

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 104
Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Proposed Expansion of Somerhill Junior School
Date of Meeting: 20 April 2009
Report of: Director of Children's Services
Contact Officer: Name: Gillian Churchill Tel: 29-3515
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Key Decision: Yes Forward Plan No. CYP8680
Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE LATE ITEM

Note: The special circumstances for non-compliance with Council Procedure Rule 7, Access to Information Rule 5 and Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act as amended (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) was that the consultation period required under Government guidance closed on 10 April 2009, therefore after the deadline for reports to Children and Young People Cabinet Member Meeting.

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 As part of the Council's future development of Schools within the city it is proposed to expand Somerhill Junior School by one form of entry from September 2011.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to set out the background and rationale for this proposed expansion and to seek Cabinet Member endorsement for proceeding to the next stage of the statutory process, which is the publication of the required Statutory Notice.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To note and endorse the proposal to expand Somerhill Junior School by one form of entry from September 2011.
- 2.2 To agree to the publication of the required Statutory Notice to progress this proposal.
- 2.3 That the results from the statutory consultation process are referred to Cabinet Member Meeting in July 2009 for decision.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 Brighton and Hove City Council has a legal requirement to provide sufficient school places for all school age children in the city. School places should be provided in such a way that parents and pupils can access a local school wherever possible.
- 3.2 Over recent years there has been a considerable increase in the number of children growing up in the part of the city that is served by Somerhill Junior School. This is evidenced by the fact that we had to temporarily increase the size of the adjacent Davigdor Infant School by one form of entry in September 2008. This increased intake will be looking to access a junior school place in September 2011.
- 3.3 The proposal is to now expand Somerhill Junior School so that it becomes a four form entry school with a yearly intake of 120 from September 2011.
- 3.4 To support the expansion of the school there will be an extension of the school premises that will be funded by a combination of the Primary Capital Programme funding, the schools Devolved Formula Capital and other council capital funding. This extension will provide additional classrooms to accommodate the extra pupils. There will also be some internal remodelling and refurbishment to provide accommodation that will better fit the needs of current teaching and learning and the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum.
- 3.5 The governing body of the junior school has been consulted as has the governing body of the adjacent Davigdor Infant School. This proposal is linked to a proposal to permanently expand Davigdor Infant School by one form of entry from September 2010.
- 3.6 The views of the governing body will be finalised in light of the consultation. The initial view of the governing body was that providing an additional form of entry at the junior school would create too large a school with an over demand put on existing facilities. They were also concerned that the school's present high standards may be negatively affected. However they are aware that the proposal could benefit the increasing number of parents and pupils of the community served by the school. Governors will hold a special meeting at the end of the consultation period to determine their final views on the proposal.
- 3.7 In proposing the expansion of Somerhill Junior School the following programme is to be followed.

Publication of Consultation Document	26 th February 2009
Public Consultation Meeting	2 nd April 2009
Last date for responses	10 th April 2009
Report back to Children and Young People CMM	20 th April 2009

Issue Public Notice	1 st May 2009
End of public notice period	29 th May 2009
Decision by the Children and Young People CMM	6 th July 2009
Provisional Opening	1 st September 2011

3.8 As this proposal is inextricably linked to the proposal to expand the adjacent Davigdor Infant school the two notices will be combined and published at the same time. It will be made clear in the notice that neither proposal will be implemented independently. The timetable will allow full analysis of responses to the notice to be prepared and presented to the Cabinet Member Meeting to be held on 6th July 2009. The report to that meeting will seek the final decision on the combined proposal.

3.9 A copy of the draft statutory notice is attached to this report at Appendix 1.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 A document outlining the expansion process was issued to governors, staff, pupils and parents and carers of Somerhill Infant School on 26th February 2009 and copies were made available to any other interested parties. This consultation document is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

4.2 As part of the public consultation process a public meeting was held on 2nd April 2009. This meeting gave parents and carers, governors and other interested parties the opportunity to put forward their views. This meeting was attended by councillors, governors of both Somerhill and Davigdor Schools, the head teachers of both schools and approximately 12 others. A record of the points raised at the meeting was kept and a copy is attached at Appendix 3 to this report.

4.3 This initial stage of the consultation came to a close on 10th April 2009. The responses to this consultation exercise have been collated and analysed. Copies of the responses received have been copied and put in the members rooms.

4.4 In summary 18 responses were received of which 4 were in favour of the proposal and 14 were against the proposal.

4.5 The responses from those who supported the proposals said that they understood the need for additional places in the area and welcomed the increase in capacity for the school as this would increase the chances of local children being able to gain a place at their local school.

4.5 The main reasons for opposing the proposal were:

- that the site of the schools is too small to accommodate an increased number of pupils;
- the schools would be too big at four forms of entry;
- smaller schools are better;
- a new school is needed rather than expanding existing schools;

- there will be disruption during any associated building works;
 - That there had been insufficient consultation and that this had been carried out separately from the consultation for the proposal to expand Davigdor Infant school;
 - Concern at the loss of outside space at the school.
- 4.6 Analysis of existing pupil placements suggests that those who do not achieve a place at Somerhill Junior School are allocated places across a range of other schools right across the city. The Council believes that there will be no negative impact on other local primary schools as a result of this proposal. It is anticipated that the present trend of rising primary aged pupil numbers in the city combined with potential new developments will mean that further additional places will be required in this part of the city even if this proposal is implemented.
- 4.7 The mix of pupils in primary schools generally reflect their local communities hence there is generally a narrower variation of social mix than that found within secondary school cohorts. The DCSF particularly supports the expansion of popular and successful schools where possible to better provide for parental preferences.
- 4.8 Regarding the argument that there is no need for an increase in places within the City, last year saw an increase in infant place provision to accommodate a significant rise in numbers within the Hove area. These have been temporary provisions prior to proposed permanent expansion and a desired new primary school in Hove. It can reasonably be expected that these infant school pupils will be seeking a junior school place in Hove for September 2011.
- 4.9 The funding for the proposed expansion is from a combination of the Primary Capital Programme funding, the schools Devolved Formula Capital and other Council capital funding. The Primary Capital Programme will provide significant funding for a large number of primary schools within the city over the next fourteen years and enables the Council to address the practicalities of school place planning and parental wishes. The proposal to expand Somerhill Junior School forms part of the wider strategy for providing school places across the City.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 Any implications for funding the additional floor area at Somerhill Junior School will be met from the Individual School Budget (ISB), which may increase as a result of any additional pupils into the Authority as a result of the expansion. If no additional pupils come into the Authority then the additional funding Somerhill Junior School will receive will come from within the existing ISB. Any capital costs arising from the proposal would have to be met from within the existing Education Capital Programme which includes streams such as the Primary Capital Programme, NDS modernisation and a contribution from the schools Devolved Formula Capital (DFC). The full cost of this project will be reported in due course.

Finance Officer Consulted: Sue Coleman

Date: 03/04/2009

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 In order to achieve the proposed expansion, statutory notices will need to be published in accordance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and associated regulations. There will then follow a period of 4 weeks within in which any person may make comment or objection to the proposal.

At the end of the publication period for the notice a decision will have to made within 2 months of the end of the publication period.

Layer Consulted: Natasha Watson

Date: 27/03/09

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 Planning and provision of school places is conducted in such a way as to avoid potentially discriminatory admissions priorities or planning processes. The city council and voluntary aided school governing bodies must be mindful of bad practice as described in the Admission Code of Practice.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 Planning and provision of school places are intended, so far as it is possible, to provide pupils, parents and carers with local places where they have asked for them. This is subject to limitations in school capacity, the funding available and the priority order for capital development determined by the Council.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There are no implications for the prevention of crime and disorder arising from this report.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 There are no risk issues in terms of resources or risks to children as a result of this proposal.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 All planning and provision to for school places in the city should be operating on the basis of admission limits and admission priorities which have been the subject of broad consultation. The effective coordination of planning arrangements should lead to sufficient school paces in all areas of the city and the removal of excess provision.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 The alternative option is to leave the school as a three form entry school.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Brighton and Hove City Council has a legal requirement to provide sufficient school places for all school age children in the city. School places should be provided in such a way that parents and pupils can access a local school wherever possible. This proposal will provide additional places where they are wanted by parents and carers.

- 7.2 The views of the parents and carers, staff, governors and pupils of the school expressed during the consultation have been considered. It is not intended to build on the playing field as has been suggested.
- 7.3 Consideration has been given to the concerns about the size of the site raised by respondents to the consultation exercise. It is accepted that the combined site does not meet the recommendations within BB99 Briefing Framework for Primary School Projects in respect of a new school. However the combined site is more than double the size shown for a school on a constrained site.
- 7.4 The requirements for team games playing surfaces are detailed in the Education (School Premises) regulations 1999. Using the proposed total number of children that will attend Somerhill and Davigdor schools if the proposal is successful this regulation requires 15,000m² of team games playing space. This can be either grass, hard porous surface or polymeric surface, with both hard porous surfaces and polymeric surfaces counting as double their actual areas. In the case of Somerhill and Davigdor schools there is a total of 14,900m² of team games playing space available. While this does not actually meet the requirement of the regulations the difference is so small that it is not considered a material factor in progressing the proposal.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Draft Statutory Notice
2. Consultation document for the proposed expansion
3. Record of the public meeting held on 2nd April 2009

Documents In Members' Rooms

1. Consultation responses

Background Documents

1. None