



Cabinet report

Date	10 FEBRUARY 2022
Title	THE FUTURE OF CHILLERTON & ROOKLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL
Report of	CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND LIFELONG SKILLS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Stenbury Federation (the Governing Body for Chillerton and Rookley and Godshill Primary Schools) wrote to the Isle of Wight Council on 19 January 2021 requesting that an amalgamation of Chillerton and Rookley and Godshill Primary Schools be consulted upon. An initial public consultation commenced on the 29 January 2021 and concluded on the 19 March 2021.
2. Cabinet took the decision to undertake a further period of consultation on a range of options as set out in section 54 of this report. This period of consultation commenced on the 5 November and concluded on the 17 December 2021.
3. This report sets out the outcomes of the consultation period, including recommendations on next steps and associated timeframe.

RECOMMENDATION

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">4. That Cabinet approves the publication of a Public Notice that achieves the 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 as set out in the report. |
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BACKGROUND

5. 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.
6. 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.

7. The consultation was an on-line consultation with no public meetings able to be held owing to the coronavirus pandemic. People consulted included the parents of the pupils attending Chillerton and Rookley and Godshill Primary Schools, the Member of Parliament, Parish Councils, local councillors, Trade Unions, and residents. In total 110 responses were received from different sources with some people making more than one response.
8. Following a change in the Council's political administration after the local government elections in May 2021 the new administration took a decision to undertake a further period of public consultation that included a range of options as set-out in section 54 of this report. This was to provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to comment on a broad range of options and bring forward alternate proposals should they wish.
9. This second period of consultation commenced on 5 November 2021 and ran until 17 December 2021.
10. The consultation was an on-line consultation with two public meetings held at both Chillerton and Rookley and Godshill Primary School. People consulted included the parents of the pupils attending Chillerton and Rookley and Godshill Primary School, the Member of Parliament, Parish Councils, local councillors, Trade Unions, and residents. In total 233 responses were received from different sources with some people making more than one response.
11. The number of pupils attending Chillerton and Rookley Primary School has fallen steadily over the last few years and the number on roll at census day in October 2021 was 21 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 21 pupils on roll in October 2021 only two pupils lived in Chillerton and eight lived in Rookley. The school has a Published Admission Number (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.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

12. 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.

Responding to climate change and enhancing the biosphere

13. By closing one school site it could result in additional children needing to be transported to school, however overall by maintaining one site for the total number of pupils 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.

14. Godshill Primary School is a more energy efficient building than Chillerton & Rookley Primary School.
15. Subject to the availability of funding heat decarbonisation plans will be commissioned in the near 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 to be carbon neutral by 2035.

Economic Recovery and Reducing Poverty

16. 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

17. 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.
18. 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. Participation workers experienced in coproduction can support engagement with the Youth Council, our Island children and wider groups of young people to ensure the voice of young people is sought, heard and acted upon on important matters that will affect them.

Corporate Aims

19. 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.

CONSULTATION

20. On the 14 October 2021 Cabinet approved the commencement of a further six-week public consultation period on the future of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School.

21. This period of consultation commenced on the 5 November and concluded on the 17 December 2021.
22. During the consultation council officers held two public meetings. The first public meeting at Godshill Primary School was attended by 12 people, groups represented included school staff and governors, parents, local schools, residents, local councillors, and unions. The second meeting held at Chillerton and Rookley Primary School was also attended by 12 people with the audience made up of similar groups to that of the first meeting.
23. Below is a summary of some of the key questions and issues raised and discussed at both public meetings:
 - Consideration of the Island Free School as an academy sponsor. Has the Isle of Wight Council been approached?
 - New housing yield and will this have an impact upon school numbers in the future?
 - Concern that the consultation needs to be rigorous and that the children's best interests are served
 - Concerns raised around the covenant placed on part of the Chillerton & Rookley Primary School site and its potential impact should the decision be taken to close the school
 - Concerns raised around the lack of response to the consultation given the low attendance to the public meetings
 - Chillerton & Rookley Primary School has been listed as an asset of community value. Will this affect further use of the school?
 - What options exist around future use/disposal of the Chillerton & Rookley Primary School site?
 - Is Godshill Primary School at risk due to low birth rates?
 - Impact upon other local schools and multi academy trusts should the school be closed
 - Further information requested on Flexi schooling
 - Transport implication if the school should close. There is no bus route that links Chillerton to Godshill. How are children expected to get there?
 - Concerns raised around why the school is in this position
 - What is the required DfE process which will be followed and what are the next steps?
24. A total of 212 responses were received to the online survey, a further 21 written responses were also received, these are summarised at Appendix 1. The following key conclusions can be drawn from them:
 - The largest number of respondents (32%) to the online consultation preferred option was to amalgamate Chillerton and Rookley Primary School with Godshill Primary School to be achieved through the closure of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School
 - 25% raised a preference for a free school / academy to be secured as a sponsor
 - Concerns were raised around the management and leadership of the Stenbury Federation, which some feel has led to the low pupil intake over recent years
 - Proposed housing developments could lead to increased pupil numbers in the future, therefore requiring additional school places to be available

- No school on the Chillerton & Rookley site would bring local travel issues as more children would need transport to get to a school
 - Flexi schooling could be successful as located in an area where many children are home educated
25. As part of the consultation the council invited alternative options to be submitted. One option was raised through the online survey which referred to the site being repurposed to provide a Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Primary School provision. Further information on the consideration of this can be found under the options section.

FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

26. 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. Most of the funding to schools is based upon the number of pupils on roll. Therefore, when the overall pupil numbers in the school reduce, then the funding allocation is reduced on a per pupil basis.
27. Under the current local and National Funding Formula school budgets are heavily linked to the number of pupils on roll. The age-weighted pupil unit (AWPU) is the basic funding that all pupils attract. The current AWPU funding amount is £3,167 for primary pupils and this illustrates how critical pupil numbers are to the funding of each school's provision. Schools with fewer pupils than expected can result in pressures that may affect standards, outcomes for children and therefore the overall viability of the school. A balanced budget is one that will lead neither to an excessive surplus at the end of the year nor to a deficit. A budget is well-informed when it takes account of the best available information on all variables, such as pupil numbers and staffing changes. Setting an annual budget is an absolute requirement as part of the local authority's (LA's) budgeting arrangement as set out in the schemes for financing schools. This is monitored and will lead to intervention to ensure financial viability if budget planning shows a future or continued deficit.
28. The pupil forecast for Chillerton and Rookley shows a continued fall in pupil numbers based on the historic trend of recruitment for reception year pupils. The headteacher reports that the school had 21 pupils on roll at the October 2021 census. This includes those pupils on roll at Chillerton and Rookley but being educated on the Godshill site for operational reasons.
29. The financial position of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School has remained unresolved since 2016/17 and for the financial year 2020/21 the cumulative deficit is now at £80,374. The school took some mitigations during 2020/21 but a recent budget submission indicates this deficit still worsening during 2021/22 to a deficit of £85,349. The forecast fall in pupil numbers and the lagged funding based on the previous October census means the school is forecasting the deficit further increasing to £93,699 over the period to 2022/23 financial year. The school budget share for 2021/22 is £300,000 with over £228,000 (76%) of this spent on staffing. The current deficit is significant and an equivalent of 27% of the school's annual core funding. Running one classroom on the Chillerton site will lead to an increase in the in-year budget deficit that will continue to grow in subsequent years, based on reasonable projections of pupil numbers.

30. Godshill Primary School has also remained in deficit at the end of the 2020/21 financial year resulting in a cumulative outturn deficit of £136,052, but in the following three financial years this deficit is expected to continually reduce to under £45,000 as the number on roll at the school increases. This position does not include any additional Chillerton and Rookley Primary School pupils that may access their education at Godshill, as they remain on roll at Chillerton and Rookley unless they transfer through normal admissions requests by parents and carers. In comparison, the school budget share for Godshill is over £627,000 making it better placed to make the necessary efficiencies and structural changes to become affordable going forward.
31. Under the Isle of Wight Scheme for Financing Schools, the final balance of any closing schools reverts to the Council and therefore, the financial risk to the local authority needs to be closely monitored to minimise any future deficit should the school be closed.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

32. Decision-makers will need to bear in mind at this stage that some changes to maintained schools are considered 'prescribed alterations', which will require a specific statutory process to be followed for their correct implementation. This process is set out in the statutory guidance 'Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools' updated in October 2018. Additionally, any proposal that requires a school to close (including a closure to amalgamate) will need to consider the statutory guidance 'Opening and closing maintained schools' updated in November 2019. Both Godshill Primary School and Chillerton and Rookley Primary School are designated as rural primary schools, the closure of which requires additional consultation and due consideration by decision-makers.
33. 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 closure of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School can be mitigated by the proposed relocation of pupils to Godshill Primary School if parents wish to have their children educated at the school.
 - *the proportion of pupils attending the school from within the local community, i.e. is the school being used by the local community*; Chillerton and Rookley Primary School is not the school of choice by the majority of its community. As at December 2021 of the 26 primary age pupils who had Chillerton in their address only two attend Chillerton and Rookley Primary School.
 - *educational standards at the school and the likely effect on standards at neighbouring schools*; In 2017, Ofsted inspected Godshill Primary School and concluded that the quality of education required improvement. The inspection team concluded "Leadership capacity has been weakened during a period of turbulence. Consequently, leaders have not maintained previously good standards of teaching, learning and assessment across the school". In 2018, Chillerton and Rookley Primary School had a short inspection from Ofsted. In

2018 a new Executive Headteacher and Chair of Governors were appointed. In September 2018, shortly after these appointments, Ofsted reinspected Chillerton and Rookley and determined that the school required improvement. They noted that a good start had been made in tackling the priorities for improvement and stated 'Governors have taken determined action to improve their own effectiveness. They have sensible plans to tackle the biggest challenges facing the school. The determined actions of the local authority have kept the school safe during a period of instability. Strong interim leadership has ensured that the necessary improvements to teaching, learning and assessment have been started'. In September 2019, Godshill Primary School was also judged to be requiring improvement, however leadership was judged to be good with Ofsted concluding 'After many changes in a short space of time, the school is now well led'. Both Chillerton and Rookley and Godshill Primary Schools are on a strong trajectory to come out of the Ofsted category of 'Requires Improvement'. Godshill Primary School has had two monitoring visits during the Covid-19 pandemic and on both occasions, Ofsted has judged the school to be taking 'effective action'. The availability, and likely cost to the LA, of transport to other schools; the closure of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School will incur some additional transport costs to provide Home to School Transport for children living closest to the school. Each case will need to be assessed for LA funded transport eligibility and the child must be attending their nearest school.

- *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);* there are sufficient surplus places within the planning area at Godshill Primary School to accommodate the displaced pupils currently on roll at Chillerton and Rookley Primary School.
- *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 increases;* In November 2020 of the thirty-four pupils on roll at Chillerton and Rookley Primary, Godshill Primary was the nearest for eight of those pupils, and twelve travelled from out of area. The closure of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School and the subsequent relocation of pupils to Godshill Primary School will therefore not necessarily increase the overall use of the motor vehicle for the school run as parents drive their children to Godshill instead of Chillerton.
- *any alternatives to the closure of the school;* As noted within this report a number of alternatives have been considered and the local authority believes the closure of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School provides the best opportunity to stabilise the educational offer in that part of the Island.
- *transport implications i.e., the availability, and likely cost of transport to other schools and sustainability issues;* Chillerton resident pupils will be entitled to local authority funded transport if they are eligible under the Home to School Transport Policy, to what becomes their nearest school if Chillerton and Rookley Primary School closes. A previous paragraph provides further detail.
- *the size of the school and whether it puts the children at an educational disadvantage e.g., in terms of breadth of curriculum or resources available;* with a possible number on roll of 15 for the 2022/23 academic year the school is

likely to be able to run two classes, one for Key stage 1 pupils and the other for Key Stage 2 pupils. Running one class across three (KS1) or four (KS2) years will impact on the breadth of curriculum that can be offered at the school.

- *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*; no decision has been made about the future of the Chillerton and Rookley Primary School site. The School building has been listed as an Asset of Community Value at the request of the local community.
- *wider school organisation and capacity of good schools in the area to accommodate displaced pupils*; pupil numbers in the area are forecast to fall over the next few years so it is anticipated that there will be places available at good schools in the area.

34. The proposed option to amalgamate Chillerton and Rookley Primary School with Godshill Primary School to be achieved through the closure of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School will require consideration of the statutory guidance in respect of rural school closures.
35. Any closure of a rural primary school requires consultation with: the parents of registered pupils; the governing body; the pupils; the teachers and other staff, the governing bodies, teachers and other staff of any other affected school(s); the parents of any pupils at other schools who may be affected; trade unions; the MP and any other interested organisation.
36. Making prescribed alterations requires a four-stage process to be followed prior to implementation, which includes a period of formal consultation. While there is no statutory pre-publication consultation period for this type of change, the statutory guidance makes it clear that there is a 'strong expectation' that schools and Local Authorities will consult all interested parties in developing their proposal prior to publication, to take into account all relevant considerations.

ADMISSIONS

37. The number of pupils offered a place for Year R in September 2021 for Chillerton and Rookley Primary and Godshill Primary were:

	PAN	Total
Chillerton and Rookley Primary	13	1
Godshill Primary	27	21

38. The primary admissions application process for September 2022 intake closed on 15th January 2022. At the point of closing no first preference applications were received for Chillerton and Rookley Primary School.
39. Children currently attending Chillerton and Rookley Primary School and those due to be on roll in September 2022, can be accommodated in Godshill Primary School. Parents can express preferences for other school places at any time and those requests will be handled by the Schools Admission Team in line with published policies.

TRANSPORT

40. Subject to the outcome of the consultation any transport issues arising will be managed in-line with the Council's Home to School Transport policy.

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

41. In 2012, Godshill Primary School was inspected by Ofsted and inspectors concluded that the quality of education being provided was of a good quality. The following year, in 2013, Chillerton and Rookley Primary School was also judged to be good by an Ofsted inspection team. Both schools were able to set a balanced budget until the financial year 2017/18. In 2017, Ofsted reinspected Godshill Primary School and concluded that the quality of education required improvement. The inspection team concluded "Leadership capacity has been weakened during a period of turbulence. Consequently, leaders have not maintained previously good standards of teaching, learning and assessment across the school". In 2018, Chillerton and Rookley Primary School had a short inspection from Ofsted (Ofsted had by this time adopted a new 'short' inspection for schools previously judged to be good) during which priorities for improvement were clearly identified.
42. In 2018 a new Executive Headteacher and Chair of Governors were appointed. In September 2018, shortly after these appointments, Ofsted reinspected Chillerton and Rookley and determined that the school required improvement. They noted that a good start had been made in tackling the priorities for improvement and stated 'Governors have taken determined action to improve their own effectiveness. They have sensible plans to tackle the biggest challenges facing the school. The determined actions of the local authority have kept the school safe during a period of instability. Strong interim leadership has ensured that the necessary improvements to teaching, learning and assessment have been started'. In September 2019, Godshill Primary School was also judged to be requiring improvement, however leadership was judged to be good with Ofsted concluding 'After many changes in a short space of time, the school is now well led'.
43. Both Chillerton and Rookley and Godshill Primary Schools are on a strong trajectory to come out of the Ofsted category of 'Requires Improvement'. Godshill Primary School has had two monitoring visits during the Covid-19 pandemic and on both occasions, Ofsted has judged the school to be taking 'effective action'.
44. Despite the improvements being made at Chillerton and Rookley Primary School numbers have continued to decline. The lack of pupils at Chillerton and Rookley restricts the budget available to ensure sufficient leadership staffing and time, professional development for staff and access to high quality external support that are essential to ongoing school improvement.
45. When Chillerton and Rookley Primary School was last inspected in September 2018, inspectors found the school to be a safe and happy place where children felt well looked after. However, Ofsted judged that, in particular, pupils did not make enough progress in Key Stage 1, and that outcomes in mathematics were weak across the school (Ofsted report at this link: <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50029816>)
46. The school was given an action to increase the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards in reading, writing and maths. The school has made significant

progress in addressing these issues. The decision to combine some of the cohorts including Year 6 from the Godshill and Chillerton and Rookley schools for lessons has created an opportunity to enhance the progress of these children. The larger combined cohort has increased the positive impact of peer-to-peer learning and modelling, enhanced social and emotional development, and enabled focused teaching in similar attainment groups. This is evidenced by end of year teacher assessments and student voice feedback.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

47. 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 future of Chillerton & Rookley Primary School will have no negative impact on equality and diversity.
48. The policies of the Council in relation to equal opportunities and eliminating discrimination will continue to apply should a change be approved.
49. 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 any proposed changes be approved.

PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

50. No decision has been made about the longer-term use of the Chillerton & Rookley Primary School site should a decision be taken to close the school. However, concerns have been raised by consultees around the legal position of the Chillerton & Rookley Primary School site, should the decision be taken to cease educational use on it.
51. The school land is held on-trust by the council. If the school is closed the property (or any proceeds of sale) could revert to the beneficiaries of the estate of the original owner.
52. The proceeds of sale could be used to fund the purchase or improvement of alternative school premises. Alternatively, the council could apply to the Charity Commission to set up a scheme for a similar charitable purpose which would extinguish the trust.

PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

53. Staffing implications will be considered subject to the final outcome of this consultation. However, it is unlikely at this stage that any redundancies will be necessary. If this is required it will be undertaken 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 any staff consultation will be set out, including the timetable for formal consultation with staff and unions.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

54. The options that the Council have considered and consulted upon prior to deciding on its preferred option are:

1. To leave both schools open and federated, meaning the status quo remains.

Merits

- Enables both schools to remain open, for at least the short-term, so maintains a local school within the village
- Stability for pupils currently accessing provision at the Chillerton and Rookley site and also those accessing provision at the Godshill site
- Reduces transport costs and environmental impact for those parents/carers that currently are able to walk their children to Chillerton and Rookley School (as of July 2021 school records show this to be four parents/carers)
- Allows the Stenbury Federation to seek additional pupils to make the school financially sustainable
- Continues to allow the spread of the cost of the Headteacher across both schools in the federation. The current cost of the Headteacher is shared across the two schools in the federation together with Barton Primary

Demerits

- The budget forecast will show a growing deficit budget for Chillerton and Rookley as set out above
- Pupil forecasts for the schools do not show either school recruiting significant numbers of additional pupils going forward
- Neither school will be financially sustainable without a significant growth in pupil numbers
- Only 7% of consultees agreed that this was the preferred option

2. The amalgamation of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School with Godshill Primary School to be achieved through the closure of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School

Merits

- This was the most preferred option for the consultees, with 32% requesting this option be pursued.
- All pupils at Chillerton & Rookley can, at the current time, be offered a place at Godshill Primary School
- Larger cohort of pupils will allow a more varied and stronger educational offer to be made
- It is understood by consultees that longer-term financial stability for the amalgamated school is more likely to be achieved
- Overall environmental and fiscal benefits of only maintaining one site for total pupil numbers
- Total resulting environmental and fiscal energy costs less than Godshill closure as Godshill is a more energy efficient building than Chillerton and Rookley
- Factoring in the yield from the local housing developments and declining birth rates this still leaves surplus capacity within the local area. By reducing the number of school places, it has a positive impact on other local schools that are not at capacity.

Demerits

- Pupils that live in the village of Chillerton and Rookley will have to travel to Godshill for their education. Currently the children of four families walk to school, so there

would be transport and environmental implications that may well include increased car use for these.

- Loss of a local school within Chillerton and Rookley
 - Loss of a school that has access to a nature area
 - No readily accessible public transport from Chillerton & Rookley to Godshill
3. **The amalgamation of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School with Godshill Primary School to be achieved through the closure of Godshill Primary School.**

Merits

- All pupils at Godshill will be offered a place at Chillerton and Rookley Primary School
- Will allow the existing pre-school to remain financially viable
- Larger cohort of pupils will allow a more varied and stronger educational offer to be made
- Longer term financial stability for the school will be achieved
- Environmental and fiscal benefits of only maintaining one site for total pupil numbers

Demerits

- Will require expansion of Chillerton and Rookley building to accommodate all pupils if they transfer from Godshill with unbudgeted capital requirements
- Pupils from Godshill will have to travel to Chillerton and Rookley for their education
- Loss of a local school within Godshill
- Environmental and fiscal costs greater than Chillerton and Rookley closure as Chillerton and Rookley a less energy efficient building than Godshill
- Will require transport to be provided for some pupils, most likely their eligibility will be to Wroxall Primary School
- Could see an increased use of the car by parents
- No readily accessible public transport from Godshill to Chillerton and Rookley
- Only 5% of consultees agreed that this was the preferred option

4. **To seek an academy/free school sponsor for Chillerton and Rookley Primary School and, if successful, to defederate the school from the Stenbury Federation.**

Merits

- This option was the second most popular option through the consultation, with 25% requesting this option be pursued. The Isle of Wight Council informed the Regional Schools Commissioner that this was an option being consulted upon. It is the Regional Schools Commissioner and her advisory panel that would have to approve an academy or free school taking on Chillerton and Rookley within a multi-academy trust. On the 17th January 2022 the Regional Schools Commissioner confirmed they have not been approached with a proposal by any academy or free school.
- Provides additional support and resources through an established academy/free school trust
- Enables the academy trust to promote the school with the intention of attracting more pupils
- Maintains a local school within the village

Demerits

- A key principle of the academy programme is to have strong multi academy trusts (MATs) with a family of schools, especially in areas where standards are low. MATs need to demonstrate their strategic plan for growth, as there is an expectation set by the DfE to form partnerships with other schools. No MAT has stepped forward to do this.
 - Without additional pupils joining the school this option would not make the school financially sustainable and this is likely to be a key consideration in the due diligence undertaken by any potential sponsor and the DfE
 - The current low number of pupils means the school will not be able to afford the staffing of a full-time Headteacher, or full-time members of other key staff such as caretaker and school business manager risking a strain on the resources of the sponsor, that may not be an attractive proposition
 - Recent enquiries of the DfE indicate that it is very unlikely that a sponsor can be found who is prepared to take on a small rural school with a significant financial deficit and forecast pupil numbers that show no growth over the coming years. The current deficit would transfer to the academy/free school sponsor.
 - Any significant shift in pupils in the area could put financial pressure onto other local schools and may affect viability elsewhere
- 5. To defederate Chillerton & Rookley from the Stenbury Federation and reform it as a stand-alone primary school.**

Merits

- Enables the formation of a new Governing Body that would seek to promote the school and its attractiveness to additional pupils through forming a new strategic vision
- Maintains a local school within the village

Demerits

- With the low number of pupils, the school will not have the financial resources to afford a full-time Headteacher or full-time members of other key staff such as caretakers and school business manager, as was the original consideration in forming a federation. The pupil number and financial factors that informed that decision remain a context
 - Without significant additional pupils joining the school this option is currently financially unsustainable
 - The defederation of both schools has the potential to put both Chillerton and Rookley and Godshill at future risk of closure.
 - Would require pupils to leave existing provision, therefore putting financial pressure on to other local schools
 - Only 8% of consultees agreed that this was the preferred option
- 6. To seek another local maintained school to federate with Chillerton and Rookley Primary School.**

Merits

- Maintains a local school within the village
- Allow the Governing Body of the new federation to promote the school in order to attract more pupils
- Shares the cost of a headteacher

Demerits

- Unless additional pupils are recruited on to the school roll the forecast for the budget shows a growing deficit
- Unlikely to find a school willing to take on such a small school with a significant deficit and declining pupil numbers forecast. The current deficit would remain with the school and transfer to the new federation
- Not financially sustainable without a significant growth in pupil numbers
- Would require pupils to leave existing federation provision, therefore putting financial pressure onto the other school in the Stenbury Federation who benefit from the shared resources and staffing.
- Only 2% of consultees agreed that this was the preferred option

7. To set up provision for flexi-schooling on the Chillerton and Rookley site to sit alongside full-time provision.

Merits

- This option was the third most popular option through the consultation, with 20% requesting this option be pursued.
- Maintains a local school within the village
- Several parents/carers of children that are currently elective home education (EHE) have expressed an interest in this option.
- The school will receive funding for each pupil on roll (pupils being flexi-schooled must be registered on the school roll), so if this does attract additional pupils then it will increase the funding coming into the school on a per pupil basis

Demerits

- The school would be accountable for the safeguarding and academic standards of all the pupils on roll at the school including those where flexi-schooling had been agreed. This poses a challenge as pupils are not required to be in school every day meaning the governors and leadership of the school are unable to fully ensure academic standards and safeguarding requirements are met on a daily basis. Good pupil progress is secured through careful sequencing of lessons over a period of time. That becomes complicated for a teacher to manage if children who are being flexi-schooled are only attending some lessons.
- Without a permanent growth in the number of pupils on roll this is a financially unsustainable model
- Electively home educating parents would not be able to use the facility without signing their children up to the roll of the school and following whatever pattern and directives the school would choose to use to implement any flexi-schooling model. This appears to be antithetical to the principle of Elective Home Education.

8. To open a new SEND Special School for Primary aged children

Merits

- The Island has a shortfall of SEND places, but it is not yet identified where exactly additional capacity is required. This review is currently underway.
- Maintains a school within the village

Demerits

- The site is not centrally located on the Island and is constrained in terms of accessibility
- Significant capital funding would be required to upgrade and remodel the building.

55. **The recommended option is that Cabinet approves the publication of a Public Notice for the amalgamation of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School with Godshill Primary School to be achieved through the closure of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School, with the anticipated implementation being September 2022.**

RISK MANAGEMENT

56. 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.
57. 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.

EVALUATION

58. The recommendation in this report to amalgamate Chillerton and Rookley Primary School with Godshill Primary School to be achieved through the closure of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School has been carefully considered. It has taken into account many different factors and fully considered all the feedback received during both consultation periods. The recommendation will reduce the number of surplus places in the area and support the on-going provision of high quality education across Godshill and Chillerton & Rookley and the Island.

APPENDICES ATTACHED

59. Appendix 1 - Consultation Response Data

BACKGROUND PAPERS

60. Background paper:
<https://iow.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s4965/Report.pdf>

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