

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
SCHOOL ADMISSIONS FORUM
HELD ON TUESDAY 15 MARCH 2011 FROM 7.00PM TO 8.55PM**

Present:-

Local Education Authority Representatives:

David Chopping and Beth Rowland

Diocesan Representatives

None present

Parent Representatives:

Phiala Mehring

Representatives from the Local Community

Patricia Cuss – *Early Years Forum*

Major Richard Henderson (deputising for Colonel Derek McAvoy) – *Arborfield Garrison*
– *Other Faith Groups*

Schools Representatives

Peter Lewis – *The Bulmershe School*

Paula Montie – *Polehampton CE Junior School*

Elaine Stewart – *Aldryngton Primary School*

Hilary Winter (Vice Chairman) – *The Piggott CE Aided Secondary School*

Also present:-

David Armstrong, Policy and Schools Access Officer

Piers Brunning, Service Manager Children's Services Infrastructure Development

Sue Riddick, Lead Admissions Officer

Rachael Wardell, Head of Children's Services Strategy and Partnerships

Tricia Harcourt, Senior Democratic Services Officer

In the absence of the Chairman, Hilary Winter, Vice Chairman took the Chair.

86. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 15 February 2011 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

It was reported that a reply had been received from the Portsmouth Roman Catholic Diocese in response to the letter sent following the last meeting to express the Forum's concerns that admission criteria discriminate against non baptised Catholic Looked After Children. The response indicated that Catholic schools do give priority to Catholic children, and a recent Adjudicator determination confirmed that Catholic schools can continue to differentiate between Catholic and none Catholic Looked After Children.

87. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from David Babb, Chairman and Diocesan Representative; Jean Bateman, Grazeley CE Aided Primary School; and Colonel Derek McAvoy, Major Richard Henderson attended in his place.

88. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Phiala Mehring declared a personal interest in relation to the Designated Areas section in Item 89, 2012/13 Admission Arrangements, on the grounds that she lived in the proposed new Maiden Erlegh/Bulmershe designated area; and she was a governor of The Forest School.

David Chopping declared a personal interest in relation to the Designated Areas section in Item 89, the 2012/13 Admission Arrangements, on the grounds that he was a Ward member for the Maiden Erlegh area and lived within Maiden Erlegh designated area.

Elaine Stewart declared a personal interest in relation to the Designated Areas section in Item 89, the 2012/13 Admission Arrangements, on the grounds that she was the Headteacher of Aldryngton Primary School.

Peter Lewis declared a personal interest in relation to the Designated Areas section in Item 89, the 2012/13 Admission Arrangements, on the grounds that he was the Headteacher of Bulmershe School.

89. ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED AND COMMUNITY SCHOOLS; AND PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ADMISSIONS SCHEMES FOR 2012/2013

Piers Brunning presented the report set out on Agenda pages 5 to 15, which gave the background to the consultation on the admission arrangements for 2012/13 the academic year, which had included 2 public meetings to discuss the proposed changes to the secondary school designated areas for Maiden Erlegh/Bulmershe and Emmbrook/Forest/Holt and St Crispin's.

He explained that Annex 1 on Agenda pages 7 to 12, set out an analysis of the responses and included the Officers' views on the results for each proposed change. Overall there had been 1026 on line responses and 1111 email and postal responses, as well as four petitions. Rachael Wardell drew attention to a correction that on page 10 in the fifth paragraph referring to the petition with 308 signatures, in that it did not support the proposals, but objected to the amendment to give Aldryngton pupils a higher priority.

The Forum considered proposed changes to the Admission Arrangements in light of the responses to the consultation as follows:

Designated Areas – Secondary Schools

Maiden Erlegh and Bulmershe

As a result of the consultation, alternative proposals for the tiebreaker had been put forward. Piers Brunning explained and gave clarification on the five different options with the help of coloured plans, which showed the possible effect of the different options:

- Option 1 - the proposal in the consultation
- Option 2 – an inner designated area based on the Aldryngton Primary School designated area
- Option 3 – an alternative smaller inner designated area – the northern half of the Aldryngton Primary School designated area
- Option 4 - alternative relative distance tie breaker
- Option 5 – new radial distance inner area tie breaker around the school, limited to the first 600m

Copies of the plans and descriptions of the five options are attached to the minutes.

Comments were made as follows:

- Concerned that the options 2 and 3 which gave priority to those children attending Aldryngton Primary were not fair as they gave preferential treatment to those children when there were children living in the area who attended other primary schools.
- Not favouring a particular school meets the reasonable needs of residents living near Maiden Erlegh.
- The objective of the review had been to make things simpler, but the options with an inner area add complexity.
- Option 4 would not reduce travel time/distance, which was one of the initial objectives of the review.
- There is a strong case for option 2, as it is nonsense to bus children past Maiden Erlegh to get to Bulmershe
- Children living near Maiden Erlegh should get a place
- The area immediately north of Wokingham Road, would be included in the Option 1 and 5.

The Forum did not reach a consensus on any one option but felt that Options 1 and 5 should be recommended to the Executive for consideration.

Designated Areas – Secondary Schools

The Emmbrook, Forest, Holt and St Crispin's

Peirs Brunning explained that the consultation proposed to combine the designated areas of the four schools into a large shared area, including the adjustments made to the Maiden Erlegh/Bulmershe areas. A combined tie breaker for Forest and Holt Schools, the two single sex schools was proposed for those pupils in criteria C and D.

Concerns had been expressed that under the combined tie breaker, pupils in Arborfield would be less likely to gain a place at Forest or Holt, because of the distance from the ellipse.

David Chopping commented that it was important that residents are not seen to be disadvantaged and put forward a suggestion that Executive be asked to consider whether to refer the interpretation of the single sex criteria and the changing circumstances to Scrutiny, to inform and give guidance on decisions about admission arrangements in future years beyond 2013.

The Forum reached a consensus to recommend to Executive that the proposed shared designated area and combined tie break set out in the consultation be approved.

It was also suggested that Executive be asked to consider whether to refer the interpretation of the single sex criteria and the changing circumstances to Scrutiny, to inform and give guidance on decisions about admission arrangements for years beyond 2013.

The Forum reached a consensus that the remaining proposed changes in the consultation be recommended to the Executive for approval:

1) Oversubscription Criteria

- **Secondary Schools – Linked/feeder schools** - the removal of the feeder school criterion
- **Secondary Schools - Transitional protection for siblings** until June 2018 where designated areas change

- **Primary Schools – Infant Junior transfer** – infant school pupils given high priority for admission to linked junior school.

2) Admission Numbers

No changes were proposed.

3) Coordinated Schemes for Primary, Secondary and In-Year admissions 2012/13

The number of preferences be increased from 3 to 4.

90. ADDITIONAL ITEM

Annual Report to Schools Adjudicator

Sue Riddick raised the issue of whether the Admissions Forum wished to make its own report to the Schools Adjudicator. Officers will be bringing a copy of the Local Authority's report to the June meeting of the Forum for comment.

RESOLVED: That the School Admissions Forum would not be preparing an annual report to the Schools Adjudicator for 2010/11.

91. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that the next meeting will be on 14 June, with further meetings planned for; 23 November 2011, and 22 February, 14 March 2012.

These are the Minutes of a meeting of the School Admissions Forum

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Maiden Erlegh School – consultation responses

The most contentious issue arising from the Maiden Erlegh consultation is the issue of the area around the Maiden Erlegh school site. Should this area be given highest priority within the proposed designated area?

Option 1 – no change from the consulted on proposals.

For

This is the option that has been consulted on – adopting any variant proposal means that it is impossible to re-consult at this stage. This area has good links to Bulmershe School and is on the main route to both Reading and Wokingham Town.

Against

The majority of responses (but not all) favoured change to protect this area.

There is a risk (but no more than this) that families living on the same block as Maiden Erlegh would be unable to secure a place there. Although there is no good reason in the School Organisation Code why they should expect such priority this might be perceived as an unfair result.

Option 2 – an inner DA based on Aldryngton Primary school's DA.

This option has been proposed by a number of parties and Aldryngton PS proposes this (along with a further condition that the priority be limited to pupils attending that school).

For

The Aldryngton DA follows logical boundaries using streets and other landscape features.

It is not so large as to significantly distort outcomes – even allowing for “worst case scenarios” where significant numbers of Earley children cannot gain a place at Maiden Erlegh School it might mean that around 10 children would get in who otherwise wouldn't.

This is because the bulk of the Aldryngton School DA would have a high priority for places at ME School.

Would be favoured by both ME and Aldryngton schools (therefore likely to be retained in future years / not generate adjudicator objections from these sources).

Against

We are breaking away from linked schools. Wokingham (until now) has had these as a lower order of priority, after pure geography and sibling links. The adjudicator has criticised arrangements that depend overly on linked schools in the past – these discriminate against families that have not chosen or been successful in gaining a place at their DA school.

The additional unsuccessful children will live in Lower Earley – and will have a markedly longer journey to Bulmershe than those living close to Maiden Erlegh.

Option 3 – another inner DA

This could be just the block of roads the school sits in (where no child would have to cross a through road). In effect this would be the northern half of the Aldryngton DA.

For

Avoids any confusion with the Aldryngton DA and implicit favouritism for that school.

Addresses the most pressing issue identified to date – the uncertainty for families living immediately to the north of the school site.

Against

Still leaves some Aldryngton DA resident families outside the area of “certainty” (and so may still generate complaint).

Creates a very small privileged area

Option 4 – a new tie breaker – relative distance to Maiden Erlegh.

This option was presented as a consultation response. It does have some merit – as it gives priority to residents in the immediate vicinity of the ME school site.

For

The final outcome may be perceived a fairer as it ensures families living near the ME school site have priority.

It ensures that what might be perceived as a perverse result is avoided – families living in very close proximity losing out to families who live much further away.

It might reduce additional traffic levels near Maiden Erlegh School (albeit in all proposals that school would be within walking or cycling distance of in DA homes).

Against

It gives higher priority to families to the north of the school site (e.g. near Earley station or in Reading) who are not in the immediate vicinity of the school, who would have to cross major roads to reach the school and who can access Bulmershe School over Lower Earley families.

It might generate higher traffic levels on the strategic road network (A329).

The outcomes are more difficult to explain (ranking in the additional distance proposal is based on linear metres (so 100 additional metres distance is a higher priority than 80 additional metres), while here the ranking would be based on ratio or decimal (so 4.2 would be a higher priority than 4.1).

Option 5 – a new tie breaker – radial distance within the proposed DA, but limited to the first 600 metres from the school site.

A variant would be 600m south of the A329.

This would avoid drawing lines on a map – but effectively generates an inner area.

For

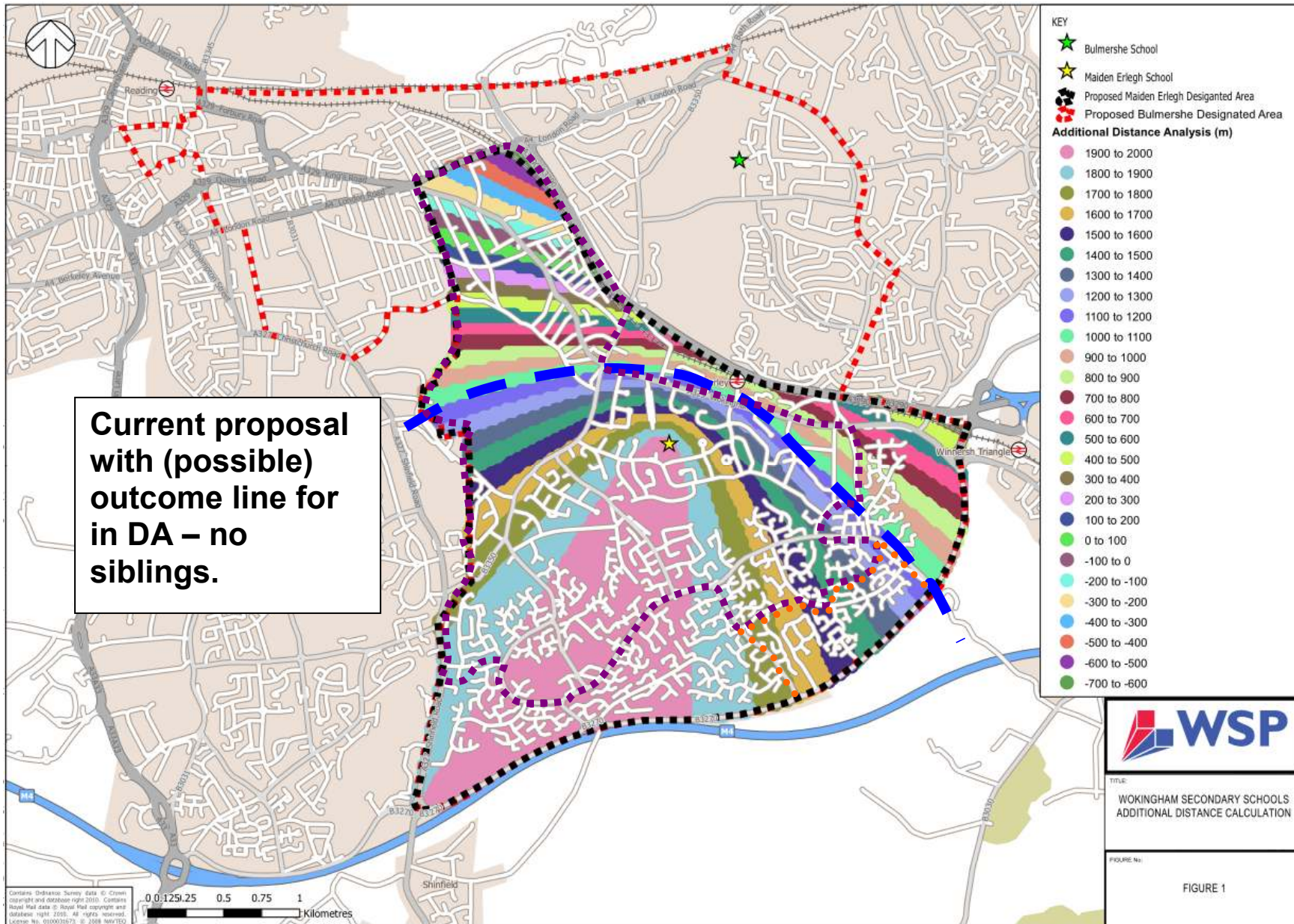
This avoids any linkage to Aldryngton School (consistent with our recommendation to remove linked schools).

Would be straightforward to administer.

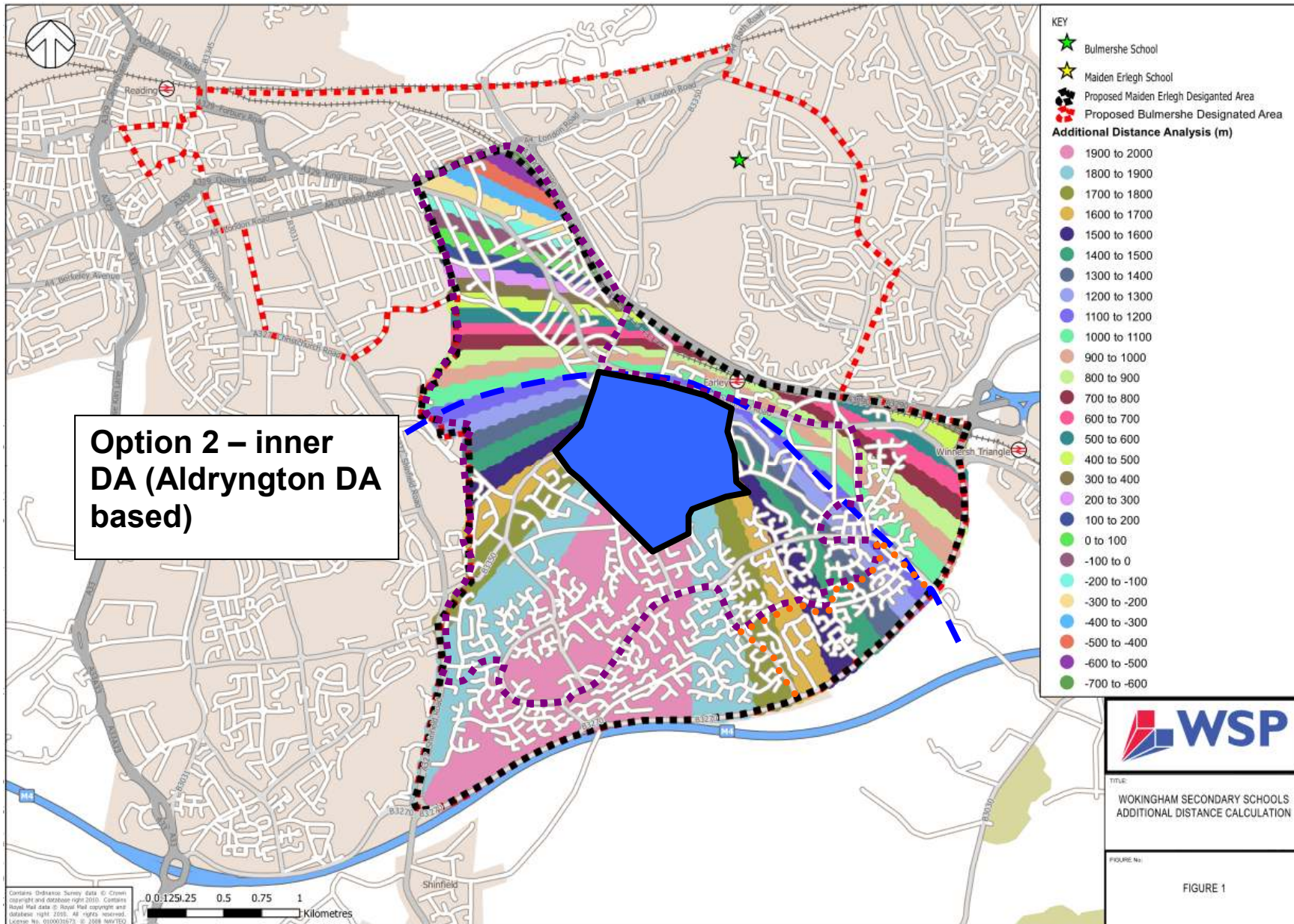
Against

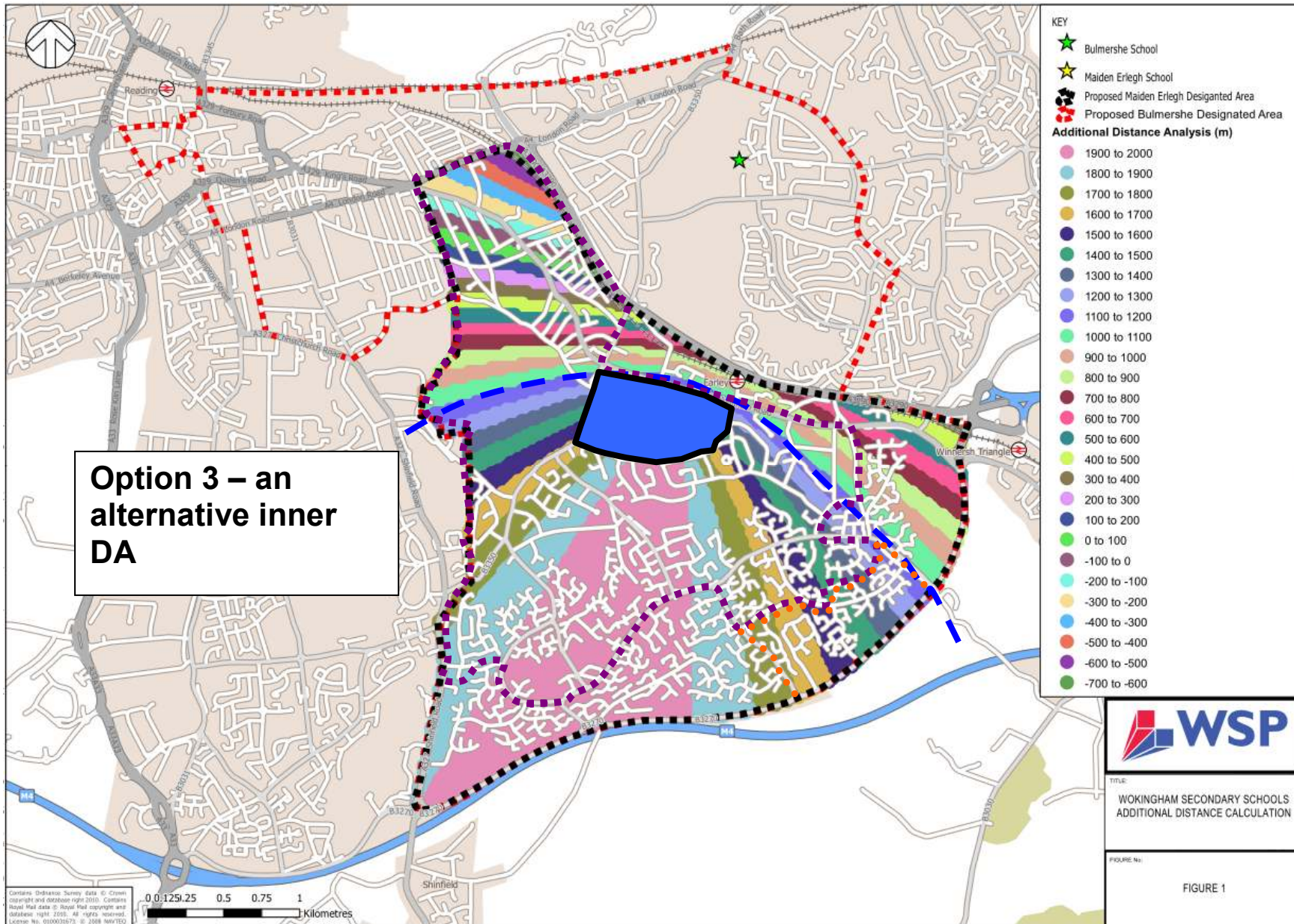
If a full circle would include areas to the north of Wokingham Road (so leading to additional Lower Earley families not getting ME school places).

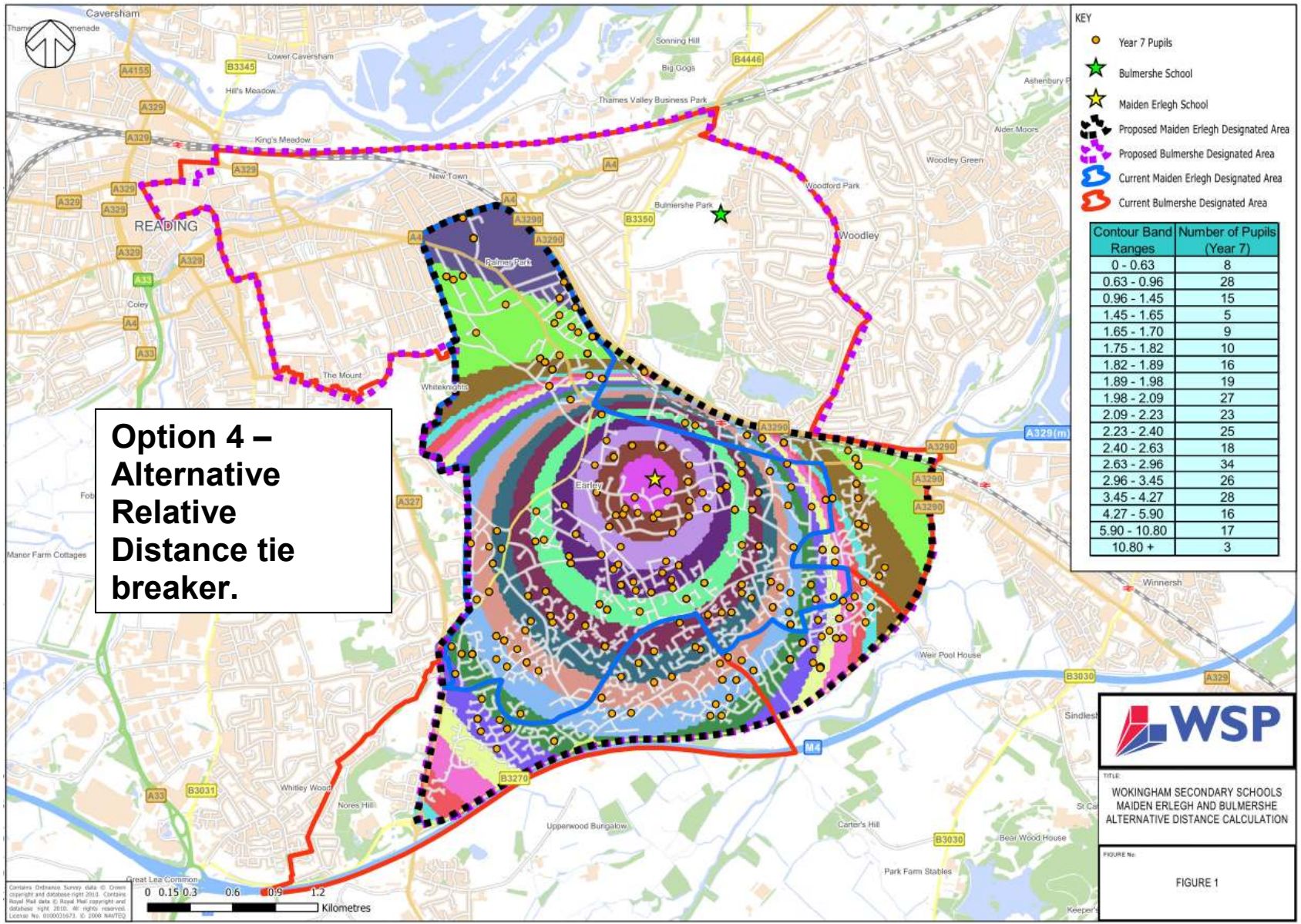
Even if limited to the area south of the A329 would still extend the effective ME school recruitment area further east – again disadvantaging LE resident families.



**Current proposal
with (possible)
outcome line for
in DA – no
siblings.**







**Option 4 –
Alternative
Relative
Distance tie
breaker.**

- KEY**
- Year 7 Pupils
 - ★ Bulmershe School
 - ★ Maiden Erlegh School
 - ⬢ Proposed Maiden Erlegh Designated Area
 - ⬢ Proposed Bulmershe Designated Area
 - ⬢ Current Maiden Erlegh Designated Area
 - ⬢ Current Bulmershe Designated Area

Contour Band Ranges	Number of Pupils (Year 7)
0 - 0.63	8
0.63 - 0.96	28
0.96 - 1.45	15
1.45 - 1.65	5
1.65 - 1.70	9
1.75 - 1.82	10
1.82 - 1.89	16
1.89 - 1.98	19
1.98 - 2.09	27
2.09 - 2.23	23
2.23 - 2.40	25
2.40 - 2.63	18
2.63 - 2.96	34
2.96 - 3.45	26
3.45 - 4.27	28
4.27 - 5.90	16
5.90 - 10.80	17
10.80 +	3



TITLE:
WOKINGHAM SECONDARY SCHOOLS
MAIDEN ERLEGH AND BULMERSHE
ALTERNATIVE DISTANCE CALCULATION

FIGURE No:
FIGURE 1

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0 0.15 0.3 0.6 0.9 1.2 Kilometres

