

Wollaton catchment review – consultation report and analysis

The Council ran a preliminary consultation on two proposals to realign the catchment areas of Fernwood and Middleton Primary Schools, to be implemented for the 2021/22 academic year. **The consultation was open for four weeks from 1 July to 28 July 2019.**

Prior to this, a review of the school catchment areas was last undertaken in the Wollaton school place planning area in 2011/12. Since then, both Fernwood and Middleton primary schools have been expanded to increase their capacity by an extra 210 places at each school (Middleton expansion to be completed by September 2019). Due to demographic changes, housing developments and increased inward migration, the Council has invested in more school places to ensure sufficient capacity in the area and for the communities the schools serve. The next phase and the aim of these proposals is to re-balance the size of the catchment areas with their new school sizes, to provide rational distribution of places and to maximise the number of pupils accessing a place at their catchment school, ideally close to their home and community. Each school has its own existing designated catchment area, which are shown on **Map 1: Fernwood and Middleton existing catchments.**

The catchment area of a school is significant in supporting the assessment and determination when allocating school places. Children who reside within the catchment area of a designated school currently receive priority for school places in the event that the preferred school is oversubscribed. Therefore, catchment areas play a key part in ensuring adequate provision of school places within a designated area. Whilst parents are not obliged to apply for their children to attend their designated catchment school, having catchment areas is useful as a guide for parents to understand which school generally serves their immediate community.

Proposal 1

Extend the catchment area of Middleton Primary, to include the proposed new housing development expected to be built on Woodyard Lane (approx. 110 dwellings). This area is currently located in the catchment of Fernwood Primary. The proposal relocates it to the adjacent Middleton catchment. As this is a site currently planned for development, there are no existing residents affected by the change. **Map 2: Woodyard Lane to Middleton.**

Proposal 2

Alter the catchment areas slightly, to transfer the area of Tom Blower Close from the Fernwood catchment to the adjacent Middleton catchment. Tom Blower Close was originally moved into Fernwood's catchment back in 2012, as some pupils living here were not securing a place at their catchment school, as there was insufficient capacity at Middleton Primary at that time. This realignment was always subject to review depending on demographic changes and future school expansion plans in Wollaton. **Map 3: Tom Blower Close to Middleton.**

Map 4: shows the new catchment areas if both proposals 1 and 2 were implemented, moving Woodyard Lane and Tom Blower Close to Middleton.

Rationale and recommendation to implement both Proposals 1 and 2

The rationale for Proposal 1 is to ensure provision for future pupils residing in the proposed new 110 dwelling development on Woodyard Lane and to maximise the likelihood of these pupils securing a place at their catchment school.

Analysis of admissions data, births data, catchment loyalty, migration since births and pupil yield from new housing developments, evidences that that there is projected sufficient capacity to accommodate a

larger Middleton catchment area, without displacing pupils already in catchment. Middleton's newly expanded capacity for 630 pupils, has projected capacity to accommodate both proposals.

Some further growth is already expected in Fernwood Primary's catchment population, as the new 'Martin's Reach' housing development will remain located in Fernwood's catchment. This development, with building well underway, will be approximately 100 new family-sized houses and is similar in size to the second large housing development proposed at Woodyard Lane. Realigning the catchments to relocate the Woodyard Lane development to the Middleton Primary catchment, will provide a more rational distribution of capacity.

Of the 17 people who responded to the consultation, 35% selected that they agree with Proposal 1 (to varying degrees). However, this is inconsistent with the number of comments expressing support for Proposal 1, which is 47% (8 people). Fewer than half of respondents disagree with Proposal 1 (8 out of 17 respondents / 47%).

Tom Blower Close was originally moved into the Fernwood Primary catchment back in 2012 as some pupils living here were not securing a place at their catchment school, which was then Middleton, as there was insufficient capacity at that time. This was always subject to review depending on demographic changes and future school expansion plans in Wollaton. Now the context has changed and Middleton has increased capacity by 50%, the size of the catchment areas need to be balanced with their new school sizes.

Proportionally and for the size of the catchment population, there is greater capacity at the newly expanded Middleton Primary to accommodate a growth in numbers. Therefore, realigning the catchments to relocate Tom Blower Close to the Middleton Primary catchment, will provide a more rational distribution of places to meet need.

This move would provide a more logical catchment boundary, particularly if the new Woodyard Lane development is moving into Middleton's catchment (see maps 2 and 3). Woodyard Lane residents will need to travel past Tom Blower Close to travel to Middleton Primary. Tom Blower Close is also significantly closer in walking distance to Middleton Primary, as detailed in the information below.

The most common query raised during the consultation process, was in relation to siblings of existing pupils of Fernwood Primary who live on Tom Blower Close. This was explained in the proposal information and further clarity was sought by some respondents. School places are allocated according to strict criteria which place a high criterion on pupils living in the catchment area with a sibling already attending the school. If a decision is made to implement Proposal 2 to change the catchment area of Tom Blower Close, any younger siblings of Fernwood Primary pupils, who are on roll at July 2021 (in Years Reception up to Year 5), who will still be on roll in the academic year that the sibling is applying for, will have priority over 'non catchment siblings and will effectively be considered as 'catchment siblings' for the purpose of first admission. This protected priority would not apply for subsequent siblings. Therefore, it would apply for up to a maximum of 6 years up to 2026/27 academic year of admission.

There are currently 23 pupils living on Tom Blower Close, within 13 households, 20 of whom currently attend Fernwood Primary.

Of the 17 people who responded to the consultation, 53% (9 people) agree with Proposal 2 (to varying degrees). 35% (6 people) disagree and 12% (2 people) neither agree nor disagree.

No objections to either proposal has been received from any local schools. The Head Teacher and governors of Fernwood, Middleton and Southwold Primary schools are supportive of the proposals

Consultation response and analysis

All stakeholders were contacted and invited to respond to the consultation: parents and carers of both Fernwood and Middleton primary schools, staff, governors, residents of Tom Blower Close, local primary schools in the surrounding area, The Fernwood (secondary) School and Nottinghamshire County Council as the neighbouring local authority. The consultation was published on the City Council's website, which encouraged consultees to complete the consultation questionnaire, advising that responses will be considered carefully when the Council considers whether the proposals should be taken forward to implementation. The consultation was also published in SCENE, the newsletter for Nottingham City schools.

Two opportunities were provided for all interested parties to attend a drop-in information session, to ask questions, make comments and share views on the options put forward. These two separate consultation sessions were held at the Kingswood Methodist Church and Community Centre, Lambourne Drive, on 8th and 15th July 2019. A total of 5 people attended and the theme of their questions and views are captured in the analysis below.

There were 17 respondents who completed the online consultation questionnaire, the breakdown and analysis for which is shown below. Respondents were also encouraged to provide any comments in relation to the proposals. These are summarised into themes.

Proposal 1: to extend the catchment area of Middleton Primary, to include the proposed new housing development expected to be built on Woodyard Lane:

- 6 people / 35% agree
However, this is inconsistent with analysis of the comments (shown below), where 8 people / 47% have expressed support for Proposal 1
- 8 people / 47% disagree
- 3 people / 18% neither agree nor disagree

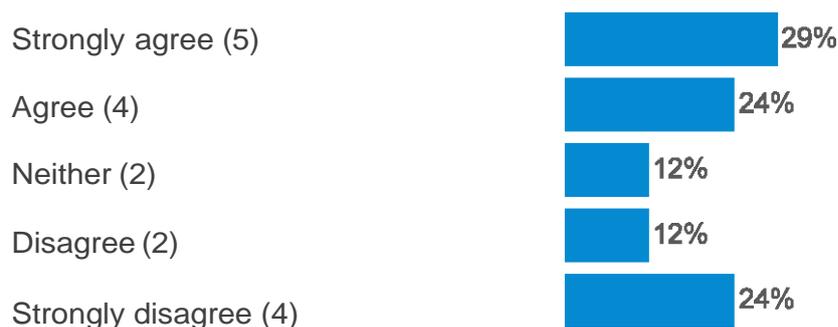
Proposal 2: to transfer the area of Tom Blower Close from the Fernwood catchment to the adjacent Middleton catchment:

- 9 people / 53% agree
- 6 people / 35% disagree
- 2 people / 12% neither agree nor disagree

How strongly do you agree or disagree with proposal 1?



How strongly do you agree or disagree with proposal 2?



11 respondents included comments in their responses. The following is a summary of the comments, grouped into general themes. The figure in brackets relates to the number of respondents who raised the particular issue. A response to each theme of concern is provided under each point:

1	Agree with proposal 1 – supportive of proposal 1 (8)
2	Agree with both proposals – understand the rationale and broadly supportive of both proposals (4)
3	Sibling admissions criteria protection for existing pupils – some raising the question as to how future siblings will still be identified as being in catchment if the proposals goes ahead and what process will be put in place by the Council Admissions service to identify those siblings potentially affected (5)
	<p>Response to queries / concerns</p> <p>School places are allocated according to strict criteria, which place a high criterion on pupils living in the catchment area with a sibling already attending the school. If, following consultation, a decision is made to implement Proposal 2 to change the catchment area of Tom Blower Close, any younger siblings of Fernwood Primary pupils, who are on roll at July 2021 (in Years Reception up to Year 5), who will still be on roll in the academic year that the sibling is applying for, will have priority over 'non catchment siblings and will effectively be considered as 'catchment siblings' for the purpose of first admission. This protected priority would not apply for subsequent siblings. Therefore, it would apply for up to a maximum of 6 years up to 2026/27 academic year of admission.</p> <p>The Admissions service will ensure that there is a robust process in place for the application process when identifying siblings who will be affected. A number of options are being explored, and we will ensure this is implemented in good time.</p>
4	Identify with existing Fernwood catchment community - concern that the proposed move of Tom Blower Close from Fernwood to Middleton catchment will disrupt the existing Fernwood School community among Tom Blower residents (2)
	<p>Response to queries / concerns</p> <p>As detailed above, siblings of existing Fernwood Primary pupils would still be considered as 'in catchment siblings' on admission, and therefore continuing the relationship with the Fernwood community for those families and siblings of existing pupils.</p>

	If proposal 2 is implemented, all other pupils residing on Tom Blower Close who start school from September 2021, will belong to the Middleton catchment community.												
5	Concern with Charlbury road split - one concern over the split of Charlbury Road between Middleton and Southwold Primary schools (1)												
	<p>Response to query / concern</p> <p>The option to move the whole of Charlbury Road into either Middleton's or Southwold's catchment area was indeed considered when exploring proposals to take forward for consultation. However, there is no clear rationale to change this.</p> <p>Southwold Primary's existing catchment area is fairly small and therefore to reduce it would not provide a rational balance with the capacity of the school.</p>												
6	School preference Fernwood over Middleton – one opinion expressed that Fernwood is a better school and that people are specifically moving into Tom Blower close as it is in the Fernwood catchment and that is where they wish their children to be educated (1)												
	<p>Response to query / concerns</p> <p>Both Fernwood and Middleton primaries are Ofsted rated 'good' schools. Both continue to be very popular and over-subscribed. It is down to varying parental preference, amongst other considerations, as to which school is favoured.</p>												
7	Traffic impact of expanding Middleton's catchment - one concern that either or both proposals would increase the number of pupils travelling from a further distance and parents will be more likely to drive to school thus increasing the traffic congestion (1)												
	<p>Response to query / concern</p> <p>If the proposals to rebalance the size of the catchment areas with their new schools capacities are not implemented, there is a greater chance of Middleton Primary admitting more pupils from outside the catchment area and therefore from further afield. This is more likely to increase the numbers travelling by car. Tom Blower Close and Woodyard Lane are closer to Middleton Primary than they are to Fernwood Primary and therefore the catchment change is more likely to result in those pupils walking to school.</p> <p>The walking distances are as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="312 1532 874 1740"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3">Tom Blower Close distance to:</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>Walk</th> <th>Straight line distance</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Middleton</td> <td>0.93 miles</td> <td>0.60 miles</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fernwood</td> <td>1.37 miles</td> <td>1.05 miles</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Measures are already being put in place to alleviate traffic congestion on Harrow Road to support the expansion of Middleton Primary. The Council are investing funds to widen the access of the community centre carpark to provide additional off-road parking at school drop off and pick up times. Middleton Primary school continues to work in collaboration with the Council to challenge inconsiderate or illegal parking outside the school during these peak times. Additionally, the School Travel Plan,</p>	Tom Blower Close distance to:				Walk	Straight line distance	Middleton	0.93 miles	0.60 miles	Fernwood	1.37 miles	1.05 miles
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	Walk	Straight line distance											
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which helps to inform measures to encourage alternative modes of sustainable travel, is regularly reviewed and updated.

The tables below show the breakdown of responses by the category selected. Some of the respondents selected more than one category, e.g. parent and community member, which explains why there is a discrepancy between 17 respondents in total and the categories selected (22):

How strongly do you agree or disagree with proposal 1?	Parent / Carer Fernwood	Parent / Carer Middleton	Future child Fernwood	Future child Middleton	Member of the community
Strongly agree	3		1		1
Agree	2		1		
Neither Agree nor disagree	2	1	1		2
Disagree	1	1			
Strongly Disagree		1	1	2	2
Total	8	3	4	2	5

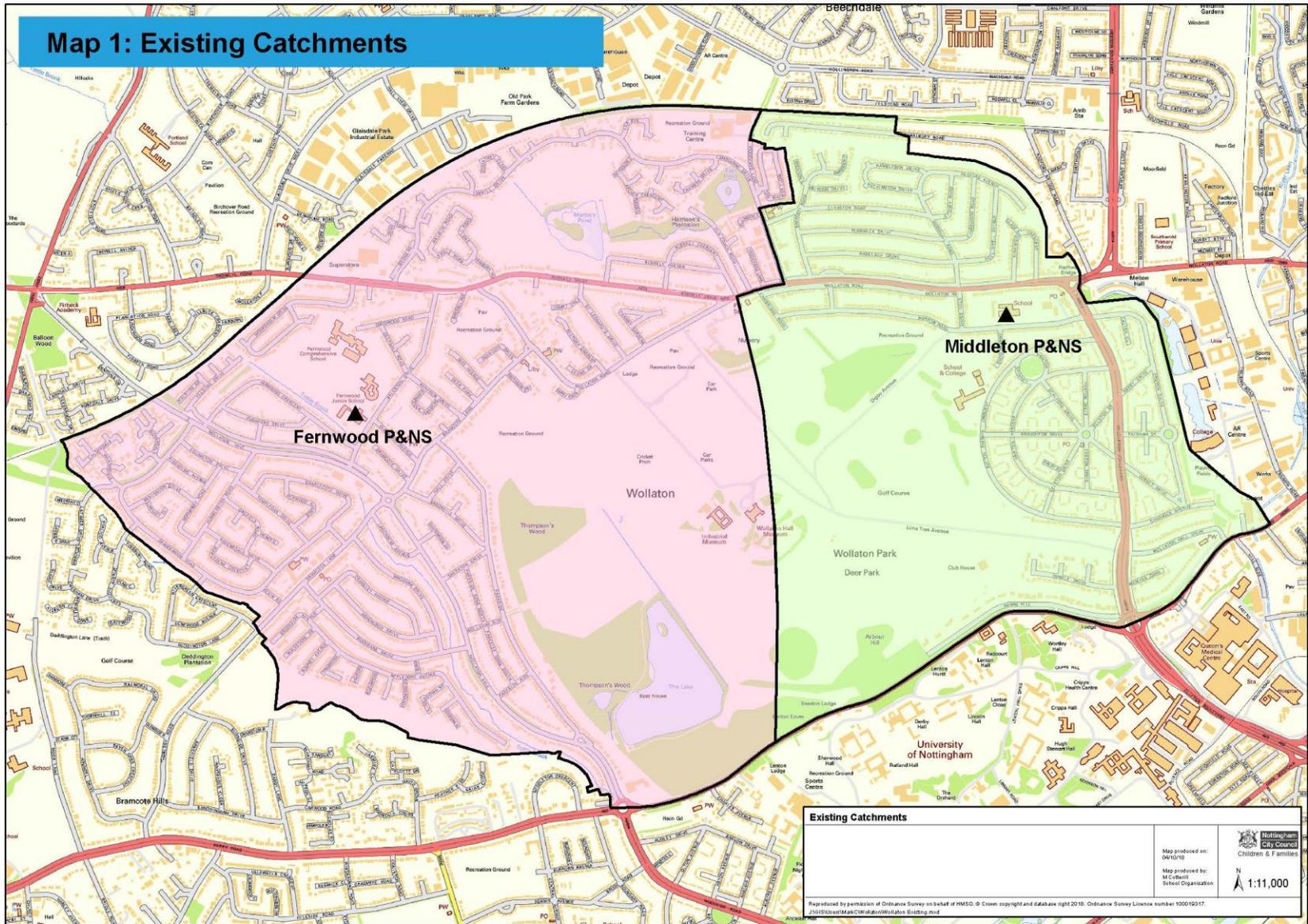
How strongly do you agree or disagree with proposal 2?	Parent / Carer Fernwood	Parent/ carer Middleton	Future child Fernwood	Future child Middleton	Member of community
Strongly Agree	1	1		2	1
Agree	3	1			
Neither Agree nor disagree	2		2		2
Disagree		1	1		1
Strongly Disagree	2		1		1
Total	8	3	4	2	5

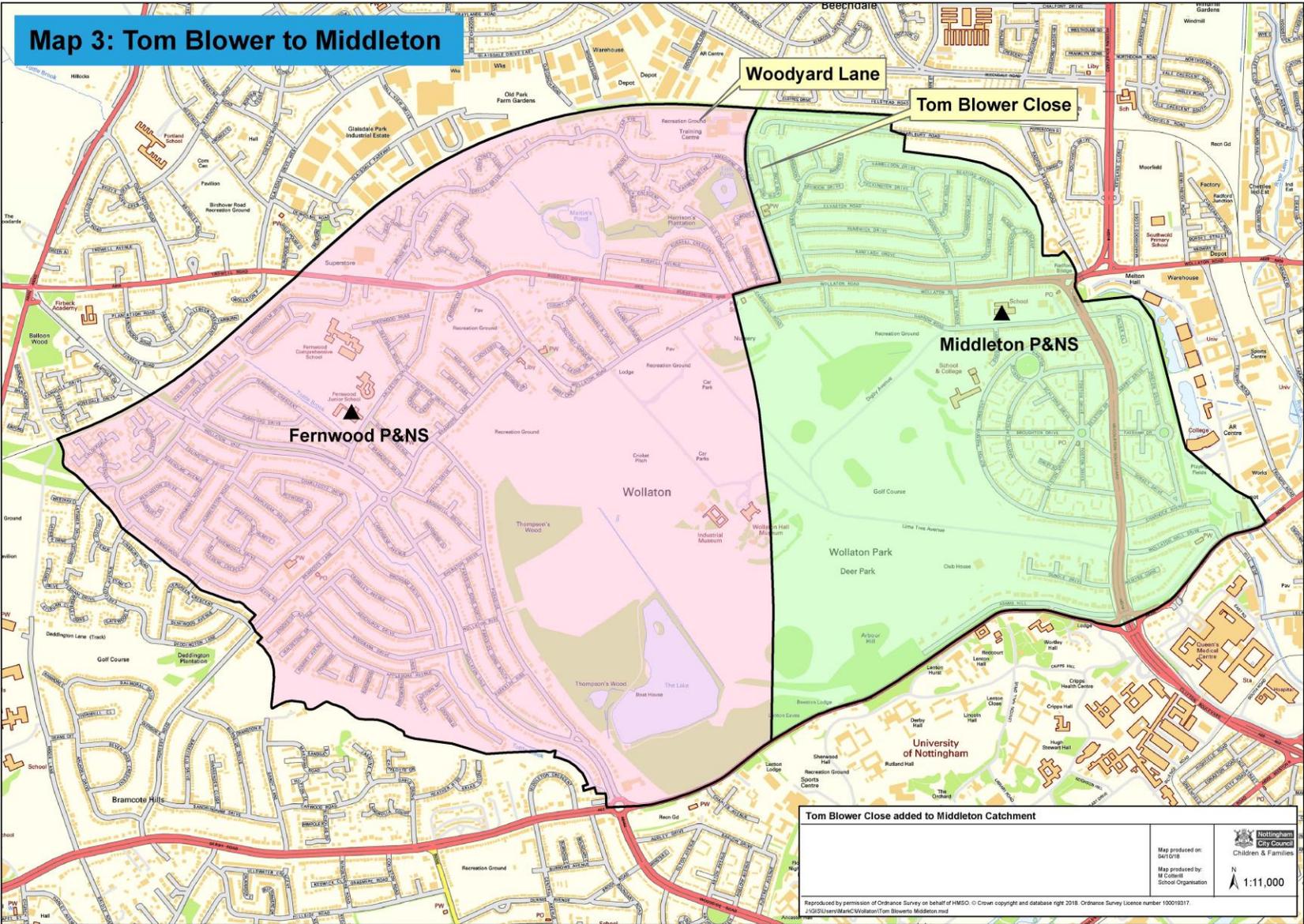
What happens next?

Additional statutory consultation requirements

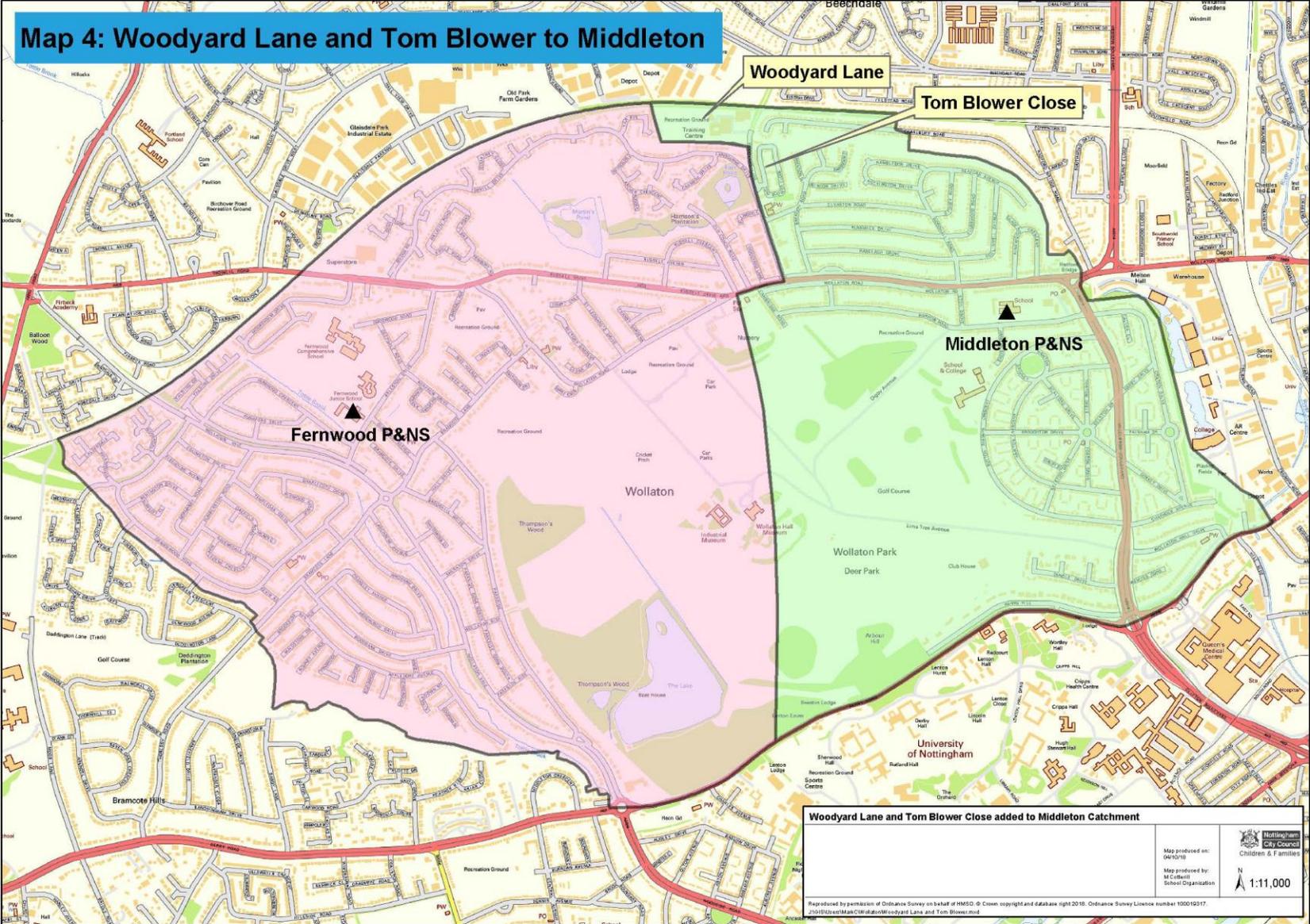
The School Admissions Code requires Local Authorities to consult on the admissions arrangements for those schools for which it is the admissions authority. Where changes to existing arrangements are proposed, including school catchments areas, consultation must be undertaken with those likely to be affected by the proposals. Therefore, any proposed catchment changes will also form part of a consultation on the Nottingham City School Admission Arrangements that are proposed to be implemented for the 2021/22 academic year. This will take place for a 6 week period between October and December 2019. The final determination of Admission Arrangements will then be approved by the Council's Executive Board by 28th February 2020.

Map 1: Existing Catchments





Map 4: Woodyard Lane and Tom Blower Close to Middleton



Woodyard Lane and Tom Blower Close added to Middleton Catchment

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