

Appendix 5

Initial Equality Impact Assessment – Policy Change

Department	Children's Services
Policy	Schools Admissions
People involved	Graham Carter, Clare O'Connor

1. What are the aims of the policy and what changes are being proposed?

It is Council policy to ensure that parents are able to exercise choice through a diverse range of school types being available within the Borough.

The following changes to the school admission arrangements for the school year 2013/14 are proposed:

- Revised admission arrangements for Shaftesbury Park Primary School (Shaftesbury) to incorporate a bilingual stream
- Revised admission arrangements for Ernest Bevin College to give priority to a sibling of a child on the roll on the date of application;
- Revised methodology for determining proximity of home to school by use of a straight line measurement;

The changes have been subject to consultation. A copy of the consultation document summarising the proposal was sent to the Governing Bodies and Headteachers of all maintained primary and secondary schools and academies in the borough. The proposal was also been considered by the Admission Forum and its primary and secondary Headteacher sub-groups. A summary of the proposal was published on the Council's website together with messages and a press release alerting parents to the proposal and inviting comments. The consultation ran from 14 November 2011 to 3 February 2012.

2. What is the rationale behind these changes?

The use of a straight line measurement is more transparent, objective and less open to challenge than the current methodology of shortest walking route with street lighting. It does not rely on the constant need to keep mapping updated with new housing developments and roads/footpaths. It avoids disputes involving suitability or accuracy of routes which take a substantial time (with associated cost to public funds) to investigate and introduce potential delays for parents. The change will increase the opportunity for parents to assess the likelihood of securing a place on grounds of proximity to school and reduce the likelihood of challenge requiring appeal hearings.

3. What information do you have on the policy and the potential impact of your policy change in relation to the following?

	List information you have. Do not put what the information shows you
Race	<p>Results of consultation</p> <p>Information on schools</p> <p>Analysis using application data from the 2011/12 intake at schools which considered the implications of the proposals including where there might be issues due to the proximity of the river, railway lines, commons, borough boundaries or features of the local road network. The exercise sought to identify the location of applicants who would have either benefitted or been disadvantaged if a straight line measurement had been used.</p> <p>Pupil population</p>
Gender	As above
Disability	As above
Age	As above
Faith	As above
Sexual Orientation	As above

4. Thinking about each group below please list the impact that the policy change will have.

Impact identified	<p>The only secondary school where a change of methodology would have any significant impact is Graveney School, where the proximity of the borough boundary with Merton would be likely to give Merton residents living just beyond the boundary priority over some Wandsworth residents living to the east of the school. This would have equated to 13% of the places awarded on proximity in 2011/12. The Governing Body of Graveney are aware of this issue and are currently consulting on the straight line proposal.</p> <p>Although the change would potentially impact more greatly on oversubscribed primary schools because of the shorter distances involved, relatively few issues were identified and the majority of schools would simply continue to have ‘winners and losers’ which are a feature of a proximity based oversubscription criterion (or tie-breaker) irrespective of a change in methodology.</p> <p>The exercise confirmed that due to the level of oversubscription, a straight line measurement would be unlikely to enable residents of boroughs north of the River Thames to secure places in oversubscribed schools within this borough. It is also identified that the change would be unlikely to significantly increase the number of residents in other boroughs who would secure places in the borough’s primary schools in favour of Wandsworth residents.</p> <p>More specifically, the exercise identified that because of the road network around Sheringdale Primary School, the change would give higher priority to those living at the top end of the Southfields Grid, over those living a little further to the north of the school, but who have a shorter walk to school. Both sets of applicants have alternative access to Riversdale Primary School.</p> <p>A similar issue was identified close to Honeywell Schools, where due to the high level of oversubscription, some applicants who live geographically very close to the school but have no direct access and thus do not currently secure a place, would do so using a straight line measurement. It is likely that applicants in this area, who would otherwise have secured a place under the current system, would have alternative access to Belleville Primary School.</p> <p>At Beatrix Potter school, applicants living the other side of Wandsworth Cemetery would be likely to secure a place in favour of those living south of the school’s priority area who have a shorter walk to the school. Both groups have alternative access to Earlsfield Primary School. The governing body of the school have noted the potential unfairness for parents living within a shorter walking distance who do not secure a place, but have not directly opposed the proposal. It should be noted that the proposal would not have an adverse effect on applicants living within the school’s first or second priority areas, who based on</p>
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	<p>anticipated demand are all likely to secure a place.</p> <p>At John Burns Primary School, applicants living to the north of the school and on the other side of a railway line (who have alternative access to Chesterton Primary School), would secure places at John Burns School in favour of those living at the west end of the Shaftesbury Estate. The latter group have closer access to Shaftesbury Park Primary School. The governing body have indicated their agreement with the proposal.</p>	
Consultation findings	<p>Responses received from 24 primary schools, 13 of which are their own admission authority. No school has expressed opposition to the change, which was also broadly welcomed by the Admission Forum and its primary Headteacher sub-group.</p> <p>Battersea Park School was the only secondary school to respond formally to the consultation, pointing out that the change would advantage some parents living on the other side of Wandsworth Common or railway lines. This should not have a significant impact on admissions to the school in the foreseeable future. A number of other secondary schools are consulting on admission arrangements which include the proposed change which has also gained broad support from the Admission Forum and its secondary Headteacher sub-group.</p> <p>Five responses were received from parents. Four in favour and one against. The parent opposing the proposal cited the unfairness which would result due to the nature of the road network around Putney Common and Heath and a conflict with a 'walk to school' policy. The impact exercise identified that access to schools in this area of the borough area was unlikely to be reduced by the proposal</p> <p>No comments received on the revised admission arrangements for Shaftesbury Park Primary School which incorporate admission to a bilingual stream.</p> <p>No comments received on the proposed admission arrangements for Ernest Bevin College.</p>	
	<u>Positive</u> impacts of policy change	Possible <u>negative</u> impacts
Race	<p>The average BME population for the borough primary schools is 58.2% and average for secondary schools is 66.0%. The analysis of the impact of the proposed admission proposals listed in section 1 has shown that they will not significantly impact on the overall pupil population. No issues were raised through the consultation in relation to ethnicity.</p> <p>The straight line proposal will lead to increased transparency and objectivity In addition, the adoption of</p>	None identified

	<p>the proposal gives an opportunity for the Council to further improve the information to assist parents in the application process. The change would make it possible to provide web-based information on home to school distances using straight line measurements. It would also be possible for admission authorities to provide maps showing the radial area from which places were offered in the previous year.</p>	
Gender	<p>The average gender split for the borough primary schools is 50.3% boys and 49.7% girls and average for secondary schools is 53.6% boys and 46.4% girls. The analysis of the impact of the proposed admission proposals listed in section 1 has shown that they will not significantly impact on the overall pupil population. No issues were raised through the consultation in relation to gender.</p> <p>The straight line proposal will lead to increased transparency and objectivity In addition, the adoption of the proposal gives an opportunity for the Council to further improve the information to assist parents in the application process. The change would make it possible to provide web-based information on home to school distances using straight line measurements. It would also be possible for admission authorities to provide maps showing the radial area from which places were offered in the previous year</p>	None identified
Disability	<p>The average SEN population for the borough primary schools is 24.7% and average for secondary schools is 33.9%. The analysis of the impact of the proposed admission proposals listed in section 1 has shown that they will not significantly impact on the overall pupil population. No issues were raised through the consultation in relation to disability.</p> <p>The proposals do not impact on Special Schools.</p> <p>The straight line proposal will lead to increased transparency and objectivity In addition, the adoption of the proposal gives an opportunity for the Council to further improve the information to assist parents in the application process. The change would make it possible to provide web-based information on home to school distances using straight line measurements. It would also be possible for admission authorities to provide maps showing the radial area from which places were offered in the previous year.</p>	None identified

Age	<p>The proposals impact on young people.</p> <p>The straight line proposal will lead to increased transparency and objectivity. In addition, the adoption of the proposal gives an opportunity for the Council to further improve the information to assist parents in the application process. The change would make it possible to provide web-based information on home to school distances using straight line measurements. It would also be possible for admission authorities to provide maps showing the radial area from which places were offered in the previous year</p>	None identified
Faith	<p>20 faith schools are potentially impacted by the proposals. None have raised specific issues except All Saints CofE Primary school which was seeking confirmation that children meeting the faith criteria but living on the other side of the River Thames would not get additional priority over Wandsworth children. This was confirmed.</p> <p>The straight line proposal will lead to increased transparency and objectivity In addition, the adoption of the proposal gives an opportunity for the Council to further improve the information to assist parents in the application process. The change would make it possible to provide web-based information on home to school distances using straight line measurements. It would also be possible for admission authorities to provide maps showing the radial area from which places were offered in the previous year</p>	None identified
Sexual orientation	Information not collected.	None identified

5. Is a full EIA required? No.

The following questions should help you decide if a full EIA is required. As a guide if you are a frontline service where the impact is unclear or negative you will need to conduct a full EIA. You are unsure call Clear O'Connor on ext 7816.

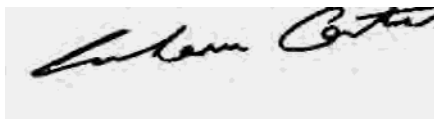
- Does the policy support a frontline service? Yes
- Is it clear what impact the policy change will have on all the equality groups? Yes.
- Overall will the change have a negative impact on any of the equality groups? No.

Comments - Please give the rationale here for not undertaking a full EIA

Impact identified. Although proposals will mean some changes no issues relating to the equality strands have been raised during the consultation or analysis.

6. Through the initial EIA have you identified any actions that needed to be implemented to improve access or monitoring of the policy? (please list)

The impact of the proposed policy will be monitored in relation to the equality strands and any issues will be documented and reported back to Committee.



Signed

Graham Carter (Head of Pupil Services)

Date 8 February 2012

Approved by: Clare O'Connor

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