

## Full statutory proposal information for the closure of Patcham House community special school

1. In accordance with section 15 (1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 Brighton and Hove City Council proposes to close Patcham House School with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018.

### Local Authority (LA) details:

Brighton and Hove City Council  
Hove Town Hall  
Norton Road  
Hove BN3 3BQ

### School details:

Patcham House Community Special School  
7, Old London Road,  
Patcham  
Brighton & Hove City Council BN1 8XR

Patcham House is a registered community special school which currently makes day provision for boys and girls aged 11-16 with complex needs.

### 2. Implementation plan:

It is proposed to close Patcham House School in August 2018. By this time, all but 2 of the pupils will have completed their Key Stage 4 education. Discussions will be held with the parent/carers of the 2 remaining students, who would potentially complete Year 9 in July 2016 to plan their transfer to alternative provision at a time appropriate to their needs and taking into account parental preference.

### 3. Reasons for Closure

Patcham House is one of the city's 6 special schools. It makes provision for students with a range of complex needs, including autistic spectrum conditions, speech, language and communication needs, mental health and other medical needs. All students have an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP). Its students come from across the city. One student from a neighbouring Local Authority has also been placed at the school. It occupies a compact site in a residential area to the north of the city.

The school has in the past been a valuable asset to the city's provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. It is currently rated as good by OFSTED. However, in the Local Authority's drive to create a better, more holistic and sustainable service for the future, it needs to ensure that it has the right provision in the right place at the right time for all of the city's children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), whose needs the Local Authority must now meet up to the age of 25, to comply with the new Children and Families Act 2014.

Thus there are a number of reasons for making this change within the timeframe given:

#### The demand for places in the city's special schools has changed over time.

Brighton and Hove is able to commission sufficient special school places across the city as a whole. However, some of the city's special schools are oversubscribed. Others, like Patcham House, struggle to admit sufficient students to be viable. The numbers in recent years have been reducing and it is now struggling to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. Many students who would in the past have attended Patcham House are now attending mainstream schools, either in the main body of the school or within a special facility. The Local Authority has given a commitment to parents that the overall number of places for pupils in special provision across the city will not decrease as a result of this proposed closure.

The Local Authority is also considering developing a new special facility, more inclusive provision which, although not a direct replacement for that provided at Patcham House, will extend the range of options to meet the diverse needs of vulnerable students who academically are able to access a mainstream curriculum, albeit with significant modification, support and intervention. This supports the core principles of the SEND review.

Date	Commissioned place numbers	Actual numbers	Boys	Girls	KS3	KS4
2012	46					
2013	36					
2014	40	36	30	6	17	19
2015	38	32	26	6	12	20
2016	20*	22	20	2	2	20
2017	10	10	9	1		10
July 2018		2	1	1		2

Diagram 1

\*Since the consultation period began, admissions to key stage 3 have been restricted

#### The Local Authority needs to make best use of its money

Patcham House has become very small and is not financially viable without significant transitional protection from the Local Authority. Over the past 5 years, the Local Authority has had to allocate an additional £580,000 of transitional protection to the school to enable it to balance its budget. In the current financial year, its core school budget of £604,462 includes £150,000 of subsidy. This subsidy is not sustainable and is not an effective use of resources.

The council is committed to reinvesting any funding which becomes available as a result of the closure of Patcham House into other services to meet the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

The Local Authority wants to develop more integrated services to improve the range of high quality provision available to the city's most vulnerable pupils

Children with complex needs in special provision need additional help from professionals in health and social care. Many parents tell the Local Authority that this is best provided where staff can work better together in a more integrated way. This is also what the new Children and Families Act 2014 expects Local Authorities to do. To be able to achieve this, Brighton and Hove needs to create economies of scale which are not possible at a school with so few students.

#### **4. Patcham House in the context of wider review and change within the city**

All Local Authorities have a statutory responsibility to keep SEND provision under review in order to be able to respond to the changes in need amongst the population of children and young people with these needs.

In 2014, Brighton and Hove City Council conducted a wide ranging review of its services for children with special educational needs and disabilities. The integrity of this review was overseen by a high level strategic Governance Board, and included parent/carers and young people, in line with the Local Authority's commitment to engage parents and young people effectively at all levels of strategic and decision making forums.

The process of consultation included a range of events for young people, parent/carers, education, social care and health staff, voluntary organisations alongside the opportunity, alongside the wider public, for them to submit views via the council's online consultation portal.

The outcome of that consultation was reported to the Children, Young People and Skills Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Board in February 2015. (Appendix 1 gives the link to this document) Recommendations emerging from the review centred around securing improvements in:

- Joint commissioning
- Integrated service delivery
- Support for families with disabled children
- Learning Support for children with SEN
- Transition to adulthood
- Emotional and mental health

3 project groups were established for each of the 3 areas of the proposals, notably provision for Learning difficulties (LD)  
Social emotional and mental health (SEMH)  
Early years (EY)

(At a later date a parallel group was created for post 16 provision)

Each group consisted of a broad range of stakeholders who would be affected by the changes in some way and who together had a breadth of expertise and experience to support the LA in its intention to co-produce specific options for change on which to formally consult. The range of membership is can be found in the link at Appendix 2

In November 2015, a joint meeting of the Children, Young People and Skills Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Board (Appendix 3 gives the link to this document) gave approval to an engagement process with key stakeholders (the link to these minutes can be found at Appendix 4). The focus for this informal consultation was to reorganise special provision and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and to integrate education, health and care provision in special schools. The purpose of this was specifically to make the system more efficient and financially viable into the future, by the consolidation of the city's 6 special schools, one of which is Patcham House School, and 2 PRUs to form 3 integrated special provisions (hubs) across the city.

This engagement phase included:

- a consultation paper with key questions to consider
- public meetings and individual meetings as requested
- all meetings being recorded

The engagement exercise was promoted through:

- The council website and the Local Offer
- The schools' bulletin
- The Wave
- Health services' own internal communication channels
- Amaze communications with parents
- School newsletters

Direct communication with voluntary and community groups working with children and young people with specialist educational needs and their families

Feedback was also invited:

- via the Council's consultation portal
- via email,
- in writing
- and by leaving a voicemail on a consultation line

Members of the project groups were also able to maintain a link between stakeholder groups and the Local Authority's thinking.

The report on the outcome of the open engagement phase to Children, Young People and Skills Committee in June 2016 (the link to this document can be found at Appendix 5), showed that those who had been consulted included:

- Children and young people
- Parents and carers
- Special and mainstream schools
- Further education colleges
- Early years providers
- Teachers and other staff at the schools
- Local Authority staff
- Public Health
- The Clinical Commissioning Group
- Sussex Community Trust
- Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust
- Governors
- Trade Unions
- Local Community groups
- Neighbouring Local Authorities
- The Anglican Diocese of Chichester
- The Roman Catholic Diocese of Arundel and Brighton
- The Police Authority
- Neighbouring Local Authorities or any which maintain a statement of special educational needs or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in respect of a registered pupil at the school
- Local Members of Parliament

Feedback from the consultation is included in the document at Appendix 5.

At their meeting in June 2016, the Children, Young People and Skills Committee reviewed the feedback from the engagement phase, which showed strong support from all stakeholders on the principles behind the review

At the committee meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2016 (the link to this paper is in appendix 6), a number of different options were considered to help achieve the Local Authority's vision of integrated provision in the light of the feedback from the consultation:

One of the options considered was to continue with the status quo of maintaining 6 small special schools and 2 Pupil Referral Units. This option was rejected as the matrix of needs has changed over time and there is no longer sufficient demand for some settings while other schools are oversubscribed. This leads to some schools becoming too small to run a full curriculum and to the Local Authority needing to provide significant amounts of 'protection' funding to keep schools afloat when this money is urgently needed for children with SEND elsewhere in the system.

This is particularly the case with Patcham House School, which has historically provided a good education to vulnerable pupils, but which has had a falling roll over a number of years as shown in diagram 1. The pupils that Patcham House School caters for have similar needs to those who are now successfully placed in the special facilities such as the Swan Centre at Brighton Aldridge Community Academy (BACA) and Phoenix Centre at Hove Park School. Greater inclusion has meant that schools like Patcham House School (whose original designation was to cater for 'delicate' pupils) have generally closed over time across the country.

There was a consensus that the principle of integrated hubs for children with learning difficulties, including those with SEMH was sound. To that end the Local Authority decided to explore further the appropriate model to achieve this integration, whether by merging the special schools or recommending that they federate under a single governing body. Thus at their meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2016 (minutes can be accessed via Appendix 7), Members agreed that that should be the subject of further consultation before formal proposals are presented. However, for children with social, emotional and mental health difficulties, Homewood College and the 2 pupil referral units would progress with the setting up of a single institution under unified leadership and governance, this to become the SEMH hub.

Patcham House School as a whole would not naturally fit within any of the hub arrangements and given its diminishing roll, financial unviability, and the intention to develop further a new special facility within a mainstream school, Members agreed to proceed with formal consultation to close the school in August 2018.

## **5. Formal consultation on the closure of Patcham House school**

A formal consultation document was prepared, advertised and posted on the council's consultation portal. The online consultation was open from 5<sup>th</sup> October to 4<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

The formal consultation was widely publicised via:

- The council's website
- Social media
- Amaze- the local parent partnership organisation for SEND.
- School newsletters and their other usual communication channels (parenttext etc)
- Local multiagency SEND forums (ie SEND Partnership Board, PRU management committees)
- Regular meetings where SEND is the focus (ie special headteachers' forum, cross LA senior leadership groups)

Meetings were held with unions, Patcham House School staff, and the School Council. The LA employed a consultant to work with the governing body to explore the implications of the range of options for change.

Following discussion with the school, it was agreed that the Local Authority should offer to conduct a personalised telephone consultation for parents of registered pupils at Patcham House. The parent/carers of 50% of the current school population participated in this. Students at Patcham House completed the online consultation with the support of their tutor as a familiar adult.

Consultation letters were written to the 3 Local MPs and both East and West Sussex, as the neighbouring Local Authority's, although only West Sussex has a student currently at Patcham House school.

Analysis of the consultation feedback can be found via Appendix 8.

## **6. SUMMARY OF THE MAIN ISSUES RAISED, WITH RESPONSES:**

### **Why is Brighton and Hove proposing to close Patcham House?**

Historically this school has been a valuable asset to the city's provision for students with complex needs. However it has now become very small, requiring considerable financial subsidy and this has questioned its continued viability. Diagram 1 shows the past and predicted student numbers until the proposed point of closure. In order to come to a decision, all responses to the local consultation on the closure of Patcham House School have now been carefully reviewed, alongside three other significant elements of consideration:

- The analysis of the current and future budget position
- The range of special provision that is or will be available for pupils with SEND similar to those whose needs have hitherto attended Patcham House school
- The widely supported plan to transform current special school based provision into three hubs which provide integrated provision across education, health and care.

### **To what extent has the city considered keeping the school open?**

Some respondents to the consultation asked the LA to reinvest in the school to increase it in size and make it financially viable. As the DFE restricts the number of special school places it is prepared to fund within the LA, this would mean removing places from other special schools and would in turn make them smaller. This would conflict with the overall drive of the wider SEND review to transform the city's provision into fewer schools (termed hubs) which are larger in size and can offer a wider range of services and create greater economies of scale. *National statistics: Special educational needs in England: January 2016* (Table 10) shows that the majority of Brighton and Hove current special schools are smaller than the national average.

Only one pupil attends Patcham House from a neighbouring LA at parental request. Neither East nor West Sussex has expressed an interest in collaborating to keep Patcham House open. Both LAs have already made changes to some of their own special provision to create larger more viable schools offering a broad curriculum to match a wider range of pupil need.

### **How will current pupils be affected by the closure?**

Under this proposal Patcham House School would close in August 2018 which would enable all the current Key Stage 4 pupils (nearly all pupils are in Key Stage 4) to complete their education at the school. The very small number of pupils at the school who are currently in Year 9 would be found alternative suitable placements as part of a personalised pathway worked out with their families over a carefully managed time scale. Early preparatory work for this has already begun, so that options are explored in advance of any decision to close the school.

### **What alternative options will be available in the city in the future for similar secondary aged pupils with complex needs?**

Patcham House historically catered for children and young people deemed 'delicate' with origins in children with long term physical health needs. Such schools were once commonplace nationally but over time most have closed as the pattern of children's needs has changed. Most children who need and can benefit from a mainstream curriculum now will be in mainstream schools with varying levels of support.

Locally one of the reasons for the falling roll at Patcham House is that the pattern of parental preference has changed over time in the city also, and parent/carers have opted for placements at other provision for their children. Many of our secondary schools now have considerable experience and expertise in meeting the needs of those with complex learning difficulties. The Swan Centre at Brighton Aldridge Community Academy specialises in meeting the needs of those with language and social communication needs. In addition existing special provision at Hove Park School was reshaped in 2013 to create the Phoenix Centre Special Facility to cater for vulnerable pupils with social and communication difficulties and associated emotional needs.

This has proved a successful addition to the capacity for this complex needs group offering inclusive opportunities as well as a more protected environment. The LA has listened to concerns expressed by parents, particularly those whose children are on the autistic spectrum, and is proposing the following:

- 1 A new special facility catering for pupils with complex needs in a mainstream secondary school offering more capacity
- 2 For those pupils who cannot cope with a protected mainstream environment, places will be available in the three integrated hubs
- 3 For pupils with complex needs including autism/Asperger's Syndrome and challenging behaviour who need a mainstream curriculum, plans are being made to create bespoke provision for them within the SEMH

### **What will happen to the money saved from the closure of Patcham House?**

The SEND review is not a cost-cutting exercise as all money remains ring-fenced to children with SEN and disabilities. However the review is addressing the way money is spent to ensure best value is gained for all children and this cannot be the case where schools have falling rolls year on year as it requires the LA to provide financial protection to ensure they can remain open. Proposals are to significantly reduce the annual spend on financial protection for schools with falling rolls who are otherwise not financially sustainable. Over the last 5 years, this financial protection (which in effect 'buys up' empty places at a school) has amounted to just over £1 million across the city's special schools, of which £580,000 was for

Patcham House alone. In the financial year 2016/17, the budget for Patcham House School was £604,462, which included transitional protection of £150,000.

#### **What will happen to the staff currently working at Patcham House?**

The Local Authority very much values the experience and expertise of those working at Patcham House and wishes to retain this within the city as far as possible.

Once the period of consultation is over, all staff will have individual meetings to discuss their futures and any opportunities available. The LA does not have the authority to require all schools to give priority to re-deploying staff at risk, but will seek to use its influence constructively to find suitable opportunities for staff who work at the school.

In the meantime, special school headteachers have agreed to give priority to Patcham House staff when vacancies arise. In planning the new Special Facility, the LA will be asking the successful school to also give priority to employing Patcham House staff and in informal discussion with schools bidding so far, all have agreed to consider this positively.

In terms of staff wellbeing at a difficult time, Public Health have offered a range of support services to staff and some funding for staff to organise support for themselves.

#### **What will happen to the site?**

As the school site has had spare room due to the falling roll, space has been used to offer temporary accommodation to the city's developing post 19 provision. In the longer term, the site may become surplus to requirements. However, at present no decision has been made about the site.

#### **How can secondary aged students continue to access an appropriate and creative curriculum to match their needs?**

Brighton and Hove is committed to ensuring that the needs of all the city's children and young people are met and can access a curriculum appropriate to their needs. There is a perception amongst some respondents that the creative and varied curriculum offered at Patcham House is only available there, but in fact, every special school in the city offers an array of diverse opportunities matched to the needs of individuals. This is evidenced in the very positive Ofsted reports that the city's special schools have received. The development of the hubs will enable this offer to be extended beyond the school day and to families.

#### **What impact will the proposed closure have on current Patcham House students?**

The proposed school closure timeframe (closure in August 2018) will mean that all except 2 students will have completed their secondary education. For the 2 students who may remain on the school roll in July 2018, alternative suitable placements will be found as part of a personalised pathway worked out with their families over a carefully managed time scale, to allow them to successfully complete their KS4 curriculum to achieve the outcomes they deserve. Discussions with students at the School Council showed that they were generally unhappy about the prospect of the school closing, particularly as it would be unavailable to other students in the future.. The LA recognises the potential impact of the proposals on the stability of the students and will work with the parents /carers to develop a personalised plan for each individual student on roll to ensure that they get the services they need to be able to complete their education successfully.

#### **What impact will the school's closure have on the community?**

The school has been an integral part of the Patcham community over the years and it is acknowledged that it has served its community well. Few of the students live in the immediate locality and most travel to school independently from other parts of the city. There will continue to be travel across the Local Authority area for those with SEND, as the Local Authority is obliged to offer a school place appropriate to a child's need, when the most local provision is deemed unsuitable. Very occasionally neighbouring LAs have sought a place for particular students following parental request. However, this necessitates a long home to school journey for them.

The Local Authority has given a commitment that the overall number of places in special provision in the city will not diminish as a result of the proposed changes. Thus there will be sufficient capacity within other special provision in the city to accommodate students with similar needs to those currently attending Patcham House. These will be distributed across other special schools, the new or existing special facilities, or in exceptional cases, one of several independent providers in the area.

### **7. WHERE AND WHEN THE STATUTORY NOTICE AND FULL PROPOSAL INFORMATION WILL BE AVAILABLE**

Brighton & Hove City Council will publish the statutory notice for this proposal on Friday 17 March 2017. The notice will remain in force for a period of 4 weeks i.e. until Friday 14 April 2017. Copies of the notice will be placed:

- at the entrance to the school
- in other places in the community; namely Patcham Village Post Office, Patcham Library and the Jubilee Library.

It will also be published in The Brighton and Hove Independent newspaper on Friday 17 March 2017.

A copy of the statutory notice is attached to this document.

On Friday 17 March 2017 the full proposal information (this document plus appendices) will be sent to the following recipients:

- The Secretary of State for Education
- The governing body of the school
- The Diocese of Chichester
- The Diocese of Arundel & Brighton
- Members of the Children and Young People Committee
- Local Ward Councillors
- The Members of Parliament for Brighton and Hove
- The parents/ carers of every registered pupil at the school

It will also be published on the council's website at the following address  
[www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/school-statutory-notice](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/school-statutory-notice).

Any person may request a copy of the full proposal information either by writing to Edd Yeo at Brighton & Hove City Council, Room 116 Hove Town Hall, Norton Road, Hove BN3 3BQ or by contacting him on 01273 294354 or via email at [edd.yeo@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:edd.yeo@brighton-hove.gov.uk).

#### **8. HOW TO MAKE REPRESENTATIONS OR COMMENT ON THE PROPOSAL**

Any person may object or make a representation or comment on the proposal. This can be done by writing to Regan Delf, Assistant Director Health, SEN and Disability Brighton & Hove City Council, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Hove Town Hall, Norton Road, Hove BN3 3BQ before the closing date of 14 April 2017 or via email to her at [regan.delf@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:regan.delf@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Following the closing date for representations, comments and objections, a report will be prepared for the Children and Young People's Committee to decide the proposal within 2 months i.e. no later than 14 June 2017. At the present time it is anticipated that the report will be considered at their meeting scheduled for 12 June 2017

Appendix 1 Consultation Feedback February 2015

[Appendix 1 Link](#)

Appendix 2 Membership of group paper June 2016

[Appendix 2 Link](#)

Appendix 3 Joint HWB & CYPS Committee paper Nov 2015

[Appendix 3 Link](#)

Appendix 4 Minutes of HWB & CYPS Committee paper Nov 2015

[Appendix 4 Link](#)

Appendix 5 Consultation Feedback June 2016

[Appendix 5 Link](#)

Appendix 6 October 3<sup>rd</sup> CYPS Committee paper

[Appendix 6 Link](#)

Appendix 7 October 3<sup>rd</sup> CYPS minutes

[Appendix 7 Link](#)

Appendix 8 Feedback analysis of PH consultation

**Brighton & Hove City Council**  
**Statutory Notice: Proposal to close Patcham House Community Special School**

Notice is given in accordance with section 15(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that Brighton & Hove City Council intends to discontinue (close) Patcham House Community Special School, 7 Old London Road, Brighton & Hove, BN1 8XR, from 31 August 2018.

The current age range of the school is 11 to 16. The Local Authority proposes to close the school from 31 August 2018. At this time all but two of the pupils will have completed their Key Stage 4 education. Suitable alternative provision will be agreed for these two pupils prior to the proposed closure at a time appropriate to their needs.

All applicable statutory requirements to consult in connection with this proposal have been complied with. Brighton & Hove City Council will implement the proposal.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be obtained from: Edd Yeo at Brighton & Hove City Council, Hove Town Hall Norton Road, Hove BN3 3BQ or by contacting him on 01273 294354 or via email at [edd.yeo@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:edd.yeo@brighton-hove.gov.uk). The Full Proposal is also on the councils website and can be found at [http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/statutory\\_notices](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/statutory_notices)

Within four weeks from the date of publication of this proposal (i.e. by 14 April 2017), any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to Regan Delf, Assistant Director Health, SEN and Disability, Brighton & Hove City Council, Hove Town Hall Norton Road Hove BN3 3BQ before the closing date of 14 April 2017 or via email to [regan.delf@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:regan.delf@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Signed: Pinaki Ghoshal

Publication Date: 17 March 2017

