

# **Part I Decision Report Template Revised June 2019**

## **(for decisions by Cabinet Members and Officer Key Decisions)**

<b>Cabinet Decision</b>	<b>Ref No:</b>
<b>January 2020</b>	<b>Key Decision:</b> <b>Yes</b>
<b>Consultation on proposed reorganisation of rural and small schools in West Sussex</b>	<b>Part I</b>
<b>Director for Education and Skills</b>	<b>Electoral Division(s):</b>

### **Summary**

The consultation on the proposed reorganisation of rural and small schools in West Sussex commenced on 7 October 2019 and closed on 25 November 2019. This report outlines the findings from the consultation. The report goes on to provide recommendations for the future operation of each school. The proposals for each school have been developed in light of the consultation responses and feedback received from the consultation public meeting events. The CYPSS Scrutiny Committee will review the proposals on 09/01/2020. The Cabinet will then be asked to approve the recommendations detailed below.

Full details of the consultation responses and analysis can be found in the appendices .

### **West Sussex Plan: Policy Impact and Context**

**Best Start in Life:** Approval of the small school organisation proposals supports the County Council's aspirations to be placed in the top quarter of performing Councils within three years, in terms of children's attainment. Great strides are being made towards this by working in partnership with schools and parents and these consultations are integral to helping achieve high performing and financially sustainable schools in West Sussex that benefit the children and communities for years to come.

### **Financial Impact**

A project team has been set up and funded within the Education and Skills budget. The potential financial impact of implementing the preferred options for each of the five schools is set out in section 4.

### **Recommendations**

The Cabinet is asked to support the proposals outlined in section 2 going forward to:

1. Consult on:
  - Closure of Clapham and Patching C of E Primary School by September 2020.
  - Closure of Rumboldswyke C of E Infant School effective September 2020
  - Relocation of Warninglid Primary School and the federation of the

- school by September 2021 (subject to developers progress) .
  - Closure of Stedham Primary School by September 2020<sup>1</sup> whilst continuing to discuss federation proposals
2. Progress the Federation proposals for:
- Compton and Up Marden C of E Primary School.

## **Proposal**

### **1. Background and Context**

- 1.1 In October 2018 the [School Effectiveness Strategy 2018 - 2022](#) was adopted by the County Council following public consultation. It sets out the objectives for school organisation and the criteria against which schools should be assessed in order to meet these objectives. Implementation of the strategy will help ensure that in West Sussex:

*"Primary schools will be of a sufficient size to be viable in the future, offer a high quality and broad curriculum, attract pupils from the local community and provide strong outcomes for children".*

The school effectiveness strategy also states that:

*"where schools are identified as being at risk, they need to consider options for change. In addition to "no change" These could include:*

- Consulting on amalgamating or merging two or more schools to become an all-through primary school.
  - Consulting on expanding the age range of a group of schools so each becomes all-through primary schools.
  - Consulting on federating two or more schools.
  - Finally, consulting on closing a school."
- 1.2 Analysis by the County Council identified a number of schools which, when measured against the criteria set out in the School Effectiveness Strategy, were considered at risk. The criteria are set out below:

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<sup>1</sup> Dependent on the school not providing a suitable pathway and implementation plan towards federation

- 1. Does the school have an infant to junior relationship with another school?
- 2. Is there a vacancy for a head teacher?
- 3. Is the curriculum better delivered by working with other nearby schools?
- 4. Does the budget prohibit leadership responsibilities from being distributed amongst a range of staff?
- 5. Does the school have difficulties recruiting high quality teachers, leaders or governors?
- 6. Can all the schools in an area sustain the projected numbers of local pupils over the next 5 years?
- 7. Are maximum pupil numbers for the school equal to or less than 100?
- 8. Does the school have less than or equal to 75% of pupils on roll in proportion to its capacity?
- 9. Do parental preferences for the school, taking into account the planned housing development, support the school reaching or exceeding 95% of the schools actual net capacity over the next 5 years?
- 10. Is the Ofsted inspection overall judgement of the school good or better (or recent LA monitoring indicates the school is not moving quickly to good)?
- 11. Does the financial projection for the next 3 years show a sustainable budget?
- 12. Does the school offer a specialism that is not replicated elsewhere in the area ?

- 1.3 As part of the process of implementing the School Effectiveness Strategy, the County Council held workshops on 9 October 2018, 27 February 2019 and 5 March 2019, to which a number of schools were invited to attend and discuss data on their schools. Attendees took away the 12 Key Questions to consider. Governing bodies were specifically encouraged to consider whether federations, where one governing body operates across two or more schools, would be beneficial to their school. The outcome of the analysis and discussions were reviewed, with further discussions being initiated with a number of schools on future options such as merger, federation, relocation or closure. A number of schools have subsequently progressed discussions and some have made steps towards federation, most notably the federation of Amberley Primary School with St James's C of E Primary School Coldwaltham, and the developing partnership between Rake Primary School and Rogate C of E Primary School who have been working towards federation for some 12 months.
- 1.4 Due to specific circumstances around five of these schools, an impact assessment was conducted between April and June 2019. The specific circumstances for four of the schools are set out in the previously submitted [Impact Assessments](#). Rumboldswhyke CE Infant school is not a rural school but serves the community of Chichester. The school was included due to its vulnerability, declining enrolment, and the quality of provision. Following the Ofsted inspection on 01 May 2019, the school was rated as inadequate. The options for the future of the school are therefore very limited following this judgement. Under the establishment and discontinuance of schools regulations 2013 the school has to either academise or close. Since the Ofsted inspection, discussions have taken place with the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) and the CE Diocese. The size and nature of the school makes finding a suitable Trust to academise the school extremely challenging. The RSC has agreed to await the outcome of consultation on the viability of the school before making the decision to issue an academy order. Unsuccessful approaches have been made to the four local Multi Academy Trusts (MAT's). Due to low enrolment, the financial outlook for this school is challenging.
- 1.5 Following the Children's and Young Peoples Select Committee on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2019 the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills gave approval on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2019 for a consultation to take place on options for each

of the schools. A Task and Finish Group was also established to review the consultation process. The first meeting was held on 18<sup>th</sup> September (with two subsequent meetings held on 24<sup>th</sup> October and 4<sup>th</sup> December 2019).

- 1.6 During the period 7 October 2019 – 25 November 2019 a public consultation on options was held for each of the five schools. This consultation also included an online survey for members of the community and interested parties to ‘have their say’, opportunities for schools to submit their future plans and representations, contact with local parish councils, discussions with the Diocese and also a public meeting at each school. The Task and Finish Group heard representations from stakeholders and from each school.

## **2. Proposal Details**

- 2.1 The updated consultation and decision making timetable (from the September 2019 decision paper) is set out below:

<b>7<sup>th</sup> October 25<sup>th</sup> November 2019</b>	<b>Stage one</b> – consultation on options
<b>January 2020</b>	The Cabinet will consider the results of the consultation and decide whether to publish specific proposals for any of the schools listed.
Should the Cabinet decide to proceed with publishing specific proposals on any of the schools the following timetable would then apply	
<b>February 2020</b>	<b>Stage two</b> – publication of proposals and 6 week representation period ( <b>planned to commence on 03<sup>rd</sup> February 2020</b> )
<b>April 2020</b>	<b>Stage three</b> – Cabinet decision on specific proposals for each of the schools.
<b>May/ June 2020</b>	<b>Stage four</b> – publication of statutory proposals (4 week representation period) followed by cabinet decision.
<b>31 August 2020</b>	<b>Stage five</b> – implementation of proposals (for Warninglid this will depend on delivery of the build on the Pease Pottage site, which is currently planned for June 2021)

- 2.2 After consideration of the outcome of the consultation process (**Stage 1**) alongside the previously issued impact assessment work, it is proposed that the County Council approves the following next steps:

- Consult on the closure of Clapham and Patching CE Primary School, Clapham, Worthing (**Stage 2**)
- Agree that the County Council officers work with Governors to progress proposals for the federation of Compton and Up Marden CE Primary School, Compton with an appropriate partner.
- Consult on the closure of Rumboldswhyke C of E Infant School , Chichester (**Stage 2**)
- Consult on the closure of Stedham Primary School (**Stage 2**), unless the governors have submitted and agreed practical proposals and a realistic implementation plan for the federation of Stedham Primary School, Stedham, and that these proposals and plans are agreed with the Director of Education.
- Consult on the relocation of Warninglid Primary School, Warninglid, Haywards Heath to a new site in Pease Pottage Crawley, by September 2021 (subject to developers completing in June 2021). Prior to this relocation taking place, agree that County Council officers will work with Governors to progress the federation of Warninglid C of E Primary School with Colgate Primary School, to implement proposals that have been submitted by both schools.
- Agree that County Council officers prepare a summary report on the outcome of the further consultations and federation outlined in 2.2 to present to the Cabinet (**Stage 3**). The Cabinet Member will then decide whether to move to the next stage of issuing closure notices (**Stage 4**) for:
  - Clapham and Patching C of E Primary School, Clapham, Worthing by September 2020
  - Rumboldswhyke C of E Infant School
  - Stedham Primary School, Stedham, Midhurst by September 2020<sup>2</sup>
  - and
  - Relocation of Warninglid Primary School, Warninglid to Pease Pottage (which will be in place prior to the relocation of Warninglid ready for intake in September 2021 subject to the developer).

## **Factors taken into account**

### **3. Consultation**

- 3.1 On the 7 October 2019, copies of the public consultation document were distributed to the following:- Members of Parliament, County Local Committee (CLC) members, District and Parish councillors, union representatives, neighbouring authorities, the parents/carers, staff and

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<sup>2</sup> Dependent on the school's response to submission of plans for federation and an appropriate implementation plan.

governors , early years providers, local libraries, the Diocese of Chichester and the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton and Independent Schools. The consultation was also published on the Internet and the proposals received local press coverage. During the period 7 October 2019 – 25 November 2019, five public consultation meetings were held at the schools affected at which some 550 people attended. Notes from each public meeting were added to the consultation website. The meetings were as follows:

- Clapham & Patching C of E Primary School – Tuesday 8 October 2019
- Compton & Up Marden C of E School – Monday 11 November 2019
- Rumboldswhyke C of E Infant School – Thursday 7 November 2019
- Stedham Primary School – Thursday 24 October 2019
- Warninglid Primary School – Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2019

3.2 The consultation sought comments on a range of options available for the following schools in relation to proposals for change on the basis of the impact assessments.

- Clapham and Patching C of E Primary School, Clapham, Worthing
- Compton and Up Marden C of E School, Compton, Chichester
- Stedham Primary School, Stedham, Midhurst
- Warninglid Primary School, Warninglid, Haywards Heath

The options under consideration were:

- no change,
- merger,
- federation,
- relocation or
- closure.

In the case of Rumboldswhyke CE Infants School, Chichester, the following options were not available for consultation due to the school's inadequate Ofsted rating:

- no change,
- merger,
- federation
- relocation

3.2 Responses to the consultation were received via the online survey, the response form in the consultation booklet, by letter and by email. Two petitions were also received; one for Rumboldswhyke C of E Infant School, and one for Clapham and Patching C of E Primary School.

3.3 The consultation period ended on the 25 November 2019. A total of 1045 responses were received (1069 answered the question as to what they considered the best option, with some respondents answering questions for more than one school). 986 people had completed a response to the consultation either on line or by returning the response form at the back of the consultation document. 59 emails and letters were received in relation to the consultation and have been acknowledged. Of the 986 online consultation responses, 122 responses were received in relation to Clapham and Patching CE Primary School, 425 were received in relation to Compton & Up Marden CE School 162 were received in relation to Rumboldswhyke CE infant School,

272 were received in relation to Stedham Primary School and 124 were received in relation to Warninglid Primary school. Some respondents commented on more than one school, while not all respondents answered all questions. A summary and detailed analysis of the online responses received is included in the appendices. There were also 10 responses received after the closing date, these comments have not been included in the final analysis.

Two petitions were received from Clapham and Patching (623 verified signatories from 1024 submitted) and Rumboldswhyke (1151 verified signatories from 1443 submitted).

- 3.4 On the 9<sup>th</sup> January 2020 Children's and Young Peoples Services Scrutiny Committee will review the correspondence received throughout the consultation, the report of the Task and Finish Group (TFG) and the analysis of the responses before making their recommendation to the Cabinet.

#### **4. Financial (revenue and capital) and Resource Implications**

##### Revenue

- 4.1 Since funding for the day-to-day operations of schools comes from the ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), the implications of any changes to school organisation for the Council's on-going revenue budget is fairly cost neutral. The amount of funding that a school receives to meet its day-to-day running costs is largely driven by the number of pupils on roll in the autumn census each year. As a result of any closure of a school, there will be a redistribution of funding across the remaining schools in that phase and the level of additional funding will vary at each of these schools depending on the number of extra pupils on roll that it attracts. Further work will be undertaken with schools in order to support them with their budget planning.
- 4.2 On assessment of the outcome of the pre-consultation, should the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills choose to consult on the specific proposals for each school, as recommended in this report, then despite the schools being funded by DSG, it has been estimated that the following potential revenue costs may fall to the County Council:
- One-off costs in relation to redundancy, payments in lieu of notice (pijon) and early retirement (£0.478m), and
  - On-going home to school transport costs (£0.107m) for those pupils who would live more than three miles away from the nearest alternative school.
- 4.3 In addition, where a school closes in August, it may be left with stranded contract costs (£0.100m) in relation to buildings maintenance, cleaning, transport, IT and other consumables for the remainder of the year.
- 4.4 A breakdown of these potential costs by school is set out in the table below:

	One-off Costs £m	Transport Costs £m	Stranded Costs £m
Clapham & Patching	£0.175	£0.029	£0.028
Rumboldswhyke	£0.178	Nil	£0.028

Stedham	£0.125	£0.078	£0.044
<b>Total</b>	<b>£0.478</b>	<b>£0.107</b>	<b>£0.100</b>

- 4.5 Any one-off redundancy and pension costs and stranded contract costs may be able to be off-set through the use of any surplus balances remaining in any of the schools when they close. Any of the one-off costs that cannot be off-set in this way will be charged against the Education and Skill's dismissal or premature retirement budget next year. The value of this budget currently totals £0.490m. Of the three schools where closure could potentially be consulted on, one was in deficit at the end of 2018/19, and the remaining two had a combined surplus of £0.089m.
- 4.6 A project team has also been created in order to facilitate the pre-publication consultation and to assess both the views on, and the impact of, the various options for change at the 5 schools in question. The cost of this team is being met from within the existing Education and Skills revenue budget, and includes 12 months funding for backfilling posts within Schools Place Planning, Admissions, Human Resources and Finance.

### Capital

- 4.7 Two potential capital costs have been identified:
- £0.020m to refurbish classrooms in existing schools to accommodate displaced pupils from Stedham Primary school, should the decision be taken to close this school, and
  - £0.075m to fund furniture fittings and equipment (FFE) at the new school in Pease Pottage in 2021 as part of relocation of Warninglid Primary School.

### The effect of the proposal

- 4.8 Implementation of the proposed changes will support the "organisation objectives" as set out in the school effectiveness strategy namely:
- "Primary schools will be of a sufficient size to be viable in the future, offer a high quality and broad curriculum, attract pupils from the local community and provide strong outcomes for children".*
- 4.9 Parent carers and pupils who will be impacted by the closure or relocation of a school would need to find an alternative school. For those children with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), the Special Educational Needs Assessment Team (SENAT) will manage the transition and work with parents to submit a preference. SENAT would then consult the governors and leaders of the appropriate chosen schools. Children with EHCPs are the highest priority for admission to another mainstream school, but are not entitled to transport unless they opt for their nearest mainstream school and it is over statutory walking distance. Governors must be given 15 working days to respond to the consultation and SENAT would need to amend the EHCP. There will be adequate time during the summer term to complete the transfer for the start of the new school year in September 2020.

- 4.10 The Admissions rounds are a statutory process for those starting school, moving to junior school and secondary admissions. However, in the scenario of a closure the local authority would operate a mini round of admissions for all those children who would need to relocate to a new school. This would apply to all the year groups affected in a school. There would be an opening date and a closing date of a period of two weeks to complete an In Year application form expressing up to three preferences. After the closing date the local authority would then allocate along with any other in year applications. This would be undertaken by applying each application against the schools admission criteria against each application in the event of more applications than the number of places available for each school in the year group. If we are unable to meet one of the preferences, then the parent carer will be allocated the next nearest alternative school with space. This process would start after the statutory proposals (**Stage 4**) and the final decision in May 2020 for school admission in September 2020. Parents not allocated a place at their preferred school will have a right of appeal to an independent admissions' appeal panel.
- 4.11 For those parent carers who have submitted applications for places in September 2020 at a school which is closing as part of the current admissions round, it is hoped 3 preferences will have been submitted and the local authority will aim to meet one of the other preferences. The Local Authority would however allow the parent/carer to submit another preference on a new paper application prior to the 14th February for consideration. Places are allocated on priority, based on the over subscription criteria and therefore no guarantees can be given, but our aim is always to meet one of the preferences listed by parents/carers.

## **5. Legal Implications**

None for the purpose of this report.

## **6. Risk Implications and Mitigations**

Risks of not approving the implementation of the consultation	Mitigation
There is a risk that the National Funding Formula (Schools Block DSG) implementation will result in an increased number of schools with financial difficulties and increased instability of pupil numbers (due to surplus capacity) which will have an impact on schools' financial viability and educational standards	> Continue to work closely with schools on the budgeting and forecasting to ensure they do not go into financial difficulty. > School effectiveness team continue to work closely with school to ensure standards are maintained
There is a risk that those schools that are earmarked for closure or relocation may suffer from a falling roll before they close, and thereby lose DSG pupil funding as a result.	Schools will be able to bid for additional DSG funds from the Schools in Financial Difficulty budget where 'an unusual or unexpected one-off situation has occurred'.
There is a risk that the School	>Continuation of Locality workshops to

<p>Effectiveness Strategy commitments may not be achieved with respect to schools organisation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) All through primaries</li> <li>2) Local solutions to achieve Small School viability (federation, merger, relocation, closure).</li> </ol>	<p>review options and initiate discussions &gt;Training/ recruitment of HT's with Exec Head capability.</p>
<p>There is a risk of pupils with EHCPs and those with school identified SEND being unsettled by any move and the receiving school not having the resources to meet their needs</p>	<p>The process of supporting parents will ensure that any move to a new placement is managed effectively with receiving schools engaged fully and with all necessary information for appropriate resources to be in place to ensure a smooth transition.</p>

## 7. Options Considered

- 7.11 The option of not progressing and consulting on the chosen option for each of the five schools, would mean that we are not progressing the school effectiveness strategy “organisation objective” that “*Primary schools will be of a sufficient size to be viable in the future, offer a high quality and broad curriculum, attract pupils from the local community and provide strong outcomes for children*”. Concerns would not be addressed and further uncertainty for these schools is predicted. Action therefore needs to be taken following the analysis and public consultation in 2019.
- 7.12 The County Council has been in discussions with stakeholders throughout the consultation process to ensure that opportunities as and when they are presented are investigated and progressed to ensure that we achieve our School Effectiveness Strategy objective that “*Primary schools will be of a sufficient size to be viable in the future, offer a high quality and broad curriculum, attract pupils from the local community, and provide strong outcomes for children*”.
- 7.13 Despite being actively pursued by the County Council, no MATs have come forward to date to take on the academisation of Rumboldswhyke CE Infant School and therefore this is no longer an option. This means that, for **Rumboldswhyke C of E Infant School**, there is no other option, but to close. A review of catchment areas in Chichester may also be required.

### 7.2 Clapham and Patching C of E Primary School

- 7.21 Whilst the chair of governors stated publicly that “no change is not an option” no proposals were presented for federating Clapham and Patching C of E Primary School. There has been no “*sufficient and compelling evidence*” submitted to demonstrate that the school is, or could be “*financially and educationally viable, and able to draw its intake from the local community, into the future*”. Although there have been some initial conversations with a local Trust regarding the possible academisation of the school, due diligence has not been completed and discussion of the Trust’s plans for the school were unconvincing in improving provision and enrolment from the local

community. A second Trust had been approached but has declined to pursue the opportunity.

- 7.22 Feedback though the consultation process has been mixed in relation to the school and its future. At the public meeting, some parents spoke passionately about the nurturing ethos of the school and how they had moved their children to the school due to poor experiences in meeting their children's special educational needs in other schools. Written responses to the consultation process were more varied however in how effectively the school was able to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Indeed, the school's ability or inability to meet the needs of pupils with SEND when there was such a high proportion within the school was an important factor in many responses.
- 7.23 In recommending a consultation on the closure of the school, we are mindful that the Council has advanced plans agreed as part of the new SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2019-24 to establish a new Specialist Support Centre at St Margaret's CE Primary School, Angmering. This will ensure that specialist support and provision will be enhanced locally in a nearby CE primary school to ensure a nurturing provision along with the specialist support required to meet pupils' learning and emotional needs. Analysis of school places also indicates that there are sufficient planned places in the communities within which current pupils live. The building will remain with the local Diocese. A review of catchment areas may also be required.

### **7.3 Compton and Up Marden C of E Primary School**

- 7.31 Proposals have been received from the Governors of Compton and Up Marden CE Primary School for the school to remain unchanged. Whilst these proposals have been developed with good intent, they do not, on their own contain "*sufficient and compelling evidence*" that the school will be "*financially and educationally viable and able to draw its intake from the local community into the future*".
- 7.32 Views captured through the consultation process made strong representation of the impact that closure of the school would have on the local community. The school is one of a few within the county that is in receipt of additional financial support for sparsity due to its geographical isolation. In analysing availability in local schools to accommodate pupils in the event of closure, significant capital investment would also be required to create the additional places required.
- 7.33 Whilst taking into account the full range of representations received from the school and community, in addition to consideration of the geographical isolation, size and access to the range of specialist expertise at the school, strengthening a partnership and federation with an appropriate school or schools would support increasing access to expertise to enhance provision and help overcome some of the isolation faced.

### **7.4 Stedham Primary School**

- 7.41 Proposals have been received from the Governors of Stedham Primary School for the school to remain unchanged. The proposals presented however did not, on their own, contain "*sufficient and compelling evidence*" that the school will be "*financially and educationally viable and able to draw its intake from the local community into the future*". Whilst situated in the village of Stedham and drawing from a rural community, the school's proximity to the nearby market town of Midhurst and to schools in Midhurst and Easebourne, ensures that the school is not geographically isolated. Governors recognise that stronger links to the Midhurst and Easebourne school communities could bring benefits to all. Governors have very recently been proactive in engaging with local schools to explore the benefits of federation and to consider potential partnerships. This could provide the school with access to a broader range of specialist expertise and, between the schools, diversity in provision that could benefit each community. As part of the consultation process (**stage 2**) it is therefore anticipated that the Governors will prepare and submit updated proposals and an implementation plan for consideration by the Director of Education. If the proposals do not however demonstrate that there is "*sufficient and compelling evidence*" that the school, as part of a federation, is "*financially and educationally viable and able to draw its intake from the local community into the future*", then the recommendation will remain to consult on the closure of Stedham Primary School, Stedham, Midhurst.
- 7.42 If the final decision is to close Stedham Primary, Easebourne C of E Primary School (along with Midhurst C of E Primary School) has the capacity to expand the number of planned places required to accommodate (along with Midhurst C of E Primary School) pupils that would be displaced from Stedham Primary School. A review of catchment areas may also be required.

## **7.5 Warninglid C of E Primary School, Warninglid**

- 7.51 Warninglid Primary School governors were open in their view that to continue as they are is not an option, and that they had been working closely with the local authority over two years to secure a federation to strengthen the longer-term future of the school. The school made a strong case that the current location of the school is unhelpful due to the lack of visibility and low numbers of children from within the current catchment area. A new school is being built by developers at Pease Pottage and will open in September 2021 (subject to the developer completing the build by June 2021).
- 7.52 Consultation responses indicated that relocation to a new site would be a positive move. However, this was seen by some to potentially impact on other local schools. During the consultation process, the governing bodies of two neighbouring schools indicated an interest in establishing a federation with Warninglid during the consultation process. Whilst it is proposed that Warninglid Primary School relocates to the new site at Pease Pottage upon completion of the new build, it is recommended that a federation would also bring greater strength and support to the school. Proposals have been received from the governing bodies of both Warninglid and Colgate Primary School, to seek a federation on equal terms as such a partnership would bring benefits to both schools. Any relocation of the school to the Pease Pottage site will require the local authority to look at catchment areas for the

schools in the area, and also to work with parents of those children who live towards the south of the current school location to ensure that options for more local provision can be offered if required.

## **7.6 Rumboldswhyke CE Infant School**

- 7.61 Rumboldswhyke CE Infant school was one of the five schools for which discussions were taking place about future sustainability prior to the Ofsted inspection in May 2019. However, the inspection's rating of the school as inadequate restricted the future options available for the school. The school has to either academise or close. Discussion has taken place with the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) and the Church of England Diocese. Both are accepting that academisation of a school of the size of Rumboldswhyke would be a challenge. The RSC has held back on the academisation order pending the consultation to determine the future viability. However, the options for the school are still limited and do not include remaining within the local authority's control, either through a stand-alone school or a federation. The consultation process has received significant publicity and reference has been made to a previous school judged inadequate having been allowed to remain in the local authority's control. The local authority has pursued this with the RSC and also has pursued local MATs to look at the feasibility of academisation. Neither have met with a positive response and therefore the only realistic option left will be to seek to close the school.
- 7.62 Suggestion has been made around expanding the school to incorporate key stage 2 pupils as an all-through primary school. Based on place planning, there are already sufficient key stage 2 places in Chichester. A concern has been raised regarding the impact of closure on reducing key stage 1 church school places within the community. However, the local authority is working with the Church of England Diocese to mitigate this risk and to ensure sufficient church school places for key stage 1 pupils into the future. The financial outlook for this school remains challenging and school enrolment continues to fall.
- 7.63 During the consultation period, the school received its first monitoring visit from Ofsted since being judged as inadequate. The visit recognised positive work and judged appropriate actions were taking place, and that the action and support plans were fit for purpose. Whilst recognising progress being made, reference is made to 'early signs' of progress in learning and achievement/progress. The HMI did not use the opportunity of the monitoring visit to reinspect the school for a full section 5 inspection. The DfE Schools Causing Concern protocol (September 2019) indicates that even where a second Ofsted Section 5 inspection judges the school to be no longer inadequate, this on its own would be insufficient to broaden the range of future options for the school.
- 7.64 Representations have been made that the school should remain open as future housing is planned nearby (Southern Gateway). However the development is long term and there are other schools with capacity, which are closer. Section 106 contributions will also fund additional capacity as part of the development.

- 7.65 The school land and site is mainly owned by the Church of England Diocese in the main and, following the completion of closure, the local authority will wish to engage with the Diocese to look at potential alternative uses of the building for educational purposes in preference to the site being sold for development.

## **8. Equality and Human Rights Assessment**

The equality impact analysis will be updated continuously throughout the consultation process through the collection and analysis of data that arises as part of the consultation process. This information will then be used to inform the next stage (**Stage 3**) of the decision making process.

## **9. Social Value and Sustainability Assessment**

The DFE guidance states that "there is a presumption against the closure of rural schools. 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". Rumboldswhyke CE Infant school is not a rural school and therefore this presumption does not apply in this case.

The effect of closure of schools on the communities of Clapham and Patching, Rumboldswhyke and Stedham (if closure is the chosen option) and Warninglid (if relocation is the chosen option) was noted in several written responses during the consultation. An extract of relevant comments is set out below:

### **Clapham & Patching**

Clapham & Patching Village Hall Committee	The school is an essential part of the Clapham and Patching communities and its loss would significantly impact on those communities and the Village Hall.
Local Resident	This small village school is an integral part of our community. The children attend village events such as singing to the elderly at Christmas. They use the local woods as part of their Forest School education. They use the local churches for special services.
Local Resident	Clapham and Patching school is at the heart of our village community. Closure would have an impact on the village for generations to come. New houses are being built in the village and children will require a school.
Local Resident	This lovely little school is part of the heart of this village. We are working hard to keep our church and our shop/ cafe, and we certainly don't want to lose the school. These things together make the village more than a "dormitory village"; they make us a community.

### **Rumboldswhyke**

Local Resident	The school should not be closed as it will have detrimental effects on the local area and children.
Parent/Carer	It is the last council owned Church of England school and it would be a huge loss to the city if the school was to close. Closure of the school would have a huge knock effect to the environment, the majority of parents walk or cycle their children to school. Closure of this school would mean a lot more cars on the road during an already hugely busy time for traffic in Chichester, which is not the message we should be teaching the next generation.
Local Resident	Chichester is a historic city and will only further lose its character and sense of community if we close the establishments that hold it together.
Local Resident	The closure of this school would be a short-sighted move, robbing the community of a valuable educational asset. It is a mistake that will be forever regretted

### **Stedham**

Local Resident	Stedham primary school has been part of village life for many years. It would be such sadness to see another school close.
Former Pupil	If you take away a village school, you take away the heart of the community. In a world where we are all rushing around and not always knowing our neighbours, with a village school you keep that community present that ensures everyone still knows everyone.
Teacher at Local School	Stedham is a good school, and as all schools are, is a hub of the community. The loss to those in the village and surrounding areas would be large, having a negative impact on the lives the children who currently attend the school and their families.
Former Pupil	I feel it would be a massive shame if the school was to close. I lived in Stedham until I was in my early twenties and my parents are still village residents. The school is the heart of the village and it helps to bring more families to the area, either to live in the village or families who love the school and choose to travel to Stedham in order to send their children there. These people then start to engage with village life by attending church, sports events or by supporting community events such as school fetes, bonfire night etc.
Teacher in Local Nursery	I feel very strongly that sustainability should not just be financial, but also environmental. Forcing Stedham families to drive their children to another school will increase traffic on the already congested roads around Midhurst and Easebourne. Air pollution would also increase. The use of the Woolbeding road as a

shortcut to Easebourne for these families is likely to lead to far more road traffic accidents. Both Midhurst and Easebourne schools already have significant problems with parents' vehicles at drop off and pick up times. Closing Stedham school would increase the risk of accidents or deaths outside these schools as well as further aggravating local residents. Childrens' health benefits from being able to walk to school. Closing Stedham would remove this option for all Stedham families and make a mockery of government 'walk to school' initiatives.

### **Warninglid**

Former Parent &  
Former Chair of  
Governors

Built as it was halfway between Slaugham and Warninglid to serve pupils from both villages, it's obvious that the traditional catchment area does not at present yield enough pupils and that the nature of the intake generally has changed to accommodate more special needs requirements. But surely this is just a blip - with literally thousands of new houses being built in our area, demand for places will inevitably go up and there will be a danger that there won't be enough schools, so to close a little gem like Warninglid would seem very unwise, despite the many problems outlined in the documents.

The potential impact of closure on transport (nearest school/subject to parental preference) and travel has been assessed as part of the [Impact Assessments](#). Further information on the community impact of these proposals will be undertaken during the planned consultation period.

## **10. Crime and Disorder Reduction Assessment**

None for the purpose of this report.

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### **Appendices**

**Appendix B:** Summary of Responses

**Appendix C:** Analysis by type of people

**Appendix D:** Key themes arising from the consultation

**Appendix E:** Available Places

