

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?

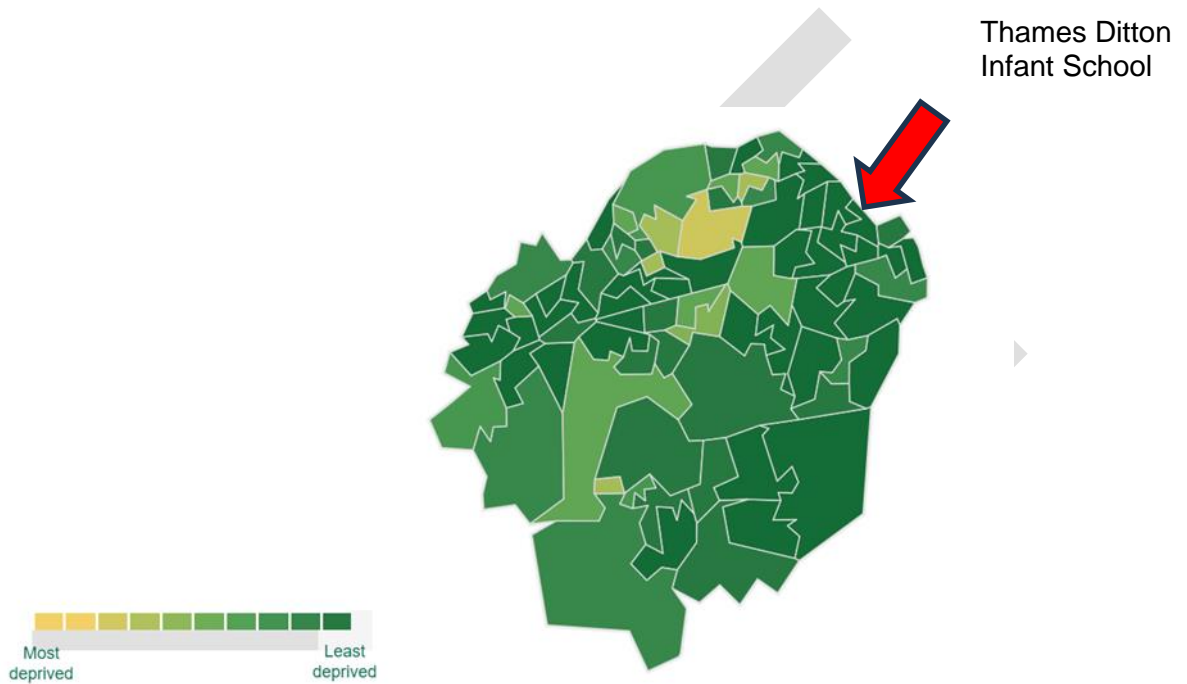
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Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?

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

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