process

- Parents and students considered that being able to state their three most preferred secondary schools was a positive aspect of the school allocation process, however, many considered that they had to wait too long between submitting their school preferences and being informed of their allocated secondary school.
- Most parents found the on-line application system straightforward. However, some parents experienced difficulties with the application process, in particular parents who were not able to read well, and those who did not have Internet access or an email account.
- Within some primary schools, each academic year there were cases where parents had not submitted a secondary school application form, and where this only became apparent once other students were informed of their allocated schools.
- Students, parents and school staff expressed uncertainty about how parental preferences were taken into account by B&HCC when allocating secondary schools.

### 2. Factors prioritised when choosing secondary schools

- Students and parents considered school open evenings to be of some help when making final choices about preferred secondary schools. However, they felt that the open evenings and other forms of publicity about the school (in the context of the high levels of marketisation to which schools subscribed) provided information on only the positive aspects of schools, making it difficult to gain a realistic understanding of what it would be like to attend particular schools.
- Students and parents prioritised certain factors, as follows, when deciding upon their preferred secondary school.
  - The most significant priority for students was to attend the same school as their close friends; this was also an important factor for parents, but not their prime consideration.
  - Staff in primary schools considered it was particularly important for vulnerable children to remain within their friendship groups when transferring to secondary school.
  - Parents placed the most emphasis on high GCSE grades and an Ofsted report which commented positively on the academic achievement of the school. Students also placed high priority on a school's academic achievements and, where students were not allocated their preferred school, some students and parents worried that they would not achieve their '*academic potential*'.
  - Parents and staff in primary schools raised concerns about children who had been allocated a primary school geographically distant from their home when they moved into B&H, but were then not given

priority to attend the same secondary school as their primary school peers.

- Students and parents also gave some priority to: schools already attended by elder siblings; schools in close proximity to their home - students prioritised reducing travelling, and some students also expressed concerns about journeys to certain schools being 'unsafe'. Priority was also given to schools which were considered to have a positive school ethos, 'good' behaviour and low levels of bullying; and schools which have facilities to accommodate students' extra-curricular interests. A small number of parents and students also favoured '*small schools*' as they considered it would be easier for students to '*settle into*' a small school rather than a large school; and a small number of parents prioritised schools which they considered were '*clean and hygienic*'.
- In the majority of cases students and parents made a joint decision about preferred secondary schools. However, in a small number of cases, where there were disagreements between students and their parents, parents' decisions were usually taken forward.

### 3. Measures taken to secure places in preferred secondary schools

- Several parents took measures to try to secure a place for their child in a particular secondary school. For example, some families/parents:
  - moved house to live within a particular catchment area, or obtained and submitted an address within a preferred catchment area through renting accommodation, moving in with their parents, or giving their parents' address as their own;
  - listed schools which they thought they were unlikely to be allocated, as their second and third choice schools;
  - started attending church to increase their chances of being accepted by one of the faith schools.
- There were also a small number of cases cited in which parents talked of knowing others who had exaggerated their child's medical condition, in an attempt to have their child awarded a statement of Special Educational Needs, and of a parent presenting a forged baptism certificate to try to secure a place for their child in a faith school. Staff in schools also cited cases of parents attempting to persuade the school's transition manager to admit their child to the school, and of parents contacting their 'first choice' school and falsely claiming they had been offered place in the school.

### 4. The reality of available school choices

- Parents and students who lived in dual-school catchment areas tended to favour the current system of allocating schools, primarily because the most '*sought after*' schools were located within these catchment areas.
- The chances of students living outside of the dual-school catchment areas securing a place in one of these schools is very limited; several parents living outside of these areas objected to their children not having the opportunity to attend one of the '*better performing*' schools.



- House prices within the dual-school catchment areas tend to be higher than in other areas of the city, thus limiting the choice of schools available to many students.
- Most parents to whom we spoke who lived in single-school catchment areas objected to their children not having a ‘real choice’ of secondary schools. However, where parents’ and students’ ‘first choice’ school was the only secondary school within their catchment, it was highly likely that they would be allocated a place in that school, which was seen by some as a positive feature of the current admissions’ procedure. In such cases, the secondary school allocation process was relatively ‘*anxious-free*’ for these students as they did not experience the worry or uncertainty of not knowing which school they would be allocated.
- Where it was usual for students from particular primary schools to transfer to specific secondary schools, this allowed the primary and secondary schools to work together to plan the transition process, even before students had been informed of their allocated schools.
- Where children from one primary school transferred to several different secondary schools, this created difficulty in building close working relations with relevant staff in secondary schools.
- Despite many negative views being expressed about the perceived ‘*unfairness*’ of the current school allocation process, the vast majority of secondary school students and parents were satisfied with the schools they/their children attended.

#### 5. Perspectives on, and experiences of, the Appeals Process

- Many students, parents and school staff considered the Appeals Process to be stressful and, for some parents and students, the prospect of the stress likely to be caused through engaging with the process prevented them from pursuing an appeal.
- Students, parents and some school staff considered the Appeals Process lacked transparency and gave preference to those who ‘*know the right people*’ and ‘*who are articulate and make a fuss*’, while families who ‘*lacked the English language skills necessary to understand the system*’ were at a disadvantage.

#### Recommendations

It should be noted that the findings report only the perspectives of participating students, parents and school staff, and may not be representative of the wider population of students, parents and school staff within Brighton and Hove. Nonetheless, the findings presented, most of which are based upon triangulated accounts from members of more than one participant group, suggest a number recommendations for future policy and practice in secondary school admissions within B&H.

Key recommendations in relation to B&HCC’s review of the secondary school’s admissions procedures are for B&HCC to consider:

1. Redrawing the current geographical catchment area boundaries to try to ensure all parents/students have a genuine choice of at least two

secondary schools, and to consider, within this, the potential site for a proposed 'new' secondary school within the city.

2. Ensuring head teachers of primary schools are aware, immediately after the secondary school application deadline, of which parents have not submitted an application. Staff in primary schools could then work with these parents to support them in submitting their application.
3. Seeking to provide all stakeholders with a greater degree of transparency about the general criteria used for allocating school places, and the specific criteria relating to the allocation of places to students living outside the catchment area.
4. Providing, and making widely available, neutral information for students and parents about schools within B&HCC to supplement the current marketing and recruitment strategies provided by schools in the form of '*glossy brochures*'.
5. Seeking to ensure that parents, students and school staff are aware that the National Offer Day, on which parents and students are informed about students' allocated schools, is a fixed date throughout England and cannot be brought forward.
6. Implementing measures to synchronise, as far as possible, the date on which electronic and postal information about the allocation of school places is received by parents.
7. Providing all stakeholders with a simplified explanation (possibly a flow chart) of how to take forward a secondary school allocation appeal, and seeking to ensure a greater degree of transparency about the appeals process.
8. Prioritising the maintenance of the current partnership and consensus on admissions represented by the locally agreed and centrally controlled admissions criteria. According to research findings (West, 2006; Pennel *et al.*, 2006; Coldron *et al.*, 2008; Gorard *et al.*, 2013), this is more likely to serve the best interests of **all** children in the city.

Evidence provided in this report, as well as evidence from other research (e.g. Allen *et al.*, 2010), suggests that the interaction between catchment and random allocation can lead to some unequal access to 'good' schools and to social segregation. International evidence (OECD, 2012) also suggests a strong correlation between equity and quality in terms of student outcomes and performance and, where education systems are segregated, the overall performance of students declines. However, the Sutton Trust (2007, 6) reports that ballots in school admissions can play a useful role in cases where other criteria, including catchment areas are 'fair', which we would define in terms of the socio-economic make-up of catchments. Given these potentially conflicting findings, a further recommendation is that B&HCC gives consideration to conducting a more substantial and in-depth analysis of whether the use of

random allocation impacts positively or negatively on interaction between catchment areas and on levels of social segregation within the schooling system in Brighton and Hove.

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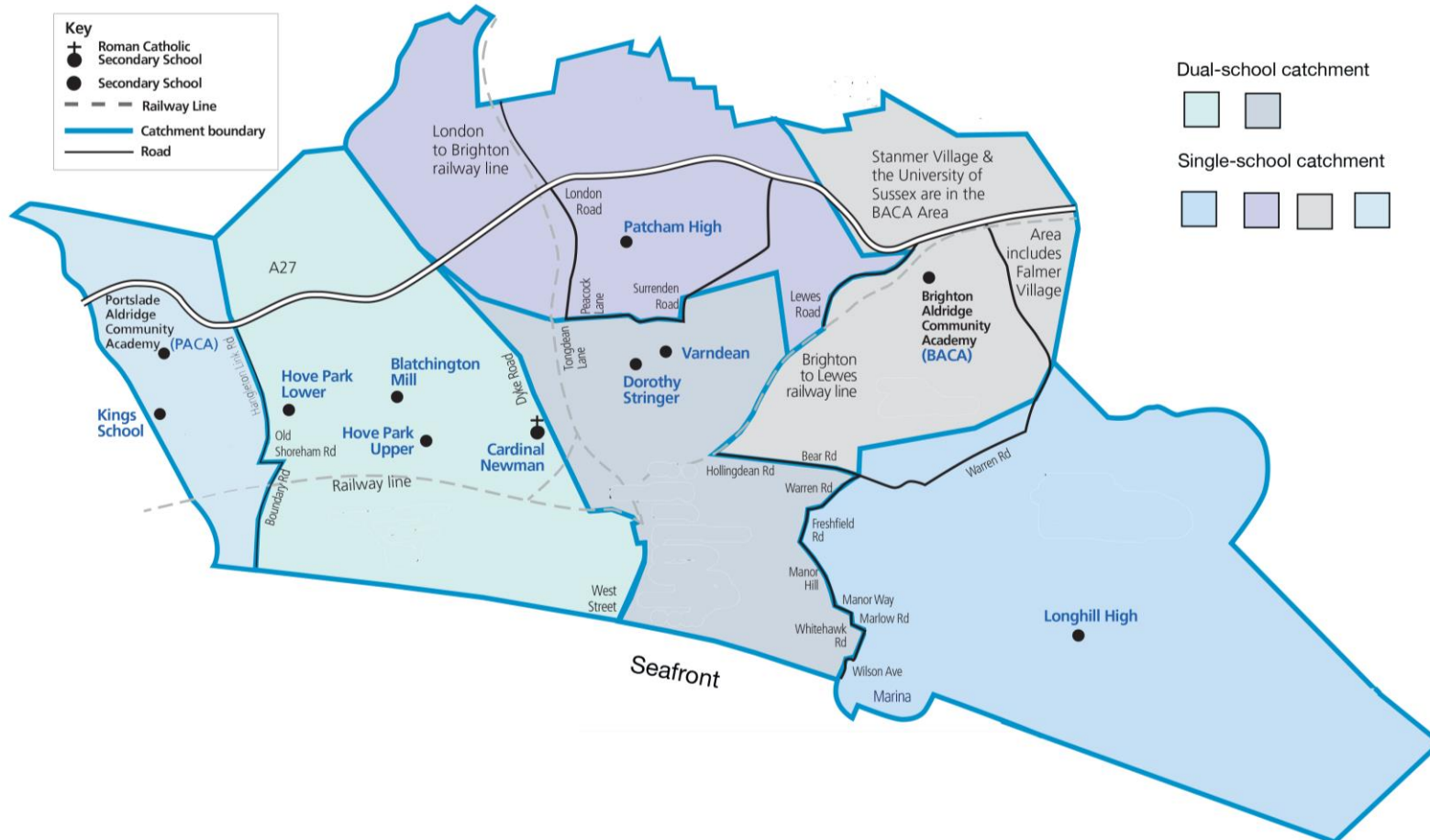
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Appendix A: Map of catchment areas, illustrating secondary schools within each catchment

Secondary Schools and Catchments: Brighton and Hove



## Appendix B: Dataset used to calculate Gorard's Segregation Index (GSI)

### January 2006\*

School	Type	Total pupils	Eligible FSM	% Eligible FSM	F	F <sub>i</sub> /F	T <sub>i</sub> /T	(F <sub>i</sub> /F-T <sub>i</sub> /T)	
V	Community	1240	150	11.8	1,830	0.081967213	0.101722724	-0.01975551	
DS	Community	1550	160	10.2	1,830	0.087431694	0.127153404	-0.03972171	
LH	Community	1230	130	10.6	1,830	0.071038251	0.100902379	-0.029864128	
FH	Community	660	220	33.9	1,830	0.120218579	0.05414274	0.066075839	
PCC	Community	1020	180	17.5	1,830	0.098360656	0.083675144	0.014685512	
BM	Community	1720	240	13.7	1,830	0.131147541	0.141099262	-0.009951721	
HP	Community	1720	320	18.6	1,830	0.174863388	0.141099262	0.033764126	
PH	Community	1010	200	19.6	1,830	0.109289617	0.082854799	0.026434818	
CN	Voluntary aided	2040	230	11.4	1,830	0.12568306	0.167350287	-0.041667227	
		12190	1830					0.281920591	0.140960296

### January 2007\*

School	Type	Total pupils	Eligible FSM	% Eligible FSM	F	F <sub>i</sub> /F	T <sub>i</sub> /t	(F <sub>i</sub> /F-T <sub>i</sub> /T)	
V	Community	1210	160	13.2	1820	0.087912088	0.09893704	-0.011024952	
DS	Community	1610	160	9.8	1820	0.087912088	0.1316435	-0.043731412	
LH	Community	1220	190	15.5	1820	0.104395604	0.099754702	0.004640903	
FH	Community	660	190	28.4	1820	0.104395604	0.053965658	0.050429946	
PCC	Community	1040	220	21.1	1820	0.120879121	0.085036795	0.035842326	
BM	Community	1720	200	11.4	1820	0.10989011	0.140637776	-0.030747666	
HP	Community	1740	320	18.1	1820	0.175824176	0.142273099	0.033551077	
PH	Community	990	190	19.7	1820	0.104395604	0.080948487	0.023447117	
CN	Voluntary aided	2040	190	9.5	1820	0.104395604	0.166802944	-0.062407339	
		12230	1820					0.295822738	0.147911369



### January 2008\*

School	Type	Total pupils	Eligible FSM	% Eligible FSM	F	F_i/F	T_i/t	(F_i/F-T_i/T)	
V	Community	1210	160	13.2	1820	0.087912088	0.100498339	-0.012586251	
DS	Community	1640	140	8.2	1820	0.076923077	0.136212625	-0.059289548	
LH	Community	1190	190	15.7	1820	0.104395604	0.098837209	0.005558395	
FH	Community	650	240	37.7	1820	0.131868132	0.053986711	0.077881421	
PCC	Community	970	180	18.4	1820	0.098901099	0.080564784	0.018336315	
BM	Community	1700	200	12.0	1820	0.10989011	0.141196013	-0.031305903	
HP	Community	1680	320	18.8	1820	0.175824176	0.139534884	0.036289292	
PH	Community	930	200	21.3	1820	0.10989011	0.077242525	0.032647585	
CN	Voluntary aided	2070	190	9.4	1820	0.104395604	0.17192691	-0.067531306	
		12040	1820					0.341426016	0.170713008

### January 2009

School	Type	Total pupils	Eligible FSM	% Eligible FSM	F	F_i/F	T_i/t	(F_i/F-T_i/T)	
V	Community	1277	224	17.5	1866	0.120042872	0.104895679	0.015147193	
DS	Community	1657	140	8.4	1866	0.075026795	0.136109742	-0.061082947	
LH	Community	1187	190	16.0	1866	0.101822079	0.097502875	0.004319204	
FH	Community	667	269	40.3	1866	0.144158628	0.054788894	0.089369734	
PCC	Community	982	196	20.0	1866	0.105037513	0.08066371	0.024373804	
BM	Community	1716	215	12.5	1866	0.115219721	0.140956136	-0.025736415	
HP	Community	1676	294	17.5	1866	0.15755627	0.137670445	0.019885825	
PH	Community	900	171	19.0	1866	0.091639871	0.073928043	0.017711828	
CN	Voluntary aided	2112	167	7.9	1866	0.089496249	0.173484475	-0.083988226	
		12174	1866					0.341618	0.170809

## January 2010

School	Type	Total pupils	Eligible FSM	% Eligible FSM	F	F_i/F	T_i/t	(F_i/F-T_i/T)	
V	Community	1310	249	19	1924	0.129417879	0.106582052	0.022835828	
DS	Community	1654	144	8.7	1924	0.074844075	0.134570011	-0.059725936	
LH	Community	1202	235	19.6	1924	0.122141372	0.097795135	0.024346237	
FH	Community	688	263	38.2	1924	0.136694387	0.055975917	0.080718469	
PCC	Community	939	187	19.9	1924	0.097193347	0.076397364	0.020795983	
BM	Community	1777	209	11.8	1924	0.108627859	0.144577333	-0.035949474	
HP	Community	1713	281	16.4	1924	0.146049896	0.139370271	0.006679625	
PH	Community	915	174	19	1924	0.09043659	0.074444716	0.015991875	
CN	Voluntary aided	2093	182	8.7	1924	0.094594595	0.170287202	-0.075692607	
		12291	1924					0.342738	0.171369

## January 2011

School	Type	Total pupils	Eligible FSM	% Eligible FSM	F	F_i/F	T_i/t	(F_i/F-T_i/T)	
V	Community	1335	258	19.3	1921	0.134305049	0.109462119	0.024842931	
DS	Community	1633	149	6.5	1921	0.077563769	0.133896359	-0.056332591	
LH	Community	1198	244	20.4	1921	0.127017179	0.098228928	0.028788251	
BACA	Academy	670	264	39.4	1921	0.137428423	0.054936045	0.082492378	
PCC	Community	908	182	20	1921	0.094742322	0.07445064	0.020291682	
BM	Community	1736	204	11.8	1921	0.10619469	0.142341751	-0.036147061	
HP	Community	1669	264	15.8	1921	0.137428423	0.136848147	0.000580276	
PH	Community	947	173	18.3	1921	0.090057262	0.077648409	0.012408853	
CN	Voluntary aided	2100	183	8.7	1921	0.095262884	0.172187602	-0.076924719	
		12196	1921					0.338804	0.169402

## January 2012

School	Type	Total pupils	Eligible FSM	% Eligible FSM	F	F_i/F	T_i/t	(F_i/F-T_i/T)	
V	Community	1345	249	18.5	1871	0.133083912	0.113569197	0.019514715	
DS	Community	1644	160	9.7	1871	0.085515767	0.138816178	-0.053300411	
LH	Community	1196	256	21.4	1871	0.136825227	0.100987925	0.035837302	
BACA	Academy	624	245	39.3	1871	0.130946018	0.052689352	0.078256666	
PACA	Academy	683	142	18.1	1871	0.075895243	0.057671198	0.018224045	
BM	Community	1668	210	12.6	1871	0.112239444	0.140842692	-0.028603248	
HP	Community	1608	256	15.9	1871	0.136825227	0.135776408	0.001048819	
PH	Community	963	157	16.3	1871	0.083912346	0.081313856	0.00259849	
CN	Voluntary aided	2112	196	9.3	1871	0.104756815	0.178333193	-0.073576378	
		11843	1871					0.310959	0.1554795

## January 2013

School	Type	Total pupils	Eligible FSM	% Eligible FSM	F	F_i/F	T_i/t	(F_i/F-T_i/T)	
V	Community	1368	251	18.3	1901	0.132035771	0.114257078	0.017778692	
DS	Community	1640	169	10.3	1901	0.088900579	0.13697486	-0.048074281	
LH	Community	1172	270	23	1901	0.14203051	0.097886912	0.044143598	
BACA	Academy	618	255	41.3	1901	0.134139926	0.051616136	0.08252379	
PACA	Academy	755	145	19.2	1901	0.076275644	0.063058548	0.013217096	
BM	Community	1653	203	12.3	1901	0.106785902	0.138060636	-0.031274734	
HP	Community	1576	250	15.9	1901	0.131509732	0.1316295	-0.000119768	
PH	Community	1000	148	14.8	1901	0.077853761	0.083521256	-0.005667495	
CN	Voluntary aided	2191	210	9.6	1901	0.110468175	0.182995072	-0.072526898	
		11973	1901					0.315338	0.157669

## January 2014

School	Type	Total pupils	Eligible FSM	% Eligible FSM	F	F_i/F	T_i/t	(F_i/F-T_i/T)	
V	Community	1334	208	15.6	1708	0.121779859	0.124777851	-0.002997991	
DS	Community	1325	144	8.8	1708	0.084309133	0.123936021	-0.039626887	
LH	Community	1145	248	21.6	1708	0.145199063	0.107099429	0.038099634	
BACA	Academy	522	211	37.9	1708	0.1235363	0.048826115	0.074710184	
PACA	Academy	581	112	17.3	1708	0.06557377	0.054344776	0.011228995	
BM	Community	1488	205	12.4	1708	0.120023419	0.13918249	-0.019159071	
HP	Community	1424	237	14.5	1708	0.138758782	0.133196146	0.005562636	
PH	Community	1026	129	12.6	1708	0.075526932	0.095968572	-0.02044164	
CN	Voluntary aided	1776	202	9.1	1708	0.118266979	0.166121036	-0.047854057	
KS	Free School	70	12	17.1	1708	0.007025761	0.006547563	0.000478198	
		10691	1708					0.26016	0.13008

## January 2015

School	Type	Total pupils	Eligible FSM	% Eligible FSM	F	F_i/F	T_i/t	(F_i/F-T_i/T)	
V	Community	1350	181	13.4	1499	0.120747165	0.12254902	-0.001801855	
DS	Community	1640	142	8.7	1499	0.09472982	0.148874365	-0.054144545	
LH	Community	1088	226	20.8	1499	0.150767178	0.098765432	0.052001746	
BACA	Academy	523	185	35.4	1499	0.12341561	0.047476398	0.075939212	
PACA	Academy	526	80	15.2	1499	0.053368913	0.047748729	0.005620183	
BM	Community	1502	166	11.1	1499	0.110740494	0.136347131	-0.025606638	
HP	Community	1396	219	15.7	1499	0.146097398	0.126724764	0.019372634	
PH	Community	1024	121	11.8	1499	0.08072048	0.092955701	-0.01223522	
CN	Voluntary aided	1788	157	8.8	1499	0.104736491	0.162309368	-0.057572877	
KS	Free School	179	22	12.3	1499	0.014676451	0.016249092	-0.001572641	
		11016	1499					0.305867552	0.152933776

\* Total number of children was provided by the DfES rounded to the nearest 10 up until 2009.

**Appendix C: To illustrate available data for the number of appeals submitted, allowed, dismissed and settled before hearing from 2007 - 2008 to 2014 - 2015 academic years**

**2007-2008**

	Appeals submitted	Appeals allowed	Appeals dismissed	Appeals settled before hearing
Blatchington Mill School	57	19	30	8
Dorothy Stringer School	71	33	30	8
Hove Park School	4	0	0	4
Longhill School	29	9	13	7
Patcham High School	1	0	0	1
Varndean School	20	7	9	4
Total	182	68	82	32

**2008-2009**

	Appeals submitted	Appeals allowed	Appeals dismissed	Appeals settled before hearing
Blatchington Mill School	89	13	65	11
Dorothy Stringer School	42	11	25	6
Hove Park School	29	8	11	10
Longhill School	9	3	3	3
Portslade Community College	4	0	0	4
Varndean School	22	4	8	10
Total	195	39	112	44

**2009-2010**

	Appeals submitted	Appeals allowed	Appeals dismissed	Appeals settled before hearing
Blatchington Mill School	76	10	61	5
Dorothy Stringer School	29	10	13	6
Hove Park School	31	4	11	16
Longhill School	7	2	2	3
Portslade Community College	1			1
Varndean School	30	18	7	5
Total	174	44	94	36

**2010-2011**

	Appeals submitted	Appeals allowed	Appeals dismissed	Appeals settled before hearing
Blatchington Mill School	76	13	50	13
Dorothy Stringer School	29	7	17	5
Hove Park School	15	0	0	15
Patcham High School	6	0	1	5
Varndean School	22	6	7	9
Total	148	26	75	47

**2011-2012**

	Appeals submitted	Appeals allowed	Appeals dismissed	Appeals settled before hearing
Blatchington Mill School	57	13	34	10
Dorothy Stringer School	44	38	0	6
Hove Park School	2	0	0	2
Patcham High School	4	0	0	4
Varndean School	20	3	7	10
Total	127	54	41	32

**2012-2013**

	Appeals submitted	Appeals allowed	Appeals dismissed	Appeals settled before hearing
Blatchington Mill School	72	25	35	8
Dorothy Stringer School	55	30	18	3
Hove Park School	6	0	0	4
Patcham High School	6	0	0	4
Varndean School	20	0	0	16
Total	159	55	53	35

**2013-2014**

	Appeals submitted	Appeals allowed	Appeals dismissed	Appeals settled before hearing
Blatchington Mill School	38	5	24	8
Dorothy Stringer School	81	20	55	2
Hove Park School	0	0	0	0
Patcham High School	2	0	0	2
Varndean School	18	6	6	4
Total	139	31	85	16

**2014-2015**

	Appeals submitted	Appeals allowed	Appeals dismissed	Appeals settled before hearing
Blatchington Mill School	19	1	0	18
Dorothy Stringer School	66	9	52	2
Hove Park School	0	0	0	0
Patcham High School	26	5	19	1
Vardean School	45	11	29	2
Total	156	26	100	23



Number of children in Brighton & Hove by Date of Birth and Postal Sector  
 Source: Snap-Shot of GP Registrations, 19th November 2015

Date of Birth / school year	BN1 1	BN1 2	BN1 3	BN1 4	BN1 5	BN1 6	BN1 7	BN1 8	BN1 9	BN2 0	BN2 1	BN2 2	BN2 3	BN2 4	BN2 5	BN2 6	BN2 7	BN2 8	BN2 9	BN3 1	BN3 2	BN3 3	BN3 4	BN3 5	BN3 6	BN3 7	BN3 8	BN411	BN412	Grand Total
01 September 98 to 31 August 99	4	13	62	123	124	208	94	196	61	109	37		80	174	215	128	42	76	109	47	30	56	96	106	135	173	118	58	191	2865
01 September 99 to 31 August 00	5	15	51	91	140	229	92	167	53	124	36	2	72	159	177	115	42	91	115	52	29	39	69	100	169	138	97	71	174	2714
01 September 00 to 31 August 01	4	13	56	51	125	229	77	194	77	120	38		79	176	176	120	32	100	115	74	31	58	76	109	158	176	105	75	183	2827
01 September 01 to 31 August 02	9	12	45	51	127	246	101	185	44	95	38		82	167	162	113	27	79	123	62	36	73	76	117	156	153	119	61	161	2720
01 September 02 to 31 August 03	9	12	64	59	136	266	103	181	50	65	37		100	180	163	114	44	86	114	57	21	75	83	134	133	152	97	65	170	2770
01 September 03 to 31 August 04	7	17	74	43	129	230	106	180	69	62	34		94	163	171	108	38	94	132	81	35	87	103	147	149	154	89	61	170	2827
01 September 04 to 31 August 05	5	23	60	48	134	240	109	181	50	63	46		92	170	137	117	36	78	133	77	36	85	93	167	154	158	101	61	158	2812
01 September 05 to 31 August 06	9	16	73	49	136	246	113	191	65	82	45		86	155	159	117	35	80	129	85	47	96	111	159	128	154	94	75	184	2919
01 September 06 to 31 August 07	4	19	76	61	160	240	109	195	64	65	50		101	155	164	119	44	88	147	87	56	111	111	168	157	158	104	73	178	3064
01 September 07 to 31 August 08	11	27	63	50	153	226	114	214	62	69	50		104	184	160	135	43	83	145	101	41	131	112	182	164	153	125	86	187	3175
01 September 08 to 31 August 09	8	21	67	68	134	225	122	186	55	58	58		85	175	163	125	41	95	156	98	57	165	101	176	138	146	112	83	176	3094
01 September 09 to 31 August 10	7	25	71	64	148	241	110	192	62	60	56		97	164	148	131	38	100	157	105	67	149	109	198	165	159	117	86	191	3217
01 September 10 to 31 August 11	8	23	78	65	150	222	123	199	71	61	71		109	160	157	138	35	99	138	105	45	147	98	200	133	141	95	83	194	3148
01 September 11 to 31 August 12	16	33	95	73	129	216	97	187	61	58	68		103	173	143	106	33	103	157	106	58	143	110	170	124	138	103	86	187	3076
01 September 12 to 31 August 13	8	40	86	64	139	203	82	209	51	65	74		105	149	158	110	33	86	155	104	58	146	107	158	110	153	99	83	155	2990
01 September 13 to 31 August 14	9	39	94	74	122	201	102	156	57	58	65		100	158	140	114	23	90	153	106	72	197	82	169	106	124	103	84	190	2988
01 September 14 to 31 August 15	13	36	124	85	126	171	75	158	43	59	78		102	171	142	93	20	91	146	112	60	179	89	149	95	107	81	80	191	2876
	136	384	1239	1119	2312	3839	1729	3171	995	1273	881	2	1591	2833	2735	2003	606	1519	2324	1459	779	1937	1626	2609	2374	2537	1759	1271	3040	50082

Date of Birth / school year	BACA	Blatchington Mill and Hove Park	Dorothy Stringer and Vardean	Longhill	PACA	Patcham	Grand Total
1 September 95 to 31 August 96	1947	796	1309	400	220	445	5117
1 September 96 to 31 August 97	1380	808	1108	442	253	411	4402
1 September 97 to 31 August 98	249	836	962	478	285	311	3121
1 September 98 to 31 August 99	206	834	870	421	249	281	2861
1 September 99 to 31 August 00	189	758	878	393	245	249	2712
1 September 00 to 31 August 01	221	853	820	392	258	279	2823
1 September 01 to 31 August 02	193	845	860	342	221	255	2716
1 September 02 to 31 August 03	216	823	893	360	235	242	2769
1 September 03 to 31 August 04	195	934	842	363	231	258	2823
1 September 04 to 31 August 05	198	952	853	331	218	258	2810
1 September 05 to 31 August 06	194	959	897	339	259	266	2914
1 September 06 to 31 August 07	182	1044	931	364	251	287	3059
1 September 07 to 31 August 08	221	1097	927	368	273	284	3170
1 September 08 to 31 August 09	198	1079	923	371	259	256	3086
1 September 09 to 31 August 10	188	1162	927	368	276	284	3205
1 September 10 to 31 August 11	196	1062	944	375	275	288	3140
1 September 11 to 31 August 12	202	1075	911	339	272	265	3064
1 September 12 to 31 August 13	170	1057	889	335	238	290	2979
1 September 13 to 31 August 14	192	1088	881	320	271	223	2975
1 September 14 to 31 August 15	195	1018	871	294	271	216	2865
Grand Total	6932	19080	18496	7395	5060	5648	62611

Date of Birth / school year	School yr in Sept 16 / year of entry into year 7	Grand Total all planning areas from 2014 data	pupil numbers likely need a school place citywide	Surplus places or shortfall of places (Assuming all places at Cardinal Newman are for B&H children)	Surplus places or shortfall of places (Assuming places at Cardinal Newman are offered to out of city children)	Surplus places or shortfall of places (Assuming we maintain a city wide surplus of 150 places)	Figures from May 2015 snapshot of GP data
<b>places in each school year from Sept 2016</b>		<b>2,615</b>			<b>-50</b>	<b>-150</b>	
01 September 98 to 31 August 99	13	2861					
01 September 99 to 31 August 00	12	2712					
01 September 00 to 31 August 01	11	2823					
01 September 01 to 31 August 02	10	2716					
01 September 02 to 31 August 03	9	2769					
01 September 03 to 31 August 04	8	2823					112
01 September 04 to 31 August 05	7	2810	2304	311	261	111	119
01 September 05 to 31 August 06	2017	2914	2393	222	172	22	15
01 September 06 to 31 August 07	2018	3059	2507	108	58	-92	-93
01 September 07 to 31 August 08	2019	3170	2596	19	-31	-181	-173
01 September 08 to 31 August 09	2020	3086	2526	89	39	-111	-123
01 September 09 to 31 August 10	2021	3205	2618	-3	-53	-203	-192
01 September 10 to 31 August 11	2022	3140	2575	40	-10	-160	-169
01 September 11 to 31 August 12	2023	3064	2507	108	58	-92	-106
01 September 12 to 31 August 13	2024	2979	2436	179	129	-21	-35
01 September 13 to 31 August 14	2025	2975	2429	186	136	-14	-24
01 September 14 to 31 August 15	2026	2865	2343	272	222	72	

#### Notes

The number of pupils likely to be looking for a school place is calculated by comparing GP registration data to school census data over previous years and adjusted for drop out rates between primary and secondary. This is then reduced to take account of pupils attending Cardinal Newman or Kings School

The number of places assumes 150 at Kings School and 363 at Cardinal Newman but some of the places at CN go to out of area pupils

Date of Birth / school year	School yr in Sept 15 / year of entry into year 7	Grand Total all planning areas from 2014 data	pupil numbers likely need a school place citywide	Surplus places or shortfall of places (Assuming all places at Cardinal Newman are for B&H children)	Surplus places or shortfall of places (Assuming places at Cardinal Newman are offered to out of city children)	Surplus places or shortfall of places (Assuming we maintain a city wide surplus of 150 places)	Figures from May 2015 snapshot of GP data
<b>places in each school year from Sept 2015</b>		<b>2,555</b>			<b>-50</b>	<b>-150</b>	
01 September 98 to 31 August 99	13	2861					
01 September 99 to 31 August 00	12	2712					
01 September 00 to 31 August 01	11	2823					
01 September 01 to 31 August 02	10	2716					
01 September 02 to 31 August 03	9	2769					
01 September 03 to 31 August 04	8	2823					56
01 September 04 to 31 August 05	7	2810	2304	251	201	51	63
01 September 05 to 31 August 06	2017	2914	2393	162	112	-38	-41
01 September 06 to 31 August 07	2018	3059	2507	48	-2	-152	-150
01 September 07 to 31 August 08	2019	3170	2596	-41	-91	-241	-229
01 September 08 to 31 August 09	2020	3086	2526	29	-21	-171	-179
01 September 09 to 31 August 10	2021	3205	2618	-63	-113	-263	-248
01 September 10 to 31 August 11	2022	3140	2575	-20	-70	-220	-225
01 September 11 to 31 August 12	2023	3064	2507	48	-2	-152	-162
01 September 12 to 31 August 13	2024	2979	2436	119	69	-81	-91
01 September 13 to 31 August 14	2025	2975	2429	126	76	-74	-80
01 September 14 to 31 August 15	2026	2865	2343	212	162	12	

### Notes

The number of pupils likely to be looking for a school place is calculated by comparing GP registration data to school census data over previous years and adjusted for drop out rates between primary and secondary. This is then reduced to take account of pupils attending Cardinal Newman or Kings School

The number of places assumes 150 at Kings School and 363 at Cardinal Newman but some of the places at CN go to out of

	5 year forecast up to 31 12 2019				5 year forecast 01 01 2020 to 31 12 2024				5 year forecast 01 01 2025 to 31 12 2029			
	Housing units	Pupils			Housing units	Pupils			Housing units	Pupils		
		Primary	Secondary	sixth form		Primary	Secondary	sixth form		Primary	Secondary	sixth form
	3733				4737				4730			
DA1 Churchill Sq and Brighton Centre	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DA2 Marina and gas works site	250	23	20	3	935	86	74	10	754	69	60	8
DA3 Lewes Road	226	21	18	2	212	20	17	2	343	32	27	4
DA4 Brighton Station and London Road	338	31	27	4	377	35	30	4	276	25	22	3
DA5 Eastern Road	169	16	13	2	255	23	20	3	91	8	7	1
DA6 Hove Station and Conway Street	117	11	9	1	228	21	18	2	179	17	14	2
DA7 Toads Hole valley	50	5	4	1	400	37	32	4	250	23	20	3
DA8 Shoreham Harbour	52	5	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Sub total</b>	1202	112	95	14	2407	222	191	25	1893	174	150	21
Remainder of city	2531	233	200	26	2330	214	185	24	2837	261	225	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3733</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>4737</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>4730</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>51</b>
	13200											

1216                      1046                      140  
2402

**Assumptions**

- Housing assumed to be all 2 bed apartments with 30% affordable units
- Total housing need within City Plan delivered on time
- Pupil product ratio as for S106 funding



Data from May 2015 school census

Option A

Estimated number going to CN	Number Attending Kings
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Year of secondary entry

	places available	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015		
<b>PACA catchment</b>	<b>240</b>	322	301	306	332	304	256	274		
reduced by 3%		312	292	297	322	295	248	266		
adjusted for CN & Kings		<b>230</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>184</b>	47	35
number of FSM pupils		45	44	48	49	44	40	37		
% of pupils in catchment receiving FSM		<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>20</b>		
<b>Hove Park School catchment area</b>	<b>300</b>	408	384	405	353	335	337	303		
reduced by 5%		388	365	385	335	318	320	288		
adjusted for CN & Kings		<b>312</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>212</b>	48	28
number of FSM pupils		46	38	47	37	36	51	29		
% of pupils in catchment receiving FSM		<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>14</b>		
<b>Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College catchment area</b>	<b>300</b>	384	358	350	301	281	279	272		
reduced by 5%		365	340	333	286	267	265	258		
adjusted for CN & Kings		<b>291</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>184</b>	59	15
number of FSM pupils		43	46	37	31	23	21	21		
% of pupils in catchment receiving FSM		<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>		
<b>Longhill High School catchment area</b>	<b>270</b>	338	338	314	322	308	286	295		
reduced by 8%		311	311	289	296	283	263	271		
adjusted for CN & Kings		<b>268</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>228</b>	33	10
number of FSM pupils		65	72	54	58	48	51	61		
% of pupils in catchment receiving FSM		<b>24</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>27</b>		
<b>BACA catchment area</b>	<b>180</b>	211	190	208	195	196	183	202		
reduced by 6%		198	179	196	183	184	172	190		
adjusted for CN & Kings		<b>183</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>175</b>	15	0
number of FSM pupils		66	68	74	56	53	64	65		
% of pupils in catchment receiving FSM		<b>36</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>37</b>		
<b>Patcham High School catchment area</b>	<b>215</b>	253	243	253	262	228	238	224		
reduced by 5%		240	231	240	249	217	226	213		
adjusted for CN & Kings		<b>212</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>185</b>	27	1
number of FSM pupils		20	12	23	17	14	19	12		
% of pupils in catchment receiving FSM		<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>		
<b>Dorothy Stringer School catchment area</b>	<b>330</b>	373	376	366	362	362	343	339		
reduced by 1%		369	372	362	358	358	340	336		
adjusted for CN & Kings		<b>317</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>284</b>	49	3
number of FSM pupils		37	37	35	45	33	31	32		
% of pupils in catchment receiving FSM		<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>		
<b>Vardean School catchment area</b>	<b>270</b>	263	293	284	275	250	237	255		
reduced by 1%		260	290	281	272	248	235	252		
adjusted for CN & Kings		<b>244</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>236</b>	14	2
number of FSM pupils		49	55	61	44	47	42	44		
% of pupils in catchment receiving FSM		<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>		
<b>UoB New School catchment area</b>	<b>180</b>	209	209	210	203	194	180	173		
reduced by 1%		207	207	208	201	192	178	171		
adjusted for CN & Kings		<b>187</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>151</b>	18	2
number of FSM pupils		35	33	36	33	34	36	35		
% of pupils in catchment receiving FSM		<b>19</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>		

Data from May 2015 school census

Option B

Estimated number going to CN	Number Attending Kings
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Year of secondary entry

	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015			
places available										
<b>Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College &amp; Dorothy Stringer School Catchment area</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>809</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>747</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>672</b>	<b>667</b>	<b>638</b>		
reduced by 5%		769	735	710	683	638	634	606		
adjusted for CN & Kings		<b>634</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>575</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>471</b>	117	18
number of FSM pupils		74	79	70	68	50	54	45		
% of pupils in catchment receiving FSM		<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	
<b>BACA, Patcham High School &amp; Varndean School Catchment area</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>690</b>	<b>702</b>	<b>704</b>	<b>679</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>620</b>	<b>632</b>		
reduced by 4%		662	674	676	652	589	595	607		
adjusted for CN & Kings		<b>616</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>561</b>	43	3
number of FSM pupils		141	139	145	126	106	124	115		
% of pupils in catchment receiving FSM		<b>23</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	
<b>Hove Park School &amp; PACA catchment area</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>672</b>	<b>709</b>	<b>684</b>	<b>648</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>573</b>		
reduced by 5%		690	638	674	650	616	557	544		
adjusted for CN & Kings		<b>534</b>	<b>482</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>388</b>	94	62
adjusted if Kings PAN increase to 150		<b>510</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>470</b>					24
number of FSM pupils		91	79	93	85	81	86	67		
% of pupils in catchment receiving FSM		<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	
<b>UoB New School &amp; Longhill High School Catchment area</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>535</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>493</b>		
reduced by 4%		514	521	510	501	502	445	473		
adjusted for CN & Kings		<b>449</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>408</b>	53	12
number of FSM pupils		111	122	107	105	102	98	115		
% of pupils in catchment receiving FSM		<b>25</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>25</b>	



Data from May 2015 school census

Option C

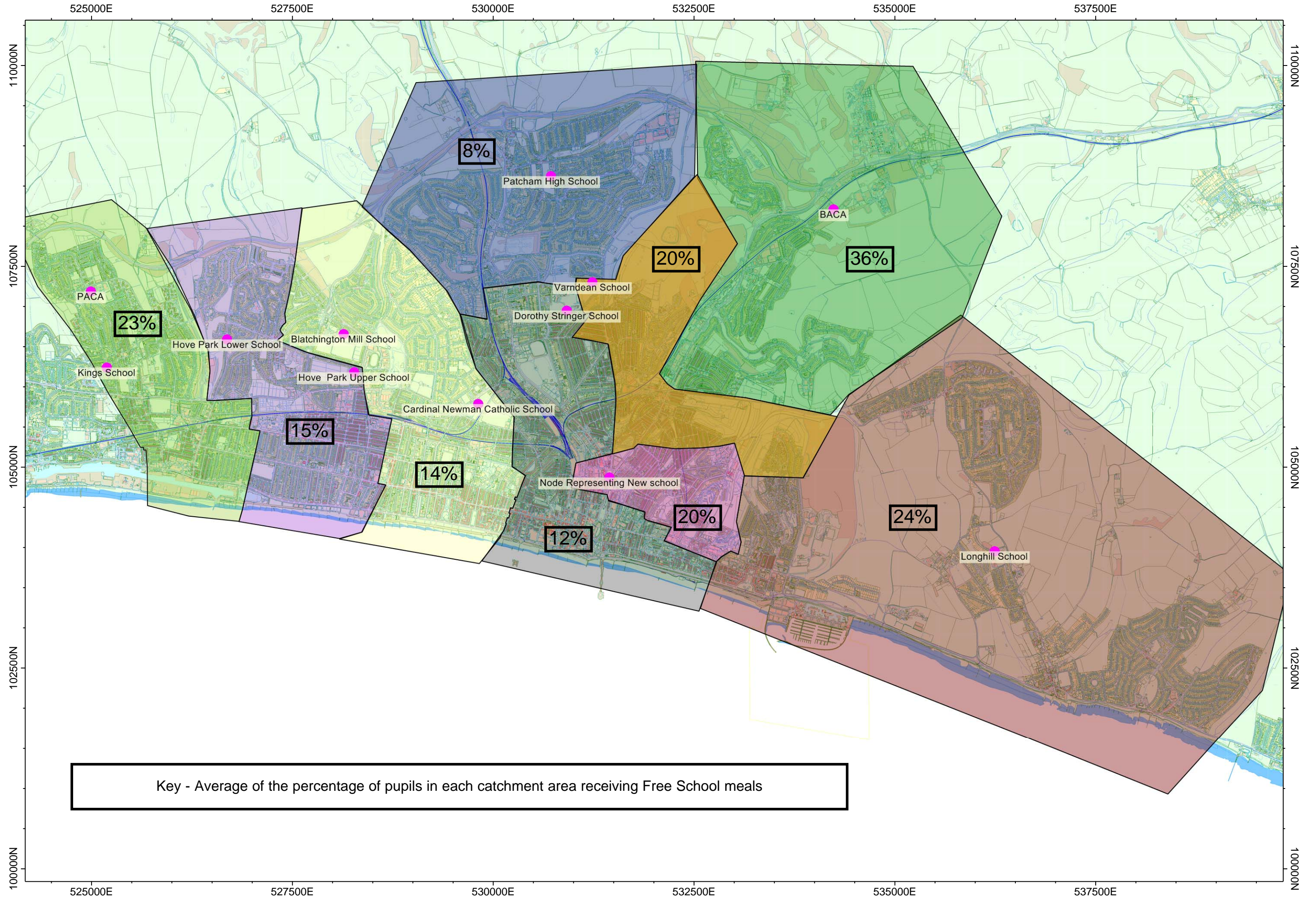
Year of secondary entry

Estimated number going to CN	Number Attending Kings
------------------------------	------------------------

	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015		
places available									
<b>BACA, Patcham High School &amp; Varndean School Catchment area</b>	<b>665</b>								
reduced by 4%	731	723	740	727	696	680	669		
adjusted for CN & Kings	702	694	710	698	668	653	642		
	<b>646</b>	<b>638</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>586</b>	54	2
number of FSM pupils	121	112	135	102	97	113	99		
% of pupils in catchment receiving FSM	<b>19</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	
<b>Dorothy Stringer School, UoB New School &amp; Longhill High School Catchment area</b>	<b>780</b>								
reduced by 4%	903	919	890	883	829	780	806		
adjusted for CN & Kings	867	882	854	848	796	749	774		
	<b>757</b>	<b>772</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>738</b>	<b>686</b>	<b>639</b>	<b>664</b>	97	13
number of FSM pupils	148	162	145	152	131	130	150		
% of pupils in catchment receiving FSM	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>20</b>	
<b>Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College, Hove Park School &amp; PACA catchment area</b>	<b>840</b>								
reduced by 5%	1125	1050	1064	992	932	879	862		
adjusted for CN & Kings	1069	998	1011	942	885	835	819		
adjusted if Kings PAN increase to 150	<b>834</b>	<b>763</b>	<b>776</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>584</b>	157	78
	<b>804</b>	<b>733</b>	<b>746</b>	<b>677</b>					30
number of FSM pupils	136	128	131	116	104	112	87		
% of pupils in catchment receiving FSM	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	



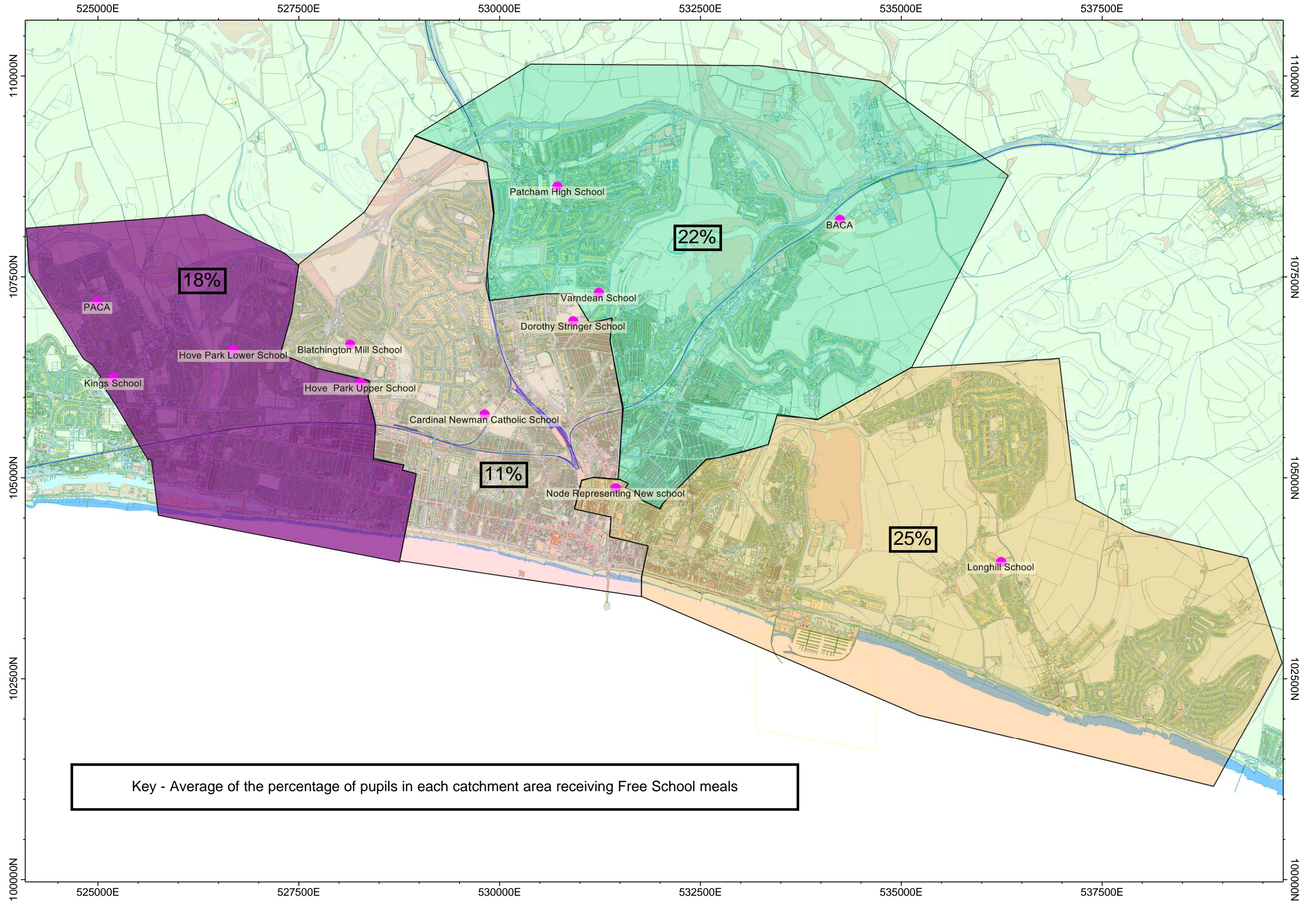
# Option A



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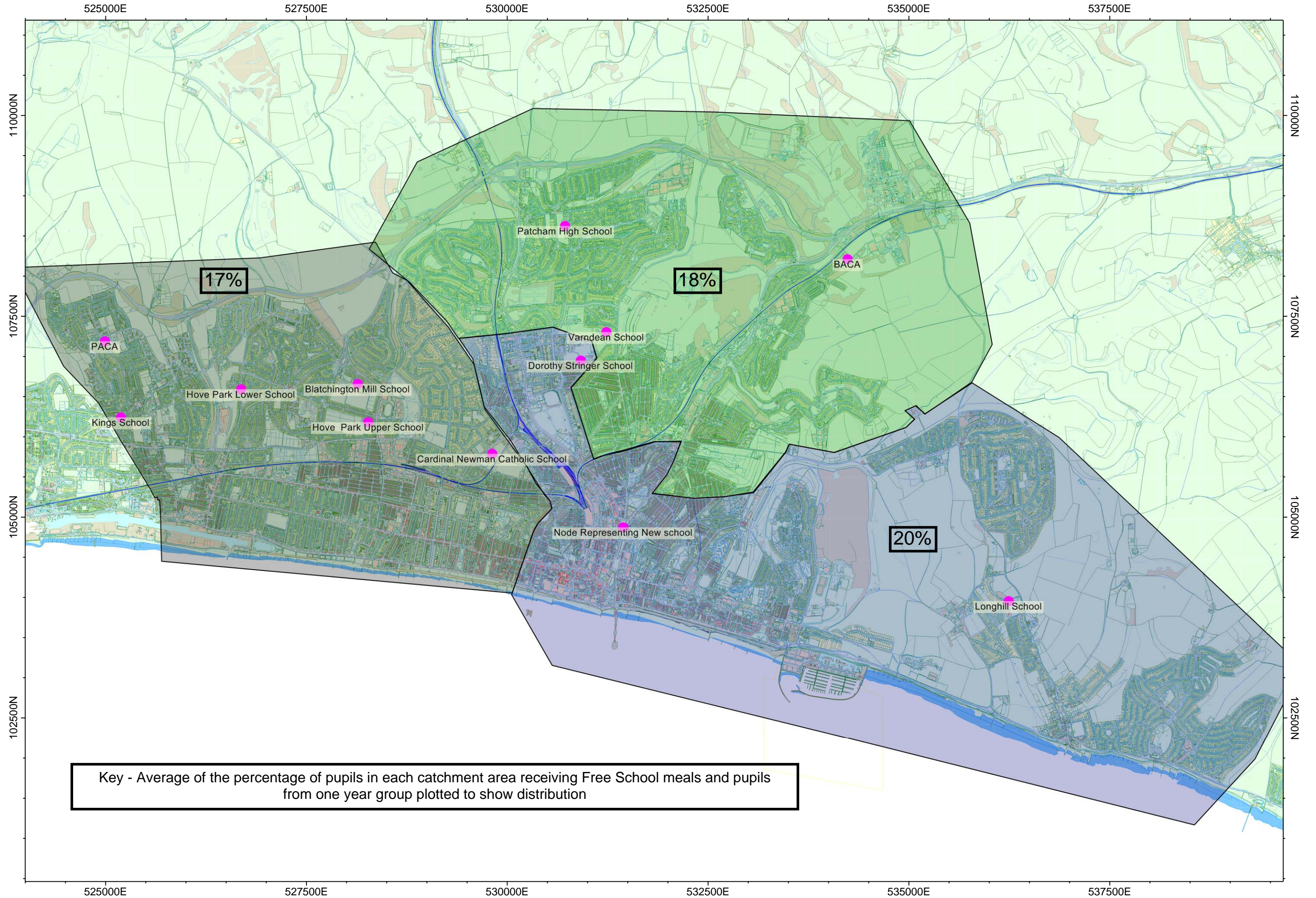


# Option B





# Option C







# Equality Impact and Outcome Assessment (EIA) Template

**EIAs make services better for everyone and support value for money by getting services right first time.**

EIAs enable us to consider all the information about a service, policy or strategy from an equalities perspective and then action plan to get the best outcomes for staff and service-users<sup>1</sup>. They analyse how all our work as a council might impact differently on different groups<sup>2</sup>. They help us make good decisions and evidence how we have reached these decisions<sup>3</sup>.

See end notes for full guidance. Either hover the mouse over the end note link (eg: Age<sup>13</sup>) or use the hyperlinks ('Ctrl' key and left click).

**For further support or advice please contact the Communities, Equality and Third Sector Team on ext 2301.**

## 1. Equality Impact and Outcomes Assessment (EIA) Template

First, consider whether you need to complete an EIA, or if there is another way to evidence assessment of impacts, or that an EIA is not needed<sup>4</sup>.

<b>Title of EIA<sup>5</sup></b>	Secondary School Admissions Review 2018/19	<b>ID No.<sup>6</sup></b>	
<b>Team/Department<sup>7</sup></b>	School Admissions		
<b>Focus of EIA<sup>8</sup></b>	<p>Brighton and Hove City Council ('the Council') is the admissions authority for all community schools in the city and is therefore responsible for determining the admission arrangements. Brighton Aldridge Community Academy (BACA) and Portslade Aldridge Community Academy (PACA) are their own admission authority but have adopted the Council's admission priorities. Cardinal Newman Catholic School and King's School are their own admissions authority and determine their own arrangements. 'Admission arrangements' means the overall procedure, practices and oversubscription criterion used in deciding on the allocation of school places.</p> <p>Admission authorities are required to determine their school admission arrangements annually. Prior to determination there must be a consultation period of at least six weeks. The Council is proposing to revise its admission arrangements for secondary schools for 2018/19. A public engagement exercise on possible options will be undertaken before the formal consultation starts in October 2016. The Council must implement fair and lawful arrangements.. The School Admissions Code 2014 sets</p>		

out acceptable and unacceptable admission arrangements and priorities.

In the event of oversubscription the current admissions arrangements set out the priorities for admission as follows:

1. Children in Local Authority care (Looked after children) and previously have been looked after children
2. Compelling medical or other exceptional reasons to attend the school
3. Sibling link
4. Catchment area
5. Other children - if none of the above four priorities applies to the child, they will be placed in this category.

Tie break- If a school is fully subscribed with children in any of these priorities, the council will use an electronic random allocation system to decide which children within that priority should be offered the available places. Are as follows:

A previous full review of secondary school admission arrangements was undertaken in 2007 and introduced the current criteria of catchments areas and random allocation within catchments areas in the event of oversubscription. A number of less substantial reviews have taken place since then which have amended certain of the catchment area boundaries.

A Steering Group was been set up in early 2015 to review the current arrangements. The review has been necessitated by the increase in the number of primary school age pupils in the city over the last 6 years, and the need to ensure that there will be sufficient secondary school places as they move through the school system. Also a new secondary school will open in Brighton in 2018.

There are over 2000 applications each year for admission into secondary school in year 7.

The new arrangements will start to affect children in current (2015/16) Year 4 (8-9 years old, who will be applying for a secondary school place in 2017 for admission in 2018), and will affect children in the following subsequent years:

- Year 3 (admitted into secondary school 2019)
- Year 2 (admitted into secondary school 2020)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Year 1 (admitted into secondary school 2021)</li><li>• Reception (admitted into secondary school 2022).</li></ul> |
|--|---|

## 2. Update on previous EIA and outcomes of previous actions

<b>What actions did you plan last time?</b> (List them from the previous EIA)	<b>What improved as a result?</b> What outcomes have these actions achieved?	<b>What <u>further</u> actions do you need to take?</b> (add these to the Action plan below)
<b>N/A as previous EIA completed in 2007</b>		

<b>Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010</b>	<b>What do you know<sup>9</sup>?</b> Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	<b>What do people tell you<sup>10</sup>?</b> Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	<b>What does this mean<sup>11</sup>?</b> Impacts identified from data and feedback (actual and potential)	<b>What can you do<sup>12</sup>?</b> All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advance equality of opportunity,</li> <li>• eliminate discrimination, and</li> <li>• foster good relations</li> </ul>																		
<b>Age<sup>13</sup></b>	Children affected by the proposals are currently in years: <table border="1" data-bbox="427 475 734 715"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Totals</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>2569</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>2704</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>2788</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2793</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reception</td> <td>2852</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> (May 2014-15 census)	Year	Totals	4	2569	3	2704	2	2788	1	2793	Reception	2852		Everyone of age can apply. There will be no impact on age.	There is equal access for every child of the entry age.						
Year	Totals																					
4	2569																					
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2	2788																					
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<b>Gender</b>	Children affected by the proposals are currently in years <table border="1" data-bbox="427 938 844 1129"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Boys</th> <th>Girls</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>1271</td> <td>1298</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>1402</td> <td>1302</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>1442</td> <td>1346</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>1362</td> <td>1431</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reception</td> <td>1438</td> <td>1415</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> (May 2014-15 census)	Year	Boys	Girls	4	1271	1298	3	1402	1302	2	1442	1346	1	1362	1431	Reception	1438	1415		The Admission Code set by the Department for Education says that authorities cannot collect data that is not set out in their Admissions priorities. Gender is not one of the priorities. (These priorities are set out in the Admissions booklet and on-line).  As this data is not collected there will be no impact on gender.	
Year	Boys	Girls																				
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<b>Disability<sup>14</sup></b>	<p>Current pupils with SEN:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="427 528 1095 1509"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="427 528 636 568">Jan-15</th> <th colspan="5" data-bbox="636 528 1003 568">National Curriculum Year</th> <th data-bbox="1003 528 1095 568"></th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="427 568 636 608">SEN Need</th> <th data-bbox="636 568 710 608">R</th> <th data-bbox="710 568 781 608">1</th> <th data-bbox="781 568 855 608">2</th> <th data-bbox="855 568 927 608">3</th> <th data-bbox="927 568 999 608">4</th> <th data-bbox="999 568 1095 608">Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="427 608 636 715">Autistic spectrum disorder</td> <td data-bbox="636 608 710 715">12</td> <td data-bbox="710 608 781 715">15</td> <td data-bbox="781 608 855 715">18</td> <td data-bbox="855 608 927 715">17</td> <td data-bbox="927 608 999 715">19</td> <td data-bbox="999 608 1095 715">81</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="427 715 636 783">Hearing impairment</td> <td data-bbox="636 715 710 783">6</td> <td data-bbox="710 715 781 783">9</td> <td data-bbox="781 715 855 783">12</td> <td data-bbox="855 715 927 783">10</td> <td data-bbox="927 715 999 783">6</td> <td data-bbox="999 715 1095 783">43</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="427 783 636 890">Moderate learning difficulty</td> <td data-bbox="636 783 710 890">6</td> <td data-bbox="710 783 781 890">49</td> <td data-bbox="781 783 855 890">80</td> <td data-bbox="855 783 927 890">85</td> <td data-bbox="927 783 999 890">76</td> <td data-bbox="999 783 1095 890">296</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="427 890 636 997">Multi-sensory impairment</td> <td data-bbox="636 890 710 997">1</td> <td data-bbox="710 890 781 997"></td> <td data-bbox="781 890 855 997">1</td> <td data-bbox="855 890 927 997">1</td> <td data-bbox="927 890 999 997">1</td> <td data-bbox="999 890 1095 997">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="427 997 636 1198">SEN support but no specialist assessment of type of need</td> <td data-bbox="636 997 710 1198">18</td> <td data-bbox="710 997 781 1198">62</td> <td data-bbox="781 997 855 1198">71</td> <td data-bbox="855 997 927 1198">39</td> <td data-bbox="927 997 999 1198">47</td> <td data-bbox="999 997 1095 1198">237</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="427 1198 636 1305">Other difficulty / disability</td> <td data-bbox="636 1198 710 1305">7</td> <td data-bbox="710 1198 781 1305">24</td> <td data-bbox="781 1198 855 1305">23</td> <td data-bbox="855 1198 927 1305">44</td> <td data-bbox="927 1198 999 1305">41</td> <td data-bbox="999 1198 1095 1305">139</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="427 1305 636 1374">Physical disability</td> <td data-bbox="636 1305 710 1374">6</td> <td data-bbox="710 1305 781 1374">10</td> <td data-bbox="781 1305 855 1374">14</td> <td data-bbox="855 1305 927 1374">12</td> <td data-bbox="927 1305 999 1374">12</td> <td data-bbox="999 1305 1095 1374">54</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="427 1374 636 1509">Profound &amp; multiple learning difficulty</td> <td data-bbox="636 1374 710 1509">4</td> <td data-bbox="710 1374 781 1509">5</td> <td data-bbox="781 1374 855 1509">5</td> <td data-bbox="855 1374 927 1509">4</td> <td data-bbox="927 1374 999 1509">4</td> <td data-bbox="999 1374 1095 1509">22</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Jan-15	National Curriculum Year						SEN Need	R	1	2	3	4	Total	Autistic spectrum disorder	12	15	18	17	19	81	Hearing impairment	6	9	12	10	6	43	Moderate learning difficulty	6	49	80	85	76	296	Multi-sensory impairment	1		1	1	1	4	SEN support but no specialist assessment of type of need	18	62	71	39	47	237	Other difficulty / disability	7	24	23	44	41	139	Physical disability	6	10	14	12	12	54	Profound & multiple learning difficulty	4	5	5	4	4	22	Children with SEND may be more liable to be bullied.	<p>The Admission Code set by the Department for Education says that authorities cannot collect data that is not set out in their Admissions priorities.</p> <p>Disability, other than pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans and those with exceptional and compelling circumstances is not one of the priorities. These priorities are set out in the Admissions booklet and on-line.</p>	
Jan-15	National Curriculum Year																																																																									
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<b>Disability</b>	Social, emotional and mental health	45	93	72	81	93	384			
	Speech, language and communication needs	175	178	161	130	107	751			
	Severe learning difficulty	9	12	7	14	13	55			
	Specific learning difficulty	3	42	73	87	130	335			
	Visual impairment	5	5	7	7	4	28			
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>2429</b>			
	<p>The school admissions guidance stipulates that if there are medical reasons that make it essential for a child to attend a particular school, parents must provide supporting information from a doctor together with any other relevant information. This must make a compelling case as to why the child's needs can only be met at the preferred school, as a medical condition in itself will not automatically result in a place being offered. It is not essential for the doctor to name the school in question, but the evidence should explain exactly what the child's needs are, and what specialist support and/or facilities your child requires. The Local Authority will seek advice from the Consultant Community Paediatrician, who in</p>									

<b>Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010</b>	<b>What do you know<sup>9</sup>?</b> Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	<b>What do people tell you<sup>10</sup>?</b> Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	<b>What does this mean<sup>11</sup>?</b> Impacts identified from data and feedback (actual and potential)	<b>What can you do<sup>12</sup>?</b> All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advance equality of opportunity,</li> <li>• eliminate discrimination, and</li> <li>• foster good relations</li> </ul>
	<p>most cases will only agree medical need for a school place if a child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) as a result of their medical situation.</p> <p>The Family Information Service has a School Preference Service to support parents and carers who may need help in applying for a secondary school place. (This service is impartial and separate from the School Admissions Team).</p> <p>Schools also support parents with the application process.</p> <p>Within the Admissions process -Priority 2 refers to children with compelling medical or other exceptional reasons to help the child being offered a place in their preferred school.</p>			
<b>Gender reassignment<sup>15</sup></b>	<p>There are small numbers of trans children in Brighton &amp; Hove primary schools.</p> <p>The Family Information Service has a School Preference Service to support parents and carers who may need help in applying for a primary or secondary school place. (This service is impartial and separate from the School Admissions Team).</p> <p>Schools also support parents with the application process.</p> <p>Within the Admissions process -Priority 2 refers to children with compelling medical or other exceptional reasons to help the child being offered a place in their preferred school.</p>	<p>This group are potentially vulnerable. Some schools may be selected as their preferred options due to those schools having more publicised and perceived effective anti-bullying policies.</p>	<p>There is no impact as this is not part of the admissions criteria.</p>	



<b>Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010</b>	<b>What do you know<sup>9</sup>?</b> Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	<b>What do people tell you<sup>10</sup>?</b> Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	<b>What does this mean<sup>11</sup>?</b> Impacts identified from data and feedback (actual and potential)	<b>What can you do<sup>12</sup>?</b> All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advance equality of opportunity,</li> <li>• eliminate discrimination, and</li> <li>• foster good relations</li> </ul>
<b>Pregnancy and maternity<sup>16</sup></b>	Not relevant.		Pregnancy and maternity should not be a factor and therefore there should be no detrimental impact.	
<b>Race<sup>17</sup></b>	<p>The current Local Authority average for BME is 24% for all schools. Currently for Primary schools average for BME is 25%. The national figure for BME is 28%.</p> <p>Currently for pupils with English as an Additional Language (EALs) at Primary schools (incl academy &amp; free schools) is 13.0% (National 18.7%*)</p> <p>In January 2015 there were 3,729 pupils with at least 101 different languages other than English (including British Sign Language), attending Brighton and Hove schools and Academies.</p> <p>The three most widely spoken languages other than English are Arabic (824 pupils), Bengali (352 pupils) and Polish (339 pupils).</p> <p>The Family Information Service has a School Preference Service to support parents and carers who may need help in applying for a primary or secondary school place. (This service is impartial and separate from the School Admissions Team).</p>	<p>This group are potentially vulnerable. Some schools maybe selected as their preferred options due to those schools having more publicised and perceived effective anti-bullying policies for more ethnic pupils.</p> <p>New entrants who are not in the same catchment area as their friends due to applying in-year for a school place (who may have the same ethnic background) will more than likely attend a different secondary school.</p>	There is no impact as this is not part of the admissions criteria.	

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	What do you know <sup>9</sup> ? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	What do people tell you <sup>10</sup> ? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean <sup>11</sup> ? Impacts identified from data and feedback (actual and potential)	What can you do <sup>12</sup> ? All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advance equality of opportunity,</li> <li>• eliminate discrimination, and</li> <li>• foster good relations</li> </ul>						
<b>Race</b>	Schools also support parents with the application process.  Within the Admissions process -Priority 2 refers to children with compelling medical or other exceptional reasons to help the child being offered a place in their preferred school.	MOSIAC are available to provide support and also the EALS.								
<b>Religion or belief<sup>18</sup></b>	The Local Authority does not collect this data set as it is not part of their Admissions priorities.		There is no impact as this is not part of the admissions criteria for community schools.							
<b>Sexual orientation<sup>19</sup></b>	<b>Allsorts</b> have confirmed that there is no data available for primary age children.	This group are potentially vulnerable. Some schools maybe selected as their preferred options due to those schools having more publicised and perceived effective anti-bullying policies.	There is no impact as this is not part of the admissions criteria.							
<b>Community Cohesion<sup>20</sup></b>	DfE do not collect data on deprivation.  The Local Authority is aware of its duty under the Equality Act 2010 to promote community cohesion.  <b>Free School Meals (FSM)</b> <table border="1" data-bbox="427 1394 768 1497"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Totals</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>401</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>436</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Totals	4	401	3	436		The proposal for FSM to be included as one of the Admissions priorities will give these children a greater priority over non FSM children.  The Local Authority makes every effort to ensure that parents are	
Year	Totals									
4	401									
3	436									

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	What do you know <sup>9</sup> ? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	What do people tell you <sup>10</sup> ? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean <sup>11</sup> ? Impacts identified from data and feedback (actual and potential)	What can you do <sup>12</sup> ? All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advance equality of opportunity,</li> <li>• eliminate discrimination, and</li> <li>• foster good relations</li> </ul>						
	<table border="1" data-bbox="427 437 766 544"> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>413</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>382</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reception</td> <td>411</td> </tr> </table> <p>14.5% of Brighton and Hove pupils from years R to 11 (aged 4 to 16) have applied for and have been deemed eligible for free school meals. This is below the National figure of 15.7%. The national figure is from Jan 2014 (the 2015 data will not be published until the end of the summer) and is expected to have decreased.</p> <p>Both the local figure and the national figure are on a downward trend and the universal infant free school meals programme has had a significant impact on numbers of infant school parents registering across the country.</p> <p>The Local Authority has mitigated this impact locally and is working closely with schools to assist them in the identification of FSM pupils. Initial figures show that the Brighton and Hove FSM reduction of 1.2 percentage points is less than national. The drop in pupils eligible for FSM is across the phases, with 100 fewer pupils claiming in secondary schools than one year ago.</p>	2	413	1	382	Reception	411		not only aware of the published admission arrangements but that they also fully understand them. The level of satisfaction with a complex process contributes directly to community cohesion.	
2	413									
1	382									
Reception	411									
<b>Other relevant groups<sup>21</sup></b>	<p>Schools report and support pupils who are Looked After, Asylum Seekers and pupils who are affected domestic violence.</p> <p>The Admissions priorities are :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Children in Local Authority care (Looked after children) and previously have been looked after children</li> <li>2. Compelling medical or other exceptional reasons to attend the school</li> </ol>									

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	What do you know <sup>9</sup> ? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	What do people tell you <sup>10</sup> ? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean <sup>11</sup> ? Impacts identified from data and feedback (actual and potential)	What can you do <sup>12</sup> ? All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advance equality of opportunity,</li> <li>• eliminate discrimination, and</li> <li>• foster good relations</li> </ul>
	3. Sibling link 4. Catchment area 5. Other children - if none of the above four priorities applies to the child, they will be placed in this category.			
Cumulative impact <sup>22</sup>	None recognised			
<b>Assessment of overall impacts and any further recommendations<sup>23</sup></b>				
Informal engagement will commence on the 14 March 2016 to 22 April 2016. Feedback received from these events will be incorporated into the EIA.				

### 3. List detailed data and/or community feedback which informed your EIA

Title (of data, research or engagement)	Date	Gaps in data	Actions to fill these gaps (add these to the Action plan below)
Transgender and sexual orientation – from Allsorts	26-11-2015	Local authorities do not collect this data as part of school census. Schools have been provided with guidance.	
2015 School Census where most recent data available (January, May or October) and National Statistics Postcodes Directory 2010	12-12-2015		

#### 4. Prioritised Action Plan<sup>24</sup>

Impact identified and group(s) affected	Action planned	Expected outcome	Measure of success	Timeframe
NB: These actions must now be transferred to service or business plans and monitored to ensure they achieve the outcomes identified.				

**EIA sign-off:** (for the EIA to be final an email must sent from the relevant people agreeing it or this section must be signed)

**Lead Equality Impact Assessment officer:**

**Date:**

**Directorate Management Team rep or Head of Service:**

**Date:**

**Communities, Equality Team and Third Sector officer:**

**Date:**

## Guidance end-notes

<sup>1</sup> The following principles, drawn from case law, explain what we must do to fulfil our duties under the Equality Act:

- **Knowledge:** everyone working for the council must be aware of our equality duties and apply them appropriately in their work.
- **Timeliness:** the duty applies at the time of considering policy options and/or before a final decision is taken – not afterwards.
- **Real Consideration:** the duty must be an integral and rigorous part of your decision-making and influence the process.
- **Sufficient Information:** you must assess what information you have and what is needed to give proper consideration.
- **No delegation:** the council is responsible for ensuring that any contracted services which provide services on our behalf can comply with the duty, are required in contracts to comply with it, and do comply in practice. It is a duty that cannot be delegated.
- **Review:** the equality duty is a continuing duty. It applies when a policy is developed/agreed, and when it is implemented/reviewed.
- **Proper Record Keeping:** to show that we have fulfilled our duties we must keep records of the process and the impacts identified.

NB: Filling out this EIA in itself does not meet the requirements of the equality duty. All the requirements above must be fulfilled or the EIA (and any decision based on it) may be open to challenge. Properly used, an EIA can be a tool to help us comply with our equality duty and as a record that to demonstrate that we have done so.

### <sup>2</sup> Our duties in the Equality Act 2010

As a council, we have a legal duty (under the Equality Act 2010) to show that we have identified and considered the impact and potential impact of our activities on all people with 'protected characteristics' (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership).

This applies to policies, services (including commissioned services), and our employees. The level of detail of this consideration will depend on what you are assessing, who it might affect, those groups' vulnerability, and how serious any potential impacts might be. We use this EIA template to complete this process and evidence our consideration.

**The following are the duties in the Act. You must give 'due regard' (pay conscious attention) to the need to:**

- **avoid, reduce or minimise negative impact** (if you identify unlawful discrimination, including victimisation and harassment, you must stop the action and take advice immediately).
- **promote equality of opportunity.** This means the need to:
  - Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by equality groups
  - Take steps to meet the needs of equality groups
  - Encourage equality groups to participate in public life or any other activity where participation is disproportionately low
  - Consider if there is a need to treat disabled people differently, including more favourable treatment where necessary
- **foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.** This means:
  - Tackle prejudice
  - Promote understanding

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<sup>3</sup> EIAs are always proportionate to:

- The size of the service or scope of the policy/strategy
- The resources involved
- The numbers of people affected
- The size of the likely impact
- The vulnerability of the people affected

The greater the potential adverse impact of the proposed policy on a protected group (e.g. disabled people), the more vulnerable the group in the context being considered, the more thorough and demanding the process required by the Act will be.

<sup>4</sup> **When to complete an EIA:**

- When planning or developing a new service, policy or strategy
- When reviewing an existing service, policy or strategy
- When ending or substantially changing a service, policy or strategy
- When there is an important change in the service, policy or strategy, or in the city (eg: a change in population), or at a national level (eg: a change of legislation)

Assessment of equality impact can be evidenced as part of the process of reviewing or needs assessment or strategy development or consultation or planning. It does not have to be on this template, but must be documented. Wherever possible, build the EIA into your usual planning/review processes.

**Do you need to complete an EIA? Consider:**

- Is the policy, decision or service likely to be relevant to any people because of their protected characteristics?
- How many people is it likely to affect?
- How significant are its impacts?
- Does it relate to an area where there are known inequalities?
- How vulnerable are the people (potentially) affected?

If there are potential impacts on people but you decide not to complete an EIA it is usually sensible to document why.

<sup>5</sup> **Title of EIA:** This should clearly explain what service / policy / strategy / change you are assessing

<sup>6</sup> **ID no:** The unique reference for this EIA. If in doubt contact Clair ext: 1343

<sup>7</sup> **Team/Department:** Main team responsible for the policy, practice, service or function being assessed

<sup>8</sup> **Focus of EIA:** A member of the public should have a good understanding of the policy or service and any proposals after reading this section. Please use plain English and write any acronyms in full first time - eg: 'Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)'



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This section should explain what you are assessing:

- What are the main aims or purpose of the policy, practice, service or function?
- Who implements, carries out or delivers the policy, practice, service or function? Please state where this is more than one person/team/body and where other organisations deliver under procurement or partnership arrangements.
- How does it fit with other services?
- Who is affected by the policy, practice, service or function, or by how it is delivered? Who are the external and internal service-users, groups, or communities?
- What outcomes do you want to achieve, why and for whom? Eg: what do you want to provide, what changes or improvements, and what should the benefits be?
- What do existing or previous inspections of the policy, practice, service or function tell you?
- What is the reason for the proposal or change (financial, service, legal etc)? The Act requires us to make these clear.

<sup>9</sup> **Data:** Make sure you have enough data to inform your EIA.

- What data relevant to the impact on protected groups of the policy/decision/service is available?<sup>9</sup>
- What further evidence is needed and how can you get it? (Eg: further research or engagement with the affected groups).
- What do you already know about needs, access and outcomes? Focus on each of the protected characteristics in turn. Eg: who uses the service? Who doesn't and why? Are there differences in outcomes? Why?
- Have there been any important demographic changes or trends locally? What might they mean for the service or function?
- Does data/monitoring show that any policies or practices create particular problems or difficulties for any groups?
- Do any equality objectives already exist? What is current performance like against them?
- Is the service having a positive or negative effect on particular people in the community, or particular groups or communities?
- Use local sources of data (eg: JSNA: <http://www.bhconnected.org.uk/content/needs-assessments> and Community Insight: <http://brighton-hove.communityinsight.org/#> ) and national ones where they are relevant.

<sup>10</sup> **Engagement:** You must engage appropriately with those likely to be affected to fulfil the equality duty.

- What do people tell you about the services?
- Are there patterns or differences in what people from different groups tell you?
- What information or data will you need from communities?
- How should people be consulted? Consider:
  - (a) consult when proposals are still at a formative stage;
  - (b) explain what is proposed and why, to allow intelligent consideration and response;
  - (c) allow enough time for consultation;
  - (d) make sure what people tell you is properly considered in the final decision.
- Try to consult in ways that ensure all perspectives can be considered.
- Identify any gaps in who has been consulted and identify ways to address this.

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<sup>11</sup> Your EIA must get to grips fully and properly with actual and potential impacts.

- The equality duty does not stop decisions or changes, but means we must conscientiously and deliberately confront the anticipated impacts on people.
- Be realistic: don't exaggerate speculative risks and negative impacts.
- Be detailed and specific so decision-makers have a concrete sense of potential effects. Instead of "the policy is likely to disadvantage older women", say how many or what percentage are likely to be affected, how, and to what extent.
- Questions to ask when assessing impacts depend on the context. Examples:
  - Are one or more protected groups affected differently and/or disadvantaged? How, and to what extent?
  - Is there evidence of higher/lower uptake among different groups? Which, and to what extent?
  - If there are likely to be different impacts on different groups, is that consistent with the overall objective?
  - If there is negative differential impact, how can you minimise that while taking into account your overall aims
  - Do the effects amount to unlawful discrimination? If so the plan must be modified.
  - Does the proposal advance equality of opportunity and/or foster good relations? If not, could it?

<sup>12</sup> Consider all three aims of the Act: removing barriers, and also identifying positive actions we can take.

- Where you have identified impacts you must state what actions will be taken to remove, reduce or avoid any negative impacts and maximise any positive impacts or advance equality of opportunity.
- Be specific and detailed and explain how far these actions are expected to improve the negative impacts.
- If mitigating measures are contemplated, explain clearly what the measures are, and the extent to which they can be expected to reduce / remove the adverse effects identified.
- An EIA which has attempted to airbrush the facts is an EIA that is vulnerable to challenge.

<sup>13</sup> **Age:** People of all ages

<sup>14</sup> **Disability:** A person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The definition includes: sensory impairments, impairments with fluctuating or recurring effects, progressive, organ specific, developmental, learning difficulties, mental health conditions and mental illnesses, produced by injury to the body or brain. Persons with cancer, multiple sclerosis or HIV infection are all now deemed to be disabled persons from the point of diagnosis.

<sup>15</sup> **Gender Reassignment:** In the Act a transgender person is someone who proposes to, starts or has completed a process to change his or her gender. A person does not need to be under medical supervision to be protected

<sup>16</sup> **Pregnancy and Maternity:** Protection is during pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which the woman is entitled.

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<sup>17</sup> **Race/Ethnicity:** This includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality, and includes refugees and migrants, and Gypsies and Travellers

<sup>18</sup> **Religion and Belief:** Religion includes any religion with a clear structure and belief system. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief. The Act also covers lack of religion or belief.

<sup>19</sup> **Sexual Orientation:** The Act protects bisexual, gay, heterosexual and lesbian people

<sup>20</sup> **Community Cohesion:** What must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together.

<sup>21</sup> **Other relevant groups:** eg: Carers, people experiencing domestic and/or sexual violence, substance misusers, homeless people, looked after children, ex-armed forces personnel, people on the Autistic spectrum etc

<sup>22</sup> **Cumulative Impact:** This is an impact that appears when you consider services or activities together. A change or activity in one area may create an impact somewhere else

<sup>23</sup> **Assessment of overall impacts and any further recommendations**

- Make a frank and realistic assessment of the overall extent to which the negative impacts can be reduced or avoided by the mitigating measures. Explain what positive impacts will result from the actions and how you can make the most of these.
- Countervailing considerations: These may include the reasons behind the formulation of the policy, the benefits it is expected to deliver, budget reductions, the need to avert a graver crisis by introducing a policy now and not later, and so on. The weight of these factors in favour of implementing the policy must then be measured against the weight of any evidence as to the potential negative equality impacts of the policy,
- Are there any further recommendations? Is further engagement needed? Is more research or monitoring needed? Does there need to be a change in the proposal itself?

<sup>24</sup> **Action Planning:** The Equality Duty is an ongoing duty: policies must be kept under review, continuing to give 'due regard' to the duty. If an assessment of a broad proposal leads to more specific proposals, then further equality assessment and consultation are needed.

