

Impact of moving to straight line distance:

Currently we use home to school distance as a tie breaker for our admission arrangements, and this is measured by shortest walking route via surfaced, passable routes. This does present some challenges, for example:

- Parents dispute the distances as they cannot see how these are calculated, and there are websites available which will show different measurements
- Parents find it difficult to estimate in advance their chances of securing a place at their preferred school, as they do not know their home to school distance measurement as measured by our system
- As new building projects come on stream, the routing network needs to be kept up to date to ensure accurate measurements. This means numerous site visits which are time consuming and costly

The proposal therefore is to change the method of measurement to straight line 'crow flies', which would be easy for parents to understand (we could publish maps showing circles indicating previous years' distances), and would not require maintenance of the routing network.

Clearly using this method of measuring would result in different decisions to the existing method. In some cases, where railway lines or rivers intervene, parents may find that they are denied a place at a school at the expense of children who have to walk past their home in order to get there, but these cases are likely to be few in number and limited to urban areas where there are alternative school places available, as the normal expectation is that rural schools will admit those children who live in their community area, and the county council negotiates with rural schools where necessary to try to ensure that this happens. Community areas (and in the case of Peacehaven Community School, the priority community area) would still apply, and the measurement is only used to differentiate between pupils within the same admission priority.

Modelling the impact of this change using this year's reception cohort shows that very few children (less than 5%) received a different allocation using this method of measurement, split roughly equally between children receiving a higher preference and children receiving a lower preference.