

EXECUTIVE RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW OF SCHOOL PLACES

The report is welcomed as it reflects well the complex, time consuming nature of the process and recognises the fair, courteous and supportive way in which parents are helped through the process. In response to the recommendations made:

Recommendation	Response
<p>6.1 To ensure that the Council continues to meet its statutory obligation to provide sufficient school places for Bracknell Forest, the allocation of school places and designated areas be reviewed in the future following the provision of new schools in the Borough and the proposed new housing developments.</p>	<p>AGREED As a result of housing pressures on the Council, there is the possibility that up to 9 new schools will be built over the next 5 years. Changed and new designated areas (DAs) will need to be established for these schools. This will impact on the DAs of existing schools. Appropriate admission arrangements will need to be established, following consultation, depending on how the schools are to be provided. These tasks are central and critical to the implementation plans and timelines for the successful opening and ongoing operation of these new schools.</p>
<p>6.2 A survey of parents of all Year 7 pupils who transferred to secondary school in September 2014 be undertaken as a further means to gauge parental satisfaction with the admissions process.</p>	<p>AGREED The recommendation to do a satisfaction survey is welcomed. The preferred time to do this would be while the child is still in primary school, in January/February after applications are received and before offer letters are sent out. If the timescale was to be once the child is in Year 7 then responses might be skewed by the outcome of the application process.</p>
<p>6.3 The presentations given to parents in respect of the allocations process be publicised to increase attendance and understanding of criteria and oversubscription leading to informed preferences and possible improved outcomes for children and parents.</p>	<p>AGREED Presentations are already well promoted and acclaimed to parents, but the Admissions team are always open to other methods of promotion and to evaluate the success of initiatives. This practice will continue.</p>
<p>6.4 Parents be encouraged to visit schools earlier in the admissions process and attend school open days in order to facilitate well informed preferences.</p>	<p>AGREED Parents are already encouraged in presentations and paperwork to visit schools. This will be emphasised in future publications and further methods trialled, for example primary schools will be encouraged to have open evenings (as is the practice in secondary schools) in addition to daytime visits.</p>

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<p>6.5 Full consultation, including meetings with parents, in respect of proposed changes to designated areas associated with new school places provision be undertaken.</p>	<p>AGREED Consultation is already an inherent part of the process of DA changes as it could be deemed an unfair process if it did not happen. Processes must be of an appropriate scale and scope depending on the number of residents and/or parents affected. The process of consultation is driven by the organisation that has the lead role – in some cases this might be a school, in others the Council. Processes are well publicised.</p>
<p>6.6 The wording of the military covenant be checked to clarify whether it relates to local or designated area schools as the implications of this are significant</p>	<p>CONFIRMATION The wording has been checked and we can confirm that all the appropriate principles are included in the School Admissions Code 2012 to which the Council conforms.</p>
<p>6.7 Consideration be given to re-providing the Admissions Whiteboard in Time Square when the Children, Young People and Learning Department relocates there to maintain the efficiency of the admissions process.</p>	<p>AGREED The Children, Young People and Learning Department has now relocated to Time Square. The database processes behind the Whiteboard are continuing with an alternative method, based on newer technology, implemented. Additional computer screens have been provided which continue to provide the same information. The required outcomes of the process are therefore maintained.</p>
<p>6.8 A small business style card with bullet points advising parents on how to achieve a successful admissions application be produced and given to parents at Parent Briefings as a reference aid when they make their applications for school places.</p>	<p>AGREED The Council will review and refresh the current leaflets and cards already provided to parents to ensure that the content is most helpful to parents.</p>

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