

Appendix A

Wimbledon Chase and Dundonald Primary School Admissions Priority area and siblings –

Background

1. To date the council has been robust in defending admissions policies that give priority to siblings, to ensure that families with young children are not inconvenienced by separate school drop-offs.
2. The only place the council's siblings policy has really been challenged through complaints in recent years is for Dundonald and Wimbledon Chase Schools, which are only a few hundred metres apart and in an area where there has been most controversy in providing sufficient local places. Here, parents are concerned about admissions applications from people moving into the area through a property letting for a short period purely to get access into the schools, and then getting priority for all their siblings despite subsequently moving away, thus reducing the distance that the schools can offer places to non-siblings.
3. There have been complaints regarding this issue at Dundonald Primary School for a number of years (though less so last year as the expansion meant it offered to a greater distance), and a growing number of complaints with regard to Wimbledon Chase because the school only offered to 269 metres in 2015 within their Admissions Priority Area (APA); 55 of their 90 places went to siblings.
4. It was therefore considered that there should be a specific revised admissions policy only for these two schools, rather than consider a blanket change for all community schools that would be unnecessary and more widely impact on the council's desire to ensure that families with young children are not inconvenienced by separate school drop-offs.
5. Officers considered having a maximum distance for all siblings at Wimbledon Chase and Dundonald, as is being implemented in 2016 for LB Wandsworth for all schools. However, setting such a distance would be random when the distance offered changes from year to year, and is complicated by Wimbledon Chase's existing APA.
6. The fact that Wimbledon Chase school currently has a large APA (much larger than the actual distance offered) provides the opportunity to ensure that priority is only given to siblings living within the general vicinity of the school.
7. Prior to the consultation officers consulted the headteachers and chairs of governors at both Wimbledon Chase and Dundonald Schools. Both schools would like an APA to be implemented with priority only given to local siblings as a means to address the issue outlined above.
8. As can be seen from Map 1 below, the present Wimbledon Chase APA is extremely large compared to the distance it can offer places and it includes the Dundonald Primary School site since, when it was established, Dundonald Primary School only offered its 30 places to just over 100 metres.

9. With Dundonald expanding to 60 places, there is therefore a logic to both schools having complementary admission priority areas and the proposal put to consultation ensures all areas currently in the Wimbledon Chase APA either continue in their APA or are in the Dundonald APA, except a small area to the south of the Kingston Road, which is well served by primary places.
10. Because Dundonald and Wimbledon Chase are so close to each other it is necessary for a small area to be in both APAs to prevent an address being caught in the middle of no places being offered even when it is only 200-300 metres from either school.

Consultation

11. As part of the annual admissions consultation the council therefore consulted on:
 - A reduction in the Admissions Priority Area (APA) for Wimbledon Chase Primary School (currently as map 1 to be as map 2)
 - Introduction of an Admissions Priority Area (APA) for Dundonald Primary School (as map 2)
 - A change to the sibling rule for Wimbledon Chase and Dundonald Primary Schools, to prioritise siblings and then other families living within the APA above other siblings and families living outside the APA
12. Consultation was carried out as follows:
 - To all Merton primary and secondary schools, requesting they share with parents
 - To all neighbouring local authorities, requesting they share with admission authorities in their area
 - On the Merton website
 - To all nursery applicants for Wimbledon Chase and Dundonald in the current and previous 2 years
 - To all early years providers and childminders in Merton (via a newsletter), requesting they share with parents
13. It is recommended that all the responses are read in detail to obtain a full picture of the responses but a summary of the issues raised in the consultations are summarised below.
14. A total of 52 responses to the consultation were received, which can be split into the following categories:
 - 21 responses supported the general proposals
 - 10 responses asked for clarity of areas of the proposals or how they affected their personal circumstances
 - 8 responses partially supported the proposals
 - 13 responses specified areas of the proposals they were opposed to
15. Of those supporting or partially supporting the proposals, the following comments were made in support of aspects of the proposals:

- No reason to voice opposition to any aspect of the primary school admission arrangements
- Fully support the sibling and APA policy
- Sibling policy that prioritises siblings within APA – I support this proposal
- Sibling policy – I support this approach
- Sibling rule is well overdue
- Aware of acute pressure for places and the frustrations of parents who cannot get a place despite living very close - agree with the proposed changes
- In favour of the introduction of the APA
- Absolutely agree that the sibling policy should only operate if the family is still in the catchment area

16. The table below summarises the areas of concern lodged by parents opposed or partially supportive of the proposals:

	Total	Sibling Policy	APA Boundaries	Sibling Policy & APA Boundaries	APA	Secondary sibling	Timing of Change
Partially supportive of proposals	8	1	5	0	0	1	1
Against proposals	13	3	6	3	1	0	0

17. These areas of concern are expanded upon below.

Sibling proposal

18. The following comments were raised regarding the Wimbledon Chase and Dundonald sibling proposal:

- Siblings should remain the higher priority as it is difficult to have children at different schools
- Concerned about the logistical and emotional impact on younger siblings if they have to attend different schools; decisions should be made on a case by case basis
- May adversely affect families who are forced to move outside of APA area for reasons other than choice
- Alternatively, a 'bonus' could be applied to siblings e.g. a 500m reduction to their home to school distance measurement
- APA could apply to siblings only to make the arrangements simpler
- Opposed to change in sibling rule as taking and collecting from different schools is impractical
- Families who have moved out of the APA, whilst protected initially, will be disadvantaged if they have future children applying. Change should only apply to those applying for their first child
- Unfair to families who have gained admission based on the existing criteria – especially as there was no APA for Dundonald
- Discriminates against the majority of hard-working middle-class families out of the area
- Disadvantages families living in only one of the APA areas
- There would be an equalities impact, with a disproportionate impact on certain protected characteristics who may be more likely to move out of the area

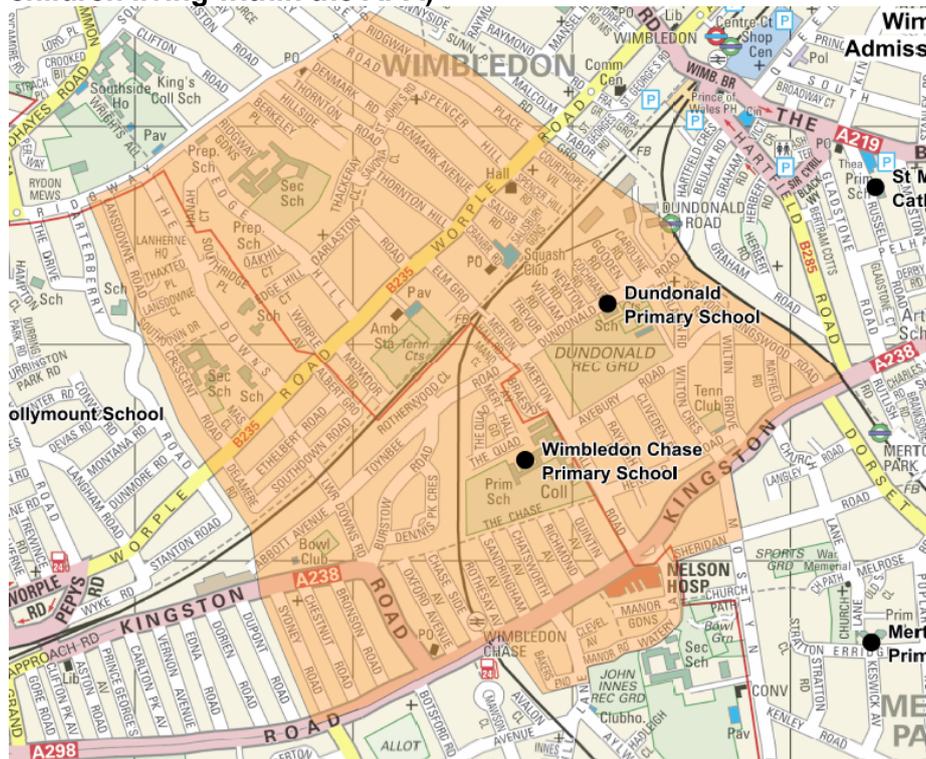
Officer comments:

19. Some people commenting did not understand the protection proposed in the admissions policy which means that all parents with children at the school on 1 September 2016 will not be impacted by the proposal. Therefore all parents will be aware at the time of applying for the first child that they will have a lower priority for a sibling should they choose to move outside the APA.
20. Since some of the comments received indicate the protection offered for existing parents was not fully understood, the proposed final policy now makes this aspect clearer. Families who are forced out of the area not out of choice may make a case for consideration under social grounds within the admissions policy and can be protected in that way should they choose not to transfer to schools in their new area.
21. The issue of linked siblings (i.e. a family with a current sibling will be protected for their next child, but possibly not for a younger child if the oldest has left the school at that time) is a valid one and is addressed in the final policy
22. One respondent drew attention to a potential equalities impact, stating that following an EIA (Equalities Impact Assessment) in Haringey on a similar proposal, the proposal was withdrawn. However, that was for a borough wide policy, rather than the Merton proposal affecting two schools in a small geographic area.
23. An EIA was therefore undertaken. This recognized that on the basis that people in social rented accommodation are more likely to move, and are less likely to be White British, and a lower socio economic group, there is the potential for it to be an impact. However, this impact is only indirect, and to not undertake the policy on this basis would be disproportional. There is some protection for vulnerable children through the council's 'social need' criteria.
24. **Overall Conclusion:** None of the comments in the consultation are seen to outweigh the proposed reasons for the policy change, which is to discourage people moving into the area purely to obtain a place at Wimbledon Chase and Dundonald schools and continue to benefit from the siblings policy, therefore allowing the council to be able to extend the area offered for other applicants.
25. It is recognized that the consequence of the revised policy is that people moving out of the APA area will lose priority for future children and moving can be for various reasons. However, unless there is a high social need, a family wishing for all siblings to attend the same school may simply need to seek a place at alternative schools, which would be closer to their home than Wimbledon Chase and Dundonald. With the existing and forecast availability of primary school places following the school expansion programme and 80% of LB Merton primary schools being good or outstanding this should not be a major issue but if it is, the social need admissions policy could apply.

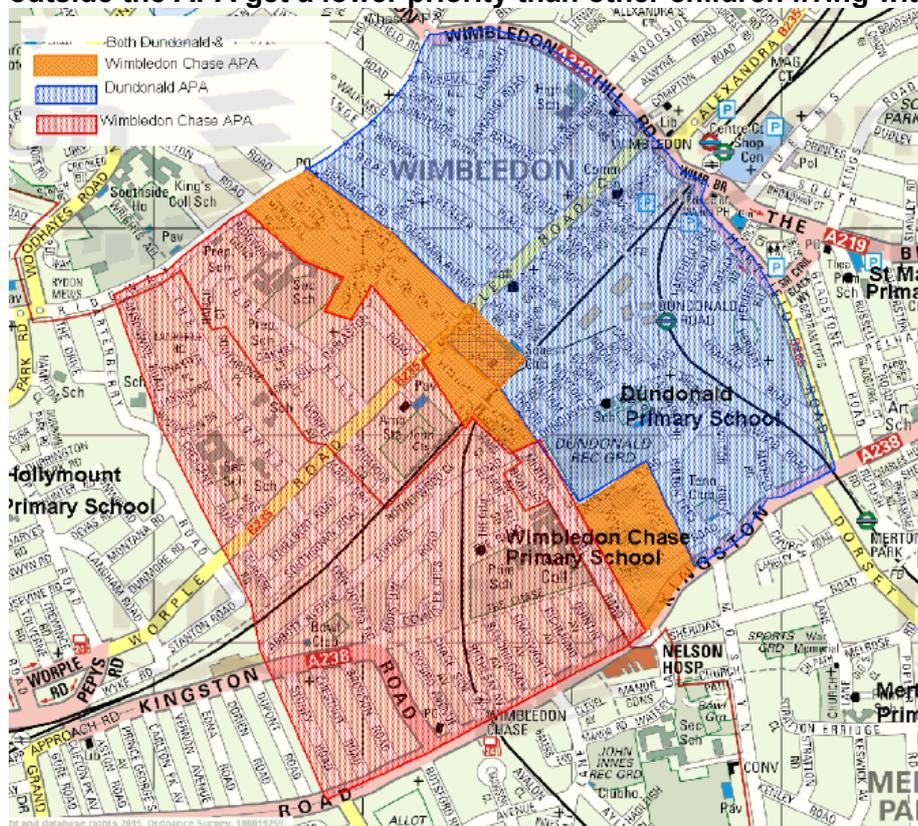
APA and APA boundaries

26. The following comments were raised regarding the introduction of a Dundonald APA and the revised boundaries of the Wimbledon Chase APA:
- The new areas will limit economic diversity
 - Prefer a slightly wider catchment (2 to 3 roads)
 - Unfair to reduce current APA on current families (x2)
 - Wimbledon Chase APA should be more equidistant from the location of the school (x2)
 - The existing Wimbledon Chase APA would work with the new sibling policy
 - Penalises families to the south of Wimbledon Chase where there are limited options for schools
 - Disappointed the Wimbledon Chase APA excludes Bakers End
 - Part of Merton Hall Road should be in the overlapping APA area (x4)
 - Trevor Road should be in the overlapping APA area
 - APA drawing appears arbitrary and unclear how the overlapping area was constructed
 - Braeside Ave (x3) should be in the overlapping area
 - Unclear why the overlap north of the rail tracks exists
 - PA for Dundonald unnecessary and should be distance only
 - Dundonald APA stretches too far north
 - All properties within 300m of both schools should be in overlap area
 - Disappointed the small area south of Kingston Road has been excluded
27. **Officer comments:** A key need for APAs is to provide greater priority to areas who may otherwise have difficulty accessing a local school. For this reason, the APA boundaries are not equidistant around the schools, and there is greater emphasis to the north of the schools where there is limited access to the alternatives, which has been the case for Wimbledon Chase since it was first agreed at the time of school expansion in 2008.
28. The APA for both schools will also support the sibling policy. There is broad support for APA areas, with comments predominantly around the overlap area needing to be more consistent and for the area to the south of the Kingston Road – which was removed in the proposal for consultation – to be reinstated. This area does contain some social housing and, whilst this area does have access to other schools to the south, there is a strong argument to keep this area in the APA. In reinstating this, part will be in the Wimbledon Chase APA only, and part will be in the overlap area in the APA for both schools. We agree the overlap area should be more consistent, and be a band from south to north; this will then include Merton Hall road, Braeside Avenue and Trevor Road, which have all been referred to in responses.
29. **Overall Conclusion:** The reduced Wimbledon Chase APA is to be extended to reinstate the area to the south removed in the consultation, and an area to the east to provide a greater overlap. The proposal is now as Map 3 below.

MAP 1 Existing Wimbledon Chase APA (siblings outside the APA get priority ahead of other children living within the APA)



MAP 2 Proposal in consultation -Wimbledon Chase and Dundonald APA (siblings living outside the APA get a lower priority than other children living within the APA)



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MAP 3: Revised proposal (siblings living outside the APA get a lower priority than other children living within the APA)



Annex 1 to appendix A

LB Merton School Admissions Consultation 2017/18

Summary of Responses in relation to Dundonald/Wimbledon Chase proposal

1. Strongly agree with the sibling policy proposed.
2. Strongly supports the proposed changes. It is a logical decision that will protect local residents and deter the endemic practice of people renting to get their eldest child into a good school then promptly moving away knowing a sibling place is guaranteed.
3. Agree with the policy change to protect families who are already attending the school.
4. Strongly support the proposals as it sets much fairer boundaries.
5. Welcome the proposed changes as there does seem to be a large number of families who have moved out the area once their eldest child has a place. Would also welcome the changes to be brought forward to September 2016 to enable our

son to continue his education at Wimbledon Chase.

6. Strongly agree with the changes, especially the sibling rule.
7. Deeply opposed as the new areas will limit economic diversity.
8. Think that siblings should remain the higher priority as it is difficult to have children at different schools.
9. Have no problem with the proposed changes and fully support them.
10. Wholeheartedly agree with the new policy that will make more spaces available for genuine local residents.
11. No reason to voice opposition to any of the primary school admission arrangements. Ricards Lodge / Rutlish – to treat children fairly irrespective of sex, should judge distance criteria to whichever of those schools are closest. Also believe that the supplementary requirements for Wimbledon College and Ursuline are discriminatory and wide open to fraud.
12. Very much in favour of revising the sibling rule as we have been adversely affected by it. Many children are not local and are dropped off by car which is a safety issue.
13. Happy with the proposed changes.
14. I agree with these admission arrangements.
15. Fully support the APA and sibling policy. However would like to suggest a slightly wider catchment (2 to 3 roads) for sibling policy.
16. Sibling policy that prioritises siblings within APA – I support this proposal.
Smaller APA – I do not think this should apply to parents who have children at the school before September 2017 and live within the current APA as it would unfairly penalise them.
New APA – I do not support the proposed reduction in size. If any reduction is made, it should be from the Wimbledon Chase side of the boundary as there are a wider selection of schools available that side. Situation would be improved if boundaries for Wimbledon Chase Primary were more equidistant from its actual location.
17. APA sibling rule – we wholeheartedly agree.
18. Agree with proposed changes.
19. Sibling policy – I support this approach as have seen on a daily basis parents driving their children to Wimbledon Chase from outside the APA.

Reduced APA – this is unfair on families who are currently within the APA. It also appears to be penalising families south of Wimbledon Chase where there are limited options for schools. A revised APA would be improved if the boundaries of Wimbledon Chase Primary were more equidistant from its actual location. The current APA would work with the new sibling policy.

20. Only heard about the consultation from local mums, not the council and can find no information on the website. We were extremely upset that after attending the nursery at Wimbledon Chase our daughter did not get a place in the Reception class due to the large number of siblings allocated places and changes to the measuring point. Disappointed that the proposed APA excludes Bakers End. Sibling rule is well overdue but it is hugely unjust to change the priority area and impact families who missed out in the 2015 admissions process.
21. Aware of acute pressure for places and the frustrations of parents who cannot get a place at the school despite living very close. Agree with the proposed changes but not the timing - would like it delayed by a year as nursery choices have already been made for the reception September 2017 intake.
22. On the whole, we are supportive of the new APA and sibling proposals. However, we appear to be in danger of falling into the gap due to the timings and boundary of the APAs (our road is in the APA for Wimbledon Chase but not Dundonald, and our son is top of the waiting list for Dundonald and 21st for Wimbledon Chase).
23. Pleased about the proposals, especially the changes to the sibling rule. Also support the APA proposals. We would also like to encourage greater historical housing checks as we have significant concerns about people moving into the area temporarily to get access to the school.
24. Delayed entry for summer born children – I welcome the proposed flexibility.
25. Fully in favour of any changes that make the current admission system more fair and helps to ensure that local schools are for the most local children.
26. Only discovered the consultation by chance on Dundonald's website. Strongly support local children attending Dundonald and Wimbledon Chase. Would like more information on the impact of the potential change, e.g. number of siblings outside the APA and admission distances.
27. Strongly in favour of all the proposed changes. I feel especially strongly about changes to the APA and sibling rule as it is fairer.
28. Very supportive of the proposals and hope they are implemented. Particularly supportive over the sibling rule as it is both logical and correct. The changes to the APA should make the allocation of places fairer to a larger proportion of the local community. I also suggest more thorough checks on current and former housing

arrangements as part of the school application process.

29. Concerned about younger siblings going to another school as we live outside the APA – both logistically and emotionally. Therefore does not want the changes unless assurances made that decisions would be made on a case-by-case basis.
30. Have major concerns - my son is due to start Wimbledon Chase in September 2016 but we live outside the APA, so am worried I will be forced to send my second child to a different school.
31. Requested further clarification on the proposed sibling rules.
32. Fully supportive of sibling rule change. Too late to help own son who did not get a place in September 2015. Would like information on the number of siblings living outside the APA that were granted a place in September 2015. Believes existing and longstanding residents deserve more priority. Why can't the application process start earlier in life?
33. Fully agree to the APA and sibling priority proposals as it is fairer. (My own children did not get into our first choice of school.) I know a number of parents using the sibling rule after they have moved away from the area. Also parents who rent in the area temporarily until their child has been offered a place.
34. Concerned about the omission of part of Merton Hall Road (between Dundonald Road & Avery Road) from Dundonald's APA. These houses are significantly closer to both the schools compared to other roads, e. g. Thornton Road, which are in both APAs. These houses which back on to Dundonald Rec have also lost significant benefit by the reduction of the Rec to expand Dundonald School. People in these houses would have purchased / rented these properties with the expectation of getting into Dundonald.
35. We are in favour of the introduction of an APA, provided it covers at least the area indicated in the consultation. Whilst we would not personally be disadvantaged by the change to the sibling policy, we are not favour of it as we believe the merits of the general sibling policy (in terms of continuity of schooling within a family) outweighs any benefits the proposed change might bring. There are many genuine reasons why a family may have to move from an area, and Haringey Council recently rejected a similar proposal, having carried out an Equalities Impact Assessment which showed which showed that (quoting from the council minutes at <http://www.minutes.haringey.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=118&MId=7304&Ver=4>) that "there would be a disproportionate impact on certain protected characteristics that would affect (sic) people who would be moving for reasons other than out of choice."

36. Asks if the proposals are for entry in September 2016 or September 2017? Asks if own situation is covered by current sibling policy?
37. Asks if new or old rules will apply to own children? What happens if they move outside the Dundonald APA, either to inside the Wimbledon Chase APA or outside the APAs altogether?
38. Believe that Trevor Road should be included within the combined APAs.
39. Only found out about the consultation from a friend. It has not been advertised as stated in the School Admissions Code clause 1.44. We therefore propose you extend the consultation period and respondent group.

Also, according to the School Admissions Code (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/389388/School_Admissions_Code_2014_-_19_Dec.pdf): "Catchment areas must be designed so that they are reasonable and clearly defined". We cannot see that the newly proposed APAs are reasonable. The map detailing the APAs looks somewhat arbitrary. In particular, it is not clear how the overlapping APA was constructed. The only rationale given in the Appendix states the need for an overlap for areas roughly 200-300m away from the schools. Based on this, there are obvious omissions (e.g. Merton Hall Road, Braeside Ave) and it is not clear why the overlap north of the rail tracks exists.

Sibling policy – suggest two alternatives. (a) Admissions by distance to the school only with a "bonus" for siblings. If a sibling is attending the school then a fixed value (say 500m) is subtracted from that distance. This is a simple rule that could be used Merton-wide, is difficult to abuse, and would give certainty of admission to parents with a sibling at that school who live at most 500m away from that school. (b) If one wants to use an APA based procedure then one could use the APA only to define eligible siblings. In other words: Siblings who live within the APA have priority over other applicants. Other applicants (siblings or not) are simply considered by distance. This would reduce the number of special factors needed for Dundonald / Wimbledon chase from 4 to 1.

40. Dundonald APA – is it necessary and reasonable for Dundonald as no reasons have been given in the consultation document? We believe the oversubscription criteria ought (after the obligatory requirements to looked after children etc.) to be based simply on straight-line distance.

Geographical definition of APA – believe there ought to be a (slightly) greater degree of overlap between the APAs to include Merton Hall Road and Braeside Avenue.

41. Thoroughly opposed to changing the sibling rule unless the sibling is in Year 6. Taking and collecting children to different schools would be impractical if not impossible, as too would the co-ordination of different school events, etc. Also oppose the Dundonald APA as it stands. – it stretches too far north.

42. Asks if own children are covered by the proposed sibling rule? Also, if the implementation date may change.
43. Asks for clarification on the sibling criteria.
44. Asks if daughter is covered by sibling policy as have had to move out of the APA to look after elderly relative.
45. Map is not fit for purpose as cannot work out which zone own house is in. What principles were used to determine which houses should come under both APAs? All properties within a 300m radius of both schools should be included in both APAs, as there should be an objective rule that determines which houses are in both APAs.
46. Current parent at Wimbledon Chase with youngest child due to start reception in September 2017 who has moved out of the APA. Does not think it is fair to change the admission rules as if they have any further children the sibling rule will not apply to them – they would not have moved away if they had known it was going to change. Would like a change to the ranking and for new criteria to only apply to people applying for a place for their first child from September 2016.
47. Surprised that not all residents in the relevant area had been informed about the consultation. Asks why Braeside Avenue and part of Merton Hall Road are excluded from the overlap area given point 12 of the Appendix?
48. Absolutely agree that the sibling policy should only operate if the family is still in the catchment area. However disappointed that a small area south of Kingston Road has been excluded whereas houses as far north as The Ridgeway are included.
49. Object to the consultation process and the identification of stakeholders to participate in the process e.g. only families who identified Wimbledon Chase or Dundonald for nursery admission were consulted. Consultation documents were not made easily available. Why is it being done before the 'Future Admissions Code' is released?

Object to the sibling rule as unfair to families who have gained admission based on the existing criteria, especially as there was no previous APA for Dundonald. It also discriminates against the majority of hard-working, middle-class families out of the area. Council should focus on tightening the rules on how long families are required to be resident within the existing APA.

Don't see any advantage to the APAs, only disadvantage to families living in only one of the APAs. Also, do not think the guidelines on 'families relocating newly into the area' are clear.

50. Just replied giving son's nursery application details.

51. In favour of all the community primary school proposals.

52. Resident of Braeside Avenue with a young child and only informed of consultation by a neighbour. Believe that Braeside Avenue and Merton Hall Road should be included in both APAs as closer to Wimbledon Chase and Dundonald than other overlapped areas. Also, walking distance to Dundonald from Braeside Avenue is shorter than to Wimbledon Chase.