

Notice of Meeting

Schools Forum

Martin Gocke (Pupil Referral Unit Representative (Governor))
(Chairman)
Stuart Matthews, Academy School Representative (Headteacher)
(Vice-Chairman)
Jennifer Baker, Special School Representative
Sue Butler, Early Years PVI Provider
Liz Cole, Primary School Representative (Headteacher)
Karen Davis, Primary School Representative (Headteacher)
Keith Grainger, Secondary School Representative (Headteacher)
Jo Lagares, Primary School Representative (Headteacher)
Roger Prew, Primary School Representative (Governor)
Elizabeth Savage, Academy School Representative (Headteacher)
Phil Sherwood, Primary School Representative (Headteacher)
Debbie Smith, Secondary School Representative (Headteacher)
Richard Stok, Primary School Representative (Governor)
Grant Strudley, Academy School Representative
Greg Wilton, Teacher Union Representative



Also Invited:

Councillor Dr Gareth Barnard, Executive Member for Children,
Young People & Learning

Thursday 18 November 2021, 4.30 - 6.30 pm

Zoom Meeting

Agenda

Item	Description	Page
1.	Apologies for Absence/Substitute Members	
	To receive apologies for absence and to note the attendance of any substitute members. Reporting: ALL	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
	Members are asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary or affected interests in respect of any matter to be considered at this meeting. Any Member with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in a matter should withdraw from the meeting when the matter is under consideration and should notify the Democratic Services Officer in attendance that they are withdrawing as they have such an interest. If the Disclosable Pecuniary Interest is not entered on the register of Members interests the Monitoring Officer must be notified of the interest within 28 days. Any Member with an affected Interest in a matter must disclose the interest to the meeting. There is no requirement to withdraw from the meeting when the interest is only an affected interest, but the Monitoring Officer should be notified of the interest, if not previously notified of it, within 28 days of the meeting. Reporting: ALL	

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3.	Minutes and Matters Arising	5 - 10
	To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of 16 September 2021. Reporting: ALL	
4.	2021-22 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment	11 - 76
	To provide an update on the 2021-22 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment to be submitted to the Executive Member and subsequently published on the Bracknell Forest Council Website, as required by the authority's statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare. Reporting: Cherry Hall	
5.	High Needs Block: Update on Progress	77 - 114
	To provide a detailed briefing regarding actions being taken to address the High Needs Block deficit budget and the strategies being implemented to secure financial probity of this funding in the future. Reporting: Cheryl Eyre	
6.	Reforming how Local Authorities' School Improvement Functions are Funded	115 - 118
	To provide an update on proposals from the government to reform how local authorities' school improvement functions are funded, for implementation from April 2022. Reporting: Paul Clark	
7.	The Schools Budget: 2021-22 Budget Monitoring	119 - 130
	To provide an update on the 2021-22 forecast budget monitoring position for the Schools Budget, to be aware of key issues and management actions being taken and progress to date on the Education Capital Programme. Reporting: Paul Clark	
8.	Outcomes from the October 2021 Financial Consultation with Schools	131 - 152
	To provide an update on the responses from the recent financial consultation from schools which sought views on the approach to setting a minimum increase in per pupil funding from 2021-22 and also whether maintained schools supported on-going de-delegation of budgets and making a financial contribution to statutory education related duties for which the council is responsible for meeting but receives no funding. There is also a limited update on the 2022-23 budget position for mainstream schools. Reporting: Paul Clark	
9.	Dates of Future Meetings	
	The next meeting of the Forum will be held at 4.30pm on Thursday 9	

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	<p>December 2021. Meetings are planned during 2022 on 13 January, 10 March, 23 June, 15 September, 17 November and 8 December.</p> <p>Reporting: Joanna Gibbons</p>	
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Published: 9 November 2021

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**SCHOOLS FORUM
16 SEPTEMBER 2021
4.30 - 5.45 PM**



Present:

Martin Gocke, Pupil Referral Unit Representative (Governor) (Chairman)
Stuart Matthews, Academy School Representative (Headteacher) (Vice-Chairman)
Jennifer Baker, Special School Representative
Liz Cole, Primary School Representative (Headteacher)
Karen Davis, Primary School Representative (Headteacher)
Jo Lagares, Primary School Representative (Headteacher)
Roger Prew, Primary School Representative (Governor)
Phil Sherwood, Primary School Representative (Headteacher)
Debbie Smith, Secondary School Representative (Headteacher)
Richard Stok, Primary School Representative (Governor)

Observer:

Councillor Dr Gareth Barnard, Executive Member for Children, Young People & Learning
(Observer)

Apologies for absence were received from:

Sue Butler, Early Years PVI Provider
Peter Floyd, Special School Representative (Governor)
Keith Grainger, Secondary School Representative (Headteacher)
Elizabeth Savage, Academy School Representative (Headteacher)
Greg Wilton, Teacher Union Representative

192. Election of Chairman

RESOLVED that Martin Gocke be re-elected Chairman of the Schools Forum.

Martin Gocke in the Chair

193. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

RESOLVED that Stuart Matthews be re-appointed Vice-Chairman of the Schools Forum.

194. Apologies for Absence/Substitute Members

The Forum noted the attendance of the following Substitute Member:
Jenny Baker for Peter Floyd

The Chair explained that, following Jane Coley's departure, there were two academy representative vacancies. Stuart Matthews and Elizabeth Savage were asking their academy school colleagues for nominations for new members of the Schools Forum and were expecting new members to be in place by November.

The Chair welcomed Nichola Jones who had been appointed as Interim Head of Children's Support Services.

195. **Declarations of Interest**

In respect of Item 4 (2022-23 Budget Preparations for the Schools Block Budget and other Finance Matters), an affected interest was declared by Councillor Barnard as governor of Warfield School, who planned to take no part in the discussion.

196. **Minutes and Matters Arising**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Forum on 15 July 2021 be approved as a correct record.

Arising from minute 185, updates on the collation of SEN data for the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment was expected to be presented to the Forum in January.

Action: Cherry Hall

Arising from minute 186, the Chair asked Cheryl Eyre to update on the progress made in building partnerships and setting up the framework and processes as part of the High Needs Block (HNB) business change project. The Chair also queried where the Sub-Group fitted into the arrangements. Cheryl Eyre replied that the work was moving at pace and the team had worked throughout the summer. Cheryl Eyre had met with Liz Cole and Debbie Smith and identified areas to move forward. Following that meeting, Cheryl Eyre was asked to provide an update on the SEN team to all Headteachers which she had done. Cheryl Eyre had agreed to meet face-to-face with all secondary school Headteachers on 24th September to talk about the HNB; to hear what the issues were and decide how to work together to address the issues. On the same day, Liz Cole had arranged a meeting with all the primary school Headteachers.

Cheryl Eyre had met with Jenny Baker to talk about the HNB Sub-Group and how to progress the work. On 24th September, it was planned to bring together a task and finish group for this piece of work. At that meeting, the group would identify an agenda for the work and agree the Terms of Reference. They would then set two dates to progress the work. The Headteachers had identified two topics to progress first: the specialist resource provisions, and the Matrix.

Regarding other partnerships, Cheryl Eyre had also met with the Parent Carer Forum and SENDIASS (the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Services). Cheryl Eyre was also due to meet with the PRU.

Cheryl Eyre had been looking at the budget and trying to see where alignment was needed, whether it was fit for purpose, and whether they were targeting the right areas going forward. There had been a good response so far by stakeholders and they were engaging well. Cheryl Eyre acknowledged that there was a lot of work to do but the team was working in a process driven way. Cheryl Eyre was expecting to be able to give a detailed briefing at the meeting of the Schools Forum in November.

Action: Cheryl Eyre

Arising from minute 186, the update regarding the DfE funding consultation was on the agenda to be presented to the Forum under Item 5 (DfE Funding Consultation: Fair Funding for All).

197. **2022-23 Budget Preparations for the Schools Block Budget and other Finance Matters**

The Forum considered a report which updated on the information currently available in respect of the 2022-23 Schools Budget for mainstream schools together with other relevant finance related matters.

Paul Clark explained that there were three key parts of the report: firstly, to provide an update on the funding framework; secondly, to share information about the budget prospects; and thirdly, to ensure that the development of the 2022-23 budget was in alignment with what the Forum wanted to do. This all related to the mainstream schools budget only.

Regarding the funding framework, with the exception of school business rates, Paul Clark explained that there would be some minor changes around data collection, but little in the way of material impact compared to what was in place for 2021-22. For School Business Rates, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) would be paying these directly in future rather than individual schools making payments. The local authority was still waiting for details on the practical implementation of this but there was expected to be no financial impact on schools from that.

In relation to the budget prospects, based on the data currently available, Paul Clark advised that there was an increase in funding of 2.6% on average, lower than the 3.4% last year and 6.7% the year before. This reflected the change towards the national funding approach.

The annual financial consultation with schools had started, generally seeking views on the usual matters and it was anticipated that responses would be received by October half term. Responses to the consultation were therefore expected to be reported to the Forum at the next meeting on 18 November.

Action: Paul Clark

Regarding the Bracknell Forest strategy, the local approach had been to replicate the National Funding Formula (NFF), and the proposal was to continue that approach.. The authority was also proposing to continue the same approaches as before on diseconomy budgets at new schools, aiming to fund any extra costs from the £1m contribution from the council and general school balances, and centrally managing the same budgets as were agreed for 2021-22.

At this stage, if all the changes set out in the initial budget report were implemented, there would be a funding gap of around £0.5m, which would be managed using reserves from the Council and from the Schools Budget. It was normal to have a funding gap at this stage of the budget preparations.

Some parts of the budget setting process required agreement from the DfE to deviate from the standard approach, and this had been set out in the recommendations. One new request to the DfE that the authority was proposing related to additional split site funding for Warfield Primary School. The Headteacher had indicated that the current funding was around £0.050m below the additional costs. The school had remained at 2 FE capacity as opposed to expanding to 3 FE. More work was needed to analyse the costing information provided and there was the option of seeking support from another Headteacher to review the split site working arrangements and consider whether alternative options could be implemented. Should the DfE agree this request, due to lagged funding there would be a one-year pressure of £0.050m.

The Forum asked how many schools were below the NFF and by how much, and how long it was expected to take those schools to reach that formula. Paul Clark replied that there were 18 schools below the NFF during the current year. From the provisional data available, that number had gone down to 11. However, where a NFF delivered a budget below the minimum level, a top up to that amount was always applied, meaning all schools were funded at least to this level.

How long it would take to work through the system depended on the measures put in place by the government, including the amount of funds and was therefore outside the authority's control.

The Forum asked whether the aim was for all schools to achieve the Minimum Per Pupil Funding Level (MPPFL). Paul Clark explained that the MPPFL was the safety net and the authority had to top-up to that level. No schools were ever affected by being below the MPPFL as it was always topped up.

The Forum asked whether the amount of money going to new schools as part of the growth fund was in alignment to the authority's obligations. Paul Clark confirmed that it was. It was clarified that the next financial year (2022-23) was to be the final year that KGA Binfield Secondary school would receive significant financial support, and from April 2023, it was due to be moved to the Bracknell Forest Funding Formula.

The Chair asked whether there was any chance that the request to the DfE to support new schools would not be agreed. Paul Clark replied that, in agreeing the request for 2021-22, the DfE acknowledged that it was part of the authority's long-term strategy agreed with the Forum and benefited schools. Therefore, there was only a small chance that it wouldn't be agreed. The Chair asked whether there was an alternative mechanism to cover the funding. Paul Clark confirmed that there was, but it wasn't expected to be necessary to pursue it.

Regarding the Warfield split site, the Forum agreed that it could rely on Paul Clark doing his due diligence to review the supporting information that had been received, and that the Forum had confidence in his judgement.

RESOLVED

1. to AGREE that subject to consideration of school responses to the annual financial consultation and general affordability, the approach to setting the 2022-23 budget should remain broadly the same as for 2021-22, and in particular:
 - 1.1 that there should be no change to the current budget strategy of:
 - a. replicating the NFF at individual Bracknell Forest school level;
 - b. setting minimum per pupil funding increases between financial years at the highest amount permitted by the DfE; and
 - c. meeting the diseconomy costs at new and expanding schools in a measured way from a combination of council reserves, Schools Budget reserves, and funding allocated for the relevant year from the DfE;
 - 1.2 that a centrally managed Growth Fund should be maintained for in-year allocation to qualifying schools (Table 2 of the report);
 - 1.3 on-going central retention by the Council of the existing Central School Services Block items (Annex 1 of the report); and
 - 1.4 that the DfE be requested:
 - a. to approve that the council continues to disapply the Minimum Funding Guarantee where schools are funded on the Start-up and Diseconomy funding policy for new and expanding schools;
 - b. to approve that the council continues to add resources from the General Fund to support the additional cost of new schools; and

- c. subject to the checks proposed in the supporting information, to increase split site funding for Warfield primary school, provisionally by £0.050m; and
- 2. to NOTE
 - 2.1 the latest update on the School and Education Spending review and the impact anticipated for Bracknell Forest at this time;
 - 2.2 the areas where schools were being asked to comment on through the annual financial consultation, to inform later decision making;
 - 2.3 the 2.6% average increase in per pupil funding that would be received by Bracknell Forest schools if the NFF was fully implemented; and
 - 2.4 the current estimated funding gaps at Table 3 of the report of:
 - a. £0.467m on the Schools Block; and
 - b. £0.050m for the Central School Services Block.

198. **DfE Funding Consultation: Fair Funding for All**

The Forum considered a report which provided an update in respect of the next stage of national school funding reform being proposed by the DfE. This closely followed the verbal update provided at the previous Forum meeting, but now with full detail.

Paul Clark shared that the authority had given consideration as to the response it would like to give. The initial view was that it would not be supporting the implementation of a hard NFF as there needed to be scope for more local decision making. Furthermore, there were no details as to how the budgets currently managed locally would operate if centralised and managed by the DfE.

Regarding the potential centralisation of services, the DfE recognised as best delivered by a local authority, the DfE had made a proposal to transfer the funds out of the dedicated schools grant (DSG) to pay authorities through part of the normal local government financial settlement. The response from the authority would be that it would not want to be financially disadvantaged as a result of any change but would not be against it otherwise.

The DfE had also asked for interest from maintained schools in adopting academic year funding as opposed to financial year. The Forum felt that this would be useful from a practical point of view in managing budgets; for example, it had been difficult in the past to set the budget prior to the staffing resignation date. However, partner agencies would still be working on a financial year basis which could complicate things.

The Chair noted that the report detailed some changes to the role of schools forums but that there were no specific questions relating to that on the DfE consultation. Paul Clark confirmed that was the case, and explained that, although there would still be a role for a local schools forum, a number of responsibilities and powers would be removed. However, the planned government policy paper on SEND was likely to trigger some changes to the funding formula which would have a further effect on schools forums' responsibilities.

RESOLVED to NOTE the content and changes proposed to School Funding through the DfE Consultation *Fair School Funding For All*.

199. **Dates of Future Meetings**

The next meeting of the Forum would be held at 4.30pm on Thursday 18th November.

CHAIRMAN

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**TO: SCHOOLS FORUM
18 NOVEMBER 2021**

CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT Executive Director of People

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update School Forum on the 2021-22 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA), attached as Annex A, to be submitted to the Executive Member and subsequently published on the Bracknell Forest Council Website, as required by the authority's statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 **That Schools Forum NOTES the attached CSA**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Statutory Guidance sets out the Local Authority's statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare. To meet this duty Bracknell Forest Council is required to submit a report to elected council members on how it is meeting its duty and to make this report available to parents.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 No alternative options were considered

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 Section 6 and 7 (as substituted by section 1 of the Education Act 2011) of the Childcare Act 2006 places a duty on English local authorities to secure sufficient childcare for working parents and to secure early years provision free of charge.
- 5.2 Part B of the Statutory guidance for local authorities sets out how Local Authorities should meet this duty, including the requirement to report to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare, and make this report available and accessible to parents.
- 5.3 In assessing the sufficiency of the local childcare market, the CSA draws on data from the Office for National Statistics, labour market statistics from the National Online Manpower Information System (NOMIS) and census data, Health data, local statistical data, information provided by local childcare providers, and a survey of parents in Bracknell Forest.
- 5.4 Currently evidence indicates that in the summer term 2021 there was sufficient childcare capacity for children aged 0 to 4 (not in school), but that the response to Coronavirus had restricted the supply of childcare for school age children (ages 4 to 16), affecting childcare before and after school and during school holidays.
- 5.5 Based on challenges identified in the CSA, the priorities for childcare in 2022-23 are:
- Identify and understand the impact of Coronavirus on parents and their childcare needs
 - Identify and understand the impact of Coronavirus on childcare in Bracknell Forest by continuing with ongoing work to:

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- understand the changes in the supply of childcare
 - Identify where supply does not match demand and work with providers to meet the demand.
 - Help providers identify and understand opportunities in the childcare market, and to effectively advertise the childcare they offer.
- Continue working with providers to ensure they remain sustainable and understand and adapt to the changes in the childcare market. We will continue to offer business support to those providers who need it.
 - Ensure providers considering opening new provision within BFC understand the current position regarding the population forecast and current sufficiency, and work with them to mitigate any detrimental impact on existing Early Years providers.
 - Improving data on all aspects of the childcare market including capacity, vacancies, waiting lists and costs. A particular focus continues to be childcare for school age children and holiday clubs. This work was started in 2021-22, however the ongoing COVID related instability in the childcare market has delayed completion.
 - Actively promoting the Bracknell Forest Local Directory, which holds information on all childcare in Bracknell Forest. This includes the use of social media, local advertising e.g., buses and Town & Country, school newsletter and websites, post cards advertising the free entitlements, Family hubs and other BFC services, Job Centre and Health Visitors.
- 5.6 The CSA will be submitted to the Executive Member for information and subsequently published on the BFC website where it will be available and accessible to parents and childcare providers.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 Comment to follow

Director of Resources

- 6.2 The revenue related cost of delivering the CSA will need to be financed from within the Dedicated Schools Grant income where sufficient funds are expected to be available

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 Not Required

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 BFC will be at risk of not meeting its statutory duty if it does not submit the CSA to the executive member and publish the report where it is accessible to parents.
- 6.5 If BFC does not complete a sufficiency assessment; development of childcare may not be placed in the correct area, may not meet the needs of working parents and may destabilise the local childcare market.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 In preparing for the CSA, data on current capacity, vacancies and costs were gathered from providers of childcare in Bracknell Forest. Parents of children resident in or accessing childcare in Bracknell Forest were consulted on their need for childcare in May and June 2021.

Method of Consultation

- 7.2 Data from providers was collected via the Provider Self Update portal, provider survey, by email and telephone and provider websites. Parents were consulted via an online survey which was advertised via childcare providers, the BFC website, the Family Information Service website and social media.

Representations Received

- 7.3 446 parents responded to the consultation, an increase of 125 responses compared to the previous survey in October 2020.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/718179/Early_education_and_childcare-statutory_guidance.pdf

Early education and childcare statutory guidance for local authorities - June 2018

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/21/contents>

Childcare Act 2006

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/5/contents/enacted>

Childcare Act 2016

CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2021

Table of Contents

1.	Overall assessment and summary.....	1
1.1.	About Childcare Sufficiency Assessments	1
1.2.	Overall Sufficiency in Bracknell Forest	1
1.3.	Our plans for childcare	3
2.	Demand for childcare	4
2.1.	Population of early years children	4
2.2.	Population of school age children.....	5
2.3.	Number of children with special educational needs and disabilities.....	5
2.4.	Characteristics of children in our area	6
2.4.1.	Deprivation.....	6
2.4.2.	Parents' working status	6
2.5.	Changes to the population of children in our area	7
2.6.	Future demand for early years free entitlement places.....	8
3.	Supply of childcare	9
3.1.	Number of early years providers and places	9
3.2.	Early years vacancies	9
3.3.	Number of school age providers and places	10
4.	Funded Early Education	11
4.1.	Introduction to funded early education	11
4.2.	Proportion of 2-year-old children entitled to funded early education	11
4.3.	Take up of funded early education	11
4.4.	30 hours extended entitlement applications	13
4.5.	Providers offering funded early education places	13
5.	Prices	14
5.1.	Prices of early years childcare	14
5.2.	Prices of school age childcare.....	14
6.	Quality of childcare in our area	15
6.1.	OFSTED inspection grades.....	15
7.	Parent Survey.....	16
7.1.	Childcare Accessed	16
7.2.	Finding Childcare	18
7.3.	Information about childcare	20
8.	Data by electoral ward	22
8.1.	Ascot.....	23
8.2.	Binfield with Warfield	25
8.3.	Bullbrook.....	27
8.4.	Central Sandhurst	29
8.5.	College Town	31
8.6.	Crown Wood	33
8.7.	Crowthorne	35
8.8.	Great Hollands North	37
8.9.	Great Hollands South.....	39
8.10.	Hanworth	41
8.11.	Harmans Water	43
8.12.	Little Sandhurst and Wellington.....	45
8.13.	Old Bracknell.....	47
8.14.	Owlsmoor.....	49
8.15.	Priestwood and Garth	51
8.16.	Warfield Harvest Ride	53
8.17.	Wildridings and Central	55
8.18.	Winkfield and Cranbourne.....	57
9.	Methodology.....	59

1. Overall assessment and summary

1.1. About Childcare Sufficiency Assessments

Our Council is required by law to 'report annually to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare and make this report available and accessible to parents'. This Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) has been prepared to meet this duty.

The statutory guidance sets out the intended outcomes of this duty as 'parents are able to work because childcare places are available, accessible and affordable and are delivered flexibly in a range of high-quality settings' and that Local Authorities are required by legislation to 'Secure sufficient childcare, so far as reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 (or up to 18 for disabled children).'

This report assesses sufficiency using data about the need for childcare and the amount of childcare available, and feedback from local parents about how easy or difficult it has been for them to find suitable childcare.

Sufficiency is assessed for different groups, rather than for all children in the local authority. The number of children in these groups fluctuates across the year, for example the numbers in funded early years provision being at their lowest in autumn after the school intake of 4-year-olds and increasing across spring to the highest numbers in summer.

Information about childcare sufficiency is used to plan our work supporting the local childcare economy.

1.2. Overall Sufficiency in Bracknell Forest

The assessment of childcare sufficiency as presented in this report uses data gathered in the summer term 2021. Demand for childcare varies across the year, with demand at its highest in the summer term and lowest in the autumn term following the intake of 4-year-olds into reception. Evidence nationally and locally suggests that in the summer term 2021 the response to COVID-19 continued to impact on both the supply of and demand for childcare.

All Covid-19 related restrictions affecting all childcare were lifted in March 2021, with the expectation that the provision of childcare in the summer term 2021 would return to the pre-Covid 'normal'. However national research from organisations such as the [Nuffield Foundation](#) and the [Sutton Trust](#) highlight that there are longer term impacts on the childcare sector, the full extent of which is not yet clear.

Local funding data, as shown in table 1 below, shows that the number of children aged 3 and 4 accessing the free entitlements in the summer term has decreased in the period 2019 to 2021. However, the number

of free entitlement hours accessed by children aged 3 and 4 in the summer term over the same period has increased. Funding for 2-year-olds has remained relatively unchanged.

Table 1: Numbers of early years children by age

<i>Term</i>	<i>Headcount – aged 2</i>	<i>Headcount – aged 3 & 4</i>	<i>Funded hours – aged 2</i>	<i>Funded hours – aged 3 & 4</i>
Summer 2019	160	2,202	26,347	515,357
Summer 2020*	168	2,211	28,964	542,772
Summer 2021	162	2,074	27,874	553,511

Source: BFC funding data

**Note: the data for summer 2020 is not directly comparable to 2019 and 2021 due to COVID-19 measures to support provider income*

Analysis of the data indicates that:

- for the financial year 2021/22 there is sufficient childcare in Bracknell Forest in the following categories:
 - Free entitlement for eligible 2-year-olds
 - Universal 15 hours free entitlement for 3 and 4-year-olds
 - Extended 30 hours free entitlement for 3 and 4-year-olds of working parents
 - Early years childcare outside the free entitlements
- There is currently sufficient childcare across Bracknell Forest to meet future demand for the period 2020/21 to 2022/23 in these categories.
- There was insufficient provision in the following categories:
 - Childcare before and after school – particularly in the Wards of College Town & Warfield
 - Childcare during school holidays – all ages
- There is insufficient evidence to determine sufficiency of provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). However, responses to the Parental Survey does indicate difficulties in finding specialist provision, particularly during school holidays.

The response to COVID-19 resulted in providers changing the provision that they offered, with some providers reducing their available places or placing restrictions on accessing available places. There is evidence of a reduction in the demand for places due to changes in parents' working arrangements and/or out of concern regarding ongoing levels of infection. Whether these changes to both demand and supply are temporary or permanent is currently unclear.

1.3. Our plans for childcare

Bracknell Forest Council's priorities for planning childcare in 2022-23 are:

1. Identify and understand the impact of Coronavirus on parents and their childcare needs
 - Parental demand for childcare is the ultimate driver of the childcare market. Many parents have seen a change in their ways of working and their working patterns with the national response to Coronavirus. Bracknell Forest Council will continue to work in partnership with a range of stakeholders to review whether supply meets demand.
2. Identify and understand the impact of Coronavirus on childcare in Bracknell Forest by continuing with ongoing work to:
 - understand the changes in the supply of childcare
 - Identify where supply does not match demand and work with providers to meet the demand.
 - Help providers identify and understand opportunities in the childcare market, and to effectively advertise the childcare they offer.
3. Continue working with providers to ensure they remain sustainable and understand and adapt to the changes in the childcare market. We will continue to offer business support to those providers who need it.
4. Ensure providers considering opening new provision within BFC understand the current position regarding the population forecast and current sufficiency, and work with them to mitigate any detrimental impact on existing Early Years providers.
5. Improving data on all aspects of the childcare market including capacity, vacancies, waiting lists and costs. A particular focus continues to be childcare for school age children and holiday clubs. This work was started in 2021-22, however the ongoing COVID related instability in the childcare market has delayed completion.
6. Actively promoting the Bracknell Forest Local Directory, which holds information on all childcare in Bracknell Forest. This includes the use of social media, local advertising e.g., buses and Town & Country, school newsletter and websites, post cards advertising the free entitlements, Family hubs and other BFC services, Job Centre and Health Visitors.

2. Demand for childcare

2.1. Population of early years children

In total, there are 7,291 children under the age of five living in our local authority. These children may require early years childcare. The Council has a statutory duty to provide funded early years provision for all 3-and 4-year-olds, equivalent to 2,985 children (although some 4-year-olds will have started reception) and the most deprived of 2-year-olds, currently estimated at around 223 children. Table 2 shows early years children by age group in Bracknell Forest, while Figure 1 shows the distribution of early years children by Ward.

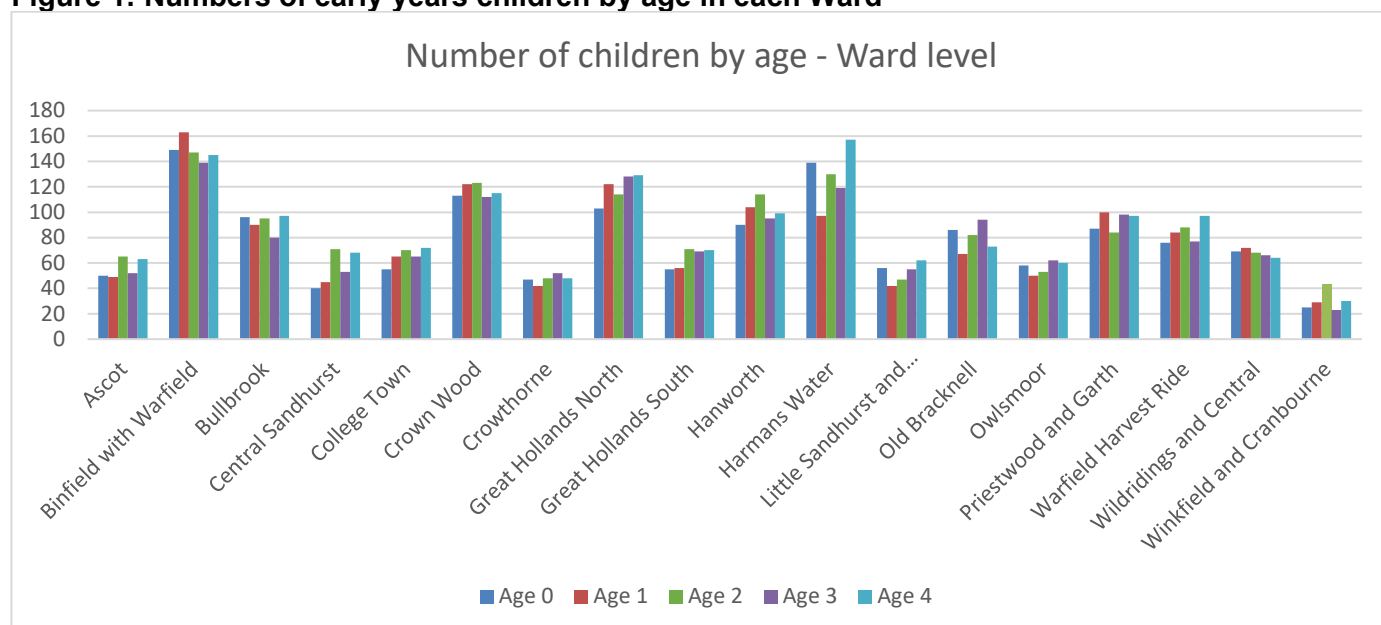
Table 2: Numbers of early years children by age

Age	Number of children
Age 0	1394
Age 1	1399
Age 2	1513
Age 3	1439
Age 4*	1546

Sources: ONS - Mid-2020 Population Estimates for 2020 Wards and 2021 LAs in England and Wales by Single Year of Age and Sex, Persons

* Some four-year-olds will have started reception

Figure 1: Numbers of early years children by age in each Ward



Sources: ONS - Population estimates for the UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: mid-2020

* Some four-year-olds will have started reception

2.2. Population of school age children

In total there are 11,622 children aged 5-11, and 5,083 children aged 12-14 living in our local authority. These children may require childcare before and after school, and/or during the school holidays.

Table 3: Numbers of school age children by age

Age	Number of children
Age 5	1501
Age 6	1565
Age 7	1637
Age 8	1710
Age 9	1726
Age 10	1710
Age 11	1773
Age 12	1713
Age 13	1703
Age 14	1667

Source: ONS - Mid-2020 Population Estimates for 2020 Wards and 2021 LAs in England and Wales by Single Year of Age and Sex, Persons

Detailed information about the school age population in Bracknell Forest can be found in the School Places Plan which is available on the Bracknell Forest website [Schools and learning strategies and policies | Bracknell Forest Council \(bracknell-forest.gov.uk\)](https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/schools-and-learning-strategies-and-policies)

2.3. Number of children with special educational needs and disabilities

Children with SEND are entitled to support with childcare up to the age of 18 (age 14 for children who do not have a special need or disability). The number of children with an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) in our local authority is:

Table 4: Children with an EHCP by age

Age	Number of children	Change from 2020
Birth to school age	3	1 (50%)
Primary school (reception to year six)	402	71 (22%)
Secondary school (year seven to thirteen)	592	113 (24%)

Source: BFC Internal data as at 31 August 2021

Children's needs change over time and are identified at different ages. Among the youngest children, SEND may only be identified when they start in childcare or school. All Early Years providers must have regard to the Early Years Statutory Framework (2021) and the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2015). Providers must have arrangements in place to support children with SEND.

Local authorities are required to have a Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF) for all 3 and 4-year-olds with SEN who are taking up the free entitlements, regardless of the number of hours taken. These funds are intended to support local authorities to work with providers to address the needs of individual children with SEN. Providers can apply for SENIF funding. During 2020/2021 60 children accessed SENIF.

For children with the most complex needs the provider or parent may request an Education, Health and Care needs assessment.

It is therefore possible that the number of children with SEND aged 0-4 is an underestimate. Some children have SEND but do not have an EHCP. In the summer term 2021 there were 140 children aged 0-4 years known to the Child Development Centre (CDC), all of whom have additional needs which vary significantly from mild additional needs to severe, complex, and lifelong needs.

2.4. Characteristics of children in our area

There are two characteristics of children in our area which must be considered when assessing childcare sufficiency - deprivation and parents' working status.

2.4.1. Deprivation

Growing up in a deprived household can limit a child's ability to access childcare. These limits include the direct cost of childcare and the indirect costs such as transport. Children who meet financial criteria that are indicative of living in a deprived household can receive additional funding to improve their access to childcare. This funding includes two-year-old funding, Early Years Pupil Premium (3- and 4-year-olds not in school) and Pupil Premium (children in school). The numbers of children qualifying for this funding in our local authority in the summer term 2021 set out in table 5.

Table 5: Children eligible for additional funding through financial criteria

<i>Funding type</i>	<i>Number of children</i>
2-year-old Funding	211
Early Years Pupil Premium	199
Pupil Premium	1,780

Source: BFC school census October 2020 and Early Years funding data summer term 2021

2.4.2. Parents' working status

To qualify for the 30 hours extended entitlement for 3- and 4-year-olds, both parents in a household or one parent in a single parent household must be in employment.¹ Based on data from the National Online

¹ Available to families where each parent (or one parent in a single adult household) are earning the equivalent of working sixteen hours per week on the minimum wage and less than £100,000 per annum

Manpower Information System (NOMIS) approximately 72% of families in Bracknell Forest meet this requirement. In the summer term 2021 a total of 1,027 or approximately 34.4 % of 3- and 4-year-olds in Bracknell Forest claimed the 30 hours extended entitlement. This remains significantly lower than the number of potentially eligible 3- and 4-year-olds.

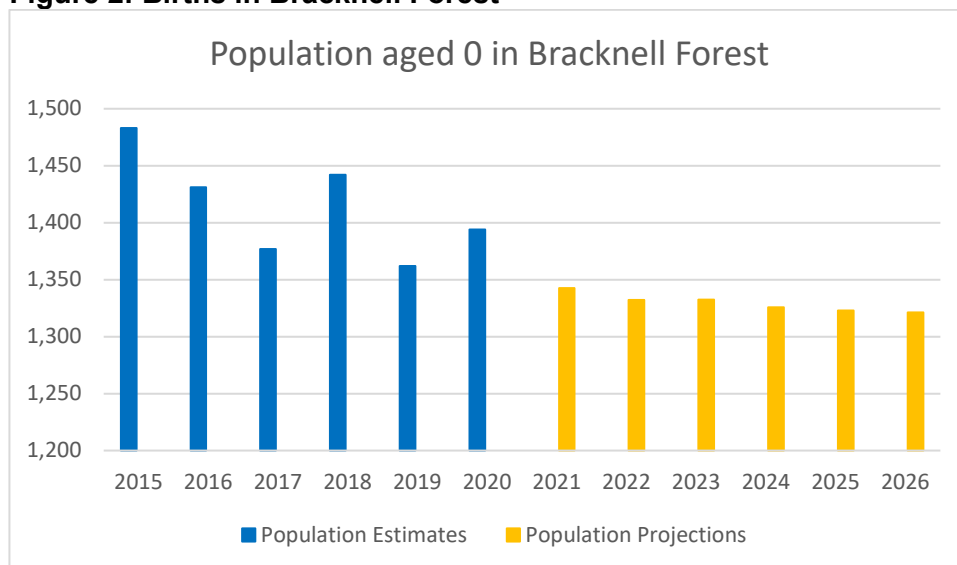
The percentage of funded 3- and 4 – year olds who accessed both the universal and extended entitlements remained unchanged at 48%. The average number of extended hours claimed per week was 12.47, a decrease from 12.98 in 2020. Uptake was higher amongst 3-year-olds, at 632 (44%) than 4-year-olds at 419 (27%).

2.5. Changes to the population of children in our area

In line with the School Places Plan the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment uses data from the Office of National Statistics population estimates and projections.

Figure 2 shows the estimated number of children aged 0 in Bracknell Forest in previous years in blue. The projected number of children aged 0 for the current and future years are shown in orange.

Figure 2: Births in Bracknell Forest



Sources: ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates 2015 to 2020 & ONS population projections 2018 to 2043

2.6. Future demand for early years free entitlement places

Using the data from the Office for National Statistics population projection 2018 to 2043 and historic data on the percentage of the children aged 3 and 4 who access the free entitlements, it is possible to forecast future demand for the free entitlements.

Table 6: Children accessing the free entitlements

	2018	2019	2020	2021	Average
Children aged 3 & 4 accessing free entitlements	2,771	2,754	2,732	2,633	
% of children aged 3 & 4 accessing free entitlements	90%	91%	91%	89%	90%

Source: DfE Local Authority Data Matrix

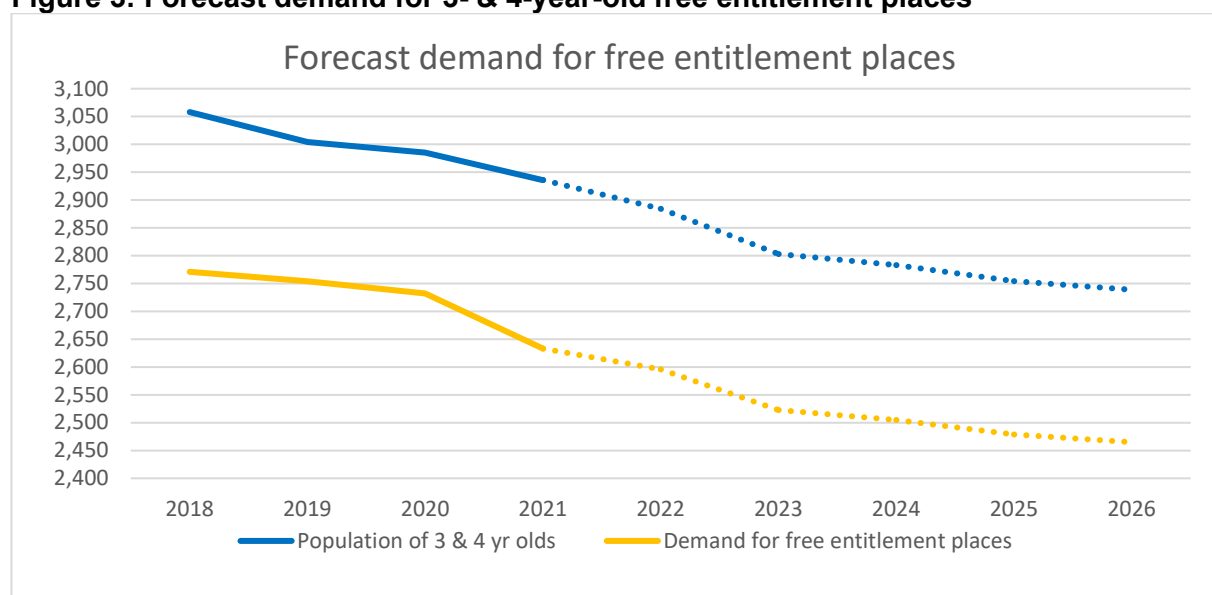
Table 7: Population projection – children aged 3 and 4

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
3-year-olds	1,401	1,397	1,382	1,369	1,366
4-year-olds	1,483	1,406	1,401	1,385	1,372
Total 3- & 4-year-olds	2,884	2,803	2,783	2,754	2,738

Source: ONS population projections 2018 to 2043

In 2026 the population of 3 and 4-year-olds in Bracknell Forest is projected to be 2,738. When combined with the current average rate of uptake for the free entitlements for 3 and 4-year-old of 90%, the forecast demand for 3-and 4-year-old free entitlement places in 2026 is 2,465. The historic population and demand for free entitlement places is shown in Figure 3 below as a solid line, with a dotted line representing the predicted population and forecast demand.

Figure 3: Forecast demand for 3- & 4-year-old free entitlement places



Sources: DfE Local Authority Data Matrix, ONS population projections 2018 to 2043, ONS Mid-Year population estimates 2018 to 2020

3. Supply of childcare

Data on available childcare capacity in Bracknell Forest for the summer term 2021 was collected from early years providers via an online survey, emailed questionnaire and telephone calls. The response to COVID-19 continued to impact the availability of childcare in the summer term 2021, particularly childcare for school age children.

3.1. Number of early years providers and places

In the summer term 2021 there were 223 early years childcare providers in our local authority, offering an estimated 4,702² early years childcare places.

Table 8: Early years providers and places by type of provision

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Number of providers</i>	<i>Number of places</i>
Childminders*	160	981.8
Nursery classes in schools	18	1030
PVI providers	45	2690

Source: Provider survey 2021, BFC data and OFSTED registration data

**Number of childminder places is an estimate based on available data; some places are also available for older children.*

A place is defined as 15 hours of childcare a week, the maximum number of funded hours a week a child can access via the universal entitlement. The table above records the maximum number of 15 hours places a provider is registered to offer in a week. In practice, many providers choose to operate below their number of registered places, and some will be allocated to children accessing places outside of the free entitlements.

A child attending for 30 hours a week as part of the extended entitlement will take up 2 places and a child attending all week at a full day care setting will take up 3 to 4 places.

3.2. Early years vacancies

A vacancy is a place that could realistically be used by a child and is available for a minimum of 15 hours a week. Vacancy rates are a snapshot, and often change rapidly. In some cases, providers may have a vacancy which is only available for a specific age group, or for a particular part time arrangement. In general, vacancy rates are at their lowest in summer and highest in the autumn, when children move to school.

² Data from the 2021 Provider Survey. Due to regulations on staff to child ratios and minimum space requirements, total childcare capacity in BFC fluctuates depending on the mix of children accessing childcare. Capacity data is correct at the point of collection only.

Data on vacancy rates is gathered in summer as this provides the most accurate indicator of available capacity in the market. In the summer term 2021 the disruption caused by COVID-19 continued to impact the number children accessing early years places and how these places were accessed. Data on vacancies in the summer term 2021 was gathered via an online Provider Survey and via email and telephone. However, not all providers responded to the survey or request for information and some who did respond chose to withhold data on vacancies. Table 9 shows reported vacancies only.

Table 9: Early Years Vacancies by type of provision

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Number of providers</i>	<i>Total number of vacancies</i>
Childminders	159	55.3
Nursery classes in schools	18	139
PVI providers	45	328

Source: Vacancies as reported by BFC early year providers for the summer term 2021

3.3. Number of school age providers and places

In total, there are 56 providers of childcare for school age children during term time, and 22 providers of childcare for school age children during the holidays. There are also 159 childminders who may provide care for school age children.

Table 10: School Age provision and places

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Number of providers</i>	<i>Number of places</i>
Breakfast club	32	Insufficient data
After-school club	33	Insufficient data
Childminders*	159	1030
Holiday club	27	Insufficient data

Source: BFC data and OFSTED registration data

**Number of childminder places is an estimate based on available data; many of these places are also available for younger children.*

Not all provision of childcare for school age children is registered with OFSTED and may not be listed on the Family Services Directory. Parents may also use provision which is not considered 'childcare', for example sports or arts clubs after school or in the holidays. Table 10 may therefore under report the total available school age provision.

OFSTED registration requirements for school age children do not include a maximum number of available places and providers will often vary their offer based on demand. These factors make collating available places for school age children challenging. The response to COVID has exacerbated this issue as providers have temporarily reduced capacity or limited access to places. There is therefore insufficient accurate data on available places for inclusion in this report.

4. Funded Early Education

4.1. Introduction to funded early education

Some children are entitled to free childcare, funded by the government.

- All children aged 3 and 4 are entitled to the 570 hours of free childcare per year, equivalent to 15 hours a week over 38 weeks, from the term after the child's 3rd birthday until the term after their 5th birthday or they start reception class in school. This is known as the universal 15 hours entitlement
- Children aged 3 and 4 where both parents are working, or from lone parent families where that parent is working³, could be [entitled](#) to an additional 570 hours of free childcare per year, equivalent to 15 hours a week over 38 weeks, from the term after the child's 3rd birthday until the term after their 5th birthday or they start reception class in school. This is known as the extended 30 hours entitlement
- Children aged 2 whose families receive certain benefits (including low-income families in receipt of in-work benefits), or those who meet additional non-economic [criteria](#), are entitled to 570 hours of free childcare a year, equivalent to 15 hours per week over 38 weeks. Nationally, about 40% of 2-year-olds are entitled to this offer, but the proportion varies by area.

Parents do not have to use all the hours of their funded entitlement and may choose to split them between more than one provider. With the agreement of their provider, parents may also spread them across the year – for example, rather than taking 15 hours for 38 weeks a year they could take just under 12 hours for 48 weeks a year.

4.2. Proportion of 2-year-old children entitled to funded early education

In Bracknell Forest, based on data provided by DWP for the summer term 2021, 13.9 % of 2-year-olds or 211 children were entitled to funded early education for economic reasons.

4.3. Take up of funded early education

The take up of early years places is measured in the summer term of each year, with the data submitted by providers as part of the free entitlement funding process. Table 11 sets out the number of children taking up their funded place (for at least some of the available hours) in our local authority in summer 2021 and the proportion of the eligible population this represents. Four-year olds who have started reception class are not included in these figures.

³ Available to families where each parent (or one parent in a single adult household) are earning the equivalent of working sixteen hours per week on the minimum wage and less than £100,000 per annum

Table 11: Take up of funded early education by age

<i>Age</i>	<i>Children</i>	<i>% of eligible children</i>
Age 2	162	77%
Age 3	1306	91%
Age 4	768	50%

Source: BFC Internal data, DWP eligibility data and ONS - Population estimates for the UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: mid-2020.

In summer 2021 a total of 255 children resident in neighbouring authorities accessed their funded early education in Bracknell Forest. Table 12 provides a breakdown of these children.

Table 12: Children resident outside BF attending BFC EY provision

<i>Local Authority</i>	<i>Children</i>
Basingstoke and Deane	1
Buckinghamshire	3
Guildford	1
Hart	36
Hounslow	2
Langley St Mary's	1
Reading	1
Runnymede	2
Rushmoor	10
Slough	2
Surrey Heath	46
Walsall	1
Wandsworth	1
Wiltshire	1
Winchester	1
Windsor & Maidenhead	53
Woking	1
Wokingham	92
Total	255

Source: BFC Free entitlement funding data

4.4. 30 hours extended entitlement applications

Parents who think they are entitled to the 30 hours extended entitlement apply for this online through the Government's [Childcare Choices website](#). The same website is used to apply for tax free childcare and parents can apply for either or both. If a parent is eligible, the system issues the parent with a code which they present to their chosen childcare provider to claim the funding. The provider validates the code through the Council's funding software prior to confirming that the child can take up 30 hours extended entitlement places. If they are ineligible, they will still be entitled to the universal 15 hours of early education and childcare. Table 13 compares the number of 3- and 4-year-olds accessing the 30 hour entitlement to the total accessing any free entitlement funding for the last 4 years. The take of the 30 hour entitlement has increased each year, reaching 49.5% in 2021. However, this is still significantly below the 72% of the population forecast to be eligible for this entitlement (see point 2.4.2.).

Table 13: 3 & 4-year-olds accessing 30 hours extended entitlement

<i>Term</i>	<i>Total funded 3- & 4-year-olds</i>	<i>Accessing 30 hours</i>	<i>% of total</i>
Summer 2018	2334	937	37.8%
Summer 2019	2202	978	41.4%
Summer 2020	2211	1055	44.6%
Summer 2021	2074	1027	49.5%

Source: BFC Free entitlement funding data

4.5. Providers offering funded early education places

Providers are paid by government for delivering funded early education places (via the Local Authority). They are not required to offer them to parents, but of course parents may choose to use a different provider if they do not. Some providers offer a restricted number of funded places. The table below sets out the number of providers offering funded places in the summer term 2021 and the numbers offering each type of funded place.

Table 14: Providers offering funded early years places

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Number of providers</i>	<i>2-year-olds</i>	<i>Universal 15 hours</i>	<i>Extended 30 hours</i>
Childminders	104	97	104	104
Nursery classes in schools	18	0	18	17
PVI providers	45	43	45	43

Source: BFC funding data

5. Prices

5.1. Prices of early years childcare

For early years childcare outside the funded entitlements, we report on average prices per hour, reported to us by settings, provided on the Bracknell Forest Local Directory and advertised on providers websites.⁴ There may be variations to prices based on the number of hours a family uses, with reductions for longer hours, or discounts for sibling groups. There may be additional payments for additional services, e.g., lunch and other meals which are not included in these prices. This data was not collected in the summer term 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19 on providers, data from the summer term 2019 is provided below.

Table 15: Average childcare prices – early years

<i>Price per hour</i>	<i>Private, voluntary and independent nurseries</i>	<i>Nursery classes in schools</i>	<i>Childminders</i>
0- and 1-year olds	£6.27	n/a	£5.17
2-year-olds	£6.27	n/a	£5.17
3- and 4-year-olds	£6.15	£5.05	£5.17

Source: cost data supplied by EY providers – summer term 2021

5.2. Prices of school age childcare

For school age children during term time, we report on average prices before and after school per session and for childminding per hour. For holiday childcare, we report on holiday club prices per week.

Table 16: Average childcare prices – school age

<i>Setting and price unit</i>	<i>Price</i>
Breakfast club per session	£5.04
After-school club per session	£11.22
School age childminder per hour	£5.12
Holiday club per week	£135.88

Source: cost data from the Bracknell Forest Local Directory, Internal BFC data and provider websites

⁴ Details of how we collect this data is provided in section 10: Methodology

6. Quality of childcare in our area

6.1. OFSTED inspection grades

Childcare providers offering the free entitlements must be registered with and be inspected by the appropriate regulatory body, OFSTED or the Independent Schools Inspectorate.

OFSTED graded outcomes are: 'outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement', and 'inadequate'.⁵ The Independent Schools Inspectorate graded outcomes are: 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Schools with nursery classes have an overall inspection grade for the school and most also have a separate early years grade.

As detailed in table 17 below, as of the summer term 2021, 176 of 180 providers in Bracknell Forest, equivalent to 97%, achieved a good or outstanding OFSTED rating in their last inspection. Some providers do not have a grade as they are new and awaiting their first full inspection, not Early Years active or a childminder who is part of an agency, these providers are not included in the calculation above. Nationally the proportion of providers judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection is 96%.⁶

Table 17: OFSTED inspection grades by type of provision

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Total number of providers</i>	<i>Total achieving good or outstanding</i>	<i>Providers with no grade</i>
Childminders	159	122	36
Nursery classes in maintained schools *	14	12	-
Nursery classes in academies ⁷	4	-	4
PVI providers	45	42	2

Source: OFSTED

* early years grade if available, otherwise overall school grade

⁵ For more information see [Ofsted inspections of early years and childcare providers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-inspections-of-early-years-and-childcare-providers)

⁶ For more information see [Main findings: childcare providers and inspections as at 31 March 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/main-findings-childcare-providers-and-inspections-as-at-31-march-2021)

⁷ Nursery classes in academies are awaiting their first inspection

7. Parent Survey

A survey was undertaken in May and June 2021 to gather parents' and carers' experience and needs in relation to childcare. The survey was aimed at parents currently accessing or looking to access childcare in Bracknell Forest. A total of 446 responses were received. A summary of relevant points and parents' comments are provided below. Percentages refer to the proportion of answers to the specific question, not of the total respondents. Specific comments from parents have been withheld.

7.1. Childcare Accessed

Current childcare

Parents and carers were asked what childcare they currently used for their children. Where the response was 'Other' respondents were asked to provide additional details.

Table 18: Childcare used – children below school age

<i>Type of childcare</i>	<i>Responses</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Nursery class in school	65	21%
Private Nursery	79	26%
Pre-school	61	20%
Childminder	68	22%
Nanny or au pair	4	1%
Other	32	10%

Table 19: Childcare used - school age children

<i>Type of childcare</i>	<i>Responses</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Breakfast Club	47	11%
After School Club/Activities	58	13%
Holiday Club	49	11%
Childminder	43	10%
Nanny or au pair	5	1%
None	187	43%
Other	42	10%

Details for responses of 'Other' included grandparents, family members and friends.

Location

When asked if childcare was available in a location that suited their needs 52 (14%) respondents said 'No', with 48 (14%) respondents indicating that they were unable to find childcare in their preferred location.

The reasons given included:

- costs/affordability
- childcare not available at the required times
- available childcare not flexible enough
- insufficient availability, particular after school care for school age children.

Respondents who had difficulty accessing childcare were asked to name the ward in which they were looking for childcare, with the highest responses being College Town and Warfield

Not accessing childcare

A total of 171 respondents indicated that they did not use childcare. They were asked to provide reasons for this. Multiple responses were possible.

Table 20: Reasons for not using childcare

	<i>Responses</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Cannot find an available place	13	6%
Too expensive/can't afford it	56	25%
Children do not want to go	7	3%
I do not need childcare	88	40%
I am not happy with the quality available	3	1%
Sessions are not available at the times I want	24	11%
Transport difficulties getting to provider	4	2%
Other	25	11%

Details for responding 'Other' included:

- one or both parents working from home
- agile working arrangements
- childminders looking after their own children
- no suitable childcare for a child with additional needs.

7.2. Finding Childcare

Suitable childcare

Parents and carers were asked to indicate how easy or difficult they found finding suitable childcare.

Table 21: Finding suitable childcare

<i>Category</i>	<i>Very easy</i>	<i>Fairly easy</i>	<i>Fairly difficult</i>	<i>Very difficult</i>
Early years childcare	81 (41%)	74 (38%)	29 (15%)	13 (7%)
School Age – before school	56 (37%)	59 (39%)	19 (12%)	19 (12%)
School age – after school	36 (23%)	70 (44%)	31 (20%)	21 (13%)
School Age – holiday care	34 (23%)	64 (44%)	34 (23%)	14 (10%)

Table 22 compares the percentage of respondents replying fairly difficult or very difficult in 2019, 2020 and 2021. The increase in 2021 reflects the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on available childcare, particularly for school age children and the removal of the option for respondents to reply 'Neither' which was available in 2019 and 2020.

Table 22: Difficulty finding childcare – annual comparison

<i>Category</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2021</i>
Early years childcare	17%	11%	21%
School Age – before school	8%	20%	25%
School age – after school	13%	15%	33%
School Age – holiday care	15%	20%	33%

Respondents who replied fairly difficult or very difficult were asked to provide a reason for their response, these responses remain relatively unchanged from previous years and included:

- Drop off and collection times did not meet parents needs
- No childminders with spaces that do school drop off/pick up
- Only term time childcare available – childcare required all year
- No early years childcare places available in the required area
- Too expensive
- No suitable childcare for a child with additional needs
- No afterschool club and/or holiday club in right location
- After school club/holiday club currently closed due to COVID
- Holiday clubs did not cater for the required age group

Accessing childcare

Parents were asked if, at any point in the past 12 months, they had been unable to access childcare when they or their child needed it.

Table 23: Unable to access childcare

<i>Category</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Early Years Childcare	45 (19%)	195 (81%)
School age – before school	22 (11%)	184 (89%)
School age – after school	35 (17%)	177 (83%)
School age – Holiday care	40 (19%)	169 (81%)

Table 24 compares the percentage of respondents year on year who reply Yes. A significant change since 2020 is the drop in respondents unable to access childcare for school age children before school, falling from 15% to 11%.

Table 24: Unable to access childcare 2019 to 2021

<i>Category</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2021</i>
Early Years Childcare	12%	20%	19%
School age – before school	11%	15%	11%
School age – after school	16%	18%	17%
School age – Holiday care	19%	18%	19%

Respondents who replied Yes were asked to provide a reason for their response, the overwhelming response was the impact of COVID-19 on the availability of childcare, which features in 60% of responses.

Responses included:

- Childcare closed/restricted due to COVID-19 / lockdown
- Available term time only – all year required
- Wrap around care not available or suitable
- Suitable childcare for child with additional needs not available

7.3. Information about childcare

Sources of information

Respondents were asked to select all the sources of information they used to find out what childcare was available in their area.

Table 25: Childcare availability information source

<i>Information Source</i>	<i>Responses</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Local Authority website	109	13%
Family Information Service website	43	5%
Job Centre/benefits office	0	0%
Health Services	9	1%
Children's Centre/Family Hub	26	3%
School	123	15%
Library	1	0%
Local Advertising	36	4%
Internet	133	16%
Social Media	132	16%
Friends & Family	179	22%
Employer	3	0%
Other	16	2%

It is worth noting that where parents have indicated that their source of information was the internet, parents could be using the Family Information Service website without being aware of it. Other sources of information included word of mouth, passing a setting on foot or by car.

Checking provider quality

Respondents were asked to indicate how they checked the quality of a childcare provision (multiple responses were allowed). Table 25 compares responses from 2019 and 2020.

Table 26: Information sources – quality of childcare

<i>Information source</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2021</i>
Visited the setting	82 (27%)	253 (28%)	238 (24%)
Word of mouth	68 (23%)	181 (20%)	222 (23%)
OFSTED reports	56 (19%)	165 (18%)	178 (18%)
Looked at the provider's website	51 (17%)	167 (18%)	171 (18%)
Reviews on the internet	41 (14%)	124 (14%)	165 (17%)

Comments from parents and carers indicate that the response to COVID could be responsible for the reduction in the percentage using visits to prospective settings and the increased in word-of-mouth recommendations and reviews on the internet.

Improving information availability

Respondents were asked for ideas on how Bracknell Forest could make it easier for parents to find out about available childcare. These responses are summarised below together with feedback from BFC.

Table 27: Improving information availability

<i>Response received</i>	<i>Bracknell Forest Council Feedback</i>
Better/more information through schools	BFC continues to work with schools to promote the Bracknell Forest Local Directory on school website and newsletters
Have a dedicated site that's easy to use with clear information on the different providers	The Bracknell Forest Local Directory provides a comprehensive listing of childcare in Bracknell Forest.
Leaflets or booklets with all providers and what they offer – sent to every home/distributed by health visitors	This would not be cost effective; parents are encouraged to make use of the Bracknell Forest Local Directory
Encourage childminders to keep their details and availability up to date	All childcare providers in Bracknell Forest are regularly reminded to keep their details and vacancies up to date. BFC is looking at innovative digital solutions to assist providers to keep their details up to date
Use social media	The use of social media has increased in recent years, further options in this area are being considered
Use advertising	BFC has undertaken several advertising campaigns in Bracknell Forest in the last year and more are planned.
Health Visitors	BFC works with Health Visitors so that Information about the Bracknell Forest Local Directory is included in the Red book given to all new parents by Health Visitors

The Family Information Service has a website which publishes information on all available childcare in Bracknell Forest, including for children with special educational needs and disabilities. This website, known as the Bracknell Forest Local Directory, can be accessed here:

<https://bracknellforest.fsd.org.uk/kb5/bracknell/directory/home.page>

BFC is actively promoting the Bracknell Forest Local Directory, including advertising on the back of buses in Bracknell Forest, the Red book, information postcards, school newsletter and websites, family hubs, adverts in 'Town and Country' the local free newspaper, posters in local shops and via other services provided by BFC.

Further work is underway to improve the visibility of the Local Directory on social media and BFC is working with partners on the use of innovative technology solutions to assist parents find the childcare they need and assist providers to keep their details and availability up to date.

8. Data by electoral ward

Section 8 provides data on population and childcare capacity by electoral ward, with a summary in the table below. The data in this section uses information collected from providers and Bracknell Forest funding data for the summer term 2021 and population data sourced from the ONS - Population estimates for the UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: mid-2020.

Table 28: Ward level summary of early years places

<i>Ward</i>	<i>Number of providers</i>	<i>Estimated Capacity</i>	<i>Uptake of funded places</i>
Ascot	9	228	117.75
Binfield with Warfield	15	335	243.85
Bullbrook	14	223	161.24
Central Sandhurst	5	93	57.07
College Town	19	454.8	381.03
Crown Wood	11	251	131.15
Crowthorne	9	180	102.94
Great Hollands North	12	168	120.12
Great Hollands South	7	203	120
Hanworth	21	393	314.41
Harmans Water	20	331	166.17
Little Sandhurst and Wellington	6	214	92.03
Old Bracknell	14	167	107.07
Owlsmoor	11	182	106.4
Priestwood and Garth	21	415	282.84
Warfield Harvest Ride	17	305	150.57
Wildridings and Central	7	334	224.33
Winkfield and Cranbourne	5	225	180.3
Total	223	4701.8	3059.26

8.1. Ascot

8.1.1. Population

The total estimated population of children in Ascot in the summer term 2021 aged 0 to 14 was 1,016, of which:

- 279 are aged under 5
- 115 are aged 3 and 4 and could be eligible for funded early years places.
- 530 are aged 5 to 11
- 207 are aged 12 to 14

8.1.2. Available childcare

The data on uptake of funded places in the table below includes funded places for 2-year-olds and universal and extended free entitlement places for 3- and 4-year-olds.

Table 29: Childcare by provider type

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Number of providers</i>	<i>Estimated capacity</i>	<i>Uptake of funded places</i>
Childminders*	6	34	2.53
Nursery classes in maintained schools	0	0	0
Nursery classes in academies	0	0	0
PVI providers	3	194	115.21
After school club	3	Insufficient data	n/a
Breakfast club	3	Insufficient data	n/a
Holiday club	3	Insufficient data	n/a

Sources: OFSTED, Bracknell Forest Local Directory, BFC Free entitlement funding data

*Childminder capacity includes places for school age children

8.1.3. Early years free entitlement funding

A total of 85 children accessed the early years free entitlements in Ascot in the Summer term 2021. Of these 30 (35%) were resident in Ascot, 29 (34%) were resident in other Bracknell Forest wards and 26 (31%) were resident outside of Bracknell Forest.

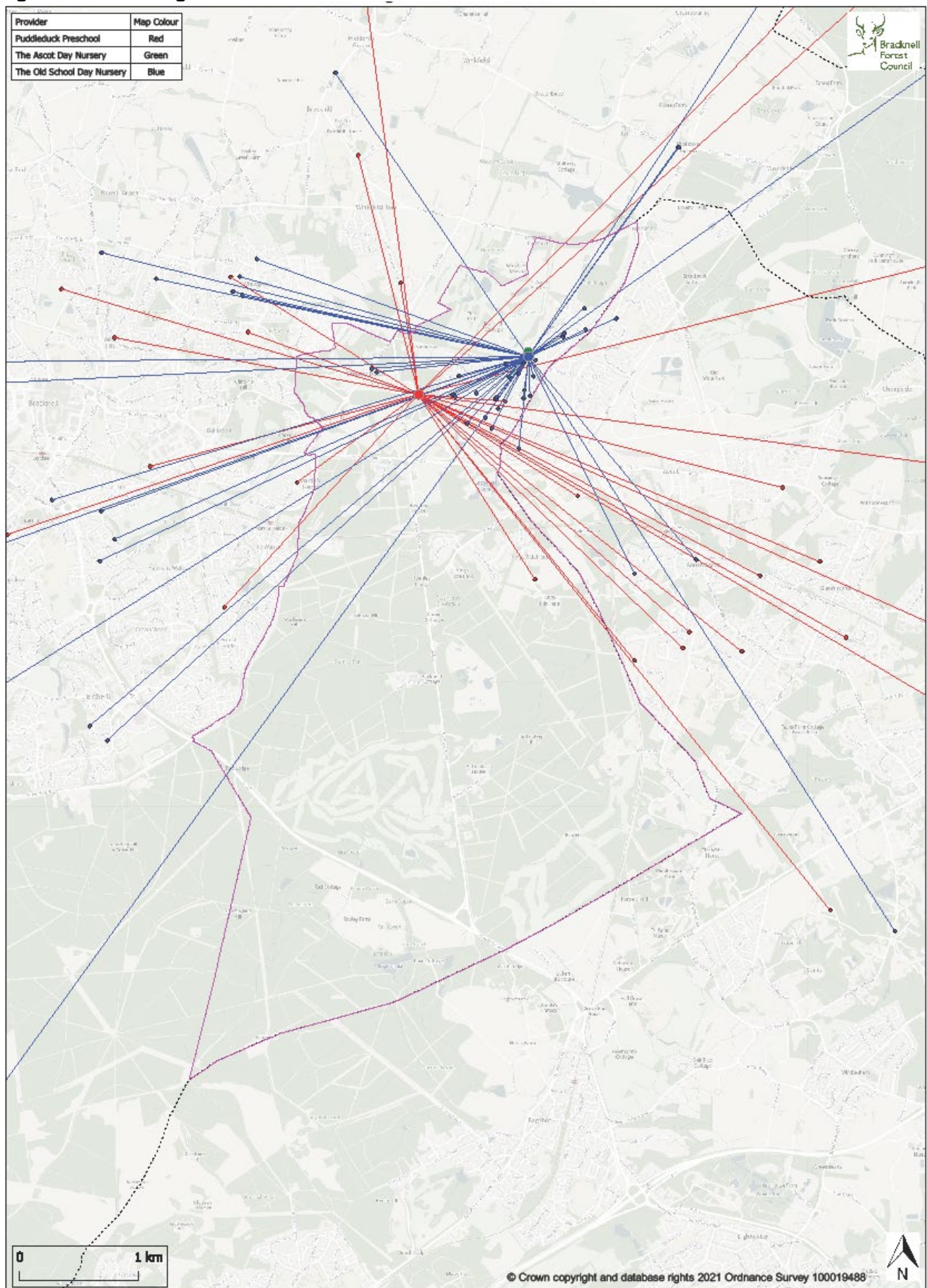
Table 30: Free entitlement uptake by resident ward

<i>Ward</i>	<i>Age 2</i>	<i>Age 3</i>	<i>Age 4</i>	<i>Total</i>
Ascot	4	17	9	30
Other Bracknell Forest Wards	1	18	10	29
Outside Bracknell Forest	0	19	7	26
Total	5	54	26	85

Source: BFC free entitlement funding data

The distribution of children accessing the free entitlement in group provisions is shown in figure 4.

Figure 4: Attending Children Distribution – Ascot



8.2. Binfield with Warfield

8.2.1. Population

The total estimated population of children in Binfield with Warfield in the summer term 2021 aged 0 to 14 was 1,936, of which:

- 743 are aged under 5
- 284 are aged 3 and 4 and could be eligible for funded early years places
- 937 are aged 5 to 11
- 256 are aged 12 to 14

8.2.2. Available childcare

The data on uptake of funded places in the table below includes funded places for 2-year-olds and universal and extended free entitlement places for 3- and 4-year-olds.

Table 31: Childcare by provider type

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Number of providers</i>	<i>Estimated capacity</i>	<i>Uptake of funded places</i>
Childminders*	10	62	14.16
Nursery classes in maintained schools	0	0	0
Nursery classes in academies	1	58	49.8
PVI providers	4	215	179.88
After school club	5	Insufficient data	n/a
Breakfast club	5	Insufficient data	n/a
Holiday club		Insufficient data	n/a

Sources: OFSTED, Bracknell Forest Local Directory, BFC Free entitlement funding data

*Childminder capacity includes places for school age children

8.2.3. Early years free entitlement funding

A total of 158 children accessed the early years free entitlements in Binfield with Warfield in the Summer term 2021. Of these 76 (48%) were resident in Binfield with Warfield, 56 (35%) were resident in other Bracknell Forest wards and 26 (17%) were resident outside of Bracknell Forest.

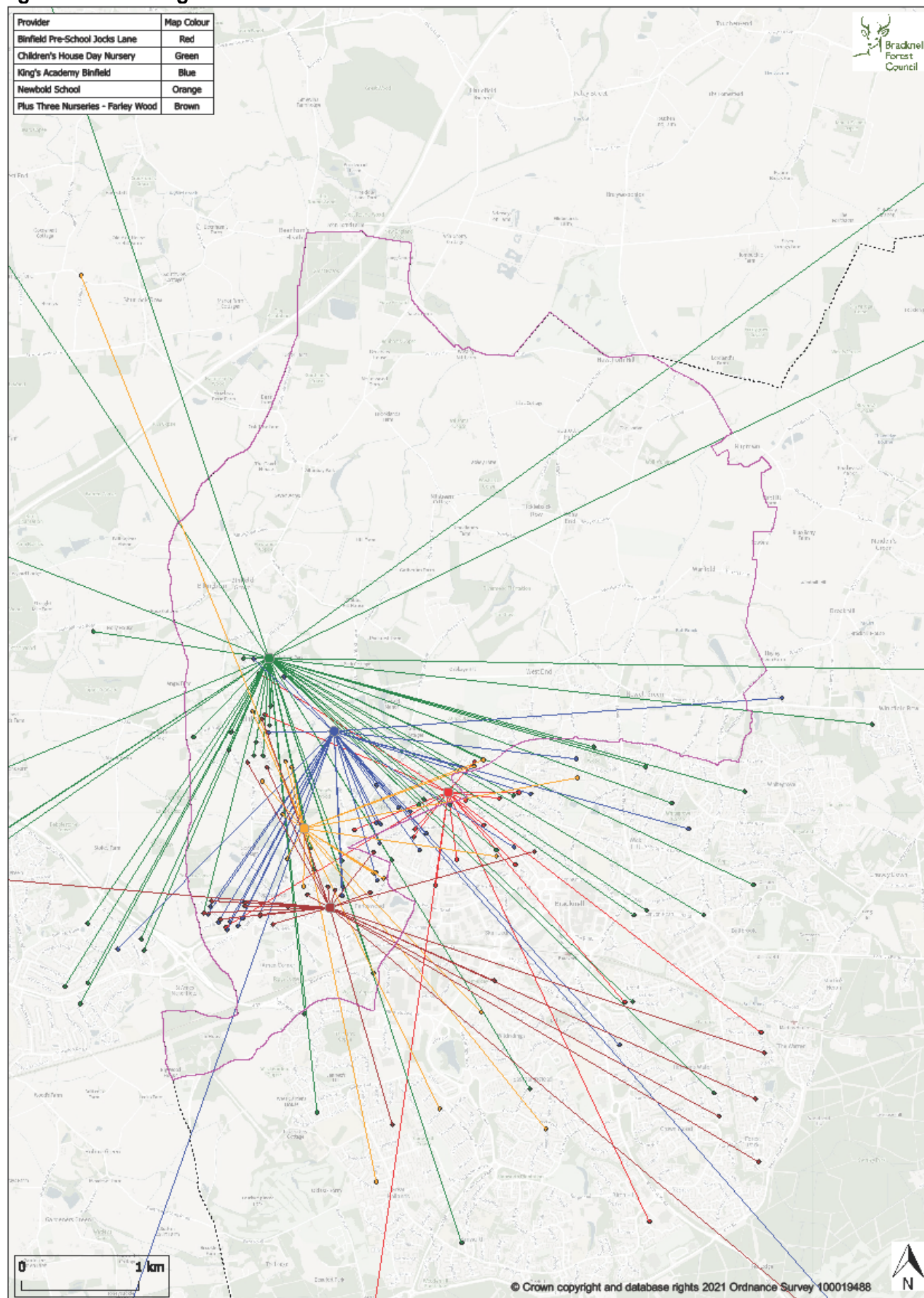
Table 32: Free entitlement uptake by resident ward

<i>Ward</i>	<i>Age 2</i>	<i>Age 3</i>	<i>Age 4</i>	<i>Total</i>
Binfield with Warfield	1	46	29	76
Other Bracknell Forest wards	7	28	21	56
Outside Bracknell Forest	0	15	11	26
Total	8	89	61	158

Source: BFC free entitlement funding data

The distribution of children accessing the free entitlement in group provisions is shown in figure 5

Figure 5: Attending Children Distribution - Binfield with Warfield



8.3. Bullbrook

8.3.1. Population

The total estimated population of children in Bullbrook in the Summer term 2021 aged 0-14 was 1,302, of which:

- 458 are aged under 5
- 177 are aged 3 and 4 and could be eligible for funded early years places
- 659 are aged 5 to 11
- 185 are aged 12 to 14

8.3.2. Available childcare

The data on uptake of funded places in the table below includes funded places for 2-year-olds and universal and extended free entitlement places for 3- and 4-year-olds

Table 33: Childcare by provider type

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Number of providers</i>	<i>Estimated capacity</i>	<i>Uptake of funded places</i>
Childminders*	11	58	11
Nursery classes in maintained schools	1	45	47
Nursery classes in academies	0	0	0
PVI providers	2	120	103.24
After school club	2	Insufficient data	n/a
Breakfast club	2	Insufficient data	n/a
Holiday club	2	Insufficient data	n/a

Sources: OFSTED, Bracknell Forest Local Directory, BFC Free entitlement funding data

* Childminder capacity includes places for school age children

8.3.3. Early years free entitlement funding

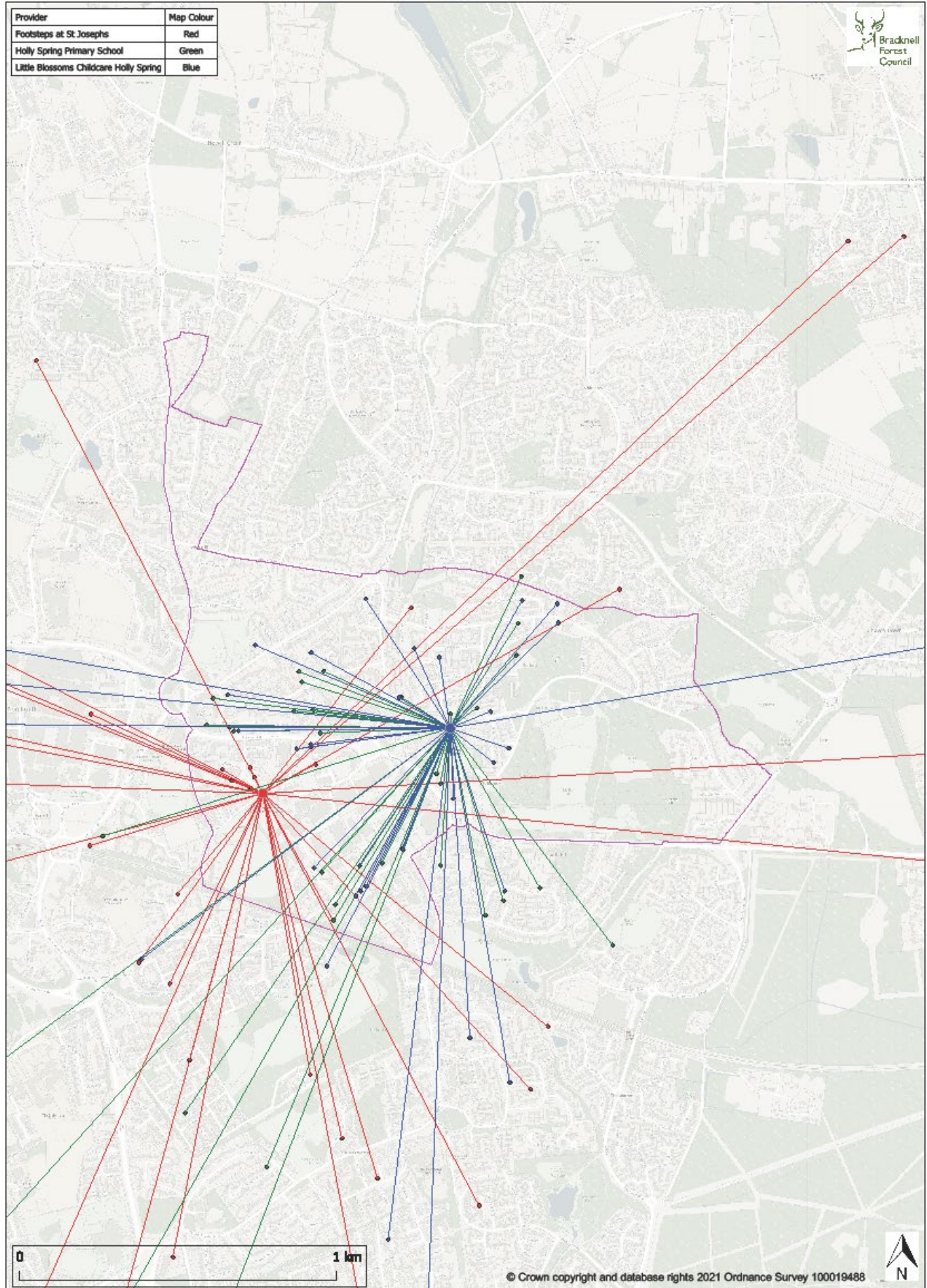
A total of 107 children accessed the early years free entitlements in Bullbrook. Of these 53 (49.5%) were resident in Bullbrook, 53 (49.5%) were resident in other Bracknell Forest wards and 1 (1%) were resident outside of Bracknell Forest.

Table 34: Free entitlement uptake by resident ward

<i>Ward</i>	<i>Age 2</i>	<i>Age 3</i>	<i>Age 4</i>	<i>Total</i>
Bullbrook	5	30	18	53
Other Bracknell Forest wards	7	29	17	53
Outside Bracknell Forest	0	0	1	1
Total	12	59	36	107

Source: BFC free entitlement funding data

The distribution of children accessing the free entitlement in group provisions is shown in figure 6.

Figure 6: Attending Children Distribution – Bullbrook

8.4. Central Sandhurst

8.4.1. Population

The total estimate population of children in Central Sandhurst in the Summer term 2021 aged 0-14 was 835, of which:

- 277 are aged under 5
- 121 are aged 3 and 4 and could be eligible for funded early years places
- 425 are aged 5 to 11
- 133 are aged 12 to 14

8.4.2. Available childcare

The data on uptake of funded places in the table below includes funded places for 2-year-olds and universal and extended free entitlement places for 3- and 4-year-olds

Table 35: Childcare by provider type

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Number of providers</i>	<i>Estimated capacity</i>	<i>Uptake of funded places</i>
Childminders*	3	21	3.4
Nursery classes in maintained schools	1	72	53.67
Nursery classes in academies	0	0	0
PVI providers	0	0	0
After school club	1	Insufficient data	n/a
Breakfast club	1	Insufficient data	n/a
Holiday club	0	Insufficient data	n/a

Sources: OFSTED, Bracknell Forest Local Directory, BFC Free entitlement funding data

* Childminder capacity includes places for school age children

8.4.3. Early years free entitlement funding

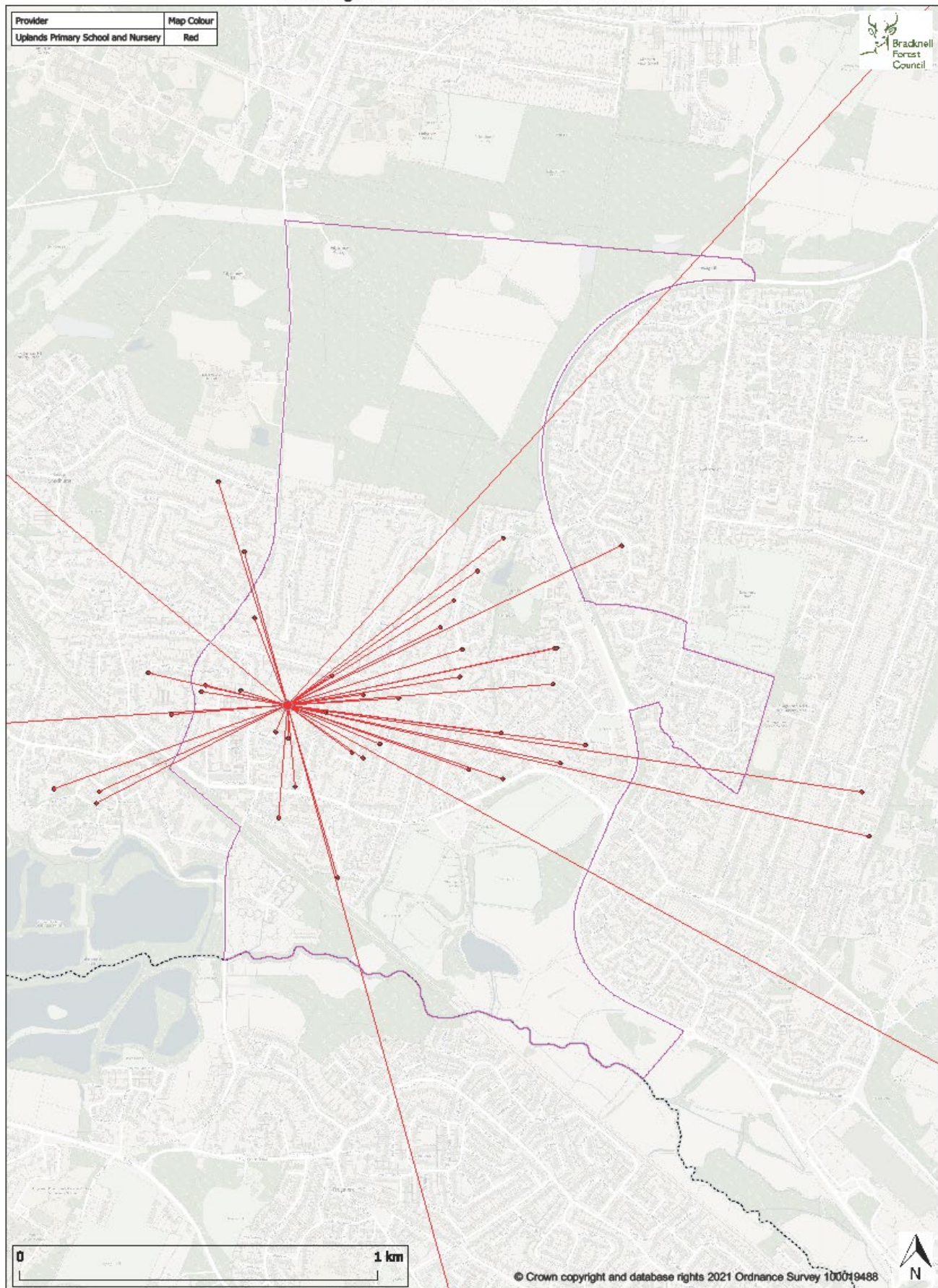
A total of 48 children accessed the early years free entitlements in Central Sandhurst. Of these 31 (65%) were resident in Central Sandhurst, 13 (27%) were resident in other Bracknell Forest wards and 4 (8%) were resident outside of Bracknell Forest.

Table 36: Free entitlement uptake by resident ward

<i>Ward</i>	<i>Age 2</i>	<i>Age 3</i>	<i>Age 4</i>	<i>Total</i>
Central Sandhurst	0	20	11	31
Other Bracknell Forest wards	0	5	8	13
Outside Bracknell Forest	0	3	1	4
Total	0	28	20	48

Source: BFC free entitlement funding data

The distribution of children accessing the free entitlement in group provisions is shown in figure 7.

Figure 7: Attending Children Distribution - Central Sandhurst

8.5. College Town

8.5.1. Population

The total estimated population of children in College Town in the Summer term 2021 aged 0-14 was 891, of which:

- 327 are aged under 5
- 137 are aged 3 and 4 and could be eligible for funded early years places
- 438 are aged 5 to 11
- 126 are aged 12 to 14

8.5.2. Available childcare

The data on uptake of funded places in the table below includes funded places for 2-year-olds and universal and extended free entitlement places for 3- and 4-year-olds

Table 37: Childcare by provider type

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Number of providers</i>	<i>Estimated capacity</i>	<i>Uptake of funded places</i>
Childminders*	13	88.8	13.79
Nursery classes in maintained schools	1	92	62.8
Nursery classes in academies	0	0	0
PVI providers	5	320	304.44
After school club	0	Insufficient data	n/a
Breakfast club	1	Insufficient data	n/a
Holiday club	0	Insufficient data	n/a

Sources: OFSTED, Bracknell Forest Local Directory, BFC Free entitlement funding data

* Childminder capacity includes places for school age children

8.5.3. Early years free entitlement funding

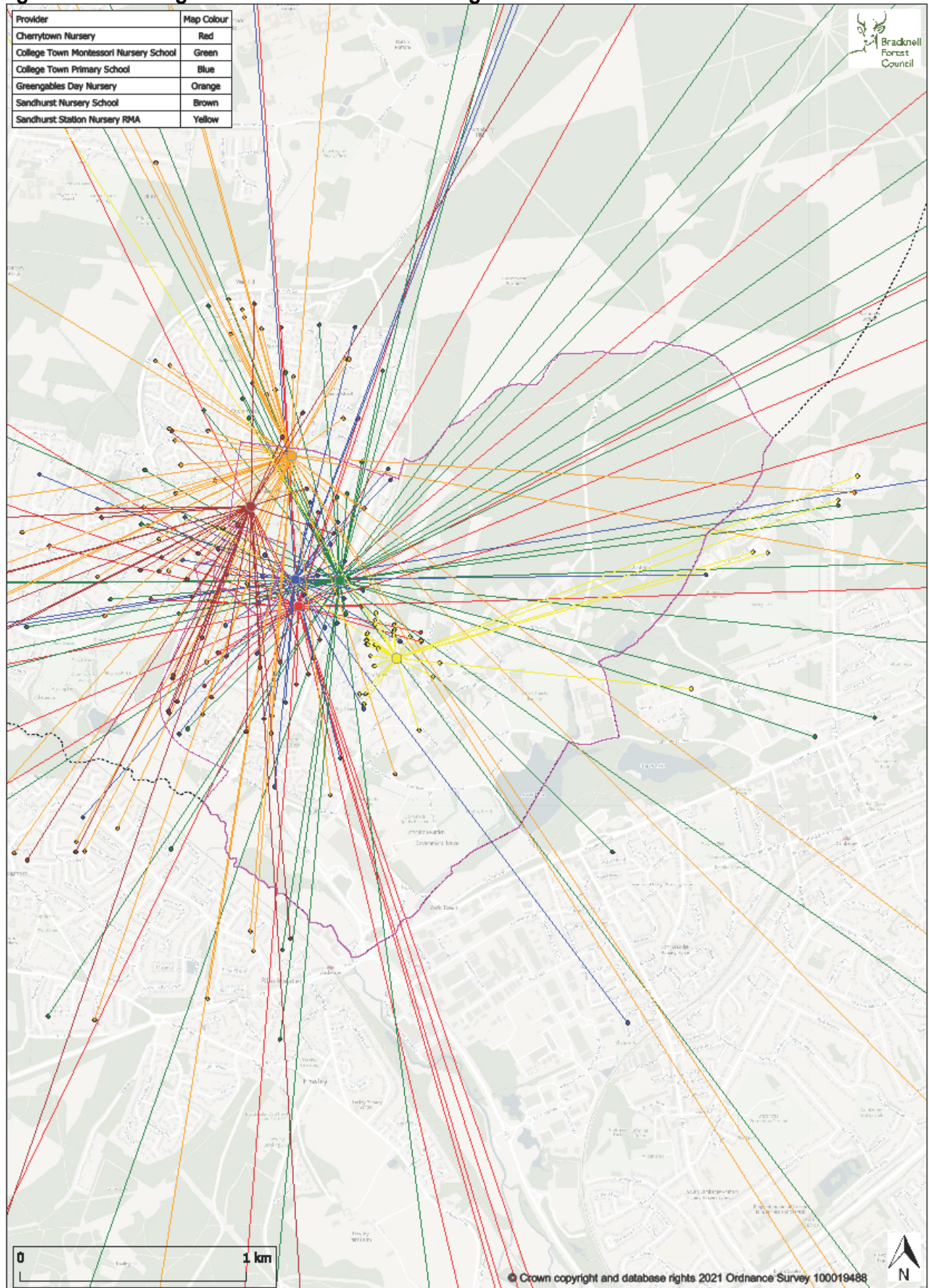
A total of 260 children accessed the early years free entitlements in College Town. Of these 88 (34%) were resident in College Town, 98 (38%) were resident in other Bracknell Forest wards and 74 (28%) were resident outside of Bracknell Forest.

Table 38: Free entitlement uptake by resident ward

<i>Ward</i>	<i>Age 2</i>	<i>Age 3</i>	<i>Age 4</i>	<i>Total</i>
College Town	6	56	26	88
Other Bracknell Forest wards	8	60	30	98
Outside Bracknell Forest	3	39	32	74
Total	17	155	88	260

Source: BFC free entitlement funding data

The distribution of children accessing the free entitlement in group provisions is shown in figure 8.

Figure 8: Attending Children Distribution - College Town

8.6. Crown Wood

8.6.1. Population

The total estimated population of children in Crown Wood in the Summer term 2021 aged 0-14 was 1,382, of which:

- 585 are aged under 5
- 227 are aged 3 and 4 and could be eligible for funded early years places
- 624 are aged 5 to 11
- 173 are aged 12 to 14

8.6.2. Available childcare

The data on uptake of funded places in the table below includes funded places for 2-year-olds and universal and extended free entitlement places for 3- and 4-year-olds

Table 39: Childcare by provider type

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Number of providers</i>	<i>Estimated capacity</i>	<i>Uptake of funded places</i>
Childminders*	9	63	5.74
Nursery classes in maintained schools	0	0	0
Nursery classes in academies	1	90	89
PVI providers	1	98	36.4
After school club	1	Insufficient data	n/a
Breakfast club	2	Insufficient data	n/a
Holiday club	1	Insufficient data	n/a

Sources: OFSTED, Bracknell Forest Local Directory, BFC Free entitlement funding data

* Childminder capacity includes places for school age children

8.6.3. Early years free entitlement funding

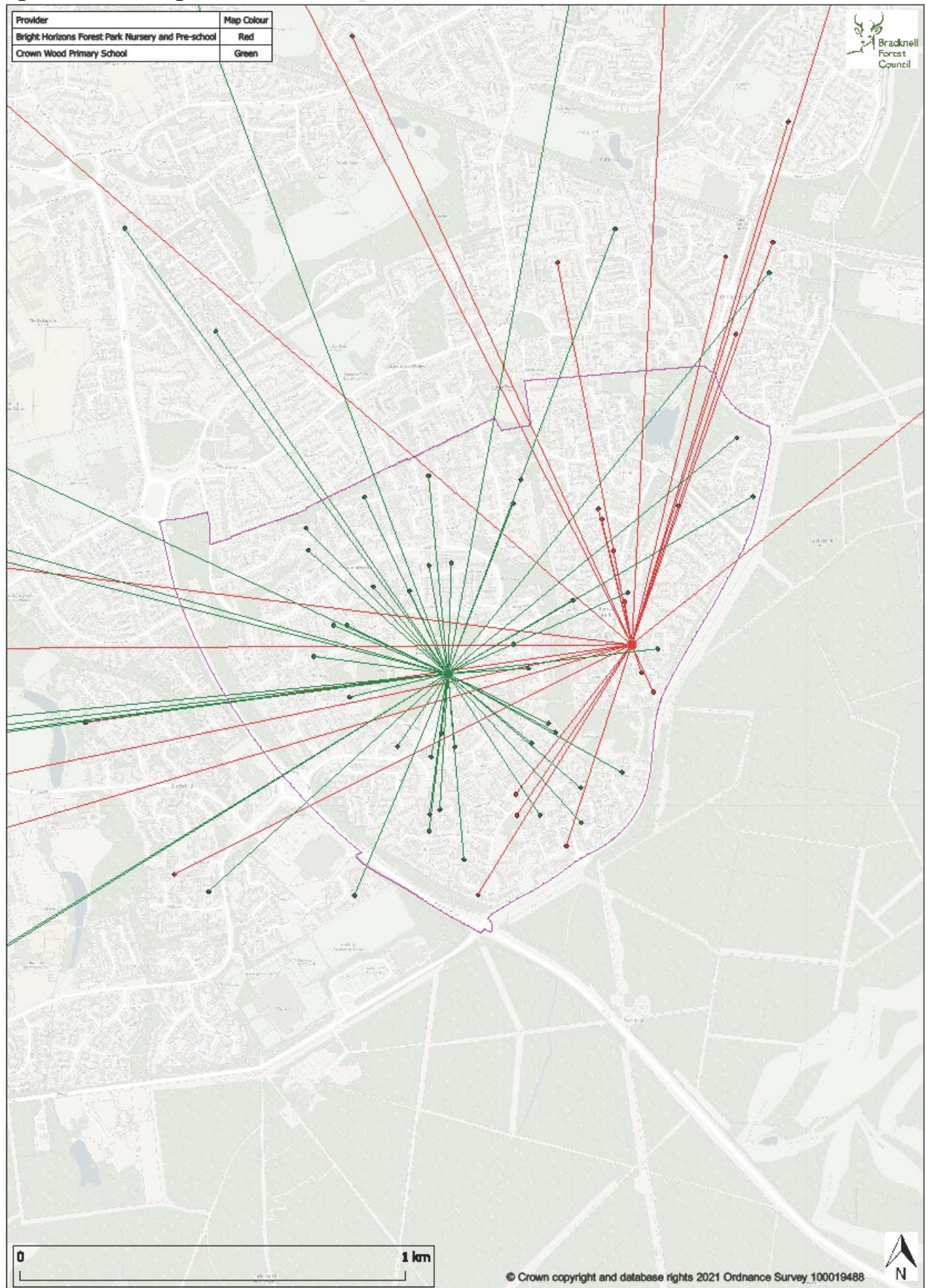
A total of 86 children accessed the early years free entitlements in Crown Wood. Of these 49 (57%) were resident in Crown Wood, 36 (42%) were resident in other Bracknell Forest wards and 1 (1%) were resident outside of Bracknell Forest.

Table 40: Free entitlement uptake by resident ward

<i>Ward</i>	<i>Age 2</i>	<i>Age 3</i>	<i>Age 4</i>	<i>Total</i>
Crown Wood	1	25	23	49
Other Bracknell Forest wards	2	18	16	36
Outside Bracknell Forest	0	1	0	1
Total	3	44	39	86

Source: BFC free entitlement funding data

The distribution of children accessing the free entitlement in group provisions is shown in figure 9.

Figure 9: Attending Children Distribution - Crown Wood

8.7. Crowthorne

8.7.1. Population

The total estimated population of children in Crowthorne in the Summer term 2021 aged 0-14 was 915, of which:

- 237 are aged under 5
- 100 are aged 3 and 4 and could be eligible for funded early years places
- 517 are aged 5 to 11
- 161 are aged 12 to 14

8.7.2. Available childcare

The data on uptake of funded places in the table below includes funded places for 2-year-olds and universal and extended free entitlement places for 3- and 4-year-olds

Table 41: Childcare by provider type

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Number of providers</i>	<i>Estimated capacity</i>	<i>Uptake of funded places</i>
Childminders*	6	32	15.06
Nursery classes in maintained schools	0	0	0
Nursery classes in academies	0	0	0
PVI providers	3	148	87.88
After school club	2	Insufficient data	n/a
Breakfast club	2	Insufficient data	n/a
Holiday club	2	Insufficient data	n/a

Sources: OFSTED, Bracknell Forest Local Directory, BFC Free entitlement funding data

* Childminder capacity includes places for school age children

8.7.3. Early years free entitlement funding

A total of 88 children accessed the early years free entitlements in Crowthorne. Of these 40 (45%) were resident in Crowthorne, 20 (23%) were resident in other Bracknell Forest wards and 28 (32%) were resident outside of Bracknell Forest.

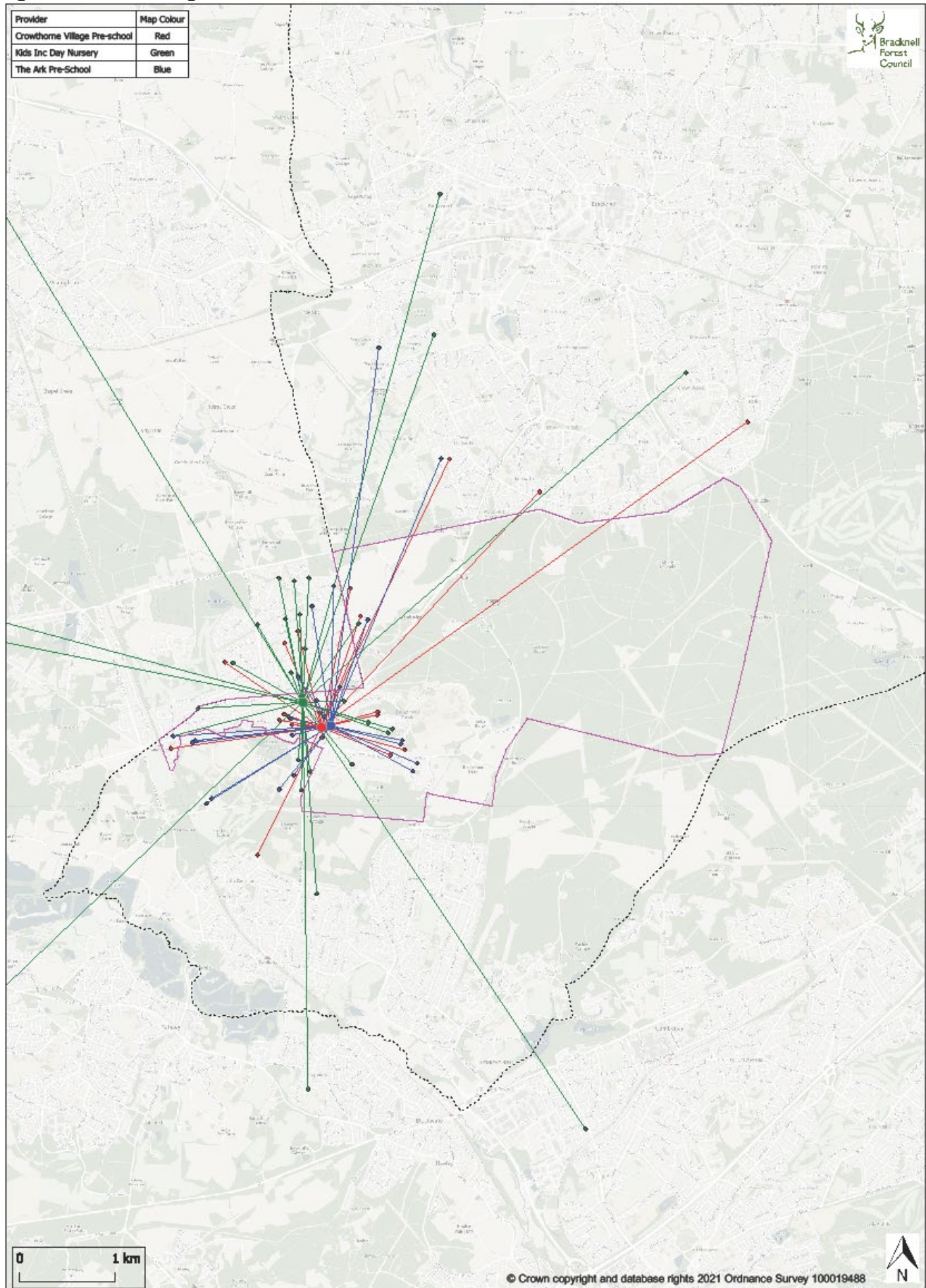
Table 42: Free entitlement uptake by resident ward

<i>Ward</i>	<i>Age 2</i>	<i>Age 3</i>	<i>Age 4</i>	<i>Total</i>
Crowthorne	4	21	15	40
Other Bracknell Forest wards	1	14	5	20
Outside Bracknell Forest	1	18	9	28
Total	6	53	29	88

Source: BFC free entitlement funding data

The distribution of children accessing the free entitlement in group provisions is shown in figure 10.

Figure 10: Attending Children Distribution – Crowthorne



8.8. Great Hollands North

8.8.1. Population

The total estimated population of children in Great Hollands North in the Summer term 2021 aged 0-14 was 1,929, of which:

- 596 are aged under 5
- 257 are aged 3 and 4 and could be eligible for funded early years places
- 1,065 are aged 5 to 11
- 268 are aged 12 to 14

8.8.2. Available childcare

The data on uptake of funded places in the table below includes funded places for 2-year-olds and universal and extended free entitlement places for 3- and 4-year-olds

Table 43: Childcare by provider type

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Number of providers</i>	<i>Estimated capacity</i>	<i>Uptake of funded places</i>
Childminders*	9	49	17.66
Nursery classes in maintained schools	0	0	0
Nursery classes in academies	2	69	53.4
PVI providers	2	134	84.06
After school club	2	Insufficient data	n/a
Breakfast club	1	Insufficient data	n/a
Holiday club	0	Insufficient data	n/a

Sources: OFSTED, Bracknell Forest Local Directory, BFC Free entitlement funding data

* Childminder capacity includes places for school age children

8.8.3. Early years free entitlement funding

A total of 128 children accessed the early years free entitlements in Great Hollands North. Of these 77 (60%) were resident in Great Hollands North, 49 (38%) were resident in other Bracknell Forest wards and 2 (2%) were resident outside of Bracknell Forest.

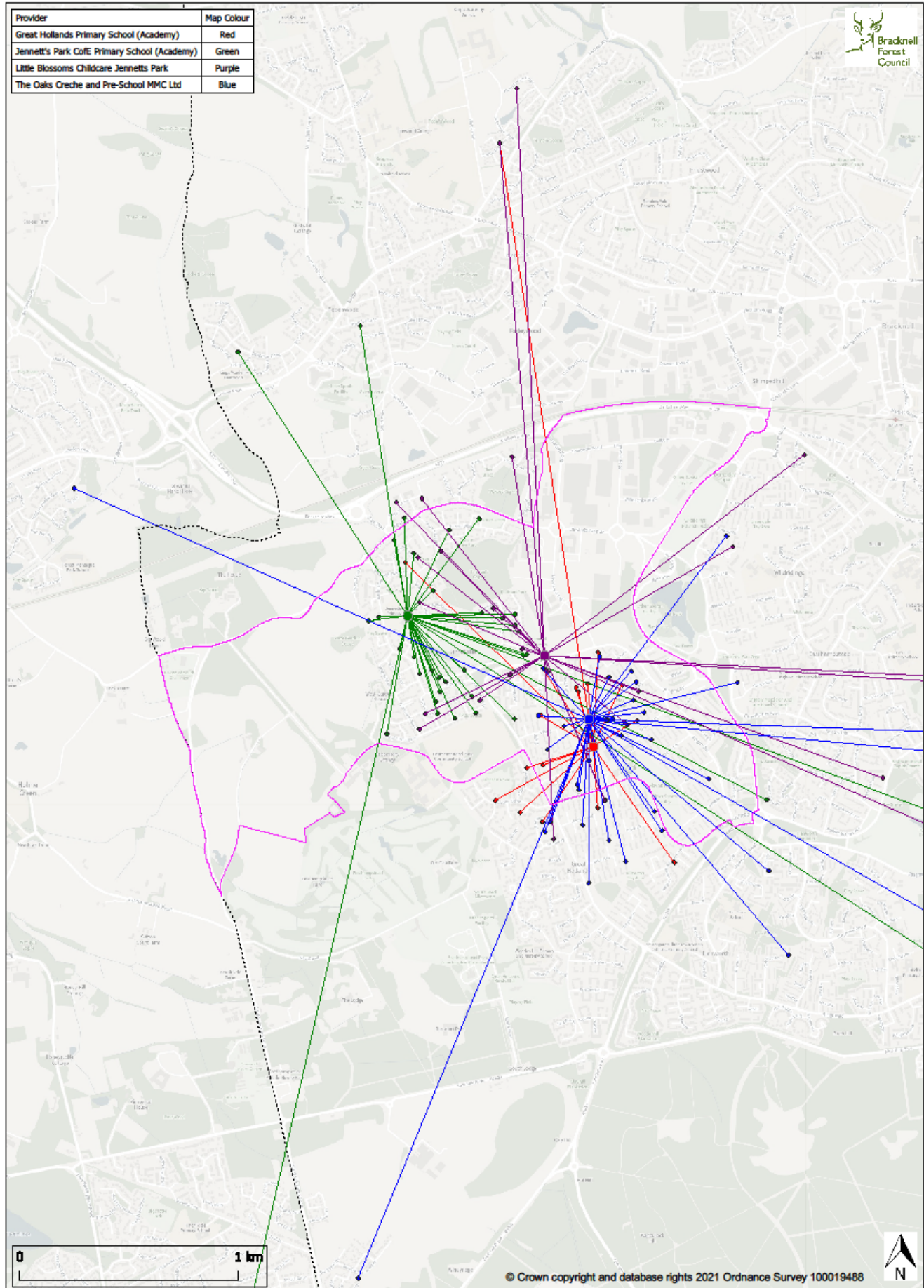
Table 44: Free entitlement uptake by resident ward

<i>Ward</i>	<i>Age 2</i>	<i>Age 3</i>	<i>Age 4</i>	<i>Total</i>
Great Hollands North	9	46	22	77
Other Bracknell Forest wards	12	22	15	49
Outside Bracknell Forest	0	2	0	2
Total	21	70	37	128

Source: BFC free entitlement funding data

The distribution of children accessing the free entitlement in group provisions is shown in figure 11.

Figure 11: Attending Children Distribution - Great Hollands North



8.9. Great Hollands South

8.9.1. Population

The total estimated population of children in Great Hollands South in the Summer term 2021 aged 0-14 was 963, of which:

- 321 are aged under 5
- 139 are aged 3 and 4 and could be eligible for funded early years places
- 507 are aged 5 to 11
- 135 are aged 12 to 14

8.9.2. Available childcare

The uptake figures include funded places for 2-year-olds and universal and extended free entitlement places for 3 and 4-year-olds.

Table 45: Childcare by provider type

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Number of providers</i>	<i>Estimated capacity</i>	<i>Uptake of funded places</i>
Childminders*	5	29	2
Nursery classes in maintained schools	1	90	83
Nursery classes in academies	0	0	0
PVI providers	0	0	0
After school club	1	Insufficient data	n/a
Breakfast club	1	Insufficient data	n/a
Holiday club	0	Insufficient data	n/a

Sources: OFSTED, Bracknell Forest Local Directory, BFC Free entitlement funding data

* childminder capacity includes places for school age children

8.9.3. Early years free entitlement funding

A total of 66 children accessed the early years free entitlements in Great Hollands South. Of these 39 (60%) were resident in Great Hollands South, 26 (39%) were resident in other Bracknell Forest wards and 1 (1%) were resident outside of Bracknell Forest.

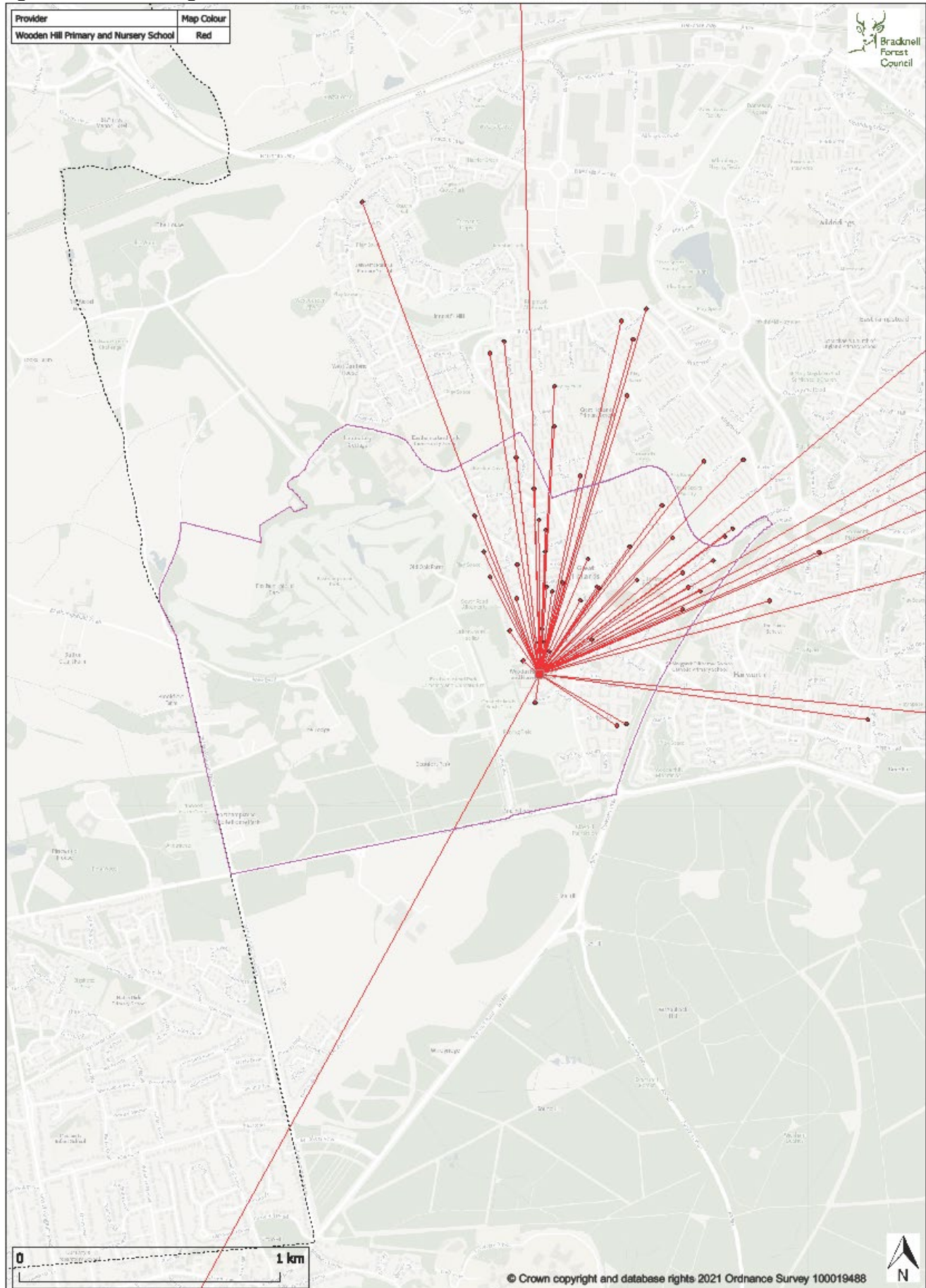
Table 46: Free entitlement uptake by resident ward

<i>Ward</i>	<i>Age 2</i>	<i>Age 3</i>	<i>Age 4</i>	<i>Total</i>
Great Hollands South	0	24	15	39
Other Bracknell Forest wards	0	15	11	26
Outside Bracknell Forest	0	1	0	1
Total	0	40	26	66

Source: BFC free entitlement funding data

The distribution of children accessing the free entitlement in group provisions is shown in figure 12.

Figure 12: Attending Children Distribution - Great Hollands South



8.10. Hanworth

8.10.1. Population

The total estimated population of children in Hanworth in the Summer term 2021 aged 0-14 was 1,532, of which:

- 502 are aged under 5
- 194 are aged 3 and 4 and could be eligible for funded early years places
- 823 are aged 5 to 11
- 207 are aged 12 to 14

8.10.2. Available childcare

The uptake figures include funded places for 2-year-olds and universal and extended free entitlement places for 3 and 4-year-olds.

Table 47: Childcare by provider type

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Number of providers</i>	<i>Estimated capacity</i>	<i>Uptake of funded places</i>
Childminders*	15	96	16.58
Nursery classes in maintained schools	2	82	74.6
Nursery classes in academies	0	0	0
PVI providers	4	253	223.23
After school club	2	Insufficient data	n/a
Breakfast club	2	Insufficient data	n/a
Holiday club	1	Insufficient data	n/a

Sources: OFSTED, Bracknell Forest Local Directory, BFC Free entitlement funding data

* childminder capacity includes places for school age children

8.10.3. Early years free entitlement funding

A total of 228 children accessed the early years free entitlements in Hanworth. Of these 105 (46%) were resident in Hanworth, 118 (52%) were resident in other Bracknell Forest wards and 5 (2%) were resident outside of Bracknell Forest.

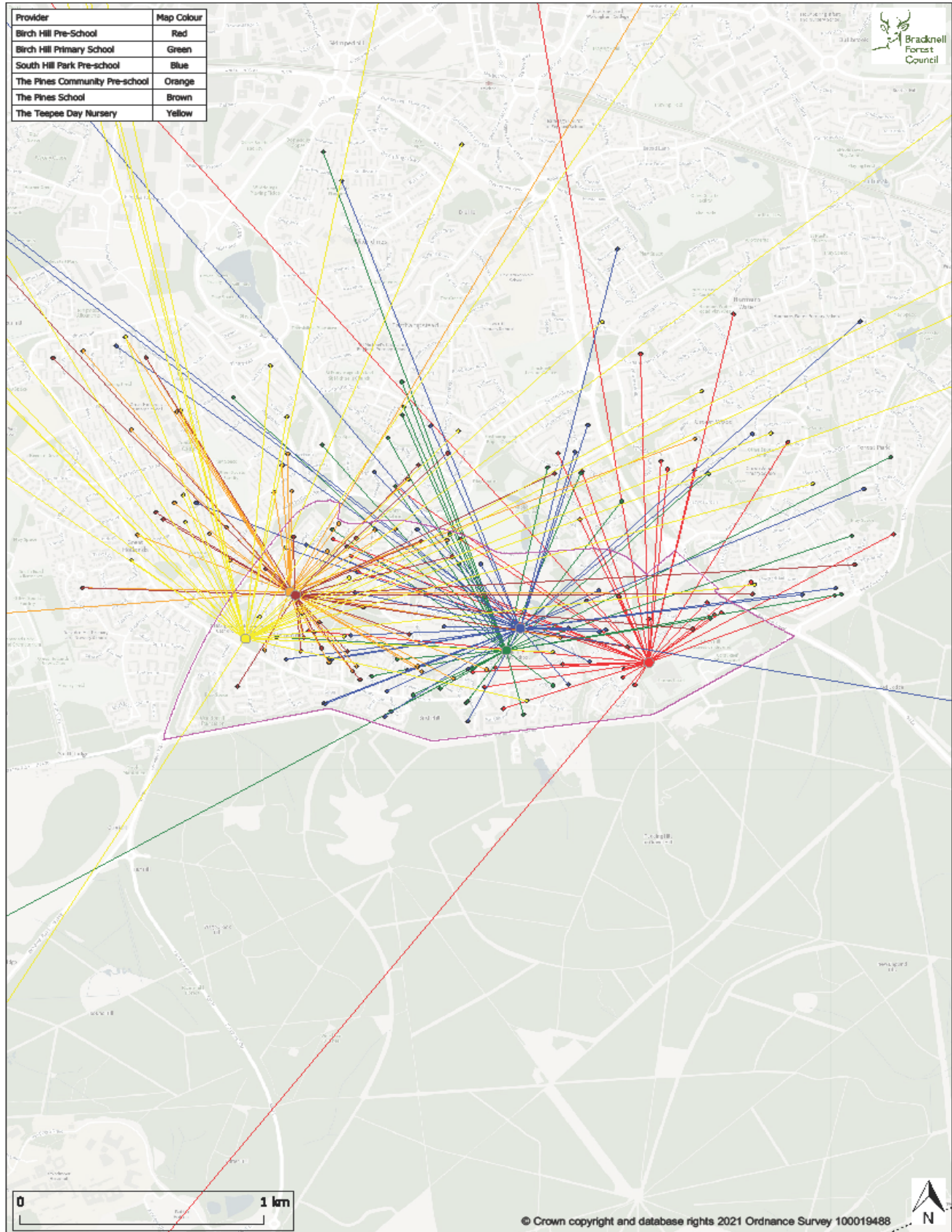
Table 48: Free entitlement uptake by resident ward

<i>Ward</i>	<i>Age 2</i>	<i>Age 3</i>	<i>Age 4</i>	<i>Total</i>
Hanworth	6	55	44	105
Other Bracknell Forest wards	5	76	37	118
Outside Bracknell Forest	1	2	2	5
Total	12	133	83	228

Source: BFC free entitlement funding data

The distribution of children accessing the free entitlement in group provisions is shown in figure 13.

Figure 13: Attending Children Distribution – Hanworth



8.11. Harmans Water

8.11.1. Population

The total estimated population of children in Harmans Water in the Summer term 2021 aged 0-14 was 1,978, of which:

- 642 are aged under 5
- 276 are aged 3 and 4 and could be eligible for funded early years places
- 1,048 are aged 5 to 11
- 288 are aged 12 to 14

8.11.2. Available childcare

The uptake figures include funded places for 2-year-olds and universal and extended free entitlement places for 3 and 4-year-olds.

Table 49: Childcare by provider type

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Number of providers</i>	<i>Estimated capacity</i>	<i>Uptake of funded places</i>
Childminders*	17	113	20.24
Nursery classes in maintained schools	1	90	78
Nursery classes in academies	0	0	0
PVI providers	2	128	67.93
After school club	1	Insufficient data	n/a
Breakfast club	1	Insufficient data	n/a
Holiday club	2	Insufficient data	n/a

Sources: OFSTED, Bracknell Forest Local Directory, BFC Free entitlement funding data

* childminder capacity includes places for school age children

8.11.3. Early years free entitlement funding

A total of 121 children accessed the early years free entitlements in Harmans Water. Of these 58 (48%) were resident in Harmans Water, 61 (50%) were resident in other Bracknell Forest wards and 2 (2%) were resident outside of Bracknell Forest.

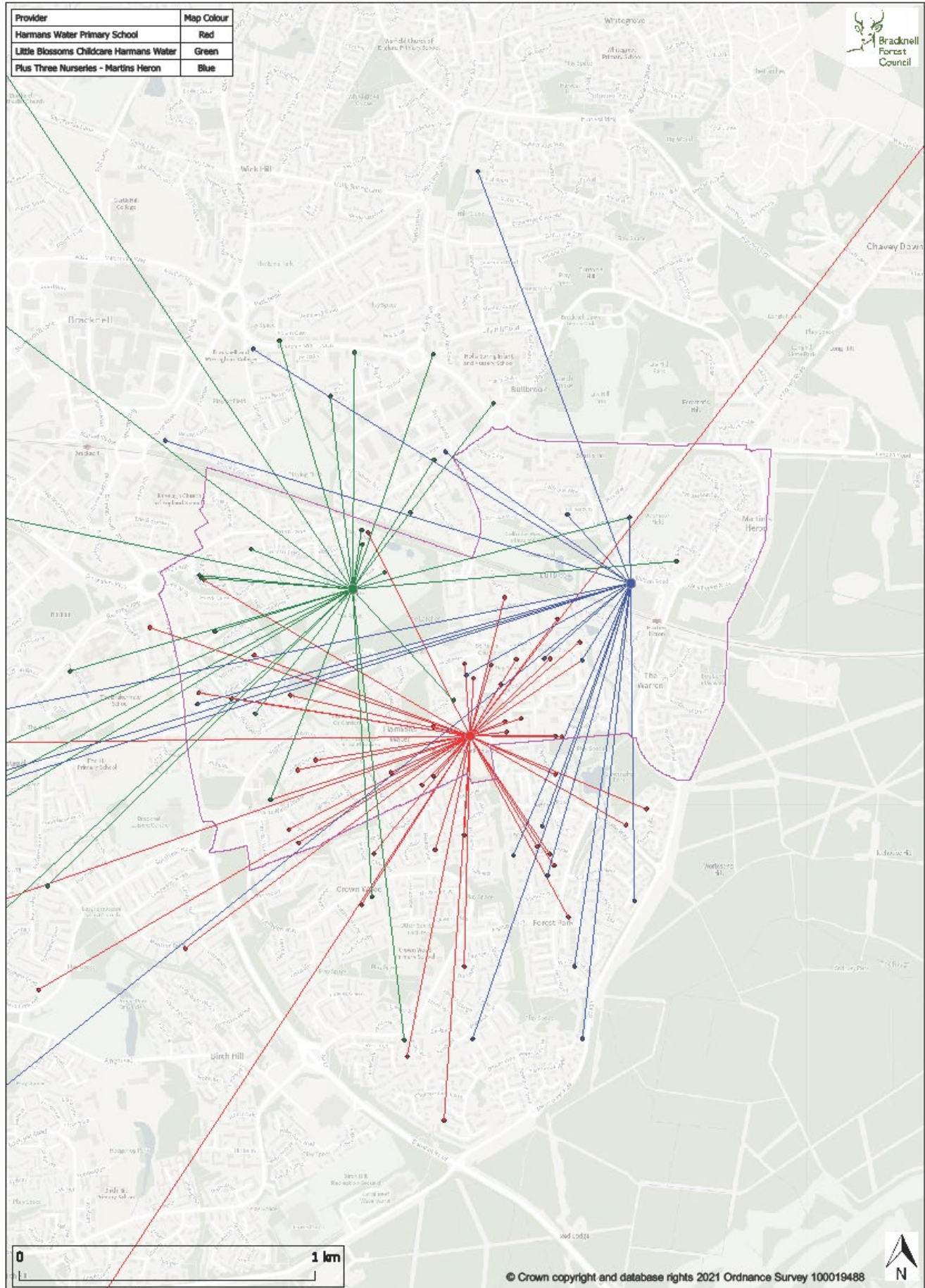
Table 50: Free entitlement uptake by resident ward

<i>Ward</i>	<i>Age 2</i>	<i>Age 3</i>	<i>Age 4</i>	<i>Total</i>
Harmans Water	5	34	19	58
Other Bracknell Forest wards	11	33	17	61
Outside Bracknell Forest	0	2	0	2
Total	16	69	36	121

Source: BFC free entitlement funding data

The distribution of children accessing the free entitlement in group provisions is shown in figure 14.

Figure 14: Attending Children Distribution – Harmans Water



8.12. Little Sandhurst and Wellington

8.12.1. Population

The total estimated population of children in Little Sandhurst & Wellington in the Summer term 2021 aged 0-14 was 938, of which:

- 262 are aged under 5
- 117 are aged 3 and 4 and could be eligible for funded early years places
- 501 are aged 5 to 11
- 175 are aged 12 to 14

8.12.2. Available childcare

The uptake figures include funded places for 2-year-olds and universal and extended free entitlement places for 3 and 4-year-olds.

Table 51: Childcare by provider type

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Number of providers</i>	<i>Estimated capacity</i>	<i>Uptake of funded places</i>
Childminders*	3	15	7.76
Nursery classes in maintained schools	1	32	28.4
Nursery classes in academies	0	0	0
PVI providers	2	167	55.87
After school club	3	Insufficient data	n/a
Breakfast club	1	Insufficient data	n/a
Holiday club	4	Insufficient data	n/a

Sources: OFSTED, Bracknell Forest Local Directory, BFC Free entitlement funding data

* childminder capacity includes places for school age children

8.12.3. Early years free entitlement funding

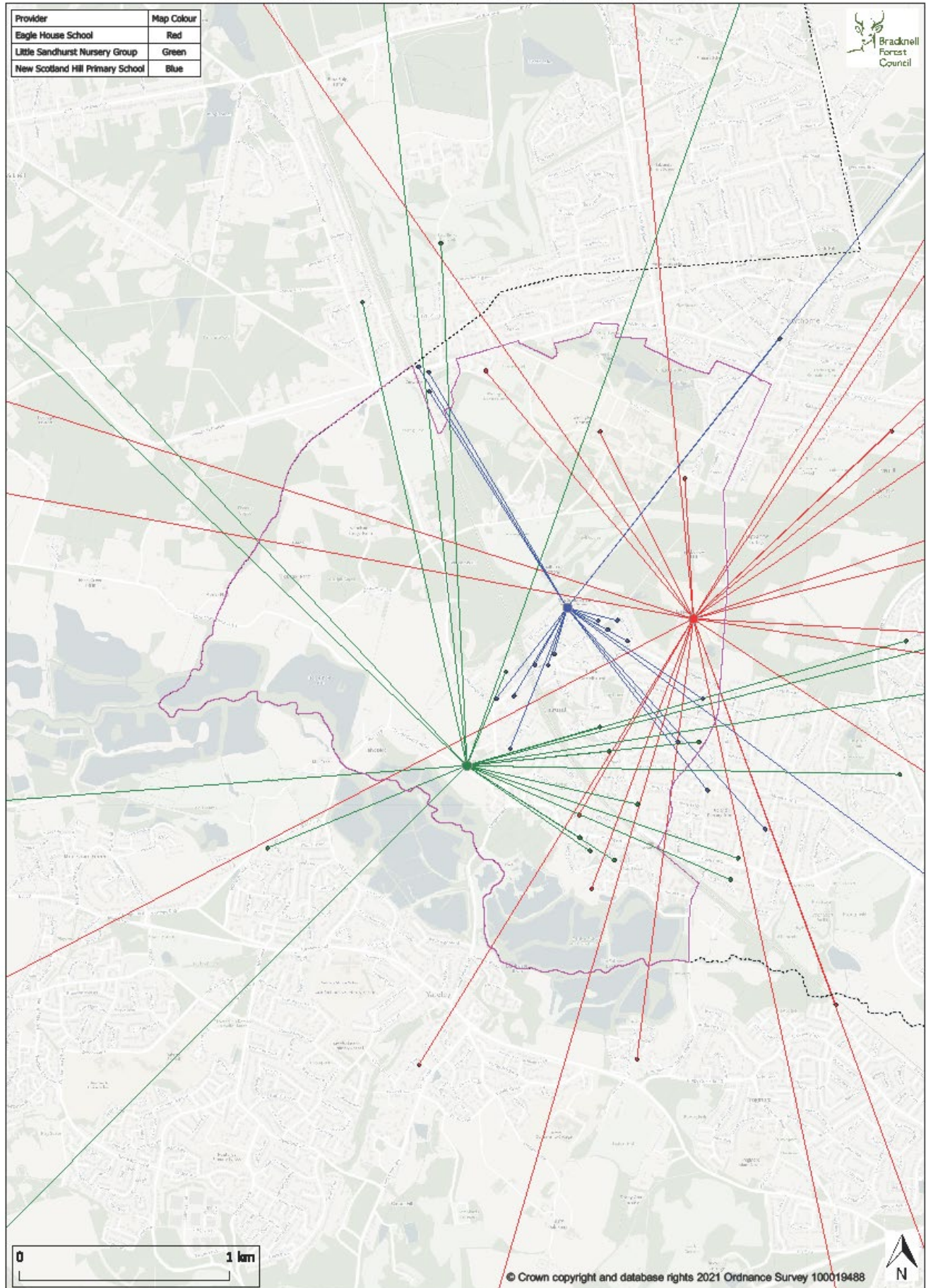
A total of 75 children accessed the early years free entitlements in Little Sandhurst & Wellington. Of these 29 (38%) were resident in Little Sandhurst & Wellington, 23 (31%) were resident in other Bracknell Forest wards and 23 (31%) were resident outside of Bracknell Forest.

Table 52: Free entitlement uptake by resident ward

<i>Ward</i>	<i>Age 2</i>	<i>Age 3</i>	<i>Age 4</i>	<i>Total</i>
Little Sandhurst & Wellington	0	18	11	29
Other Bracknell Forest wards	2	16	5	23
Outside Bracknell Forest	3	12	8	23
Total	5	46	24	75

Source: BFC free entitlement funding data

The distribution of children accessing the free entitlement in group provisions is shown in figure 15.

Figure 15: Attending Children Distribution - Little Sandhurst and Wellington

8.13. Old Bracknell

8.13.1. Population

The total estimated population of children in Old Bracknell in the Summer term 2021 aged 0-14 was 1,199, of which:

- 402 are aged under 5
- 167 are aged 3 and 4 and could be eligible for funded early years places
- 618 are aged 5 to 11
- 179 are aged 12 to 14

8.13.2. Available childcare

The uptake figures include funded places for 2-year-olds and universal and extended free entitlement places for 3 and 4-year-olds.

Table 53: Childcare by provider type

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Number of providers</i>	<i>Estimated capacity</i>	<i>Uptake of funded places</i>
Childminders*	10	63	21.6
Nursery classes in maintained schools	1	26	25.6
Nursery classes in academies	0	0	0
PVI providers	3	78	59.87
After school club	0	Insufficient data	n/a
Breakfast club	0	Insufficient data	n/a
Holiday club	4	Insufficient data	n/a

Sources: OFSTED, Bracknell Forest Local Directory, BFC Free entitlement funding data

* childminder capacity includes places for school age children

8.13.3. Early years free entitlement funding

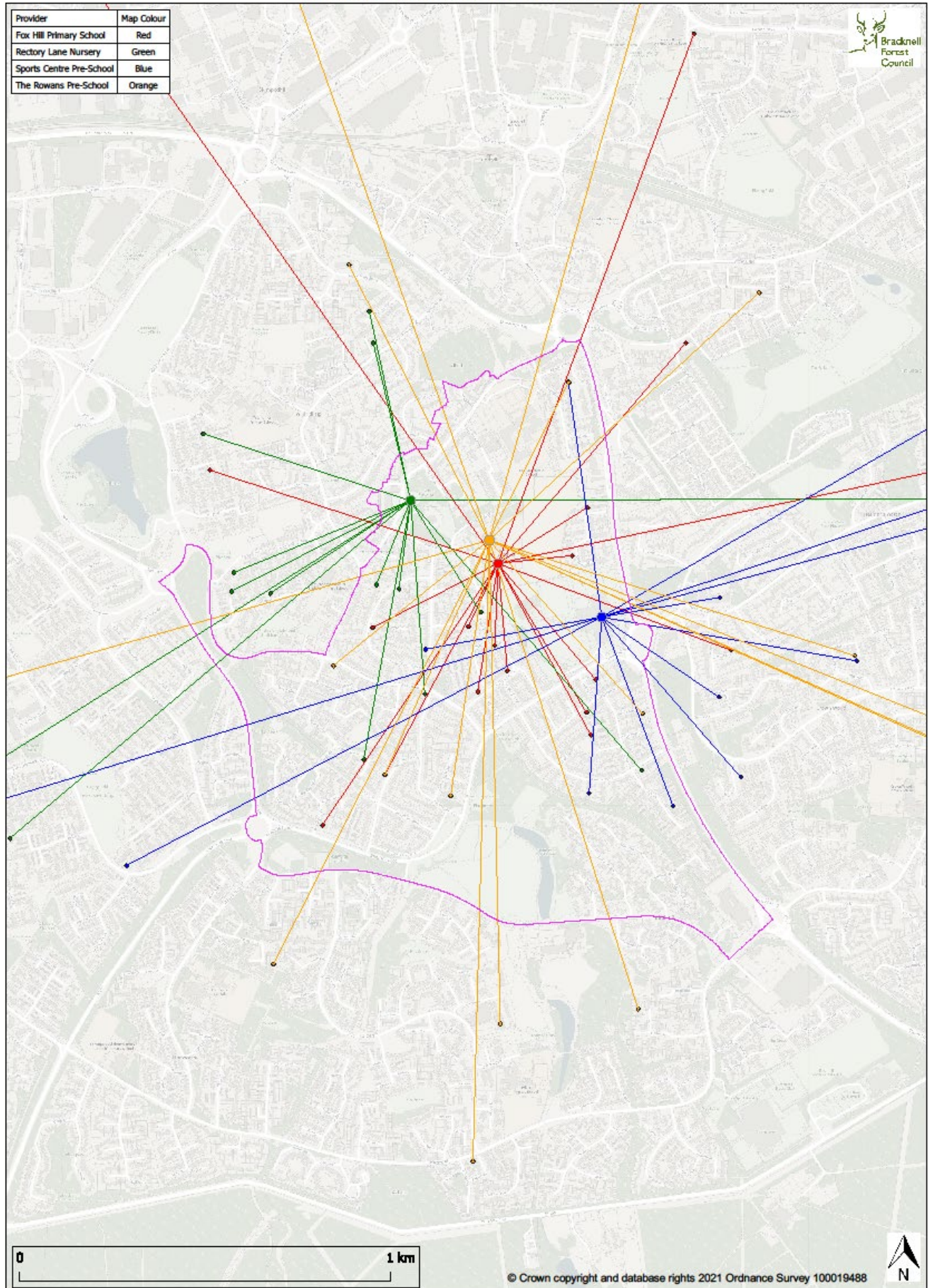
A total of 80 children accessed the early years free entitlements in Old Bracknell. Of these 30 (38%) were resident in Old Bracknell, 48 (60%) were resident in other Bracknell Forest wards and 2 (2%) were resident outside of Bracknell Forest.

Table 54: Free entitlement uptake by resident ward

<i>Ward</i>	<i>Age 2</i>	<i>Age 3</i>	<i>Age 4</i>	<i>Total</i>
Old Bracknell	4	18	8	30
Other Bracknell Forest wards	10	27	11	48
Outside Bracknell Forest	0	1	1	2
Total	14	46	20	80

Source: BFC free entitlement funding data

The distribution of children accessing the free entitlement in group provisions is shown in figure 16.

Figure 16: Attending Children Distribution - Old Bracknell

8.14. Owlsmoor

8.14.1. Population

The total estimated population of children in Owlsmoor in the Summer term 2021 aged 0-14 was 911, of which:

- 283 are aged under 5
- 122 are aged 3 and 4 and could be eligible for funded early years places
- 482 are aged 5 to 11
- 146 are aged 12 to 14

8.14.2. Available childcare

The uptake figures include funded places for 2-year-olds and universal and extended free entitlement places for 3 and 4-year-olds.

Table 55: Childcare by provider type

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Number of providers</i>	<i>Estimated capacity</i>	<i>Uptake of funded places</i>
Childminders*	9	54	8
Nursery classes in maintained schools	1	68	55
Nursery classes in academies	0	0	0
PVI providers	1	60	43.4
After school club	1	Insufficient data	n/a
Breakfast club	1	Insufficient data	n/a
Holiday club	0	Insufficient data	n/a

Sources: OFSTED, Bracknell Forest Local Directory, BFC Free entitlement funding data

* childminder capacity includes places for school age children

8.14.3. Early years free entitlement funding

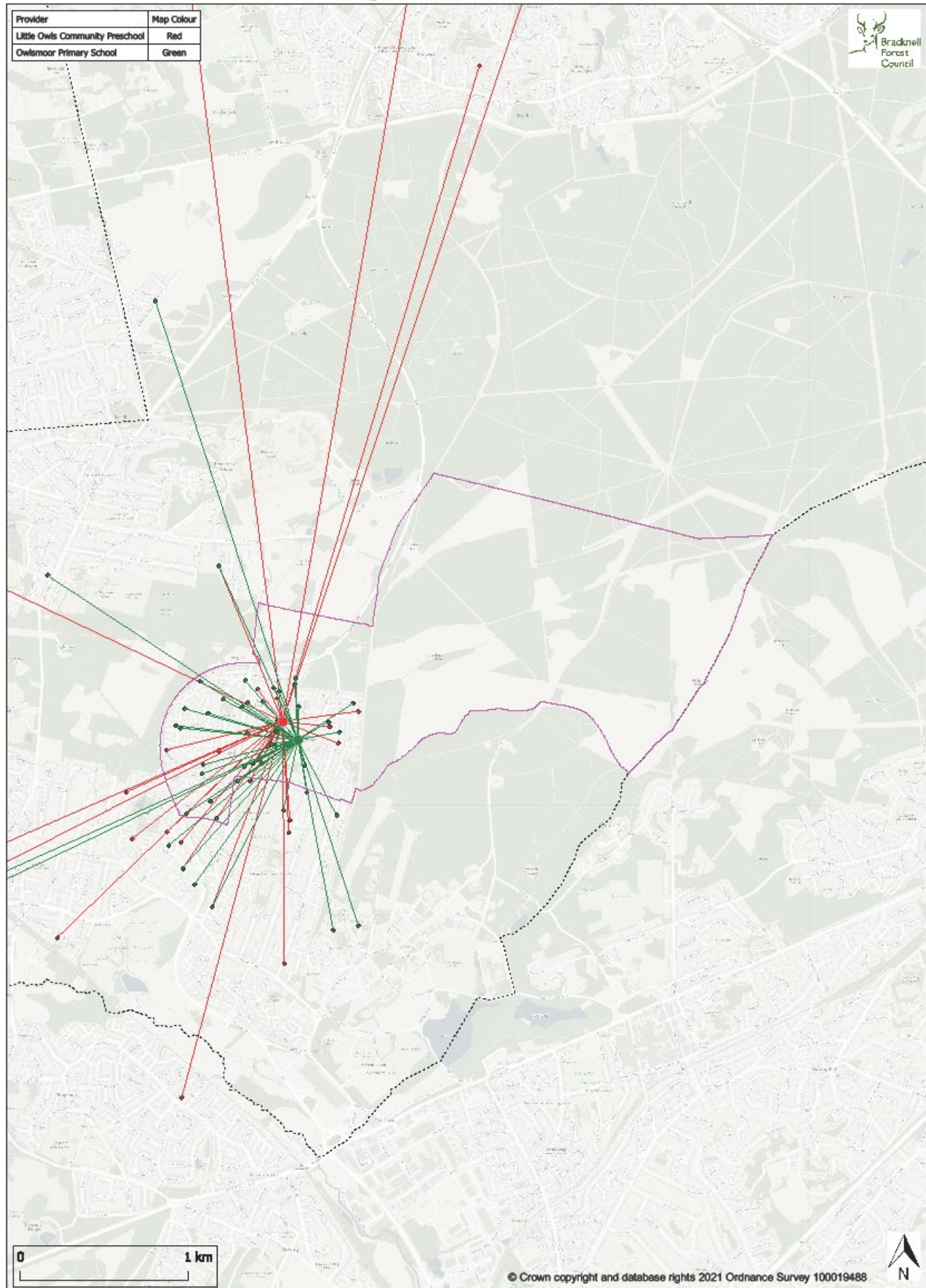
A total of 82 children accessed the early years free entitlements in Owlsmoor. Of these 43 (53%) were resident in Owlsmoor, 37 (45%) were resident in other Bracknell Forest wards and 2 (2%) were resident outside of Bracknell Forest.

Table 56: Free entitlement uptake by resident ward

<i>Ward</i>	<i>Age 2</i>	<i>Age 3</i>	<i>Age 4</i>	<i>Total</i>
Owlsmoor	0	30	13	43
Other Bracknell Forest wards	0	17	20	37
Outside Bracknell Forest	0	2	0	2
Total	0	49	33	82

Source: BFC free entitlement funding data

The distribution of children accessing the free entitlement in group provisions is shown in figure 17.

Figure 17: Attending Children Distribution – Owlsmoor

8.15. Priestwood and Garth

8.15.1. Population

The total estimated population of children in Priestwood and Garth in the Summer term 2021 aged 0-14 was 1,562, of which:

- 466 are aged under 5
- 195 are aged 3 and 4 and could be eligible for funded early years places
- 834 are aged 5 to 11
- 262 are aged 12 to 14

8.15.2. Available childcare

The uptake figures include funded places for 2-year-olds and universal and extended free entitlement places for 3 and 4-year-olds.

Table 57: Childcare by provider type

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Number of providers</i>	<i>Estimated capacity</i>	<i>Uptake of funded places</i>
Childminders*	16	93	16.8
Nursery classes in maintained schools	2	114	100
Nursery classes in academies	0	0	0
PVI providers	3	228	160.21
After school club	2	Insufficient data	n/a
Breakfast club	2	Insufficient data	n/a
Holiday club	2	Insufficient data	n/a

Sources: OFSTED, Bracknell Forest Local Directory, BFC Free entitlement funding data

* childminder capacity includes places for school age children

8.15.3. Early years free entitlement funding

A total of 201 children accessed the early years free entitlements in Priestwood and Garth. Of these 83 (42%) were resident in Priestwood and Garth, 99 (49%) were resident in other Bracknell Forest wards and 19 (9%) were resident outside of Bracknell Forest.

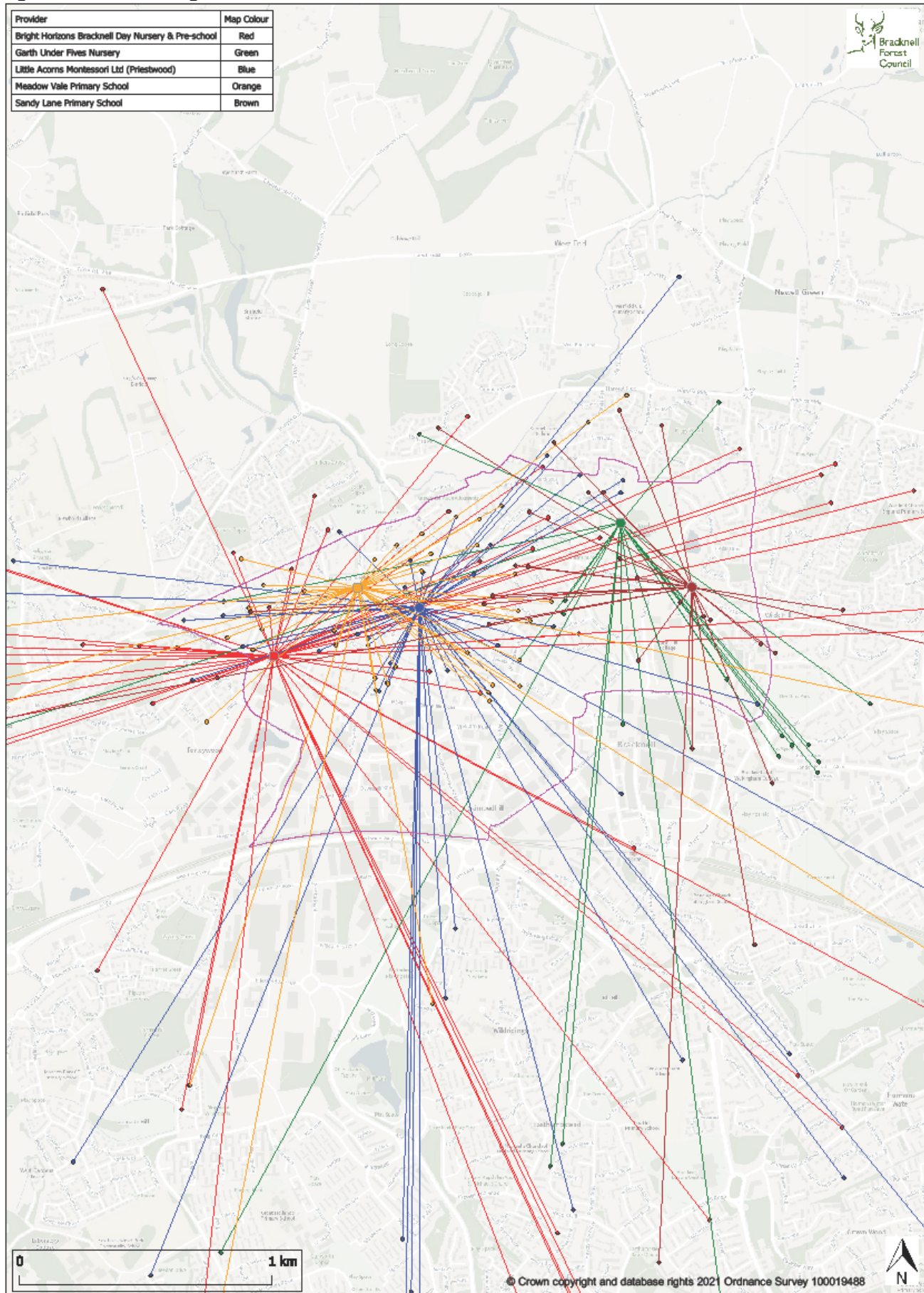
Table 58: Free entitlement uptake by resident ward

<i>Ward</i>	<i>Age 2</i>	<i>Age 3</i>	<i>Age 4</i>	<i>Total</i>
Priestwood and Garth	4	50	29	83
Other Bracknell Forest wards	7	62	30	99
Outside Bracknell Forest	2	13	4	19
Total	13	125	63	201

Source: BFC free entitlement funding data

The distribution of children accessing the free entitlement in group provisions is shown in figure 18.

Figure 18: Attending Children Distribution - Priestwood and Garth



8.16. Warfield Harvest Ride

8.16.1. Population

The total estimated population of children in Warfield Harvest Ride in the Summer term 2021 aged 0-14 was 1,429, of which:

- 422 are aged under 5
- 174 are aged 3 and 4 and could be eligible for funded early years places
- 747 are aged 5 to 11
- 260 are aged 12 to 14

8.16.2. Available childcare

The uptake figures include funded places for 2-year-olds and universal and extended free entitlement places for 3 and 4-year-olds.

Table 59: Childcare by provider type

Type of provision	Number of providers	Estimated capacity	Uptake of funded places
Childminders*	14	93	18.64
Nursery classes in maintained schools #	1	116	88.8
Nursery classes in academies	0	0	0
PVI providers	2	96	43.13
After school club	2	Insufficient data	n/a
Breakfast club	2	Insufficient data	n/a
Holiday club	0	Insufficient data	n/a

Sources: OFSTED, Bracknell Forest Local Directory, BFC Free entitlement funding data

* childminder capacity includes places for school age children

Includes children attending Warfield Primary All Saints & Woodhurst sites

8.16.3. Early years free entitlement funding

A total of 120 children accessed the early years free entitlements in Warfield Harvest Ride. Of these 67 (56%) were resident in Warfield Harvest Ride, 50 (42%) were resident in other Bracknell Forest wards and 3 (2%) were resident outside of Bracknell Forest.

Table 60: Free entitlement uptake by resident ward

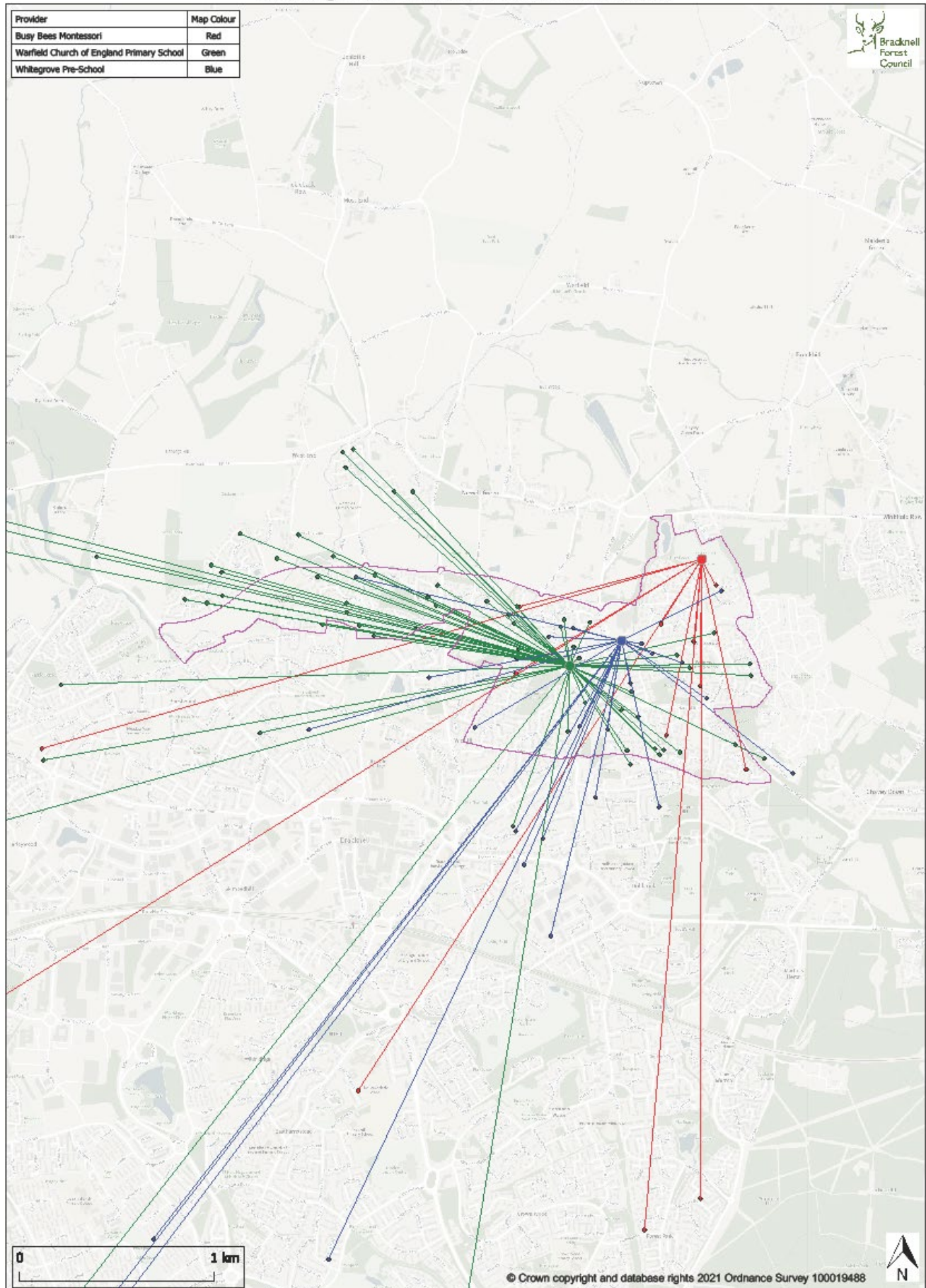
Ward	Age 2	Age 3	Age 4	Total
Warfield Harvest Ride	3	42	22	67
Other Bracknell Forest wards	8	24	18	50
Outside Bracknell Forest	0	1	2	3
Total	11	67	42	120

Source: BFC free entitlement funding data

Includes children attending Warfield Primary All Saints & Woodhurst sites

The distribution of children accessing the free entitlement in group provisions is shown in figure 19.

Figure 19: Attending Children Distribution - Warfield Harvest Ride



8.17. Wildridings and Central

8.17.1. Population

The total estimated population of children in Wildridings and Central in the Summer term 2021 aged 0-14 was 985, of which:

- 339 are aged under 5
- 130 are aged 3 and 4 and could be eligible for funded early years places
- 519 are aged 5 to 11
- 127 are aged 12 to 14

8.17.2. Available childcare

The uptake figures include funded places for 2-year-olds and universal and extended free entitlement places for 3 and 4-year-olds.

Table 61: Childcare by provider type

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Number of providers</i>	<i>Estimated capacity</i>	<i>Uptake of funded places</i>
Childminders*	3	18	1
Nursery classes in maintained schools	1	52	50
Nursery classes in academies	0	0	0
PVI providers	3	264	173.33
After school club	3	Insufficient data	n/a
Breakfast club	3	Insufficient data	n/a
Holiday club	2	Insufficient data	n/a

Sources: OFSTED, Bracknell Forest Local Directory, BFC Free entitlement funding data

* childminder capacity includes places for school age children

8.17.3. Early years free entitlement funding

A total of 161 children accessed the early years free entitlements in Wildridings and Central. Of these 41 (26%) were resident in Wildridings and Central, 114 (71%) were resident in other Bracknell Forest wards and 5 (3%) were resident outside of Bracknell Forest.

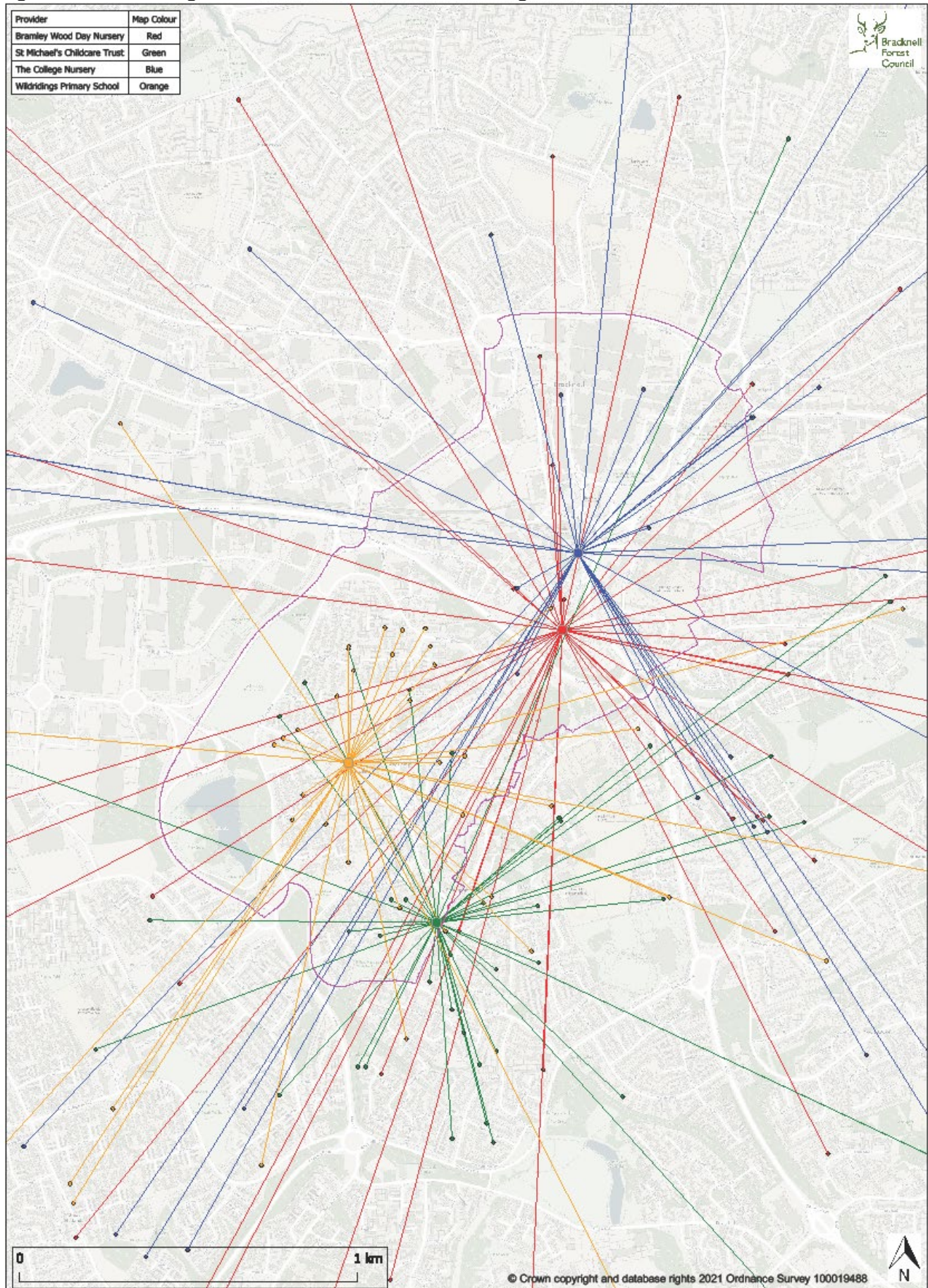
Table 62: Free entitlement uptake by resident ward

<i>Ward</i>	<i>Age 2</i>	<i>Age 3</i>	<i>Age 4</i>	<i>Total</i>
Wildridings and Central	1	23	17	41
Other Bracknell Forest wards	11	65	38	114
Outside Bracknell Forest	0	4	1	5
Total	12	93	56	161

Source: BFC free entitlement funding data

The distribution of children accessing the free entitlement in group provisions is shown in figure 20.

Figure 20: Attending Children Distribution - Wildridings and Central



8.18. Winkfield and Cranbourne

8.18.1. Population

The total estimated population of children in Winkfield and Cranbourne in the Summer term 2021 aged 0-14 was 626, of which:

- 150 are aged under 5
- 53 are aged 3 and 4 and could be eligible for funded early years places
- 348 are aged 5 to 11
- 128 are aged 12 to 14

8.18.2. Available childcare

The uptake figures include funded places for 2-year-olds and universal and extended free entitlement places for 3 and 4-year-olds.

Table 63: Childcare by provider type

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Number of providers</i>	<i>Estimated capacity</i>	<i>Uptake of funded places</i>
Childminders*	0	0	0
Nursery classes in maintained schools	0	0	0
Nursery classes in academies	0	0	0
PVI providers	5	225	180.3
After school club	2	Insufficient data	n/a
Breakfast club	2	Insufficient data	n/a
Holiday club	0	Insufficient data	n/a

Sources: OFSTED, Bracknell Forest Local Directory, BFC Free entitlement funding data

* childminder capacity includes places for school age children

8.18.3. Early years free entitlement funding

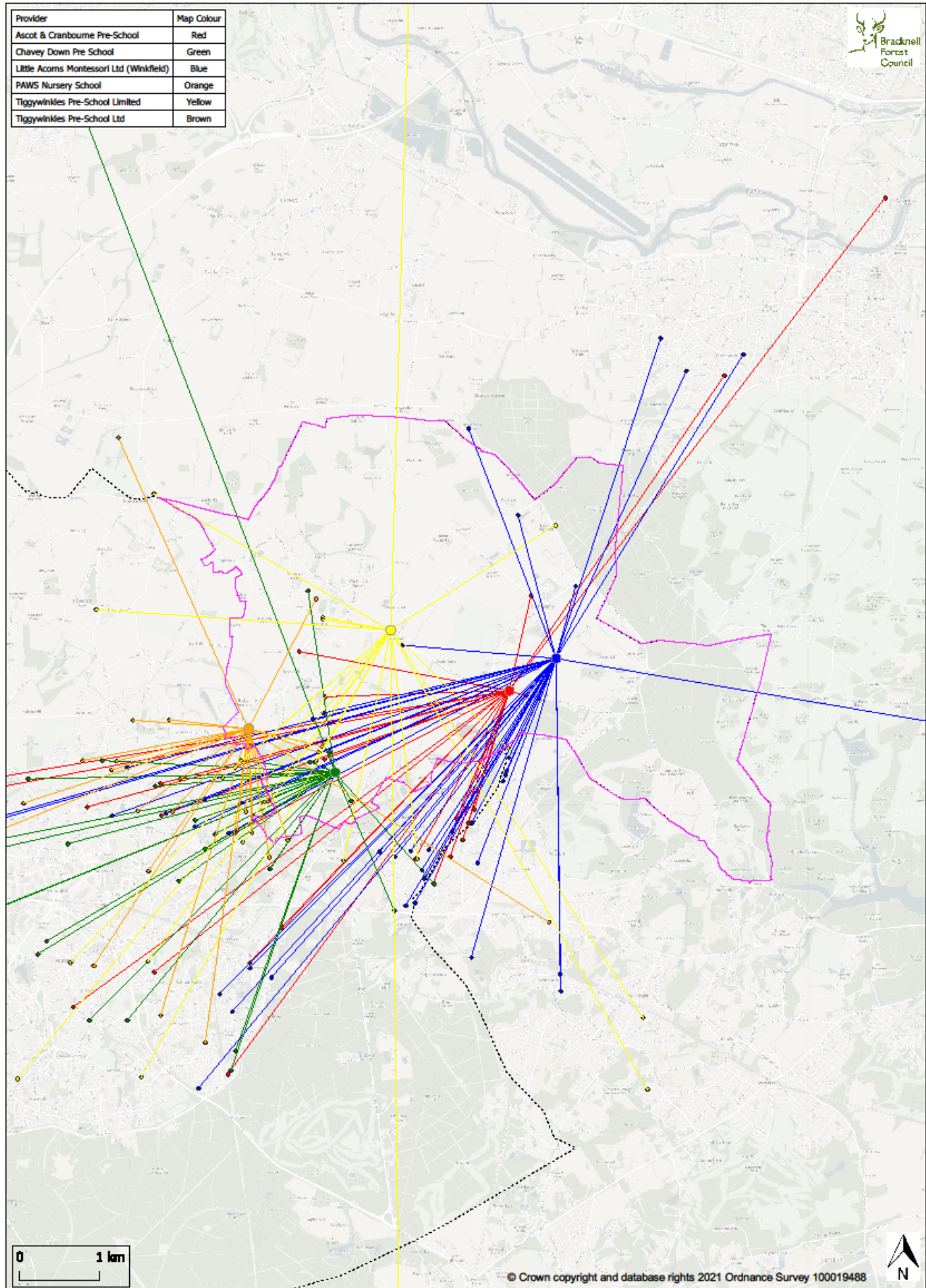
A total of 142 children accessed the early years free entitlements in Winkfield and Cranbourne. Of these 25 (18%) were resident in Winkfield and Cranbourne, 92 (65%) were resident in other Bracknell Forest wards and 25 (17%) were resident outside of Bracknell Forest.

Table 64: Free entitlement uptake by resident ward

<i>Ward</i>	<i>Age 2</i>	<i>Age 3</i>	<i>Age 4</i>	<i>Total</i>
Winkfield and Cranbourne	0	20	5	25
Other Bracknell Forest wards	7	52	33	92
Outside Bracknell Forest	0	14	11	25
Total	7	86	49	142

Source: BFC free entitlement funding data

The distribution of children accessing the free entitlement in group provisions is shown in figure 21.

Figure 21: Attending Children Distribution - Winkfield and Cranbourne

9. Methodology

- Child Population – ONS - Population estimates for the UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: mid-2020.
- Children with EHC plans: based on data held by Bracknell Forest Council
- Supply of childcare: based on data supplied by providers in the summer term 2021 via the Provider Self Update Portal, data provided by OFSTED and supplemented by local intelligence
- Vacancy rates: based on data supplied by providers via the Provider Self Update Portal, Provider Survey, questionnaire and telephone contact.
- Data on take up of funded early education entitlements is based on the data held in the Bracknell Forest payment database for the summer term 2021.
- Price of childcare: cost data per age group submitted by providers via the Provider Self Update Portal, the Family Services Directory and from provider websites.
- Quality of childcare: data on childcare quality is provided by OFSTED
- Data from parents: Online survey using the Objective survey tool on the council website, May and June 2021. Survey advertised via the Council website, Family Information Service website, social media and via childcare providers

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**To: SCHOOLS FORUM
18 NOVEMBER 2021**

High Needs Block Briefing Update Assistant Director – Education and Learning

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Schools Forum has requested a detailed briefing regarding actions being taken to address the High Needs Block deficit budget and the strategies being implemented to secure financial probity of this funding in the future.
- 1.2 There are a number of projects that have been developed around different aspects of SEND provision which have been monitored and scrutinised by a number of boards; High Needs Project Board, People Change Board, SEND Improvement Partnership Group, Children and Young Peoples Performance Board and Members School Improvement Accountability Board.

2 Supporting Information

- 2.1 The HNB grant provided by the DfE to LA's is intended to fund support for SEND children in the borough. The grant, even after the latest increase, is insufficient to meet demands despite an ambitious cost saving and improvement programme. The HNB budget over spent by £4.8m in 2020-21 and the current forecasted deficit at 31 March 2023 has increased to £20.9m. The DfE has strengthened their financial monitoring arrangements and interventions with those LAs experiencing the most significant difficulties which may include BFC.
- 2.2 A set of slides have been provided which contain details of the areas of work which are focused on the High Needs Block. The aim of these projects is to reduce the deficit of the High Needs Block (HNB) element of the schools' budget by implementing and monitoring key elements of the SEND commissioning plan and developing a robust strategy and delivery model.

The timescale for the projects is 3-5 years with the aim of making a significant savings impact; amount to be determined.

- 2.3 The areas of focus are as follows:

- 1. **Governance Framework & processes**
- 2. **Building relationships**
- 3. **Service & Process Review**

- a. Service Review
- b. Process Review: assessments

4. **Data**

- a. Update sufficiency analysis & align data to service needs

5. **Developing the market for SEND / AP & Support**

- a. Specially Resourced Provisions (SRP)
- b. Banding Matrix
- c. Update against priorities and deliverables

6. **Commissioning**

- a. East Berkshire Integrated Therapies (detailed update to follow)
- b. Short Breaks and future commissioning approach (detailed update to follow)
- c. Alternative Provision (AP) - Review Quality Assurance & Due Diligence processes and Commissioning approach
- d. Explore effective routes to market for complex placements

- 2.4 The Department of Education published recommendations for a SEND delivery model in 2021. We have considered this model and are developing a 'locality' delivery model that closely aligns with these recommendations.

In response to recommendations we have three key priorities:

- 1. Transformation of the SEND Support Services
- 2. Developing responsive, flexible and effective local specialist provision
- 3. Building the SEND early help local team and offer around mainstream settings

2.5 The aim of the priorities is to ensure:

- a) Greater inclusion of children educated in their local community school
- b) Fewer pupils in segregated independent provision
- c) Reduction in complaints, mediations, appeals and tribunals
- d) Reduction in exclusions
- e) Less demand and pressure on high-cost provision
- f) Improving outcomes for children and young people

4 **Risk Management Issues**

4.1 There are potential challenges to this model, however it has been identified that this model has been successful in other authorities and has resulted in savings to the High Needs Budget. The key challenges will be:

- a) The disruption caused by the re-design of the SEN support service and the changeover of staff to implement the interim structure
- b) The longstanding systemic issues around governance and allocation of resources means the changes in culture and systems will take time to embed the new processes needed
- c) The change in culture and ways of working to ensure co-production of services with families and schools and capturing and acting on improvements needed
- d) Prioritising really robust and regular communication with all our stakeholders
- e) Although savings will be identified quickly, through improved efficiency, larger savings will not be achieved in a short time frame.

Background Papers

School Forum High Needs Block – SEND Initiatives (PPT pack)

Contact for further information

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TEL: 01344 351492
Cheryl.eyre@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

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High Needs Block

Schools Forum briefing
November 2021

Project Scope

- Project Objective, Problem Definition, Timescale and Savings Impact

Project Objective:

Reduce deficit of the High Needs Block (HNB) element of the schools budget by implementing and monitoring key elements of the SEND commissioning plan and undertaking a service review for the SEND team.

Project Problem Definition:

The HNB grant provided by the DfE to LA's is intended to fund support for SEND children in the borough. The grant, even after the latest increase, is insufficient to meet demands despite an ambitious cost saving and improvement programme. The HNB budget over spent by £4.8m in 2020-21 and the current forecasted deficit at 31 March 2023 (September) has increased to £20.4m. The DfE has strengthened their financial monitoring arrangements and interventions with those LAs experiencing the most significant difficulties which includes BFC.

Timescale:

3 years

Savings Impact:

TBC

Project Workstreams

- Project Workstreams

- 1. Governance Framework & processes**

- 2. Building relationships**

- 3. Service & Process Review**

- a. Service Review
- b. Process Review: assessments

- 4. Data**

- ∞ a. Update sufficiency analysis & align data to service needs

- 5. Developing the market for SEND / AP & Support**

- a. Specially Resourced Provisions (SRP)
- b. Banding Matrix
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- 6. Commissioning**

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Project Workstreams

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1) Governance Framework and processes

- Capita ONE update
- Emma Shenton and Mike Carne are leading work on improvements to Capita ONE between now and end of December 2021 and have split this piece of work down into three phases:
 - Phase 1 – Utilise the existing system
 - Phase 2 – Consider additional modules
 - Phase 3 – Potential new system

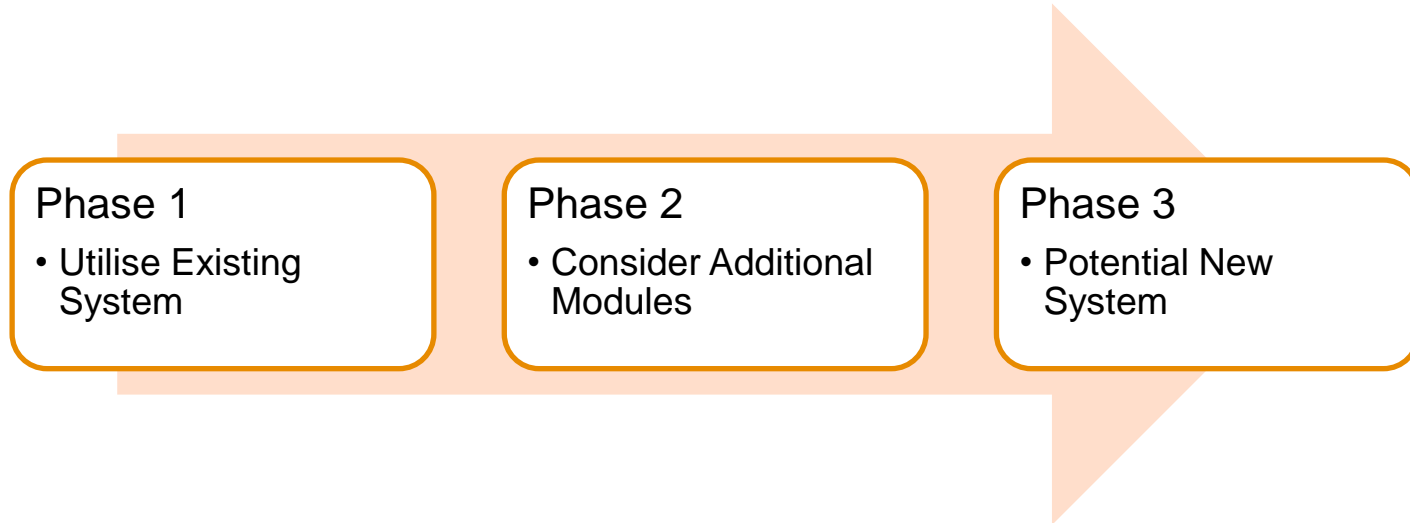
1) Governance Framework and processes

- Capita ONE update (cont.)
- Priority focus at the moment is working on Phase 1, Stage 1 – Urgent Basics – We have determined with Nicola and the team that the urgent basics that need capturing within the Capita ONE system and the priorities at this stage are:
 - Capturing where we are in the assessment process
 - Making sure all children with EHCP's are in the system – records do not have to be complete but a minimal level of essential data should be captured.
 - A meeting with Rhian and Paul S to discuss data – clear understanding on what the data they need to be there, what needs to be cleansed, what needs to be sorted and what is the basic reporting.
 - Planning how we are going to get the current data
 - Meeting regarding the assessment stage (Start of stage 2) the week Emma is back from leave
 - Making sure the right caseworker is assigned to the child
- We now have access to the Capita ONE test system so we can start planning how the data will be inputted and assessing the fields and modules currently within the system and can begin checking the system configuration.

Systems Workstream

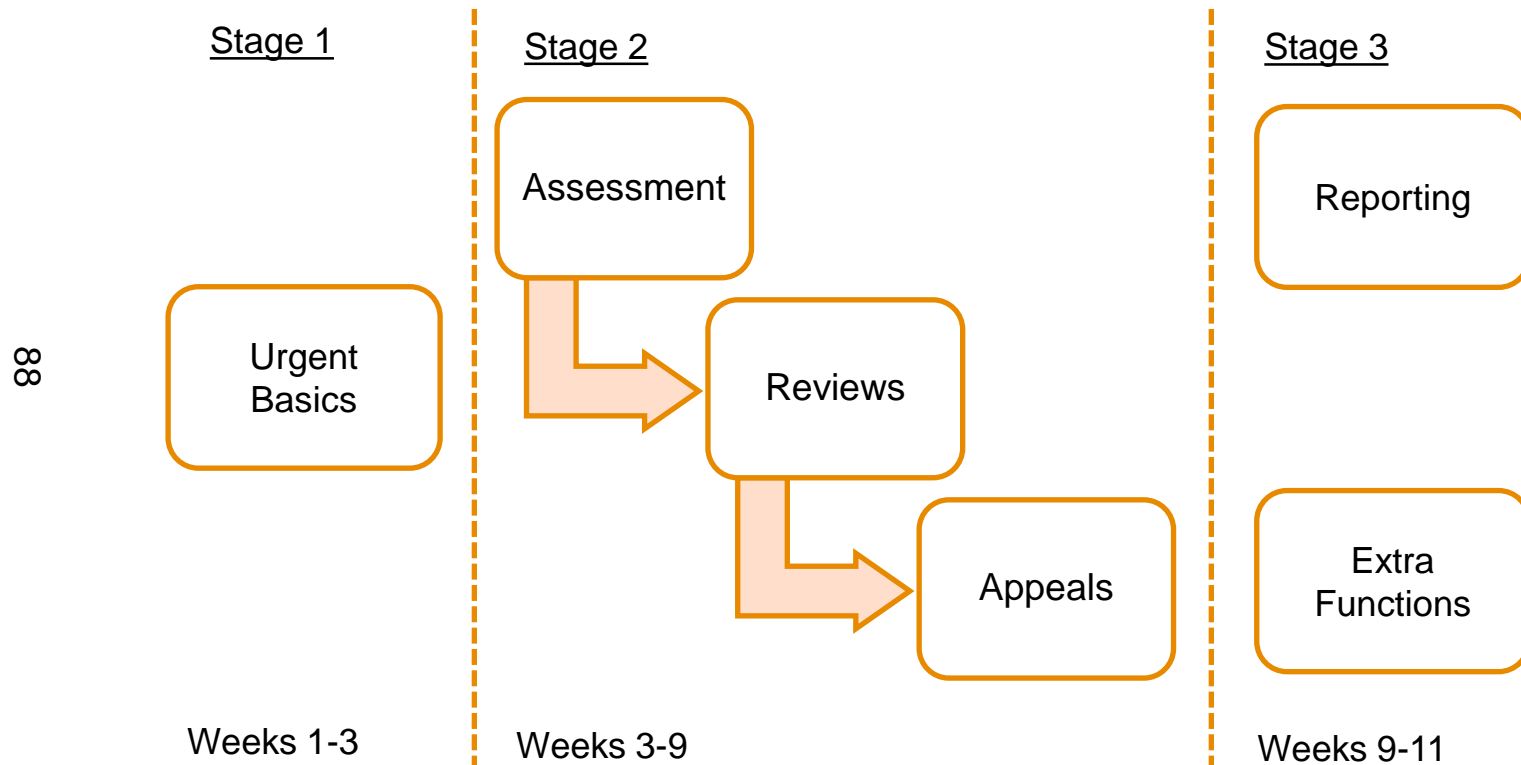
- Phases of Workstream

87



Phase 1 - Detail

- Detailed Implementation



Each Stage to Include

- Click to add text

System Configuration Check

- What fields do we need?
- Anything we need to change in configuration?
- Make changes

Training

- Sufficient rough and ready training to enable short term activity

New Entries

- Starting to use system

Feedback

- Capture new entries feedback and RAG rate the opportunities (R-Immediate, A-this phase, G – future phases)

Catch up data

- Begin using individuals spare time to populate missing live records

Project Workstreams

- Project Workstreams

1. Governance Framework & processes
- 2. Building relationships**
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2) Building Relationships

- SEND communication with schools and families

We have prioritised our communication with schools by:

- Sending out to all schools a 'Who is Who' list and contact details for all SEND support officers attached to each school in the borough and as well as the link professional attached to each of the schools
- Putting in place Individual schools meetings with the SEND team manager with a focus on annual reviews outstanding for the last academic year and date setting for the reviews for this academic year with a focus on transition
- We will use the meeting to update SEND school contacts as well as discuss children who are currently undergoing assessment
- Linking with IASS and the PCF to prepare a newsletter for families and develop locality 'drop-ins' for families to commence in November

2) Building Relationships

- Keeping in touch – regular SEND meetings
- Half termly primary head teacher meetings from Autumn 2021 will now take place across the three local areas and half termly headteacher meetings with secondary headteachers commencing in November
- Half termly SENDCo network meetings took place in October and are planned for December
- Half termly individual SENDCo meetings with the SEND team managers are taking place throughout October and are planned in December

Project Workstreams

- Project Workstreams

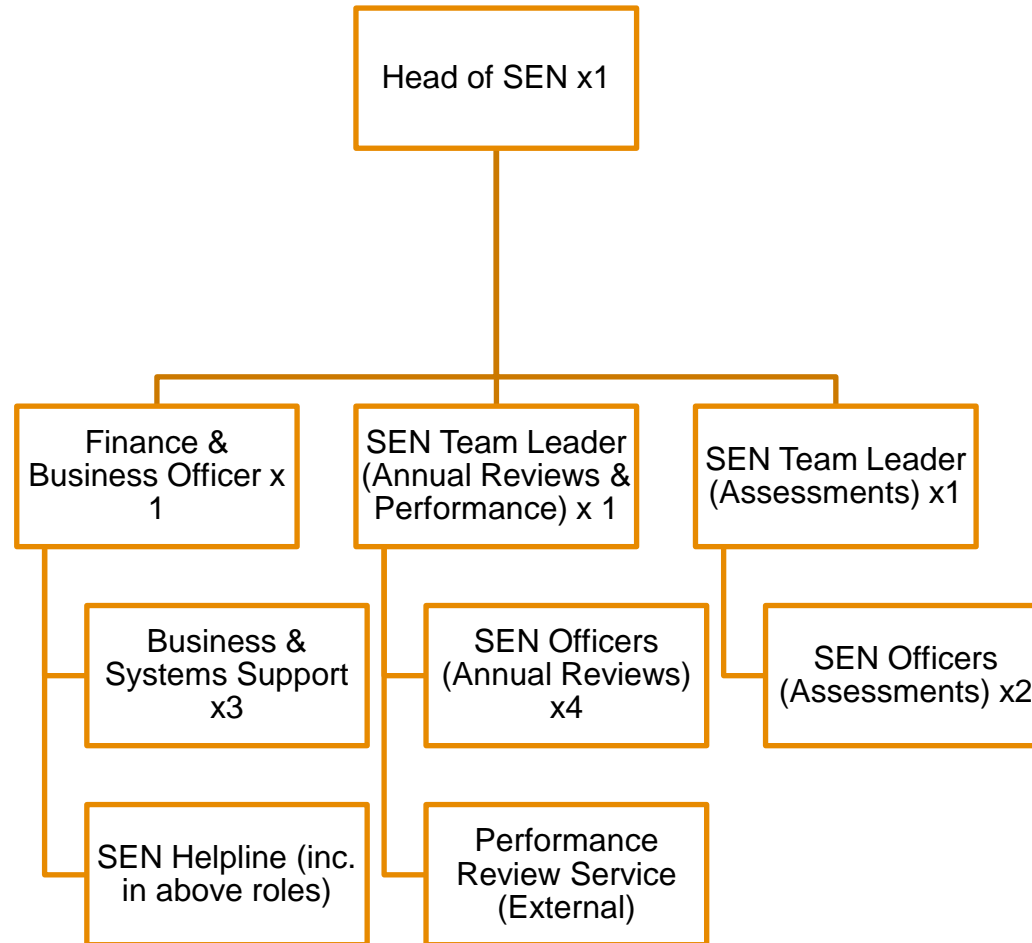
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3a) Service Review

- Update on Service Review
- Modelling finalised: **15th October**
- JDs to be drafted/reviewed/approved for all roles in new structure: **29th October**
- CL to work with HR/Finance to complete impact documents: **2nd November**
- CL to meet with CE/NJ to get sign-off: **3rd November**
- CL to present 3 docs to PY/ PC (with CE): **4th November**
- CE to draft paper for Grainne/DMT/CMT: **5th November**
- Paper to be presented and approved @ CMT (allowing 2 weeks for DMT/CMT process): **19th November**
- Consultation to start: **22nd November (30 days)**
- Consultation to end: **21st December**
- Post consultation CMT approval required: **(TBC)**
- Recruitment to begin: **January 2022**

3a) Service Review

- Proposed SEN Size and Shape



Information Advice
& Support Service
(SENDIASS)

Bracknell
Parent and
Carer Forum

3b) Process Review – Assessments

- Final remaining action regarding website pages for SEND in progress

Project Workstreams

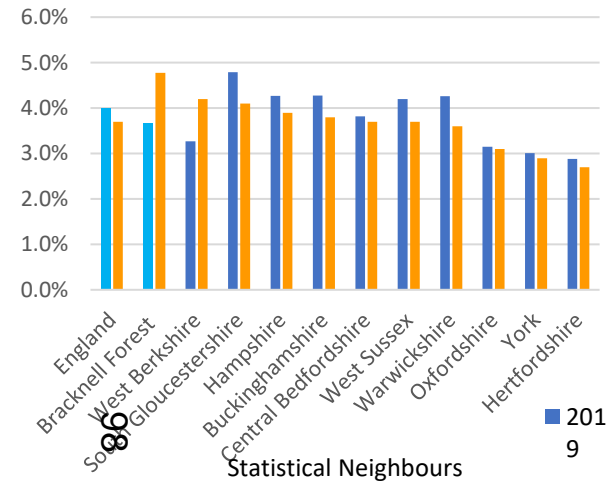
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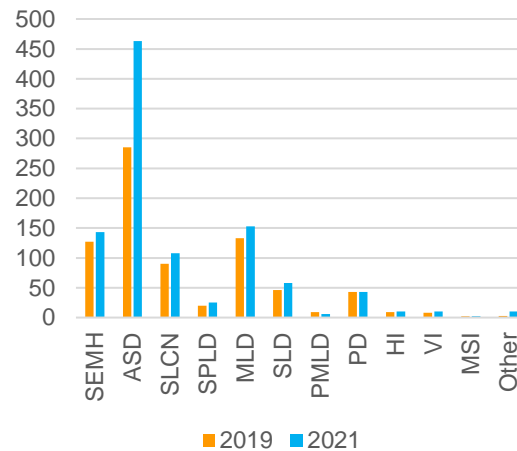
4a) Sufficiency Plan – Key Headlines

- Updated Sufficiency Plan to be circulated in October

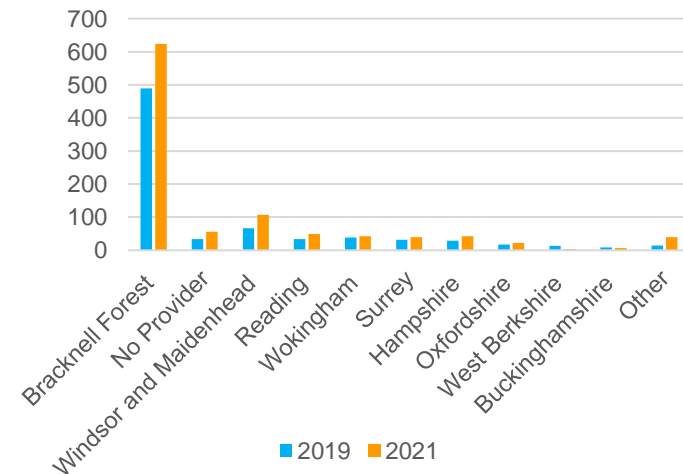
Percentage of CYP with EHCP in 2021



Primary Needs of CYP with EHCP



Location of providers for CYP with EHCP



- The percentage of CYP with EHCP in Bracknell Forest is higher than England and our statistical neighbours.
- ASD remains the highest primary need, however ASD has increased by 62%, and MLD by 15% with SEMH increasing by 13%.
- Of the 1031 CYP with an EHCP, the needs of 624 of these are met in placements within the borough (figure 21). For CYP not placed in Bracknell Forest, the majority are placed in the nearby boroughs of Windsor & Maidenhead, Reading and Wokingham
- Where CYP have been placed in special schools outside the borough specifically in independent and non-maintained special schools, the most common primary needs are SEMH and ASD. There are 86 CYP with these two primary needs who are placed outside the borough
- The total spend on provisions for special school placements in other local authorities, BFC mainstream school and in independent schools has shown a notable increase. Over the three-year period (2019-2021)
- The needs with the highest average placement cost are PMLD and SEMH where over half these CYP are placed outside the borough or in independent and non-maintained schools.
- The total spend on out of borough special schools grew by 31% with the cost of each placement at those schools having increased by an average of 3%. The total spend on independent schools increased by 144% in three years and the cost of each placement only increased by 22%.

Project Workstreams

- Project Workstreams

1. Governance Framework & processes
2. Building relationships
3. Service & Process Review
 - a. Service Review
 - b. Process Review: assessments
4. Data
 - g a. Update sufficiency analysis & align data to service needs
- 5. Developing the market for SEND / AP & Support**
 - a. Specially Resourced Provisions (SRP)
 - b. Banding Matrix
 - c. Update against priorities and deliverables
6. Commissioning
 - a. East Berkshire Integrated Therapies (detailed update to follow)
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5a) SRP – current position

Blue = new provision yellow = existing provision * = R & KS1 to start ** = YrR only

Setting	Specialism	Nursery	KS1	KS2	KS3&4	October 2021 Uptake	Places when fully commissioned
North Bracknell							
Birch Hill	Autism & MLD	x	✓	✓	x	5	10
Harmans Water	SEMH	x	✓	✓	x	4	14
Kings Academy	ASC	x	✓	✓	x	1	10
South Bracknell							
Owlsmoor	SLD (SEN Unit)	x	✓	✓	x	5	8
100 Rainbow	Communication & Interaction / ASC						
		✓	✓	x	x	2	10
Meadow Vale	Speech & Language	x	✓	✓	x	4	TBC
Crowthorne and Sandhurst							
Sandy Lane	Autism and / or Language & Communication	x	✓	✓	x	9	14
The Pines	MLD with Autism or Speech & Language needs	x	✓	✓	x	9	20
The Rise	ASC	x	x	x	✓	56	56
Total						95	142

5b) Banding Matrix

- Work is currently being undertaken by the Head Teachers Working Group
- Work will then commence for specialised services to review, update and agree Head Teacher Working Group outputs

101

Setting the Scene:



DfE Priorities 2021



1. High quality outcomes supported by the most appropriate service in education, health and care
2. Back mainstream schools to better meet the needs of the majority of children with SEND
3. Make the EHCP process more streamlined and consistent, and increase capacity in the specialist sector to place children close to home, at a sustainable cost

102

Co-production with children, young people, their families and carers to continue being the underpinning principle across the system

Bracknell Forest strategy closely aligned with DfE priorities

Setting the Scene:



Department
for Education

Groups of schools model

For the vast majority of children with SEND, they can and should have their needs met in mainstream settings.

One of our biggest areas for reform is aimed at reforming SEND provision in mainstream settings so that it is easier for schools to access resource without the need for an EHCP and they are incentivised to intervene early. We are exploring a groups of schools model, to put a greater share of budgets in the hands of local school leaders whilst recognising that SEND provision is generally above what an individual school would be able to arrange.

The overarching aims of a groups of schools model is therefore to:

- Put funding for the majority of children with SEND firmly in the hands of schools to make access to the necessary provision easier, quicker, supporting improved early intervention and consistent high-quality support
 - Promote co-operation and inclusion through a clear funding, incentive and accountability structure which leads to improved financial sustainability, without creating unnecessary complexity or burden
-

5c) Update against priorities and deliverables

- Our Three Key Priorities

104

To support schools in developing local provision by strengthening an early help offer of **SEND health and education local teams** around our mainstream schools

Working closely with the Commissioning team to review and develop **responsive, flexible, and effective local specialist provision**

Ensuring the special educational needs team **responds to EHCP requests and reviews and the allocation of resources** efficiently and effectively, resolves concern early and **performs highly against its performance indicators**

A SEND programme has been developed and project leads meet fortnightly. A weekly sit – rep has been developed to **drive through improved performance**

Key Deliverables: Priority One – September 2021

- Transformation of the SEND Support Services
- A recovery programme is in place for the completion of out of time assessments
- Roll out is now taking place for cycle 4 of the multi-agency quality assurance of EHCPs
- Specific focused work for children with EHCPs transitioning is being closely monitored
- Additional legal and officer resources with daily monitoring is in place to address the backlog of complaints and tribunals
- Decision Making Groups are being finalised and implemented to ensure tight governance for the allocation of specialised resources for special schools/SRPs/allocation of local resources
- Terms of reference have been drafted and consultation rolled out with stakeholders
- A SEND interim leadership structure has been developed along with job descriptions and implemented
- Demand modelling is in the final stages of completion
- Business case developed for the new structure and awaiting financial costing based on the outcomes of the demand modelling

Key Deliverables: Priority Two – September 2021

- Developing responsive, flexible and effective local specialist provision
- Planning is now completed, and individual desk top school documentation developed for the roll out of the independent schools' review for pupils currently accessing the provision and will commence w/c 18 October.
- SLA template has been finalised for SRPs and decision-making groups (including draft terms of reference) now in place for the allocation of resources led by SEND managers who over-see the specialist provision. Individual meetings with HTs are in place for November as well as HT/SRP network meetings to share the new documentation and governance arrangements. Further work is taking place to consider gaps in SRP provision across each of the three localities at Key Stage three.
- Initial discussions have taken place with the special school to develop outreach for mainstream schools
- Work is due to commence to develop the service criteria for accessing special school and SRPs and monthly reporting with the team managers to ensure accountability and escalate requests for additional resources.

Key Deliverables: Priority Three – September 2021

- Building the SEND early help local team and offer around mainstream settings
- SEND specialised teams are being reconfigured to work across three clusters to maximise integrated working
- Individual and network meetings with all school leaders and SENCOs and the SEND cluster team are in the first roll out
- Regular meetings are in place with IASS and the PCF to play a strategic role within the SEND programme and in generating and shaping of solutions.
- Development of an early support offer for individual families including drop ins, professional meetings, and networks for parents/carers is underway working closely with IASS
- The service is working closely with IASS to put in place a SEND young people's forum to play a key role in shaping the work of the programme

Key Metrics

- Key metrics will include:
 - **Greater inclusion** of children educated in their local community school
 - **Fewer** pupils in **segregated independent** provision
 - **Reduction** in **complaints, mediations, appeals and tribunals**
 - **Reduction** in **exclusions**
 - **Less demand and pressure on high-cost** provision
 - **Improving outcomes for children and young people**

Challenges going forward

- Key challenges
 - The disruption caused by the re-design of the SEN support service and the changeover of staff to implement the interim structure
 - The longstanding systemic issues around governance and allocation of resources means the changes in culture and systems will take time to embed the new processes needed
 - The change in culture and ways of working to ensure co-production of services with families and schools and capturing and acting on improvements needed
 - Prioritising really robust and regular communication with all our stakeholders

Project Workstreams

- Project Workstreams

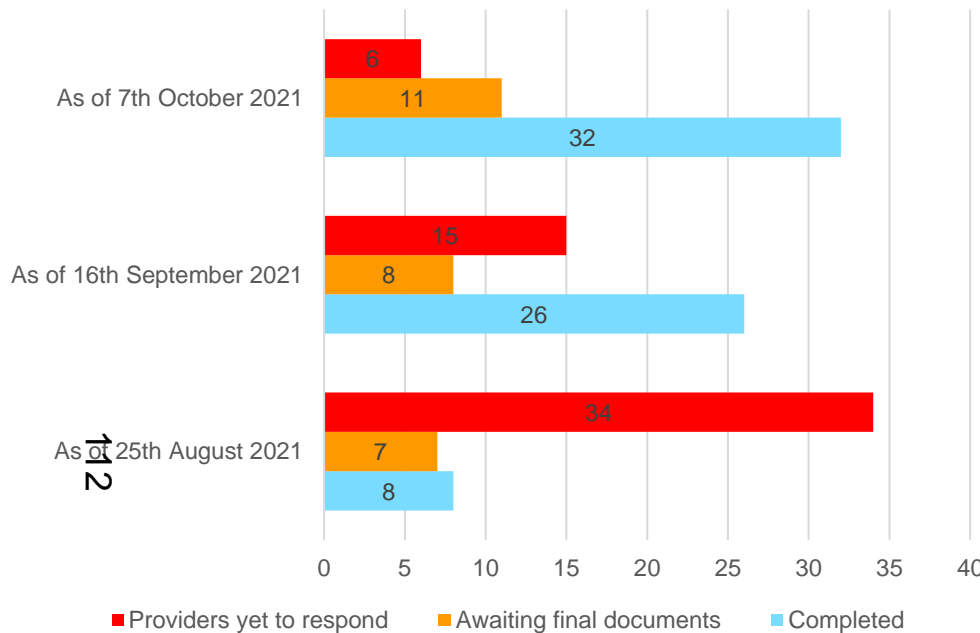
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6) Commissioning

- Updates
- **East Berkshire Children and Young Peoples Integrated Therapies Project** - work to explore joint commissioning options with Slough and RBWM resumed in October 2021. Next update to be provided in January 2022 when next steps and scope of work have been agreed. Work to review Speech and Language Therapy services delivered within Bracknell Forest will be completed by Nichola Jones and Manjit Hogston as part of the quarterly contract monitoring with Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust
- **Short Breaks recommissioning** – Strategic Procurement Plan is being developed and will be taken to DMT in Autumn 2021. Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) and Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) are underway. Parent/Carer and service user consultations will take place in November/December 2021. Tender process will commence in January 2022 with governance via DMT and Children's Social Care.
- **Quality Assurance & Due Diligence processes** – Joint briefing note developed by Commissioning and SEN and shared. (Further detail provided in Slides 4, 5 and 6).
- **Individual Placement Agreements (IPA's) for SEN out of area independent school placements** – SEN to retrospectively issue IPA's where missing (Estimated number of missing IPA's 270). Resource within SEN identified to undertake work and approximately 25% of missing IPA's have been drafted to date, with a target of 31st December to issue all missing IPA's.

Retrospective Due Diligence Process

- Commissioning



Providers yet to respond

Provider	DD status	No of CYP	Associated Spend £
New Barn School	No response	4	245,951
Serendipity	No response	1	66,987
TLG Reading	No response	1	5,569
Southlands Residential	No response	3	333,265
Purbeck – Cambian Group	No response	1	27,593
St Edwards	No response	1	27,798
Total		10	707,163

- The number of providers successfully completing retrospective due diligence checks continue to increase as shown in the graph above.
- We are yet to receive communications from **6 providers** named in the table above despite chaser emails
- We have **10 CYP** on placement with these providers

with an associated cost of **£707, 163** per academic year

- It is the commissioning position that no further invoices are paid to these 6 providers until they engage with the Due Diligence process
- This option is open to Bracknell Forest Council legally and contractually

Project highlight report – High Needs Block

Aim: Reduce deficit of the High Needs Block budget by implementing and monitoring key elements of the SEND Commissioning Plan, and undertaking a service review for the SEND Team.

Project Health

Rationale	Engagement	Progress	Resource	Outcomes	Total
4	4	4	4	3	76 %

Status summary

Recruitment issues mentioned in previous report have been largely resolved, with key posts within the SEND Team filled on an interim basis, allowing progress against key deliverables to continue

Delivered in last period

- Service review continuing to progress - demand modelling completed
- Stakeholder relationship-building is ongoing, with significant progress made against development of relationships including but not limited to: schools; parents and carers; Social Care; Public Health
- Schools Forum Sub-Group have provided input on banding matrix (see below for next steps)

Planned delivery

- Timeline outlined for SEN Service Review, including input from Finance and HR (recruitment to begin in Jan 2022)
- Review of Capita ONE is ongoing. Three initial phases (to be completed between now and end of December 2021) have been identified and are in progress
- Review by SEN and specialist services teams (including Finance) of banding matrix proposals
- Retrospective Due Diligence and Individual Placement Agreements on track for completion by Dec 2021 by Commissioning
- Embed processes and procedures for placements into SRPs – SLAs due to be signed off on Friday 22nd October 2021

Financial health



Savings

Year	Target	Projection
2021/22	TBC	TBC
2022/23 +	TBC	TBC
Total	TBC	TBC

How will the savings be achieved?

- Demand projection for places and development of provision across Bracknell Forest Council
- Commissioning review, quality assurance and procurement framework
- Early support localised model
- Shared accountability and decision-making on spend within a local model

Is any further work required to validate savings?

The savings will be delivered...		
Early	On time	Late
		✓

Project highlight report – High Needs Block

Top risks and issues

Description	RAG status	Mitigation
SEND Service Review		Demand modelling now completed. Requires Finance and HR input, job descriptions to be completed, and CMT sign-off. Mitigation to avoid delay includes: meetings are being pre-booked with Finance and HR, and 2-week contingency has been identified for CMT sign-off before consultation is due to begin
Single points of failure (SEND team)		To be addressed in service review to eliminate areas where single points of failure are a risk
Limited understanding of roles & responsibilities and needs between stakeholders		To be addressed by building relationships workstream
Scope Creep		PID drafted in Aug 21 and shared with AD & interim HOS outlining what is within the project scope – change to scope requests to be sent to Business Change team
Currently no framework in place around provider commissioning		Workstream added to address this together with commissioning (linked to complex placements milestone) due for completion December 2021
SRP Savings – Unable to generate savings in the first 3 years		To be discussed by HOS and Finance to clarify position

Milestones

Milestone	Deadline	RAG status	Comment
SEND Service Review	Consultation due to begin end of November 2021		Demand modelling now completed, consultation start date is contingent on previous deadlines being met (please see risk log on left-hand side for further details.)
Specially Resourced Provision (SRP)	September 2021		In progress against new target deadline – SLAs due to be finalised 22 nd October 2021
Banding / Funding Matrix	April 2022		In progress
Short Breaks (commissioning)	Spring 2022		Currently under review
Alternative Provision (commissioning)	Spring 2022		Ongoing (in review), HOS reviewing this currently. Significant stakeholder engagement ongoing. Work to finalise Commissioning Framework also ongoing, alongside discussions re. legislation.
Integrated Therapies (commissioning)	Summer 2022		In progress, HOS reviewing this currently
Complex placements	Summer 2022		In progress
Governance Framework and Processes	Summer 2022		Capita One proposal being investigated
Building Relationships	Summer 2022		Significant positive reciprocal engagement now taking place between SEN and key stakeholders

Any decisions required / exceptions to raise?

TO: SCHOOLS FORUM
DATE: 18 NOVEMBER 2021

**GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION:
REFORMING HOW LOCAL AUTHORITIES'
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT FUNCTIONS ARE FUNDED**

Executive Director: People

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update to the Schools Forum on proposals from the government to reform how local authorities' (LAs) school improvement functions are funded, for implementation from April 2022.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **To provide a steer on the best approach for the council to take in framing a detailed proposal for consideration at the next Forum meeting.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To maintain the partnership approach between the council and the Forum on matters relating to school and education funding.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Plan changes without considering the views of the Schools Forum and risk damaging the successful partnership approach.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 On 29 October, the Department for Education (DfE) issued the government consultation document *Reforming how local authorities' school improvement functions are funded*. This was communicated without advance notice to LAs on 3 November through the normal DfE weekly bulletin. Responses are required by 26 November.

- 5.2 The consultation proposes to remove the School Improvement Monitoring & Brokering Grant, which is currently allocated to local authorities to support school improvement activities and to permit LAs in future to fund all of their school improvement activity (including all core school improvement activities) via de-delegation from schools' budget shares.

As this is a de-delegation proposal, the consultation therefore relates only to maintained mainstream schools.

The consultation document can be viewed at [Reforming how local authority school improvement functions are funded - Department for Education - Citizen Space](#)

- 5.3 The consultation sets out that a change is being proposed the role of LAs in school improvement and that activity can be divided into 'core improvement activities' with LAs holding powers to warn and intervene in schools causing concern and 'additional

improvement services' which councils may opt to provide to maintained schools with their agreement.

- 5.4 In terms of 'core improvement activity' this is currently expected to be funded through the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokerage Grant. This is generally used to part fund costs in the School Improvement Team with the balance distributed as earmarked funding allocations to schools in, or in danger of entering an Ofsted category.
- 5.5 Funding is only allocated to schools where significant additional support is required that relevant schools do not have sufficient resources to fund. This follows a School Monitoring Board (SMB) proposal which is established by the council to support, challenge and monitor schools at risk of being judged as Requiring Improvement or inadequate at its next inspection or where a school enters an Ofsted category of concern (judged to have serious weaknesses or placed into Special Measures).
- 5.6 For 'additional improvement services' LAs can use the de-delegation route. The Forum will be aware that national funding arrangements require all LAs to delegate funding to mainstream schools for the same services and functions, with a general presumption of maximum delegation. However, where relevant school representatives on a Schools Forum agree that the whole budget for their phase e.g. primary or secondary should be returned to the Council for central management, this is allowed, but only in respect of a small number of defined services. This recognises that there are reasons of cost effectiveness, shared risk management and ease of organisation and management that a strategic approach can bring.
- 5.7 This approach is termed 'de-delegation' and applies only to maintained mainstream schools. Academy schools are responsible for providing these services directly. De-delegation is not relevant to High Needs Block funded services, such as special schools or pupil referral units as the DfE requires different arrangements to apply. 'Additional improvement services' are currently funded by the council.
- 5.8 There is a very tight timeline to implement this change in what is a crucial service as detailed below.

Date	Proposal
29 October 2021	Government consultation launched on proposals for reforming how councils' improvement functions are funded.
December 2021 / early January 2022	Government publishes its response to the consultation, confirming its intentions.
December 2021 / January 2022	Councils agree de-delegation for FY 2022-23 with their schools forums. Provisions made within the School Funding Regulations allowing councils to de-delegate to fund all improvement activity, including core improvement activities, from FY 2022-23 onward. Amendments made to relevant government guidance relating to council school improvement activity.
By April 2022	School Funding Regulations 2022-23 come into effect, allowing councils to de-delegate for all council school improvement functions.
April 2022	The Grant is reduced by 50% on a per school basis.

- 5.9 Subject to the outcome of this consultation, the DfE are proposing that the School Improvement & Brokerage Grant would end with effect from the start of 2023-24, with funding reduced to 50% of the current amount on a per school basis in 2022-23 to give councils and maintained schools time to adjust to these new arrangements. Grant funding for the council in 2022-23 is estimated at around £0.050m.
- 5.10 Ordinarily, the council would wish to undertake a consultation with schools setting out detailed proposals to report back to the Forum for a decision. This is particularly true where that service can have such a crucial impact on school performance. However, reflecting on this very tight timeline, with the deadline for reports for this meeting set at 9 November, this clearly limits time to develop a proposal for the BF School Improvement team and gather views from schools.
- 5.11 It is therefore considered more beneficial to seek a steer from the Forum at this meeting on the best approach to take for the future service delivery with a decision to be presented to the Forum at its next meeting on 9 December meeting. Today's meeting may also agree to the need to move back the December meeting to closer to the end of term, and on this occasion make a decision on behalf of schools without a formal consultation.
- 5.12 The options currently being considered, which may be further widened as work progresses are:
1. Maintain the status quo: Seek to fund core, statutory school improvement functions in 2022-23 through the 50% remaining School Improvement & brokerage Grant, estimated at circa £0.050m. No changes to other School Improvement Services. Note: this may require a small per pupil deduction through de-delegation to fully cover costs.
 2. Review all services currently provided by the School Improvement Service and seek to widen the de-delegation offer to include all or some of the current School Improvement SLA purchased separately by individual schools, the ad hoc training and consultancy support currently being purchased as well as incorporation of the existing Support to Schools in Financial Difficulty de-delegated service into a wider offer. These changes would remove the need for schools to individually purchase services.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from the recommendation in this report.

Director of Resources

- 6.2 The Director of Resources is satisfied that there are no significant financial implications arising from this report. Financial implications may arise as a result of any proposals presented to the Forum in December and these will be reflected in the relevant report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 The need for an EIA will be taken when the final budget proposals are confirmed.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.4 None identified.

Climate Change Impact

6.5 None identified.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

7.1 People Directorate Management Team.

Method of Consultation

7.2 Written report.

Representations Received

7.3 Included in body of this report.

Background Papers

DfE consultation document as referenced above in paragraph 5.2.

Contact for further information

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Doc. Ref

[https://bfccouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/fina/bpm/FIBPSCB-FIN9.6/Schools Forum/\(106\) 181121/Reforming how LA school improvement functions are funded.docx](https://bfccouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/fina/bpm/FIBPSCB-FIN9.6/Schools%20Forum/(106)%20181121/Reforming%20how%20LA%20school%20improvement%20functions%20are%20funded.docx)

TO: SCHOOLS FORUM
DATE: 18 NOVEMBER 2021

THE SCHOOLS BUDGET: 2021-22 BUDGET MONITORING **Executive Director of People**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this annual report is for the Schools Forum to receive an update on the 2021-22 forecast budget monitoring position for the Schools Budget, to be aware of key issues and management actions being taken and progress to date on the Education Capital Programme.

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Monitoring information on the revenue budget available at the end of September forecasts a significant year end over spending on the Schools Budget of £7.598m which mainly arises from the previously highlighted increase in the number of children and young people needing support through the High Needs Block (HNB) budget. Taking account of the pre-existing £2.626m deficit held in the Dedicated Schools Grant Adjustment Account, a £10.224m cumulative deficit is currently being forecast for 31 March 2022.
- 2.2 The on-going significant increase in costs and the difficulty in presenting balanced budget proposals for 2022-23, despite the significant increase in funding and developing savings programme illustrates the changing financial situation.
- 2.3 Furthermore, the council has begun discussions with the Department for Education (DfE) relating to the significant size of the HNB deficit through the DSG Deficit Recovery programme. These discussions are on-going and remain at the exploratory stage.
- 2.4 These discussions are in the context of the expectation that the current 3-year period of change to DSG conditions that currently confirm that no liability for a deficit will fall onto an LAs General Fund will end at 31 March 2023 with LAs then needing to manage the cumulative debt from their own resources. The current forecast debt for the HNB at that point of transfer is £20.4m. This reduces to £18.2m when other earmarked DSG surplus balances are also included.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Schools Forum NOTES:

- 3.1 **the budget variances being forecast on the Schools Budget that total to an aggregate net forecast over spending of £7.598m (paragraph 6.12);**
- 3.2 **that the year-end balance held in the Dedicated Schools Grant Adjustment Account is forecast at a £10.224m deficit (paragraph 6.12);**
- 3.3 **the possibility that liability to fund balance held in the Dedicated Schools Grant Adjustment Account will transfer to LAs from April 2023 (paragraph 6.18)**

- 3.4 the council is in discussions with the Department for Education relating to the management for the High Needs Block deficit (paragraph 6.21)
- 3.5 progress to date on the Education Capital Programme, as summarised at Annex 2.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 It is appropriate for the Schools Forum to be aware of, and where relevant, comment on these financial matters.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 Where relevant, these are set out in the supporting information.

6 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

2020-21 Monitoring of the Schools Budget (Revenue)

Setting the budget

- 6.1 The Council holds the statutory duty to set the annual Schools Budget and each February sets an initial total budget as part of the overall budget setting process. For 2021-22 this included a net budget of £5.170m which comprised £4.943m as the forecast over spending on the HNB element of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)¹, and £0.227m from Council funds to finance the additional costs arising from new schools to ensure that the BF Funding Formula for Schools was set at the same values as the Department for Education's (DfE) National Funding Formula (NFF)².
- 6.2 Having set the initial budget, the Council then delegates to the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning the power to agree the allocation of budgets to individual lines of the Schools Budget, up to the level agreed.
- 6.3 Budget proposals for the 2021-22 Schools Budget were approved by the Schools Forum at its meetings in January and March, and these were subsequently agreed by the Executive Member.
- 6.4 The most significant income source to the Schools Budget is the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), which is paid by the Department for Education (DfE). The initial approved budget included £109.240m as the estimated amount of DSG. Other grant income of £5.444m was also expected from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for sixth forms, the Pupil Premium, Primary PE and Sports activities and the Universal Infant Free School Meals initiative. With £0.130m of general income also anticipated, there was originally expected to be £114.814m of income available to

¹ The DSG is the ring-fenced grant allocated by the DfE through a formula to LAs to fund most of their expenditure on school and education related services.

² The NFF distributes funding based on schools' and pupils' needs and characteristics and uses the same factor values for all schools across the country. The exception to this being an area cost adjustment (ACA) uplift which is paid to areas with high costs. BF receives a 5.7% uplift.

fund expenditure within the Schools Budget. Adding the £5.170m approved net budget results in a gross budget of £119.984m.

- 6.5 In agreeing an initial HNB budget, the Schools Forum was in receipt of more up to date information than the Council when the formal budget decision was taken and agreed the HNB should include an initial forecast over spending of £5.699m, a £0.756m increase on the amount initially approved by the council. The budgets agreed at individual service level therefore reflected an aggregate level of spend that would result in a forecast £5.699m over spending.

Current approved budget

- 6.6 Subsequent to setting the original budget, the ESFA has confirmed the amount of DSG recoupment that needs to be deducted to directly fund academy schools, where funding continues to be based on the BF Funding Formula for Schools. This amounted to a £28.353m deduction which has been balanced off by an equivalent decrease in budget for maintained mainstream schools.
- 6.7 Furthermore, the ESFA has also recalculated allocations through the HNB DSG. This reflects updated numbers of pupils in special schools and the adjustment made to LA HNB funding allocations to ensure the resident LA funds the cost of places taken up by their pupils in other LA specialist providers and also for deductions for ESFA directly funded providers. The deduction for BFC has reduced by £0.066m, which has been balanced off by an equivalent increase in budget for non-maintained special schools.
- 6.8 Overall, these changes result in an anticipated level of income of £86.527m, an unchanged net budget of £5.170m and therefore total funding of £91.697m. To ensure budgets correctly reflect anticipated spending requirements, relevant adjustments have been made to the areas of the accounts that the changes relate to. Annex 1 sets out a summary budget statement.
- 6.9 Other budget changes may need to be processed later in the year if further updates are provided by the ESFA. If applicable, this will relate to the HNB and the Early Years Block.

Forecast budget variances

- 6.10 As part of the Council's Financial Regulations, the Schools Budget is subject to monthly budget monitoring. This involves forecasting likely expenditure and income through to the end of the year, identification of reasons for variations against original budgets, and where relevant, setting out options for management action. This process allows for a forecast year end level of balances to be calculated.
- 6.11 It is appropriate for the Forum to be aware of the current forecast year-end balance as this will need to be taken into account when the 2022-23 budget is agreed. It is also likely that a number of variances identified this year will be on-going and will therefore need to be considered in next year's budget.
- 6.12 Provisional budget monitoring information available at the end of September indicates that the Schools Budget will overspend by £7.598m this year which is £1.899m higher than the amount forecast when the budget requirement was agreed by the Forum. There is a £2.626mm deficit opening balance on the DSG Adjustment Account meaning an aggregate year end deficit of £10.224m is currently being forecast.

- 6.13 The prime cause of the increasing deficit is financial performance in the HNB which in the 2 years April 2020 to March 2022 has over spent by £12.422m
- 6.14 The following sections set out current spending and budget variance forecasts for 2021-22, and whilst there remains the potential for change over the coming months, a significant year end over spending is considered unavoidable. Explanations of the significant changes anticipated from the current budget plan (+/- £0.020m) are set out below, with Annex 1 showing the overall Schools Budget at a summary level.

Schools Block - £0.007m over spend:

LA Managed items - £0.007m over spend:

- 1) There are 2 significant variances to report: a forecast £0.034m over spend on premature retirement and dismissal costs of school-based staff. This is a de-delegated budget for maintained schools and reflects current actions already taken to facilitate more effective and efficient school organisation structures. Other significant variance relates to a £0.027m forecast over spending on transport arrangements required to maintain children looked after in the most appropriate school setting. These are partially offset by a number of relatively small forecast under spendings.

High Needs Block - £7.636m overspend against budget:

As previously reported, budget items 2) to 6) below represent the most unpredictable and volatile education budgets that the council is responsible for. Therefore, a considerable amount of time is taken in their management. However, they remain subject to significant change at short notice which can result in large movements in cost forecasts. To help manage this volatility, a contingency for future cost increases of £0.178m is included in the forecasts until such time as greater certainty is available relating to placement details and their costs. The contingency amount is reviewed each month and adjusted accordingly.

Forecasts reported at this time for external pupil placements and top up funding for mainstream schools include confirmed costs for the summer term, with provisional amounts included for autumn and spring which are subject to change until all required placements and their costs are known. The forecasts will continue to change through to the end of the financial year.

The variances being reported now will need to be assessed as to their on-going impact and included as appropriate when budget proposals for 2022-23 are presented.

- 2) **Delegated Special Schools – £0.127m over spend.** Top up payments to Kennel Lane Special Schools have been recalculated to reflect in-year starters and leavers and increases in support needs for existing pupils. The current forecast also includes provision to purchase 198 places.
- 3) **Maintained schools and academies – £0.419m over spend.** Top up payments to BF maintained schools and academies are forecast to overspend by £0.401m. In respect of BF pupil placements in other LA schools and academies, a £0.022m overspend is forecast. In general, placements have increased with average costs of support remaining fairly stable.

Funding of £0.103m set aside to support the development of new SEN resource units in mainstream schools will not now be spent as the programme has slipped, mainly as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

- 4) **Non-maintained special schools and colleges – £1.613m over spend.** This is the most significant budget area in terms of expenditure and the focus of the change programme. Whilst the increase in placements is broadly in line with the budget assumptions which expected an extra 28 FTE which compares to the current actual forecast for the year of 26, there has been a significant increase in the average cost of support. The budget assumed that this would remain close to the 2020-21 actual average of £36.2k but is in fact now at £43.5k, an increase of 20%. This reflects the nature of placements required and the availability of places.
- 5) **Education out of school - -£0.210m under spend.** The main variances relate to a forecast £0.078m allocation of top-up funding to support pupils with an EHCP at College Hall Pupil Referral Unit which is off-set by a significant reduction in spend on pupils in externally commissioned Alternative Provision settings as more pupils are placed in school settings. This amounts to a forecast budgeted saving of £0.275m.
- 6) **Other SEN provisions and support services - -£0.012m under spend.** The main variances relate to a £0.030m forecast over spending on support to pupils with medical needs and reflects current known cases, a £0.091m expected saving on speech and language and occupational therapy support and additional spend of £0.034m on the general savings programme relating to service re-design. There are a number of other relatively small variances across a wide number of budgets.
- 7) **Over spending anticipated in original budget - £5.699m.** In setting the original budget, it was accepted that spending would significantly exceed income and was initially calculated at a £5.699m over spending.

Early Years Block - -£0.045m under spend

- 8) **Free entitlement to early years education – nil variance.** In response to the covid pandemic, DfE have put in place a more flexible approach to funding LAs for the free entitlement and if requested will base funding on actual termly take up rates rather than the normal January only census data. This approach is expected to result in an insignificant budget variance which will become clearer once the October census data has been validated and payments to providers calculated.
- 9) **Other Early Years provisions and support - £0.045m underspend.** The main variance being forecast relates to a £0.025m saving against the translation contract as a result on limited demand on the service.

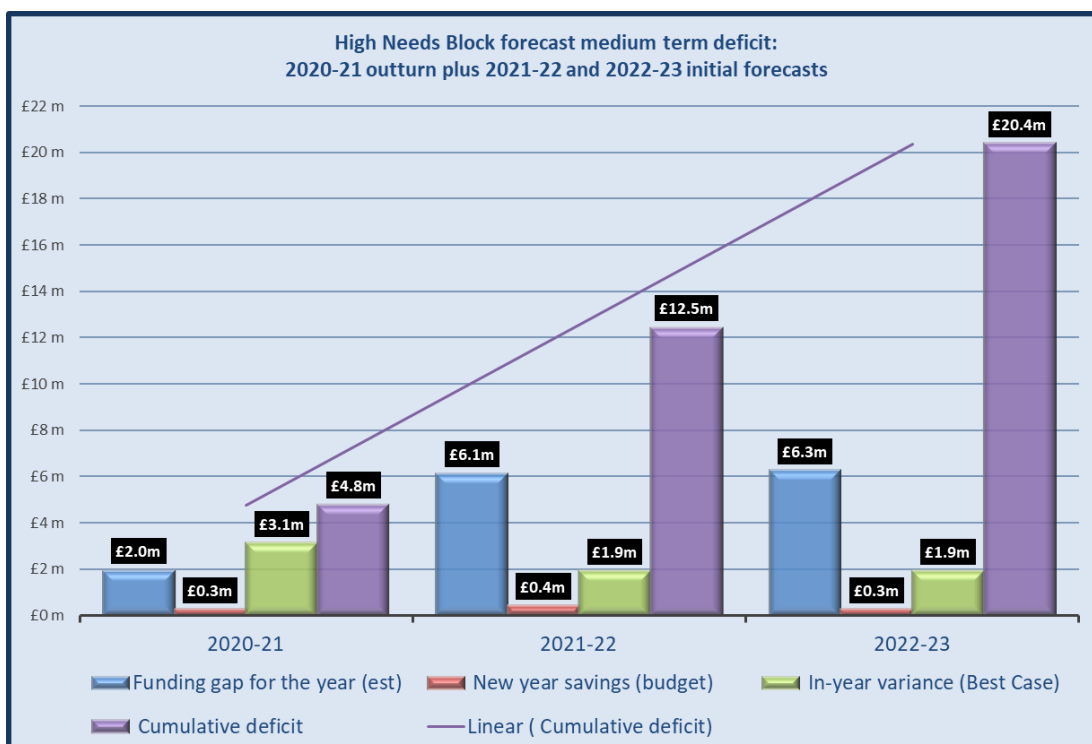
Forecast cumulative balance - £10.224m deficit:

- 10) The budget variances being forecast at the end of September indicate a year end cumulative deficit of £10.224m. This comprises the £2.626m accumulated deficit at the start of the year, the £5.699m overspend anticipated when the budget was set and the additional £1.899m overspend now being reported.

Managing the forecast overspend

- 6.15 It is clear that the council is facing significant challenges in managing spend to the level of HNB income. As set out above and on previously presented reports, this largely arises from increases in numbers of pupils requiring additional support, the emergence of more complex needs, rising costs of support and is consistent with most other LAs.

- 6.16 The work currently being undertaken through Schools Forum HNB Sub Group to review the overall budget for impact and efficient use of resources is fundamental to moving towards a sustainable financial position over the medium to long term. An update on this and other work is provided on a separate agenda item.
- 6.17 As previously reported to the Forum, in response to the continuing growth in deficits on HNB budgets, in January 2020, the DfE updated the status of the DSG ring-fence to make clear that any deficit must be carried forward to the Schools Budget in the next financial year or future financial years. This is intended to confirm that no liability for a deficit will fall onto an LAs General Fund.
- 6.18 This was a time limited change to the DSG ring-fence for 3 years to March 2023. As it stands, the Government has stated that local authorities are expected to be able to demonstrate their ability to cover DSG deficits from their available reserves from 2023-24 onwards. Clearly this will present a significant financial challenge to the council at the same time as other challenges, most significantly relating to rising costs of social care. Using the current year forecast over spend as an initial guide, with no further change in 2022-23, then the council would face a £20.4m deficit from the HNB at April 2023, as illustrated in the chart below. The £20.4m forecast deficit is 106% of the £19.3m HNB grant funding received in 2020-21.
- 6.19 In the overall context of the financial challenges LAs are facing with their HNB budgets, the ESFA recognises that there may be some LAs which will not be able to pay off their historic deficit from the DSG over the next few years. In these cases, the DfE expects to work together with the LA to agree a plan of action to enable the LA to pay off its deficit over time.
- 6.20 As part of an appropriate agreed package of measures, the ESFA will, if necessary, make funds available from within the overall total of DSG so that the local authority can pay off its deficit over time. The ESFA will need convincing evidence from the LA that it would be impracticable to pay off a historic deficit from the DSG it would expect to receive in future years.
- 6.21 Additionally, the ESFA expects to approach selected LAs to begin discussions with them. This has now commenced with BFC, with an initial scene setting meeting in May, with a further update in September to reflect the changing staff in the Council. A more detailed and structured discussion on specific aspects of the BF HNB position and recovery plan is expected to take place in December.



2020-21 Education Capital Programme

Approved budget

- 6.22 The current Education Capital budget approved by the council amounts to £10.585m, and comprises £2.097m of council funding, £1.760m from housing developers and £6.728m from various grants and other income. Of this total, £4.412m is new funding for 2021-22 with £6.173m brought forward from previous years to finance the completion of approved projects.
- 6.23 The major scheme in the programme are:
- School related projects, including schools' Devolved Formula Capital £5.872m
 - School Planned Maintenance £2.988m
 - Other projects £1.725m

Annex 2 provides a summary of the approved schemes, including current progress and key targets.

Forecast budget variances

- 6.24 At this stage, a £0.120m under spending is being reported which relates to the project proposed by Holly Spring Primary School for and SEN / Nurture Hub which is not now ready to proceed. No variances are being reported elsewhere as in general, variances are recycled within the school related projects.
- 6.25 At this stage, there is expected to be sufficient DfE grant funding and developer contributions plus the investment from the Council to fully finance the schemes required in the short term, with funding pressure expected to arise over the medium term.

- 6.26 Due to a substantial number of high-cost roof repairs, the planned maintenance programme is also facing pressure in delivering all the works required within available funds. This is being severely impacted on through the roof failure at Sandhurst Secondary School which has required the closure of 10 classrooms and a drama studio. Additional grant was allocated to LAs in-year to support school condition works, with BFC receiving £0.796m which has been directed towards part funding this project.

Next steps

- 6.27 Budget monitoring will continue with any emerging issues incorporated into budget proposals and presented to the Forum at the appropriate time.

7 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 7.1 The relevant legal provisions have been considered within the main body of the report.

Director of Resources

- 7.2 The financial implications arising from this report are set out in the supporting information.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 7.3 There are no specific impacts arising from this report.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 7.4 There are a number of risks associated with managing these revenue and capital budgets:

- financial and economic factors, in particular the need to maintain services whilst achieving significant savings;
- the impact of demand led services and the need to forecast changes and reshape service delivery to meet changing needs;
- staffing and the need to recruit, train and retain staff with the relevant skills and expertise;
- IT infrastructure availability and information accuracy;
- failure to design, monitor and control the implementation of major programmes and projects;
- effective safeguarding of children;
- effective maintenance of assets;
- working effectively with partners, residents, service users, the voluntary sector and local businesses;
- impact of litigation and legislation;

The budget includes resources sufficient to enable the Council to monitor these key risks and where possible to minimise their effects on services. Specific risk reduction measures included as part of budget monitoring are:

- A robust system of budgetary control with regular reporting to CYPL Departmental Management Team and the Corporate Management Team
- Quarterly Service Reports (QSR's) to Members
- Exception reports to the Executive

Climate Change Impact

7.5 Not applicable to this report on financial performance. Any relevant implications would have been reported when budget decisions were taken.

8 CONSULTATION

8.1 Not applicable.

Background Papers

None.

Contact for further information

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Doc. Ref

[https://bfcouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/fina/bpm/FIBPSCB-FIN9.6/Schools_Forum/\(106\)_181121/2021-22_Schools_Budget_Monitoring_etc.docx](https://bfcouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/fina/bpm/FIBPSCB-FIN9.6/Schools_Forum/(106)_181121/2021-22_Schools_Budget_Monitoring_etc.docx)

2021-22 PROVISIONAL BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT FOR THE SCHOOLS BUDGET AS AT THE END OF SEPTEMBER 2021							
Service Area	Approved Budget			Estimated Variance			Note
	Spend	Income	Net	Under spending	Over spending	Net variance	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Schools Block							
<u>Delegated and devolved funding:</u>							
Delegated Mainstream School Budgets	51,698	0	51,698	0	0	0	
School Grant income	5,444	-5,444	0	0	0	0	
Schools Block	57,142	-5,444	51,698	0	0	0	
<u>LA managed items:</u>							
Retained de-delegated Budgets:							
Behaviour	263	-7	256	-17	0	-17	
Schools in Financial Difficulty	205	0	205	0	0	0	
Official Staff Absences	354	0	354	-4	0	-4	
English as an Additional Language	108	0	108	-13	0	-13	
PRC / Licence Fees / FSM checking	61	0	61	0	34	34	
Under spend returned to maintained schools	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Combined Service Budgets:							
Education Attainment and School Transport for LAC	176	0	176	0	27	27	
Family Intervention Project / Domestic Abuse	102	0	102	0	0	0	
CAF Co-ordinator	42	0	42	-3	3	0	
SEN Contract Management	33	0	33	0	0	0	
Education Health / Sport	31	0	31	0	0	0	
Statutory and Regulatory Duties	498	0	498	0	0	0	
Other Schools Block provisions and support services	764	0	764	-20	0	-20	
LA managed items:	2,637	-7	2,630	-57	64	7	1
Sub total Schools Block	59,779	-5,451	54,328	-57	64	7	
High Needs Block							
Delegated Special Schools Budgets	4,899	0	4,899	0	127	127	2
Maintained schools and academies	6,243	-33	6,210	-187	606	419	3
Non Maintained Special Schools and Colleges	9,209	0	9,209	-100	1,713	1,613	4
Education out of school	2,443	0	2,443	-302	92	-210	5
Other SEN provisions and support services	2,070	-68	2,002	-198	186	-12	6
Overspending anticipated in original budget	-756	0	-756	0	5,699	5,699	7
Sub total High Needs Block	24,108	-101	24,007	-787	8,423	7,636	
Early Years Block							
Free entitlement to early years education	7,194	-3	7,191	0	0	0	8
Other Early Years provisions and support services	389	-19	370	-45	0	-45	9
Sub total Early Years Block	7,583	-22	7,561	-45	0	-45	
Dedicated Schools Grant	0	-80,953	-80,953	0	0	0	
Contribution from BFC	227	0	227	0	0	0	
TOTAL - Schools Budget	91,697	-86,527	5,170	-889	8,487	7,598	
<u>Note on Unallocated Schools Budget balance:</u>							
Opening balance on DSG Adjustment Account (Unusable Reserve)						2,626	
Forecast overspend in budget build						5,699	
2022-23 forecast in-year net variance						1,899	
Net forecast deficit at 31 March 2020						10,224	10

See paragraph 6.14 for an explanation to the notes

CAPITAL MONITORING 2021/22

Dept: People

Children, Young People and Learning

As at 30 September 2021

Cost Centre Description	Approved Budget 2021/22 £000's	Cash Budget 2021/22 £000's	Expenditure to Date £000's	Estimated Outturn 2021/22 £000's	Carry Forward 2021/22 £000's	(Under) / Over Spend £000's	Next Target / Explanatory Note	Current status of the project / notes
SCHOOL PROJECTS								
Ascot Heath Schools Amalgamation	346.6	346.6	0.0	346.6	0.0	0.0	Completed	Completed. In defects.
College Town Amalgamation	103.0	103.0	0.0	103.0	0.0	0.0	Completed	Main project completed. Small retention to be settled.
Crown Wood Primary	16.2	16.2	0.0	16.2	0.0	0.0	Completed	Completed. Planning condition to be satisfied
Harmanswater Primary	345.8	345.8	276.3	345.8	0.0	0.0	Completed	Currently on site, main works due to complete end of August, some works planned for October.
Holly Spring Infant & Junior Amalgamation	48.6	48.6	11.6	48.6	0.0	0.0	Completed	Completed. Retentions to be settled.
Kennel Lane Redevelopment	526.2	526.2	31.4	526.2	0.0	0.0	Completed	Currently on site, extension works planned to be on site during the school period, due to complete by the Autumn.
King's Academy Oakwood	287.0	287.0	0.0	287.0	0.0	0.0	Completed	Completed - ICT to King's Academy
Sandy Lane	357.0	357.0	20.5	357.0	0.0	0.0	Completed	Completed
Warfield West Primary	115.0	115.0	37.0	115.0	0.0	0.0	Completed	Completed. Consultation on migration proposal
Primary	2,145.4	2,145.4	376.8	2,145.4	0.0	0.0		
Easthampstead Park	233.9	233.9	0.0	233.9	0.0	0.0	Completed	Main project completed. School managed spend ongoing.
Sandhurst Redevelopment	10.0	10.0	50.2	10.0	0.0	0.0	Masterplan feasibility study	In progress
Secondary	243.9	243.9	50.2	243.9	0.0	0.0		
Binfield Learning Village	659.1	160.0	-2.9	160.0	499.1	0.0	Completed	Completed. Final equipment payments due to King's Academy.
All through	659.1	160.0	-2.9	160.0	499.1	0.0		
Project Management Overheads	60.0	60.0	82.1	60.0	0.0	0.0	To be fully spent by March 2021	To be allocated to projects
Fees	60.0	60.0	82.1	60.0	0.0	0.0	To be fully spent by March 2021	To be allocated to projects
Basic Need Grant for Allocation	269.3	62.9	0.0	62.9	206.4	0.0	Works in progress	Fully applied
High Needs Provision Capital	500.0	50.0	0.0	50.0	450.0	0.0	Works in progress	Under review
Special Provision Capital Fund	889.8	200.0	8.7	200.0	689.8	0.0	Works in progress	Approved school bids underway
Healthy Pupils Capital Fund	4.3	4.3	0.0	4.3	0.0	0.0	Works in progress	Allocated to schools for facilities provision for healthy schools initiatives
Wildridings Security, Safeguarding & Fire Safety	1.9	1.9	0.0	1.9	0.0	0.0	School managed project	School managed project
Capital Related Spend in Schools Revenue (RCCO)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	Financial year end review.	Review and resulting transfers complete
Primary SEMH Hub	40.0	40.0	0.0	40.0	0.0	0.0	To progress in 2021	To progress in 2021
Devolved Capital and other funds held by schools	1,058.1	788.4	265.2	668.4	269.7	-120.0	Managed by schools	Managed by schools
Other Schools Related Capital	2,763.4	1,147.5	273.9	1,027.5	1,615.9	-120.0		
SCHOOL PROJECTS	5,871.8	3,756.8	780.1	3,636.8	2,115.0	-120.0		

Percentages

20.8%

96.8%

-3.2%

CAPITAL MONITORING 2021/22

Dept: People

Children, Young People and Learning

As at 30 September 2021

Cost Centre Description	Approved Budget 2021/22 £000's	Cash Budget 2021/22 £000's	Expenditure to Date £000's	Estimated Outturn 2021/22 £000's	Carry Forward 2021/22 £000's	(Under) / Over Spend £000's	Next Target / Explanatory Note	Current status of the project / notes
CAPITAL MAINTENANCE / CONDITION								
Planned works	2,988.3	2,988.3	1,567.6	2,988.3	0.0	0.0	Completed	Majority of schemes on site, due to complete the main bulk of works by the Autumn
ROLLING PROGRAMME	2,988.3	2,988.3	1,567.6	2,988.3	0.0	0.0		

Percentages 52.5% 100.0% 0.0%

OTHER PROJECTS								
Braccan Walk Youth Facilities	62.3	41.4	16.4	41.4	20.9	0.0		Complete, in defects, some furniture also to be ordered
Retentions - Non Schools	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		
Market St Refurbishment	27.4	27.4	5.4	27.4	0.0	0.0	Complete	Complete
Nursery Provision	630.4	630.4	201.6	630.4	0.0	0.0	End August completion	Complete. Minor snagging to finish.
Education Centre Relocation	8.7	8.7	0.0	8.7	0.0	0.0	Completed	Complete, retentions to be paid
Rowans (Fox Hill) Childrens Centre security	29.5	29.5	4.6	29.5	0.0	0.0	Completed	Complete, retentions to be paid
S106 Primary SEMH Hub	660.0	660.0	0.0	660.0	0.0	0.0	Under review	Under review
S106 10a Portman Close Flats	200.0	200.0	0.0	200.0	0.0	0.0	Under review	Under review
S106 Priestwood Nursery Facilities	100.0	100.0	60.6	100.0	0.0	0.0	Completed	Project complete
Priestwood Guide Centre	7.1	7.1	0.0	7.1	0.0	0.0	Completed	Drainage work undertaken- awaiting invoice
Other	1,663.1	1,663.1	272.2	1,663.1	0.0	0.0		
OTHER PROJECTS	1,725.4	1,704.5	288.6	1,704.5	20.9	0.0		

Percentages 16.9% 100.0% 0.0%

TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME	10,585.5	8,449.6	2,636.3	8,329.6	2,135.9	-120.0
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Percentages 31.2% 98.6% -1.4%

TO: SCHOOLS FORUM
DATE: 18 NOVEMBER 2021

**OUTCOMES FROM THE OCTOBER 2021
FINANCIAL CONSULTATION WITH SCHOOLS**
Executive Director: People

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update to the Schools Forum on the responses from the recent financial consultation from schools which sought views on the approach to setting a minimum increase in per pupil funding from 2021-22 and also whether maintained schools supported on-going de-delegation of budgets and making a financial contribution to statutory education related duties for which the council is responsible for meeting but receives no funding.
- 1.2 There is also a limited update on the 2022-23 budget position for mainstream schools.

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Responses from the financial consultation showed clear support from maintained schools for continuing to maximise the strategic and cost-effective benefits that can arise from central management through the de-delegation route on permitted services. Furthermore, there is strong support from maintained schools to continue to contribute £20 per pupil towards the cost to the council of meeting education statutory and regulatory duties that the DfE no longer provides LAs with grant funding to meet their responsibilities.
- 2.2 In terms of allocating funds to mainstream schools, there is also strong support from schools to applying minimum per pupil funding increases at the highest permitted rate of 2% from 2021-22 amounts, subject to affordability.
- 2.3 In respect of the 2022-23 budget, updates are presented on some areas from the amounts reported to the last meeting. There is no significant overall effect from the September update, however, further changes are expected once the DfE confirms the October 2021 census and other relevant data towards used for budget purposes at the end of the year.
- 2.4 The decisions taken on the outcomes from the consultation will assist with the on-going preparation of the 2022-23 budget. As some of the questions only impact on specific groups, DfE permit only Forum members representing these groups to make relevant decisions. The report recommendations are therefore presented to reflect this

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Items for all School and Early Years Members (maintained and academy)

- 3.1 **To NOTE the outcomes from the financial consultation with schools as summarised in the supporting information and Annex 1.**

3.2 That the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning (CYPL) is asked to AGREE that:

- 1. all schools should receive the maximum +2% increase in per pupil funding from the 2021-22 financial year, subject to affordability.**
- 2. any cost associated with providing all schools with the agreed minimum percentage increase in per pupil funding from 2021-22 should be met by those schools receiving the largest increases in per pupil funding, typically those above the average percentage increase.**

Item for Maintained Primary School representatives only:

3.3 To AGREE the continued de-delegation of budgets for the services requested by the council.

Item for Maintained Secondary School representatives only:

3.4 To AGREE the continued de-delegation of budgets for the services requested by the council.

Items for all Maintained School representatives (includes Special and PRU) only

3.5 To AGREE that a £20 per pupil contribution continues to be made by maintained schools towards the cost of delivering 'general' education related statutory and regulatory duties.

3.6 To AGREE the proposed updates to the Scheme for Financing Schools (Annex 2).

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 To ensure the majority view expressed by schools are taken into account when relevant discretionary parts of the funding framework are set locally.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 These were set out in the consultation document.

6 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

6.1 At its last meeting on 16 September, as part of initial budget preparations for 2022-23, it was reported to the Forum that the annual financial consultation document had been circulated to schools with responses due back for October half-term.

6.2 This sought views on the level and funding required for setting the minimum per pupil funding increase from 2021-22 through the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) ¹,

¹ The MFG compares per pupil funding allocations between years and where the change is below the minimum threshold, a funding top-up is added to meet the minimum per pupil change requirement. The MFG calculation required by the DfE excludes funding for business rates and fixed lump sum

whether maintained schools supported on-going de-delegation of budgets and also whether a financial contribution should continue to be made to the council in respect of the cost of meeting statutory education related duties. Comments were also sought on a small number of updates to the Scheme for Financing Schools (the Scheme)².

- 6.3 This report sets out the responses received and now seeks subsequent recommendations on relevant aspects of the 2022-23 funding framework.

Outcomes from the financial consultation with schools

- 6.4 By the October response deadline, replies had been received from 23 out of 39 schools (59% response rate – was 64% last year). A reply was received from 19 primary schools (63%), 3 secondary schools (50%) and Kennel Lane Special School. This represents a good response rate, with 62% of maintained schools and 50% of academy schools responding which gives confidence that decisions on these matters can be taken with the knowledge of the majority view of schools and their categories.
- 6.5 The questions are set out below and responses summarised. Recommendations for change, where relevant, have also been added in boxes. A numerical summary of replies to each question can be found at Annex 1.
- 6.6 In terms of agreeing decisions from this consultation, the Executive Member for CYPL has the statutory duty in respect of agreeing the MFG (questions 1 to 2). For de-delegation, the maintained school members of the Forum decide for their phase (question 3) with any contribution to education related statutory duties being decided by the relevant maintained school members, including special school and pupil referral unit members (question 4). In respect of changes to the Scheme, these are also decided by maintained schools members only (question 5).
- 6.7 Seven schools made comments, all of which were primary schools. These related to:
1. more financial support to; small schools; while pupils are undergoing assessment for an EHCP; those with falling rolls;
 2. changes to the Scheme, in particular that relating to claw-back of surplus balances calculation.
 3. how the contribution to statutory education duties is being spent and also that the council should seek to reduce the amount of contribution
 4. requesting more financial information on de-delegated services,

Confidential Annex 2 sets out the detailed responses received.

allocations. The cost of top-up funding is financed by scaling back increases to schools experiencing the highest proportional funding gains

² All LAs must develop a “Scheme” which sets out financial roles and responsibilities of schools and LAs. It must cover minimum requirements set by the DfE, with some areas open to local determination. It is a legally binding document and can only be updated following consultation with schools and approval of the Schools Forum

6.8 The following responses are made in respect of to these responses:

1. additional financial support is already provided to 1 FE primary schools, funding arrangements for High Needs pupils are being considered through the Forum sub-group and the council recognises the difficulties facing schools with falling rolls and is actively reducing the number of available places (reduction of 100 planned admission numbers in primary schools since September 2019, 72 in secondary).
2. the claw-back of surplus balances calculation is considered to be suitable with adequate flexibilities to consider any specific issues schools may have with their spending. In respect of excluding school generated income, this is considered as part of a school's overall financial performance and decision making and should therefore remain within the calculation. Furthermore, it would be time consuming and extremely difficult to validate income and associated expenditure incurred at a school on these activities.
3. for statutory education duties, Annex 2 of the consultation document sets out the areas of expenditure this relates to and whilst there has been no reduction to the £20 per pupil contribution, there have been cost increases of circa 15% during the period that have been absorbed by the council through efficiencies and savings being made each year as part of the council's approach to setting the budget.
4. planned budget information relating to each de-delegated service is provided on the supporting information available with the consultation document. Actual spend on each service is reported each year to the Schools Forum as part of the budget outturn report, with any net under-spending on the aggregate of all de-delegated services returned to schools and not retained.

6.9 **Question 1: Strategy for allocating funds to schools**

Do you agree that subject to affordability, that both mainstream and special schools should receive a minimum +2% increase in per pupil funding from the 2021-22 financial year? 2% is the highest increase permitted by the DfE?

This question relates to the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) which LAs are required to apply and requires funding top-up to schools where the ordinary operation of the Funding Formula results in a change in per pupil funding that is below a specified percentage. It compares the final budget from one year to the next and adjusts for changes in the number of pupils. For 2022-23, the DfE will permit LAs to set a rate of between +0.5% and +2.0%.

Responses from all 23 schools impacted by this supported this proposal.

The Forum is recommended to agree that all schools receive the maximum +2% increase in per pupil funding from the 2022-23 financial year, subject to affordability.

6.10 **Question 2: Strategy for allocating funds to schools**

Do you agree that we should continue to fund any cost associated with providing all mainstream schools with the agreed minimum percentage increase in per pupil funding from 2021-22 by limiting increases to those mainstream schools receiving the largest increases in per pupil funding, typically those above the average percentage increase?

Where top-up funding is required through the MFG, the main option available to finance the cost relates to scaling increases to schools with increases above the minimum threshold which based on responses to this consultation is expected to be +2%. The consultation proposed limiting the scaling of increases to only those schools receiving above the average percentage increase. An alternative approach would be to scale increases to all schools receiving a rise in per pupil funding.

Responses from 20 schools (91%) potentially impacted by this supported this proposal. 2 schools disagreed although no specific comments were provided.

The Forum is recommended to agree that any cost associated with providing all schools with the agreed minimum percentage increase in per pupil funding from 2021-22 should be met by those schools receiving the largest increases in per pupil funding, typically those above the average percentage increase.

6.11 **Question 3: de-delegated services**

To continue the strategic and cost effective approach in the use of the funds for contingencies (including schools in financial difficulties including those in or in danger of entering an Ofsted category), support to underperforming ethnic groups, CLEAPSS licence fees, staff supply cover costs, premature retirement / dismissal cost, free school meal eligibility checking and Behaviour Support Services, do you agree that the Schools Forum should again agree to de-delegate all relevant funding for continued central management by the LA?

Note this question only impacts on maintained, mainstream schools.

Responses from all 17 schools impacted by this supported this proposal.

The Forum is recommended to agree the continued de-delegation of budgets for the services requested by the council.

6.12 **Question 4: statutory education related duties**

In respect of making a financial contribution to the education related statutory and regulatory duties required of the council that will no longer be financed through DfE grant, do you agree that maintained schools should continue to make a £20 per pupil / place contribution?

Note this question only impacts on maintained schools, including mainstream special schools and Pupil Referral Units.

From April 2017, the DfE implemented a saving of £600m through the complete withdrawal of the Education Services Grant (ESG) which was the mechanism used to fund LAs for their statutory and regulatory education related duties as prescribed in various Education Acts and other relevant statutes. This resulted in the council losing £1.2m of grant but continuing to have to meet the same requirements. The DfE “recognise that local authorities will need to use other sources of funding to pay for education services once the general funding rate has been removed” and will “allow local authorities to retain some of their schools block funding to cover the statutory duties that they carry out for maintained schools which were previously funded through the ESG.” Schools have always previously agreed to a £20 per pupil deduction which would contribute around £0.23m to the £1.2m loss in grant. The deduction, if agreed, is taken after the calculation of final school budgets.

14 of the 18 respondents that this question impacted on (78%) agreed that a £20 per pupil contribution should continue.

The Forum are recommended to agree that a £20 per pupil contribution continues to be made by maintained schools towards the cost of delivering ‘general’ education related statutory and regulatory duties.

6.13 **Question 5: Scheme for Financing Schools**

Do you agree that amendments should be made to the Scheme to update the claw-back of surplus balances calculation to exclude activities directly related to Teaching Schools and similar functions and to increase the amount of financing available to support schools requesting a licensed deficit or loan?

Note this question only impacts on maintained schools, including mainstream special schools and Pupil Referral Units.

16 of the 18 respondents that this question impacted on (89%) agreed that the Scheme should be updated accordingly.

The Forum are recommended to agree that relevant amendments be made to the Scheme as detailed in Annex 2.

Note: A number of minor changes including clarifications and updated terminology will also be made.

Update on 2022-23 budget

- 6.14 The most significant updates to the 2022-23 budget will arise from the October 2021 census and other data which will not be confirmed by the DfE until December. At the publication of this report, provisional census data is available, although there are outstanding queries on 9 mainstream schools (23% of total) which impacts on the accuracy and completeness of data being viewed.
- 6.15 The basic assumption remains that any change in pupil numbers will be broadly neutral in terms of the difference in change in DSG income received and the allocation of individual budgets for schools.
- 6.16 Table 1 below sets out the areas where updates can still occur, together with the latest estimated change from the October Forum meeting. All amounts remain subject to further change.

Table 1: Update where available on budgets subject to change

Item	Estimated amount £k
Funding shortfall to NFF as reported to Forum in October	-467
Change in DSG from October census i.e. pupil numbers only	TBD
Change in budget allocations to schools from October census i.e. pupil numbers and characteristics	TBD
Re-calculated DSG Growth Fund allocation for increased pupil numbers	30
Re-calculated LA managed Growth Fund budget for significant increase of pupils at September 2022 and KS1 class size allocations	50
Net change	-387

- 6.17 At this stage, there is no material change in the overall budget forecast with a £0.467m shortfall to the amount required to deliver NFF funding rates. It was previously reported that the options available to manage the indicated budget shortfall are.
1. Draw down funds from the Reserve created by the council to help finance the additional costs of new and expanding schools (subject to DfE approval with initial discussions underway)
 2. Draw down funds from the Reserve created in the unallocated Schools Budget to support the additional costs of new and expanding schools
 3. Fund schools at a scaled percentage of the NFF rather than the full amount.

A combination of these options can also be used.

- 6.18 In respect of the estimated £0.050m funding shortfall on the Central Schools Services Block, the council is continuing to work through options with the objective of ensuring no further costs fall on the DSG.

Next steps

- 6.19 The decisions taken on the outcomes from the consultation will assist with the on-going preparation of the 2022-23 budget. As some of the questions only impact on specific groups, DfE permit only Forum members representing these groups to make relevant decisions. The report recommendations are therefore presented to reflect this.

7 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 7.1 The relevant legal implications are addressed within the main body of the report.

Director of Resources

- 7.2 The Director of Resources is satisfied that there are no significant financial implications arising from this budget policy setting report although a new risk has emerged around the ability of the council to provide the agreed support to School Budgets.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 7.3 The need for an EIA will be taken when the final budget proposals are confirmed.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 7.4 None identified.

Climate Change Impact

- 7.5 None identified.

8 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 8.1 People Directorate Management Team, school governors, head teachers, Schools Forum and schools.

Method of Consultation

- 8.2 Written reports and formal consultation with schools.

Representations Received

- 8.3 Included in body of this report.

Background Papers

Financial Consultation with schools and other relevant documents:

<https://schools.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/finance/school-funding-consultation-2022-to-2023-financial-year/>

Contact for further information

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Doc. Ref

[https://bfcouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/fina/bpm/FIBPSCB-FIN9.6/Schools Forum/\(106\) 181121/Outcomes from October 2021 consultation with schools.docx](https://bfcouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/fina/bpm/FIBPSCB-FIN9.6/Schools%20Forum/(106)%20181121/Outcomes%20from%20October%2021%20consultation%20with%20schools.docx)

Summary responses to the October 2021 financial consultation with schools

QUESTION	TOTALS				TOTAL	%
	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	ALL THROUGH	SPECIAL		
1 Do you agree that subject to affordability, that both mainstream and special schools should receive a minimum +2% increase in per pupil funding from the 2021-22 financial year? 2% is the highest increase permitted by the DfE.						
Yes	19	3	0	1	23	100%
No	0	0	0	0	0	0%
No reply / not applicable	0	0	0	0	0	
2 Do you agree that we should continue to fund any cost associated with providing all mainstream schools with the agreed minimum percentage increase in per pupil funding from 2021-22 by limiting increases to those mainstream schools receiving the largest increases in per pupil funding, typically those above the average percentage increase?						
Yes	18	2	0	0	20	91%
No	1	1	0	0	2	9%
No reply / not applicable	0	0	0	1	1	

QUESTION	TOTALS				TOTAL	%
	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	ALL THROUGH	SPECIAL		
3 To continue the strategic and cost effective approach in the use of the funds for contingencies (including schools in financial difficulties including those in or in danger of entering an Ofsted category), support to underperforming ethnic groups, CLEAPSS licence fees, staff supply cover costs, premature retirement / dismissal cost, free school meal eligibility checking and Behaviour Support Services, do you agree that the Schools Forum should again agree to de-delegate all relevant funding for continued central management by the LA?						
Yes	16	1	0	0	17	100%
No	0	0	0	0	0	0%
No reply / not applicable	3	2	0	1	6	
4 In respect of making a financial contribution to the education related statutory and regulatory duties required of the council that will no longer be financed through DfE grant, do you agree that maintained schools should continue to make a £20 per pupil / place contribution?						
Yes	12	1	0	1	14	78%
No	4	0	0	0	4	22%
No reply / not applicable	3	2	0	0	5	

QUESTION	TOTALS				TOTAL	%
	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	ALL THROUGH	SPECIAL		
5 Do you agree that amendments should be made to the Scheme to update the claw-back of surplus balances calculation to exclude activates directly related to Teaching Schools and similar functions and to increase the amount of financing available to support schools requesting a licensed deficit or loan?						
Yes	14	1	0	1	16	89%
No	2	0	0	0	2	11%
No reply / not applicable	3	2	0	0	5	
Total responses	19 63%	3 50%	0 0%	1 50%	23 59%	
Maximum responses	30	6	1	2	39	

Proposed changes to Scheme text relating to the control on surplus school balances

Words to be deleted from the existing loan scheme are ~~struck through~~

New words are in *italic and shaded*

Normal text indicates the wording for the BFC Scheme. Words in *italics* are offered as an explanation to the Scheme text and are not part of the Scheme.

Controls on surplus balances

Surplus balances held by schools as permitted under this scheme are subject to the following restrictions:

- a. the Authority shall calculate by 30 June each year the surplus balance, if any, held by each school as at the preceding 31 March. For this purpose the balance will be the recurrent balance as defined in the Consistent Financial Reporting Framework;

Balances on Devolved Formula Capital and any other specific grant funded activities are excluded, unless allowed for in the relevant grant conditions.

- b. the Authority shall deduct from the calculated balance any amounts for which the school has a prior year commitment to pay from the surplus balance from the previous financial year;

In this context, a prior year commitment is defined as a project previously agreed with the Authority to be excluded from the claw-back calculation, for example, capital building and construction projects – see c.i to viii below for full criteria to be used to establish a valid commitment against a surplus balance.

- c. the Authority shall then deduct from the resulting sum any amounts which the governing body of the school has declared to be assigned for specific purposes permitted by the authority, and which the authority is satisfied are properly assigned. To count as properly assigned, amounts must not be retained beyond the period stipulated for the purpose in question, without the consent of the Authority. In considering whether any sums are properly assigned the Authority may also take into account any previously declared assignment of such sums but may not take any change in planned assignments to be the sole reason for considering that a sum is not properly assigned. Schools will be required to provide relevant information to support funds assigned for a specific purpose, in a format prescribed by the authority.

The criteria to consider whether sums are properly assigned are as follows:

- i. Capital building and construction projects
- ii. Furniture, IT and other one-off expenditure of a capital nature
- iii. Infrastructure, maintenance and refurbishment
- iv. Staffing remodelling and restructuring
- v. Specific curriculum resources
- vi. Balances held in respect of pupil focused extended activities

- vii. Money held to fund budget deductions known to be occurring in the next financial year e.g. fall in pupil numbers.
- viii. *Balances held in respect of an activity that supports a number of other BF schools, such as one operating a school improvement and CPD service*
- ix. Other high cost activities, of a long term nature, agreed in advance with the ~~Director of Children, Young People and Learning and the Schools Forum~~ *Executive Director responsible for schools.*

The conditions outlined here are intended to ensure schools can build up reserves towards particular projects but cannot defer implementation indefinitely. A change in the plans of a school is not allowed to be the only criterion by which a sum can be considered to be properly assigned or not. After the accounts are closed each year, the Authority will contact schools with significant surplus balances to agree whether any of the balance has been properly assigned for a specific purpose and can therefore be deducted from the claw-back calculation.

The above specified criteria have previously been approved by the Schools Forum following consultation with schools where they were supported by the vast majority of respondents.

- d. The maximum surplus that can be retained by a secondary school is 10% of the annual budget. For primary, special and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), it is the greater of 16% or £150,000.
- e. if the result of steps a-c is a sum greater than the maximum amount specified in d, above, then the Authority shall deduct from the current year's budget share an amount equal to the excess.
- f. the calculation will be made against the final budget for the year in question i.e. after any contingency funding, significant in-year pupil growth allocation etc. The deduction will be made annually in arrears i.e. the final balance at 2011-12 calculated against the final budget for 2011-12 (known around June 2012) will be deducted at the start of the 2013-14 financial year.

This paragraph has been added to make clear that the calculation will be made against final and not initial budgets. It is also proposed to delay any claw-back for one year to allow relevant schools time to plan for the change when setting subsequent budgets.

- g. Should any school wish to retain a higher surplus than permitted in steps d-f above, the Schools Forum will consider each referral on a case by case basis, taking account of the merits of each individual proposal based upon the submission made by the school.
- h. An appeal against a decision by the Forum in step g. can be made to the relevant Director. The Director's determination will be final.
- i. Where, at 31 March 2014, a school holds a surplus balance in excess of steps d-f, this can be retained until 31 March 2017 without specific approval of the Forum.

Funds deriving from sources other than the Authority will be taken into account in this calculation if paid into the budget share account of the school, whether under provisions in this scheme or otherwise.

The total of any amounts deducted from schools' budget shares by the Authority under this provision are to be applied to the Schools Budget of the Authority

Proposed changes to Scheme text relating to licensed deficit and loan arrangements

Words to be deleted from the existing loan scheme are ~~struck through~~

New words are in *italic and shaded*

4.9 Licenced deficit arrangements

In exceptional circumstances, in agreement with the Schools Forum and Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning, the authority will permit schools to over spend their budget allocation through a licensed deficit arrangement. The funding of such agreements would be through the collective *annual income schools receive from the council through the Funding Formula for Schools* ~~surplus of school balances held by the authority on behalf of schools and any unspent funding in the Schools Budget Unallocated Reserve, and will be considered on an individual basis.~~ General features of the scheme are detailed below:

Circumstances in which licensed deficit arrangements may be agreed:

1. if in the opinion of the *Executive Director responsible for schools* ~~Director of Children Young People and Learning~~ a school could not otherwise achieve its improvement targets (there will still be a requirement of the governing body to demonstrate repayment).
2. if in the opinion of the *Executive Director responsible for schools* ~~Director of Children Young People and Learning~~ and *Executive Director responsible for Finance* ~~Director of Finance~~ a school could not reasonably be expected to effect immediately the savings required as a result of a significant reduction in pupil numbers (there will still be a requirement of the governing body to demonstrate repayment).

Outline features of the scheme.

- the maximum length over which schools may repay the licensed deficit is 3 years (i.e. reach at least a zero balance).
- arrangement for a licensed deficit will only be agreed where the governing body produces a plan which demonstrates to the satisfaction of the *Executive Director responsible for schools* ~~Director of Children Young People and Learning~~ and *Executive Director responsible for Finance* ~~Director of Finance~~ the savings or additional income required to repay the deficit within an agreed timescale.

In general the minimum size of loans which may be agreed will be the lesser of the following:

Primary schools	£10,000
Special schools	£20,000
Secondary schools	£30,000

OR

For all types of school, 5% of the size of the budget share as determined by the authority.

In general the maximum size of loans which may be agreed will be the greater of the following:

Primary schools	£50,000
Special schools	£150,000
Secondary schools	£250,000

OR

For all types of school, 15% of the size of the budget share as determined by the authority.

- interest will be charged at 1% above the Council's cost of borrowing on the date on which the licensed deficit is agreed unless the authority agrees for it to be waived. The requirement to pay interest will be assessed on the merits of each individual application, and in general, will not attract interest.

Outline controls on licensed deficits

- the maximum proportion of the *annual income schools receive from the council through the Funding Formula for Schools* that will be used to support licensed deficits and loan arrangements will be 3% collective balances held by the authority including any unspent funding in the Schools Budget Unallocated Reserve which will be used to support the arrangement shall not exceed 40%
- the *Executive Director responsible for schools* Director of Children Young People and Learning and *Executive Director responsible for Finance* Director of Finance of the authority will make recommendations to the Schools Forum and Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning to agree any licensed deficits and the terms on which they are offered.

The authority may request those schools operating external bank accounts to allow some or all of those balances to support the above arrangements.

4.10 Loan arrangements

In exceptional circumstances, in agreement with the Schools Forum and Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning, the authority will permit schools to receive a loan in advance of future budget allocations. The funding of such agreements would be through the collective *annual income schools receive from the council through the Funding Formula for Schools* surplus of school balances held by the authority on behalf of schools and any unspent funding in the Schools Budget Unallocated Reserve, and will be considered on an individual basis.. General features of the scheme are detailed below:

Circumstances in which a loans may be agreed:

1. where major capital projects which would otherwise result in the project not being undertaken (there will be a requirement of the governing body to demonstrate repayment).
2. to finance invest to save schemes e.g. energy efficiency investments which result in net annual savings after making the required loan repayments.

Outline features of the scheme.

- ordinarily, the maximum length over which schools may repay the loan is 3 years (i.e. reach at least a zero balance), however, longer periods are available on a case by case basis, linked to the expected useful life of the asset and the ability of individual schools to repay any loan.
- arrangement for a loan will only be agreed where the governing body produces a plan which demonstrates to the satisfaction of the **Executive Director responsible for schools** ~~Director of Children Young People and Learning~~ and **Executive Director responsible for Finance** ~~Director of Finance~~ the savings or additional income required to repay the deficit within an agreed timescale,
- arrangement for a loan will only be agreed where the governing body agrees in writing that should the school convert to an academy, that the liability to fully repay any outstanding balance in accordance with the agreed loan schedule will be incorporated into the transfer arrangements to become the obligation of the new Academy body.

In general the minimum size of loans which may be agreed will be the lesser of the following:

Primary schools	£10,000
Special schools	£20,000
Secondary schools	£30,000

OR

For all types of school, 5% of the size of the budget share as determined by the authority.

In general the maximum size of loans which may be agreed will be the greater of the following:

Primary schools	£50,000
Special schools	£150,000
Secondary schools	£250,000

OR

For all types of school, 15% of the size of the budget share as determined by the authority.

- interest will be charged at 1% above the Council's cost of borrowing on the date on which the loan is advanced unless the authority agrees for it to be waived. The requirement to pay interest will be assessed on the merits of each individual application, with loans likely to attract interest.

Outline controls on loans

- the maximum proportion of the **annual income schools receive from the council through the Funding Formula for Schools that will be used to support licensed deficits and loan arrangements will be 3%** ~~collective balances held by the authority including any unspent funding in the Schools Budget Unallocated Reserve which will be used to support the arrangement shall not exceed 40%~~
- the **Executive Director responsible for schools** ~~Director of Children Young People and Learning~~ and **Executive Director responsible for Finance** ~~Director of Finance~~ of the authority will make recommendations to the Schools Forum and Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning to agree any loans and the terms on which they are

offered.

The authority may request those schools operating external bank accounts to allow some or all of those balances to support the above arrangements.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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