

**TO: EXECUTIVE  
23 JUNE 2015**

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**CHANGES TO ADMISSION TO SCHOOLS AS A BASIS FOR CONSULTATION  
Director of Children, Young People and Learning**

**1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To review admissions criteria and designated areas (DA) in the light of the new, large housing developments that are likely to be built over the next 10 years. New housing will lead to the creation of large numbers of additional school places in existing or new schools. Current admission arrangements need to change to reflect these developments.

**2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 Over the past few years in excess of 5,000 school places have been created. Projecting forward, up to 13 additional primary forms of entry (FE) and up to 9 secondary FE are required as a result of new housing developments in the next 10 years. Although there was a review of school provision in South Bracknell 10 years ago, there has been no significant review of designated areas for over 15 years.
- 2.2 There are two key aspects to the proposed changes: changes to secondary school admission arrangements and designated area changes at both primary and secondary schools. Taken together changes will affect ALL schools in the Borough; designated area changes will affect schools in North Bracknell, Sandhurst and Crowthorne.
- 2.3 Changes to DA boundaries are sensitive and create interest with local communities and the media. As a complex project the Council wishes to receive comments in order to inform the way forward. The initial consultation will include the overall strategic plan covering the next 5-10 year period. The implementation of these changes will be phased over a number of years through the annual admissions consultation process.
- 2.4 The Council is progressing in a fair and transparent manner by responding to the new schools by establishing DAs for these schools at an early stage.
- 2.5 The current arrangement of the five secondary schools having feeder primary schools is recommended for removal and instead the focus would be on the designated area for each maintained secondary school.
- 2.6 Designated areas are recommended to be revised.
- 2.7 Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools can now opt to remove the denominational criterion from their admissions criteria. VC schools will be asked if they wish the Council to include this aspect in the consultation.
- 2.8 In order to minimise disruption to families with children already at school, admission arrangements will include, for a 6 year period, provision for placing a higher priority on children who have siblings in the DA at the school at the time of the child's admission.
- 2.9 Extensive consultation will be required and statutory deadlines adhered to. Initial briefings and approvals will take place in the period until the end of the summer term (mid July). Statutory and non-statutory consultation will take place between 1 September and 20 November. Approvals will then be sought between December 2015 and January 2016.

### **3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To agree to consult on the removal of feeder primary links for secondary school admission purposes.**
- 3.2 To agree to consult on revisions to primary and secondary school designated areas.**
- 3.3 If requested by a Voluntary Controlled school, to change that school's admission criteria to omit the denominational criterion.**
- 3.4 To agree to consult on including in criteria for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools protection for up to 6 years for younger siblings of children who were living in the designated area at the time of their admission.**
- 3.5 To agree that non-statutory and statutory consultation will take place between 1 September and 20 November.**

### **4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 Over the past few years in excess of 5,000 school places have been created. There has been no significant review of designated areas for over 15 years. Projecting forward, up to 13 additional primary forms of entry (FE) and up to 9 secondary FE are required as a result of new housing developments. Significant changes are required to existing DA boundaries that will affect all schools in the Borough. It is necessary to start the process now for the required changes to admissions arrangements so that entry to schools in September 2017 is possible.
- 4.2 As a complex project the Council wishes to receive comments in order to inform the way forward.
- 4.3 The changes demonstrate that the Council is responding positively and transparently to new housing and the need for new schools
- 4.4 Having set out the overall strategic objective it would be the Council's intention to seek agreement to detailed changes through the annual admissions consultation process over forthcoming years by working towards the final outcome year by year, as required and when school providers are known.

### **5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 'No change' is not an option. Alternative options are set out in the body of the report.

### **6 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

#### Admissions Authorities and designated areas

- 6.1 The Council is the Admissions Authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools in the Borough. All these schools, primary and secondary, have designated areas.
- 6.2 Changes agreed as a result of this paper will affect ALL schools in the Borough.
- 6.3 Voluntary aided (VA) schools and Academies are their own Admissions Authorities. Three voluntary aided primary schools have designated areas as part of the overall coverage in the Borough; the remaining three primary schools and Ranelagh secondary academy school take children from a wider area determined by the Diocese. Although all these schools will be interested in potential changes, any changes agreed as a result of this paper will only affect the DAs of the three voluntary aided primary schools that have DAs.

New housing and school places

- 6.4 New housing developments are planned at Amen Corner (on two sites, North and South), Binfield Learning Village at Blue Mountain, the Transport Research Laboratory site (TRL) near Crowthorne and in Warfield (on two sites, West and East).
- 6.5 11-13 additional *primary* forms of entry (FE) and 8-9 FE additional *secondary* places are being planned through school expansions or new Academies as part of all these developments. Changes are needed to existing primary and secondary designated areas as a result of the substantial number of new places being created in existing and new schools.
- 6.6 Construction of new houses is managed by the housing developer. The timings of additional school places is therefore dictated by the housing developer and are currently scheduled as:

<i>School</i>	<i>Academy/Expansion</i>	<i>Phase</i>	<i>Due to open Sept.</i>
Warfield West	Expansion	Primary	2016
Binfield Learning Village	Academy	Sec'y & Primary	2017
TRL	Expansion	Primary	2018
Amen Corner North	Academy	Primary	2018
Amen Corner South	Academy	Primary	TBA
Warfield East	Academy	Primary	TBA

Secondary school admission arrangements

- 6.7 Current Community secondary schools admission arrangements include provision for feeder primary schools.
- 6.8 The new school places at TRL are to be provided as an expansion of the adjacent school, Crowthorne CE Primary, onto a second site. However the DA of the current school feeds into Edgbarrow School, and the DA of TRL feeds into Easthampstead Park School. Similarly, the new Warfield West development is to be served by an expansion of Warfield CE Primary onto a second site. The DA of the current school feeds into Garth Hill, and the new area would feed into the new Binfield Learning Village secondary provision. Feeder school arrangements will not allow provision for one part of a primary school DA to feed one secondary school, and another part to feed a different secondary school.
- 6.9 Two primary schools in the east of the Borough, Ascot Heath Junior and Cranbourne are currently feeder schools to a secondary school outside the Borough, Charters School in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. Charters School are currently consulting on the possibility of removing feeder schools as part of their admission criteria for 2016/17. It is likely this change will be successful and then there would be a knock-on implication to the continued pattern of feeder schools in the rest of the Borough. Continuation of the feeder school relationships would therefore be difficult to continue as it would otherwise mean treating applicants from different parts of the Borough in different ways, which is not allowed in the Schools Admission Code<sup>1</sup>. Given the uncertainty in relation to the admission arrangements for Charters School, it is prudent to review the existing arrangements for feeder status into our secondary schools. Whilst Charters may not change admission arrangements for 2016, it is likely that they will change by

<sup>1</sup> The School Admission Code (2014) states that the use of a feeder school as an over-subscription criterion must be 'transparent and made on reasonable grounds'.

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2017 therefore the Council needs to ensure we are best placed to manage the impact of this change at the outset of our consultation process.

- 6.10 The current arrangement of the five Community secondary schools having feeder primary schools is recommended for removal and instead the focus would be on the designated area for each maintained secondary school. Secondary schools can continue to have working links (for visits, study days, resource sharing etc.) with primary schools in their designated area.
- 6.11 The criteria for admission to secondary schools would therefore change. Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education Health & Care Plan that names a specific school must, by law, be admitted to that school. After this requirement has been satisfied the following rules will apply:

<i>Current criteria</i>	<i>Proposed criteria</i>
Looked After Children and all previously looked after children	Looked After Children and all previously looked after children
Children who have either medical or social grounds for admission to a particular school	Children who have either medical or social grounds for admission to a particular school
Children who live in the designated area of the secondary school	Children who live in the designated area of the secondary school.  <i>NB Those children who were living in the DA at the time of admission will have protection for their younger siblings(s) for up to 6 years.</i>
Children who have siblings at the school	Children who have siblings at the school
Children who attend a primary school that is formally linked with the secondary school i.e. in a 'feeder primary'	If a school does not have places for all the children in one of the above criteria, priority will be given to children who fulfil a combination of higher admission criteria. The combination of criteria will follow the same order of priority as the basic list of criteria.
If a school does not have places for all the children in one of the above criteria, priority will be given to children who fulfil a combination of higher admission criteria. The combination of criteria will follow the same order of priority as the basic list of criteria.	If there are still insufficient places, a final decision will be made on the <i>radial distance</i> between the home and the school. Those living nearer to the school will be placed higher than those living further away.
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Revision to primary and secondary school designated areas

- 6.12 Where extra places are required as a result of housing developments, these can be provided through expanding an existing school or establishing a new school as an Academy.

Primary schools

- 6.13 Two schools are expanding onto a second site - Warfield and Crowthorne CE Primaries. For these schools their DAs will need adjusting:

<i>New primary places</i>	<i>Currently in the DA(s) of:</i>
Warfield West	Warfield/Whitegrove, Sandy Lane & Meadow Vale
TRL/Crowthorne	Hatch Ride and Oaklands (Wokingham schools)

- 6.14 The governors of each school will need to decide how they want the school organised across the two sites. Parents applying for places at these two schools will express a preference in the usual way (for reception and in-year intake) for the school as a single establishment. The decision on which site the child attends will be made using information on the distance from home to each school site and whether or not there is a sibling already at the school.

- 6.15 Four Academy schools are likely to be forthcoming. There will be a need for primary school DAs to be created from existing DAs in the following areas:

<i>New primary places</i>	<i>Currently in the DA(s) of:</i>
Amen Corner North	Binfield
Amen Corner South	Binfield
Binfield Learning Village <sup>2</sup>	Binfield and Meadow Vale
Warfield East	Warfield/Whitegrove

- 6.16 There is also the opportunity to address an outstanding issue in relation to the current pattern of primary school DAs. Four areas of the Borough are currently shared by more than one primary school which makes admissions arrangements more complicated for parents:

- Binfield and Warfield / Whitegrove
- Warfield and Whitegrove
- College Town and Owlsmoor
- New Scotland Hill and St Michael's Sandhurst

It is recommended that these shared areas be removed at the same time.

Secondary schools

- 6.17 The new secondary school to be built at the Binfield Learning Village at Blue Mountain is planned to take children from the western half of the current Garth Hill College DA. A new DA is required for the Binfield Learning Village secondary provision and a subsequent revision made to Garth Hill College's DA.

Summary of changes to DAs

- 6.18 Maps of proposed arrangements are provided in Annex 1.

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<sup>2</sup> Note that primary provision at Binfield Learning Village is part of a proposed 'all-through' school for children aged 5-18 years old.

6.19 The merits of revising DAs are:

- New school places are being developed in areas of new housing and strong community links can be developed with the new development areas. On the whole there will be minimal influence on the DAs of existing schools which will continue to work with their current communities. The Council's vision of 'local schools for local people' and close school–community links will be maintained.
- Where new school places are being funded by developers<sup>3</sup>, developers will feel more confident that residents of their new houses, in the DA of the school, will be able to attend the new schools.
- Designated areas mean that the highest proportion of children can attend a local school closest to them (subject to there being no designated area pressure on places). This is particularly important in rural areas.
- Continuation of current admissions procedures and transport policies and procedures which are well-established and well-known by parents.

6.20 Points that do not support this approach:

- Across the Borough there will be a higher surplus of secondary places, which provides choice for parents but will mean an overall increase in build and fitting out costs.

Inclusion of denominational criterion

6.21 Church schools – both Voluntary Controlled (VC) and Voluntary Aided (VA) – can now consider whether or not to have a denominational criterion as one of their admissions criteria. For this change to apply to 2017 admissions, changes to criteria will be needed as part of the current year's process.

- Governors of VC schools (Crowthorne CE, Warfield CE and Winkfield St Mary's CE Schools) will need to decide by July 2015 and ask the Council to revise the admissions criteria for their school<sup>4</sup> and the Council will **adjust their criteria** and consult in the timescales described in this paper.
- If Governors of VA schools wish to make this change they will need to decide, as the Admissions Authority for their school, in time to consult between 1 October and 31 January.

Protection for siblings

6.22 In order to minimise disruption to families with children already at school, admission arrangements will need to include for a 6 year period a provision placing a higher priority on children who have siblings in the DA at the school at the time of the child's admission. This is to provide transitional protection for those families who have already accepted places where the sibling rule applied.

Timetable and scope of consultation

6.23 Note that the expansion to Warfield CE School due to open in September 2016 can happen with no need for changes to the DA as the new development is located in the current DA of Warfield CE / Whitegrove School. Should changes have been necessary the consultation on these would have been held in 2014.

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<sup>3</sup> This affects most new primary school places but not primary and secondary places at the Binfield Learning Village which are being funded by the Council.

<sup>4</sup> The Council is the Admissions Authority for VC schools

- 6.24 Consultation will need to be extensive, and programmed carefully to align with statutory requirements. The statutory annual consultation for admissions purposes (for 2017 entry and beyond) must run for a minimum of 6 weeks and must be held between 1 October and 31 January, and be formally agreed by 28 February.

Specific content of consultation in 2015/16 for 2017/18 admission and beyond

- 6.25 The consultation in 2015/16 will:
- Remove secondary school 'feeder primary' criterion.
  - Establish the final revised pattern of DAs.
  - Establish DAs for Binfield Learning Village and necessary changes in North Bracknell involving Binfield, Warfield and Whitegrove primary schools and Garth Hill College<sup>5</sup>.
  - Establish the extended Crowthorne School DA, to include TRL, currently in Wokingham BC.
- 6.26 The following timescales are recommended.
- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| Initial discussion and approval processes  | up until July              |
| Consultation (Statutory and non-statutory) | 1 September to 20 November |
| Approvals                                  | December to January        |
- 6.27 Consultation regarding changes at Amen Corner & Sandhurst will be processed in 2016/7 and Warfield East in 2017/8.
- 6.28 The costs of consultations will be met from within existing resources.

## **7 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS**

### Borough Solicitor

- 7.1 The LA has a wide discretion following consultation on the admission policy it adopts for oversubscription. The touchstone is that whatever policy it adopts must be clear and easy to understand by all.
- 7.2 Neighbouring boroughs will have to be consulted and it must be recognised that if re-drawing the designated areas and oversubscription criteria adversely affects neighbouring boroughs, they may re-draw their area as a consequence

### Borough Treasurer

- 7.3 The Borough Treasurer is satisfied that no significant financial implications arise from this report. Any options for change that are proposed in the future will need to be costed and funded before formal approval.

### Equalities Impact Assessment

- 7.4 An EIA is available for admissions to schools. This EIA will be reviewed as part of the consultation and planning processes.

### Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 7.5 A risk matrix is attached as Annex 2.
- 7.6 Other risks are set out above in the body of the report.

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<sup>5</sup> There is a need to link with the timescales for Binfield Learning Village process to seek a sponsor, including publication of specification which will need to include reference to DAs

## **8 CONSULTATION**

### Principal Groups Consulted

- 8.1 There has been no consultation as yet. Extensive consultation will be planned and undertaken if the review scope and process is agreed.

### Method of Consultation

- 8.2 To be decided.

### Representations Received

- 8.3 None received as yet.

### Background Papers

'School Admissions Code', DfE, December 2014

Executive Report on 'School Capacity and Funding Strategy', 16 December 2014

Executive Report on 'School Places Plan 2014-2019', 18 November 2014

CMT report on 'New housing developments and additional primary pupil places', 26 November 2014

CYPL DMT report on 'Planning for new school places', 3 February 2015

### Contact for further information

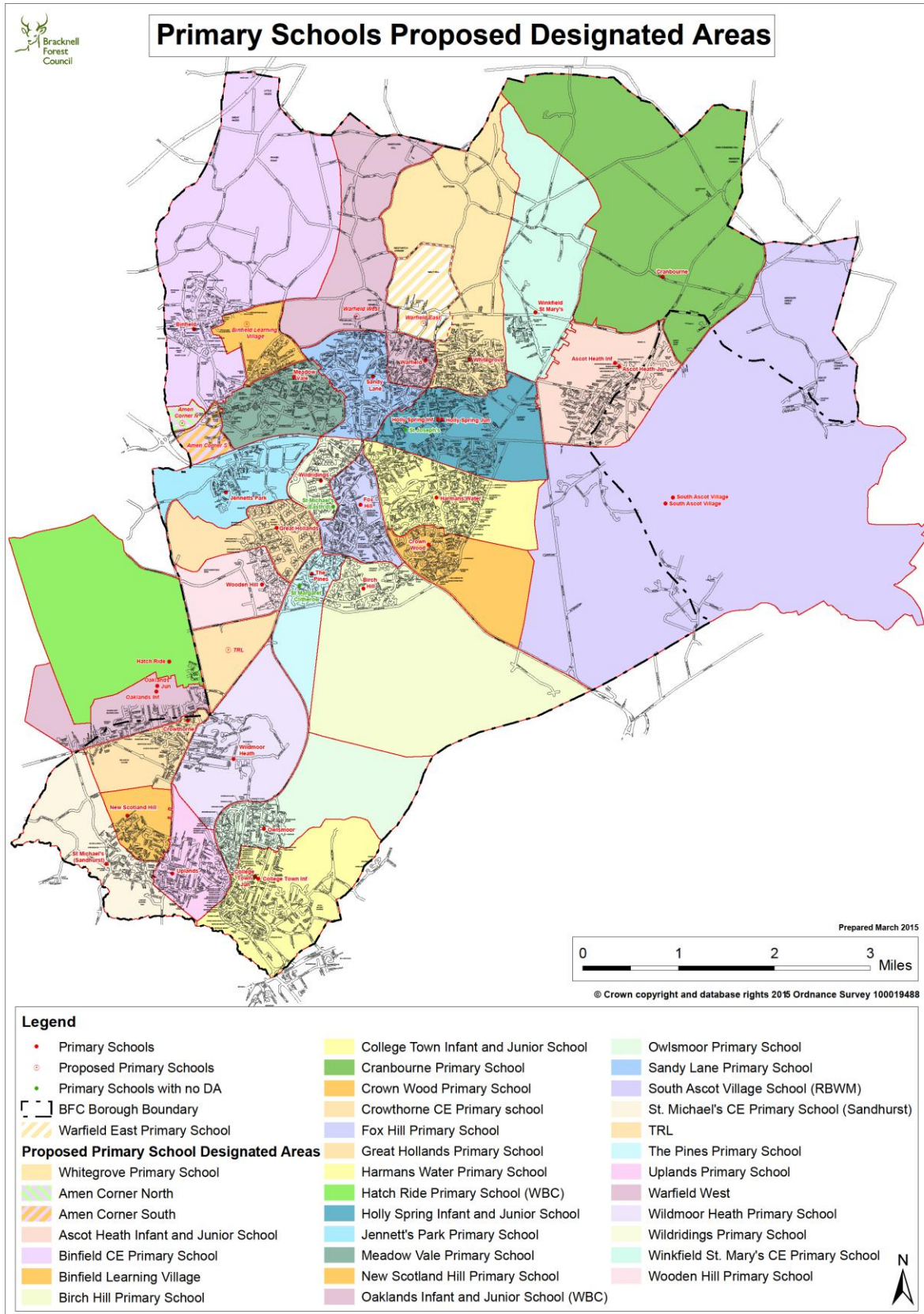
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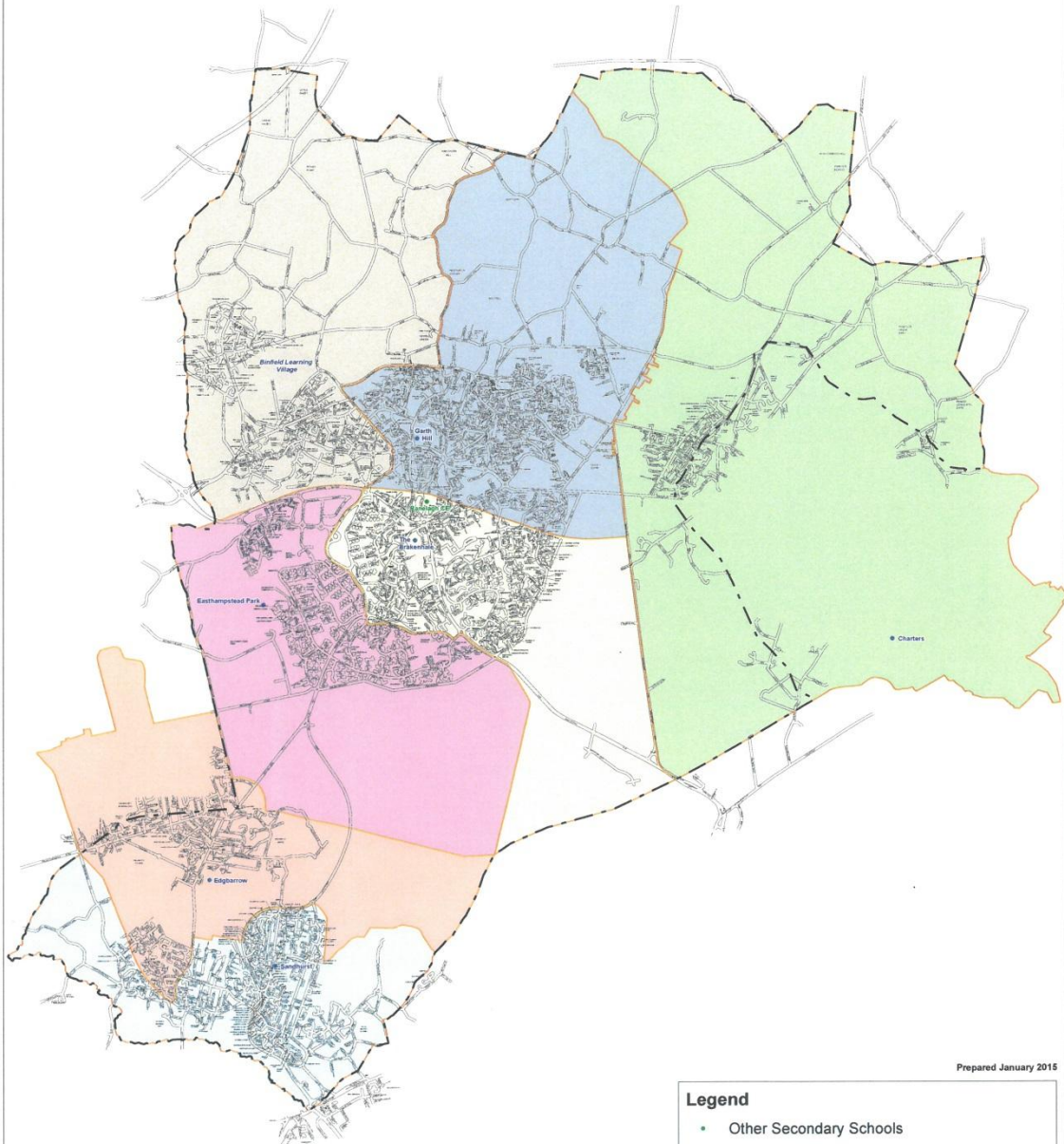
Annex 1:

Maps of proposed designated areas: Primary and Secondary





## Secondary Schools Proposed Designated Areas



Prepared January 2015

### Legend

- Other Secondary Schools
- Secondary Schools

[ - - - ] BFC Borough Boundary

### Proposed Secondary School Designated Area

- Binfield Learning Village
- Charters Secondary School
- Easthampstead Park Community School
- Edgbarrow School
- Garth Hill College
- Sandhurst School
- The Brakenhale School



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Annex 2



RISK LOG: CHANGES TO ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

ID No	Raised by	Date Raised	Description	Risk type	Potential scale of impact	Potential likelihood	Unadjusted Impact	Confidence in data or assumption	Preventative / Mitigating actions	Follow up	Owned by	Status
<b>Key admissions related issues</b>												
1	GS	Oct-14	Risk of delay in public consultation re DA boundary changes & admission number, which could adversely affect the intake of new pupils.	Reputation / Statutory - school place provision	Low	Low	Low	High	Annual schedule is well established. Experienced team familiar with processes. Long term planning essential to meet required timeframes.		LA	Open
2	GS	Oct-14	Proposals to DAs and admission arrangements create issues with communities.	Timing / Reputation	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Only pursue DA changes when timely to do so. Consult in a clear, organised manner. The need to change DA boundaries for the new schools may be generally accepted however the opposition to the housing development creating demand for the new schools is less predictable.		GS / LA	Open
3	GS	Mar-15	Inappropriate boundary settings of new DAs i.e. too small or too big or changed too early or too late	Statutory - school place provision Timing Cost	High	Low	Medium	High	Plans reflect current housing proposals and build timescales; arrangements will be enacted when needed and can be modified in detail if required.		GS / LA	Open
4	GS	Oct-14	Delay in agreeing proposals for one area may delay agreements in other areas.	Timing	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Areas will not be linked and pursued separately when timely to do so.		GS / LA	Open
5	GS	Oct-14	The proposals are not seen as being 'clear and reasonable' if the Schools Adjudicator is required to be involved.	Timing	High	Low	Medium	Medium	Manage the process so that we pay particular attention to what is 'reasonable' and if necessary seek the advice of the Schools Adjudicator at an early stage		GS	Open
6	GS	Oct-14	Risk that a suitable provider of places may not be on board to the programme timescale.	Timing / Statutory	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Continue discussions with schools about expansions. If suitable schools with an interest in expanding are not forthcoming, need to pursue Academy route and timescale		DW / GS	Open
7	GS	Oct-14	New school provider may face implementation challenges and delays	Timing / Statutory	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	There will be a need to monitor the situation sensitively as the process continues to ensure governing bodies and headteachers are aware of, and satisfied with emerging outcomes – listening to needs and resolving them. Necessary timeframes to be well known. Council support to be provided as necessary.		GS / CT	Open

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8	GS	Oct-14	Risk of demand forecast not meeting the target, leading to lack of demand in the new school provision.	Reputation	Low	Medium	Low	Medium	Continue to refine pupil forecasting methodology with regular review of factors and assumptions. Be prepared to open additional places on a phased basis. Consider spare spaces alongside needs in surrounding areas.		GS	Open
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