



Agenda Item Introduction

Committee

CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date

6 JUNE 2023

Topic

PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY – SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING

BACKGROUND

At the Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Children’s Services, Education and Skills on 1 September 2022, representatives from headteachers and school governors made a submission that highlighted the issue of school place planning, its impact upon the education of children and over-sufficiency of primary school places. It was resolved that the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education and Skills be requested to submit the report on school place planning, together with the statements from Isle of Wight Primary Headteachers and Primary Chairs of Governors, to Cabinet for consideration and identification of options regarding the future provision of primary education on the Island. A paper is due to go to Cabinet on 8 June 2023 on the topic of School Place Planning.

FOCUS FOR SCRUTINY

The role of the committee is not to act as a ‘shadow Cabinet’. Its function is to ensure that the principles of decision making have been complied with:

- taking into account all relevant considerations and ignoring those which are irrelevant
- compliance with finance, contract and all other procedure rules
- due consultation and proper advice is taken, and alternative options considered before decisions are reached
- impartiality and an absence of bias or pre-determination
- any interests are properly declared
- decisions are properly recorded and published
- decisions are proportionate to the desired outcome
- respect for human rights and equality impacts
- a presumption in favour of transparency and openness
- clarity of aims and desired outcomes
- due consideration of all available options
- reasons are given for decisions

OUTCOME

Does the committee support the proposed recommendations, or wish to report any comment to Cabinet?

APPROACH

The Cabinet report to be submitted to the committee.

APPENDICES ATTACHED

School Place Planning - Cabinet Report

Appendix 1 – IOW Primary School place planning areas

Appendix 2 – Headteachers letter

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Purpose: For Decision

Cabinet Report

Date **8 JUNE 2023**

Title **SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING**

Report of **CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDRENS SERVICES,
EDUCATION AND LIFELONG SKILLS**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Within the Isle of Wight Corporate Plan, it states that the Council will work with local communities to maintain and ensure appropriate local school provision. The plan states that the Council should ensure that a strategic school places plan is in place and maintained. This report discharges that priority.
2. The Isle of Wight Council has a statutory duty to ensure a sufficiency of school places for Isle of Wight children, this includes to:
 - Ensure sufficient childcare is available to meet the Early Years free entitlement as far as reasonably practicable
 - Ensure sufficient maintained school provision is available to meet the needs of all children aged up to 16
 - Ensure sufficient post-16 provision is available for all Isle of Wight children
 - Give priority at all ages to meet the needs of children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND), learning difficulties and/or disabilities up to 19 (in some cases 25)
 - Support all maintained nurseries, schools and Post-16 provision to function as high-quality, viable and financially efficient services
 - Ensure fair access to educational opportunity and promote diversity and parental choice.
3. This report is focused on ensuring sufficient maintained school provision is available to meet the needs of mainstream children aged up to 16.
4. At present, there is growth in Year 7 intake pupil numbers in the secondary phase, which will continue until 2026-27. The actions identified in this report therefore necessarily focus on the primary phase where a significant decline in pupil numbers is forecast during the five-year forecast period. In 2027-28, the decline in pupil numbers will reach the secondary phase, and therefore further place planning decisions will need to be made to manage surplus capacity in due course.

5. At times, the effective management of school places will include the need to remove surplus places to ensure overall provision aligns with forecast need. Due to a significant reduction in birth rates on the Island, in some areas, action is recommended in the primary phase in order to ensure demand and capacity are aligned and we continue to provide the best outcomes for the children, which is the focus of this report.

RECOMMENDATION

6. That Cabinet approves a period of public consultation on the closure of Cowes Primary School, St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, and Wroxall Primary School to commence Autumn 2023. And;
7. That Cabinet approves the publication of a Public Notice to amalgamate Chillerton and Rookley Primary School with Godshill Primary School to be achieved through the closure of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School with effect from the 1 January 2024.

BACKGROUND

8. Following an OFSTED Annual Performance Assessment in 2005, the Department for Education placed a requirement on the Council to address the level of underperformance and low aspirations, the effectiveness of support and challenge to schools, the strengthening of school leadership and teaching quality, efficiency of the system of school organisation and the unfilled places. This resulted in the Council entering into a major school reorganisation to move from a three-tier school system to a two-tier system in 2011.
9. The Isle of Wight now has a diverse system of schools, early years' settings and Post-16 provision. The Council is committed to ensuring that families living on the Isle of Wight have access to a good local school which offers a rich and varied learning experience, has the highest expectations for their children's success and where parents can be confident that their children will be safe. All children have the right to an enjoyable, inclusive, and broad education and it is the role of the local authority to intervene on behalf of children, especially those experiencing vulnerabilities, when this is not the case.
10. Whilst the reorganisation of schools on the Island had a positive impact on the performance of schools, birth rates nationally have now reached their lowest since 1941. The drop in the number of births is significant on the Isle of Wight due to its Island geography as migration to the Isle of Wight is greater in older age groups.
11. Longer term pupil trends show the decline in births having a direct impact upon the number of children arriving into the primary phase. The numbers of primary pupils are forecast to decrease from c.9,200 in 2017 to c.8,000 by 2025. Secondary forecasts indicate pupil numbers are starting to grow from c.6,000 in 2017 to 6,400 in 2025. However, this growth will not be maintained longer-term and consideration will need to be given to how future surplus capacity is managed in the secondary sector.

12. The planning and provision of school places is a complex task that must take account of changing populations, parental preference, migration and new housing. Individual schools, subject to status, now have greater autonomy regarding admission numbers and decisions surrounding school expansion/reduction, adding further complexity to the statutory role the Council has in relation to ensuring a sufficiency of school places. The geography and rural nature of the Isle of Wight creates challenges in relation to small schools. The main principle of current and future provision is that we will seek to provide local schools for local children, which are both educationally and financially sustainable in the longer term.
13. Having a level of surplus across our schools provides flexibility; allows for movement onto, and around the Island, and helps meet parental preference. The consequences of having too many surplus places can be severe. The main impact on schools of surplus places due to falling rolls is the resulting reduction in individual school finances.
14. Schools are funded through the ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) using a local funding formula. On the Island this mirrors the Department for Education's (DfE) national funding formula. The revenue funding passed through the LA 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 funding allocation is reduced on a per pupil basis.
15. Falling rolls also make planning and staffing decisions difficult, with schools potentially having to make year on year redundancies. There is a particular problem for schools affected by infant class size legislation: they may have limited ability to make savings by changing staffing structures or changing the use of physical space. For example, a school with an intake of 60 that only admits 32 pupils must still employ two teachers and heat, light and equip two classrooms, even though the budget for that year group may have nearly halved.
16. It is also important to understand that not all schools are affected equally by falling pupil numbers. For example, when there is a 10% drop in numbers, not all schools will see a 10% reduction. In reality, popular schools remain full or close to full and this may mean that a large drop in numbers could significantly affect a small number of less popular schools. When schools are disproportionately affected by falling rolls, those schools are at risk of spiralling decline. This means that we need to consider removing places.
17. In a recent article published within the Times Education Supplement, it notes that England's smallest primary schools are five times more likely to be rated "inadequate" by Ofsted than the largest ones, according to an analysis of graded inspections. None of the country's smallest primary schools - with up to 144 pupils - were rated as "outstanding" in graded inspections by Ofsted during the 10 months from September 2021 to the end of June 2022. This evidence supports the need to reduce the number of smaller schools on the Island in order to provide the best outcomes for children.

18. A report was presented to Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services, Education and Skills on the 1 September 2022 that identified the level of surplus capacity within the Primary Schools on the Island, and the measures that had been implemented to reduce some school's published admission number (PAN). This was in line with Cabinet's clear directive that school closures should be avoided where possible.
19. A representation was made at the meeting on behalf of all headteachers and Governing Bodies on the Island, which requested support to formulate an Island wide approach to School Place Planning and not for the Council to work in isolation or, only consider reducing planned admission numbers. This can be seen in Appendix 2
20. Further work has taken place to review and update forecast data, and to understand what options are available in each of the school place planning areas that have been identified as having significant surplus capacity, this is set out in detail later in this report.

FORECASTING SCHOOL PLACES – METHODOLOGY

21. The Council collects data on the historical and current uptake of places in all schools. This data along with other linked information, primarily birth and housing data, is used to forecast school places across the Isle of Wight.
22. Immunisation and Vaccination data from Local Health Authorities are collected by age and postcode, these are allocated to pupil place planning areas. Local authorities have the discretion to determine their pupil planning areas for the purposes of school place planning, but this should be in line with the DfEs non-statutory guidance. This includes guidance around importance of the size of the planning areas. Too large and it does not provide full visibility of place pressures/surplus, or too small and this can over-represent pressure and give an inaccurate picture of place pressure. The primary planning areas are defined within Appendix 1.
23. The methodology used is based upon a cohort survival model. The basic premise is that pupils will roll forward from one-year group to the next at the end of each academic year. If there are known housing developments within a school's planning area, the expected pupil yield is added to the projections where appropriate. This information is provided by the Isle of Wight Local Planning Authority (LPA). Expected changes due to pupil mobility and migration are also taken into account. For each year group, the number of pupils on roll in January is compared with the same cohort a year later. A weighted moving average of the observed changes over the last three years (3:2:1) is calculated and applied in the same way as the participation rate.
 - Intake into Reception Year – the number of four-year olds living in a school planning area is determined as above. This is compared with the number of pupils that are enrolled by the school and a participation rate is calculated. Again, a three-year weighted moving average is applied to calculate a participation rate for use in forecasting future YR enrolment at schools.

- Intake to Year 7 – At secondary transfer, the participation rate is applied to the Year 6 numbers available in the primary schools across the Isle of Wight.
- Assumptions - The model assumes that the school population tends to be stable rather than influenced by a trend in the long term; by using this methodology we can mitigate against an exceptional trend. Weighting the average accounts for the assumption that recent events are far more likely to be replicated but using a moving average smooths out high fluctuations in year groups in a particular year. Data on housing developments is collected and the likely effects of housing developments on pupil numbers is applied to the schools as appropriate. The number of pupils that a particular development is likely to yield is determined from information supplied the Isle of Wight LPA as to the number and phasing of housing units combined with the type and tenure of those dwellings.

Understanding the forecasts for school places in each area

24. For the purposes of school place planning, the Isle of Wight is broken down into more localised education planning areas, as defined under appendix 1. The tables set out within points 36-42 identifies current and forecast future aggregated pupil numbers and schools' capacities within each planning area and, indicate both actions being taken and actions proposed to ensure a sufficiency of school provision within these areas.
25. When looking at forecasts in each of the following sections it is important to remember that the figures presented are not statements of fact – they are forecasts based on a tried and tested methodology. It should also be noted that whilst the Council will seek to support parental preference, its forecasts focus on the number of school places available within a school place planning area. It can be the case that some schools in an area are regularly oversubscribed in relation to parental preference. This could suggest a shortage of school places in the area. However, parental preferences only show where parents would like their children to attend school, not if there is a shortage of school places in an area.
26. School place planning decisions cannot be explicitly based around meeting parental preference. Schools' popularity does change over time and, creating a school place planning system that overly follows such trends would ultimately lead to a lack of choice for parents and a longer-term insufficiency of school places.

EDUCATION WHITE PAPER

27. The DfE consulted on a White Paper which contained an aspiration that all schools should be part of a multi-academy trust or planning to join a multi-academy trust by 2030. Legislation was being taken through parliament in a Schools' Bill which would have enacted parts of the aspirations in the White Paper. The School's Bill has been withdrawn by the Government.

ADMISSIONS

28. For Community and Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools, the Local Authority (LA) is the admission authority and therefore manages any amendments to a school's Published Admission Number (PAN). However, community and VC schools have the right to object to the Schools Adjudicator if the LA set a PAN for them that is lower than they would wish. There is a strong presumption in favour of an increase to the PAN to which the Schools Adjudicator must have regard when considering any such objection (para 1.3 of the School Admissions Code). Therefore, it is considered unlikely that the Schools Adjudicator would support an application to reduce the PAN if the Governing Body are not in support.
29. For Voluntary Aided, foundation and academy schools, the Governing Body is the admission authority so the LA cannot enforce an amendment to PAN.
30. On an annual basis the LA are required to determine local admissions arrangements. Where changes are to be made this must include a public consultation, this includes contacting all community and VC schools to establish if they wish to propose an amendment to their PAN in future years. As a result of this year's consultation, the proposed amendments for September 2024 intake are set out below:

| PAN Reductions for September 2024 intake | |
|---|----------------------|
| Barton Primary School | Reduce from 45 to 30 |
| Broadlea Primary School | Reduce from 45 to 30 |
| Carisbrooke CE Primary School | Reduce from 60 to 45 |
| Godshill Primary School | Reduce from 27 to 20 |

SCHOOL TRANSPORT

31. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 created new duties on LAs to provide free transport for pupils in receipt of free school meals or whose families receive the maximum level of Working Tax Credit. Statutory Guidance has been issued by Central Government, particularly Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance (July 2014) and 2010 Post-16 Transport Guidance (February 2014) and is used by all LAs to inform policy and provision of the transport service. The July 2014 Guidance requires the LA to review its School Transport arrangements regularly to ensure that they provide the most cost-effective service.
32. There are no priority/catchment areas for primary and secondary schools. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to apply for the school nearest to their home address. A pupil's nearest school is calculated by direct distance. This is a straight line from the centre of the home address to the centre of the school. This is calculated using the local authority's geographical information system (GIS). School Transport is assessed on whether they are attending their nearest school (direct distance or walking route) and whether the shortest walking route is over the qualifying distance. The legislation specifies the statutory distances (2 and 3 miles) that apply to the provision of home to school transport, when distances are calculated from a pupil's home address to school,

the measure of the shortest available walking route from the centre of the home address to the centre of the school building is used to ascertain whether the pupil lives more than the minimum number of miles to be entitled to free transport provision.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

33. The recommendation in this report directly links to the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25 priority which is to work with local communities to maintain and ensure appropriate local school provision. In addition to this it supports the commitment that through the ongoing business of the council it will work with and challenge schools' performance to ensure that all are good or outstanding, and to ensure work is undertaken to challenge schools in financial deficit to secure a more sustainable position for the schools and the Council.

Responding to climate change and enhancing the biosphere

34. By reducing the number of school sites, it could result in additional children needing to be transported to school, however overall by maintaining fewer school buildings for the total number of pupils on the Island it will have overall benefits for the environment as it will reduce the impact of building emissions. Schools do regularly promote active travel to school which will continue to support the reduction of emissions created from transporting children to school by car.
35. Subject to the availability of funding heat decarbonisation plans will be commissioned in the future for all Local Authority owned school buildings. The recommendation in this report will assist in the submission of applications for future funding and ultimately support the IWCs target for schools to be carbon neutral by 2035.

Economic Recovery and Reducing Poverty

36. As set out within the corporate plan this report demonstrates the council's commitment to work with local communities to maintain and ensure appropriate local school provision, providing the best possible outcomes for children on the Island. In addition to this it supports the commitment that through the ongoing business of the council it will work with and challenge schools performance to ensure that all are good or outstanding, and to ensure work is undertaken to challenge schools in financial deficit to secure a more sustainable position for the schools and the council.

Impact on Young People and Future Generations

37. The decisions the Council makes now not only affect current residents, but may have long term impacts, both positive and negative, on young people and future generations. These impacts may not immediately be apparent or may not emerge for a number of years or decades. Impacts will be interrelated across the various domains of young people's lives from housing, employment or training, health and the environment.

38. The United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989, in particular article 12, places a duty for children and young people to have an active voice in decision making on matters that affect them. We value the views of our young people. Incorporating coproduction and consultation with young people into our decision-making process is a robust way of ensuring young people's views are taken into consideration. Should approval be provided by Cabinet to commence the consultations on the future of schools, consideration will be given to ensure young people are engaged in the process, and the views of the Youth Council and our Youth MP will be actively sought.

Corporate Aims

39. The recommendation in this report directly links to the Corporate Plan 2021-25 priority which is to work with local communities to maintain and ensure appropriate local school provision. In addition to this it supports the commitment that through ongoing business of the council we will work with and challenge schools performance to ensure that all are good or outstanding, and to ensure work is undertaken to challenge schools in financial deficit to secure a more sustainable position for the schools and the council.

FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

40. Schools are funded through the ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) using a local funding formula. On the Island this mirrors the Department for Education's (DfE) national funding formula. The revenue funding passed through the LA 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 funding allocation is reduced on a per pupil basis.
41. All schools have devolved funding, accounting systems and bank accounts and it is their responsibility to remain individually financially viable. Uncertainty around places creates budget risks at an individual school level, as they work to maintaining efficient right sized establishments that ensure in-year income matches in-year expenditure. The School Standards & Framework Act 1998 requires local authorities to have a Scheme for Financing Schools. The scheme drives the requirements of schools in managing their deficits and the LA role relates to adherence to the scheme only as it has no power to write off or contribute towards individual school deficits. When a school closes, any deficit balances fall to the local authority and therefore surplus capacity increases the risk of inefficient schools and potential increased deficits, impacting upon local authority budgets. In the event of an underperforming school converting to an academy (Sponsored academy conversion) this results in deficits falling to the local authority. Only 'good' or 'outstanding' Schools which convert to academies (convertor academies) have deficits funded by the incoming trust or DfE.
42. Most schools on the Island are raising concerns about the ability to set balanced budgets in coming years, and the number of schools in deficits is likely to rise. In a recent consultation with mainstream schools on school funding, most respondents emphasised concerns around the overall quantum of funding not being sufficient to meet current costs, in particular pressures

around energy contracts, the 2022/23 pay award being higher than expected and general inflation / future pay award uncertainty. The local authority continues to highlight pressures through the Association of Directors of Children’s Services and regional network groups. Maintained school budget revisions due shortly will likely also demonstrate the growing pressures.

43. In order to undertake the school organisation work needed by the recommendations in this report additional revenue funding would be required to support a temporary increase in staffing within the Strategic Development Team. This is estimated to cost approximately £30,000 and will be funded from the Corporate Contingency as agreed with the Director of Finance.

PLANNING AREA REVIEW (PRIMARY AND SECONDARY)

44. The information detailed within this section outlines both the current and forecast position within each school place planning area. The data source for this information is the January 2023 census:

45. COWES (WEST)

| Cowes (West) Primary Schools | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Primary Planning Area | Number of Primary Schools | Year R: Total PANs Sept 2022 | Year R: Number on Roll Sept 2022 | Year R: % surplus Sept 2022 | Year R: Proposed PANs Sept 2024 | Year R: Forecast No. on Roll Sept 2024 | Year R: Forecast % surplus Sept 2024 |
| Cowes | 4 | 180 | 161 | 10.6% | 180 | 112 | 38.2 % |
| Cowes (West) Secondary Schools | | | | | | | |
| Secondary Planning Area | Number of Secondary Schools | Year 7: Total PANs Sept 2022 | Year 7: Number on roll Sept 2022 | Year 7: % surplus Sept 2022 | Year 7: Proposed PANs Sept 2024 | Year 7: Forecast No. on Roll Sept 2024 | Year 7: Forecast % surplus Sept 2024 |
| Cowes Secondary | 1 | 210 | 217 | -3.3% | 210 | 218 | -3.8% |

Explanatory notes:

Primary

- Despite the PAN reduction undertaken by Cowes Primary School, there is a significant decrease in Year R pupils forecast in the area and action must be taken to reduce capacity in-line with forecasts.

Proposal:

- Consultation on the closure of Cowes Primary School -The resulting impact would mean total capacity of 150 Year R places in area.

46. COWES (EAST)

| Cowes (East) Primary Schools | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Primary Planning Area | Number of Primary Schools | Year R: Total PANs Sept 2022 | Year R: Number on Roll Sept 2022 | Year R: % surplus Sept 2022 | Year R: Proposed PANs Sept 2024 | Year R: Forecast No. on Roll Sept 2024 | Year R: Forecast % surplus Sept 2024 |
| East Cowes Primary | 2 | 90 | 67 | 25.6% | 90 | 64 | 28.8% |

Explanatory notes:

Primary

- The number of Year R pupils living in the planning areas are typically accommodated within the number of places available.
- Despite an increasing surplus there are currently no plans to reduce the total number of places available within the planning area. Autumn Census data to be reviewed and if required appropriate action to be taken to manage any future surplus.

47. NEWPORT

| Newport Primary Schools | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Primary Planning Area | Number of Primary Schools | Year R: Total PANs Sept 2022 | Year R: Number on Roll Sept 2022 | Year R: % surplus Sept 2022 | Year R: Proposed PANs Sept 2024 | Year R: Forecast No. on Roll Sept 2024 | Year R: Forecast % surplus Sept 2024 |
| Newport Primary | 10 | 388 | 335 | 13.4% | 373 | 315 | 15.5% |
| Newport & West Wight Secondary Schools | | | | | | | |
| Secondary Planning Area | Number of Secondary Schools | Year 7: Total PANs Sept 2022 | Year 7: Number on roll Sept 2022 | Year 7: % surplus Sept 2022 | Year 7: Proposed PANs Sept 2024 | Year 7: Forecast No. on Roll Sept 2024 | Year 7: Forecast % surplus Sept 2024 |
| Newport Secondary | 3 | 480 | 476 | 0.8% | 480 | 484 | -0.8% |

Explanatory notes:

Primary

- Year R pupils in the area remain steady for the forecast period.
- The area presents a number of surplus places which will accommodate future fluctuations across the years with a possible increase in numbers forecast for September 2025.

- Within this area two schools have reduced their PAN to remove surplus places. These schools are:
 - Barton Primary School – Reduced from 45 to 30
 - Carisbrooke CE Primary School – Reduced from 60 to 45
- Chillerton & Rookley Primary School remains a concern with only 11 pupils on role as at January Census. All children have been educated on the Godshill Primary School site since January 2023 due to staffing issues. Parents and children are content with this arrangement. The recommendation in this report is to amalgamate Chillerton and Rookley Primary School with Godshill Primary School to be achieved through the closure of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School with effect from 1st January 2024. See section 43-50 for further details.

Proposal:

- Closure of Chillerton & Rookley Primary School with effect from 1st January 2024.

48. RYDE

| Ryde Primary Schools | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Primary Planning Area | Number of Primary Schools | Year R: Total PANs Sept 2022 | Year R: Number on Roll Sept 2022 | Year R: % surplus Sept 2022 | Year R: Proposed PANs Sept 2024 | Year R: Forecast No. on Roll Sept 2024 | Year R: Forecast % surplus Sept 2024 |
| Ryde Town | 6 | 240 | 187 | 22.1% | 240 | 176 | 26.8% |
| Ryde Rural | 2 | 45 | 45 | 0.0% | 45 | 29 | 36.2% |
| Ryde Secondary Schools | | | | | | | |
| Secondary Planning Area | Number of Secondary Schools | Year 7: Total PANs Sept 2022 | Year 7: Number on roll Sept 2022 | Year 7: % surplus Sept 2022 | Year 7: Proposed PANs Oct 2024 | Year 7: Forecast No. on Roll Oct 2024 | Year 7: Forecast % surplus Oct 2024 |
| Ryde Secondary | 1 | 270 | 284 | -5.2% | 270 | 291 | -7.8% |

Explanatory notes:

Primary

- There is a forecast reduction in Year R pupils for both Ryde Town and Ryde Rural planning areas.
- Ryde Rural, due to its isolated nature, accommodates small numbers of children which translate to a large percentage of surplus when compared to the places available.
- For Ryde Rural, there are no further plans to reduce the total number of places available within the planning area. Autumn Census data to be reviewed and if required measures taken to manage any surplus.
- Ryde Town has a significant number of surplus places and action is required to reduce the overall number.

- Oakfield CE Primary School lowered their PAN from 45 to 30 (1 FE) in September 2022, however it should be noted that the building has capacity for 420 (2FE) pupils.

Proposal:

- Consultation on the closure of St Marys RC Primary School -The resulting impact would mean total capacity of 210 year R places in area.

49. SANDOWN, SHANKLIN & VENTNOR

| Sandown, Shanklin & Ventnor Primary Schools | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Primary Planning Area | Number of Primary Schools | Year R: Total PANs Sept 2022 | Year R: Number on Roll Sept 2022 | Year R: % surplus Sept 2022 | Year R: Proposed PANs Sept 2024 | Year R: Forecast No. on Roll Sept 2024 | Year R: Forecast % surplus Sept 2024 |
| Sandown & Shanklin | 7 | 235 | 205 | 12.8% | 235 | 163 | 30.8% |
| Ventnor | 4 | 112 | 80 | 28.6% | 105 | 58 | 44.7% |
| Sandown, Shanklin & Ventnor Secondary Schools | | | | | | | |
| Secondary Planning Area | Number of Secondary Schools | Year 7: Total PANs Sept 2022 | Year 7: Number on roll Sept 2022 | Year 7: % surplus Sept 2022 | Year 7: Proposed PANs Sept 2024 | Year 7: Forecast No. on Roll Sept 2024 | Year 7: Forecast % surplus Sept 2024 |
| Sandown & Ventnor Secondary | 2 | 305 | 315 | -3.3% | 305 | 322 | -5.6% |

Explanatory notes:

Primary

- There is a forecast decrease in Year R pupils in both planning areas and there remains a significant number of surplus places, particularly within the Ventnor planning area.
- Within the Ventnor area, St Francis Primary School reduced their PAN from 45 to 30 and has repurposed some accommodation for the resource provision. Godshill Primary School has also requested to lower their PAN from 27 to 20 for September 2024.
- Within the Sandown and Shanklin area, Broadlea Primary Schools PAN has been reduced from 45 to 30 for September 2023.

Proposal

- Due to the proposed changes to Broadlea Primary School PAN, it is suggested that no further reductions are made in the Sandown and Shanklin planning area at present. However, this situation will need to be closely monitored.

- It is however proposed that within the Ventnor planning area a consultation on the closure of Wroxall Primary School is considered -The resulting impact would mean total capacity of 80 year R places in area.

50. WEST WIGHT

| West Wight Primary Schools | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Primary Planning Area | Number of Primary Schools | Year R: Total PANs Sept 2022 | Year R: Number on Roll Sept 2022 | Year R: % surplus Sept 2022 | Year R: Proposed PANs Sept 2024 | Year R: Forecast No. on Roll Sept 2024 | Year R: Forecast % surplus Sept 2024 |
| West Wight Primary | 4 | 74 | 75 | -1.4% | 74 | 83 | -11.6% |

Explanatory notes:

Primary

- Following the review of surplus places which concluded in the closure of All Saints CE Primary School in September 2020, the forecast data for the West Wight planning area currently remains stable.
- Brighstone CE Primary reduced their PAN from 30 to 15 in September 2021.
- The LA is closely reviewing demand for places in the area and additional places will be provided if required.

51. CHILLERTON & ROOKLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

52. The Council received a letter from the Stenbury Federation (the Governing Body for Chillerton and Rookley and Godshill Primary Schools) on 19 January 2021 requesting that an amalgamation of Chillerton and Rookley and Godshill Primary Schools be consulted upon. On 22 January 2021, an officer delegated decision was taken to approve a pre-publication consultation on the future of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School, part of the Stenbury Federation with Godshill Primary School.
53. A pre-publication consultation commenced on 29 January 2021 and ran until 19 March 2021. It was informed by a number of issues that the governors explained are compromising the viability and educational provision at Chillerton and Rookley Primary School.
54. Following a change of political administration, a decision was taken to undertake a second period of consultation which commenced on 5 November 2021 and ran until 17 December 2021.
55. In February 2022, Cabinet took the decision to defer the decision to proceed with the publication of a Public Notice to achieve the proposed amalgamation of Godshill Primary School and Chillerton and Rookley Primary School through the closure of Chillerton & Rookley Primary School with effect from the 31 August 2022, in order for further options to be explored.

56. Following extensive options to consider the future of the school site it is considered that with a sustained decline in intake of children to the school that the future of the school should be reconsidered.
57. The number of pupil numbers attending the school has fallen steadily over the last few years and the number of roll in April 2023 was 9 against a capacity at the school of 91 places. This contrasts with the number of pupils on roll in the 2017/18 academic year which was 85. Of the 9 pupils on roll in April 2023 only 2 pupils lived in Chillerton, and 3 lived in Rookley. The school has a PAN of 13. Schools are mainly funded based upon the number of pupils on roll. Low and falling pupil numbers has a significant impact on a school's budget.
58. It is recommended that Cabinet approve the publication of the Public Notice to achieve the proposed amalgamation of Godshill Primary School and Chillerton and Rookley Primary School through the closure of Chillerton & Rookley Primary School with effect from the 1 January 2024.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

59. The council has the power to make a proposal under the Education and Improvement Act 2006, in conjunction with the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013 to close the following types of schools: community, community special, maintained nursery, foundation, foundation special or voluntary (VC or VA). The council is 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 January 2023 and "The making significant changes (prescribed alterations) to maintained schools" dated January 2023.
60. In deciding to discontinue a maintained school, the Council must 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.
61. The local authority is empowered to propose the closure of all categories of maintained school. Where the local authority does make such a proposal it is also decision maker. A right of appeal to the Schools Adjudicator is in place, this enables the relevant diocese, school governing body or trustees to contest the decision taken by the local authority. There is no right of appeal on determinations made by the Schools Adjudicator.
62. Wroxall Primary School is designated as a rural school, and as such there are additional considerations for proposers. The "Opening and Closing of Maintained Schools" guidance sets out that there is a presumption against the closure of rural schools. This presumption does not mean that rural schools can never close, but that the case for closure should be strong and clearly in the best interests of educational provision in the area.

63. In formulating any closure proposals in relation to rural primary schools, proposers must have regards to the likely effect of the discontinuance of the school on the local community, the availability and likely cost of transport to other schools, any increase in motor vehicles which is likely to result from the discontinuance and the effect of that increase and any alternatives to the discontinuance.
64. Proposers must also be able to provide evidence that they have carefully considered a number of additional factors set out in the statutory guidance before proposing to close a rural primary school.
65. There is a statutory process to follow when closing maintained schools. It is a statutory requirement to consult any parties the proposer thinks appropriate before publishing proposals under section 15 Education and Inspections Act 2006 to close a maintained school. It is for the proposer to determine the nature and length of the pre-publication consultation, but the statutory guidance makes it clear that it is best practice for consultation to take place in term-time.
66. In the case of rural primary schools, the Education and Inspections Act 2006 sets out some particular groups who must be consulted in addition to the groups specified by the Secretary of state to be consulted for all closures, as follows:
 - a) The registered parents of registered pupils at the school
 - b) any parish council for the area in which the school is situated
 - c) any other interested organisation or person that the proposer thinks appropriate

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

67. 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; School Place Planning will have no negative impact on equality and diversity.
68. The policies of the Council in relation to equal opportunities and eliminating discrimination will continue to apply should a change be approved.
69. Council staff will work closely with the headteachers and governing bodies to assess any support that might be required by staff, students and their families / carers should any proposed consultations be approved.

PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

70. If the reduction of school places results in school closures further consideration will need to be given to the potential disposal of the site/s, should this be required. This will be for a future decision.

OPTIONS

71. The options that the Council have considered and consulted upon prior to deciding on its preferred option are:
- (1) To not undertake a review of the school places on the Island, meaning status quo remains.
 - (2) To approve a period of public consultation on the closure of Cowes Primary School, St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School and Wroxall Primary School to commence Autumn 2023. And;
 - (3) To approve the publication of a Public Notice to amalgamate Chillerton and Rookley Primary School with Godshill Primary School to be achieved through the closure of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School with effect from the 1 January 2024.
 - (4) To approve a period of public consultation on the closure of Cowes Primary School, St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School and Wroxall Primary School to commence Autumn 2023 And;
 - (5) To not approve the publication of a Public Notice to amalgamate Chillerton and Rookley Primary School with Godshill Primary School to be achieved through the closure of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School with effect from the 1 January 2024.

RISK MANAGEMENT

72. Financial risks have been reviewed and considered by the Senior Finance Business Partner and further information can be reviewed in the Finance section of this report.
73. The council is required to pro-actively and effectively manage surplus capacity and performance across all the schools it is responsible for. Failure to do so in this instance would lead to lost opportunities and continuing uncertainties for all involved:
- As surplus numbers increase over the coming years schools will be faced with ever greater financial challenges, potentially leading to job losses and a reduced ability to offer a wide, quality, and varied curriculum.
 - Parents, carers, staff, and pupils would continue to be faced with uncertainties around the availability and quality of the educational offer on the Island.
 - The capital and revenue resources available to the council would not be sufficient to support all schools and could lead to a number of budget deficits.
74. The proposed risks set-out above are mitigated by the recommendations in this report. The overall number of schools serving the areas is reduced in-line with future need, located where a majority of pupils live and ensure performance and standards can be effectively addressed.

EVALUATION

75. The current number of primary school places in the areas identified for review is unsustainable leading to the inefficient use of resources in the area. If used more effectively these resources could be better targeted to improving the educational outcomes of the local children rather than maintaining the schools' estate which provides for and maintains the oversupply of places. The council must look to the needs of the children, not only now, but also long into the future in coming to its final decision about how to address the oversupply of places.
76. The recommendations set out in this report are felt to provide the best opportunity to secure long term educational improvement and financial stability for families and schools.
77. The future of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School has previously been considered by Cabinet, and despite continued support from the Local Authority and the Governing Body the Schools intake has continued to decline with 2 academic years with no children on role.

APPENDICES ATTACHED

78. Appendix 1 – IOW Primary School place planning areas
79. Appendix 2 – Headteachers letter

BACKGROUND PAPERS

80. A report was presented to Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Childrens Service's, Education and Lifelong Skills on 1 September 2022. The detail of this report and the presentation can be found in the link shared below. [Policy and Scrutiny Committee - School Place Planning](https://iow.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s8990/Item 5 - Policy and Scrutiny Report -CS - School Place Planning - FINAL.pdf)
(<https://iow.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s8990/Item 5 - Policy and Scrutiny Report -CS - School Place Planning - FINAL.pdf>)

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