

Notice of Meeting

Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning Decisions



Date and Time

Tuesday, 28 January
2025
11.00 am

Place

Woodhatch Place, 11
Cockshot Hill,
Reigate, Surrey ,RH2
8EF

Contact

Toby Nash
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ov.uk

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@SCCdemocracy



Cabinet Member:
Clare Curran

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<https://surreycc.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

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AGENDA

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests from Members in respect of any item to be considered at the meeting.

Notes:

- In line with the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012, declarations may relate to the interest of the member, or the member's spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom the member is living as husband or wife, or a person with whom the member is living as if they were civil partners and the member is aware they have the interest.
- Members need only disclose interests not currently listed on the Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.
- Members must notify the Monitoring Officer of any interests disclosed at the meeting so they may be added to the Register.
- Members are reminded that they must not participate in any item where they have a disclosable pecuniary interest.

2 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

a MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

- (i) The deadline for Member's questions is 12pm four working days before the meeting - 22 January 2025.

b PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The deadline for public questions is seven days before the meeting – 21 January 2025.

c PETITIONS

The deadline for petitions was 14 days before the meeting, and no petitions have been received.

3 PROPOSAL TO CREATE A SEN UNIT AT THAMES DITTON INFANT SCHOOL

(Pages
1 - 34)

The Cabinet Member to consider a report on the proposal to create a SEN unit at Thames Ditton Infant School.

Terence Herbert
Chief Executive

Published: Monday, 20 January 2025

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QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

Cabinet and most committees will consider questions by elected Surrey County Council Members and questions and petitions from members of the public who are electors in the Surrey County Council area.

Please note the following regarding questions from the public:

1. Members of the public can submit one written question to a meeting by the deadline stated in the agenda. Questions should relate to general policy and not to detail. Questions are asked and answered in public and cannot relate to “confidential” or “exempt” matters (for example, personal or financial details of an individual); for further advice please contact the committee manager listed on the front page of an agenda.
2. The number of public questions which can be asked at a meeting may not exceed six. Questions which are received after the first six will be held over to the following meeting or dealt with in writing at the Chairman’s discretion.
3. Questions will be taken in the order in which they are received.
4. Questions will be asked and answered without discussion. The Chairman or Cabinet members may decline to answer a question, provide a written reply or nominate another Member to answer the question.
5. Following the initial reply, one supplementary question may be asked by the questioner. The Chairman or Cabinet members may decline to answer a supplementary question.

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SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LIFELONG LEARNING**

DATE: 28 JANUARY 2025

LEAD OFFICER: RACHAEL WARDELL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LIFELONG LEARNING

SUBJECT: PROPOSAL TO CREATE A SEN UNIT AT THAMES DITTON INFANT SCHOOL

ORGANISATION STRATEGY PRIORITY AREA: Tackling Health Inequality / Enabling A Greener Future / Empowered and Thriving Communities

Purpose of the Report:

Under section 14 of the Education Act 1996 and section 27 part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, Local Authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that:

- There are sufficient schools for providing primary and secondary education in their areas.
- As the local authority they keep under review the educational provision for children and young people who have special educational needs and or a disability (SEND).

Surrey's latest sufficiency modelling projections to 2030-2031, which are based on the previous three year's trends from academic years 2018-2019 to 2020-2021, indicate significant growth in the total number of pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) resident in Surrey over the forecast period. This projected growth is expected to reach its peak in 2026-27 and 2027-28, before reducing slightly thereafter. By 2030-31, the total number of Surrey EHCP pupils in National Curriculum Years (NCY) 0-14 (age 4-19 years), is projected to be more than 2,500 higher than the 2020-21 total.

Primary age projections show moderately increasing demand from 1,893 places in 2020-2021 which is expected to peak at 2,053 places in 2024-2025, before declining thereafter towards the end of the forecast period. This represents 8.4% increase in demand for specialist school places over that 4-year period and is equivalent to 160 places. The most prevalent primary needs for pupils aged 4-11 who require a specialist school placement (in order of prevalence) are Autism and Communication & Interaction needs and Severe or Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties.

Surrey's existing maintained specialist provision, which includes specialist school places in SEN Units in mainstream schools and in Specialist Schools/ academies, has around 4,000 places and 97% occupancy.

The Council's priority is to further reduce reliance on the independent sector, but most importantly ensure local children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) who require specialist school placements can have their educational needs met close to home, more connected to local communities and local support services and within state-maintained provision wherever possible.

The Department for Education (DfE) expects local authorities to manage their specialist estates efficiently to avoid detriment to schools' educational offers, creating disadvantage to children and young people who have SEND or the local authority's financial position. This means ensuring the availability of specialist school places that are appropriately matched to need-type, phases of education and geographic location so that all of Surrey's statutory school age children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that require a full-time specialist school placement in either a mainstream SEN Unit or Specialist School have a named placement, ready for the beginning of the next academic year.

The proposal is to open a SEN unit at Thames Ditton Infant School and formalise the nurture class which opened in September 2024, to create an additional 21 places for primary school age pupils with Communication and Interaction needs and co-occurring needs who require a specialist placement in a mainstream school.

The proposals require Surrey County Council to follow the statutory process outlined in the DfE guidance "Making significant changes ('Prescribed Alterations') to Maintained Schools," because they fit into one of the categories in this instance:

The proposal is to open additional SEN provision within existing mainstream school classrooms at Thames Ditton Infant School

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

The Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning determines the statutory notice published for the proposal thereby bringing into effect the formal commencement of the proposals.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Learning may:

1. reject a proposal
2. approve a proposal without modification
3. approve a proposal with modifications, having consulted the LA and/or GB (as appropriate)
4. approve a proposal, with or without modification – subject to certain conditions (such as the granting of planning permission) being met.

Reason for Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning 's approvals and recommendations completes the statutory process in accordance with the DfE guidance "Making significant changes ('Prescribed Alterations') to Maintained Schools."

Executive Summary:

Demand for Specialist Places

- Table 1** shows the latest projections for infant pupils with EHCPs in Surrey who have autism and/or have communication and interaction needs identified as their primary need in Elmbridge. The projections show a gradual decrease in this cohort year on year to 2032/33 however the demand still outweighs the level of provision within local schools.

Table 1 Forecasts for children with autism and communication and interaction needs in Elmbridge

Residential Area	School Location	Forecast									
		2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33
Elmbridge	Surrey	94	80	77	77	77	77	75	74	74	74
	Out of county	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3
	Total SEN Need	96	82	79	79	79	79	77	77	77	77
Total SEN Places Available		24	24	34	44	54	54	54	54	54	54
Shortage or Surplus of Places (No.)		-72	-58	-45	-35	-25	-25	-23	-23	-23	-23
Shortage or Surplus of Places (%)		-299%	-240%	-133%	-80%	-46%	-46%	-43%	-42%	-42%	-42%

- The proposed SEN unit at Thames Ditton Infant School would have 21 specialist school places. Should these pupils be required to attend an education provision in the independent sector, costs would equate to around £1.113m per year every year, based on an average unit cost of £53k per pupil per annum for independent sector provision. This is compared to the average cost for state-maintained specialist places at £23k per pupil per annum and equivalent costs for 21 places of £483k. Provision of the additional state-maintained specialist school places would generate an approximate saving of £30k per pupil place per year.
- This data clearly shows that sustained use of the independent sector in the future would constitute an inefficient use of limited resources and severely impact Surrey's ability to deliver services and support for children, young people, and families, whilst remaining financially sustainable.
- Surrey's ambition for children and young people who have additional needs and disabilities is to develop high quality fit for purpose local state-maintained specialist school provision that enables better long term outcomes. This in turn ensures that Surrey resident pupils are educated closer to home, more connected to local communities and local support services, and have increased opportunities to enter employment in the future.
- Table 2** shows the current SEN unit provision within mainstream schools in Elmbridge.

Table 2 Current SEN unit provision within primary schools in Elmbridge

School	Designation	Age
Bell Farm Primary School	Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)	4-11 (Years R to 6)
Chandlers Field Primary School	Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)	4-11 (Years R to 6)
Thames Ditton Junior School	Moderate learning difficulties (MLD)	7-11 (Years 3 to 6)

Key Outcomes and benefits for children, young people and families:

6. Expanding outstanding sufficient and sustainable specialist school provision for Surrey resident primary age pupils in Elmbridge would provide the following benefits as stated in the Developing local Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Provision report to Cabinet on 25 January 2022:
7. Benefits realisation ensures Surrey's maintained specialist education provision is fit for purpose and creates additional employment/supported internship opportunities for residents around areas of expansion.
8. Children, young people, and families can access the same level of high-quality support wherever they live in Surrey. We have a good, shared understanding of our children and young people who have SEND in Surrey and our support offer matches their identified needs.
9. Expanding Surrey's specialist provision aligns with the Preparation for Adulthood programme and strategy for Post-16 to create local further education and employment pathways such as apprenticeships and supported internships. This enables young people who have SEND to make a successful transition to adulthood and secure employment.
10. Capacity created locally would also make certain that SEND home to school transport distance and costs are reduced so that pupils attend their closest most appropriate school with shorter journey times. Opportunities for developing independent travel skills can be maximised as a result of children and young people being educated closer to home. This would also address local congestion around school sites as well as traffic flow around the county, which would be of benefit to Surrey's Green Agenda.
11. The distribution and occupancy of current Special Schools and SEN Units in mainstream schools clearly illustrates that there is insufficient provision of autism and Communication & Social Interaction Needs, Moderate Learning Difficulties, Severe Learning Difficulties and Social Emotional Mental Health Needs Special places.
12. The approved remodification and expansion programme will ensure that additional places are matched appropriately to need type, phases of education and geographic locations.

Consultation:

13. An informal consultation was published for the proposal from 12 September to 25 October and further statutory notices were published from 4 November to 2 December 2024. All consultation documents are available at www.surreysays.co.uk.
14. The statutory notices are also attached as **Annex 1** of this report.
15. A summary of the consultation analysis for both proposals is attached as **Annex 2**.

Risk Management and Implications:

16. Sufficiency data requires close monitoring and frequent ratification to ensure projected demand for learners with EHCPs is up to date and accurate. This guarantees an appropriate availability of specialist school places, which are aligned to need, phase of education and geographical location. Latest sufficiency modelling demonstrated a clear need for the additional and changed specialist provision that the proposal will create.

17. The key risk to the proposals not being approved is the loss of specialist places (21 additional places for primary school age pupils with Communication and Interaction needs and co-occurring needs) that are needed in county to meet the overall projected demand. These places would likely then need to be found in the NMI sector, which based on current average costs equates to approx. £1.3m per annum from the DSG High Needs Block being spent on out of county independent provision year on year. The 21 additional places would provide a potential cost containment of approx. £720k.
18. The Local Authority needs to be satisfied that the appropriate fair and open local consultation and or representation has been conducted and that the proposer has given full consideration to all responses received. To ensure that this is the case the consultation and decision-making processes are quality assured.
19. Surrey County Council has worked closely with the school to ensure that parents, carers and young people know about the consultation proposals and have had sufficient opportunity to share their views through a number of channels including public and stakeholder meetings, written responses, email correspondence and online response forms.

Financial and Value for Money Implications:
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20. The school would receive funding per pupil per year for each agreed planned place commissioned. The school would also receive a “top up” sum for each pupil on roll at the SEN unit, appropriate to the needs of individual children.

Year of operation	Academic Year	No. Places	Place Funding (per pupil)	Top-Up (per pupil)	AY Total
First	24/25	Up to 12	£10,000*	£7,517.92	Up to £210,215.04
Second	25/26	Up to 19	£6,000 for the three pupils on roll for Oct 24 census previous year's 12 pupils £10,000* for 16 new placements	£7,517.92	Up to £320,840
Third	26/27	Up to 21	£6,000 for previous year's 19 pupils £10,000* for 2 new placements	£7,517.92	Up to £291,876

*The school also receives “mainstream” funding through the national funding formula for pupils on roll of the centre in the previous October. A higher rate of place funding is paid for places which were not occupied in the previous October.

21. A Surrey maintained special school with experience of setting up new provision would support the school with the start-up of the new SEN unit. This would support the training and ongoing development of the provision over the first academic year.

Section 151 Officer Commentary:
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22. The Council continues to operate in a very challenging financial environment. Local authorities across the country are experiencing significant budgetary pressures. Surrey County Council has made significant progress in recent years to improve the Council's financial resilience and whilst this has built a stronger financial base from which to deliver

our services, the cost of service delivery, increasing demand, financial uncertainty and government policy changes mean we continue to face challenges to our financial position. This requires an increased focus on financial management to protect service delivery, a continuation of the need to deliver financial efficiencies and reduce spending in order to achieve a balanced budget position each year.

In addition to these immediate challenges, the medium-term financial outlook beyond 2024/25 remains uncertain. With no clarity on central government funding in the medium term, our working assumption is that financial resources will continue to be constrained, as they have been for the majority of the past decade. This places an onus on the Council to continue to consider issues of financial sustainability as a priority, in order to ensure the stable provision of services in the medium term.

The cost containment identified in this report relate to reductions in future spend in the high needs block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) which support in delivering the requirements of the Council Safety valve agreement with the DfE.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer:

23. Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on the Council to secure that sufficient schools for providing primary and secondary education are available in its area.
24. Section 27 Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on the local authority to keep under review the educational provision for children and young people who have special educational needs and or a disability.
25. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 and The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) Regulations 2013 set out the statutory process that must be followed by the proposer and the decision maker. In this case the local authority is both proposer and decision maker.
26. In considering this Report, Cabinet must give due regard to the results of the consultation as set out in the Annexes attached and the response of the Service to the consultation comments and conscientiously take these matters into account when making its final decision.

Equalities and Diversity:

27. The Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) for the proposals are attached to this report as **Annex 3**.

Other Implications:

28. The potential implications for the following council priorities and policy areas have been considered. Where the impact is potentially significant a summary of the issues is set out in detail below.

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	Set out below
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	Set out below
Environmental sustainability	Set out below

Compliance against net-zero emissions target and future climate compatibility/resilience	No significant implications arising from this report
Public Health	No significant implications arising from this report

Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children implications:

- 29. The creation of additional specialist places directly supports both the Surrey Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020 and the SEND Partnership Strategy 2019.
- 30. The proposals would provide increased provision for pupils who need a specialist placement in a mainstream school in Surrey, thereby ensuring that those who are Looked After and/ or who have SEND are closer to home, more connected to local communities and support services.

Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults’ implications:

- 31. Safeguarding vulnerable children is a high priority in all Surrey schools. Schools have considerable expertise in safeguarding vulnerable children and adhere to robust procedures. The schools will continue to apply good practise around safeguarding as they do currently. In addition, safeguarding is a key area for monitoring when Ofsted conducts inspections.
- 32. The creation of additional specialist school places closer to home supports highly effective joint agency monitoring to safeguard children, to reduce placement breakdown and increased demand on statutory care services.

Environmental sustainability implications:

- 33. The provision of education places closer to home will reduce the average journey times for learners with EHCPs and is aligned with the vision and aspirations of the Home to School Travel Assistance transformation programme.

What Happens Next:

- 34. Subject to the Cabinet Member determining the statutory notices Surrey County Council and the Governing Bodies will proceed to implement the proposals:

To open a new 21 place SEN unit provision at Thames Ditton Infant School for pupils with Communication and Interaction and cooccurring needs.

- 35. The significant change will be implemented from 1 September 2025.

Contact Officer:

Katie Kelly-Weller, Commissioning Manager

Consulted:

- Headteachers of the schools featured in the proposals
- Parents of children attending the schools featured in the proposals
- Children and young people who attend the schools featured in the proposals

Governing bodies and staff members of each of the schools featured in the proposals
Surrey Family Voice
Local residents in Surrey
Local Cllrs in the areas of each of the schools featured in the proposals
Cllr Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning
Rachael Wardell, Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning
Julia Katherine, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning
Trudy Pyatt, Assistant Director for Education, Access, Quality, and Improvement
Eamonn Gilbert, Assistant Director Commissioning
Jodi Emery, Service Manager SEN Commissioning
Mike Singleton Service Manager, Education Place Planning
Amanda Scally, Legal Services

Annexes:

Annex 1 Statutory Notices (Full)
Annex 2 Consultation Analysis (Summary)
Annex 3 Equality Impact Assessment

Statutory Notices

Proposal to establish a special
educational needs unit at Thames
Ditton Infant School

November
2024



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School Organisation Statutory Notice

3

Notice is given in accordance with section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, as amended by the Education Act 2011, that Surrey County Council, is proposing to make a significant change to Thames Ditton Infant School by establishing a unit for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Local Authority Details:

Local Authority	Surrey County Council
Address	Quadrant Court 35 Guildford Road Woking GU22 7QQ

School Details:

Name of School	Thames Ditton Infant School
Category of School	Foundation School
Type of School	Infant school
URN	124968
Address	Speer Road, Thames Ditton, Surrey
Postcode	KT7 0PW

Introduction

This paper outlines a proposal by Surrey County Council, in cooperation with the Governing Body of Thames Ditton Infant School, to establish a unit for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) at Thames Ditton Infant School. There would be 21 places for pupils with autism and/or communication and interaction needs from Reception to Year 2. All pupils would have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The statutory process and timescales for the establishment of the special educational needs unit are detailed below.

Proposal

In agreement with the school's Headteacher and Governing Body, Surrey County Council are proposing to establish a SEN unit at Thames Ditton Infant School with 21 places for pupils with autism and/or communication and interaction needs. Each pupil would have an EHCP specifying the specialist provision within the school as an appropriate placement to meet their individual needs.

Proposed timeline

The proposed establishment of a special educational needs unit would come into effect from September 2025 onwards.

Phase	Date
Statutory notices	04/11/24 – 02/12/24
Lead Cabinet Member Decision	January 2025
Implementation	September 2025

It is proposed that:

1. A new SEN unit would be established to provide a total number of 21 places for autistic pupils and pupils with communication and interaction needs aged 4 to 7 years.

Making Representations, Objections and Comments

2. This is a four-week consultation which starts on Monday 4 November 2024 and concludes on Monday 2 December 2024.
3. Any person can make comments, agree, or object to the proposal by sending representations to the Local Authority through the following channels:

Website	www.surreysays.co.uk
Email	schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk
Post	Katie Kelly-Weller Education Place Planning Surrey County Council Quadrant Court 35 Guildford Road Woking GU22 7QQ

Background

4. Thames Ditton Infant School is a Foundation school. The school is situated in Thames Ditton, within the borough of Elmbridge. The school is rated as “Good” by Ofsted in its last full inspection in April 2022.
5. Thames Ditton Infant School is a three-form entry infant school for pupils aged 4-7 years and will have a published admissions number (PAN) of 60 from September 2025 (thus becoming two-form entry at this time).
6. The school has capacity for 270 children and there is sufficient capacity within the school to accommodate a SEN unit following the reduction of the schools PAN from September 2025.

In September 2024, the school will be opening a nurture class (The Nest) for children with a diagnosis of autism and with social communication needs. "As part of this consultation the proposal is that if the SEN unit is agreed then this class will move to the SEN unit from September 2025

Rationale

Table 1 shows the latest projections for infant pupils with EHCPs in Surrey who have autism and/or have communication and interaction needs identified as their primary need in Elmbridge. The projections show a gradual decrease in this cohort year on year to 2032/33 however the demand still outweighs the level of provision within local schools.

Table 1 Forecasts for children with autism and communication and interaction needs in Elmbridge

Residential Area	School Location	Forecast									
		2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33
Elmbridge	Surrey	94	80	77	77	77	77	75	74	74	74
	Out of county	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3
	Total SEN Need	96	82	79	79	79	79	79	77	77	77
Total SEN Places Available		24	24	34	44	54	54	54	54	54	54
Shortage or Surplus of Places (No.)		-72	-58	-45	-35	-25	-25	-23	-23	-23	-23
Shortage or Surplus of Places (%)		-299%	-240%	-133%	-80%	-46%	-46%	-43%	-42%	-42%	-42%

The proposed SEN unit at Thames Ditton Infant School would have 21 specialist school places. Should these pupils be required to attend an education provision in the independent sector, costs would equate to around £1.113m per year every year, based on an average unit cost of £53k per pupil per annum for independent sector provision. This is compared to the average cost for state-maintained specialist places at £23k per pupil per annum and equivalent costs for 21 places of £483k. Provision of the additional state-maintained specialist school places would generate an approximate saving of £30k per pupil place per year.

This data clearly shows that sustained use of the independent sector in the future would constitute an inefficient use of limited resources and severely impact Surrey's ability to deliver services and support for children, young people, and families, whilst remaining financially sustainable.

Surrey's ambition for children and young people who have additional needs and disabilities is to develop high quality fit for purpose local state maintained specialist school provision that enables better long term outcomes. This in turn ensures that Surrey resident pupils are educated closer to home, more connected to local communities and local support services, and have increased opportunities to enter employment in the future.

Table 2 shows the current SEN unit provision within mainstream schools in Elmbridge.

Table 2 Current SEN unit provision within primary schools in Elmbridge

School	Designation	Age
Bell Farm Primary School	Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)	4-11 (Years R to 6)
Chandlers Field Primary School	Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)	4-11 (Years R to 6)
Thames Ditton Junior School	Moderate learning difficulties (MLD)	7-11 (Years 3 to 6)

Key outcomes and benefits

Expanding outstanding sufficient and sustainable specialist school provision for Surrey resident primary age pupils in Elmbridge would provide the following benefits as stated in the [Developing local Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Provision](#) report to Cabinet on 25 January 2022:

1. Benefits realisation ensures Surrey's maintained specialist education provision is fit for purpose and creates additional employment/supported internship opportunities for residents around areas of expansion.
2. Children, young people, and families can access the same level of high-quality support wherever they live in Surrey. We have a good, shared understanding of our children and young people who have SEND in Surrey and our support offer matches their identified needs.
3. Expanding Surrey's specialist provision aligns with the Preparation for Adulthood programme and strategy for Post-16 to create local further education and employment

pathways such as apprenticeships and supported internships. This enables young people who have SEND to make a successful transition to adulthood and secure employment.

4. Capacity created locally will also make certain that SEND home to school transport distance and costs are reduced so that pupils attend their closest most appropriate school with shorter journey times. Opportunities for developing independent travel skills can be maximised as a result of children and young people being educated closer to home. This will also address local congestion around school sites as well as traffic flow around the county, which will be of benefit to Surrey's Green Agenda.
5. The distribution and occupancy of current Special Schools and SEN Units in mainstream schools clearly illustrates that there is insufficient provision of autism and Communication & Social Interaction Needs, Moderate Learning Difficulties, Severe Learning Difficulties and Social Emotional Mental Health Needs Special places.
6. The approved remodification and expansion programme will ensure that additional places are matched appropriately to need type, phases of education and geographic locations.

An Equality Impact Assessment is being completed throughout the consultation process and will be published as part of the Lead Cabinet Member Decision meeting.

Implementation plan

Finance and resourcing

The school would receive funding per pupil per year for each agreed planned place commissioned. The school would also receive a "top up" sum for each pupil on roll at the SEN unit, appropriate to the needs of individual children.

Year	No. Places	Place Funding (per pupil)	Top-Up (per pupil)	AY Total
1 (AY 24/25)	12	£10,000	£7,517.92	£210,215.04
2 (AY 25/26)	19	£6,000 for previous year's 12 £10,000 for 7 new placements	£7,517.92	£284,840.48

A Surrey maintained special school with experience of setting up new provision would support the school with the start-up of the new SEN unit. This would support the training and ongoing development of the provision over the first academic year.

Staffing

Thames Ditton Infant School has already consulted to reduce the PAN from 90 to 60 from September 2025. The staff are already in place to manage the SEN unit.

The new provision would be run and overseen by a lead teacher/SEND Manager. The class would be supported by Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) and Learning Support Assistants (LSAs).

Capital planning and buildings

Thames Ditton Infant School will have latent classroom capacity as a result of the reduction in PAN from 90 to 60 from September 2025. These classrooms would be utilised for the proposed SEN unit.

Growth model

Thames Ditton Infant School has opened a nurture class called The Nest for September 2024 for autistic pupils and those with communication and interaction needs. If the SEN unit is agreed then this class will be part of the unit. The growth model is shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3 Growth model for nurture group and SEN unit at Thames Ditton Infant School

	Sep-24	Sep-25	Sep-26	Sep-27
Reception	12	7	2	7
Year 1		12	7	7
Year 2			12	7

	Nurture class
	SEN unit

A nurture class will open with 12 spaces from September 2024, with this class transferring to a SEN unit if approved from September 2025. A new Reception intake would also join the school from September 2025 with 7 spaces in the unit. By September 2026, the SEN unit would have 21 spaces throughout Reception to Year 2. Dependant on need, the spaces may not be split evenly across the year groups.

Consultations, approvals, and overall timescales

1. It is proposed that the changes commence from September 2025. The proposed changes require a period of consultation, the publication of Statutory Notices and the agreement of Surrey County Council’s Cabinet Member for Education and Learning if the proposal is to proceed.
2. The first stage of consultation was open from Thursday 12 September 2024 and concluded on Friday 25 October 2024. During this period, Surrey County Council shared its proposal with the wider professional network, schools including headteachers and chairs of governors, with unions, parent representatives, partner agencies and with the staff and parents of the school subject to the proposals. The associated documentation was published on Surrey County Council’s ‘Surrey Says’ website and circulated to local stakeholders. Interested parties were invited to return responses to the consultation via an online form or alternatively by email or post.
3. The consultation analysis is published at www.surreysays.co.uk on the statutory notice webpage alongside this document.

Key points from the consultation responses:

- There were 20 responses to the informal consultation
 - 100% of respondents agreed with the proposal.
 - The most prevalent theme in the comments was the need for more specialist school places in Surrey.
1. Statutory Notice is now open for a four-week period from Monday 4 November 2024 to Monday 2 December 2024. The publication of Notices is when the local authority formally states that it intends to implement the proposed changes. This will be the

final opportunity for consultees to make their views known before a final decision is taken. Following the consultation periods officers will summarise the feedback and will report to the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning.

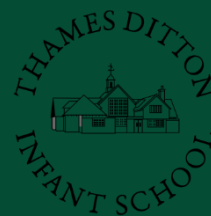
What happens next?

You can make representations, objections and comments using the online form at www.surreysays.co.uk. Alternatively, you can respond by email or post at the addresses given in the section [Making Representations, Objections and Comments](#).

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Consultation Analysis (Informal Consultation)

Proposal to Establish a Special
Educational Needs Unit at Thames
Ditton Infant School



Consultation Analysis (Informal Consultation)

Proposal to establish a special educational needs unit at Thames Ditton Infant School

Introduction

This report is an analysis of responses gathered on the proposal to establish a special educational needs unit at Thames Ditton Infant School.

Surrey County Council published an informal consultation from 12 September 2024 to 25 October 2024.

This paper is an analysis of the responses received during the informal consultation notice period.

Consultation Summary

The aim of the consultation was to seek views on the proposal from all interested parties, particularly from pupils and their families who attend Thames Ditton Infant School, pupils and their families who may attend the school in the future, local schools and the local community.

The informal consultation was open from 12 September 2024 to 25 October 2024. The associated documentation was published on the Surrey County Council 'Surrey Says' website and circulated to local stakeholders. Interested parties were invited to return responses to the consultation via an online form or alternatively by email or post.

A public meeting was scheduled to be online on 1 October 2024 however there were no registrations, so we took the decision to cancel it.

Key points from the consultation responses:

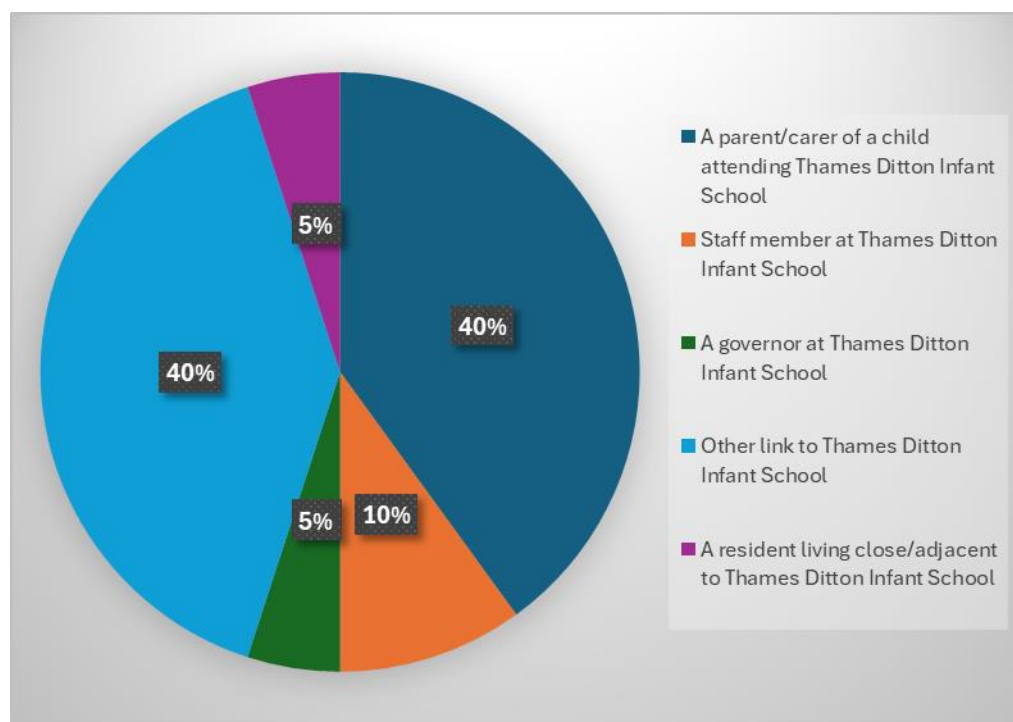
- There were **20 responses** to the informal consultation.
- In response to the question "Do you agree with the proposal to establish a special educational needs unit at Thames Ditton Infant School?", **100% agreed**.
- 40% of all responses were from parents/carers of pupils currently attending the school
- The most prevalent theme in the comments was the **need for more specialist school** places in Surrey.

Informal Consultation

Quantitative Analysis

In total, there were 20 responses to the consultation. 100% of respondents agreed with the proposal to establish a special educational needs unit at Thames Ditton Infant School.

All 20 respondents indicated their relationship with the school. The chart below shows the distribution of respondents to the consultation.



Qualitative Analysis

Respondents had the opportunity to add comments at the end of the survey. Out of the 20 responses received, 11 (55%) comments were made on the proposal. These comments were similarly themed and therefore only separated into 2 possible tags. Each response could have more than one tag attached. The overall frequency of each of the tags provides an indicator of respondent’s main concerns regarding the proposal.

Sub theme	Tag	Number of responses	Prevalence (% out of total responses)
Positive impacts	Need for more specialist places in Surrey	8	73%
	Will help to meet the needs of children and their families	4	36%

Key themes from the consultation

Positive impacts

Respondents identified multiple positive impacts for the addition of a special educational need's unit at Thames Ditton Infant School. Many felt the proposal would "support the pupils with additional needs in the local area", describing it as "excellent" and "much needed" and "it means more local provision for SEN students".

Need for more specialist places in Surrey

73% observed that the proposal would begin to address the need for more specialist places in Surrey. One respondent stated that "with so few places for SEND children across Surrey this will support the needs of the community and ensure children do not miss out on their education because of a lack of school to attend". Another expressed that "additional SEND provision is a welcome addition as there is a shortage across all local authorities". It was also felt that "it is an excellent project to support as it means more local provision for SEN students".

"...more units like these will go some way towards alleviating the crisis. Fully support."

"...I would clearly support the proposal as it is clear that this is very much needed."

Will help to meet the needs of children and their families

36% suggested that the proposal will help to meet the needs of children and their families. It was felt that "it is a provision that will help meet the needs of pupils with additional needs in the local area". One respondent stated that the proposal "will be an excellent and much needed resource for the community and for the families it will support". Another commented that "it is important to support SEN from early years to give children the best start".

Recommendations: what happens next?

The recommendations are that following the publication of this analysis document on [Surrey Says](#), the proposal will continue to the next phase where we will begin the statutory notice period for 4 weeks from 4 November 2024 to 2 December 2024. The publication of Notices is when the local authority formally states that it intends to implement the proposed changes. This will be the final opportunity for consultees to make their views known before a final decision is taken.

The associated documentation will be published on the Surrey County Council 'Surrey Says' website and circulated to local stakeholders. Interested parties were invited to return responses to the consultation via an online form or alternatively by email or post.

Following the consultation periods officers will summarise the feedback and will report to the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning.

EIA Title

Did you use the EIA Screening Tool?

Yes

1. Explaining the matter being assessed

- A new service or function

Surrey County Council, in cooperation with the Governing Body of Thames Ditton Infant School, are proposing to establish a unit for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) at Thames Ditton Infant School. There will be 21 places for pupils with autism and/or communication and interaction needs from Reception to Year 2. All pupils will have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Currently, Thames Ditton Infant School is a three-form entry (3FE) infant school in the borough of Elmbridge in Surrey. The school will have a published admissions number of 60 from September 2025 (thus becoming two-form entry at this time). The school has a capacity of 270 and there is sufficient capacity within the school to accommodate a SEN unit following the reduction of the school's PAN from September 2025.

The proposal will impact:

- Pupils currently attending Thames Ditton Infant School.
- Parents and families of children currently attending Thames Ditton Infant School or likely to attend the school in the future.
- Staff at Thames Ditton Infant School.
- Local children and young people with a school designation of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and/or communication and interaction needs, who will have an opportunity to gain a place at a specialist school locally.

How does your service proposal support the outcomes in the Community Vision for Surrey 2030?

Specify which of the ten Vision outcomes this work is linked to.

- Everyone benefits from education, skills and employment opportunities that help them succeed in life.
- Everyone lives healthy, active and fulfilling lives, and makes good choices about their wellbeing.
- Closer provision to home - potential to walk to school.
- Communities are welcoming and supportive, especially of those most in need, and people feel able to contribute to community life.

Equality Impact Assessment

3 Are there any specific geographies in Surrey where this will make an impact?

- Elmbridge

Assessment team

Detail here who you have involved with completing this EIA:

- Rachael Wardell, Surrey County Council, Executive Director Children Families and Learning
- Julia Katherine, Surrey County Council, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning
- Eamonn Gilbert, Surrey County Council, Assistant Director Commissioning
- Jodi Emery, Surrey County Council, Service Manager, SEND Commissioning
- Mike Singleton, Surrey County Council, Service Manager, Education Place Planning
- Sarah Jeffery, Surrey County Council, Service Manager, Education Place Planning
- Katie Kelly-Weller, Surrey County Council, Commissioning Manager, Education Place Planning
- Sarah Riddell, Surrey County Council, Commissioning Assistant, Education Place Planning
- Elspeth Leach, Thames Ditton Infant School, Headteacher

Consultation Information:

Surrey County Council and Thames Ditton Infant School consulted on the proposal to establish a special educational needs unit at Thames Ditton Infant School.

The aim of the consultation was to seek views on the proposal from all interested parties, particularly from pupils and their families who attend Thames Ditton Infant School, pupils and their families who may attend the school in the future, local schools and the local community.

The informal consultation was open from 12 September 2024 to 25 October 2024. The associated documentation was published on the Surrey County Council 'Surrey Says' website and circulated to local stakeholders. Interested parties were invited to return responses to the consultation via an online form or alternatively by email or post.

In total, there were 20 responses to the consultation. 100% of respondents agreed with the proposal to establish a special educational needs unit at Thames Ditton Infant School.

A public meeting was scheduled to be online on 1 October 2024 however there were no registrations, so we took the decision to cancel it.

The Statutory Notices were published from 4 November 2024 to 2 December 2024. The associated documentation was published on the Surrey County Council 'Surrey Says' website and circulated to local stakeholders. Interested parties were invited to return responses to the consultation via an online form or alternatively by email or post.

There were 3 responses to the statutory notices. The responses to the notices regarding the proposal to establish a special educational needs unit at Thames Ditton Infant School had 100% (3) of respondents agree with the proposal.

Equality Impact Assessment

A full analysis of both consultations is available on the statutory notices page of the [Surrey Says website](#).

2. Service Users / Residents

Who may be affected by this activity?

There are 9 protected characteristics (Equality Act 2010) to consider in your proposal. These are:

1. Age including younger and older people
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Pregnancy and maternity
5. Race including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
6. Religion or belief including lack of belief
7. Sex
8. Sexual orientation
9. Marriage/civil partnerships

Though not included in the Equality Act 2010, Surrey County Council recognises that there are other vulnerable groups which significantly contribute to inequality across the county and therefore they should also be considered within EIAs. If relevant, you will need to include information on the following vulnerable groups (Please **refer to the EIA guidance** if you are unclear as to what this is).

- Members/Ex members of armed forces
- Adult and young carers*
- Those experiencing digital exclusion*
- Those experiencing domestic abuse*
- Those with education/training (literacy) needs
- Those experiencing homelessness*
- Looked after children/Care leavers*
- Those living in rural/urban areas
- Those experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage*
- Out of work young people*
- Adults with learning disabilities and/or autism*
- People with drug or alcohol use issues*
- People on probation
- People in prison
- Migrants, refugees, asylum seekers
- Sex workers
- Children with Special educational needs and disabilities*
- Adults with long term health conditions, disabilities (including SMI) and/or sensory impairment(s)*
- Older People in care homes*
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities*
- Other (describe below)

(*as identified in the Surrey COVID Community Impact Assessment and the Surrey Health and Well-being Strategy)

Impacts have been identified under the protected characteristic **disability** and **age including younger and older people**. The following vulnerable groups have also been identified, **children with Special educational needs and disabilities** and **those experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage**.

Disability

(Including children with special educational needs and disabilities)

Describe here the considerations and concerns in relation to the programme/policy for the selected group.

Table 1 shows the latest projections for infant pupils with EHCPs in Surrey who have autism and/or have communication and interaction needs identified as their primary need in Elmbridge. The projections show a gradual decrease in this cohort year on year to 2032/33 however the demand still outweighs the level of provision within local schools.

Table 1 Forecasts for children with autism and communication and interaction needs in Elmbridge

Residential Area	School Location	Forecast									
		2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33
Elmbridge	Surrey	94	80	77	77	77	77	75	74	74	74
	Out of county	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3
	Total SEN Need	96	82	79	79	79	79	77	77	77	77
Total SEN Places Available		24	24	34	44	54	54	54	54	54	54
Shortage or Surplus of Places (No.)		-72	-58	-45	-35	-25	-25	-23	-23	-23	-23
Shortage or Surplus of Places (%)		-299%	-240%	-133%	-80%	-46%	-46%	-43%	-42%	-42%	-42%

The proposed SEN unit at Thames Ditton Infant School will have 12 specialist school places. Should these pupils be required to attend an education provision in the independent sector, costs would equate to around £636k per year every year, based on an average unit cost of £53k per pupil per annum for independent sector provision. This is compared to the average cost for state-maintained specialist places at £23k per pupil per annum and equivalent costs for 12 places of £276k. Provision of the additional state-maintained specialist school places would generate an approximate saving of £30k per pupil place per year.

This data clearly shows that sustained use of the independent sector in the future would constitute an inefficient use of limited resources and severely impact Surrey’s ability to deliver services and support for children, young people, and families, whilst remaining financially sustainable.

Surrey’s ambition for children and young people who have additional needs and disabilities is to develop high quality fit for purpose local state-maintained specialist school provision that enables better long-term outcomes. This in turn ensures that Surrey resident pupils are educated closer to home, more connected to local communities and local support services, and have increased opportunities to enter employment in the future.

Table 2 shows the current SEN unit provision within mainstream schools in Elmbridge.

Table 2 Current SEN unit provision within primary schools in Elmbridge

School	Designation	Age
Bell Farm Primary School	Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)	4-11 (Years R to 6)
Chandlers Field Primary School	Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)	4-11 (Years R to 6)
Thames Ditton Junior School	Moderate learning difficulties (MLD)	7-11 (Years 3 to 6)

Positive Impacts:

Expanding outstanding sufficient and sustainable special school provision for Surrey resident primary age pupils in Elmbridge will provide the following benefits as stated in the [Developing local Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Provision](#) report to Cabinet on 25 January 2022:

1. Benefits realisation ensures Surrey’s maintained specialist education provision is fit for purpose and creates additional employment/supported internship opportunities for residents around areas of expansion.
2. Children, young people, and families can access the same level of high-quality support wherever they live in Surrey. We have a good, shared understanding of our children and young people who have SEND in Surrey and our support offer matches their identified needs.
3. Expanding Surrey’s specialist provision aligns with the Preparation for Adulthood programme and strategy for Post-16 to create local further education and employment pathways such as apprenticeships and supported internships. This enables young people who have SEND to make a successful transition to adulthood and secure employment.
4. Capacity created locally will also make certain that SEND home to school transport distance and costs are reduced so that pupils attend their closest most appropriate school with shorter journey times. Opportunities for developing independent travel skills can be maximised as a result of children and young people being educated closer to home. This will also address local congestion around school sites as well as traffic flow around the county, which will be of benefit to Surrey’s Green Agenda.
5. The distribution and occupancy of current Special Schools and SEN Units in mainstream schools clearly illustrates that there is insufficient provision of autism and Communication & Social Interaction Needs, Moderate Learning Difficulties, Severe Learning Difficulties and Social Emotional Mental Health Needs Special places.
6. The approved remedification and expansion programme will ensure that additional places are matched appropriately to need type, phases of education and geographic locations.

Describe here suggested mitigations to inform the actions needed to reduce inequalities.

N/A

What other changes is the council planning/already in place that may affect the same groups of residents? Are there any dependencies decision makers need to be aware of?

Surrey County Council is aware that the special educational needs unit at Thames Ditton Junior School currently supports children with moderate learning difficulties and not specifically children who have autism and/or have communication and interaction needs as their primary need. Therefore, Surrey County Council is currently discussing key stage 2 options for the children who will be attending the special educational needs unit at Thames Ditton Infant School.

Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?

No.

DRAFT

Age including younger and older people

The proposal positively impacts pupils who have autism and/or have communication and interaction needs identified as their primary need aged 4 to 7 years old in Elmbridge, who require a specialist school place.

Describe here suggested mitigations to inform the actions needed to reduce inequalities.

N/A

What other changes is the council planning/already in place that may affect the same groups of residents? Are there any dependencies decision makers need to be aware of?

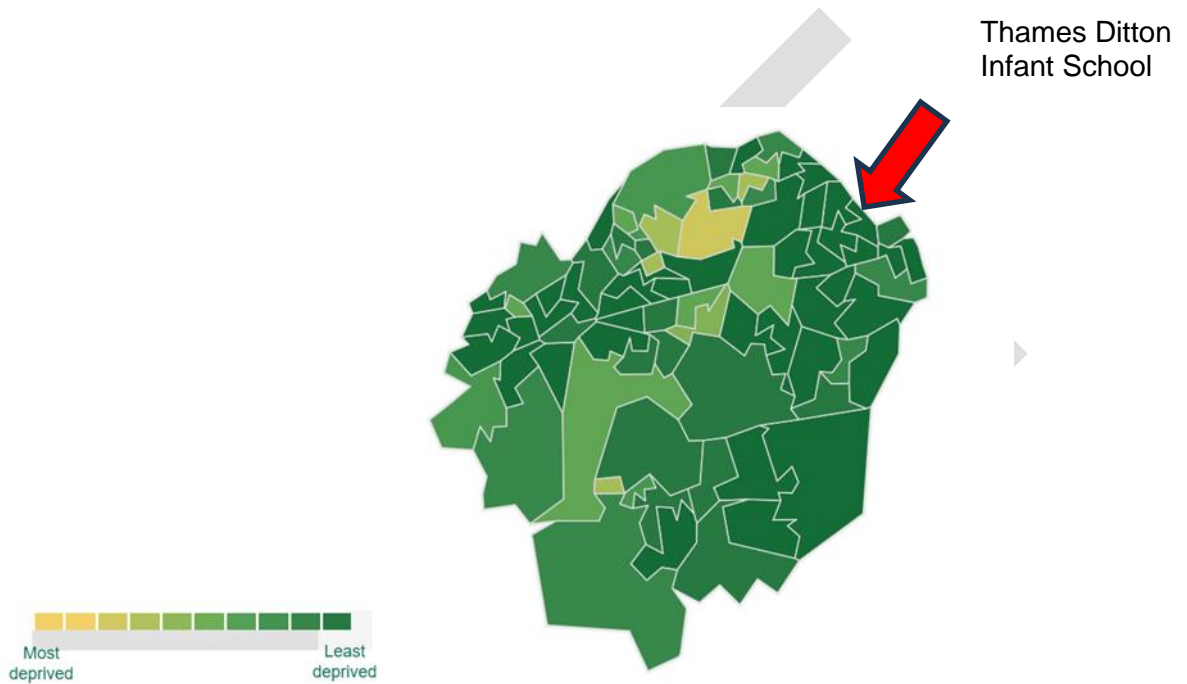
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Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?

No

Socio economic disadvantage

[The Indices of deprivation 2019](#) finds that 1 out of 81 Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) in Elmbridge are between 20% - 30% most deprived area in the country. Only 6 out of 81 areas are more deprived than 50% of England. 41 out of 81 Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) in Elmbridge are in the least deprived 10% in the country. Thames Ditton Infant School is close to LSOA 005C, which is one of the least deprived 10% areas of the country.



Positive impact: More families will be able to access specialist provision closer to home.

Describe here suggested mitigations to inform the actions needed to reduce inequalities.

Placements co-ordinated through the SEND admissions process will place pupils at the appropriate placement identified through their Education Health and Care Plan. Additional local places will mean more pupils will be able to attend provision local to home.

What other changes is the council planning/already in place that may affect the same groups of residents? Are there any dependencies decision makers need to be aware of?

N/A

Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?

No.

3. Staff

Any impacts for staff with protected characteristics will be considered by the Governing Body of Thames Ditton Infant School.

Describe here suggested mitigations to inform the actions needed to reduce inequalities.

Communication and consultation with staff throughout the decision-making process.

What other changes is the council planning/already in place that may affect the same groups of residents? Are there any dependencies decision makers need to be aware of?

No

Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?

No.

4. Recommendation

Based on your assessment, please indicate which course of action you are recommending to decision makers. You should explain your recommendation below.

- **Outcome One: No major change to the policy/service/function required.** This EIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or negative impact, and all opportunities to promote equality have been undertaken
- **Outcome Two: Adjust the policy/service/function** to remove barriers identified by the EIA or better advance equality. Are you satisfied that the proposed adjustments will remove the barriers you identified?
- **Outcome Three: Continue the policy/service/function** despite potential for negative impact or missed opportunities to advance equality identified. You will need to make sure the EIA clearly sets out the justifications for continuing with it. You need to consider whether there are:
 - Sufficient plans to stop or minimise the negative impact
 - Mitigating actions for any remaining negative impacts plans to monitor the actual impact.
- **Outcome Four: Stop and rethink the policy** when the EIA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination. (For guidance on what is unlawful discrimination, refer to the [Equality and Human Rights Commission's guidance and Codes of Practice on the Equality Act](#) concerning employment, goods and services and equal pay).

Recommended outcome:

- **Outcome One: No major change to the policy/service/function required.** This EIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or negative impact, and all opportunities to promote equality have been undertaken

Explanation:

No negative equality impacts have been identified.

5. Action plan and monitoring arrangements

There is no current action plan as no negative impacts have been identified.

6a. Version control

Version Number	Purpose/Change	Author	Date
1	First Draft	Sarah Riddell	November 2024
2	Draft Review	Katie Kelly-Weller	December 2024
3	Draft review	Lauren Comer	December 2024
4	Final version for Cabinet Member of Education and Learning Decision Meeting	Katie Kelly-Weller	December 2024

6b. Approval

Secure approval from the appropriate level of management based on nature of issue and scale of change being assessed.

Approved by	Date approved
Head of Service	
Executive Director	
Cabinet Member	
Directorate Equality Group	

Publish:

It is recommended that all EIAs are published on Surrey County Council’s website.

Please send approved EIAs to: equalityimpactassessments@surreycc.gov.uk

EIA author: Katie Kelly-Weller, Education Place Planning Manager

6c. EIA Team

Name	Job Title	Organisation	Team Role
Katie Kelly-Weller	Education Place Planning Manager	SCC	Author, Project Manager
Sarah Riddell	Education Place Planning Assistant	SCC	Project Group Member
Lauren Comer	Education Place Planning Manager	SCC	Project Group Member

If you would like this information in large print, Braille, on CD or in another language please contact us on:

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