

Report for: **ACTION**

Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	NO - Part I
Title	Improving Choice in Education
Responsible Officer(s)	Alison Alexander, Managing Director & Strategic Director of Adult, Children and Health Services
Contact officer, job title and phone number	Kevin McDaniel, Head of Schools and Education Services, 01628 683592
Member reporting	Cllr N Airey, Lead member for Children's Services
For Consideration By	Cabinet
Date to be Considered	24 November 2016
Implementation Date if Not Called In	Immediately
Affected Wards	All

REPORT SUMMARY

1. In September 2016 the government published a consultation called "Schools that work for everyone" and is seeking responses by 12 December 2016. This report sets out the response from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead that confirms our commitment to excellent education for all pupils who live in the borough, particularly for those living with financial disadvantage.
2. Education standards in the Royal Borough continue to rise and parents continue to demand choice of school type. With our commitment to schools of all types which strive to provide excellent education, the Royal Borough welcomes the opportunity to support the option of selective education for those who choose to access it.
3. In addition, the Royal Borough welcomes the intention of the consultation to make education attainment for financially disadvantaged pupils a shared responsibility across the education sector. It is clear from the attainment results over the last three years that these children do not do as well as their peers in local schools and we are committed to improving their success.
4. This report concludes that the Royal Borough should engage actively in the coming months with any existing school that wishes to explore the opportunity to enable some admissions through selection by academic aptitude. All opportunities must ensure that every school in the borough continues to offer an excellent education for all pupils and contributes to improving outcomes for our pupils living with financial disadvantage as table 1 (section 2.6) clearly shows this group continues to do less well than their peers.

If recommendations are adopted, how will residents benefit?	
Benefits to residents and reasons why they will benefit	Dates by which residents can expect to notice a difference
1. Greater education choice available locally.	To be confirmed with national legislation but unlikely to be before September 2018 admission to secondary school.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet:

- i. Endorse the development of selective or partially selective education within the education provision of the Royal Borough to further improve the choice of education available to pupils and the families.**
- ii. Authorise the Managing Director & Strategic Director of Adult, Children and Health Services with the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services to finalise and respond to the “Schools that work for everyone” consultation by the Department for Education as set out in appendix A.**
- iii. Authorise the Managing Director & Strategic Director of Adult, Children and Health Services and the Lead Member for Children’s Services to write to all secondary schools in the borough inviting expressions of interest in allowing some or all admissions through a selective stream, and to follow up on the responses to secure a range of options for residents.**
- iv. Authorise the Managing Director & Strategic Director of Adult, Children and Health Services and the Lead Member for Children’s Services to write to selective schools across the country inviting them to actively pursue the establishment of a new wholly selective school or a school with a selective stream in the borough.**

2. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The Royal borough has a wide range of school choice, offering both two and three-tier options with access at ages 8, 11, 13 and 16, in a range of community, faith, single gender and mixed schools. This council remains committed to ensuring every pupil can choose the education they want to receive and that all education is high quality education. To this end this council has invested £21m in primary school capacity over the last five years and has an active investment programme of £30m for secondary school expansion. The investment programme will support the education sector to achieve high standards while meeting the forecast level of demand for school places, including the provision of up to 10% extra capacity. This council believes that the availability of additional places offering selective education will increase choice, quantity and quality of school places available to pupils and families living within the borough.
- 2.2 The standard of education within the Royal Borough is rising. Following inspections this academic year, at the end of October 2016 88% of the state-

funded schools in the borough are judged to be Good or Outstanding. 59% of students who completed the year 6 SAT test in 2016 reached the national benchmark making the Royal Borough the 17th highest attaining local authority out of the 150 authorities with sufficient schools in England. Similarly, 72.2% of students who took GCSE examinations in September 2016 achieved an A*-C grade in English and Mathematics making the Royal Borough the 9th highest attaining local authority in England.

- 2.3 Whilst overall quality and attainment are high within the Royal Borough, some pupils seek places in other local authority areas. Historically 20%-30% of pupils have applied for selective school places when this process took place before the entrance test results were known. The system changed in 2014 so that applications were made after the test results are known. There was a reduction in the number of applications as some parents recognised the reduced chance of being accepted. In 2015, 16% of parents sought a selective school place outside of the Borough with 13% putting this as their first preference of school type based on the result of their child's entrance test result. In the last five years over 12% of pupils living in the Royal Borough have been offered a selective school place in year 7 (see appendix B for a detailed summary of the applications for secondary school places).
- 2.4 The 666 pupils that have attended a selective school or a school with a selective stream outside of the Royal Borough since September 2011 have had limited positive effect on the borough's education attainment figures. This council would like these borough residents to have the choice to attend a selective school within the borough boundary and to therefore contribute to education standards within the Royal Borough. This council has made a manifesto commitment, in response to residents' demands, to promote selective education within the Royal Borough.
- 2.5 Whilst this council is investing in existing schools to meet planned demand for the next three years, there will be further population growth. The delivery of the Borough Local Plan will require at least one new primary and secondary school to meet the needs of the families who will live in the new housing being planned. An opportunity exists within the borough to build the two new schools in the centre of Maidenhead on council owned land on a number of sites including Maidenhead Golf Club. The council land holding in Maidenhead could be utilised for a new selective secondary school so that residents have access to a balanced range of school types within a high quality education system.
- 2.6 The government consultation makes several proposals relating to the contribution of selective schools, independent schools and universities to improving the educational standards for pupils from financially disadvantaged backgrounds. In the Royal Borough, 6.0% of our young people are currently eligible for free school meals while 14.4% have been eligible at some point in the last six years¹. This larger cohort is eligible for the Pupil Premium and numbered 3052 pupils by the Department for Education in April 2016. This cohort is typically referred to as the "Free School Meals" cohort in schools and there is comparative data available for this segmentation at the end of Key Stages. Nationally, this cohort of young people does not achieve as well as their peers and that is true in our borough. Locally over the last three school years these pupils have achieved around the national average for those from financially disadvantaged backgrounds and

¹ Taken from DFE data in 2016 following the recent refresh of IDACI data which is updated every five years. Previously the Royal Borough had 9% of the school population eligible for Free School Meals.

significantly below other pupils in the borough. Table 1 shows the attainment of these pupils in comparison to the national benchmark for their age group and the gap with other pupils in the Royal Borough.

Table 1: Performance of pupils eligible for Free School Meals

			2013	2014	2015
Key Stage 2 Level 4+ reading, writing and maths	RBWM	FSM	68%	68%	58%
		Gap	-11%	-15%	-26%
	National	FSM	60%	64%	66%
		Gap	-19%	-18%	-17%
Key Stage 4 5+ A*-C inc. English & maths	RBWM	FSM	48%	34%	39%
		Gap	-22%	-30%	-28%
	National	FSM	38%	33%	34%
		Gap	-27%	-27%	-28%

- 2.7 Improvement in this area is priority for this council and this council has a manifesto commitment to “Work with schools to close any attainment gaps for poor pupils”. Already this academic year, our school improvement service has offered every school targeted support regardless of school type. This council welcomes the proposals outlined in the consultation to improve the support provided by the most advantaged in the education system to increase the attainment of young people living with financial disadvantage.
- 2.8 In this context, it is recommended that the Royal Borough respond positively to the proposals set out by the government to allow wholly or partially new selective school places to be developed. We believe the range of options, from new schools to the conversion of existing schools, will offer the best chance to develop the range of school types while maintaining high quality education in them all.
- 2.9 The consultation format specified by the government in the “Schools that work for everyone” paper requires the respondent to answer to a batch of questions following each section of the consultation paper. Appendix A contains the proposed response to each question from the Royal Borough, labelled by the paragraph number which contains the questions. There is often more than one question per paragraph number.
- 2.10 The government will consider all consultation responses before bringing forward the necessary changes in policy, guidance or statute in due course. This council however wishes to move forward as quickly as possible and will therefore take the following steps to establish a number of options by March 2017:
- write to all state funded secondary schools within the borough to invite expressions of interest in allowing some or all admissions through selection;
 - write to selective schools across the country inviting them to actively pursue the establishment of a new wholly selective school or a school with a selective stream in the borough.
- 2.11 This council will support any proposal that considers full or partial selective education only where the proposal includes a detailed commitment to raise the academic achievement of young people eligible for pupil premium and those struggling to get by as identified in the Resolution Foundation “Hanging On” report

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in September 2016². The proposal must outline concrete steps to include a representative proportion of those pupils within the provision. For example, a new selective school admitting 120 pupils in a year group would be expected to prioritise the admission of significantly in excess of the 12 young people eligible for free school meals based on the current population of the borough. Further, any such school will have to be supported by resident demand which is clearly evidenced.

3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The following outcomes are required from the process.

Defined Outcomes	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Sig. Exceeded	Date they should be delivered by
Consultation response submitted by due date.	Not submitted	Submitted	NA	NA	12 December 2016
Expressions of interest are received from existing schools	None received	1 received	2 received	At least 3 received	End of March 2017
Interest from existing Selective schools	None received	1 received	2 received	At least 3 received	July 2017

4. FINANCIAL DETAILS

4.1 There are no financial implications of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The local authority is able to respond to the consultation as set out in the recommendations. Until such time as a new regulations are published, there is no mechanism for new selective schools to open in the UK.

6. VALUE FOR MONEY

6.1 There is no expenditure resulting from this report.

7. SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT APPRAISAL

² <http://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/hanging-on-the-stresses-and-strains-of-britains-just-managing-families/>

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7.1 Not required.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

Risks	Uncontrolled Risk	Controls	Controlled Risk
Too many selective places are proposed	HIGH	An open process and demographic needs analysis by RBWM will make clear to proposers, DFE and EFA the likely impact of individual schemes	MEDIUM

9. LINKS TO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

9.1 This paper contributes to the council's strategic objective to make sure every pupil can access excellent education. It is directly related to the manifesto commitments to explore the provision of selective school education within the borough and to close the gap for disadvantaged pupils.

10. EQUALITIES, HUMAN RIGHTS AND COMMUNITY COHESION

10.1 This report relates to the principles of maintaining choice and high quality education for all. There are specific recommendation regarding those eligible for free school meals and any forthcoming proposals will contain detail that may require a full Equality Impact Assessment. This report does not require such an assessment.

11. STAFFING/WORKFORCE AND ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None.

12. PROPERTY AND ASSETS

12.1 None.

13. ANY OTHER IMPLICATIONS

13.1 None

14. CONSULTATION

14.1 This report will be considered by the Children's Overview and Scrutiny panel on 16th November 2016. The government consultation is available to all for submission and the council has encouraged schools to express their specific opinions.

15. APPENDICES

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- Appendix A: The Royal Borough response to government consultation - Schools that work for everyone.
- Appendix B: Selective School Analysis

17. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

17.1 The historical data generated from recent school admissions years has been used to establish the demographic figures used in section 2 and the Governments "Schools that work for everyone" document, which can be downloaded from <https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-frameworks/schools-that-work-for-everyone>, is the source of the questions for the proposed responses.

18. CONSULTATION (MANDATORY)

Name of consultee	Post held and Department	Date sent	Date received	See comments in paragraph:
Internal				
Cllr N Airey	Leader Member for Children's Services	21/10/16	24/10/16	Comments
Cllr D Evans	Deputy Lead Member for Children's Services	21/10/16		
Russell O'Keefe	Strategic Director Corporate and Community Services	21/10/16		
Alison Alexander	Managing Director/ Strategic Director Adults, Children and Health	21/10/16	22/10/16	Comments
Simon Fletcher	Strategic Director Operations and Customer Services	21/10/16		

REPORT HISTORY

Full name of report author	Job title	Full contact no:
Kevin McDaniel	Head of Schools and education	01628 683592

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	Support	
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