

Cabinet – 12 March 2020

Written question from Jill Cowley to the Leader, Isle of Wight Council

Councillor Steve Hastings has written in West Wight free magazines that Yarmouth School is to be closed.

Why is the LA ignoring the DfE [legal presumption against closing rural schools](#), which states that before one is shut a number of factors must be considered, including the likely effect of the closure of the school on the local community or in DfE words **'the overall and long term impact on the local community of the closure of the village school and of the loss of the building as a community facility'**?

Response

There has been no suggestion from the council or Yarmouth Primary School that the School is being closed. The council and governing body have been clear through-out that Yarmouth Primary School would be relocated not closed.

The relocation of Yarmouth Primary School was a decision for the governing body of the school to propose and decide upon, following a lengthy consultation period. Despite this being a non-statutory proposal Governors followed all relevant statutory guidance on relocation in coming to their decision to move the school to the Freshwater site.

The council in taking a decision to close All Saints' Primary School followed all relevant statutory guidance provided by the DfE, including the presumption against the closure of rural schools.

The future of the Yarmouth site has yet to be decided, as set out by the council previously it would want to work with all stakeholders to look at how the site could be best utilised once the school has relocated. It should be noted that the site is jointly owned by the council and diocese.

The council has recently announced that it has successfully secured £4.5m from the DfE to provide a new 1fe primary school on the Freshwater site, thereby meeting the commitments it made to the community of Freshwater and governors of Yarmouth Primary School. This significant sum will enable the council to deliver a high quality new school that will support the very best of learning environments for many thousands of West Wight children long in to the future.