

Report for: 15 October 2024

Item number: To be added by the Committee Section

Title: *Options for the future of Tiverton Primary School*

Report

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Ward(s) affected: Hermitage & Gardens, St Ann’s, Seven Sisters and South Tottenham

Report for Key/

Non Key Decision: Key Decision

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1 Following years of growth, the number of primary aged children joining Haringey primary schools has been in steady decline since 2014, a trend observed across London. Primary pupil rolls in Haringey have reduced by over 2,000 in just 5 years: 21,300 in 2019 to 19,100 in 2024 (January school census data) and pupil numbers are forecast to continue falling until at least 2028¹.
- 1.2 Tiverton Primary School is a substantive two form entry (fe) community school maintained by the local authority and located at Pulford Road, N15 6SP. Since 2019, there has been a gradual decline in pupils on roll at the school. Due to this sustained fall in rolls over several years, there is concern from the local authority that the school is at risk of becoming financially unviable and vulnerable in the context of a Requires Improvement Ofsted² judgement.
- 1.3 The impact of falling rolls with fewer children starting reception in individual schools creates serious challenges for school leaders and governing bodies. School funding is primarily determined by the number of children on roll, and

¹ Data provided to us by the Great London Authority (GLA) and London Councils all point to a significant and sustained period of reduction in demand for reception places, which has implications for school budgets and standards. The fall in demand reflects the decline in the birth rate since 2012 and changes in migration patterns in London. Further information on Haringey’s school roll projections can be found in our [2024 School Place Planning Report](#).

² The government has set out that Ofsted ratings will be replaced with ‘score cards’ which are due to be introduced in September next year. For the purposes of this report, Ofsted ratings will still be referred to as an evaluation of the quality of education.

falling rolls equate to reduced funding. This has meant that more and more schools are now facing serious financial pressures after year-on-year decline to their roll resulting in schools such as Tiverton Primary School falling into financial deficit. This impacts on the efficient running of schools, financial stability and education standards.

- 1.4 The purpose of this report is to set out options for the future of Tiverton Primary School and to seek agreement from Council's Cabinet to commence consultation on these options. Further information on the reasons for this decision can be found at para. 4 below.

2 Cabinet Member Introduction

- 2.1 Every child and young person, wherever they live in our borough, deserves an excellent education and, as a Council, we are committed to supporting our schools to continue to deliver high-quality teaching, learning and support across Haringey.

- 2.2 We have some of the best performing primary schools in the country and we are immensely proud of the outcomes for our children and young people. In 2023, 73.2% of Haringey Early Years pupils achieved GLD (Good Level of Development), which was ranked 7th highest in the country (from the 152 local authorities). This year this has increased to 73.5%. 82% of Haringey Year 1 pupils achieved the phonics standard in 2023, ranking them 17th in the country and this year it has improved to 83.8%. This is a credit to our children, families, and schools, and we will continue to work in partnership with all our schools to raise standards and attainment.

- 2.3 In recent years, as widely reported, Haringey, like many other London local authority (LA) areas, has been experiencing a significant decrease in pupil numbers, which has caused some schools to face serious and irreversible financial and sustainability pressures. The critical London wide factors of lower birth rates; the cap on rent benefits; families leaving the capital as a result of the housing crisis; Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic have resulted in a reduction in demand for primary school places in the borough which is no fault of the Council or our schools.

- 2.4 School leaders and the Council in recent years have been working to mitigate the risks that arise from falling rolls where schools fall into financial deficit. Haringey officers have been working with schools locally to progress a number of approaches, with a focus on preventing the escalation of risk to those in scope for potential closure or amalgamation. The approaches used so far include measures to reduce costs such as restructuring school staffing levels, reducing the amount of available support staff, limiting extracurricular activity such as school trips, 'vertical grouping' by combining different year groups in some schools, formally reducing and capping reception and in-year classes, and for some schools the need to agree financial deficit recovery plans with the local authority. I would like to take this opportunity to thank

everyone in Haringey's educational system for their often challenging work, as we have worked through these existing decisions and now start to explore the even more difficult options outlined in this paper.

- 2.5 The Council has a statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient high quality school places for our children, and that places are planned effectively. This financial pressure has a significant impact on our schools and threatens the stability and quality of our education system. We must continue to ensure that every single child has access to an excellent education that allows them to fulfil their potential and achieve their ambitions. This is why we must now begin to consider the difficult options outlined in this report for Tiverton Primary School.
- 2.6 Significant concerns have been raised about its long-term sustainability in terms of the risks to the school's financial viability and its ability to attract pupils to the school. The latter is as a result of a declining birth rate and the recent inspection outcome. For these reasons, I recommend to Cabinet that the Council consults on the options set out in this report.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet
 - a) agree to commence consultation on the options for the future of Tiverton Primary School, including the options of 'no change', federation, amalgamation or closure.

4. Reasons for decision

- 4.1 Tiverton is a substantive two-form entry (fe) community primary school maintained by the local authority. The school is located at Pulford Road, N15 6SP and sits within Planning Area 3 (PA3)³ which incorporates the following wards: Hermitage & Gardens, St Ann's, 50% of Haringay, 50% of Seven Sisters and 40% of South Tottenham and includes the following primary schools: Chestnuts, Crowland, Seven Sisters, South Haringay, St Ann's CE, St John Vianney RC, St Mary's RC Infant, St Ignatius RC and West Green.
- 4.2 Tiverton Primary School amalgamated with the former Stamford Hill Primary School in September 2020 with the Stamford Hill site closing on 31 August 2020. Tiverton Primary School was graded 'Requires Improvement' when inspected by Ofsted in June 2023. Previously it had been graded as 'Good' at a full inspection in May 2018.
- 4.3 Due to a continued fall in demand for school places in PA3, Tiverton is currently operating as a 1fe primary school. Prior to 2020, the school had a

³ A school place planning area is a group of schools within a local authority that is used for assessing current and future pupil demand for school place provision. For the purposes of planning school places, Haringey is divided into five Planning Areas (PAs).

published admission number (PAN)⁴ of 60. This was reduced to 30 from September 2020 to align with demand.

- 4.4 Over several years, the pupil roll at Tiverton Primary School has significantly fallen. The 2017 May census recorded the school as having 352 pupils on roll and the school now has 176 children on roll as of September 2024, a reduction by 50%. This is owing to in-year movement and a larger cohort of Year 6 pupils that have transitioned to secondary school and a smaller cohort of only 25 pupils that starting in Reception.
- 4.5 As previously mentioned, school funding is primarily determined by the number of children on roll, and falling rolls equate to reduced funding. It is extremely difficult for a school to remain financially viable when pupil numbers are falling as most school funding is pupil-based in line with the School's National Funding Formula. Unused or vacant school places create an immediate cost pressure for a school through a reduced budget, which in turn can affect the overall sustainability and quality of education standards.
- 4.6 As well as the issue of falling rolls impacting on Tiverton Primary School, the Council has concerns stemming from the internal audit report issued to Tiverton Primary School in June 2024, which provided an overall assurance rating of 'Limited Assurance'. There were serious weaknesses identified in key financial processes which places the school at risk of longer term financial viability. The school is under a licensed deficit scheme and is receiving support from the local authority to help it achieve a balanced financial position, however, it still remains at risk of unviability due to falling rolls.
- 4.7 The purpose of this report is to seek agreement from Cabinet to consult on the options for the future of Tiverton Primary School. We will be seeking the views of governors from Tiverton Primary as well as other local schools and also gathering feedback on the proposals from parents and staff and other stakeholders that may be impacted by any of options that may be progressed. Further detail on which groups and stakeholders we will be consulting with is set out at para. 6.58.
- 4.8 In proposing the options set out in this report, careful consideration and weight has been given to:

⁴ A primary school's PAN (published admission number) is the number of school places that must be offered in Reception each year. PAN's must be included in a school's admission arrangements. The PAN is normally derived from the net capacity assessment for the school. Net capacity assessments (NCA) are a DfE tool used by local authorities to assess the physical accommodation of an individual school. The NCA considers all the space in the school and then uses a calculation to determine how many pupils, across all year groups, the school can reasonably and safely accommodate. The assessment generates an indicative admission number (IAN) which is established by dividing by 7 for a primary school (7 year groups). When demand is high a school's PAN is normally set in line with the indicative admissions number so that maximum use is made of the teaching space available at the school. When demand is low the PAN can be reduced to manage the financial impact on the school e.g. if a school with 60 places is only educating 30 or fewer children in each year group the school might reduce the PAN so that only one teacher needs to be employed for each year group.

- a) the financial viability of Tiverton Primary School if it were to remain open;
- b) the opportunity for another primary school to federate with Tiverton Primary School and whether this could lead to a sustainable solution;
- c) whether any other school in the local area might be willing to amalgamate with Tiverton Primary and has the physical capacity to accommodate all the displaced pupils onto its site;
- d) whether Seven Sisters⁵ as the nearest community school with the same type and characteristic as Tiverton Primary School is the best possible option for an amalgamation
- e) whether or not there would be sufficient primary school places in the local area that could provide a suitable alternative for displaced pupils

4.9 Whilst options for the future of the school are being considered, the Council remains firmly committed to ensuring that all pupils on roll are receiving an excellent education that supports them in reaching their potential. Senior leaders and governors are robustly addressing educational standards with support from the Council's school improvement partner, Haringey Education Partnership (HEP). Nevertheless, a consultation on the options for the school's future has been triggered by a lack of demand for places at the school against a backdrop of falling demand in PA3 coupled with concerns about the long term financial viability of the school.

5. Alternative options considered

5.1 The following options have been considered and will be presented to stakeholders for their views as part of the consultation:

- no change i.e. continuation of current strategy for school improvement without any further action to address falling local rolls
- Federation
- amalgamation resulting in the closure of Tiverton Primary School with the displaced pupils being accommodated by another community school
- whether Seven Sisters as the nearest community school with the same type and characteristics as Tiverton Primary could be the best option for an amalgamation/merger
- Closure

5.2 **No change and continuation of current strategy** - This is a highly cost-inefficient option and is not sustainable. The school has a deficit budget and there is a significant risk that the deficit balance will increase at a greater rate due to falling rolls. The Council has a responsibility to ensure the efficient use of public money.

⁵ Seven Sisters Primary School is in the process of changing its name to South Grove Primary as part of a rebrand, effective from October 2024 with the change taking effect publicly from January 2025. For the purpose of this report, it will continue to be referred to as Seven Sisters Primary.

A school with falling rolls will have significantly less funding and this directly affects staffing numbers (both teaching and support staff), resources, equipment, expenditure, maintenance work and extracurricular activities for children. In time, a school affected by income loss will almost inevitably see performance and standards fall. It is the duty of the Council to ensure that the quality of education for children, and stability for teaching and support staff, take priority. The operational challenges affecting schools with falling rolls will continue to increase with a negative impact on pupils and no systemic solution.

Pupils require access to a broad and balanced curriculum. The school leadership is currently addressing standards issues with support provided by school improvement partners at HEP, however, this option is not recommended as it does not provide a long-term sustainable solution to falling local demand, and further, leaves other local schools vulnerable because of the current and projected surplus of places across PA3. Furthermore, taking no action to the issues affecting a school with falling rolls is not an acceptable option available to the Council.

- 5.3 **Federation** – In considering federation, there must be clear benefits that such an arrangement would bring for children including, but not limited to raising standards, improving the breadth and depth of education delivery and increasing opportunities for outstanding outcomes. Federated schools operate in collaboration with each other, sharing senior staff and possibly governing bodies, which allows them to maximise good educational practice, while achieving economies of scale.

Federation would require full commitment from the schools involved and a shared vision for the development of the federation. For this option to be feasible, Tiverton Primary School would be required to work with the local authority to identify another school that would see the benefits in federation. With low numbers of pupils on roll and uncertainty regarding its future, it is highly unlikely that another school would deem it viable to federate with Tiverton Primary School. To date, there has been no appetite expressed by any school to federate with Tiverton primary.

Although the Council has a role in supporting schools to explore federation, federation is ultimately a decision made independently by the governing bodies of schools. This option is not recommended because under a federation, schools would remain as separate organisations, and this would not address the decline in numbers on roll at Tiverton Primary or the risk of financial unviability.

- 5.4 **Amalgamation – this would result in the closure of Tiverton Primary with the displaced pupils being accommodated by another school**

An amalgamation can only be achieved by closing one or more schools and providing spaces for displaced children in another 'host' school. This option would involve the host school retaining its original DfE school number as it is

not technically considered a new school. However, following the amalgamation process, governors have the option to rename the school to create a new identity for the merged schools.

- 5.5 **Closure** - The local authority has a statutory duty to ensure the efficient use of resources. Maintaining a school with a declining roll could not be considered efficient given that there are surplus places in other local schools. The DfE advises that school closure decisions should be taken when there is no demand for the school in the medium to long term and there are sufficient places elsewhere to accommodate displaced children.

A school closure would see a school cease to exist as a statutory entity with all displaced children taking places in other local schools. School closures can take the form of a full and immediate closure, whereby all children on roll are supported to find places in other local schools, or the closure can be 'staggered'. A full and immediate closure of Tiverton is a viable option but would require all pupils on roll to join the roll of another school. There are sufficient primary school places in the local area that can provide a suitable alternative for displaced pupils.

A staggered closure option would cease the admission of children into reception each year until all remaining children have worked their way through to year 6, at which time the school would close. While this may be a less disruptive option for some families, it significantly increases the financial burden and further damages the quality of education at the school as pupils do not benefit from the mixing of year groups they would usually experience. A staggered closure option would therefore not be recommended in this case.

6. Background information

Summary

- 6.1 Following many years of borough-wide rising demand as a result of the growth in Haringey's population, the number of primary aged children joining Haringey primary schools has been in steady decline since 2014/15, a trend observed across London. School funding is primarily determined by the number of children on roll, and falling rolls equates to reduced funding to deliver education across the borough.
- 6.2 The Council has a statutory duty to ensure there are a sufficient number of school places for pupils and that places are planned effectively. Published Admission Numbers (PANs) reflect the maximum number of pupils schools can accommodate in each year group: this is derived from dividing the whole school PAN by the number of year groups within the school. Reductions to PANs have been implemented in recent years in schools across both the East and the West of the borough, however, they have not kept pace with falling numbers, leaving the surplus still above viable levels.

Demand for places

- 6.3 The Council monitors surplus reception places, a key measure of demand, and aims to maintain between 5 and 10% surplus across all Haringey primary schools. In June 2024, the reception vacancy rate in Haringey for entry to September 2024 was 10.3% overall with some school planning areas carrying a higher surplus rate. Without taking further action, surplus reception places are forecast to rise above 15% by 2027/28 as shown in our projections in Table 2 at para. 6.9 below.
- 6.4 Allowing surplus places to remain above 10% through inaction would directly and negatively impact the financial viability of Haringey schools, which will have an impact on education standards. This is because schools with less income have less money for staff salaries, for extracurricular activities, for equipment, to pay bills and carry out maintenance work. The quality of education and classroom support offered for children in these schools would deteriorate in time, as the affected schools would have to deplete surplus funds or go into deficit to maintain their current education offer.
- 6.5 The Haringey Education team is continuing to work collaboratively with all schools to review and adjust future plans to bring surplus places to within a sustainable range, but further action is now required with regards to Tiverton Primary and the impact on schools in PA3 which carries one of the highest surplus in the borough.

Planning Area 3 (PA3)

- 6.6 The proposals outlined in this report will help to address the issue of falling rolls in planning area 3 (PA3) which has seen a significant decline since 2019 as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Total number of pupils on roll in schools in PA3 (reception to year 6)

Schools in PA3	School Capacity (Mid 2024)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Capacity	3,330	3,750	3,720	3,630	3,420	3,450	3,330
Percentage of Surplus capacity		9.9%	11.8%	17.3%	16.0%	19.3%	18.1%

Source: 2019-2024 January school census (PLASC) data

- 6.7 The Department for Education has previously recommended that local authorities maintain no more than 5% surplus capacity to ensure that pupils arriving in-year can be offered a school place, and to allow for mobility. Surplus rolls at too high a level can affect the viability and sustainability of our schools.

Projected demand for reception places

- 6.8 Haringey commissions the Greater London Authority⁶ to provide an annual school rolls projection output based on January school census data in the year that the projections are produced.⁷
- 6.9 Table 2 below sets out the actual and projected numbers for the corresponding reception year and shows the number of places available and the actual/projected surplus or deficit for that year.

Table 2 – Reception places borough wide

Intake year	Reception aged pupils	Number of school places across borough	% of reception surplus	Deficit/surplus No. of places	Equivalent Form of Entry (fe)
2018/19	3,029 (actual)	3,290	7.9%	261	9
2019/20	2,952 (actual)	3,296	10.4%	344	12
2020/21	2,934 (actual)	3,236	9.3%	302	10
2021/22	2,683 (actual)	3,088	13.1%	405	13
2022/23	2,720 (actual)	3,026	10.1%	306	10
2023/24	2,652 (actual Jan 2024)	3,056	13.2%	404	13
2024/25	2,558	2,910	12.1%	352	12
2025/26	2,471	2,880	14.2%	409	14
2026/27	2,484	2,880	13.8%	396	13
2027/28	2,395	2,880	16.8%	485	16
2028/29	2,442	2,880	15.2%	438	15
2029/30	2,447	2,880	15.0%	433	14
2030/31	2,447	2,880	15.0%	433	14

Source: 2018-2024 January school census (PLASC) and GLA 2024 School roll projections – 10 year constrained 3/4 model. Please note that the “Equivalent form of Entry” column have been rounded to the nearest form of entry (30 places) for planning purposes.

- 6.10 The table illustrates that demand for reception places is projected to continue to fall up until 2027 with only a very small rebound (1-2fe) subsequently. Surplus reception places are forecast to rise above 15% by 2027/28. It is clear from our projections that further action must be taken to reduce surplus places.

⁶ The Greater London Authority's (GLA) school roll projections service is commissioned by Haringey and the majority of London LAs. The GLA's model is extensive and utilises a range of data sets such as population, births, migration, fertility rates, GP registrations, school rolls and housing data to generate annual school roll projections.

⁷ Every school in England has a statutory duty to complete the DfE School Census every term.

- 6.11 Whilst projections become less robust the further forward the data projects, this risk is mitigated by ensuring that the number of reception applications are routinely monitored against current projection data.

Factors driving the reduction in reception demand

- 6.12 Demand for reception places depends upon a range of factors including parental perceptions of schools in a given area, parental choice, birth rates, migration and the ability to afford to live in an area.
- 6.13 The reasons for Haringey's declining numbers are multifaceted, but include a combination of falling birth rates, changes to welfare benefits, the housing crisis, increases in the cost of living, the withdrawal of the right of entry and freedom of movement from EU nationals (Brexit) and as a result of families leaving London during the Covid-19 pandemic. Many of these factors remain outside the Council's control and are at no fault of the schools or their current leadership.
- 6.14 A report on [Managing falling school rolls in London](#) published by London Councils in January 2024 provides some wider context and independent analysis of the issue.

Reducing the surplus through managing published admission numbers (PANs)

- 6.15 For the reception intakes in 2023, 2024 and 2025 a total of 300 reception places have been removed through reducing PANs at various schools across the borough, with the intended result that the projected surplus would reduce to 10% for the 2025/26 academic year. However, as previously mentioned reductions to PANs have not kept pace with falling numbers, which risks leaving the surplus still above viable levels in future years.
- 6.16 Haringey Council has the authority to reduce school PANs at all community and voluntary controlled (VC) schools (i.e. 36 out of 64 primary schools), and to recommend PAN reductions at the remaining 28 academies, foundation or faith schools. The final decision to reduce PAN at these schools' rests with their governing body or academy trust. Reducing a school's PAN (e.g. from 90 to 60 or 60 to 30) allows governors and school leaders to plan for and employ fewer staff knowing they will only need one teacher for each year group.
- 6.17 The Council continues to consider reducing PANs wherever possible at schools significantly affected by falling rolls. However, while PAN reductions directly reduce the number of surplus places, they are not a long-term solution because the size of the school building remains unchanged. The unused space (e.g. empty classrooms) that PAN reductions create in schools must still be maintained, heated etc, and this draws on resources that could be more directly used to educate and support children.

Diocesan partners (Catholic and Church of England)

- 6.18 Of the 64 primary schools in Haringey, 19 are faith based Roman Catholic or Church of England voluntary aided or academy primaries (30%).
- 6.19 A recent analysis on first place preferences for Faith vs. Non-Faith schools was developed by the Haringey School Place Planning team looking at comparing levels of demand since the high point of Reception demand (2012) to the latest available data for 2024. The data demonstrates that demand for non-faith settings has fallen only slightly in this period (by 7%) compared to 30% for Church of England settings and 58% for Catholic settings.
- 6.20 Although this data suggests that the popularity of our faith schools has significantly fallen since 2012, the 2021 Census data found that 39% of Haringey residents still identify as Christian. It is important that we retain an appropriate mix of faith-based schools to reflect the needs and beliefs of our communities, however, this has not stopped us from making recommendations to our Diocesan partners about how they might reduce their number of classes to respond to the fall in demand and ensure that places are kept within a manageable level.
- 6.21 A considerable number of our faith schools have already taken steps to reduce their published admission numbers to reflect changes in Haringey's population and their governing bodies have in recent years delegated this responsibility to the local authority as part of the Council's annual consultation and determination of admission arrangements. Haringey's Education Services and School Place Planning teams will continue to work within a collaborative process and take a graduated approach in partnership with both dioceses.

School income and deficit

- 6.22 School funding is primarily determined by the number of children on roll and falling rolls equates to reduced funding to deliver education across the borough. In accordance with DfE funding regulations, the majority of school funding must be allocated on the basis of pupil numbers. The impact of surplus places can be significant to a school's overall budget and financial viability. In the 2024/25 academic year, for every surplus place that a maintained primary school carries, there is a loss on average of £4,025 AWPU (Age Weighted Pupil Unit) funding per pupil.⁸
- 6.23 Primary pupil rolls in Haringey reduced by 2,200 in the last 5 years (21,300 in 2019 to 19,100 in 2024). This reduced borough-wide roll means that in 2023/24, Haringey received circa £8.85m less Dedicated Schools Grant

⁸ AWPU (Age Weighted Pupil Unit) is an amount of funding attributed to each pupil at the school. There are three rates payable, one each for Primary, Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 pupils. The pupil numbers used to calculate the AWPU allocation is based on the October pupil census.

(DSG)⁹ Schools Block funding based on 2023/24 per pupil funding rates, compared with 2018/19.

- 6.24 High levels of surplus places results directly in a reduction in income, which can lead to deficit budgets. Falling rolls is a major theme that runs through the budget planning considerations of many schools in financial difficulty. Several schools are currently managing small year group sizes that prove to be uneconomical and require adopting a more flexible approach to resourcing i.e. vertical grouping (children from different years groups taught together) and capping of in-year classes (Years 1 - 6).
- 6.25 To manage and balance budgets, many Haringey school leaders have had to make efficiencies and innovations, which include reducing costs and exploring opportunities to increase income, for example, by hiring out facilities. However, in many cases these options have already been taken and budgets are still under pressure before they must deal with the financial impact of surplus school places.
- 6.26 Whilst school federations can provide some financial support through economies of scale, our current data in relation to budget deficits suggests that it does not protect schools sufficiently. It is key that schools experiencing falling rolls produce realistic 3-year budget plans (in accordance with DfE requirements for all schools) and deficit recovery plans (if necessary) and consider their options regarding future financial viability. These options could include staffing restructures, reducing costs, amalgamating with (an)other school(s) and potentially closure.

School performance and Ofsted

- 6.27 While school performance and Ofsted grading often helps to strengthen demand and protects a school from falling rolls, this isn't the case for Haringey, as 98% of primary schools in the borough were rated by Ofsted as good or outstanding.
- 6.28 Managing school performance in the context of falling rolls requires governors and school leaders to make difficult decisions affecting changes to provision for existing pupils. e.g. around restructuring the staffing complement or the removal of important enrichment provision or wrap-around provision such as after school clubs to balance reducing budgets.

What has been done already?

⁹ The dedicated schools grant (DSG) is payable to local authorities under section 14 of the Education Act 2002. Local authorities are responsible for determining the split of the grant between central expenditure and the individual schools budget (ISB) in conjunction with local schools forums. Local authorities are responsible for allocating the ISB to individual schools in accordance with the local schools' funding formula.

6.29 To summarise, the Council and school leaders have already taken the following actions:

- reduced the planned admission number (PANs) at schools that don't fill up.
- combined different year groups to keep schools financially viable.
- reduced the number of teaching and/or support posts to balance budgets
- Introduced mixed age teaching (i.e. mixing two year groups into one class)
- Reduced expenditure on other support staff, ICT and teaching resources
- Offered fewer enrichment activities for pupils
- Reviewed contracts and other expenditure to maximise efficiency

6.30 The Council has no control over the factors causing a reduction in school aged children. The Council is now in a position to start looking at schools such as Tiverton Primary that have been impacted the most by falling pupil numbers and budget pressures and consider the options outlined in this report.

Quality of education offer

6.31 Schools with reduced budgets have less income for support staff such as teaching assistant and learning mentors, who provide important support for pupils through academic and pastoral interventions. Specialist teachers with expertise in physical education, languages or art become too expensive, meaning primary class teachers who may not be skilled or trained in these areas have to teach these subjects themselves. It is also common in small schools to see leaders double up on roles, such as headteachers taking on the SENCo (Special Educational needs Coordinator) or School Business Manager responsibilities.

6.32 As budget pressure becomes greater, and class sizes drop below 50%, schools must also consider the option of vertically grouped classes to avoid going into deficit. This involves a sufficiently experienced and able teacher being employed to teach children from across two year groups in the same classroom. Vertical grouping brings increased complexity in day-to-day management and organisation and increased workload for the teacher. The challenges of recruiting and retaining skilled and experienced teachers in London can make schools under financial pressure less attractive.

Housing development across the borough

6.33 At this stage it is unclear how much additional demand for school places will come from planned housing development. Our projections use data from the GLA (Greater London Authority) which make assumptions about the "child yield" from new developments, essentially the number of children that you might expect from the mix of proposed new housing. In recent years and across most London boroughs these child yields have been considerably lower than anticipated. This may be in part related to the character of new

properties, many of which are 1–2-bedroom apartments and which are not necessarily optimal for family living.

- 6.34 Further factors also include the affordability of larger housing in Haringey and across London and the additional impacts of Brexit and Covid-19, both of which have been linked to lower levels of demand for future school places as both factors have impacted birth rates across London and led to out-migration from Haringey and London.
- 6.35 Data from the most recent GLA report on [Housing in London](#) shows that there has been a huge increase in the size of deposit required for a London property purchase in recent years. In 1993 the average required deposit was £13,000, in 2008 around £50,000 and by 2023 around £143,000. The GLA also state that “London rents are so much higher than those of other regions that the median monthly rent for a one-bedroom home in the capital (£1,276) is higher than the median rent for a home with four or more bedrooms across all of the North and Midlands”.
- 6.36 In PA3 where Tiverton and Seven Sisters Primary Schools are located additional housing development appears to have had no discernible impact on demand for local primary school places. In fact, primary pupil rolls in PA3 have fallen from 3,307 in 2019 to 2,727 by 2024 (January school census data), a fall of around 18%.
- 6.37 Irrespective of whether new housing or some other dynamic creates additional demand for Reception places in future years the priority now is to ensure the sustainability and resilience of our primary schools. This will ensure their continued success today and ability to absorb of potential additional pupils in future years.

Individual school data for Tiverton Primary School and Seven Sisters Primary School

- 6.38 Both Tiverton and Seven Sisters Primary Schools are substantive 2fe community primary schools located in N15 within planning area 3 (PA3). Tiverton Primary School is currently graded ‘Requires Improvement’ by Ofsted (June 2023) and Seven Sisters is graded ‘Good’ (March 2019).
- 6.39 An amalgamation between Tiverton Primary and Seven Sisters could be a viable option and is fundamentally due to the similar type and characteristics of two community schools located in close proximity to one other, minimising disruption for families and young people, but also due to both schools having a high surplus as well as high unused capacity in their buildings.
- 6.40 Table 3 below shows there has been a gradual decline in pupils on roll at both schools since 2019.

Table 3: Total number of pupils on roll (reception to year 6)

School	School Net Capacity	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Seven Sisters Primary	420	323	306	272	257	244	221
Tiverton Primary	420	307	310	327	297	271	245

Source: 2019-2024 January school census (PLASC) data

- 6.41 Despite both schools being 2 form entry buildings with a net capacity of 420, both are operating as 1fe primary schools due to a fall in demand. Both schools previously had a PAN of 60 but reduced to 30 and operated mixed-age teaching as well as capped in-year classes (Years 1 -6).
- 6.42 An amalgamation would result in a single organisation operating as a two-form entry (fe) school, which is more aligned with the current level of projected demand in the area. It is predicted that an amalgamated school with Seven Sisters Primary could satisfactorily fill two forms of entry as opposed to the current surplus created across two individual sites with a combined school net capacity equivalent to 4fe.
- 6.43 Table 4 below shows the number of pupils on roll at Tiverton and Seven Sisters Primary Schools as of September 2024 and the theoretical impact on pupil numbers based on a proposal for an amalgamation.

Current roll as at Sep 2024	Net capacity	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total pupil roll
Seven Sisters Primary School	420	26	21	28	25	31	25	37	193
Tiverton Primary School	420	25	24	19	18	27	31	32	176
Seven Sisters (South Grove) (amalgamation)	420	51	45	47	43	58	56	69	369
+ / - admission number (60)		-9	15	13	17	-2	-4	+9	-51

Source: School Admissions Data – school roll returns September 2024

- 6.44 It is clear from this data that Seven Sisters Primary would have the capacity to absorb the vast majority of pupils from Tiverton Primary across all year groups with the exception of Year 6. The total number of pupils in Year 6 currently exceeds the admission limit.
- 6.45 If numbers remain constant and an option for an amalgamation was progressed, the Council will commit to working closely with the newly formed school to help it maximise the space available so that any internal re-

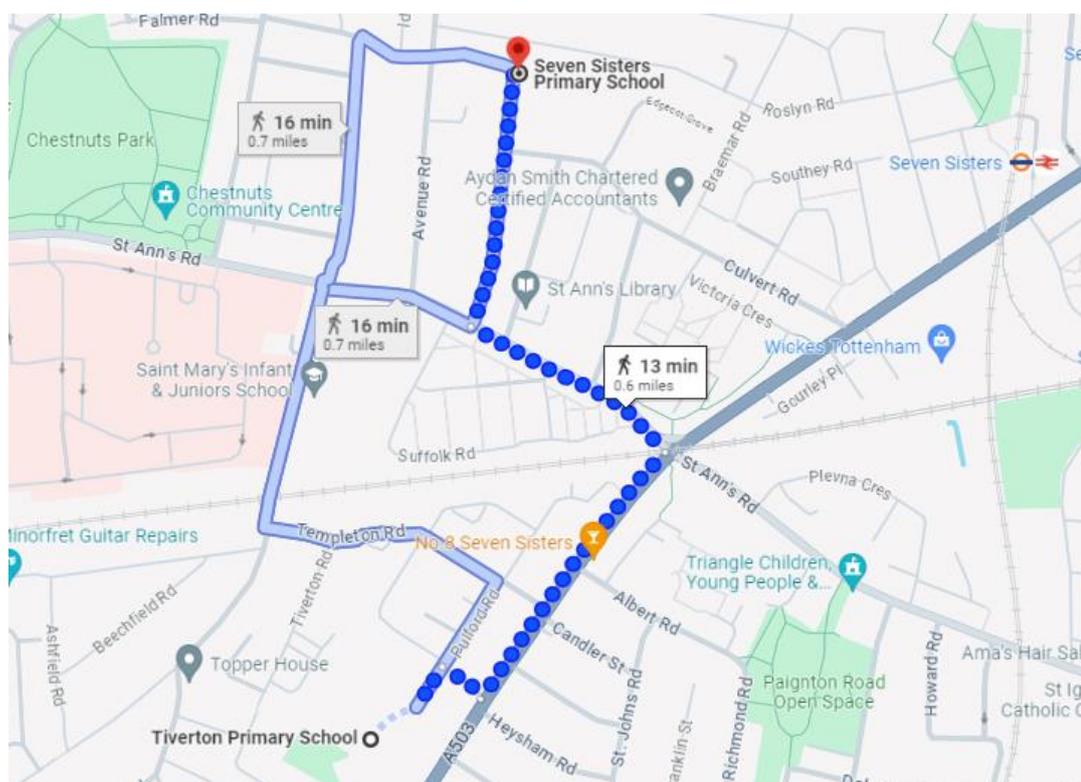
organisation to accommodate additional pupils continued to ensure the successful learning of all pupils at the school.

Travel and home locations of current Seven Sisters and Tiverton pupils

- 6.46 Tiverton is 0.6 miles away from Seven Sisters, which is a 13-minute walk between the two schools. Map 1 below shows that current pupils at both Tiverton and Seven Sisters Primary Schools live, in the most part, in broadly the same area which is unsurprising given that the two schools are closely located as shown previously in the location map at para. 6.47 below.

Additional travel distance for typical Tiverton pupils should the school amalgamate with Seven Sisters

- 6.47 Seven Sisters Primary School is the nearest community school and located at South Grove, N15 5QE. Both Tiverton Primary and Seven Sisters Primary are closely located to each other in PA3 as shown in the map below:



There is a short walking distance (13 minutes) between the schools.

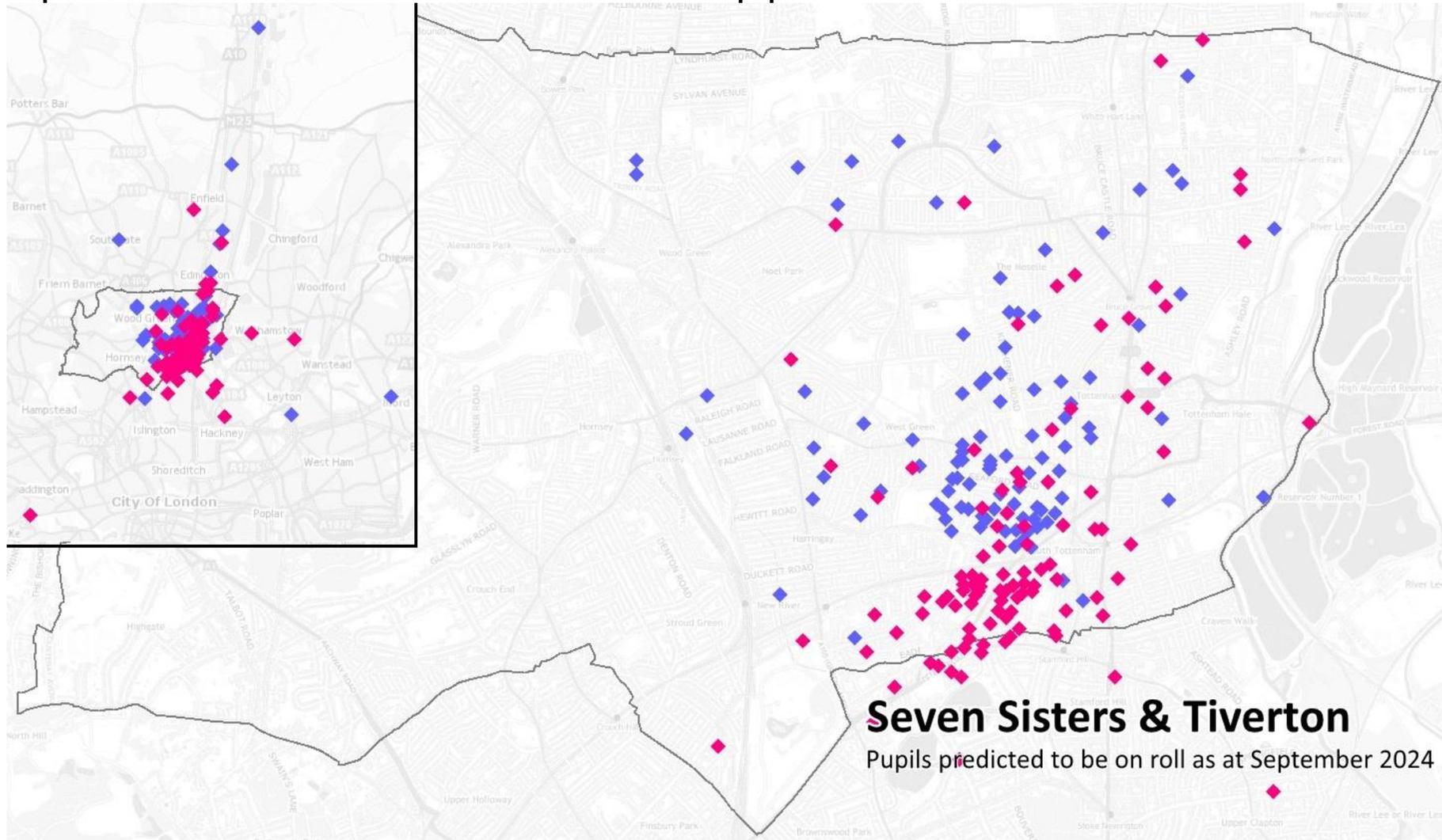
- 6.48 By analysing the entire cohort of pupils predicted to be on roll at Tiverton Primary School in September 2024 we can establish that the typical pupil (median¹⁰) at Tiverton resides 0.26 miles / a ¼ of a mile away from the physical location of the school itself. Should this exact same cohort of pupils

¹⁰ The median value is the middle value in a range of data after the data is sorted in ascending order, i.e. 1,1,4,4,5,[6],8,8,9,15,18 (in this example the number 6). Using the median reduces the impact of outliers. In this case parents/carers who live immediately adjacent to the school or many miles away.

attend Seven Sisters rather than Tiverton the typical distance travelled is 0.43 of mile / less than half a mile. The difference between 0.26 and 0.43 is 0.17 of a mile, less than 300 metres.

- 6.49 It should be noted that these data are averages, and most parents/carers will have a shorter or longer travel distance than that stated above. Of the 215 pupils at Tiverton predicted to be on roll in September 2024, some 62 or just under a third will have a shorter distance to Seven Sisters than Tiverton.
- 6.50 If an amalgamation was progressed with Seven Sisters, it would be necessary to explore the need for implementing a larger school street initiative at Seven Sisters Primary to minimise any increased traffic congestion stemming from a merger and to ensure the road safety and physical wellbeing of families and young people.

Map 1 Home locations of current **Seven Sisters** and **Tiverton** pupils



Vulnerable groups -Tiverton and Seven Sisters

- 6.51 There is a high incidence of need at both schools, with the pupils with an EHCP at Tiverton at 12 (5%), and at Seven Sisters 25 (11%). The percentage of pupils on FSM is 55% at Tiverton and 37% at Seven Sisters (May 2024 census, reception to year 6). Additional support to enable a smooth transition will be offered to affected pupils who have EHCPs.
- 6.52 The Council has a duty of care to ensure children in its schools are able to receive a good education and to access the full curriculum. A school with a declining roll is not able to do this effectively as it is not financially viable to run. Furthermore, there is not projected to be an increase in pupil numbers in PA3 to change this situation.

What about closure of Seven Sisters with displaced pupils being accommodated by Tiverton Primary School? Could this be an option?

- 6.53 A proposal to amalgamate Tiverton Primary with Seven Sisters is fundamentally due to the similar type and characteristics of two community schools located in close proximity to one other, minimising disruption, but also due to both schools having a high surplus as well as high unused capacity in their buildings.
- 6.54 It would not be appropriate to expect Tiverton Primary School to accommodate all the pupils at Seven Sisters Primary School due to the higher incidence of need at Seven Sisters and due to the unmatched SEND support that the school currently offers to families in the local community and to the borough from the Seven Sister Primary school site.
- 6.55 Seven Sisters Nurture Hub has been operating successfully for a number of years and was commissioned by the London Borough of Haringey to provide a space for children who need access to therapeutic intervention. Children are referred by their Haringey school to the Hub and have a bespoke programme to enable them to understand their social and emotional needs. There is also an outline proposal for a potential Respite unit for children with disabilities at Seven Sisters Primary.
- 6.56 It is important to note that Seven Sisters Primary school was historically a 3 form entry school in the noughties. The fabric and structure of the building remains very robust. The space and current bespoke programmes offered to children with SEND means it may be a more compatible to meet the needs of displaced pupils.

Full and immediate closure and sufficient places at alternative schools

- 6.57 There are sufficient primary school places in the local area that can provide a suitable alternative for displaced pupils. A high surplus of primary school places in the local area means that other alternatives can be offered for pupils

at Tiverton that wish to go elsewhere. A full and immediate closure remains a viable option.

- 6.58 A closure may help support the sustainability and viability of other schools in Planning Area 3 (PA3) by enabling neighbouring schools to increase their pupil numbers. If a decision is made to progress with a closure rather than an amalgamation, further information and support for families affected will be provided from the admissions team throughout the process.

Consultation process and next steps

- 6.59 There are 4 main stages summarized in the table below, with indicative timescales:

	Description	Timescale
1	Informal consultation on the proposals set out in this report	6-week consultation (October-December 2024)
2	Gathering stakeholder representation and drafting a report with recommendations to Cabinet	December 2024 – January 2025
3	Decision on whether to progress to formal consultation which involves publishing a statutory notice of intention to amalgamate or close. This triggers a 28-day representation period during which any person could object to or make comments on the proposal.	February 2025 Cabinet meeting
4	Final decision to proceed or not with an amalgamation or closure	April or May 2025 Cabinet meeting

Approximate dates subject to change depending on the progress and decisions by Council's Cabinet

- 6.60 There are three key decision points where members will decide on how to proceed:
- **Cabinet Decision 1** - Council's Cabinet will make a decision on whether to informally consult on the options proposed in this paper.
 - **Cabinet Decision 2** – Results of the informal consultation are considered by Cabinet who will decide whether to progress to formal consultation. Formal consultation involves the Council publishing a statutory notice of their intention to close or

amalgamate Tiverton Primary School with another school. There will be a 28-day 'objection period' for those who object to the proposal to send their objections to the Council.

- **Cabinet Decision 3** - The outcome of the statutory notice period and any objections are considered by the Cabinet, who makes the final decision to proceed or not with an amalgamation or full and immediate closure.

6.61 To ensure as wide a consultation as possible, a range of modes and methods of communication can be used to inform and facilitate feedback from stakeholders regarding the proposal –

- through the Schools Newsletter which is distributed to the head teacher and chair of governors of every school in the borough;
- letter to all Haringey primary and secondary schools
- email to all Children's Centres in the borough;
- email to all registered nurseries and child minders and any other early years providers;
- published on the Council's online admissions pages; / dedicated consultation page
- via information in all libraries across the borough (posters/ digital screens);
- email to all councillors from the Lead Cabinet Member;
- email MPs whose constituencies are affected;
- email to the diocesan authorities.
- email to all residents' groups that the Council hold information for
- email to the branch secretaries of all trade unions recognised by the Council for collective bargaining in respect of its employees at Tiverton Primary School
- email to neighbouring authorities
- email to other groups, bodies, parents and carers as appropriate
- social media and digital billboards

6.62 Stakeholders will be given the opportunity to express their views in writing, via a questionnaire – both electronically and via a hard copy, by email and post.

Early engagement and information sharing events – 23 May 2024

6.63 An early information engagement session was carried out with the Tiverton Primary School parent/carer community on 23 May 2024, hosted by the school and attended by Haringey Education representatives. The purpose of the two events (morning and afternoon sessions) was to share key information about the changes to the borough's population in recent years and the declining pupil numbers in planning area 3 (PA3). The sessions were well attended, and the issues and feedback raised by the school community are set out at Appendix B.

- 6.64 If a decision to move to informal consultation is made, further in-depth engagement meetings will be held during the pre-publication consultation period to provide more detailed background information on proposals and a chance for Q&A. There will also be separate consultation meetings for parents/carers with children with SEND at Tiverton Primary School.

Equality and Diversity Monitoring

- 6.65 As part of the consultation process, respondents will be asked to complete an equality and diversity questionnaire, looking at Gender, Age, Ethnicity and Disability. The information collected will help identify any special requirements; promote equality; and improve choice and diversity. This information will only be retained and used for as long as is necessary. Where data is no longer required, it will be destroyed in line with relevant destruction policies and processes.

7. Contribution to the Corporate Delivery Plan 2024-2026

- 7.1 Ensuring that Haringey schools are educationally and financially viable to provide pupils with a rounded education that meets their academic, social and emotional needs, underpins theme 3 within the Corporate Delivery Plan 2024-26 which seeks to enable every child to have the best start in life with access to high quality education.
- 7.2 The Council has a statutory duty to ensure there is a sufficient number of school places for pupils and that places are planned effectively, taking action where appropriate to mitigate the risks of too many or too few places. Ensuring that we prioritise forms of school organisation that will remain financially viable under a range of different funding scenarios i.e., organisational structures within and between schools that provide flexibility to address population change.
- 7.3 Haringey's aims are to create a fairer, more inclusive borough, which supports children and young people to thrive. We want to optimise schools' roles as an anchor system in the borough and ensure that developments and changes are sustainable.

8. Carbon and Climate Change

- 8.1 The proposals in this report will lead to a more efficient use of school buildings. Running a higher number of school sites with fewer pupils is inefficient in terms of energy usage, as the buildings still need to be heated and lit. Reducing the number of buildings with surplus places will mean that the retained buildings will start working to their designed capacity in terms of number of occupants, both pupils and staff, leading to more efficient energy use instead of running a higher number of schools with fewer pupils.

9. Statutory Officers comments (Director of Finance (procurement), Head of Legal and Governance, Equalities)

9.1 Below are financial, governance and legal and equality comments.

Finance

9.2 Tiverton Primary School's budget forecast for the 2024-25 financial year anticipates a deficit of £592,100, with the first quarter forecast projecting an increased deficit of £607,317.

9.3 Since 2018-19 the school has received financial support including several school loans from the local authority in support of its financial pressures and approved licenced deficit school balance.

9.4 In 2023-24 school failed to meet the DfE Schools Financial Review Statement (SFVS) as reported to the DfE and also received an 'Nil Assurance' school audit report.

9.5 For all options considered in this report, we recommend providing fully costed options appraisals for each proposal. Below, we offer brief comments on the financial impact of each option on both the council and the schools.

- No change i.e. continuation of current strategy for school improvement without any further action to address falling local rolls

The school should be restructured as soon as possible based on findings from the Integrated Curriculum Financial Planning (ICFP) tool to ensure a viable three-year plan is in place. Without action, the risk of a growing financial deficit will increase each year, significantly impacting the school's ability to meet its financial commitments. A lower number of pupils enrolled makes this a risky option for the council.

- Federation and Amalgamation

Both options require a fully costed structure based on analysis using the Integrated Curriculum Financial Planning (ICFP) tool for both Tiverton and the federated or amalgamated school to ensure financial viability. There are potential savings in both scenarios through synergies.

Federation with similar institutions can offer financial benefits by sharing resources, such as a unified leadership team, administrative staff, and teaching expertise, leading to cost savings and more efficient use of funding.

Similarly, amalgamation can further reduce operational costs as discussed in Federation model, by streamlining administrative functions, consolidating staff roles, and optimising facility use. This creates

economies of scale, enabling the combined entity to operate more efficiently on a single site compared to individual schools in federated model. While the long-term financial outlook may improve in federation model through greater efficiency and resource allocation, careful planning and management are crucial to ensure that the initial costs of amalgamation do not exceed the expected savings.

- Closure

The financial implications can be substantial. The local authority will have to absorb the school's financial deficit including licensed deficit and bear associated additional costs related to the closure, including redundancy payments for staff, settlement costs for leased equipment and contract early closure costs.

Head of Legal & Governance

- 9.6 This report sets out proposals for the future of Tiverton Primary School, a primary school maintained by Haringey Council.
- 9.7 The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (“the Act”), as well as secondary legislation in the form of the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013 (“the Regulations”) contains a detailed process to be followed by an authority it proposes to close discontinue or cease to maintain a school. In addition, the authority must adhere to statutory Guidance; the current Guidance issued in January 2023 is entitled “Opening and closing maintained schools” (“the Guidance”). The purpose of the legislation and guidance in the context of school closures is to ensure that surplus capacity is removed where necessary. All proposals to close a school must be made with regard to the factors outlined in the Guidance and follow the statutory process.
- 9.8 The Guidance provides illustrative reasons for closing a maintained school that include i. where there are surplus places elsewhere in the local area that can accommodate displaced pupils and there is no predicted demand for the school in the medium to long term; ii. it is to be amalgamated with another school or iii. where it is no longer considered viable. This report alludes to all 3 as the reasons as contributing to the subject of the report.
- 9.9 The statutory framework sets out a two stage consultation process. At stage one the proposer is required to consult any parties it thinks appropriate before publishing formal proposals to a close a maintained school i.e. initial/informal consultation. Stage 2 is the formal stage of entailing publication of the statutory proposal; this must be done within 12 months of the initial consultation. It is for the proposer – in this case the Council- to determine the nature and length of initial consultation. The guidance advises that it is best practice for consultations to be carried out in term time to allow the maximum number of people to respond and further the proposer should have regard to

the Cabinet Office guidance on consultation principles when deciding how to carry out the consultation exercise. Officers must ensure that the consultation principles are adhered to.

- 9.10 It is permissible for the Council to propose in the initial consultation the options that are outlined in this report.

Equalities Comment

- 9.11 The Council has a public sector equality duty under the Equalities Act 2010 ('the 2010 Act') to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a "relevant protected characteristic" and people who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between people who share those a "relevant protected characteristic" and people who do not share it.
- A "relevant protected characteristic" is age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (formerly gender) and sexual orientation.

The three parts of the duty apply to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership status applies to the first part of the duty.

Although it is not enforced in legislation as a protected characteristic, Haringey Council treats socioeconomic status as a local protected characteristic.

- 9.12 The report recommends that Cabinet agree to commence consultation on the options for the future of Tiverton Primary School, including the options of 'no change', federation, amalgamation or closure.
- 9.13 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been initiated and is attached at Appendix 1. This is an initial assessment of the potential impact of an amalgamation between Tiverton and Seven Sisters Primary or an immediate and full closure based on consideration of all the relevant available data. It will be updated following the informal and formal consultation periods to address any issues equalities impacts arising from the consultation, and to provide further assessment of any detailed proposal that may then be put forward. This will ensure that equality considerations inform each decision that is taken.
- 9.14 **Service users (children at Tiverton Primary)** -- A comprehensive EqIA has identified some potential negative impacts on some children – aged 0 to 11 years old – at Tiverton. This decision may particularly impact children who are

male, of Black African, Black Caribbean or any other white backgrounds as they are overrepresented in Tiverton primary school. Additionally, students at Tiverton may live in higher areas of deprivation and face particular socioeconomic disadvantages of the specified Equality characteristics / protected groups which includes Sex, Gender Reassignment, Age, Disability, Race & Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation, Religion or Belief (or No Belief), Pregnancy & Maternity and Marriage and Civil Partnership. In terms of pupil composition Tiverton Primary shares many similar characteristics with other Haringey primary schools located in Planning Area 3 and any negative impact can be mitigated with careful planning and the offer of alternative school places. There are sufficient places that exist at neighbouring schools to absorb displaced pupils. All surrounding schools are judged by Ofsted to be 'good' or 'outstanding.'

- 9.15 **Children with Special Education Needs (SEN) or disabled children** – Whilst Tiverton Primary has a lower proportion of pupils with SEN than other primary schools in the borough, they are nevertheless a vulnerable group who could be particularly affected by this proposal, although this could be mitigated by good transition planning. The admission arrangements prioritise children with an EHCP or SEND needs before oversubscription criteria comes into force as well as also giving priority to children with social and medical considerations that meet the criterion for an exceptional medical or social need.
- 9.16 **Teaching and non-teaching staff** – The closure or amalgamation of Tiverton Primary School will inevitably negatively impact on teaching and support staff working at the school. Due to the predominance of female staff over male staff in Tiverton Primary School (and indeed in primary schools across the borough and the country), they are likely to be affected in greater numbers.

Additionally, Tiverton has an overrepresentation of Black and Asian staff compared to the Haringey average, and an older staff population. Therefore, staff who have these protected characteristics are more likely to be negatively impacted by the decision. Linked to this equality characteristic is another, Pregnancy & Maternity. In terms of mitigating the impact on both of these equality characteristics staff, including those who have particular protected characteristics, the Council will endeavour to ensure all staff affected by any proposal to close or amalgamate. Tiverton Primary School will receive individualised support which considers protected characteristics, including access to the redeployment pool and the Employee Assistance Programme, including CV/statement writing/ interview technique training and support to find alternative roles within Haringey.

10. Use of Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)
- Appendix 2 – Early engagement feedback

11. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

This report contains no exempt information.

Background papers

1. The Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998.
2. The Education Act 2002.
3. The Education and Inspections Act 2006.
4. Education and Skills Act 2008.
5. The School Admissions Code (September 2021).
6. The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014.
7. The School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 2012.
8. The School Admissions (Appeals Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012.
9. The Education Act 2011
10. The School Admissions Appeals Code (October 2022).
11. The School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012.
12. The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013
13. School roll projections sourced from the GLA
14. School roll information, including admission information from data held within Education Services
15. Department for Education "Opening and Closing maintained schools "(January 2023)
16. Department for Education "Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools" (January 2023).