

Appendix 3

Brighton & Hove City Council

Early Years and Childcare

**Hertford Infant and Nursery School Nursery Class Closure
Report on Statutory Representation Phase**

December 2020

1. Introduction

Hertford Infant and Nursery School is a community maintained school with a nursery class which currently offers part-time free early education to three and four year olds (the early years free entitlement, EYFE).

The head teacher and governors have asked the local authority to carry out the statutory process for prescribed alterations to maintained schools in order to raise the lower age range of the school by one year from three to four years old, and to close the nursery class, with effect from 1st September 2021.

Following pre-publication public consultation between 16th September and 16th October 2020 Brighton & Hove city council undertook the statutory process for prescribed alterations in accordance with government guidance. The statutory process took place for a four week period from 6th November and 4th December 2020

2. Statutory Process for Prescribed Alteration

2.1 Publication

A statutory notice (attached as appendix 1) was published in Brighton & Hove Independent on 6th November 2020.

2.2 Representation

The representation period was a four week period from 6th November to 4th December 2020.

In order to comply with statutory guidance and to ensure that interested parties were aware of the proposal the notice was

- given to Hertford Infant and Nursery School's head teacher and governing body
- published by Hertford Infant and Nursery School on its website, along with associated documents
- published on Brighton & Hove city council's website and on its news pages
- published on Brighton & Hove city council's schools' bulletin
- sent to all early years and childcare providers in the city
- posted with a covering letter to all households in the Hollingdean and Stanmer ward with a child aged two or under (308 households)

A full copy of the full proposal could be requested from the local authority and comments could be made via email to eyc@brighton-hove.gov.uk

The full proposal is attached as appendix 2.

3. Response to Representation

Six email responses were received. Most comments came from parents who currently used the nursery, had used it in the past, or were planning to use it in the future.

All those who commented objected to the proposal to close the nursery

Comments related to

- Lack of marketing of the nursery by the school, and consequently local people were unaware of its presence
- Failure to publicise consultation on closure sufficiently; the fact that consultation on closure had started meant that parents were then unlikely to send their child to the nursery
- Excellent teaching and care of children, including warm atmosphere which is small and friendly
- Excellent progress made by children who attend the nursery
- Effect on other provision in the area, including whether sufficient alternative provision exists
- Effect on the school as the nursery acts as a feeder
- The benefit to children of attending nursery and school on the same site
- The benefit to parents of having nursery and school-age children on the same site
- Inability to access the full early years free entitlement at other early years providers – that there are few completely free places offered elsewhere and consequent impact on low income families
- More families may move into the area as accommodation which was previously let to students was not taken up and is now available for families
- That the proposal should be reconsidered after the pandemic

A petition addressed to Brighton & Hove Local Government – Early Years Provision entitled “Save Hertford Nursery School” was also put on the 38 degrees website.

The text of the petition was

Reconsider the closure of Hertford Infants Nursery Provision in September 2021.

Why is this important?

The nursery is an integral part of a child’s education and means that each child in the local area can attend the same site when they start nursery age 3 through to when they transfer to junior school. Transition becomes easier as friendships span through from the nursery setting into the infants. The nursery also offers the option of 15 free hours over term time, ensuring parents and carers can avoid additional costs which private settings often incur. There are also plenty of families ready and waiting to use the existing provision and also those that would be happy to consider nursery and reception children coming together in their education setting if this helps keep the nursery open.

The petition had attracted 270 signatures by 5th December 2020.

Vicky Jenkins
Childcare Strategy Manager
December 2020

