



Delegated decision report

DECISION UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

DECISION CANNOT BE TAKEN BEFORE 14 MAY 2019

Title **WEST WIGHT SCHOOL PLACES PLANNING (CONSULTATION OUTCOMES)**

Report to **CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. On the 1 March 2019 the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills approved the commencement of an initial six-week public consultation period on the removal of surplus primary school places within the West Wight school place planning area (<https://www.iow.gov.uk/Council/how-it-works/Delegated-Decisions/Decisions-Taken>). The planning area is made up of; All Saints' CE Primary, Brighstone CE Primary, Shalfleet CE Primary, St Saviour's Catholic Primary and Yarmouth CE Primary.
2. As part of the consultation the council set out its preferred option 'The closure of All Saints' CE Primary School and expansion of St Saviour's Catholic Primary School to one form of entry (FE). Four alternate options considered by the council were also set-out in the report and the council invited other options to be put forward. This report summarises the responses received during the consultation and the steps that will now be taken by the council to progress the removal of surplus school places within the West Wight school place planning area (SPPA).
3. The recommendation set-out in paragraph 62 below provides a further opportunity for public consultation. This new option clearly demonstrates that the council has listened to and fully considered the feedback it has received during the initial consultation phase, is fully committed to achieving an outcome that ensures the best possible local educational opportunities for all children and removes a meaningful proportion of the identified surplus capacity in the area.

BACKGROUND

4. This report provides a summary of the outcomes of the public consultation on West Wight School Place Planning. The consultation commenced on the 4 March 2019 and closed on the 15 April 2019. The consultation included two public meetings, a closed meeting with the staff of All Saints' CE Primary School and an opportunity for all stakeholders to respond to the consultation either via the dedicated website or, directly in writing to the council.
5. Available data clearly shows a significant fall in the number of children forecast to be seeking a place at Reception Year (Yr R) on the Island, and in particular the West Wight area. The number of children joining mainstream schools at Yr R has been stable for the last five years, 2014 to 2018, and a similar demand is forecast for 2019. However, in 2020 it is expected that numbers across the Island will reduce by approximately 200 children due to a known decrease in births.
6. As required by the Department of Education, the council uses School Place Planning Areas (SPPA) that break-up the Island in to smaller education areas. This ensures that when planning supply and demand of school places it can be done at a local level. The West Wight SPPA is made up of All Saints' CE Primary, Brightstone CE Primary, Shalfleet CE Primary, St Saviour's Catholic Primary and Yarmouth CE Primary.
7. Of the five schools in the West Wight SPPA All Saints' CE Primary is not a school of choice for local families. The school has a capacity of 210 pupils but currently only has 81 children on roll meaning it has a surplus capacity of 62% which is significantly in excess of the 5% generally considered acceptable in school organisation terms. The school has been rated as Requires Improvement (RI) at its last three Ofsted inspections. It is also noted that Brightstone CE Primary has been RI at its last two Ofsted inspections and has surplus capacity of 47%.
8. Current pupil numbers show that only three of the four available forms of entry across West Wight are being taken up at Year R. The forecast drop in pupil numbers means a position will soon be reached where only two of the four available forms of entry will be needed.
9. Statutory Guidance on 'Opening and closing maintained schools' https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/756328/Opening_and_Closing_maintained_schools_Guidance.pdf and 'making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools' https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/756572/Maintained_schools_prescribed_alterations_guidance.pdf is provided by the Department for Education. These include particular reference to 'Rural schools and presumption against closure'. The council has and will continue to ensure that all consultations undertaken and decisions made follow these guidelines. All five schools in this SPPA are on the 2018 list of designated rural primary schools.

The Consultation

10. On the 1 March 2019 the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills approved the commencement of an initial six-week public consultation period on the removal of surplus primary school places within the West Wight SPPA.
11. During the consultation council officers met with the staff of All Saints' CE Primary School and held two public meetings. The first public meeting at All Saints' was attended by approximately 150 people, groups represented included school staff and governors, parents, local residents, local business, local councillors and unions. The second meeting held at St Saviour's was attended by around 90 people with the audience made up of similar groups to that of the first meeting. A summary of both meetings has been made available on the consultation website and are attached at appendix 1.
12. Below is a summary of some of the key questions and issues raised and discussed at both public meetings, further detail on these points can be found at appendix 1;
 - Freshwater is the largest village on the island and therefore a primary school should be maintained on the All Saints' site.
 - The council's consultation report unfairly portrayed All Saints' as a failing school and there are areas of improvement in the school's performance that should be recognised.
 - Other schools are not being considered for closure, why is the focus on All Saints'?
 - The All Saints' site is the best in West Wight, why not move another school on to it?
 - The school has been part of the Freshwater landscape for over 150 years, to lose it would have a significant impact on the whole community.
 - Why does the council not remove the current leadership at All Saints' if it is continuing not to perform and make the progress it needs to
 - There is capital funding available for the All Saints' this will be lost if the school is closed.
 - Has sufficient support from the local authority gone in to turning All Saints' performance around?
 - It is not acceptable to ask families from Freshwater to travel to Totland or further afield to access primary education.
 - If required would Home to School Transport be provided?
 - There are no safe walking routes to St Saviour's therefore, family's safety would be put at risk.
 - The St Savours site is not sufficiently large to expand to one form of entry and does not have the required accommodation.

- Any expansion of St Saviour's should be in permanent accommodation not temporary.
 - Future significant new housing and commercial development is planned in the wider Freshwater area so, primary school places will be required in the future.
 - The forecast data that was used to show the decline in pupil numbers across West Wight was not accurate and was therefore misleading.
13. A total of 386 responses were received to the online survey, a further 88 written responses were also received, these are summarised at appendix 2. The following key conclusions can be drawn from them;
- A majority of respondents felt that a primary school should be maintained in Freshwater on the All Saints' site.
 - No school on the All Saints' site would bring local travel issues as more children would need transport to get to a school.
 - The leadership at All Saints' should be changed or, more should be done to deal with it.
 - The facilities on the All Saints' site are a community asset and should not be lost.
 - Proposed housing developments could lead to increased pupil numbers in the future, therefore requiring additional school places to be available.
 - The expansion of St Saviour's is not the best solution for those children displaced if All Saints' is closed.
14. The Council also received a written petition containing 987 signatures and is aware of an online petition through change.org containing 775 signatures.
15. As part of the consultation the council invited alternative options to be submitted. Those received have been considered, collated and are summarised below.
- a. Close / federate All Saints' with Yarmouth / Shalfleet CE Primary federation, increase the size of Yarmouth to one form entry and relocate it to the All Saints' site.
 - b. Federate All Saints' with Brighstone CE Primary retaining a smaller school on the All Saints' site. Re-purpose parts of the All Saints' site not required.
 - c. Federate All Saints' with St Saviour's to provide a new multi-faith one form entry school on the All Saints' site.
 - d. Change the leadership at All Saints', reduce its size and re-purpose those parts of the school not required.
 - e. Close Brighstone Primary and move the students to All Saints' creating a one form entry school. Find alternate uses for the Brighstone site.
 - f. Close Yarmouth Primary School and move the pupils to All Saints' creating a one form entry school. Find alternate uses for the Yarmouth site.
 - g. Federate all the CE schools in West Wight and keep All Saints' open.

- h. Close St Saviour's and All Saints' and build a new one form entry school elsewhere in Freshwater. It could be a multi-faith, CE, Catholic or non-faith school.
 - i. Close St Saviour's, All Saints' and Yarmouth and build a new two form entry school on the All Saints' site. It could be a multi-faith, CE, Catholic or non-faith school.
 - j. Close All Saints' CE Primary and re-open Totland Primary.
 - k. Defer the closure of All Saints' until September 2020 to see if it can sufficiently improve.
16. Appendix 3 sets out the pros and cons of each option. Option (a) above is considered to be the most viable alternative to the initial proposal.

NEXT STEPS

17. As a result of the public consultation council officers have approached the Yarmouth and Shalfleet CE Primary Federation Headteacher and Governor representatives to discuss a potential alternative proposal.
18. As a result of these discussions it is being recommended that a further period of consultation should be undertaken on an option to close All Saints' CE Primary School and expand and relocate Yarmouth CE Primary School on to the All Saints' site. This option would:
- retain primary provision within Freshwater,
 - acknowledge that 69 out of the 91 children currently attending Yarmouth CE Primary live in Freshwater and Totland,
 - retain a school rated 'good' by Ofsted with strong leadership and governance,
 - reduce the overall number of school places in West Wight
 - allow for future growth if required,
 - retain government funding for redevelopment / new build of the school buildings on the All Saints' site,
 - make the Yarmouth site available for alternate use.
19. In addition to the option described above, the Council would still welcome further feedback on the initial options set out in the March report and indeed any of the other options submitted through the initial consultation period.

PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

20. Staffing implications will be considered subject to the outcome of this consultation. This will be done in accordance with the Council's Restructuring, Redundancy and Redeployment Policy, including a duty to consult with those staff potentially affected by any proposed closure. Details of staff consultations will be set out, including the timetable for formal consultation with staff unions. TUPE implications will also be considered at this point.

PERFORMANCE

21. Ofsted inspections are a key way in which the quality of provision and performance in schools is judged. Ofsted uses four grades to judge schools by when it carries out full Ofsted inspections:

Outstanding
Good
Requires Improvement
Inadequate

22. If schools are judged by Ofsted to be good, when it is time for them to receive their next Ofsted Inspection, they are subject to a short or full inspection, and the published results of these are one of the four grades described above.
23. If schools are judged by Ofsted to require improvement, they may be subject to monitoring inspections, and the published results of these are that senior leaders and governors:
- **are not** taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order for the school to become good.
 - **are** taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order for the school to become good.
24. Currently three of the five West Wight schools are judged by Ofsted to be good: Shalfleet, St Saviour's and Yarmouth. Of the two that are not, Brighstone has had two Requires Improvement (RI) judgements since 2012, when it was last judged to be good. The most recent of these was in April 2018. All Saints has had three RI judgements since 2013. Most recently, in July 2018, the school was subject to a monitoring visit in which the school was judged not to be taking effective action.
25. At the end of Key Stage 2, children in primary schools are assessed as to whether they have reached either the expected standard known as Age Related Expectations (ARE), or the higher standard (H), in reading and writing and maths combined. The achievement of ARE signifies that pupils are academically 'secondary ready'.
26. The results of these assessments are tabled below for schools in the West Wight.
27. Also included in the table are three-year averages for both measures, as with small cohorts, it can be hard to make judgements about performance on the basis of one year, for instance where small numbers of children with very low data significantly lower cohort averages.

School	2018 % children achieving ARE + combined	2018 % children achieving H combined	3 year average % children achieving ARE + combined	3 year average % children achieving H combined
<i>National average</i>	64	10	60	8
All Saints	50	0	42	0
Brighstone	40	0	45	3
Shalfleet	58	13	66	8
St Saviours	75	25	68	13
Yarmouth	71	29	48	9

28. Both St Saviour's and Yarmouth have achieved significantly above national averages for the percent of their pupils achieving ARE in 2018, an indicator of strong academic performance.
29. Both All Saints' and Brighstone have achieved results that are well below national averages for the percent of their pupils achieving ARE in 2018.
30. In terms of both academic performance and Ofsted judgements, Yarmouth is a strong, well-performing school, as part of the successful Federation with Shalfleet C.E. Primary school, which indicates that it is well-placed to continue providing a good quality of education for the children of West Wight.

ADMISSIONS

31. The local authority has, as required by its published admission arrangements for September 2019, made thirteen offers for children to start in Reception at All Saints' CE Primary School. Admission arrangements for 2020 have also been determined as required by statutory timescales. The published admission number for All Saints' CE Primary School was reduced in that process to 15, over the course of seven years this could restrict the school to 105 pupils. This would reduce the SPPA to 3.5 forms of entry, still a significant surplus when the total demand is forecast to reduce to only 2FE.
32. There are currently 81 children on the roll of All Saints' CE Primary School. Although the consultation process being followed, and the proposed further period of consultation, can create some uncertainty for parents, families have not made applications for their children to attend a school other than All Saints' CE Primary School. In line with statutory guidance any parent must be allowed to apply for a school place at any time. Any applications received will be processed alongside other 'in-year' applications.
33. In the event that All Saints' CE Primary School is closed on the 31 December 2019 and Yarmouth CE Primary School is expanded to a pan of 30 from the 1 January 2020, the authority will work with families and provide advice on how to make an application for an alternative school place. The expansion of Yarmouth would provide additional capacity for pupils displaced from All Saints' should parents wish to choose this option. The advice will include spaces that are available in the area, although parents are not restricted to applying only to schools with places.

TRANSPORT

34. The council has a statutory duty to provide transport when the nearest suitable school for a compulsory school age child is more than two miles away, for children aged up to seven, and 3 miles away for children aged 8 and over. Also, when there is no safe route of less than 2 miles between home and the nearest suitable school there is a duty to provide local authority funded transport.
35. The council will assess the transport implications, including safe routes to school, within any options that are progressed. Temporary/transitional or permanent transport arrangements may be required. In the case that the recommendation in this report is implemented, the council will, if required, provide free transport for those displaced pupils between All Saints' and Yarmouth until the relocation of Yarmouth to the All Saints' site takes place.

GOVERNANCE

36. The alternative option being considered will not alter the current governing board arrangements at the federation of Shalfleet and Yarmouth CE Primary Schools. Recent Ofsted reports show that 'governors for the Shalfleet/Yarmouth Federation have worked to promote the visions and values and to create a culture of high ambition for pupils and staff' at Yarmouth CE Primary School. They have a good knowledge of the school and are able to hold leaders to account.' At Shalfleet 'Leaders and governors have high expectations for all pupils to achieve as well as they can.'

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

37. The proposal set out in section 3 above promotes the raising of educational achievement which is a priority of the council as set out in the council's Corporate Plan and Education Strategy Document "Delivering Educational Excellence".

FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

38. Schools nationally and locally continue to struggle with managing limited resources and increasing numbers of schools have moved into a cumulative deficit position. Of the 42 maintained Isle of Wight schools one third (14) are in a deficit position as at March 2019, increasing by two on the previous year. Schools continue to be innovative in terms of merging year groups, sharing support functions and managing contract costs but around 80% of expenditure directly relates to staffing. Regular restructuring is taking place in many schools however; it is becoming more difficult to achieve long term financial stability where local declines in pupil numbers are predicted.
39. The financial position of All Saints' CE Primary school has worsened since 2016/17 when it previously had a significant surplus of funding of £75,947. This has subsequently been utilised to cover a 2017/18 deficit of £72,025 and again the draft 2018/19 outturn is likely to be a further significant in-year deficit. Updated three year budget plans are required from all schools by the end of May 2019 but this level of deficit is unlikely to be recovered in the short term.

40. Under the Isle of Wight Scheme for Financing Schools the final balance of any closing schools reverts to the Council and therefore this financial risk to the local authority needs to be closely monitored to minimise any deficit should the consultation confirm the closure of All Saints’.
41. Revenue funding for maintained schools passes through the local authority and is strictly controlled by operational guidance supplied by the DfE. Changes in schools generally have a per pupil impact on the overall funding allocation. When the overall pupil numbers in an area reduce the local allocation is reduced on a per pupil basis.

CARBON EMISSIONS

42. The recommendations set out in this report support the Council’s Carbon Management Plan. The total number of primary schools in the West Wight area would be reduced from five to four and, the existing All Saints’ building would be replaced in whole or part by a new energy efficient school building funded through the Department for Education Priority School Building Programme 2. It is also expected that there would be reduction in the number of school car journeys made if local school provision is maintained.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

43. The Council has the power to make a proposal to close a maintained school under the Education and Improvement Act 2006. When formulating a closure proposal in relation to a rural primary school the council must have regard to
 - (a) the likely effect of the discontinuance of the school on the local community,
 - (b) the availability, and likely cost to the local authority, of transport to other schools,
 - (c) any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the discontinuance of the school, and the likely effects of any such increase, and
 - (d) any alternatives to the discontinuance of the school.
44. In addition, the council is also required to have regard to statutory guidance issued by the DfE when deciding whether a maintained school should close. The relevant statutory guidance is the “Opening and Closing of Maintained Schools” dated November 2018 and “The making significant changes (prescribed alterations) to maintained schools” dated October 2018.
45. The council should be satisfied that there are sufficient surplus places elsewhere in the local area to accommodate displaced pupils, and the likely supply and future demand for places in the medium and long-term. The council should take in to account the overall quality of alternative places in the local area and the popularity of other local schools.
46. The guidance states that the council should adopt a presumption against the closure of rural schools. However, this does not mean that a rural school will never close, but the case for closure should be strong and a proposal must be clearly in the best interests of educational provision in the area. When

producing a proposal to close a rural primary school, the proposer must consider:

- the likely effect of the closure of the school on the local community;
 - the proportions of pupils attending the school from within the local community i.e, is the school being used by the local community;
 - education standards at the school and the likely effect on standards at neighbouring schools;
 - the availability, and likely cost to the LA, of transport to other schools;
 - Whether the school is now surplus to requirements (e.g. because there are surplus places elsewhere in the local area which can accommodate displaced pupils, and there is no predicted demand for the school in the medium to long term);
 - any increase in the use of the motor vehicle which is likely to result from the closure of the school, and the likely effects of any such increase; and
 - any alternative to the closure of the school.
47. In deciding a proposal to close a school that has been designated with a religious character, the council needs to consider the effect that this will have on the balance of denominational provision in the area, as well as the number of pupils currently on the roll, the medium and long term need for places in the area, and whether standards at the school have been persistently low.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

48. Consideration must be given as to whether there are any sex, race or disability discrimination issues that arise from the changes being proposed. The proposal being put forward by the council in this report; the closure of All Saints' CE Primary School and enlargement and relocation of Yarmouth CE Primary School will have no negative impact on equality and diversity.
49. The policies of the council and Yarmouth CE Primary School in relation to equal opportunities and eliminating discrimination will continue to apply should the proposed changes be approved.
50. Council officers will work closely with the headteacher and governing body to assess and support students and their families / carers should the proposed changes be approved.

PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

51. The proposal set out in paragraph 9 of this report should secure DfE capital investment through the Priority School Building Programme 2 (PSBP2) for the All Saints' site. Work is underway through Hampshire County Council Design Services and the DfE to understand the scope of the work required on the site and allocated budget should a decision be taken to retain a one form entry primary school on it.

52. Works on the scale envisaged could mean that the relocation of Yarmouth to the All Saints' site cannot happen before early to mid 2021.
53. In order to facilitate, if required, the temporary relocation of pupils from All Saints' to Yarmouth the council will provide appropriate additional accommodation on the Yarmouth site.
54. If the Yarmouth CE Primary School site was to be vacated, detailed discussion in regard to its future use would be required between those stakeholders with an interest in it. The outcomes of those discussions would be for a separate report at a later date.

OPTIONS

55. The Council has previously consulted on five options set out in its report of 1 March 2019. This included its preferred option to close All Saints' CE Primary School and expand St Saviour's RC Primary School to one form entry. This option remains viable.
56. This report introduces a potential alternative option for consultation alongside the original preferred option. This new option is to close All Saints' CE Primary School and expand Yarmouth CE Primary School to one form entry and relocate this enlarged school to the All Saints' site.
57. Consideration has been given to the options detailed in appendix 3.
58. The Council would welcome comments on the additional proposal, the original preferred option or any of the other options submitted during the consultation outlined in appendix 3.
59. An indicative timetable for the consultation and decision-making phases is attached at appendix 4.

RISK MANAGEMENT

60. An implementation group will be formed to take forward the final recommendation. It will meet on a monthly basis or more regularly if required. It will be chaired by a senior education and inclusion officer. Representatives will include governors, headteacher and local authority officers with expertise in governance, property, HR, finance, admissions and school improvement. They will ensure that risks associated with the final recommendation are identified and mitigated.

EVALUATION

61. Following an initial period of public consultation, it is the considered view of officers that the recommendations set-out in paragraph 62 of this report offer a positive forward in regard to managing surplus school places in West Wight. The alternative proposal being recommended will;
 - retain primary provision within Freshwater,

- acknowledge that 69 out of the 91 children currently attending Yarmouth CE Primary live in Freshwater and Totland,
- retain a school rated 'good' by Ofsted with strong leadership and governance,
- reduce the overall number of school places in West Wight,
- provide a site that could expand for future growth if required,
- retain government funding for redevelopment / new build of the school buildings on the All Saints' site,
- make the Yarmouth site available for alternate use.

RECOMMENDATION

62. It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills approves a further four-week consultation period on the new alternative proposal;

- the closure of All Saints' CE Primary on the 31 December 2019,
- the expansion of Yarmouth CE Primary School to a Published, Admission Number (PAN) of 30 from the 1 January 2020,
- Yarmouth CE Primary school permanently relocating to the All Saints' site at a future date once building works are completed (estimated 2021)

It is also recommended that the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills welcomes any additional comments and feedback about the previous preferred option put forward in the original report, any of the alternative options detailed in that report and any of the other options submitted during the initial consultation period which are outlined in Appendix

APPENDICES ATTACHED

63. The following appendices are included with this report:

[Appendix 1: Notes from the two public meetings](#)

[Appendix 2: Summary of consultation response data](#)

[Appendix 3: Alternative Options submitted during consultation](#)

[Appendix 4: Draft timetable](#)

64. Background Paper: <https://www.iwight.com/azservices/documents/2780-03-19-Record-of-Delegated-Decision-West-Wight-School-Place-Planning.pdf>

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