



Report for Leader Decision (Education and Children's Services portfolio)

Decision Date:	12 July 2024
Reference number:	EC03.24
Title:	Closure of Westcott CE School, Westcott, Aylesbury HP18 0PH
Cabinet Member(s):	Cllr Anita Cranmer
Contact officer:	Paula Campbell-Balcombe
Ward(s) affected:	Stone and Waddesdon
Recommendations:	The Leader is recommended to approve the closure of Westcott CE School, Westcott, Aylesbury HP18 0PH with effect from 31st August 2024.
Reason for decision:	Following a decrease in the pupil population across the Waddesdon planning area, low pupil numbers at Westcott CE School are impacting on the School's financial viability and consequent ability to sustain high-quality teaching and learning for its pupils.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 Westcott CE School is a small, rural primary school for children aged 4-11. The school has a published admission number of 15 with a capacity for 105 pupils. The school heavily relies on attracting children from outside the area, in particular Aylesbury Town, due to its small catchment population. The school, as at January 2024, (when the initial consultation was launched) had only 33 pupils on roll (i.e. 69% surplus capacity); 14 of the pupils are in Year 6 and due to leave the school at the end of the school year and there are only 7 pupils across all of Key Stage 1 (i.e. Reception, Year 1 and Year 2). The School was only allocated one pupil for admission into Reception in September 2024 and they have since declined the offered place.
- 1.2 In November 2023, following discussions with officers from the Education Directorate, and the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education (ODBE) the Governing Board of the Westcott CE

School made the decision to initiate the process for closure due to their view that in the present circumstances the school was unsustainable.

- 1.3 The first stage consultation process on the future of Westcott CE School commenced on 31st January 2024 and concluded on 13th March 2024. 70 responses were received, 52 (74%) against the proposal; 17 (24%) in support of the proposal; 1 response (2%) did not express a preference. No viable alternatives were put forward during the consultation period and the decision was therefore taken to progress to the next stage of the consultation process and to publish a Statutory Notice proposing the closure of the School.
- 1.4 The second stage was the publication of the statutory notice for the closure of the school which included a representation period commencing on 8th May 2024 and concluding on 4^h June 2024. Five responses were received, two against the proposal, two in support and one did not say.
- 1.5 **Following analysis of the responses from the consultation and statutory notice the Leader, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services, is recommended to approve the closure of Westcott CE School from 31st August 2024.**

2. Content of report

- 2.1 The reasons that give rise to the proposal to close Westcott CE School include:
 - Low current/projected pupil numbers and a surplus of places in the local area; Falling number of births in Westcott village (c. 2 children a year based on birth figures over the last six years)
 - The school has been under a Directive Academy Order (following Ofsted judging the school to be inadequate in June 2022), unfortunately it has not been possible to secure a Multi Academy Trust sponsor to take over the school. On the 30th April 2024 the DfE revoked the academy order on the basis that the school would not be viable as an academy, so allowing a statutory notice to be published proposing the closure of the school.
 - Increasing deficit budget situation meaning that the school is not financially viable.
 - A lease on part of the school site ends in 2032 and the landowner has confirmed that they do not intend to extend the lease beyond its expiry date.
- 2.2 Westcott CE School is classed by the DfE as a rural school for which there is a presumption against the closure. While this does not mean that a rural school will never close, the case for closure should be strong and the proposal clearly in the best interests of educational provision in the area.
- 2.3 Proposers must show that they have carefully considered the following factors:
 - I. demand for the school and availability of places across the wider area
 - II. educational offer at the school
 - III. transport and admissions implications

- IV. the impact on the community
- V. alternatives to closure including joining a MAT

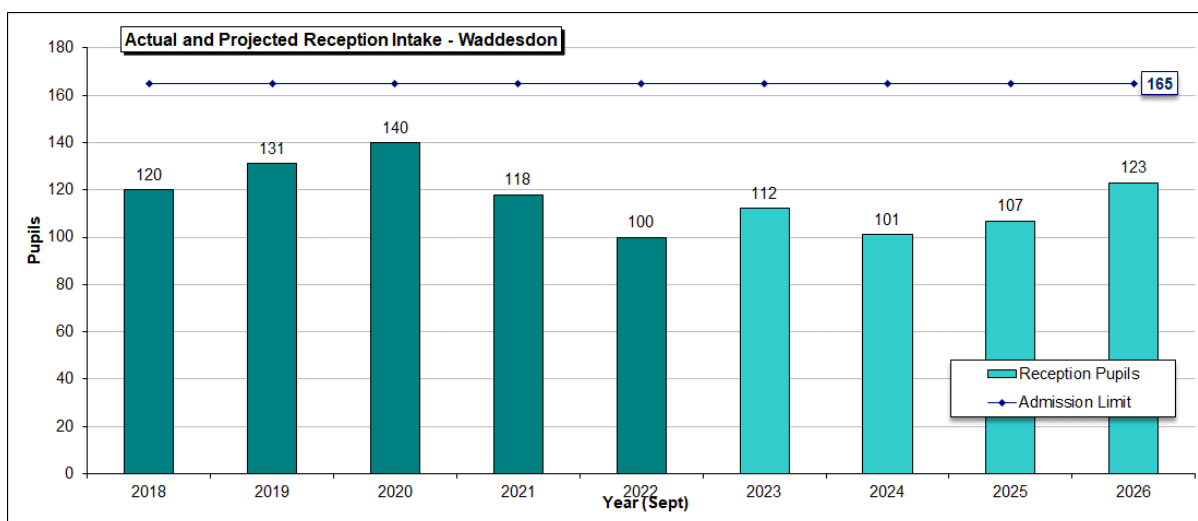
2.4 The Governing Board of Westcott CE School have considered all these factors, which are explored in more detail below, and despite the best efforts of governors, staff and the support of the ODBE and the LA, the Governing Board have decided to progress the statutory process for closure.

2.5 Consideration of these points is summarised below:

(i) Demand for Westcott CE School and availability of places across the wider area

2.6 Westcott CE School is a small, rural primary school for children aged 4-11 and has an admission number of 15 with a capacity for 105 pupils. The school heavily relies on attracting children from outside the area, in particular Aylesbury Town, due to its small catchment population. The school, as at January 2024, had only 33 pupils on roll (i.e. 69% surplus capacity); 14 of the pupils are in Year 6 and due to leave the school at the end of the school year and there are only 7 pupils across all of Key Stage 1 (i.e. Reception, Year 1 and Year 2). The School was only allocated one pupil for admission into Reception in September 2024.

2.7 The latest projections below for the Waddesdon planning area show that there is no significant change in the pre-school population for the foreseeable future and that therefore schools will need to rely on families from Aylesbury to fill places.



2.8 Projections forecast that there will be approximately 42-64 surplus intake places over the next three years (i.e. 25-40%). Approximately 500 homes have been allocated in the planning area within the Aylesbury Local Plan, however, most have already been approved/completed and have been incorporated within the projections above so there is little prospect that demand will significantly rise over the planning period to 2033. Based on the demographic data and current trends the closure of Westcott CE School could help

to reduce the significant levels of surplus capacity in the area and increase the viability of other good schools in the area.

- 2.9 The school has a nursery to encourage more families to the school. The nursery children are taught together with Reception pupils to make the class more viable – although the nursery is also struggling to attract children and has only two pupils in attendance (as at January 2024).

(ii) Educational offer.

- 2.10 Ofsted’s inspection in June 2022 and May 2023 recognised the school as “inadequate”. Since then, the school has had high teacher turnover and many pupils have left the school. The school is currently having to operate with mixed age classes across more than two year groups. Due to falling budget share linked to falling pupil numbers, the school may need to reduce to two classes by 2024/25. Despite the best efforts of staff, school leaders and governors, there is inevitably a risk that the educational experience of each pupil is therefore not as good as it might be in another context in terms of breadth of curriculum and resources available.

(iii) Impact on the Community

- 2.11 It is recognised that the closure of the school in Westcott will result in the loss of school provision in the village. This has been carefully weighed up against minimal local demand and the sustainability of delivering quality education and financial viability into the future.
- 2.12 While the impact on the wider community is an important consideration, the key consideration is to determine whether the proposal is in the best interests of children who are educated at the school. The school itself is on a small site with constrained facilities and is not used by external organisations. There is a local cricket club in the village which is hired out for small functions and meetings.
- 2.13 The ODBE owns the school buildings and site apart from (i) the forest school area which is leased to the school by the church and (ii) the land to the north of the school building which is owned by the Woodward Trust, the lease to which expires in 2032. The Woodward Trust have confirmed that they are not willing to extend the lease which will be a challenge to resolve. Without this land, the school will be left with very limited outdoor space after 2032 and a new access route will need to be agreed to access the land owned by the church. A decision on the future use of the site owned by the ODBE has not yet been taken and will not be taken by the ODBE until a final decision on the closure is made. The ODBE have confirmed however that they will consider proposals for use of the building should a decision be taken to close the school. Any future uses will need to comply with Charity Act obligations upon which the school is held and would need to demonstrate that they are viable. There is however a clause on part of the land and buildings owned by the ODBE which could require it to revert back to the Crown if it should ever cease to be used

for educational purposes which could significantly impact future use possibilities for the site.

(iv) Alternatives to Closure

- 2.14 The school was recognised by Ofsted as being 'Inadequate' in its inspection in June 2022. As a result, the school was the subject of a Directive Academy Order i.e. the DfE have told the school they must become an Academy and join a MAT; the school needs to join with a larger organisation to build both operational and financial resilience and address small school issues (e.g. succession planning, headteacher workload, quality of teachers, recruitment & retention, fluctuating intakes etc). Whilst a MAT was initially identified, after working with the school and reviewing its current and future position, the MAT decided it wasn't viable to take them into their MAT and withdrew as a potential sponsor. Discussions with other MATs have indicated that other MATs would take the same view. On the 30th April 2024 the DfE revoked the academy order on the basis that the school would not be viable as an academy, so allowing a statutory notice to be published proposing the closure of the school.
- 2.15 In September 2012, the ODBE invested in the expansion of Westcott CE School from an 4-7 infant school to a 4-11 combined school in response to parental choice and to try and make the school more sustainable. Despite this investment the school has failed to attract sufficient pupils to ensure its long term viability.

(v) Admissions and transport implications

- 2.16 Should Westcott School close on 31st August 2024, parents and carers would be able to express a preference for a place at an alternative school. The Council will manage this process and the Council and the school will work together to manage the transition of the pupils. Parents and carers would be asked to complete an in-year admissions application form and to name up to 3 schools they would prefer their child/ren to attend. The Council would try to meet parent and carers' preferences wherever possible but cannot guarantee to do so as it would depend upon vacancies at that time.
- 2.17 We will have particular focus on those vulnerable pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and ensuring that the right levels of support continue to be in place for those pupils who require it.
- 2.18 The Council's Admission Officers would be available to support families in completing in-year applications for school places for start in September 2024. The earliest window to complete an in-year admissions application form for a September start was from 7th May to 3rd June 2024. All applications will be considered together not on a first-come, first served basis. Parents of pupils at Westcott CE School were contacted and encouraged to apply for a place during this window as applications could be made and places held before the final decision whether to close the school or not is made.

- 2.19 All statutory aged children would be automatically entitled to free home to school transport if they attend their nearest available school and meet the following criteria:
- children who live beyond the statutory walking distance (up to 2 miles if below the age of 8 or up to 3 miles if aged between 8 and 16);
 - children from low income families;
 - children whose walking route to school is unsafe;
 - children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), a disability or a mobility difficulty.
- 2.20 As a result of placing displaced children, there is likely to be a short-term increase in transport costs. Longer term, children living in Westcott village itself (who can currently walk to school) would become eligible for travel assistance as there is no safe walking route from their home to another school. However, any increase in home to school transport costs is likely to be reasonable (i) due to the falling number of births in Westcott village (c. 2 children a year based on birth figures over the last six years and assuming all choose to attend their nearest suitable school) and (ii) when compared with the alternative options for reducing excessive surplus capacity in the area. Further, there is existing bus/taxi transport going to Westcott CE School serving the school's wider catchment area (due to unsafe walking routes) which could be used to offset any additional costs to transport these pupils to the nearest suitable school after Westcott CE School.
- 2.21 Whilst the closure will have an impact on the costs of home to school transport this is minimal and can be partly mitigated in the short term through optimising existing transport already running to other schools for those that become newly eligible as a result of the closure. In the longer term it is hoped that the provision of additional school places across Aylesbury town will mitigate the need to transport pupils that would have attended Westcott CE School.

3. Other options considered

- 3.1 The school was recognised by Ofsted as being 'Inadequate' in its inspection in June 2022. As a result, the school was the subject of a Directive Academy Order i.e. the DfE have told the school they must become an Academy and join a MAT; the school needs to join with a larger organisation to build both operational and financial resilience and address small school issues (e.g. succession planning, headteacher workload, quality of teachers, recruitment & retention, fluctuating intakes etc). Whilst a MAT was initially identified, after working with the school and reviewing its current and future position, the MAT decided it wasn't viable to take the school into their MAT and withdrew as a potential sponsor. Discussions with other MATs have indicated that other MATs would take the same view. On the 30th April 2024 the DfE revoked the Directive Academy Order on the basis that the school would not be viable as an academy, so allowing a statutory notice to be published proposing the closure of the school.

3.2 No MATs or schools came forward during either the consultation process or representation period to offer support to Westcott School and no other alternative proposals were brought to the Governing Board, ODBE or the Local Authority for consideration.

4. Legal and financial implications

4.1 In taking forward this proposal Buckinghamshire Council has complied with all applicable statutory requirements in accordance with section 15 of the Education and Inspections Act. The Council has complied with the DfE's published guidance: **Opening and closing maintained schools Statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers: January 2023.**

[Opening and closing maintained schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

4.2 The LA is the decision maker on any proposals to close community schools and the Diocese is the only body that can object to the Schools Adjudicator on such a proposal. As the School is a VA School the LA has worked in partnership with ODBE and the Governing Board on this proposal and ODBE were fully supportive of initiating a process to close the school.

4.3 The full year funding allocation for Westcott CE School in the 2024-25 financial year is £359,420. The school was in a deficit position at the end of 2023-24 and is projecting a rising deficit over the next 3 years due to falling pupil numbers. The budget projections indicating an increasing deficit are based on the school continuing as a one form entry primary school. If a decision was made to close the school in August 2024, the school would retain its full 12 month budget share income but costs would only be incurred for 5 months. Therefore, the latest forecast indicates that if the school were to close on 31 August 2024 the school would be in a small surplus position.

4.4 Any unspent balance following the closure would be returned to the Local Authority's schools block and will offset deficit balances of schools converting to academy status via the directive academy conversion route.

4.5 Any arrangements for the funding of pupils transferring from a closing school need to be in accordance with the Schools and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2023. Under the regulations local authorities have limited circumstances under which they are able to redetermine school budgets during the financial year. In the case of a school closure the local authority is able to add an amount to reflect the transfer of pupils to a school only where that school has been established or is subject to a prescribed alteration as a result of the closure of another school. In the case of the transfer of pupils from Westcott CE School this would not be the case due to the relatively small numbers of pupils involved and the availability of places across other schools within the area.

4.6 Any pupils that do transfer to another school would be on the pupil census for October 2024 in that school and therefore identified for funding purposes for the 2025-26 financial year.

4a Director of Legal & Democratic Services comment

4.7 Director of Legal Services nominee has considered the report and has confirmed that he is happy with the content of the report and the proposal.

4b Section 151 Officer comment

4.8 The S151 Officer has read and noted the report.

5. Corporate implications

5.1 This section will need to include the relevant corporate plan priority relating to this report and make reference to any other implication that need to be taken into account such as:

- a) Property - The ODBE owns the school buildings and site apart from (i) the forest school area which is leased to the school by the church and (ii) the land to the north of the school building which is owned by the Woodward Trust, the lease to which expires in 2032. The Woodward Trust have confirmed that they are not willing to extend the lease which will be a challenge to resolve. Without this land, the school will be left with very limited outdoor space after 2032 and a new access route will need to be agreed to access the land owned by the church. A decision on the future use of the site owned by the ODBE has not yet been taken and will not be taken by the ODBE until a final decision on the closure is made. The ODBE have confirmed however that they will consider proposals for use of the building should a decision be taken to close the school. Any future uses will need to comply with Charity Act obligations upon which the school is held and would need to demonstrate that they are viable. There is however a clause on part of the land and buildings owned by the ODBE which could require it to revert back to the Crown if it should ever cease to be used for educational purposes which could significantly impact future use possibilities for the site.
- b) HR – all existing staff positions at the time of closure will be made redundant. Buckinghamshire Council HR are working with the school and all the staff regarding staff consultations, support, and redundancy procedures in the event that decision is made to close the school.
- c) An Equality Impact Assessment was completed as part of the consultation and decision making process. The Council will work closely with all families and staff impacted by this decision to ensure that the necessary support is provided to parents, carers, pupils and staff in moving forward with a closure proposal.
- d) Value for money - Schools are mainly funded by an amount of money for each child attending the school. Low pupil numbers are therefore impacting on the school's financial viability and consequent ability to sustain high-quality teaching and learning for its pupils. Continued low pupil numbers mean the school will be unable to sustain

a balanced budget and while it may be possible to identify some cost savings through efficiency, the School would not be able to achieve the scale of saving necessary without also cutting back even further on staff, which would be unacceptable in terms of the impact on the quality education provision.

6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

- 6.1 As part of the statutory process on the future of the school, the proposal was subject to an initial first stage 6 week consultation and a further four week representation period (following publication of the statutory notice). A summary of both the responses from the consultation and representation period is provided within this paper and more detailed responses are provided in Annex C and D.

Stage 1 Consultation on the Future of Westcott CE School

- 6.2 The first stage consultation process on the future of Westcott CE School commenced on Wednesday 31st January 2024 and concluded on Wednesday 13th March 2024. In line with statutory requirements the consultation letter (see Annex A) was sent to the following consultees and also promoted via a dedicated webpage and survey on Your Voice Bucks:

Consultees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader of the Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet Member for Education and Children’s Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Cabinet Member for Education and Children’s Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local MPs – Rob Butler MP; Greg Smith MP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Councillors: Cllr Mick Caffrey; Cllr Paul Irwin; Cllr Ashley Waite
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish Councils: Westcott; Waddesdon; Stone; Quainton; Ashendon
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents/Carers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils at the School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching associations and Unions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northampton Roman Catholic Diocese and Oxford Diocesan Board of Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buckinghamshire Council Officers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Residents

- 6.3 Local councillors from the Stone and Waddesdon Wards and the local MPs were invited to a briefing session on Tuesday 30th January 2024, the day ahead of the consultation going live, such that they were aware of the forthcoming consultation and could respond to constituents' questions should they be approached. Everyone that attended the meeting understood the reason behind the proposed consultation and the challenges facing the school.
- 6.4 A meeting was also held with the staff at the school on Tuesday 30th January 2024 to inform them of the consultation and to also inform them that there would be a separate statutory redundancy consultation commencing with staff from 8th February 2024 to 14th March 2024.
- 6.5 A meeting was held on Monday 5th February 2024 with the head teachers from all local schools to talk through the consultation; the rationale behind it; and, to answer any specific questions arising.
- 6.6 Two public meetings were held at the school on Thursday 8th February 2024 at 2.30pm and 6.30pm which were attended by a total of 21 people across the two sessions (excludes Diocesan representative and LA officers). Attendees included staff, parents/carers, local residents, representatives from other local schools and governors from Westcott CE School. The meetings included a formal presentation by Gareth Drawmer, Head of Achievement & Learning, followed by the opportunity for attendees to ask questions about the proposal to help inform their consultation response. The Director of the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education was also in attendance at the meetings and responded to questions.
- 6.7 **First Stage Consultation Outcome**
- 6.8 The Council received 70 responses to the first stage consultation. 61 of these came in via the Your Voice consultation page and 9 came directly to the email consultation mailbox.
- 6.9 In summary of the 70 who responded 17 (24%) were in agreement with the proposal to close the school from 31st August 2024; 52 (74%) did not agree; and 1 (2%) didn't know or didn't say:

Agree/Disagree with Proposal	Responses received via Your Voice	Responses received via Consultation Mailbox	Total
Agree with proposal to close	15	2	17
Disagree with proposal to close	45	7	52
Don't Know/didn't say	1	0	1
Total	61	9	70

- 6.10 Of the 70 responses received 54 (77%) said that they understood why the proposal had been made to consult on closure of the school. 11 (16%) said that they didn't understand

the proposal and 5 (7%) that they didn't know or didn't say. See Annex C for full details of the Stage One Consultation Responses.

- 6.11 No viable alternatives were put forward during the consultation period and the decision was therefore taken to progress to the next stage of the consultation process and to publish a Statutory Notice proposing the closure of the School.

Stage 2 Publication of the Statutory Notice for the closure of e Westcott CE School and commencement of 4 week Representation Period

- 6.12 The second stage, the publication of the Statutory Notice for the closure of Westcott CE School from 31st August 2024 and commencement of a 4 week representation period commenced on Wednesday 8th May 2024 and concluded on Tuesday 5th June 2024. In line with statutory requirements, a Statutory Notice was published in the Bucks Herald on Wednesday 8th May 2024 (Notice near HP18 0PH | Public Notice Portal). In addition, a letter notifying the publication of the statutory notice (see Annex B) was sent to the following consultees and also promoted via a dedicated webpage and survey on Your Voice Bucks:

Consultees
• Leader of the Council
• Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services
• Deputy Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services
• Local MPs – Rob Butler MP; Greg Smith MP
• Local Councillors: Cllr Mick Caffrey; Cllr Paul Irwin; Cllr Ashley Waite
• Parish Councils: Westcott; Waddesdon; Stone; Quainton; Ashendon
• Parents/Carers
• Pupils at the School
• School Staff
• Teaching associations and Unions
• Northampton Roman Catholic Diocese and Oxford Diocesan Board of Education
• Local Schools
• Buckinghamshire Council Officers
• Local Residents

- 6.13 Local councillors from the Stone and Waddesdon Wards and the local MPs were invited to a briefing session on Tuesday 23rd April 2024 ahead of the consultation going live such that they were updated on the outcome of the first stage of the consultation and the proposal to move forward to the Statutory Stage. Everyone that attended the meeting understood the position following the first stage consultation and the rationale for progressing to the publication of a Statutory Notice proposing closure.



6.14 A meeting was held with the staff at the school on Tuesday 7th May 2024 to inform them of the outcome of the consultation and to inform them that a Statutory Notice proposing closure would be published on 8th May 2024.

6.15 **Formal Representation Period Consultation Outcome**

6.16 The Council received 5 representations during the statutory notice period . 4 of these came in via the Your Voice consultation page and 1 came directly to the email consultation mailbox.

6.17 In summary, of the 5 who responded, 2 (40%) were in agreement with the proposal to close the school from 31st August 2024; 2 (40%) did not agree; and 1 (20%) didn't know or didn't say:

Agree/Disagree with Proposal	Responses received via Your Voice	Responses received via Consultation Mailbox	Total
Agree with proposal to close	2		2
Disagree with proposal to close	2		2
Don't Know/didn't say		1	1
Total	4	1	5

6.18 From the table above it can be noted that the overall response rate was very low and is perhaps reflective of the fact that those consulted during the formal representation period felt that they had made their comments as part of the Stage One consultation and did not therefore feel that they needed to repeat them. Of those who responded in the formal representation stage, two were Buckinghamshire Council employees of whom one was against the proposal and one was in support. One was a former parent at the school and one was a former pupil. One respondent confirmed that they were a governor at the school and that they were in support of the proposal. No respondents identified themselves as being a staff member or parents/carers of pupils currently at the school.

6.19 Having looked at response rates for a similar statutory proposal undertaken by Hertfordshire to close Wareside CE school in 2022 their Cabinet Report states that they received no objections to their statutory proposal. It doesn't state if they received any responses in support. The school closed on 31st August 2022.

6.20 In contrast when Surrey CC consulted on a proposal to close Ripley CE School in 2018 they received 256 responses to their statutory proposal of which 98% of respondents were against the proposal. Despite this significant objection to the proposal Surrey CC still proceeded with the proposal to close based on the fact that they could not find a MAT to take on the school, numbers were too low to make it viable and the quality of educational outcomes was low. The school closed on 31st August 2018.

6.21 When Buckinghamshire Council consulted on the closure of The Mary Towerton School in Studley Green last year the Council received 51 responses to the first stage consultation of

which 21 (41%) were in agreement with the proposal to close the school from 31st August 2023; 24 (47%) did not agree; and, 6 (12%) didn't know or didn't say. The Council received 10 responses during the formal representation period following the publication of the statutory notice. Of the ten people who responded 4 (40%) were in agreement with the proposal to close the school and 6 (60%) did not agree. The proposal to close the school on 31st August 2023 was subsequently taken by the Leader of the Council.

- 6.22 It is clear therefore that other LAs have closed schools where there has been either no response during the formal representation period or a much higher response rate and objection to a closure proposal. DfE Guidance states that Decision Makers should not simply take account of the numbers of people expressing a particular view when considering representations made on proposals. Instead the Decision Maker should give the greatest weight to representations from those stakeholders likely to be most directly affected by the proposals. The responses submitted to both consultations did not present any alternative proposals to closure from external organisations such as MATs or other local schools to help address the underlying issues associated with falling rolls.
- 6.23 Local Councillors and MPs were consulted on the proposal and no formal responses were submitted during the formal representation stage.
- 6.24 An email was sent on 26th June 2024 to the local Councillors who had previously been briefed on the proposal asking if they wished to add any further comments to the paper. No responses were received.

7. Communication, engagement & further consultation

- 7.1 Please refer to Section 6 above and Annexes A - D for full details of the consultation process that has been undertaken.
- 7.2 As noted in the section above, the proposal has been widely consulted upon and has followed the DfE guidance in relation to the closure of schools. A communication plan was produced and kept under review throughout the consultation process.
- 7.3 Once the decision is taken as to whether to close the school all relevant parties will be formally notified of the decision and Officers from the Council will continue to work with the School to ensure that full support is provided to staff, pupils, parents and all those who are affected by the proposal.

8. Next steps and review

- 8.1 If the recommendation is supported by the Leader of the Council, the School will close on 31st August 2024.

9. Background papers

- 9.1 Annex A: Consultation documents January 2024 [Consultation on the proposed closure of Westcott Church of England School - Your Voice Bucks - Citizen Space](#)
- 9.2 Annex B: Statutory Notice documents May 2024 [Statutory notice for the proposed closure of Westcott Church of England School - Your Voice Bucks - Citizen Space](#)
- 9.3 Annex C: Stage One Consultation Report
- 9.4 Annex D: Stage Two Statutory Notice Outcome Report

10. Your questions and views (for key decisions)

- 10.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report, please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider, please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by email to democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk by 5pm on 10 July 2024.