

Subject:	Secondary School Admission Arrangements 2018/19		
Date of Meeting:	Children, Young People and Skills Committee 19 September 2016		
Report of:	Executive Director of Children's Services		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Richard Barker Head of School Organisation	Tel: 29-0732
	Email:	richard.barker@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

Note: 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), were that the Cross Party School Organisation Working Group were meeting to consider the most recent update on the admission arrangements for 2018 on 8 September 2016.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

1.1 The City Council is the admission authority for maintained community 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. This paper provides an update on the outcomes of the engagement phase earlier this year and the conclusions reached by the working group regarding proposed revisions to the admission arrangements for the city's secondary schools. The report notes that there is not yet confirmation of the permanent site for the new school nor determined admission arrangements for schools that are their own admission authority. Therefore it is not yet possible to put forward proposals as part of city wide admission arrangements for September 2018. It is expected, subject to approval from the DfE, that the new school will open with admission arrangements that do not include a catchment area.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To note the responses to the engagement activities which have helped to inform the current proposals developed by the Cross Party School Organisation Working Group (CPSOWG) for future admission arrangements.
- 2.2 To note that, as their own admission authorities, Cardinal Newman Catholic School, King's School, the Brighton Aldridge Community Academy, Portslade Aldridge Community Academy and the new University of Brighton Academies Trust secondary school are responsible for their own admission arrangements.
- 2.3 To agree that in view of the lack of greater certainty regarding the site of the new University of Brighton Academies Trust secondary school it would premature to

make significant and potentially uninformed changes to the admissions arrangements for September 2018.

- 2.4 To request that a report be provided to the Committee in due course in respect of progress in finding a site for the new school, including, if required, a temporary site so as to provide for the opening of the school in September 2018.
- 2.5 To note that pending the identification of a suitable catchment to reflect the site of the school, the new University of Brighton Academies Trust secondary school have agreed (subject to approval from the DfE) to adopt admission arrangements for September 2018 which will provide for parents across the city to seek admission, but that those admissions arrangements will be the subject of further review for admissions in 2019 as the Trust are fully committed to being part of city wide co-ordinated admissions scheme.
- 2.6 To agree that any future formal consultation in respect of admission arrangements should include the proposal for the introduction of a priority for pupils in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM).
- 2.7 To note that a report to determine the admission arrangements for maintained community schools, for entry in September 2018, will be presented to this committee for consideration in due course.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 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 will 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 2615 pupils in each year group.

School	Published Admission Number (PAN)
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	240
Varndean School	270
Total	2615

* King's School is expected to have a PAN of 150 for September 2018

- 3.4 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 for 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, as a tie-break, 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 The University of Brighton Academies Trust (UoBAT) bid to open a new secondary school in the city has now moved to the pre-opening stage of the process. Currently all efforts are being made to open the school by the preferred date of September 2018, but the opening date cannot be agreed until the funding agreement is signed. The school will have a PAN of 180 pupils.
- 3.9 With this additional number of places making a total of 2795 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. Whilst there are primary aged cohorts of more than 3100 children in the city, once the impact of pupils attending schools outside of the city, outside the state maintained system and in special provision has been taken into consideration the number of pupils who require a place is expected to be less than the number of places available.
- 3.10 An overview of pupil numbers can be found in Appendix 2. In the city there are sufficient places available for the number of pupils requiring them. There are localised pressures in some school catchment areas which will mean that not all catchment children can be placed in their catchment school(s).
- 3.11 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.
- 3.12 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.

- 3.13 Both Aldridge Education schools, Brighton Aldridge Community Academy (BACA) and Portslade Aldridge Community Academy (PACA) are their own admission authority and have previously adopted the Council's admission priorities. It is recognised that the UoBAT intend, in principle, to adopt the Council's admission arrangements including a catchment area and the same oversubscription criteria, when their permanent site opens.
- 3.14 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.
- 3.15 As detailed in Appendix 2, the current catchment area for Dorothy Stringer School/Varndean School has too many pupils for the number of places available in 2018 through to 2022. The current catchment area for Hove Park/Blatchington Mill schools has too many pupils for the number of places available in 2019 through to 2022. Patcham High School (PHS) has too many pupils for the number of places available in 2018, 2021 and 2022.

Table showing the number of pupils unplaced from within the catchment area

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Dorothy Stringer/Varndean	105	118	134	134	119
Hove Park/Blatchington Mill	n/a	41	32	107	36
Patcham High School	11	n/a	n/a	2	13

- 3.16 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 and a year later for entry in September 2019.
- 3.17 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).
- 3.18 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 and a year later for admissions in September 2019.

- 3.19 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. The deadline for objections for September 2019 arrangements is 15 May 2018.
- 3.20 This report asks that the committee agree that without confirmation of the permanent location of the new school or an indication of the proposed September 2018 admission arrangements for BACA and PACA it is not yet possible to propose or determine admission arrangements for the schools whose admission arrangements are the responsibility of the City Council.
- 3.21 A further report will come to the committee in due course, outlining the proposed admission arrangements for September 2018. In accordance with the school Admissions Code the arrangements will need to be determined by 28 February 2017. At this time it is not anticipated that any change will be made to the current arrangements for 2018/19 because of the uncertainty described in Paragraph 3.20. It should be noted that for this admission year there are sufficient places across the city's schools to accommodate all pupils who require one.
- 3.22 This report details the progress made by the working party following the public engagement phase and the likely arrangements for the 2018/19 admission year. The basis for future consultation on admission arrangements is not yet known.

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 working party 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 efforts to consider the options to change admission arrangements continued through the change in political administration in May 2015 and have maintained cross party support. A significant number of potential catchment areas were designed, considered and then discontinued before the three options to stimulate debate in the engagement phase were agreed upon.
- 4.3 Following the council elections in 2015 there were some changes in membership of the working party with previous members of the group Cllr Penny Gilbey, Cllr Leo Littman, Sue Shanks (ex-councillor, Green Group) and Anne Pissaridou (ex-councillor Labour and Co-Operative Group) replaced with new representatives. However some of the working party's membership has remained consistent throughout its work.
- 4.4 The current members of the working party have been:
- Cllr Daniel Chapman (Chair)
 - Cllr Emma Daniel (from June 2016 replacing Maggie Barradell ex-councillor, Labour and Co-operative Group)
 - 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

Headteachers of the secondary schools have had an open invitation to attend meetings and recent discussions have taken place with representation from Dorothy Stringer, Varndean, Hove Park and Blatchington Mill schools.

- 4.5 The working party also wished to ensure that changes supported the desire to make sure all pupils in the city achieve to their full potential, and raise the attainment of children from deprived circumstances. The group identified that one way of helping to do this is through enabling pupils that live with disadvantage gain a higher priority to attend a more popular school.
- 4.6 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
- 4.7 The working party recognised that it is not possible to propose admission arrangements which would meet their priorities and satisfy all of the aims. The working party 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 school pupils and the introduction of the new secondary school.
- 4.8 As part of their commitment to support pupils from deprived circumstances, the working party proposed pupils eligible for FSM should have a higher priority in admission arrangements. It was put forward that the current oversubscription criteria should be amended to give children eligible for FSM living within the city an element of 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.

- 4.9 It was proposed that within the oversubscription criteria a category for pupils in receipt of FSM was introduced. The number of pupils would vary for each school and be determined as a percentage of each school's intake.
- 4.10 The working party agreed a quota of 15% should be used which is the proportion of the city's total school population in receipt of FSM. This quota would mean a minimum number of pupils eligible for FSM in each school, should there be sufficient preferences made.
- 4.11 In the majority of the city's schools, the cohort of pupils would have more than 15% of pupils eligible for FSM as places would be offered to pupils in receipt of FSM under different oversubscription criteria such as 'catchment area'.
- 4.12 As an example, if a school had a PAN of 100, there would be 15 places available under the FSM quota. If the catchment area only had 8 pupils living in the catchment area and eligible for FSM they would all be allocated a place under category 3 of the admission arrangements. There would be 7 spaces remaining to be allocated to pupils eligible for FSM from outside the catchment area under category 3.
- 4.13 The working party recognised that it would not be possible to propose admission arrangements which would meet all 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. A public engagement phase was undertaken to seek responses to proposals put forward by the working party and to test the responses of the public to the priorities and aims the group had set themselves.
- 4.14 A recommendation was sought from the CYPS committee on 7 March 2016 for a 6 week engagement phase to be undertaken between 14 March 2016 and 22 April 2016 to consider three options which incorporated different catchment area variations broadly containing one, two or three schools. The engagement phase was extended by an extra week and concluded after:
- 24 public meetings had been held, attended by approximately 820 people.
 - 3 focus groups with pupils in Years 3 and 4
 - 1 focus group with pupils in Year 7
 - 1628 online responses to a consultation form
 - 122 direct email submissions to the dedicated engagement exercise mailbox
- 4.15 The views and suggestions from this engagement exercise have helped the working party to develop their final proposals.
- 4.16 For the purposes of the design of catchment area maps, the data being used (Appendix 2 and 7) is based on school census data. This is because it provides us with address data that allows us to better model the impact of the proposal that is recommended to be formally consulted upon.
- 4.17 This data set does not 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 is calculated. Currently 13,200 housing units are proposed with the potential of generating over 2,262 additional school age children across all year groups, or about 220 additional children in each statutory school year group, which may bring additional planning pressures on the school system in the longer term.

- 4.18 As with all forecasting and modelling there are a number of assumptions made in relation to the number of pupils in a catchment area seeking a school place.

5. Outcome of the Engagement Phase

- 5.1 A more detailed analysis of the online responses has been provided in Appendix 3. There were a total of 1628 responses to the self-selecting questionnaire placed on the council's website and promoted through press statements and requests to all local schools to distribute details to their parents via the school's usual communication methods.
- 5.2 1340 respondents stated they were parents and residents affected by the proposals and the analysis provided in appendix 3 uses this group as the base source. Virtually all of these respondents provided their postcode and it can be seen that the bulk of responses lived in a central belt of Brighton that incorporates the catchment areas for Varndean and Dorothy Stringer schools and Patcham High School. A significant number of respondents also came from the south Hove area, although responses were received from across the city.
- 5.3 In response to the question about the prioritisation of principles that the group had identified the three themes that received the most responses were:
- Minimise pupil's journeys to school
 - Ensure all the city's schools are successful and viable
 - Allow children to move to a secondary school with their school friends

There were varying responses from those living in the different catchment areas, although all areas included 'ensuring all schools are successful and viable' as one of their top three responses. 'Offering more choice to parents' was the most popular preference for those living in the BACA, Longhill School, Blatchington Mill/Hove Park and PACA catchment areas.

- 5.4 The proposal to introduce a FSM criterion was disagreed with by 63% of the base respondents. It did receive support from those who were teachers or governors in Brighton and Hove schools. It also was a proposal that received significant support from respondents in the Longhill and BACA catchment areas.
- 5.5 Of the three catchment area maps (Appendix 4 Options A-C) put forward to prompt discussion at the engagement events two maps received significant support as respondents first preference, options A and C. Option A received the most support (47%) although again variations in responses can be seen depending upon the catchment area in which respondents live. Responses from the PHS and Dorothy Stringer/Varndean catchment areas strongly supported option A, there was strong support for option C from respondents in the PACA, BACA, Longhill and Blatchington Mill/Hove Park school catchment areas.

- 5.6 Option B was the most favoured second preference for all respondents across the city. Options A (39.6%) and C (40.8%) were similarly popular to those who provided a third option.
- 5.7 The tie-break option that received most support was for the use of a distance measure i.e. to prioritise pupils who live closest to the school. It was clear from the replies given that this response rate was linked to the proposed options being put forward for the catchment areas. It was not considered as a separate matter by many respondents. The majority of respondents in the Longhill and BACA catchment areas preferred random allocation to remain as the tie-break option.
- 5.8 The responses gathered from the public meeting are outlined in Appendix 5. The themes noted from informal minutes and an analysis of the written responses provided at the meeting match the themes that emerged from the replies to the online form.
- 5.9 Having also considered the extensive comments provided as part of the responses that allowed for an additional free text reply, the following themes emerged to accompany the proposals. These have been summarised as follows:
- Principles: journey safety, environmental impact, family finances, strong local communities, quality of teaching, improve standards at current schools
 - Catchment areas: Strong local community creates better schools, minimise school journeys, ensure safe routes, environmental impact, financial impact, more choice for child's needs/interests, same GCSE options
 - Free School Meal priority: Unfair on working families, treat children the same, discouraging parents to work, minimise journeys, quality of teaching, improve standards at current schools
 - Oversubscription criteria: Strong local community, safe routes, environmental impact, financial impact
- 5.10 It is clear that there was no city wide consistency in the responses to the proposals put forward to the engagement phase and there were geographical differences in what proposals were preferred. As a result, the working group have not been able to draw upon a consistent theme for the development of a single proposal.
- 5.11 Having taken account of the responses received, the working party considered each of the options put forward in the engagement phase. They also explored the impact of some of the issues raised in the engagement phase by taking further information from Headteachers. Specifically in relation to the impact of distance to school on:
- pupil attendance levels,
 - participation in and enrichment from extra curriculum activities and
 - the impact the proportion of FSM pupils within a school has on attainment.

- 5.12 Evidence was supplied by schools that showed how attendance levels in existing pupil cohorts were affected by the distance they travelled to school. There are clear links to attendance levels and pupil's levels of attainment.
- 5.13 An analysis of school attendance by pupils eligible for FSM from all secondary schools across the city showed absence rates for this group to be on average higher than non FSM absence rates. This was supported by anecdotal evidence from headteachers regarding their observations with this cohort of pupils. However the working party recognised that this was at odds to the aim to promote more choice. It challenged the responses received in the engagement events which suggested attending a preferred school is a strong motivator for pupil's to regularly attend school despite the distance involved.
- 5.14 The working party reached agreement that none of the catchment area models could be used as a final proposed option. Further work was therefore undertaken by the group. As a result the proposal in Appendix 6 was developed and met with consensus across the group. The projected pupil numbers for the proposal are shown in Appendix 7.
- 5.15 The option proposes that the new school (The UoBAT will be required to consult separately on this proposal, subject to the agreement of the DfE) is incorporated into the existing catchment area for Dorothy Stringer School and Varndean School. This proposal would address the issue of there being insufficient school places available for the number of pupils projected to be within the catchment area. It would maintain the sense of community within this area and incorporate both of the possible permanent sites for the new school that are being actively considered.
- 5.16 This catchment area is increased with the inclusion of a portion of the current Hove Park/Blatchington Mill catchment area up to Montpelier Road.
- 5.17 Having considered the numbers of pupils in the catchment areas of PHS and BACA the model shows a move for the Coldean area from the catchment area of PHS to that of BACA. This proposal seeks to ensure there is no future oversubscription in the PHS catchment area. It provides more balanced pupil numbers for BACA and patterns of parental preference would indicate that the school will not be oversubscribed from within its catchment area despite the modelling indicating this happening in 2019 and 2021. The proposal endeavours to ensure that catchment areas reflect appropriate travel distances to schools, including safe walking routes and reduces the number of bus journeys required.
- 5.18 All other catchment areas remain as they are currently arranged, ensuring that schools are able to maintain their community identity.
- 5.19 Additional pupil journeys are not created at a greater expense to the council.
- 5.20 Making no other changes mean that the introduction of an admission priority for pupils in receipt of FSM would not be affected by the impact of a sibling link being introduced for families who have had the catchment area of their home changed.

5.21 The working party have proposed a change to the existing oversubscription criteria by incorporating criteria for pupils in receipt of FSM, including siblings. This is a change to the proposal that was considered as part of the engagement phase.

5.22 The working party have proposed the following description:

1. Children in the care of a Local Authority and previously looked after children
2. Children with compelling medical or other exceptional reasons to attend the school
3. Children with siblings attending the school living in the catchment area or having been placed under the FSM eligibility criteria
4. Children eligible for FSM – firstly from inside the catchment area, then from outside the catchment area - to a maximum quota of 15% of the school's PAN
5. Children living in the catchment area
6. Children outside the catchment area

In the event there are fewer FSM applicants than the designated FSM quota (priority category 4) at the initial allocation, any unfilled places will be added to priority categories 5 and 6. If it is not possible to allocate a FSM place to an applicant from within the catchment area because there are FSM applicants in excess of the 15% quota, the application will be considered according to the criteria for children living in the catchment area.

5.23 A variety of potential scenarios relating to how the FSM criteria would work have been supplied as Appendix 8.

6. Arrangements for September 2018

6.1 Whilst two sites in the city are being actively considered as potential locations for the new secondary free school it has not been possible to provide any further certainty on the school's actual location.

6.2 Both sites, the Brighton General Hospital site at the top of Elm Grove, and a section of City College's estate on the east side of Pelham Road in the city centre, are within the proposed catchment area for the new school.

6.3 Until the permanent location of the new school is known and there is more clarity regarding the BACA and PACA proposed admission arrangements it is not appropriate to put forward any proposals for either consultation (if this is necessary), or decision at the current time.

6.4 A further report will come to committee in due course and within a timescale which will allow all statutory deadlines set out in the School Admissions Code to be met.

6.5 Based on current information it is understood that the new school is likely to open with admission arrangements that do not include a catchment area (this is subject to the trust's own consultation process, in conjunction with the DfE). Should the school be oversubscribed, admission criteria will prioritise applicants by distance, meaning those living closest to the school or a node point representing the planned location of the new school, in the area of

oversubscription, would be offered a place at the school first. Without a catchment area it will provide all parents in the city with more choice in the preferences they can state.

- 6.6 As the responses to the engagement activity identified, there are parents who prioritise an increased choice of schools over the length of their child's journey to school. The absence of a catchment area would give parents wishing to obtain a place at the school an opportunity to be allocated a place at it.
- 6.7 It is possible that the school may have to open on a temporary site. The Council continues to work with the University and the national Education Funding Agency (EFA) to identify an appropriate site for the new school. Any decision to pursue a particular site would be subject both to planning permission and the agreement of the EFA.
- 6.8 The Council has a statutory responsibility to ensure there are sufficient school places for all children living in its area who require one. The opening of the new school in September 2018 will ensure there are sufficient places across the city for all pupils who require a place.
- 6.9 It is projected that without a change in admission arrangements there are two existing catchment areas that will have more pupils in them than places available in September 2018. These are the PHS and Dorothy Stringer School/Varndean School catchment areas. It is expected that approximately 118 pupils, in total, in those catchment areas will not be able to be offered a place at the catchment school. Paragraph 3.15 details the numbers of pupils who may not be offered a place in each catchment area.
- 6.10 Without more information on the likely siting for the opening of the new school the impact on parental preference is not easy to calculate. However, depending upon the pattern of preferences made by parents, there are likely to be some pupils who will not be offered a place at their catchment school even though they have expressed a preference for it.
- 6.11 In this situation the School Admissions Team will allocate a place at the nearest school to the home address with spaces at that time. Pupils directed to a school would qualify for free transport if the distance involved was over 3 miles or 2 miles for those on low incomes.
- 6.12 When making their application and selecting their school preferences parents will need to be aware that some catchment areas will have more children than places available. The Council will encourage schools to ensure they have high quality transition arrangements in place in order to support any pupils who might be allocated a school which previous cohorts of pupils from their current primary school might have not attended.
- 6.13 Consideration will also need to be given to when the new school's Funding Agreement is signed as to how the admission process for the school's first year is managed. For the first year of opening only, funding agreements for Free Schools provide that they may choose whether they wish to participate in the local qualifying scheme.

7. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 7.1 The working party undertook extensive analysis of a range of different admission arrangements from September 2018. This was then narrowed to three proposals that were put forward as part of the engagement phase. The responses to that engagement phase and further consideration of the city's needs by the working group has culminated in the group's proposals in this report.
- 7.2 A large number of catchment area options were given consideration throughout this process. Ranging from the incorporation of the new school into an existing catchment area with no other changes, to disbanding all of the catchment areas across the city and the creation of different pairings of schools in shared catchment areas.
- 7.3 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.
- 7.4 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.
- 7.5 The working party have been alert to the impact of any additional transport demands as a result of the proposals being considered and the concerns for child welfare of potential pupil journeys created by the options considered.
- 7.6 Once additional information is available regarding the location of the new school and proposed arrangements for schools other than non-community schools in the city, proposals for the admission arrangements in September 2018 can be brought forward to this committee.

8. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 8.1 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. Prior to, and following, the engagement phase the nature of the work has meant that much of their consideration took place in private.
- 8.2 A seven week engagement phase based on 3 proposed catchment area models and specific questions about the prioritisation of pupils eligible for FSM and the tie-breaker used in determining school places was undertaken between March and April 2016. It included public meetings and information published online. Consultation reply forms allowed responses to be gathered online. Informal minutes were taken of each public meeting and completed response forms were gathered in, at the end of the events.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 Without information relating to the location of the new school and the admission arrangements of BACA and PACA it is not possible at this stage to formulate any proposals for the admission arrangements for the academic year 2018/19.
- 9.2 It is anticipated that the new school will open in 2018/19 without a catchment area. This will allow equal opportunity for all parents in the city to gain a place and provide more choice to parents who live in a catchment area with only one school. Following identification of the school's permanent site it is expected that the school will be assimilated into city wide admission arrangements
- 9.3 As far as admissions arrangements for 2019/20 and beyond are concerned, following the engagement activity the working party considered the responses received and developed a proposed model for admission arrangements across the city. This came after strenuous efforts were made in considering an extensive range of possible catchment area models prior to and after the engagement activity. Without strong consensus across the city it is recognised that the arrangements will not meet all the priorities stakeholders consider important.
- 9.4 The working party have concluded that the new school should be located in the current Dorothy Stringer and Varndean Schools' catchment area. This would address the additional places needed for the number of pupils in this area.
- 9.5 They have proposed that the Coldean area should move from being in the catchment area for PHS to BACA's catchment area, thus providing a more equitable distribution of pupil numbers in future years.
- 9.6 They did not propose any further changes to existing catchment areas. This is in response to concerns including the length of safe pupil journeys, the focus on schools being successful and viable and maintaining strong local communities.
- 9.7 The working party proposed that an oversubscription criteria be introduced which would give priority for pupils in receipt of FSM to provide disadvantaged students with more opportunities to go to the most popular schools. Having reviewed a range of studies, whilst there are no indisputable conclusions, the working party supported the opportunity to test the positive impact study on students eligible for FSM in the city.
- 9.8 It is anticipated that the new school will open without a catchment area allowing equal opportunity for all parents in the city to gain a place and providing more choice to parents who live in a catchment area with only one school. Following identification of the school's permanent site the school will be assimilated into the city wide admission arrangements.
- 9.9 Having not been able to secure the permanent site of the new school prior to the conclusion of the working party's efforts, the model that has been developed represents only the conclusion of their work; it is not a model which can go out to formal consultation at present.

10. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 10.1 It is not possible to quantify in detail the financial implications of these recommendations. However, any changes to admission arrangements or patterns may impact on the numbers of pupils at individual schools and therefore individual school budget allocations which are largely driven by pupil numbers.

Finance Officer Consulted: Andy Moore

Date: 23/08/16

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). The increase in the number of primary aged pupils in the city means that additional secondary school places will be required 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 tiebreaker 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 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 no changes are proposed to admission arrangements there is no duty to consult before determining those arrangements.
- 10.7 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.

10.8 The report notes that for the 2017/18 admission year particular catchment areas will have more pupils living within them than there are places at the catchment schools, i.e. the catchment area will not 'catch'. There is no requirement, either in the School Admissions Code or the Council's own admission arrangements, that all pupils living within a catchment area must be offered a place at the catchment school(s). The Council only has a duty to secure that there are sufficient school places for all children living in its area who require one.

Lawyer Consulted: Serena Kynaston Date: 09/09/16

Equalities Implications:

10.9 An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken prior to the engagement phase. This report recommends no change to admission arrangements and therefore a further update to the assessment has not been undertaken.

10.10 The council has a statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient school places for all pupils who require one. The modelling of pupil numbers indicates that there will be sufficient places available in September 2018 although some catchment areas may not have sufficient places in the schools which serve those areas.

10.11 The catchment areas where oversubscription is predicted to occur without any change are Hove Park/Blatchington Mill Schools, Dorothy Stringer/Varndean Schools and PHS. The use of random allocation as a tie-breaker will ensure that no disadvantage to protected groups will occur.

Sustainability Implications:

10.12 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.

Any Other Significant Implications:

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Relevant Implications
2. Pupil Number Projections – Current Catchment Areas
3. School Catchment Consultation Online Responses
4. Options A-C
5. School Catchment Consultation Public Meeting Responses
6. Cross Party Working Group Proposal
7. Pupil Number Projections – CPWG Proposal

8. Free School Meal Scenarios

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. School Catchment Consultation Public Meeting Response Forms
2. School Catchment Consultation Online Response Entries

Appendix 1

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 1.1 No crime or disorder implications are anticipated as a result of the recommendation in this report.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 1.2 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. It is anticipated that there will be sufficient school places for all pupils who require a place in September 2018.

Public Health Implications:

- 1.3 None known.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 1.4 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.

