

Delegated decision report

DECISION UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

DECISION CANNOT BE TAKEN BEFORE 1 MARCH 2019

Title **WEST WIGHT SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING**

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report seeks authority from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills to approve the undertaking of a consultation on the removal of surplus primary school places within the West Wight school place planning area. 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. The Council's preferred option to manage the increasing numbers of surplus places in West Wight is;
 - The closure of All Saints' CE Primary School and expansion of St Saviour's Catholic Primary School to 1 form of entry
3. In coming to its preferred option the Council has also considered:
 - The closure of St Saviour's Catholic Primary School and expansion of All Saints CE Primary School to 1 form of entry.
 - Closure of both All Saints' CE Primary School and St Saviour's Catholic Primary School and seek to open a new one form of entry free / academy school on one of the existing sites.
 - The closure of All Saints' CE Primary School and allow the admissions process to manage the impact of reduced places in the area.
 - That no change is pursued and the current situation is allowed to continue.
4. The closure of All Saints' CE Primary School and the expansion of St Saviour's Catholic Primary School to one form of entry could be achieved, subject to the required statutory approvals, for the start of the academic year 2019 / 2020.
5. During the consultation the Council would welcome any additional viable proposals.

BACKGROUND

6. This report provides a summary of available data that clearly shows a significant fall in the number of children forecast to be seeking a school place at Yr R (Reception Year) on the Island, and in particular the West Wight area. Surplus places as a result of falling numbers have a significant impact on school budgets which in turn may impact on standards, outcomes for children and therefore the overall viability of a school. Schools' Forum asked officers to look at the implications of forecast numbers and to bring the conversation to Headteacher Conferences in the autumn 2018 term. A meeting was subsequently held between officers and representative headteachers.
7. In the summer 2018 primary phase schools across the Island had a total of 10,767 places available. Of these 14% (1,053) places were not taken up and were therefore surplus to need. The number of children joining mainstream schools' at Year 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 sector will reduce by approximately 200 children due to a known decrease in births.
8. For school place planning purposes and as required by the Department for Education (DfE), the Council uses School Place Planning Areas (SPPA) that break up the Island into smaller education areas. These areas use geography and existing travel to learn patterns to group schools; this ensures that when planning supply and demand it can be done at a local level.

Existing pupil numbers mean that only three of the four available forms of entry across West Wight are currently being taken up at Year R. The anticipated decline in pupil numbers indicates a position will shortly be reached where only two out of the four available forms of entry will be needed. The DfE, reviewing the pupil level data it holds, has asked the authority how it intends to manage this higher than acceptable level of surplus places. Therefore, the Council is considering the appropriate level of future provision in the West Wight area and specifically the future of All Saints' CE Primary School.

9. The Department for Education provides statutory guidance on 'Opening and closing maintained schools' and 'Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools'. This guidance recommends the following process should be followed.
 - Initial Consultation – Minimum 6 weeks
 - Public Notice – Statutory Proposal published
 - Representation (Formal Consultation) - Public Notice to run for 4 weeks, during which representations can be made. Notice is posted online, in media and at the affected schools.
 - Decision – the Local Authority (decision-maker) must decide the proposals within two months of the expiry of the public notice.
 - Implementation - must be as specified in the published statutory notice, subject to any modifications agreed by the decision-maker

PUPIL NUMBERS IN WEST WIGHT

10. This report focuses on the West Wight SPPA and shows that the number of children joining the five schools within the area at Year R has for the period 2014 to 2018 been stable, with around 30 surplus places out of a total of 119. For 2021 it is expected that this surplus will grow to 56 places, 47%, in line with the projected fall in population within the area. All Saints CE Primary School & Brighstone CE Primary School, based upon historic trends, are the two schools likely to be most affected by this forecast drop in numbers.
11. The five primary schools within the West Wight planning area; All Saints' CE Primary, Brighstone CE Primary, Shalfleet CE Primary, St Saviour's Catholic Primary and Yarmouth CE Primary. Of the primary age children living in West Wight 90% attend a West Wight school, the remainder normally seek a school place in Newport, Ventnor and Cowes. As there is no secondary provision within the West Wight Area, children attend secondary provision across the Island with the majority attending Christ the King (46%) and Carisbrooke Schools (35%).
12. Table 1 below sets out the current total Published Admission Number (PAN), school capacity and pupil numbers at each school.

	PAN Per year group	Total School Capacity	Current number of pupils on roll	Surplus Places	% surplus places
<i>St Saviour's Catholic Primary</i>	20	140	133	7	0.6%
<i>Yarmouth C of E Primary</i>	15	105	91	14	13%
<i>Shalfleet</i>	24	168	176	-8	0%
<i>All Saints' CE Primary</i>	30	210	81	129	62%
<i>Brighstone CE Primary</i>	30	210	112	98	47%

13. As shown in the table above, All Saints' CE Primary School has a significant level of surplus capacity, showing it is not the local school of choice. For September 2019 they currently have eight first preference applications. It is also, therefore, the school most likely to be adversely affected by the forecast reduction in pupil numbers. Currently All Saints' Primary Schools planned admission number (PAN) is 30 and the school have capacity for 210 children. The School are consulting on reducing their PAN to 15 with effect from September 2020. While this will show a reduction in the level of surplus places at the school and in the area as a whole, it will not address the underlying issue around the school's performance and it not being a school of choice for its local community.
14. Table two below outlines the forecast intake for the overall planning area, based on known births and trends.

Table two – Forecast Data

	PAN	1718	1819	1920	2021	2122	2223
4 year old Population	119	85	93	96	89	63	63
<i>Surplus/Shortfall</i>		34	26	23	30	56	56

15. St Saviour’s Primary School is the nearest school to All Saints’ CE Primary School; it is a popular school and currently has 133 pupils on roll against a capacity of 140. As this is the closest school to All Saints within the planning area, is rated as ‘good’ by Ofsted (January 2019) this proposal also includes the potential expansion of St Saviour’s. This would allow the school to increase its planned admission number from 20 to 30. This increase would add an additional 70 places back in to the area, supporting local children in accessing a local school place. This addition in numbers will also support the school financially, making them more resilient in this time of economic challenge.
16. The proposed closure of All Saints CE Primary School and expansion of St Saviours Catholic Primary School would result in a net reduction of 140 surplus places in the area.

PERFORMANCE

17. Ofsted inspections are a key way in which the quality of provision and performance in schools is judged. Currently three of the five schools within the West Wight planning area 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. At the most recent of these in April 2018, the narrative within the Ofsted report made it clear that Brighstone had improved and was securely on its journey to good. Ofsted stated that *‘leaders have stopped the decline in standards, and outcomes are continuing to improve. However, outcomes are not yet in line with other schools nationally’*.
18. All Saints’ has not been good since being created following reorganisation. It was rated as RI in 2013, 2015 and 2017. Any improvements in the school have not been good enough as illustrated by the July 2018 monitoring visit, in which Ofsted stated that the school was *‘not taking effective action to improve’*.
19. All Saints’ CE Primary School has a continuous track record of weak educational performance over several years and there are insufficient indications that rapid and sustainable improvement is likely. It also has a long-standing relatively weak reputation in the community relative to neighbouring schools. The issues facing the school are complex and inter-related, partly related to the number of surplus places within the planning area. The number on roll has been low for several years in comparison to capacity and this is having a significant negative impact on the budget. A change of approach may now be necessary, in order to raise standards of educational provision and outcomes for primary school age students locally and also to secure the right strategy for the local planning area.

20. 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 results of these assessments are recorded in table three below for schools in the West Wight. Also included in table three 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.
21. Table Three – West Wight Schools Age Related Expectations Data

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

22. St Saviour's, in addition to having the best performance data of the West Wight schools for the three year averages shown above, is also performing at significantly above national averages in all measures stated. It is showing consistently strong, above average performance.
23. Outcomes in both Brighstone and All Saints need improving. The three year averages for Age Related Expectation+ in both schools are relatively weak, with All Saints' having the lowest percentage of children achieving this measure, and All Saints has also a three year average of zero for the Higher Standard combined measure. However, the latest Ofsted monitoring report is now indicating that Brighstone have stopped the decline and the quality of provision is improving.

FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

24. 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 predicted to be in a deficit position by 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.

25. 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 in-year deficit of £72,035 (16% of its budget share). Despite the school initiating actions to recover the budget position by restructuring staffing during 2018, the budget revision in November 2018 confirmed that the school is likely to move into an overall cumulative deficit position of £15,490 by March 2019 and an over advance of funding of £24,000 had to be actioned to ensure cash flow continues to be operational over the remainder of this financial year. Current estimates from the school indicate the school will remain in deficit in the short term based on their confirmed October 2018 census pupil count of 80 pupils, rising to their estimated 85 the following year. For this school on average, any reduction in pupils would adversely affect this position by £3,428 per pupil per year.
26. 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.
27. Table Four - All Saints' CE Primary Revenue Budget History & Forecast Plan (November 2018)

<i>Financial Year</i>	<i>In Year +surplus / - deficit £</i>	<i>Cumulative Position £</i>
<i>Balance brought forward</i>		<i>75,947</i>
<i>2017/18 Outturn</i>	<i>-72,025</i>	<i>3,922</i>
<i>2018/19 Forecast</i>	<i>-19,412</i>	<i>-15,490</i>
<i>2019/20 Forecast</i>	<i>10,589</i>	<i>-4,901</i>
<i>2020/21 Forecast</i>	<i>22,815</i>	<i>17,914</i>

28. Schools are funded through the ring fenced dedicated schools grant (DSG) using a local funding formula, heavily linked to the Department for Education's (DfE) national funding formula. The revenue funding passed through the local authority for maintained schools is strictly controlled by operational guidance supplied by the DfE and 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.
29. The capital cost for the expansion of St Saviour's Primary School is anticipated to be in the region of £375,000. This would be funded from the Children's Services 2018/19 capital programme.

CONSULTATION

30. Subject to approval to consult being obtained a draft timetable for consultation, decision making, and implementation is set out in Appendix 1.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

31. The Council has the power to make a proposal to close a maintained school under the Education and Improvement Act 2006. When formulating any closure proposals 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.

32. In addition the council is also required to have regard to the statutory guidance issued by the DfE when deciding whether a maintained school should close. The relevant statutory guidance is the “Opening and Closing Maintained Schools” dated November 2018 and “The making significant changes (prescribed alterations) to maintained schools” dated October 2018.

33. 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 into account the overall quality of alternative places in the local area and the popularity of other local schools.

34. 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 proportion of pupils attending the school from within the local community i.e. is the school being used by the local community;
 - educational 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 or long term);
 - any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the closure of the school, and the likely effects of any such increase; and
 - any alternatives to the closure of the school.

35. In deciding a proposal to close a school that has been designated with a religious character, the council need 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 roll, the medium and long term need for places in the area, and whether standards at the school have been persistently low.

PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

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

ADMISSIONS

37. The number of preference applications for Year R in September 2019 for each school in the planning area as of the 1 February 2019 are:

	PAN	1 st Pref	2 nd Pref	3 rd Pref	Total
All Saints’	30	8	6	2	16
Brighstone	30	15	2	5	22
Shalfleet	24	20	11	5	36
St Saviour’s	20	26	4	5	35
Yarmouth	15	14	21	6	41

38. An initial desktop exercise has identified that children currently attending All Saints’ CE Primary School and those due to be on roll in September 2019, can be accommodated in existing places in other West Wight schools with the exception of current Yr3. The proposed increase of 70 places at St Saviour’s will assist in maintaining local places for local children. The Council will work with West Wight schools to ensure placement of these children including Yr3 in the most local school. If closure of All Saints’ CE Primary School does go ahead the admissions team will publish and support a process for parents to make applications to alternative schools.
39. The admissions policy at St Saviour’s gives priority to children of Catholic faith and then those of other faiths. The final oversubscription criterion allows for admission of all other children and the school regularly recruits in this category. Therefore, children who make applications with no faith basis may be routinely admitted to the school.
40. Should an option other than the Council’s preferred option be approved, admission arrangements as required will be put in place to manage the change.

TRANSPORT

41. The West Wight area is rural in its nature with four of its five schools designated by the Department for Education (DfE) Rural Schools List as “Rural Town and Fringe” and its fifth as “Rural Village”. During the consultation period the routes

through Freshwater to St Saviours School will need to be assessed for safe walking to school.

42. Children currently living in Freshwater can be admitted to either of the two primary schools. Some children are currently attending other schools through parental choice. With fewer places available in Freshwater it is possible that the Council may have to provide transport assistance to support children who need to attend the next nearest available school.

GOVERNANCE

43. The Governing Body at All Saints' CE Primary is constituted in the standard format for a Voluntary Controlled school; there is currently one vacancy for a foundation governor.
44. All Saints' Primary's most recent Ofsted inspection has reported that despite the efforts of governors, the required outcomes are still not being achieved and stated the following:
- Governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and are focussed on improving school standards, but this has been hampered by significant turbulence in staffing. At the last monitoring inspection, which took place in July 2018, governors were judged as not taking effective action to tackle areas requiring improvement in order for the school to become good.
 - Governors do not have high enough expectations about the pace of change. Although they now carry out a wider range of monitoring activities, they are not making sure that the school's self-evaluation is accurate and are 'not able to hold leaders to account for the rate of progress towards becoming a good school'. Governors do ensure that pupil premium funding is used effectively to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that safeguarding arrangements are effective.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

45. Consideration must be given as to whether there are any sex, race or disability discrimination issues that arise from the changes being proposed. While the preferred option of the Council is the closure of All Saints' CE Primary School and expansion of St Saviour's Catholic Primary School, sufficient education provision for primary age children living in the local area will be maintained.
46. The policies of the council and St Saviour's Catholic Primary School in relation to equal opportunities and eliminating discrimination will continue to apply should the proposed changes be approved.
47. Council officers will work closely with the headteacher and governing body to assess any support that might be required by students and their families / carers should the proposed changes be approved.

PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

48. The All Saints' CE Primary School buildings are owned by the Portsmouth CE Diocese, the playing fields and Freshwater Early Years building are owned by the Council. Should the school be closed, clarification around the future of this site will be for a later report.
49. The St Saviour's Catholic Primary School site is owned by the Catholic Diocese. If the school is to expand to enable it to accommodate 30 pupils per year group two additional classrooms will be required. It is anticipated that in the first instance this will be in the form of a double modular building, this would be funded from the Children's Service Capital Programme.
50. The DfE through its Priority Schools Building Programme Two (PSBP2) has been working with the Council on a potential capital investment programme at All Saints'. These discussions remain on-going at this point in time and are now subject to the outcome of this consultation.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

51. The options that the Council have considered prior to deciding on its preferred option are:
 - Close St Saviour's Catholic Primary School and expand All Saints' CE Primary School to 1 form of entry – while reducing the level of surplus capacity in the SPPA, this option would remove the strongest performing school educationally and add places to a school that is not popular locally and has the overall weakest performance of the five primary schools across West Wight.
 - Close both All Saints' CE Primary School and St Saviour's Catholic Primary School and seek to open a new one form of entry free / academy school on one of the existing sites – this option would allow the Council to deal with the surplus places issue however, it would remove a highly successful and popular school in St Saviour's. It would also require the Regional School Commissioner and the DfE to agree to the opening of a new provision.
 - Close All Saints' CE Primary School and allow the admissions process to manage the impact of reduced places in the area – this option would remove the local choice for families living in Freshwater by not expanding St Saviour's, increase the need for Home to School Transport and potentially make it more difficult for families to access a West Wight school place.
 - That no change is pursued and the current situation is allowed to continue – while this option would ensure local choice remains, it fails to deal with the current and forecast levels of surplus places and the continuing relatively weaker performance of All Saints' CE Primary.
52. The recommended option would be for the Cabinet Member for Children's Services to approve a statutory consultation being undertaken on a review of

the West Wight School pupil place planning area as set out in the report, with the option being consulted upon being the closure of All Saints' CE Primary School and expansion of St Saviour's Catholic Primary School by 70 places with the anticipated implementation being September 2019.

RISK MANAGEMENT

53. An implementation group will be formed if required 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.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

54. The proposal set out above supports 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".

RECOMMENDATION

55. That the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills approves consultation being undertaken on the review of the West Wight School pupil place planning area as set out in the report, with the Council's preferred option being the closure of All Saints' CE Primary School and the expansion of St Saviour's Catholic Primary School by 70 places with the anticipated implementation being September 2019.
56. That a report on the outcome of the consultation be prepared for a future decision day.

APPENDICES ATTACHED

57. Appendix 1 – Proposed Consultation Process for Option A

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APPENDIX 1

Added to IW Forward Plan	21 January 2019
Meetings with Headteachers & Chair of Governors of all West Wight Primary Schools	15 February 2019
Report goes into public domain	15 February 2019
Decision Day - Report seeking to obtain Approval to Consult	01 March 2019
Public Consultation - 6 weeks as per IW policy	04 March - 12 April 2019
Key meetings during consultation period	Public Meetings Staff Meetings
Report to EME on consultation seeking approval to publish notice	26th April 2019
If approved, Publish notice - 4 weeks	29 April - 27 May 2019
Closing date for representations	27 May 2019
Decision - EME if no objections. Cabinet if there are. Must be within 2 months from end of consultation period	June 2019
Earliest closure date of All Saints assuming transfer of all pupils to alternative schools	September 2019
Expansion of St Saviours to 1fe primary school, PAN 30	September 2019