

## **Consultation Briefing:**

### **Reorganisation of secondary school catchment areas, 2016**

#### **Contact**

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## **1. Introduction and purpose**

Brighton & Hove is planning some changes to the secondary school catchment areas for children due to start secondary school from September 2018. There is a need to ensure that there are sufficient school places for all children who need one and there are fair and easy to understand arrangements in place to decide who gets a place at which school. The purpose of this consultation was to seek views to help design how school places are allocated. Responses from this consultation, along with other sources of information, will be used to inform final proposals for changing the school catchment boundaries and admissions policy.

Residents, parents/guardians and other interested parties were invited to share their views on;

- the council's schools admissions principles and priorities
- different school catchment scenarios
- Introducing free school meal eligibility (FSM) as an admissions priority
- Which tie-break method to use if a school has more applications than places available.

## **2. Methodology**

A consultation document and on-line self-completion questionnaire were devised to inform and give an opportunity to comment on the proposals.

The questionnaire was available on the city's online Consultation Portal between 14 March 2016 and 1 May 2016 with the link distributed via the usual council channels with specific emphasis on social media linking through to the council webpages.

**As a self-selecting questionnaire it is not possible to determine if the responses to the survey are representative either of residents or parents in the city.**

As part of the questionnaire, respondents were asked;

- to complete the council's standard equalities monitoring form
- if they had child(ren) moving to a secondary school in Brighton & Hove in or after 2018 and when the child would to secondary school if they had a sibling already at a local secondary school
- if they had child(ren) in receipt of free school meals
- for their postcode

## **3. Response and respondents' profile**

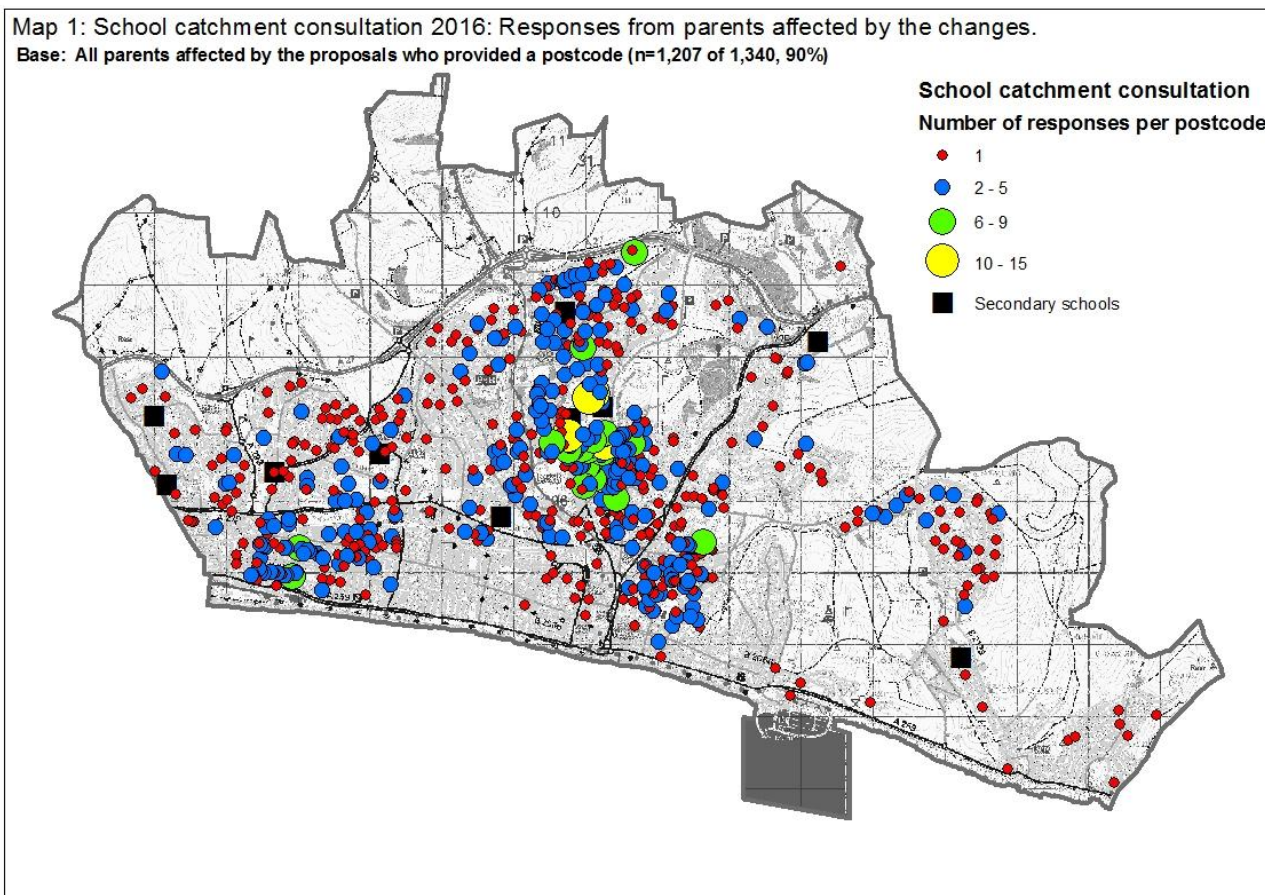
In total 1,628 responses were received including responses from;

- 1,340 parents or guardians who are city residents and have a child moving to a city secondary school in or after 2018.
- 198 residents who do not have a child moving to a city secondary school in or after 2018
- 100 teachers at one of Brighton & Hove schools

- 43 governors at one of Brighton & Hove Schools
- 40 other respondents, including seven from community & voluntary sector organisations

<b>Table 1: Response by current school catchment</b>				
		<b>All respondents</b>	<b>Percent (all respondents)</b>	<b>Percent (with matching postcode)</b>
Valid	BACA	36	2.7	3.0
	Blatchington Mill / Hove Park	289	21.6	23.9
	Dorothy Stringer / Varndean	615	45.9	51.0
	Longhill	62	4.6	5.1
	PACA	39	2.9	3.2
	Patcham	166	12.4	13.8
	Total	1207	90.1	100.0
Missing	No matching postcode	133	9.9	
<b>Total</b>		<b>1340</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

**Base: All parent/residents affected by the proposed changes (n=1,340)**



Using the postcode supplied by parent/residents who have a child(ren) moving to a secondary school in or after 2018 shows that the distribution of responses is not even across the city or existing school catchment areas. From Table 1 and Map 1 it can be clearly seen that there are higher number of responses from the central area of the city and particularly from respondents who live in the current Dorothy Stringer / Varndean catchment (46 per cent of all respondents).

Of the 1,340 parent/guardians likely to be affected by the proposed changes 416 (32 per cent) children with sibling links and 56 (4 per cent) were in receipt of FSM.

#### 4. Results and findings

The responses to the consultation have been analysed by the following groups;

- Parents/guardians who are residents and who have a child moving to a secondary school in the city in or after 2018 (referred to as parent/resident affected by the changes)
- Residents who do not have a child going to a secondary school in the city in or after 2018 (referred to as residents not affected by the changes)
- Teachers at one of Brighton & Hove schools
- Governors at one of Brighton & Hove Schools
- 'Other' respondents

The parent/residents affected by the changes can be further broken down in the following groups;

- Parent/residents affected by the changes where there is a sibling link
- Parent/residents affected by the changes who are in receipt of free school meals (FSM)
- Parent/residents affected by the changes living in the each of the current school catchment areas.

**It should be noted that the higher number of responses from parent/residents affected by the proposals, particularly from the Dorothy Stringer/Vardean catchment but also the Blatchington Mill/Hove Park and Patcham catchments compared to the relatively small number of responses from the BACA, PACA and Longhill catchments does skew the results of these finding towards the views of those parent/residents from the catchments with the highest number of responses.**

#### 4.1 Schools admissions principles and priorities

It was explained to respondents that unfortunately no admission arrangements can make all parents happy and that the council has a duty to have admission arrangements that are fair and clear. Taking this into consideration respondents were asked to select and rank three priorities that they thought the council should give priority to achieving. Tables 3 and 4 summarises their responses.

When looking at what is considered the top priority; among all parent/residents affected by the changes nearly two out of five respondents (38 per cent) thought that minimising pupil's journey to school was the top priority.

Only 5 per cent or less thought that 'raising the attainment of children in the most deprived circumstances', 'give schools a social mix of pupils from all backgrounds' and 'give parents more certainty in knowing where their child will get a school place' was the top priority.

However there are some notable differences;

- When looking at the responses by school catchments the proportion of respondents who thought the top priority was to 'minimise pupil's journey to school' was 48 per cent

and 47 per cent respectively for those living in the Dorothy Stringer/Vardean and Patcham catchments. While those respondents living in the PACA (46 per cent), Longhill (45 per cent) and BACA (42 per cent) catchments 'offering more choice to parents' was the top priority.

- One in five respondents (22 per cent) in the BACA catchment thought 'giving schools a social mix of pupils from all backgrounds was a top priority, compared to only three per cent of all parent/residents affected by the changes.
- For a third of school governors (33 per cent) the top priority was 'ensure all schools are successful and viable'.

**Table 2: Unfortunately no admission arrangements can make all parents happy. The council has a duty to have admission arrangements that are fair and clear on a city-wide basis. Taking this into consideration which of the following principles do you think we should give top priority to achieve? **TOP PRIORITY****

	Offer more choice to parents	Allow children to move to a secondary school with their school friends	Minimise pupil's journeys to school	Raise the attainment of children in the most deprived circumstances	Ensure all the city's schools are successful and viable	Give schools a social mix of pupils from all backgrounds	Give parents more certainty in knowing where their child will get a school place
Parents/resident affected by the changes (n=1336)	15%	19%	38%	2%	19%	3%	5%
Residents not affected by the change (n=196)	10%	17%	36%	4%	18%	8%	7%
Teacher in one of Brighton & Hove schools (n=100)	9%	14%	35%	11%	22%	9%	0%
Governor at one of Brighton & Hove schools (n=43)	9%	5%	30%	12%	33%	12%	0%
Other respondent (n=37)	16%	19%	16%	8%	19%	5%	16%
Sibling link - Yes (n=414)	14%	17%	35%	2%	24%	3%	4%
Sibling link - No (n=890)	16%	20%	38%	2%	16%	3%	5%
FSM - Yes (n=56)	29%	20%	25%	2%	16%	5%	4%
FSM - No (1,251)	14%	19%	38%	2%	19%	3%	5%
BACA (n=36)	42%	8%	6%	3%	19%	22%	0%
Blatchington Mill / Hove Park (n=288)	28%	18%	23%	1%	22%	3%	5%
Dorothy Stringer / Varndean (n=613)	5%	20%	48%	2%	18%	2%	5%
Longhill (n=62)	45%	10%	8%	6%	27%	3%	0%
PACA (n=39)	46%	13%	15%	0%	21%	3%	3%
Patcham (n=166)	7%	27%	47%	1%	13%	0%	5%

 30% or higher  5% or lower

When looking at what were considered the top three priorities. For all parent/residents affected by the proposals the top three priorities were 'minimise pupil's journeys to school' (75 per cent), 'allowing children to move to a secondary school with their school friends' (63 per cent) and 'ensuring all schools are successful and viable' (51 per cent). The lowest

priority was given to ‘raising the attainment standard of children in the most deprived circumstances’ which was only one of the top three priorities for 13 per cent of parent/residents affected by the changes.

However again, there are big differences when look at the responses by catchment: More than two thirds of respondents in the Dorothy Stringer/Varndean (87 per cent), Patcham (86 per cent) and Blatchington Mill/ Hove Park (66 per cent) catchments think ‘minimise pupil’s journey to school’ is a top three priority. However, less than a third of respondents from BACA (22 per cent), Longhill (24 per cent) and PACA (28%) did so.

**Table 3: Unfortunately no admission arrangements can make all parents happy. The council has a duty to have admission arrangements that are fair and clear on a city-wide basis. Taking this into consideration which of the following principles do you think we should give top priority to achieve? TOP THREE PRIORITIES**

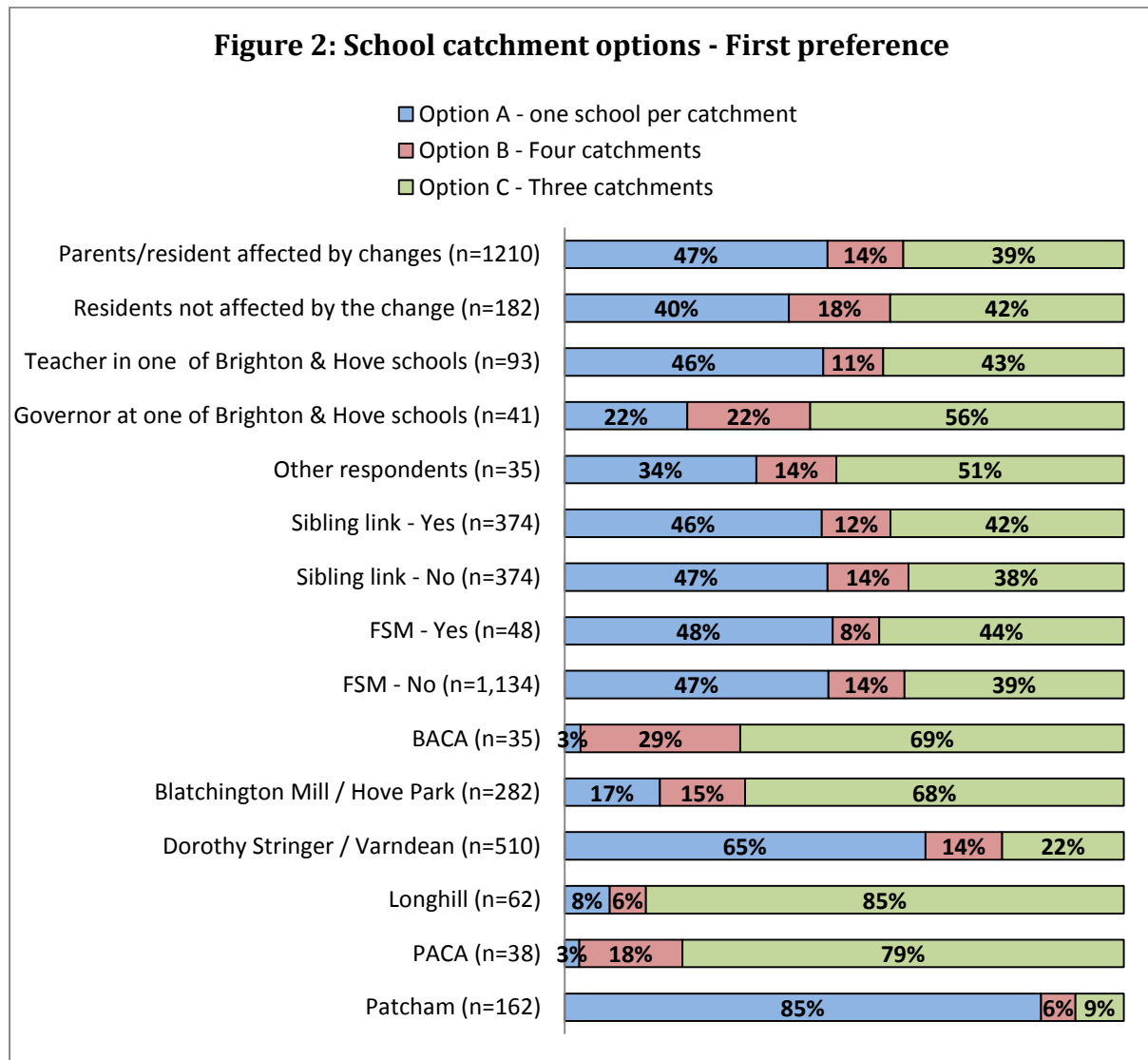
	Offer more choice to parents	Allow children to move to a secondary school with their school friends	Minimise pupil’s journeys to school	Raise the attainment of children in the most deprived circumstances	Ensure all the city’s schools are successful and viable	Give schools a social mix of pupils from all backgrounds	Give parents more certainty in knowing where their child will get a school place
Parents/resident affected by the changes (n=1336)	30%	63%	75%	13%	51%	20%	40%
Residents not affected by the change (n=196)	23%	54%	73%	16%	54%	27%	48%
Teacher in one of Brighton & Hove schools (n=100)	20%	55%	60%	30%	54%	48%	30%
Governor at one of Brighton & Hove schools (n=43)	16%	33%	51%	40%	77%	53%	23%
Other respondent (n=37)	27%	59%	62%	19%	57%	24%	51%
Sibling link - Yes (n=414)	30%	60%	73%	15%	56%	22%	37%
Sibling link - No (n=890)	31%	64%	76%	13%	49%	19%	41%
FSM - Yes (n=56)	41%	68%	71%	20%	41%	14%	43%
FSM - No (1,251)	30%	63%	75%	13%	52%	20%	39%
BACA (n=36)	72%	25%	22%	36%	64%	72%	8%
Blatchington Mill / Hove Park (n=288)	54%	60%	66%	12%	51%	19%	35%
Dorothy Stringer / Varndean (n=613)	15%	69%	87%	13%	49%	16%	42%
Longhill (n=62)	69%	32%	24%	39%	69%	40%	23%
PACA (n=39)	72%	38%	28%	21%	56%	46%	33%
Patcham (n=166)	15%	75%	86%	4%	49%	9%	53%

 70% or higher  20% or lower

#### 4.2 School catchment scenarios

Respondents were given three illustrations of how catchments might look if there were, one, two or three secondary schools in each catchment area. They were then asked to rank

the three options in the order of preference. Figures 2 and 3 below summarise their responses.



Looking at first preferences (Figure 2), among all parent/residents affected by the changes there is no clear majority for one option over the others with 47 per cent favouring option A and 39 per cent favouring Option C. Only 14 per cent favour option B. The views of teachers are similarly divided however a majority (56 per cent) of school governors prefer Option C.

Parents/residents affected by the changes that have or have not got children with a sibling link or are or are not in receipt of FSM are almost all equally split between Options A and C.

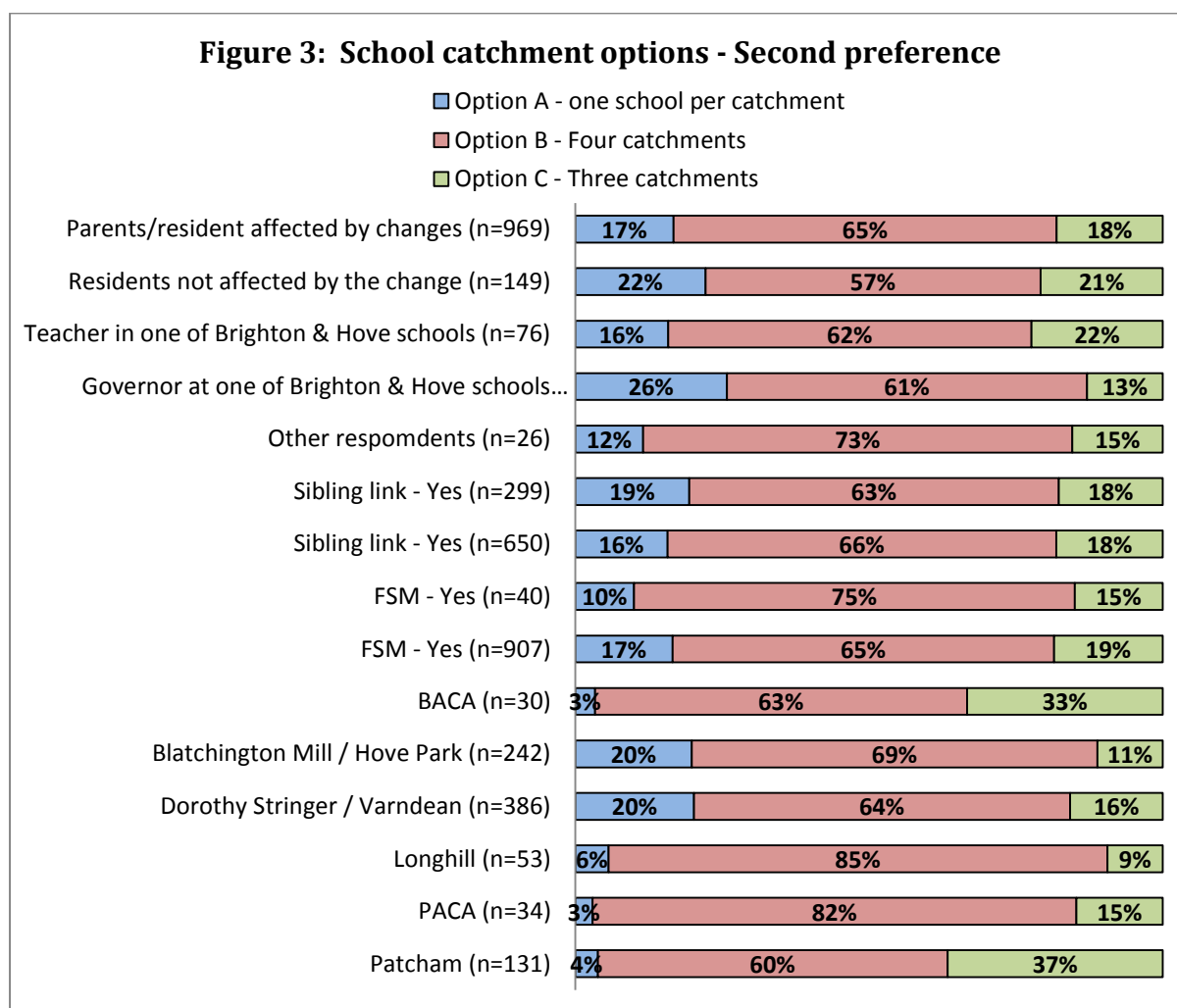
However there are big differences in the views of respondents living in the current catchment areas;

- More than four out of five respondents (85 per cent) living in the Longhill catchment prefer Option C as do more than two thirds living in the PACA (79 per cent), BACA (69 per cent) and Blatchington Mill/Hove Park (68 per cent) catchments



- More than four out of five respondents living in the Patcham catchment (85 per cent) and nearly two thirds in the Dorothy Stringer/Varndean catchment prefer Option A.

The differing views of respondents in their first preference for either Option A or C is clearly illustrated when looking at second preferences were Option B, the middle ground between Options A and C, is preferred by a majority of respondents across all groups (Figure 3).



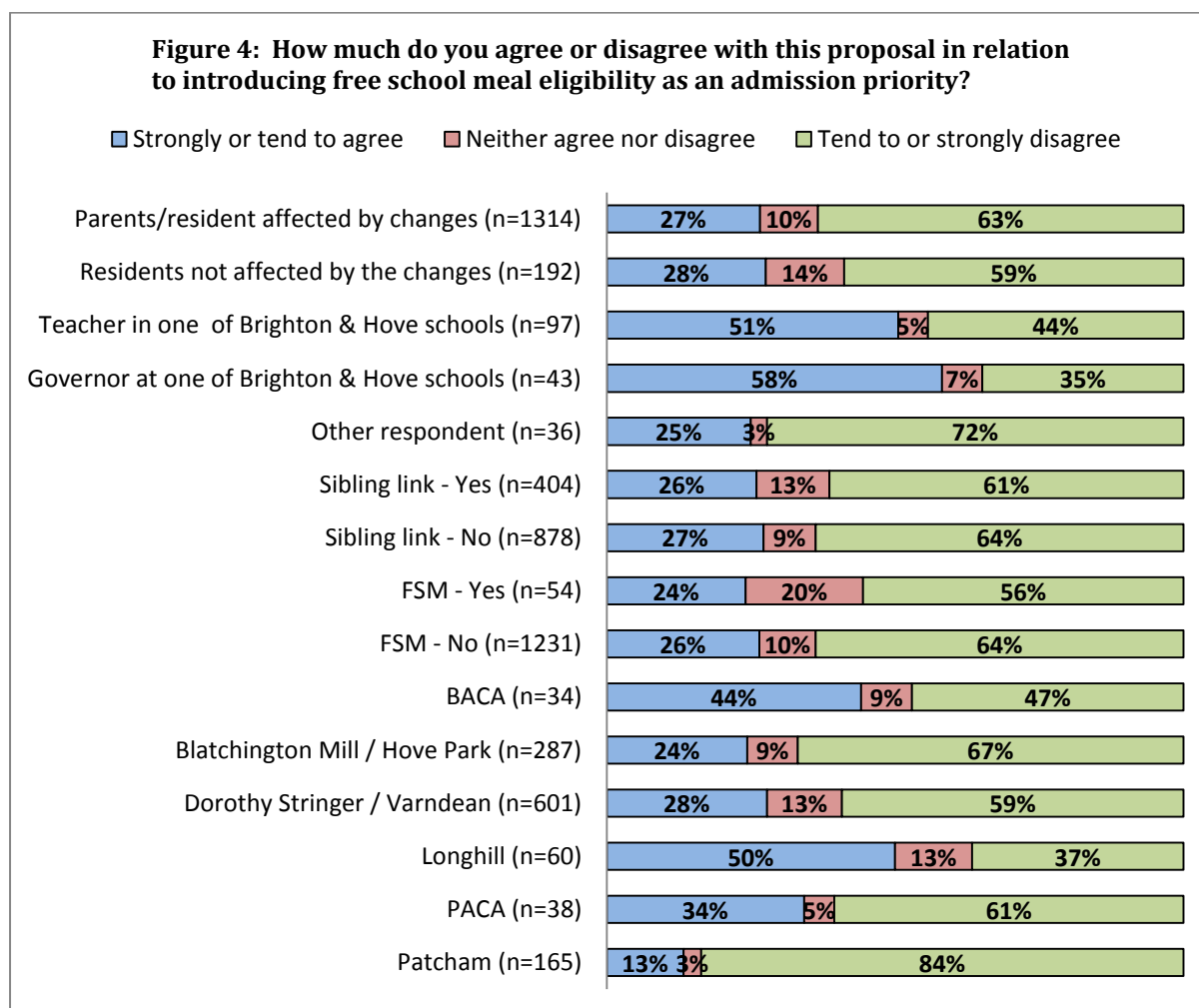
### 4.3 Introducing free school meal (FSM) eligibility as an admission priority?

It is proposed that FSM eligibility be introduced as an admissions priority which would result in the admission priorities changing to, in order of priority;

1. Children in the care of a Local Authority and previously looked after children
2. Children with compelling medical or other exceptional reasons to attend the school
3. Children eligible for Free School Meals – firstly from inside a catchment area, then from outside a catchment area - to a maximum quota of 15% of the school's Published Admission Number

4. Children with siblings attending the school living in the catchment area
5. Children living in the catchment area
6. Children outside a catchment area

Respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the proposal to introduce FSM eligibility as an admissions priority. Figure 4 summarises their responses.



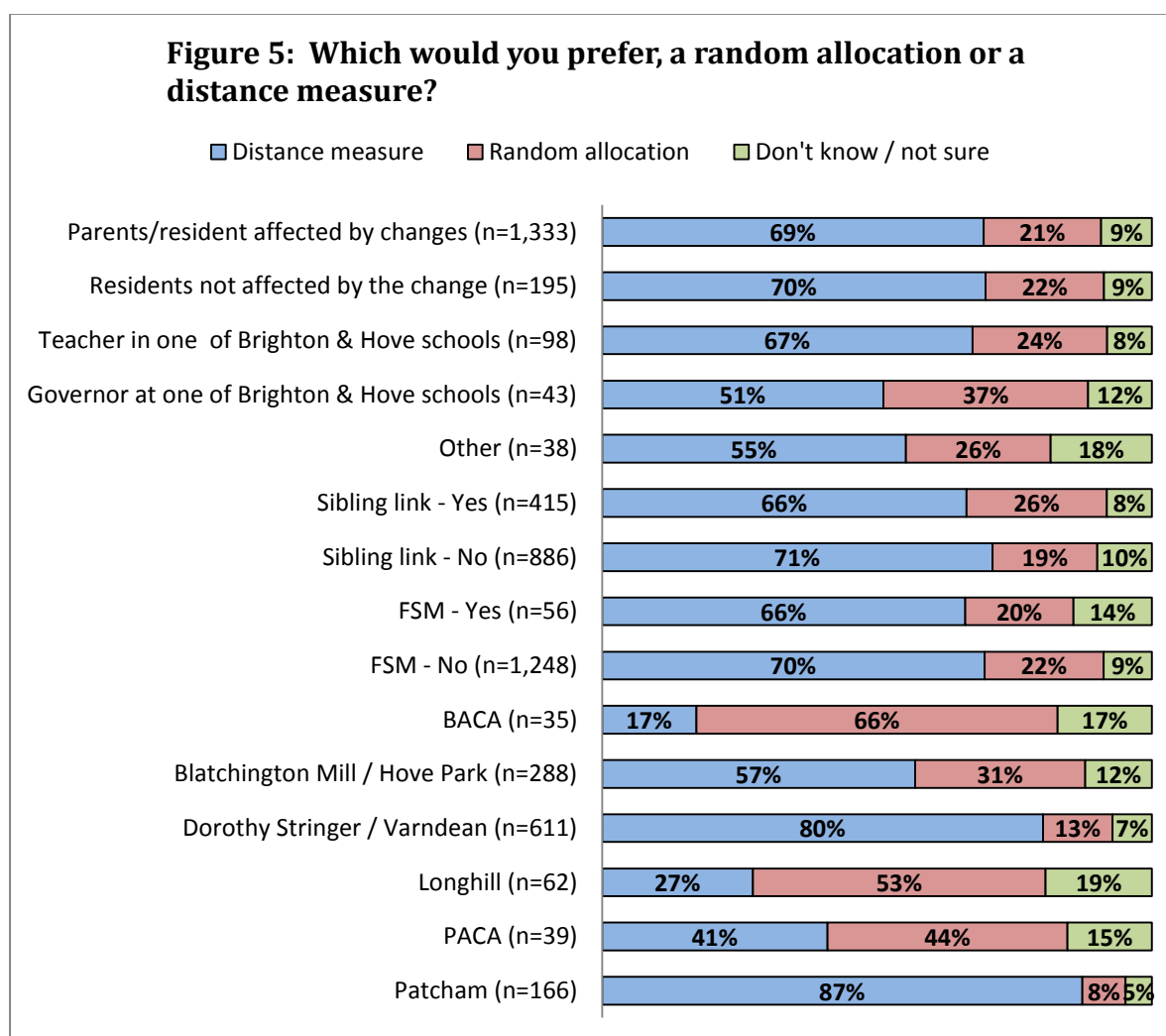
Among all parent/residents affected by the changes more than three out of five (63 per cent) disagree with the introduction of FSM eligibility as an admissions priority. This is nearly two and a half times more than those that agree (27 per cent).

Among parent/residents eligible for FSM only a quarter (24 per cent) agreed with the proposal while more than a half (56 per cent) disagreed but the number of respondents eligible for FSM was low.

School governors are most likely to be in favour of the proposal with 58 per cent agreeing and 35 per cent disagreeing. A half of teachers (51 per cent) and parents/residents in the Longhill catchment (50 per cent) also agreed with the proposal to introduce FSM eligibility as an admissions priority.

#### 4.4 Which tie-break method to use if a school has more applications than places available.

Currently, if a school is oversubscribed with children the council uses an electronic random allocation system (a lottery where each child has an equal chance of being offered a place) tie-break to decide which of the children within that priority should be offered the available places. An alternative to the random allocation system in these situations could be a home to school distance measure that would give priority to those pupils who live nearest to the school. Respondents were asked which they preferred random allocation or a distance measure. Figure 5 summarises their responses.



Two thirds of parents/residents affected by the changes (69 per cent) prefer a distance measure as a tie breaker when a school is oversubscribed, three times more than those that prefer random selection (21 per cent). A majority of teacher (67 per cent) and school governors (51 per cent) also preferred a distance measure as do parent/residents with (66 per cent) or without (71 per cent) a sibling link and those eligible (66 per cent) or not (70 per cent) for FSM.

There are however big differences by school catchment areas with parent/residents from;

- PACA were split, random allocation (44 percent) and distance measure (41 per cent)
- BACA (66 per cent) and Longhill (53 per cent) preferring random allocation
- Patcham (87 per cent), Dorothy Stringer/Vardean (80 per cent) and Blatchington Mill/Hove park (57 per cent) preferring a distance measure.