

Equality Analysis Form

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Equality Analysis

The council has an important role in creating a fair society through the services we provide, the people we employ and the money we spend. Equality is integral to everything the council does. We are committed to making Croydon a stronger, fairer borough where no community or individual is held back.

Undertaking an Equality Analysis helps to determine whether a proposed change will have a positive, negative, or no impact on groups that share a protected characteristic. Conclusions drawn from Equality Analyses helps us to better understand the needs of all our communities, enable us to target services and budgets more effectively and also helps us to comply with the Equality Act 2010.

An equality analysis must be completed as early as possible during the planning stages of any proposed change to ensure information gained from the process is incorporated in any decisions made.

In practice, the term '**proposed change**' broadly covers the following:-

- Policies, strategies and plans;
- Projects and programmes;
- Commissioning (including re-commissioning and de-commissioning);
- Service review;
- Budget allocation/analysis;
- Staff restructures (including outsourcing);
- Business transformation programmes;
- Organisational change programmes;
- Processes (for example thresholds, eligibility, entitlements, and access criteria).

2. Proposed change

Directorate	Education
Title of proposed change	Proposed closure of Virgo Fidelis Convent Senior School
Name of Officer carrying out Equality Analysis	Denise Bushay

2.1 Purpose of proposed change (see 1.1 above for examples of proposed changes)

Briefly summarise the proposed change and why it is being considered/anticipated outcomes. What is meant to achieve and how is it seeking to achieve this? Please also state if it is an amendment to an existing arrangement or a new proposal.

Virgo Fidelis Convent Senior School Interim Executive Governing Board, in consultation with Croydon Council and the Archdiocese of Southwark have agreed to commence the statutory process for proposed closure of the school in August 2021.

The IEB, Croydon Council and Archdiocese of Southwark share the collective view that the school is no longer viable. There are several reasons contributing to this shared view, chiefly:

- the majority of the buildings estate needed for a viable 11-16 secondary school is unfit for purpose and in poor repair (these portions of the estate are currently out of use)
- the pupil roll has fallen consistently over the past several years
- the school budget has been in deficit over the past several years with the school now in significant debt.

As a consequence of the above, as well as other factors, the school is increasingly hampered in its capacity to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum that it would be reasonable to expect of a modern secondary school now and in the immediate and longer term future.

Years 7 and 10 pupils

The Office of the Schools Adjudicator approved the suspension of entry to Year 7 for September 2020. Year 7 pupils who accepted a place at Virgo Fidelis have been offered an alternative school place at Notre Dame High School, an all-girls' Roman Catholic comprehensive school situated in Elephant and Castle; or another school of choice. Year 10 students will be taught on the site of St Mary's Catholic Secondary School. Subject to approval of the proposed closure of Virgo Fidelis, the governors of St Mary's Catholic Secondary School have agreed to retain the Year 10 pupils as they move into the final year of their education in a COVID-secure and single-sex location away from the rest of the school. The pupils who remain will be enrolled at St Mary's for Year 11.

Current Pupils

Years 8 and 9 will be offered alternative places at other schools, subject to approval for the proposed closure of the school. Year 11 pupils will have completed their GCSE examinations in July 2021, and the proposed closing date of the school is August 2021.

Statutory process

The process for decision making regarding school closures is set out in the Department for Education's (DfE) statutory guidance 'Opening and Closing Maintained Schools' November 2019. The statutory process consists of:

- Pre-publication consultation
- Publication of statutory notice
- Representation / formal consultation
- Decision by the council's cabinet on the school closure proposal

Pre-publication consultation will take place from 01 October until 23 October 2020. Subject to approval, the statutory notice will be published on 12 November which will start the four week representation period (formal consultation) which will end on 10 December 2020.

A statutory notice was published on 12 November 2020, which started the representation - formal consultation period. The formal consultation period lasted four weeks from 12 November to 10 December 2020 which allowed any person to send objections or comments to the council.

The pre-publication and formal consultation outcomes reports are attached to the main report – Proposed closure of Virgo Fidelis Convent Senior School.

3. Impact of the proposed change

Important Note: It is necessary to determine how each of the protected groups could be impacted by the proposed change. Who benefits and how (and who, therefore doesn't and why?) Summarise any positive impacts or benefits, any negative impacts and any neutral impacts and the evidence you have taken into account to reach this conclusion. Be aware that there may be positive, negative and neutral impacts within each characteristic.

Where an impact is unknown, state so. If there is insufficient information or evidence to reach a decision you will need to gather appropriate quantitative and qualitative information from a range of sources e.g. Croydon Observatory a useful source of information such as Borough Strategies and Plans, Borough and Ward Profiles, Joint Strategic Health Needs Assessments <http://www.croydonobservatory.org/> Other sources include performance monitoring reports, complaints, survey data, audit reports, inspection reports, national research and feedback gained through engagement with service users, voluntary and community organisations and contractors.

3.1 Deciding whether the potential impact is positive or negative

Table 1 – Positive/Negative impact

For each protected characteristic group show whether the impact of the proposed change on service users and/or staff is positive or negative by briefly outlining the nature of the impact in the appropriate column. . If it is decided that analysis is not relevant to some groups, this should be recorded and explained. In all circumstances you should list the source of the evidence used to make this judgement where possible.			
Protected characteristic group(s)	Positive impact	Negative impact	Source of evidence
Age	In line with the School Admissions Code, school places are allocated using the agreed/published admissions criteria. The proposed changes relate to children and young people of statutory school age. Admissions to schools are a function that operates within a statutory framework. Croydon is the admission authority for community schools and there are arrangements and criteria for the admission of pupils to nursery, primary and secondary mainstream schools.	The closure may affect siblings of pupils attending Virgo if they intended to attend the same school. School Admissions would ensure that appropriate provisions are in place for any displaced pupils. They would ensure that parental preference and family circumstances such as siblings are considered when offering school places to minimise the impact on families where possible.	Croydon Observatory
Disability	Children and young people with special educational needs and/or disability are given priority in the admissions criteria or attend	For any pupils at Virgo with a disability / Education and Health Care Plan. For these pupils, an individual and	Croydon Observatory

	special schools. All schools are required to admit a child if their Education and Health Care Plan names the school. The new special free school – AVA – in New Addington will provide additional school places.	tailored approach will be used was to help with the transition to another school. School transport support provided. An alternative place will be identified that meets their needs	
Gender	As above, children allocated school place in line with Admissions Code. The proposed changes are not gender specific. The admission arrangements do not contain criteria that impact differently on people with a particular gender	This is a single sex girls schools and there is a limited number of girl only schools in Croydon. However, as the Virgo borders neighbouring borough - Lambeth and Southwark- there's an opportunity to apply for a school place at girl only schools in these boroughs.	Croydon Observatory
Gender Reassignment	N/A		
Marriage or Civil Partnership	N/A		
Religion or belief	The admission arrangements for voluntary aided school could contain a denominational criterion within the policy, to enable priority for children whose parents are active members of the Roman Catholic and who request admission to a church school on denominational grounds. However, all applications, including those with no faith basis for applying, are considered applying the published arrangements Surplus school places available and some pupils could attend other Catholic secondary schools in and bordering Croydon.	The admission criteria is based on determined admission arrangements compliant with the relevant legislation and is unlikely to discriminate unlawfully. A decrease in the number of faith school provision for families seeking such places. Pupils may have to travel further to school and attend a non-faith school. However pupils of secondary school age tend to travel further to school. School Admissions would ensure that appropriate provisions are in place for any displaced pupils. They would ensure that parental preference and family circumstances such as siblings are considered when offering school places to minimise the impact on families where possible.	Croydon Observatory

Race	The Admission Criteria, based on the Admissions Code, are used to allocate school places and do not include ethnicity or race as criteria. The proposed changes are not intended to have any negative impact on pupils from different ethnic groups		Croydon Observatory
Sexual Orientation	N/A		
Pregnancy or Maternity	N/A		

Important note: You must act to eliminate any potential negative impact which, if it occurred would breach the Equality Act 2010. In some situations this could mean abandoning your proposed change as you may not be able to take action to mitigate all negative impacts.

When you act to reduce any negative impact or maximise any positive impact, you must ensure that this does not create a negative impact on service users and/or staff belonging to groups that share protected characteristics. **Please use table 4 to record actions that will be taken to remove or minimise any potential negative impact**

3.2 Additional information needed to determine impact of proposed change

Table 2 – Additional information needed to determine impact of proposed change

If you need to undertake further research and data gathering to help determine the likely impact of the proposed change, outline the information needed in this table. Please use the table below to describe any consultation with stakeholders and summarise how it has influenced the proposed change. Please attach evidence or provide link to appropriate data or reports:		
Additional information needed and or Consultation Findings	Information source	Date for completion
<p>Two periods of statutory consultations will be undertaken – pre-publication and representation – where those with an interest could express their views and/or object/comment on the proposal to close the school.</p> <p>A consultation document including a questionnaire will be used as a basis of informing stakeholders, including parents/carers and local residents about the educational rationale for the proposed closure of the school and inviting feedback on the proposal.</p> <p>Stakeholders will be given the opportunity to express their views in writing via a questionnaire, both electronically and via the hard copy attached to the consultation document, by email and post.</p>	<p>Pre-publication consultation outcomes report</p> <p>Representation outcomes report</p> <p>School census data</p> <p>Admissions data</p> <p>Birth data</p>	<p>October – December 2020</p> <p>November / December 2020</p>
<p>Different modes and methods of communication will be used to inform and facilitate feedback from stakeholders about/on the proposal.</p> <p>Equality and Diversity Monitoring: As part of the consultation process, respondents were asked to complete an equality and diversity questionnaire, looking at Gender, Age, Ethnicity and Disability. The information collected will help identify any special requirements and promote equality and diversity.</p> <p><u>Pre-publication consultation period</u></p> <p>A total of 60 responses have been received during the representation period. 57 responses were received via the online Get Involved survey and 3 were received via email.</p> <p>Of those who chose to complete the 'about you' questions, the majority of respondents were local residents.</p> <p>Of the 57 responses received via Get Involved;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32 do not support the proposed change • 12 do support the proposed change 	<p>Croydon Observatory</p>	

- 12 were not sure
- 1 was not affected/did not wish to answer the questions relating to the proposal.

About You Questions

Tell us who you are. Please tick all that apply.

Response	Number	Percentage
Member of staff at Virgo Fidelis	1	3
Member of staff at another school	2	5
School Governor at Virgo Fidelis	0	0
School Governor at another school	2	5
Parent/carer of a child/children at Virgo Fidelis	5	13
Parent/carer of child/children at another school	4	10
Pupil at Virgo Fidelis Convent Senior School	1	3
Local resident	13	33
Prefer not to say	5	13
Other (Please specify)	6	15
Total	39	100

Gender

Response	Number	Percentage
Male	7	12
Female	20	35
Transgender	0	0
Prefer to self-describe	2	4
Non-binary	0	0
Prefer not to say	4	7
No response given	24	42
Total	57	100

Age Range

Response	Number	Percentage
Under 16	1	2
16 - 18	0	0

19 - 25	1	2
26 - 34	4	7
35 - 44	7	12
45 - 54	11	19
55 - 64	5	9
65+	0	0
Do not wish to declare	4	7
No response given	24	42
Total	57	100

Ethnicity

Response	Number	Percentage
White British	10	18
White Irish	2	4
White European	0	0
Other white	1	2
Mixed white and black Caribbean	1	2
Mixed white and black African	2	3
Mixed white and Asian	0	0
Other mixed background	2	3
Asian or Asian British: Indian	3	5
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	0	0
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	0	0
Asian or Asian British: Chinese	0	0
Other Asian or Asian British Background	0	0
Black or Black British: Caribbean	3	5
Black or Black British: African	2	3
Other Black or Black British background	0	0
Arabic	0	0
Prefer not to say	5	9
Other	1	2
No response given	25	44
Total	57	100

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Response	Number	Percentage
No	24	42
Yes	3	5
Prefer not to say	5	9
No response given	25	44
Total	57	100

If yes, please tick all that apply*

*3 respondents provided 4 answers

Response	Number	Percentage
Mobility	2	50
Visual impairment	0	0
Hearing impairment	0	0
Mental Health	0	0
Learning Disability	1	25
Communication difficulty	1	25
Other	0	0
Prefer not to say	0	0
No response given	0	0
Total	4	100

Representation – formal consultation - period

Summary of responses

A total number of 34 responses were received; 32 via the Get Involved website and 2 via email.

Please tell us whether you support/do not support the proposed closure of Virgo Fidelis Convent Senior School.

Response	Number	%
I do not support the proposed closure of Virgo Fidelis	22	65
I support the proposed closure of Virgo Fidelis	8	24
Not sure	4	11
I am not affected by/do not want to answer	0	0

Please tell us who you are.

Please tick all that apply*

*36 responses were received from 34 respondents

Response	Number	%
Member of staff at Virgo Fidelis school	0	0
Member of staff at another school	1	3
School Governor at Virgo Fidelis school	0	0
School Governor at another school	2	6
Parent/carer of a child/children at Virgo Fidelis school	4	11
Parent/carer of child/children at another school	6	16
Pupil at Virgo Fidelis school	1	3
Ex-pupil of Virgo Fidelis school	1	3
Local resident	13	36
Member of a local church	6	16
Prefer not to say	1	3
Other	1	3

Equality Data

Gender

Response	Number	Percentage
Male	6	18
Female	14	41
Transgender	0	0
Prefer to self-describe	0	0
Non-binary	1	3
Prefer not to say	3	9
No response given	10	29
Total	34	100

Age Range

Response	Number	Percentage
Under 16	1	3
16 - 18	0	0

19 - 25	1	3
26 - 34	5	15
35 - 44	7	20
45 - 54	3	9
55 - 64	2	6
65+	3	9
Do not wish to declare	2	6
No response given	10	29
Total	34	100

Ethnicity

Response	Number	Percentage
White British	6	18
White Irish	0	0
White European	0	0
Any other white background	2	6
Mixed white and black Caribbean	0	0
Mixed white and black African	0	0
Mixed white and Asian	0	0
Any other mixed background	1	3
Asian or Asian British: Indian	0	0
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	0	0
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	0	0
Asian or Asian British: Chinese	0	0
Other Asian or Asian British Background	0	0
Black or Black British: Caribbean	3	9
Black or Black British: African	3	9
Other Black or Black British background	1	3
Arabic	0	0
Prefer not to say	7	20
Other	0	0
No response given	11	32
Total	34	100

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Response	Number	Percentage
No	15	44
Yes	1	3
Prefer not to say	7	21
No response given	11	32
Total	34	100

Pre-publication and Representation findings

Religious education - 19 respondents expressed concern surrounding the loss of Catholic secondary school places in Croydon. The council is required to consider the effect the proposed closure will have on the balance of denominational provision in the area and will continue to work closely with the Diocese regarding Catholic secondary schools within the borough.

Single sex education - 17 respondents stated they are concerned that the proposed closure will impact the number of single sex secondary school places in Croydon. A key part of the council's duty is to secure diversity of education offer to increase opportunities for parental choice when planning the provision of school places in the borough. However, it is important to note that there has been a declining roll at the school which has contributed to a significant financial deficit.

Although the council recognises that the proposed closure will result in a reduction in both Catholic and single sex secondary school places in Croydon, due to the falling roll at Virgo Fidelis Convent Senior School, it is felt that the proposed closure will not have a negative impact on equality and diversity for protected groups.

For guidance and support with consultation and engagement visit <https://intranet.croydon.gov.uk/working-croydon/communications/consultation-and-engagement/starting-engagement-or-consultation>

3.3 Impact scores

Example

If we are going to reduce parking provision in a particular location, officers will need to assess the equality impact as follows;

1. Determine the Likelihood of impact. You can do this by using the key in table 5 as a guide, for the purpose of this example, the likelihood of impact score is 2 (likely to impact)
2. Determine the Severity of impact. You can do this by using the key in table 5 as a guide, for the purpose of this example, the Severity of impact score is also 2 (likely to impact)
3. Calculate the equality impact score using table 4 below and the formula **Likelihood x Severity** and record it in table 5, for the purpose of this example - **Likelihood (2) x Severity (2) = 4**

Severity of Impact	3	3	6	9
	2	2	4	6
	1	1	2	3
		1	2	3
	Likelihood of Impact			

Table 4 – Equality Impact Score Key

Risk Index	Risk Magnitude
- 9	High
- 5	Medium
- 3	Low

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Table 3 – Impact scores

Column 1 PROTECTED GROUP	Column 2 LIKELIHOOD OF IMPACT SCORE	Column 3 SEVERITY OF IMPACT SCORE	Column 4 EQUALITY IMPACT SCORE
	<p>Use the key below to score the likelihood of the proposed change impacting each of the protected groups, by inserting either 1, 2, or 3 against each protected group.</p> <p>1 = Unlikely to impact 2 = Likely to impact 3 = Certain to impact</p>	<p>Use the key below to score the severity of impact of the proposed change on each of the protected groups, by inserting either 1, 2, or 3 against each protected group.</p> <p>1 = Unlikely to impact 2 = Likely to impact 3 = Certain to impact</p>	<p>Calculate the equality impact score for each protected group by multiplying scores in column 2 by scores in column 3. Enter the results below against each protected group.</p> <p>Equality impact score = likelihood of impact score x severity of impact score.</p>
Age	1	1	1
Disability	1	1	1
Gender	1	1	1
Gender reassignment	n/a		
Marriage / Civil Partnership	n/a		
Race	n/a		
Religion or belief	2	2	4
Sexual Orientation	n/a		
Pregnancy or Maternity	n/a		

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4. Statutory duties

4.1 Public Sector Duties

Tick the relevant box(es) to indicate whether the proposed change will adversely impact the Council’s ability to meet any of the Public Sector Duties in the Equality Act 2010 set out below.

- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who belong to protected groups
- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Fostering good relations between people who belong to protected characteristic groups

Important note: If the proposed change adversely impacts the Council’s ability to meet any of the Public Sector Duties set out above, mitigating actions must be outlined in the Action Plan in section 5 below.

5. Action Plan to mitigate negative impacts of proposed change

Important note: Describe what alternatives have been considered and/or what actions will be taken to remove or minimise any potential negative impact identified in Table 1. Attach evidence or provide link to appropriate data, reports, etc:

Table 4 – Action Plan to mitigate negative impacts

Complete this table to show any negative impacts identified for service users and/or staff from protected groups, and planned actions mitigate them.				
Protected characteristic	Negative impact	Mitigating action(s)	Action owner	Date for completion
Disability		For these pupils, an individual and tailored approach was used to help with the transition to another school. School transport support provided. An alternative place will be identified that meets their needs	Kathy Roberts	August 2021, subject to cabinet decision

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Race				
Sex (gender)	<p>17 respondents stated they are concerned that the proposed closure will impact the number of single sex secondary school places in Croydon. A key part of the council's duty is to secure diversity of education offer to increase opportunities for parental choice when planning the provision of school places in the borough. However, it is important to note that there has been a declining roll at the school which has contributed to a significant financial deficit.</p> <p>Although the council recognises that the proposed closure will result in a reduction in both Catholic and single sex secondary school places in Croydon, due to the falling roll at Virgo Fidelis Convent Senior School, it is felt that the proposed closure will not have a negative impact on equality and diversity for protected groups.</p>	<p>19 respondents expressed concern surrounding the loss of Catholic secondary school places in Croydon. The council is required to consider the effect the proposed closure will have on the balance of denominational provision in the area and will continue to work closely with the Diocese regarding Catholic secondary schools within the borough.</p>		<p>August 2021, subject to cabinet decision</p>
Gender reassignment				
Sexual orientation				

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Age	The closure may affect siblings of pupils attending Virgo if they intended to attend the same school.	School Admissions would ensure that appropriate provisions are in place for any displaced pupils. They would ensure that parental preference and family circumstances such as siblings are considered when offering school places to minimise the impact on families where possible.	Niora Amani Melanie Arscott	
Religion or belief	<p>A decrease in the number of faith school provision for families seeking such places.</p> <p>Pupils may have to travel further to school and attend a non-faith school. However pupils of secondary school age tend to travel further to school.</p>	<p>School Admissions would ensure that appropriate provisions are in place for any displaced pupils. They would ensure that parental preference and family circumstances such as siblings are considered when offering school places to minimise the impact on families where possible.</p> <p>19 respondents expressed concern surrounding the loss of Catholic secondary school places in Croydon. The council is required to consider the effect the proposed closure will have on the balance of denominational provision in the area and will continue to work closely with the Diocese regarding Catholic secondary schools within the borough.</p>	Niora Amani Melanie Arscott	
Pregnancy or maternity				
Marriage/civil partnership				

Equality Analysis

6. Decision on the proposed change

Based on the information outlined in this Equality Analysis enter X in column 3 (Conclusion) alongside the relevant statement to show your conclusion.		
Decision	Definition	Conclusion - Mark 'X' below
No major change	Our analysis demonstrates that the policy is robust. The evidence shows no potential for discrimination and we have taken all opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations, subject to continuing monitoring and review. If you reach this conclusion, state your reasons and briefly outline the evidence used to support your decision. Equality and diversity monitoring done during consultation. Statutory framework supports the allocation of school places	X
Adjust the proposed change	We will take steps to lessen the impact of the proposed change should it adversely impact the Council's ability to meet any of the Public Sector Duties set out under section 4 above, remove barriers or better promote equality. We are going to take action to ensure these opportunities are realised. If you reach this conclusion, you must outline the actions you will take in Action Plan in section 5 of the Equality Analysis form	
Continue the proposed change	We will adopt or continue with the change, despite potential for adverse impact or opportunities to lessen the impact of discrimination, harassment or victimisation and better advance equality and foster good relations between groups through the change. However, we are not planning to implement them as we are satisfied that our project will not lead to unlawful discrimination and there are justifiable reasons to continue as planned. If you reach this conclusion, you should clearly set out the justifications for doing this and it must be in line with the duty to have due regard and how you reached this decision.	

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Stop or amend the proposed change	Our change would have adverse effects on one or more protected groups that are not justified and cannot be mitigated. Our proposed change must be stopped or amended.	
Will this decision be considered at a scheduled meeting? e.g. Contracts and Commissioning Board (CCB) / Cabinet	Meeting title: Cabinet Date: 18 January 2021	

7. Sign-Off

Officers that must approve this decision		
Equalities Lead	Name: Yvonne Okiyo	
	Position: Equalities Manager	05.01.2021
Director	Name: Shelley Davies Date: 07.01.21 Position: Interim Director of Education	