

Appendix A

Consultation Responses

Four responses were received. These are set out below, with a commentary on the issues raised:

Response 1 – from a parent received 5/1/18

“I am writing to propose a change to the Wokingham School Admission Policy. Namely to swap the oversubscription criteria E (Children living in the designated area) with F (Children outside the designated area with siblings in the school).”

Commentary

This response concerns the admissions arrangements for the Bohunt School, which are not the subject of this report (because the Bohunt School determines its own admissions policy). The respondent has been advised of this.

Response 2 – from a parent received 18/01/2018

Q1 relates to Oversubscription criteria

*“Q1- I feel very strongly that Wokingham borough Council should change its oversubscription criteria to enable out of catchment children with siblings at a particular school **to take priority** over children without siblings who live in catchment.*

The majority of other boroughs already operate in this way.

Our current system splits siblings too easily and put strains on families. Recently there has been a shortage of places and many children being forced into attending schools outside of their catchment schools which in future their siblings are unlikely to attend.

It can be emotionally disruptive for children to attend a different school from their siblings not to mention a logistical nightmare for parents. It is also difficult for parents to be actively involved in school life when they are split between schools.

I understand we want children to be at their closest school where possible but if a family is already travelling to one school surely it makes sense for all of their children to go there instead of adding another journey and causing an unnecessary amount of disruption to the family and children involved.

Q3- Could we have some more information on the designated areas for new schools that will have opened by this admission year and the effect on the designated areas of other schools.”

Commentary

No changes to the arrangements are proposed. This issue has been the subject of consultation in previous years and the result was that the current arrangement was

retained. If the proposal resulted in out of designated area siblings being admitted to a school where (under the current arrangements) they would not have been admitted the corollary is that some first and only children living in a school's designated would not be admitted. These children would not have priority for other local schools and the council might be unable to place them in other preferred schools and be compelled to divert them to other schools some distance from their homes. Furthermore, a substantial change of this nature would need to be consulted on with the whole community and should only be considered if there is evidence that there is widespread support for the proposal. This is clearly not the case here, as only two responses have been received on this issue.

Response3 – from a school

I only disagree with the proposed changes to the F1 admissions policy for 2019-20 in that there is no provision for settings already offering the 30 hour places.

Please could the financial impact of applying the criteria strictly as they are be considered, especially in mainstream nursery units attached to a mainstream school.

Please could the LAC and SEN criteria be applied first (as is the case) then the 30 hour core offer followed by the 15 hour offer, with (a possible fixed number of) 30 hour places being offered first. This would avoid parents taking up all available morning spaces, thus preventing the school from being able to offer enough 30 hour spaces to meet demand. It would also help to prevent any clawback on the termly headcount due to any empty afternoon spaces that cannot easily be filled.

Commentary

The 30 hour policy is an important part of national policy. Given the nature of this objection it is important to establish a policy that works for all stakeholders, so it is proposed to withdraw this policy from this report. Admissions arrangements for nursery classes fall outside the statutory framework, so do not have to be decided before 28th February 2017.

Response 4 ; from Aldryngton Primary School

Designated Area

The Governing Body of Aldryngton Primary School fully support the following proposals:

- *That the designated area of Loddon Primary School be extended to include that of Aldryngton primary school.*
- *That the designated area of Whiteknights Primary School be extended to include that of Radstock Primary School*

Over-subscription Criteria

The Governing Body also support the proposal to clarify the definition of temporary and permanent home address to ensure, that fraudulent applications, based on short term temporary address do not qualify for admission to over-subscribed schools.

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We have some reservations about a fully electronic application process. How will the authority ensure that all parents have appropriate access and information to ensure that no child is disadvantaged.

Commentary

The Aldryngton governing body's support is noted for all changes.

The concern with the fully electronic process is noted. Another communication on the same matter was sent to the Wokingham Borough School Admissions Forum, requesting that there should be a process to provide paper forms to parents.

Providing paper forms would run contrary to the council's ambition to move away from paper to e-service delivery. Parents who do not have computer access can be supported to make on-line applications, for example at Children's Centres. Paper forms will though be made available where other forms of support are not feasible.

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