

## WEST WIGHT SCHOOL PLACES CABINET REPORT

A report recommending the future direction of primary school education in the West Wight will go before the Isle of Wight Council's Cabinet next week (11 July).

The local authority has to address the oversupply of school places in the area, with five schools currently catering for around 90 children per year group — a number which is expected to fall over the coming years.

To help address this, the West Wight School Places report is recommending that a public notice is published to:

- \* close All Saints' CE Primary School, Freshwater from 3 April 2020;
- \* expand Yarmouth CE Primary School;
- \* relocate Yarmouth CE Primary School to the All Saints' site once new building works are completed there.

The council said it made sense to propose the closure of a school that was operating with a significant surplus capacity (62 per cent) and not currently offering a good standard of education, as adjudged by Ofsted.

The proposal is to issue the statutory notice to close All Saints', which has been rated as 'requires improvement' since 2013, and expand and, eventually relocate, Yarmouth Primary, which is rated 'good' by Ofsted.

Councillor Paul Brading, Cabinet member for children's services, said: "In terms of sensible planning for the location of the current schools, it makes sense to use the buildings closest to where the children live.

"Given only seven children attending Yarmouth actually live in the town and 69 live in Freshwater and Totland, it makes logical sense to propose the move to relocate Yarmouth CE Primary onto the All Saints' site.

"It also makes the most sense strategically in terms of future proofing buildings as the All Saints' site is due to receive a multi-million-pound investment from the Department for Education to substantially improve/replace the existing buildings. This can take place following closure and the temporary expansion at Yarmouth."

Given that schools are largely funded on a per pupil basis, having one less school in West Wight would mean the remaining four are more financially sustainable and will have the resources needed to fund high quality teaching and learning for the children.

If approved by Cabinet on 11 July, a public notice on the recommendations will be published in local media on Friday 19 July and people can make their views known through the statutory process.

The council has extended the public notice consultation period from four to nine weeks, closing on Friday 20 September to take account of the school summer holidays.

All the responses to the statutory notice will be considered fully by the Cabinet and it will make a final decision on Thursday 10 October 2019.

Councillor Brading added: "Once the decision is finally made, we will work closely with parents and local schools to ensure the children can transition to their new school.

"We are confident all the schools will welcome any new children and will work hard to ensure they are fully integrated into the life of their new school."

The report can be viewed via the council's website:

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/Meetings/committees/cabinet/11-7-19/agenda.pdf?636977626787069390>