

**Report for:** 14 April 2025

**Item number:** To be added by the Committee Section

**Title:** **Determination of the statutory notice proposing the closure of Tiverton Primary School**

**Report authorised by:** Ann Graham, Director of Children's Services

**Lead Officers:** Jane Edwards, Assistant Director for Schools and Learning  
Carlo Kodosi, Head of Admissions and School Organisation

**Ward(s) affected:** Hermitage & Gardens, St Ann's, South Grove and South Tottenham

**Report for Key/  
Non Key Decision:** Key Decision

## **1. Describe the issue under consideration**

- 1.1 This report sets out the result of the statutory representation period on the proposal to close Tiverton Primary School.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide the Cabinet Member for Children, Schools & Families with a factual summary of the proposal and any representations received, to enable the Cabinet Member to make a final decision on the proposal to close Tiverton Primary School.

### **Statutory guidance**

- 1.3 The [‘Opening and closing maintained schools’ statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers’ \(October 2024\)](#) provides a clear framework for local authorities and governing bodies wishing to propose the discontinuance of a maintained school.
- 1.4 There are a number of reasons under which proposers are permitted to pursue the closure of a maintained school. Two of the four reasons set out on page 23 of the DfE guidance are relevant to this proposal:
  - There are surplus places elsewhere in the local area which can accommodate displaced pupils and there is no predicted demand for the school in the medium to long term;
  - it is no longer considered viable;

## Need for decision

- 1.5 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 2028<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.6 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 the last 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 Ofsted<sup>2</sup> judgement.
- 1.7 School funding is primarily determined by the number of children on roll and 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 smaller one-form entry schools such as Tiverton Primary School falling into financial deficit. This has not just been felt by Haringey schools - many primary schools across London and England ended 2023-24 in financial deficit.<sup>3</sup>
- 1.8 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 will be challenged to do this effectively because of inevitable financial pressures from reduced funding. Reduced funding can impact on the efficient running of schools, financial stability and education standards.
- 1.9 It is a principle of the Council to protect Haringey's high quality of education, and this may be compromised where the cost of teaching staff, equipment and enrichment activities become unaffordable. The link between pupil numbers and school funding means that it is not always feasible to keep a school operating to guarantee the standard of education families and pupils deserve.

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<sup>1</sup> 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](#).

<sup>2</sup> 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 used to indicate an evaluation on the quality of education.

<sup>3</sup> Expenditure data [published by the Department of Education \(Dfe\)](#) shows almost 15 per cent of local authority-maintained primary schools ended 2023-24 in deficit, an increase of 2.7 percent (12.3%) from the previous year.

- 1.10 We know that schools in the local area, including schools across the borough boundary in Hackney, have a significant surplus of places. Furthermore, current school roll projections across planning area 3 where Tiverton Primary school is located do not indicate any future demographic growth.
- 1.11 Full consultation has been undertaken over a period of several months including meetings with staff, governors, and parents, along with other interested stakeholders. The six-week pre-publication consultation ran from 6 November 2024 to 18 December 2024 and gathered views from stakeholders on options for the future of the school. A summary of the representations received from the pre-publication consultation was reported to Cabinet at the February Cabinet meeting and can be found at Appendix 1.
- 1.12 On the 11 February 2025, the Council's Cabinet agreed to publish a statutory notice commencing the statutory representation period, which was the last opportunity for people and organisations to comment on the proposal. There were no comments or objections received during the 28 day representation period.

## **2 Recommendation**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet member:

### **Note**

- that no comments or objections were received during the 4-week representation period despite consulting widely with all relevant stakeholders
- the school is currently in deficit and the revenue budget to operate successfully in future whilst maintaining the delivery of a good quality of education for pupils is severely diminished by the school's very low pupil numbers.
- Many families have already transferred their children to other local schools; Tiverton Primary currently has 130 pupils on roll (as of week ending 28 March 2025), 29 of which are year 6 pupils that will be transferring to secondary school in September 2025. A significant number have also secured places at other local schools to start following the Easter holidays.

### **Approve**

- the proposal to discontinue the school from 31 August 2025 with displaced pupils transferring to other local schools.

## **3 Cabinet Member Introduction**

- 3.1 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.

- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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 consider the difficult option of closure outlined in this report for Tiverton Primary.
- 3.5 Significant concerns have been raised about the schools' long-term sustainability in terms of the risks to its financial viability and ability to attract pupils to the school. The latter is, in large part, due to a declining birth rate which is also affecting many schools locally and across London.
- 3.6 For these reasons and having undertaken consultation over a period of several months to find the best solution, I am in agreement, with delegated authority from Council's Cabinet, for the local authority to cease to maintain Tiverton Primary in order for transition planning to commence for the remaining pupils so they can be supported in securing another local school rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.
- 3.7 Many families have already been offered an alternative school via the Council's in-year admissions process, including children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The remaining families with pupils still enrolled at the school will be well-supported to transition to an alternative school. This will include a dedicated admissions officer being made available via telephone

and onsite to families to offer admissions support and discuss options. We know there are sufficient places at local schools rated by Ofsted as 'Good' Or 'Outstanding' which can accommodate all the remaining displaced pupils.

- 3.8 We will also ensure that all staff are formally consulted on closure. All school staff will receive individualised support and be subject to the normal redeployment procedures. They will be added to the Council's redeployment register so that they can access details of vacancies available within the Council and schools. Other support would include access to the Employee Assistance Programme for independent support and counselling and access to CV/statement writing/ interview technique on request.

## **4 Background information**

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 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)<sup>4</sup> 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.
- 4.3 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. The reception vacancy rate in Haringey for entry to September 2024

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<sup>4</sup> 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.

following national offer day in March 2024 was 10.3% overall with some school planning areas<sup>5</sup> carrying a higher surplus rate.

- 4.4 As shown in Table 1 below, planning area 3 (PA3) where Tiverton Primary School is located has seen a significant reduction in pupil numbers.

**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

- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 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.

### Declining demand

- 4.7 Demand for reception places depends upon a range of factors including parental perception of a schools in a given area, parental choice, birth rates, migration and the ability to afford to live in an area.
- 4.8 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

<sup>5</sup> 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).



outside the Council's control and are at no fault of the schools or their current leadership.

- 4.9 A report on [Managing school places and admissions in London \(February 2025\)](#) published by London Councils in February 2025 provides some wider context and independent analysis of the issue.

### **Tiverton Primary School**

- 4.10 There are currently vacancies across all year groups at Tiverton Primary School with 130 pupils on roll as of weekend ending 28 March 2025 (roll return data submitted by school to the local authority): 0 in nursery, 18 in Reception, 18 in Year 1, 11 in Year 2, 13 in Year 3, 19 in Year 4, 22 in Year 5, and 29 in Year 6. As a substantive two form entry school, Tiverton Primary had the capacity to admit up to 420 pupils (Reception– Year 6). The school reduced to 1FE in September 2020 and is currently operating at 62% of its total capacity as a 1FE.
- 4.11 The future viability of the school has been further weakened by a high number of parental requests to transfer to other local schools and schools in neighbouring boroughs rather than wait to move in a managed cohort as described in the transition proposal set out below at para 7.12.
- 4.12 During the consultation periods, the Council and school emphasized to all parents the benefits of pupils transferring as part of a managed transfer and a co-ordinated admissions process run by the Haringay School Admission Service. Despite this, families still had the right to express a preference to other Haringey local schools as part of the Council's in-year admissions process. 145 children have left the school since June 2024. Of these, 125 have moved to other schools in Haringey and neighbouring boroughs (Hackney and Enfield).
- 4.13 The Council, as admissions authority, cannot lawfully refuse to admit a pupil to a school where the admitting school has available places. There has been, and there continues to be a significant number of vacancies across the whole school estate and in neighbouring boroughs such as Hackney and Enfield. Please see para. 5.18 below for school vacancy information.
- 4.14 It is important to note that the resulting and significant decrease in numbers on roll will further compromise the financial viability of the school and its ability to offer a broad and balanced curriculum.

### **Tiverton Primary School – financial position and future viability**

- 4.15 Under legislation, schools retain a high degree of autonomy when setting budgets unless they are in a deficit position. Schools are reminded of the need to forecast as accurately as possible so that decisions are taken in the light of accurate budget projections. Schools in deficit are required to

complete deficit recovery plans to bring their budget back into balance by elimination of the deficit within three years.

- 4.16 The Council is financially liable for maintained schools affected by falling rolls and they must act in a timely way to minimise the risk of schools going into or increasing deficits. The Council has a responsibility to deliver best value, and continuous improvement through the efficient, effective and economic management of our school estate, whilst also ensuring that secure, sustainable and high-quality education is in place for the children and young people of Haringey now and into the future.
- 4.17 As well as the issue of falling rolls and a drop in preferences impacting Tiverton, the Council has had serious concerns stemming from the internal audit report issued to the school in June 2024, which provided an overall assurance rating of 'Limited Assurance'. There were serious weaknesses identified in key financial processes which placed the school at risk of longer term financial viability. The school has been under a licensed deficit scheme and has continued to struggle to bring its budget back into balance despite support with loans and regular budget monitoring meetings with the local authority Schools Finance team.
- 4.18 In October 2024, the governing body was issued with a warning notice stating that the local authority intended to exercise its intervention powers under section 60(1)(e) Education and Inspections Act 2006). An Interim Executive Board of Governors was established following the resignation of all members of the governing board on 7 October 2024.
- 4.19 The local authority Schools Finance team and the IEB are working in partnership to stabilise the school's financial deficit and to avoid any further shortfall. Ultimately, the cost of the deficit would fall on the Council's General Fund and would represent additional financial pressures for the Council. It is therefore essential to ensure there is appropriate financial governance for the remaining months the school remains open if a decision was to be made to proceed with the closure option contained in this report.
- 4.20 It has become increasingly clear that the school is no longer sustainable financially or organisationally, and that, after evaluation of a number of options, closure of the school should be considered and consulted on.
- 4.21 Amongst the considerations for recommending closure are:
- The pupil roll has fallen over the past five years resulting in reduced (per pupil) funding. This reduced funding has created significant deficit (-£703,686), and it is thought to be unlikely that the school will be able to reverse this trend and prevent this deficit growing over future years if it remains open.
  - This funding position would have a detrimental impact on staffing and resources, which would limit the school's ability to continue to provide



the high quality of education that the children in the school community need and deserve.

- The school would be hampered in its capacity to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum that it would be reasonable to expect of a primary school.
- Haringey has capacity in neighbouring schools to meet the needs of all displaced pupils transitioning from Tiverton to alternative schools.

- 4.22 In considering the closure of a school, Haringey is required to follow the Department for Education's (DFE) guidance: "*Opening and closing maintained schools, Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers* (October 2024). This sets out a five-stage process as outlined at para. 6.16 below.
- 4.23 Council's Cabinet agreed on 15 October 2024 to start a pre-publication consultation on the options for the future of Tiverton Primary School. The Cabinet report to this and the minutes of the meeting can be found here: [Issue - items at meetings - Options for the future of Tiverton Primary School | Haringey Council](#).
- 4.24 On 11 February, Council's Cabinet subsequently agreed to the publication of a statutory notice to close the school. The Cabinet report to this and the minutes of the meeting can be found here: [Agenda item - Results of the pre-publication consultation on the future of Tiverton Primary School and publication of statutory notice | Haringey Council](#)
- 4.25 The 28 day representation period ended on 24 March with no objections or comments. The final decision on whether to proceed with the closure of the school will now need to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Families.

## **5 Alternative options considered and not favoured**

- 5.1 The following options were considered and presented to stakeholders as part of the pre-publication consultation carried out in November and December 2024:
- 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 South Grove Primary<sup>6</sup> as the nearest community school with the same type and characteristics as Tiverton Primary could be the best option for an amalgamation/merger

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<sup>6</sup> South Grove Primary was previously known as South Grove Primary and changed its name from January 2025.

- Closure

### **No change and continuation of current strategy**

- 5.2 This is a highly cost-inefficient option and 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.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 This option is not preferred 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.

### **Federation**

- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 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 interest expressed by any school to federate with Tiverton Primary School.
- 5.7 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 rejected 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.

**Amalgamation – closure of Tiverton Primary with displaced pupils being accommodated by another school such as South Grove Primary School**

- 5.8 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.
- 5.9 The report presented to Cabinet in October 2024 explored the option of an amalgamation with South Grove Primary (previously known as South Grove) due to the similar type and characteristics of the two community schools located in close proximity to one other, minimising travel disruption, but also due to both schools having a high surplus as well as high unused capacity in their buildings. It is important to note that only South Grove Primary had expressed an interest in an amalgamation; no other primary school has come forward.
- 5.10 An amalgamation between Tiverton Primary and South Grove on the South Grove site was initially proposed based on pupil numbers at the time and the fabric of the building which was in better condition. South Grove appears to have been able to accommodate all pupils from Tiverton Primary school.
- 5.11 The drop in pupil numbers experienced by both schools in recent years made this option feasible in terms of pupil numbers, however this is no longer favoured due to the financial position of both schools. Currently, Tiverton Primary School and South Grove have both budgeted for a deficit position at the close of 2024/25 as follows:

School	Financial position
Tiverton Primary:	£-703,686
South Grove	£-713,840

The current financial status of both schools is outlined below as per their December 2024 financial returns:

School	Closing balance 2023-24	Projected closing Balance 2024-25	In-year movement
Tiverton	-538,189	-703,686	-165,497
South Grove	-690,146	-713,840	-23,694

- 5.12 It is important to note that when a maintained school closes, any outstanding deficit falls to the Council to be written off. However, when two schools are amalgamated, the newly formed school inherits the school deficit. Due to falling rolls in PA3, there is a risk that the school deficit balances could increase at a greater rate for both schools and have an impact on school funding and cause greater pressure on in-year budgets up to the point of a merger and beyond. This would ultimately result in increased financial liability for the Council as schools at risk move toward or increase their deficit position.
- 5.13 An amalgamation is also not considered a viable option as it is unlikely to lead to sufficiently stabilising numbers of pupils at the newly amalgamated school. Since June 2024 the vast majority of families leaving Tiverton Primary School have opted to transfer to other local schools near their home address. Our records show that most leavers (19 pupils) have transferred to Woodberry Down Community School in Hackney. A small number of families expressed an interest in South Grove and a significant number of pupils have successfully transferred to alternative Haringey schools.
- 5.14 Although the short distance (0.6 miles away from South Grove), which is a 13 minute walk between the two schools was one of the key reasons a merger was explored, based on the recent evidence of pupil movement, there is no guarantee that families would opt to transfer their child(ren) to South Grove. The trend so far points to pupils transferring elsewhere and we know there are sufficient places at other local schools to accommodate pupils.
- 5.15 The option of an amalgamation with South Grove is therefore rejected based on the reasons outlined above. To date, no other school has expressed an interest in an amalgamation with Tiverton Primary, and there are none located near enough with the sufficient places to accommodate all displaced pupils.

#### **Full and immediate closure**

- 5.16 This is the option recommended. 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.
- 5.17 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.
- 5.18 All children presently attending Tiverton Primary and all applicants to Reception for September 2025 can be accommodated in alternative schools within a reasonable distance. On analysing in-year vacancy information of

schools in and immediately bordering PA3 where Tiverton is located, there are currently more than sufficient vacant places across all year groups (reception to Year 6) across 12 Haringey schools within 1 mile of the school.

#### Haringey schools within 1 mile (A)

School name	PA	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Chestnuts	PA3	-1	-1	3	2	1	-1
Crowland	PA3	6	0	0	6	-1	0
Earlsmead	PA4	1	6	1	5	-1	0
Harris Philip Lane	PA5	0	-1	0	4	1	0
South Grove	PA3	-7	-7	27	4	-2	27
South Harringay Infant	PA3	0	7	0			
South Harringay Junior	PA3				2	0	1
St Ann's CE	PA3	1	5	4	2	1	1
St Ignatius Catholic	PA3	34	13	38	25	30	30
St Mary's Priory Catholic Infant	PA3	6	30	1			
St Mary's Priory Catholic Junior	PA3				24	14	32
West Green Primary School	PA3	0	0	0	0	1	0

5.19 As seen in the table below, there are also other schools in Hackney bordering PA3 which have vacancies within 1 mile of the school and families may wish to attend schools across a wider distance based on their home locations i.e. local schools nearer to their home address. Pupils in Year 6 are not included as this cohort of pupils will be transferring to secondary school and therefore not impacted by the proposals set out in this report.

#### Hackney schools (B)

School name	Borough	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Holmleigh	Hackney	0	0	0	0	0	0
Parkwood	Hackney	0	9	3	7	3	10
Sir Thomas Abney	Hackney	8	11	4	4	0	7
Springfield School	Hackney	9	2	0	0	0	4
Woodberry Down Community	Hackney	0	0	2	7	0	2

**Note:** Sir Thomas Abney and Holmleigh Primary Schools are proposed to merge to a single 2FE school from 1 Sept 2025

#### Tiverton Roll Returns / Surplus (C) Wonde Data (28/03/2025)

Calculations	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Total of A + B	57	74	83	92	47	113
Tiverton	18	18	11	13	19	22
<b>A+B - C (surplus places)</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>91</b>

- 5.20 It is expected that schools in the local area and beyond will still be carrying a high number of vacancies at the end of the academic year 2024-25, which means that an alternative local school can be offered to any family that wants one.
- 5.21 All Haringey schools in the local area are judged by Ofsted to be 'Good' or 'Outstanding.' Pupils joining other local schools from Tiverton Primary will contribute towards the improved sustainability of the receiving schools as it will lead to increased pupil numbers and, in turn, their financial income. A closure will therefore help support the sustainability and viability of other schools in PA3 by enabling neighbouring schools to increase their pupil numbers.
- 5.22 The Council is financially liable for any maintained school deficits and must decide each year whether to continue to fund a school in deficit. When a maintained school closes the Council is responsible for the debt carried by the school at the point of closure. If the Council does not take action to reduce the number of primary school places to align with the current and projected demand, it knowingly takes on increased financial burden and responsibility at a time when it is required to find substantial savings.

### **Resource and Risk implications**

- 5.23 The Council aims to ensure that demand for school places is as closely matched to supply as possible. The closure of a school where there is considerable overcapacity supports this process.
- 5.24 Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on local authorities to "*secure that sufficient schools for providing primary and secondary school education are available for their area*". The authority is required to exercise these functions with a view to increasing opportunities for parental choice. The large level of existing and anticipated vacancies and the compact nature of Haringey's geography mitigate considerably against any risk of there being insufficient places to house pupils affected by any closure.

### **Premises and use of vacant site**

- 5.25 Following the complete vacation of the Tiverton Primary School site, the local authority will consider the wider needs of our children, young people and school in determining a use of the site that keeps it in education use if that need can be demonstrated.
- 5.26 The freehold of the building belongs to the Council, who would ultimately decide what use the building would be put to, if closure were agreed. Planning constraints presently limit the use of the building for anything other than education or training purposes. Haringey Council's clear preference would be for the building to remain in use as an educational or community facility. This includes but is not limited to SEND provision, alternative provision or future



proofing for a possible return to a rise in pupil numbers in the next 7 to 20 years.

- 5.27 No options on the future use of the school site can be considered until the Lead Cabinet Member with delegated authority from Councils' Cabinet makes a final determination on whether to approve the proposal.

## **6 Consultation process and next steps**

- 6.1 Although the statutory timescales for consultation had been agreed at the Cabinet meeting in February 2025, Council's Cabinet had the ability to halt or delay the process at any point if a credible alternative option to closure was identified.
- 6.2 The LA carried out consultation with all relevant parties prior to the publication of the statutory proposal, in accordance with the recommendation set out in the statutory guidance issued by the DFE "[Opening and Closing Maintained Schools October 2024.](#)"
- 6.3 Details of these pre-publication consultation and the representation received from stakeholders together with the responses from Officers are included at Appendix 1.
- 6.4 The statutory notice and full proposal were published on Monday 24 February 2025 on Haringey's Commonplace consultation page. The notice was also published in the local paper, The Enfield and Haringey Independent. A copy of the notice and full proposal is included at Appendix 2.
- 6.5 A letter was sent to all staff and parents of registered pupils at Tiverton Primary Schools signposting them to the full proposal on the Commonplace consultation page, including details on how written representation could be submitted. These letters were translated into 5 languages (Albanian, Portuguese, Somali, Spanish and Turkish (representative of the local demographic and copies made available on request from the main school offices at both schools. The statutory notice and full proposal were also translated in the above languages and published via Commonplace.
- 6.6 The statutory notice and full proposal were also emailed to all local Haringey primary and secondary schools, nurseries, children centres, MPs, trade unions, the diocese and neighbouring authorities.
- 6.7 A frequently asked questions (FAQs) document was included on the Haringey Commonplace consultation page.
- 6.8 Prior to the start of the representation period, Officers held a series of public meetings at Tiverton Primary School to discuss the proposal and answer questions from interested stakeholders. Interpreters were arranged to

translate for families with English not as their first language. The minutes from these public meetings were available to view as part of the Cabinet reports and subsequently published on the Haringey Local Democracy website. The minutes to the public meeting can also be found at Appendix 3.

- 6.9 A series of informal meetings were arranged with school staff and their trade union representative to address HR matters and offer support and guidance in relation to redeployment and redundancy packages. A formal HR consultation with all staff is scheduled to begin on 22 April 2025 when the final decision on closure has been taken.

### **Representation period responses**

- 6.10 The statutory guidance issued by the DfE “Opening and Closing Maintained Schools October 2024,” sets out that comments/views on the statutory proposal must be submitted in free text format by individuals. This is to ensure that the representations cannot be considered to be “guided” in any way, and to ensure that those making representations can feel able to make whatever comments or suggestions they feel appropriate and necessary.
- 6.11 It is important to note that the Council **did not** receive any comments or objections during the four-week statutory representation period between 24 February and the 24 March 2024.
- 6.12 It is inferred that the lack of responses is related to a growing understanding and acceptance of the main reasons for the proposal (falling local pupil rolls and long-term financial sustainability impacting on standards) along with an acceptance of the main solution to transferring pupils to other schools rated ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’ by Ofsted. This can be observed from families moving their child(ren) to other schools in advance of a final decision.
- 6.13 Several important points have been noted during the pre-statutory consultation periods and a number of questions were asked at public meetings prior to the publication of the statutory notice. Cabinet have already considered these points sensitively, considering all issues and implications of a decision to publish a notice to close the school. They have already considered at length the views of parents, children and staff and the Council’s view remains that there are sufficient places in the local area and the need for an urgent and cost-effective solution that best meets the needs of Tiverton Primary School.

## **7 Overall decision making and risk implications**

- 7.1 As the main driver of school funding is pupil numbers there continues to be a significant concern about the long-term sustainability of Tiverton Primary School in terms of the risks to its financial stability and its ability to attract pupils to the school against a backdrop of falling demand which is projected to remain broadly static until 2030.

- 7.2 For this reason, The Cabinet Member for Children Schools and Families is asked to approve the proposal to discontinue Tiverton Primary School from 31 August 2025. This would mean the closure of the school with displaced pupils transferring to other schools with available places.
- 7.3 It is important to ensure an effective transition of pupils to minimise any impact and the Council will continue working with the school and families to support them in mitigating this risk, especially during the interim transition period outlined in para 7.12 should the Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Families decide to approve the proposal on behalf of Council's Cabinet.
- 7.4 Any delay to a decision on the future of the school is likely to have a detrimental impact on the school in the future, its pupils and staff. Ongoing reduction in pupil numbers leads to financial challenges impacting on staffing and the school's ability to deliver a full and balanced curriculum. The timetable and phasing proposal set out at para. 7.14 is proposed to mitigate this risk.

#### **Factors to be considered by Decision Maker**

- 7.5 The Cabinet Member for Children Schools and families with delegated authority from Council's Cabinet is the decision maker for this proposal and must decide on the proposal within two months of the end of the representation period, otherwise the local authority must forward the proposal, and any representations received to the Schools Adjudicator for a decision to be made.
- 7.6 The Secretary of State has issued statutory guidance to assist decision makers, and Cabinet must have regard to the statutory guidance when it takes a decision on statutory proposals. "Opening and Closing Maintained Schools, October 2024."
- 7.7 Before considering the merits of the proposal, the Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Families must be satisfied that the following elements have been complied with:
- that comprehensive information has been supplied and that all information required is available to make a decision.
  - that the published statutory notice complies with statutory requirements.
  - that the statutory consultation has been carried out prior to the publication of the Notice; and
  - whether the proposal is related to any other proposals.
- 7.8 The decision maker must have regard to the following
- cost effective provision of education and the removal of surplus school places;
  - how the proposal will impact upon local diversity.

- the effect on standards and school improvement;
- types of schools available within the borough;
- the impact on community cohesion and race equality;
- the impact on the provision of extended services and travel;
- the impact of the proposal on Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision; the views of interested parties: Cabinet should consider the views of all those affected by the proposal or who have an interest in them, including but not limited to pupils, families of pupils, staff, governors, local residents, and local Diocesan bodies.

7.9 In developing the proposal, a detailed case has been made about the future viability of Tiverton Primary School and the unsustainability of maintaining a school with such significant numbers of surplus places against a backdrop of falling demand across schools in the wider area.

7.10 With regard to diversity of provision, whilst the proposal will result in parents being able to express a preference for one less community school, the low numbers of admission in recent years would suggest that Tiverton Primary School has not been a first preference for many families living in the wider local area. Should the proposal be approved, there will still many other primary schools within PA3 and further schools in adjacent planning areas with vacancies.

7.11 The full statutory proposal is set out in Appendix 2 and provides more detailed information in relation to the types of schools available within the borough, the impact on the provision of extended services and travel and the impact of the proposal on Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision. The community impact statement did not identify any risks to the impact of the proposal on community cohesion or race equality.

### **Timescale for Implementation**

7.12 The local authority, as the proposer intends for the decision to be implemented in a phased manner and for it to cease to maintain Tiverton Primary School with effect from 31 August 2025. The proposed phased implementation is:

- April 2025 to July 2025: no changes – Pupils in Reception, Years 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 are able to continue at Tiverton Primary School. Families have a right to express a preference for other schools via the Council's in-year admissions process.
- May 2025 to June 2025: a co-ordinated in-year admissions process will be run by the School Admissions Service to enable families to apply elsewhere for September 2025. Families will be awarded priority under the Council's social/medical criterion, wherever possible.
- 31 August 2025 – Tiverton Primary School closure
- September 2020 –displaced pupils start at alternative schools

- 7.13 There is no legal basis on which the Council can mandate and enforce that the cohorts of pupils remain at the school. The Council acknowledges that parental preference to move children to a school at a time of their choice remains, irrespective of the transition plan outlined. As previously stated, some parents have already transferred their child(ren) to other schools with available places.
- 7.14 Should the Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and families approve the proposal on behalf of Council's Cabinet, transition planning would begin straight away, involving pupils, parents and staff. Individual transition plans would be developed for pupils based upon their need to ensure any vulnerable groups of children are identified and well supported during this process. Some pupils with EHCPs have already received support and been offered places at an alternative provision.

### **Decision Options Available**

- 7.15 Having regard to the statutory guidance issued by the DFE on 'the Opening and Closing maintained schools in October 2024, the Cabinet member must consider the available evidence, including any comments and objections generated during the Representation Period. The Cabinet Member must then decide, having considered the merits of the proposal, whether to:
- reject the proposal;
  - approve the proposal without modification;
  - approve the proposal with such modifications as they think desirable; or
  - approve the proposal – with or without modification – subject to certain conditions being met

### **Officer Recommendation**

- 7.16 As set out in para 3.1 of this report, the Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Families is recommended to approve the proposed closure of Tiverton Primary School from 31 August 2025.

### **Reasons for Recommendation**

- 7.17 The considerations for recommending closure are set out in para. 4.1 below and restated below:
- The pupil roll has fallen over the past five years resulting in reduced (per pupil) funding. This reduced funding has created significant deficit (-£703,686), and it is thought to be unlikely that the school will be able to reverse this trend and prevent this deficit growing over future years if it remains open.
  - This funding position would have a detrimental impact on staffing and resources, which would limit the school's ability to continue to provide

the high quality of education that the children in the school community need and deserve.

- The school would be hampered in its capacity to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum that it would be reasonable to expect of a primary school.
- Haringey has capacity in neighbouring schools to meet the needs of all displaced pupils transitioning from Tiverton to alternative schools.

## **8 Contribution to the Corporate Delivery Plan 2024-2026**

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 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.
- 8.3 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.

## **9 Carbon and Climate Change**

- 9.1 The proposal 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.

## **10 Statutory Officers comments (Director of Finance (procurement), Head of Legal and Governance, Equalities)**

Below are financial, governance and legal and equality comments.

### **Finance**

- 10.1 Tiverton Primary School's budget forecast for the 2024-25 financial year anticipates a deficit of £703,686.



- 10.2 The further drop in pupil numbers with 152 pupils on roll (October 2024 census) will reduce funding for the school in future years.
- 10.3 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. The current outstanding loan balance for the school is £137,888.
- 10.4 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.
- 10.5 Below, we offer brief comments on the financial impact of closure:

#### Recommendation for School Closure

School closure has been determined to be the only financially sustainable option that ensures the effective allocation of resources across the local education system.

This decision will have financial consequences for the Council; however, it represents the most appropriate option to consider. The local authority will need to cover the school's financial shortfall as well as manage the additional expenses linked to the closure. These expenses will encompass redundancy payments for employees, settlement costs for leased equipment, and costs associated with early contract termination.

#### **Assistant Director of Legal and Governance**

- 10.6 Assistant Director of Legal and Governance has been consulted in the preparation of this Report.
- 10.7 The relevant legislation and statutory guidance that the Council must have regard to when closing Tiverton Primary School: Section 15 and 16 of the Education and Inspection Act 2006, Regulations 11 and 12 of The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013, and the guidance issued by the DfE "Opening and Closing Maintained Schools 2024" which provides guidance on the statutory process for school closure, including the steps to be taken such as consultation, publication of proposals for consultation, representation period and the factors that the decision makers must have regard to when approving such proposals. When considering whether to approve the recommendations the Cabinet Member with delegated authority from Council's Cabinet will need to be satisfied that the consultation and representation periods were appropriate, fair and open, and that the Council has given full consideration to all the responses.
- 10.8 The closure of Tiverton will have a direct impact on the staffing resources at the school. The School and Council must ensure that displaced staff are

treated fairly in accordance with agreed processes to manage redeployment opportunities and redundancies where this is not possible.

10.9 The recommendations are within the legal powers of the Council.

### **Equalities Comment**

10.10 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.

10.11 The report recommends that Cabinet agree to discontinue Tiverton Primary School following the outcome of the 4-week representation period (formal consultation) which yielded no comments or objections.

**10.12** An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) is attached at Appendix 4. This is an assessment of the potential impact of closure based on consideration of all the relevant available data. The EqIA has been updated following the pre-statutory consultation period to address the issues raised.

**10.13 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. 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. Older Tiverton

children (Years 4, 5 and 6) are overrepresented within the service user base, simply because the numbers of younger pupils (in Reception, Years 1, 2 and 3) at the school are low. 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.'

**10.14 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 giving priority to children with social and medical considerations that meet the criterion for an exceptional medical or social need.

**10.15 Teaching and non-teaching staff --** The closure 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.

**10.16** 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 overrepresented amongst those likely to be negatively impacted by the decision. In terms of mitigating the impact of these equality characteristics, the Council will endeavour to ensure all staff affected will receive individualised support and be subject to the normal redeployment procedures. They will be added to the Council's redeployment register so that they can access details of vacancies available within the Council and schools. Other support would include access to the Employee Assistance Programme for independent support and counselling and access to CV/statement writing/ interview technique on request.

## **11 Use of Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Analysis of pre-publication consultation responses  
Appendix 2 – Tiverton Primary statutory notice and full proposal  
Appendix 3 – Minutes of the public meeting held at Tiverton Primary  
Appendix 4 – EqlA

## **12 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 Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012.
13. School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013
14. School roll projections sourced from the GLA
15. School roll information, including admission information from data held within Education Services
16. Department for Education "Opening and Closing maintained schools "(October 2024)
17. Department for Education "Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools" (January 2023).