

Subject:	Proposed Expansion of St Andrew's CE Primary School to Three Forms of Entry from September 2015		
Date of Meeting:	22 September 2014		
Report of:	Executive Director of Children's Services		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Michael Nix	Tel: 29-0732
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Ward(s) affected:	Brunswick & Adelaide, Central Hove, Goldsmid, Westbourne		

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), (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) were that the Governing Body of St Andrew's CE Primary school was not able to give a final view on the proposal until it had had the opportunity to consider the authority's response to the issues the Governing Body had raised and the further responses of parents. Because of the school holidays it was not possible to hold meetings with parents until 10 and 11 September and the Governing Body met to agree its response on 15 September 2014.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 The Committee received a report at its meeting on 21 July 2014 on the consultation that had been held on a proposal to expand St Andrew's CE Primary School to three forms of entry from September 2015. The number of primary age children in the South Central Hove planning area continues to grow beyond the capacity of schools in the area and the aim of the proposal is to ensure as far as possible that children in this area are able to attend a local school if they wish.
- 1.2 In view of the information contained in the report and the considerable number of responses to the consultation that were opposed to this proposal it was resolved:
 - 1) That the Committee authorise further work on the conditions contained in the Chair of Governors' letter of 2 July (Appendix 4) in order to secure a proposal which would attract fuller support.
 - (2) That the Committee authorise further consideration of the possibility of including part or all of the Haddington Street car park in the design solution, taking into account how appropriate parking provision to meet local needs would continue to be made.

- (3) That the Committee requested that a further report be brought to a special meeting of the Committee in September, in order that a decision could be made as to whether to publish a Statutory Notice

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee notes that any proposal to expand St Andrew's CE Primary School by extending its building on to the Haddington Street public car park will require not only planning consent but also a Traffic Regulation Order
- 2.2 That the Committee authorises the publication of a Statutory Notice on 1 October 2014 so that a further report can be brought to the Committee's meeting on 17 November 2014 for a decision to be made on the proposal.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The report to this Committee on 21 July 2014 set out the reasons for the proposal. Numbers of children in the South Central Hove planning area used for pupil place planning purposes are forecast to continue to grow in 2015 and 2016 and are expected to exceed the places in the area for some years to come. As these numbers already significantly exceed the number of places available in schools in this and neighbouring areas, without additional places being made available children aged 4+ would have to be allocated places in schools outside their immediate community, including schools over three miles away. Consideration has to be given to whether this is reasonable and whether there are steps that could be taken so that more children could be offered a place in a more local school.
- 3.2 Eight public questions were put to the Committee at the meeting and these questions and the answers given are recorded in the draft minutes.
- 3.3 The Governing Body of St Andrew's CE Primary School provided a written response to the proposal, requesting that more time be taken to carry out further work on key issues raised during the consultation. This response was included as Appendix 4 to the previous report and is included as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 3.4 Paragraphs 3.6 to 3.18 of this report describe the response to the five points identified in the letter dated 2 July 2014 from the Governing Body (Appendix 1).
- 3.5 The Governing Body has considered the further work that has been done since the Committee's July meeting and has provided a further response (Appendix 3) in which it expresses support for progression to statutory consultation on the proposal subject to certain conditions.

Meetings with school community

- 3.6 Officers met on 8 July with four parents and one governor. The main focus of the discussion was on the demand for places and whether the Council's analysis contained sufficient detail to demonstrate convincingly whether there was a need for new places and whether new places at St Andrew's would be the right location to meet any such need, especially because additional (faith based)

foundation places (50% of the total) may draw in children from further away. These issues are considered further in paragraphs 3.8 – 3.13 below.

- 3.7 Officers attended two meetings with parents at the school on 10 and 11 September. These meetings provided an opportunity to explore in more detail the need for new places and to update parents on the development of the design proposals. Around 50 parents attended these meetings, together with several governors and members of the school leadership team and the Schools Buildings Officer for the Diocese of Chichester.

Demand for new places in this location

- 3.8 As noted in the previous report, authorities are required each year to satisfy the Department for Education (DfE) that their forecasting methodology is robust and provides an accurate reflection of the need for new places. In Brighton & Hove a range of factors is currently used in considering the demand for new places and where this demand is located. These include:

- GP registration data, with adjustments based on previous experience to allow for any duplication in the data and parents choosing not to place their children in the maintained sector
- Information from school admissions in previous years
- Known information about new homes being provided

For planning purposes, officers have identified ten 'primary places planning areas', with the forecast number of children in each area identified from post code analysis.

- 3.9 In response to consultation requests that the planning areas should be further refined, the forecast figures for 2015 – 2017 for South Central Hove and neighbouring planning areas have been analysed by individual sub-post code areas (BN3 1, BN3 2 and so on) and the outcome of this analysis was used at the parents meetings on 10 and 11 September to demonstrate the distribution of children across the relatively large South Central Hove area and neighbouring areas and how this exceeds the number of places in local schools.
- 3.10 It has also been suggested that St Andrew's is not the best location for additional places because as a faith school it draws pupils from a wider area. If St Andrew's were a community school it would have a greater impact on meeting the demand for additional places in its immediate area. However, the school's faith based admissions criteria focus first and foremost on the local parish and attendance at St Andrew's Church and this is reflected in the pattern of enrolments.
- 3.11 Analysis of the home addresses of pupils in reception, Y1 and Y2 at St Andrew's in 2013/14 (May 2014 census) shows that around 12% of these pupils live outside the South Central Hove planning area. It is likely that most of these children will have been allocated foundation places because they meet the school's faith based admissions criteria. Allocations for September 2014 reception admissions included only two children out of 60 living outside the South Central Hove planning area, reflecting the increasing pressure for places in this area. The great majority of St Andrew's pupils live in the South Central Hove

planning area and it is to be expected that a significant proportion of new places at St Andrew's would be taken by children living in the area who would otherwise have to go to other schools outside the area, some of them much further away.

- 3.12 Our forecasting methodology has been approved by the DfE and has achieved a good degree of accuracy over many years. We believe that it is robust and that more detailed analysis would be most unlikely to lead to different conclusions. The further analysis gives no reason to question that this part of the city remains underprovided with primary school places.
- 3.13 The Governing Body also requested information about the numbers attending local schools for September 2014. Appendix 2 shows the numbers of reception children allocated to each primary school in Hove and Portslade on the 'national offer day (16 April). At this point, only Mile Oak School had spare places. The table also shows the number of places accepted by parents and carers and the number of spare places as at 26 August. The actual number of enrolments will not be reliably known until the first census on 2 October. The most recent information suggests however that almost all schools in Hove and Portslade will be full, many of them with waiting lists, including all the schools in South Central Hove.

Design for school extension

- 3.14 A large number of responses suggested that the required extension for an additional form of entry should be provided on the Haddington Street car park rather than on the school's playgrounds. In response to this and the Committee's resolution at the last meeting a scheme has been developed which provides additional classrooms on the northern end of the car park rather than on playgrounds. The scheme shows how year groups of three classrooms can be provided in clusters to support team working and includes a larger hall and other improvements as in the previous scheme. There is some limited encroachment on the infant playground but this will be more than replaced by the removal of the mobile classroom that stands on this playground at present.
- 3.15 The car park currently has 32 spaces and the scheme shows how 18 spaces would be provided once the scheme was completed. However, it would be necessary to take all the places out of use for a period estimated at 26 weeks to provide a construction site compound so that the new building could be constructed safely. These proposals would require a Traffic Regulation Order to be obtained and would result in a loss of income to the Council as explained in the Financial Implications section below. The scheme and the requirement during the construction period have been discussed with the Executive Director of Environment Development & Housing and the Head of Transport and is supported in principle. The cost implications from the loss of parking spaces are explained in paragraph 7.2 below.
- 3.16 The scheme has been discussed with the head teacher and governors at St Andrew's and further refined in light of their comments. It has also been discussed with parents at the meetings on 10 and 11 September.

Travel Plan

- 3.17 In developing the scheme further (if this expansion proposal is approved) the design team will in consultation with the school develop proposals for safe access to the school. The planning application must include a consideration of safe access requirements and there will be planning conditions requiring safe access proposals and a school travel plan to be in place prior to construction commencing on site. A further condition would require any street works to be complete and a detailed School Travel Plan to be in place before the new building was occupied. The school would be responsible for drawing up and adopting the School Travel Plan, with support from the Council's School Travel Plan team.

Timeframe for decision making

- 3.18 The timeframe for decision making is driven by the need for new places in September 2015. Design work is continuing at risk so that this requirement can be met if the proposed expansion is approved. As with other recent schemes, the scheduling of the project will ensure that the scheme can be safely completed if partial occupation of the building is required in September. It is proposed therefore that subject to the Committee's agreement to the proposal as it has been further developed, the Statutory Notice should be published on 1 October for a period of four weeks as required and that a report be brought to the 17 November 2014 meeting of this Committee for a final decision to be made.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Alternative options to providing additional places at St Andrew's were described in the report to the Committee's 21 July meeting. They included providing a new school, expansion of a different school, further bulge classes or allocating places to a much greater number of children at more distant schools. The reasons why these options were not preferred are set out in paragraphs 4.2 to 4.6 of the previous report and these still apply.
- 4.2 At the 21 July meeting, several members of the Committee stated that a new school would be a preferable option. Paragraph 4.2 of the report to that meeting set out the reasons why a new school had not been considered to be a preferred option, principally the lack of available sites, the additional cost, especially if a site had to be purchased, and the additional time required to secure an academy or free school sponsor and construct a new school. In view of the Committee's comments at the meeting we have reviewed again the report of an independent site search commissioned from a private firm in June 2014. This report does not identify any sites suitable for a new primary school in South Hove.
- 4.3 On 22 July 2014 (the day after the Committee meeting) the DfE informed the Council that an application from a potential primary free school sponsor was being considered in the current round, for which announcements are to be made in this autumn term. This particular sponsor has applied in two previous rounds and has not previously been approved by the DfE. The sponsor discussed a possible site with the Council during 2012 and early 2013. However, this site has a variety of current users, some of them with very long leases and there has been no further discussion of this site or any other site with this potential sponsor

since summer 2013. In light of this, it is suggested that this application cannot be relied upon as offering a practicable alternative option for providing new places in South Hove and in the timescale required.

- 4.4 Paragraphs 4.3 – 4.5 of the report to the 21 July meeting of this Committee set out the significant difficulties in considering either permanent expansion or bulge classes at other schools. There will be discussions with primary head teachers later this term about the continuing pressure for places and about any opportunities for bulge classes should these be needed, and this may be followed up by discussions with governors. However, for the reasons set out in the previous report, agreement for further expansion or bulge classes at other schools will be difficult to achieve and would be likely to give rise to significant organisational and planning challenges.
- 4.5 Allocating places to a greater number of children at more distant schools must be seen as a last resort option. Without the bulge class at Davigdor for September 2014, around 30 children from this area would have been allocated places in schools more than three miles from their home addresses. Current forecasts suggest that this position would be likely to be repeated at least for 2015 and 2016 and that it would be some years before this could be corrected by any future decline in the number of children living in the area served by St Andrew's.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The previous report set out the consultation process that had been undertaken on this proposal. The report described the significant level of concerns the proposal had generated and provided a commentary on each of the principal concerns.
- 5.2 Since the previous meeting there have been further meetings with parents and governors, including two meetings arranged by the school on 10 and 11 September 2014, attended by the Assistant Director (Education and Inclusion) and other officers. Approximately 50 parents attended these meetings along with governors and the school's senior leadership team. These meetings provided an opportunity to discuss with parents the further work that had been done on the building design for the expansion and to answer their questions.
- 5.3 Most of those attending these two meetings accepted that there was a need for new places in the area and there was general appreciation of the revised design. Some parents argued however that the proposed expansion of St Andrew's was not the right solution to the places problem and that a new school should be provided. Some parents continued to be concerned about safety in the narrow streets around the school and suggested more time was needed to develop safety improvement proposals. Others asked for a further full consultation on the revised plans.
- 5.4 The Governing Body considered the further work on the proposal and the outcomes of the further meetings with parents at a special meeting on 15 September 2014. They confirmed in writing their support for progression to statutory consultation on the proposed expansion subject to conditions. Most of these conditions have already been agreed through the process of developing

the proposal and we expect to be able to reach agreement on those that remain. The Diocese of Chichester also supports the proposal on this basis.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The further work that has been done does not change our belief that the case for additional places in this part of the city is compelling and that without any new places there could be significant challenges for families who have to take their young children relatively long distances to school, often with awkward journeys. The revised design proposal is made in response to the concerns raised during consultation in particular about impact on outside play space. Although this design reduces the number of public parking spaces available, by replacing 18 of the current 32 places it can be regarded as striking a good balance between the need for school places and the need for public parking.
- 6.2 We also believe that alternative solutions as set out in the previous report and in paragraphs 4.1 – 4.5 above are either not available or could not be delivered on time or at less cost. Expansion of St Andrew's remains the preferred option for providing the additional places that are needed.
- 6.3 The proposal is supported by the governing body with the conditions outlined in paragraph 5.4 above.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 There are no financial implications arising from the publication of a Statutory Notice.
- 7.2 The cost of the capital build has been identified in the Children's Service Capital Budget, from the funding for additional class for Hove. There will be a reduction in the car parking income for the Haddington Street car park of approximately £25,000 for a closure of 6 months to allow for the car park to be used as the construction site compound, and £14,000 per annum for the reduction in places from 32 to 18 once completed.

Finance Officer Consulted: Andy Moore

Date: 10/09/14

Legal Implications:

- 7.3 If the proposals are to proceed the Council are required to publish statutory notices in accordance with section 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and associated Regulations. Following publication there will then follow a period of four weeks during which time any person or organisation can submit comments on the proposal to be taken into account when the final decision is made.
- 7.4 At the end of the representation period the Council will need to make a final decision on whether to proceed with the proposals within two months.

Lawyer Consulted: Serena Kynaston

Date: 11/09/2014

Equalities Implications:

- 7.5 The governing body of St Andrew's CE Primary School as admissions authority must treat all applications openly and fairly in accordance with the statutory School Admissions Code.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.6 There are no sustainability implications arising from this proposal. More children will be able to attend a local school, rather than travel longer distances to other schools. The building extension will be completed to high sustainability standards and will not impact on the school playing field.

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.7 The implications of not providing additional capacity close to where children live have been set out extensively in this report. These implications apply most particularly to the families who may be affected.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Letter from Christine Bartley, Chair of Governors, received 2 July 2014
2. Hove and Portslade Primary Schools: Reception class allocations, 16 April 2014 and known acceptances, 26 August 2014
3. Response with conditions from the Governing Body of St Andrew's CE Primary School to the proposal to expand the school to three forms of entry from September 2015 (received 16 September 2014)

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None

