

**Report for:** Cabinet - 22 April 2025

**Item number:** 19

**Title:** Results of the pre-publication consultation on the closure of St Peter in Chain's and St Gildas' Catholic Primary Schools and publication of statutory notice

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

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

**Ward(s) affected:** Crouch End, Stroud Green and Hornsey

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

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

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to report back to Council's Cabinet on the outcome of the four-week pre-publication consultation on the closure of St Peter in Chain's and St Gildas' Catholic Primary Schools and seek agreement to move to the next stage of the process, the publication of a statutory proposal to close both schools.
- 1.2. The four-week pre-publication consultation ran from 24 February 2025 to 24 March 2025 and gathered views from stakeholders on the proposal to close both the infant and junior schools. We are asking Cabinet to now consider the feedback from this consultation before approving the publication of a formal statutory notice which will invite further comment from stakeholders. Details on the alternative options previously considered and not favoured is also provided at para. 5 below for the consideration of decision makers.
- 1.3. A summary of the representations received from the pre-publication consultation can be found at para 7.6 below. Officer responses to individual stakeholder representation is provided with this report at Appendix 1.

### **Reasons for decision**

- 1.4. 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>.

- 1.5. Both St Peter in Chain's Infant and St Gildas' Junior Schools are a substantive two form entry (fe) Voluntary Aided Catholic schools located at Oakington Way, London, N8 9EP. Since 2019, the number of pupils on roll has dropped significantly at both schools and they operate as one form entry schools. From April 2024, some year groups have been merged, and the governing body moved the infant school to the federation's junior school site on Oakington Way in September 2024.
- 1.6. 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 St Peter in Chain's Infant and St Gildas' 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>[OBJ]</sup>
- 1.7. 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.
- 1.8. 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.

## 2. Recommendation

- 2.1. It is recommended that Cabinet:
  - a. Consider the feedback received from the pre-statutory consultation on the closure of St Peter in Chain's Infant and St Gildas' Junior Schools.
  - b. Note the reasons for not favouring any alternative options.
  - c. Agree to the publication of a statutory notice to close St Peter in Chain's Infant and St Gildas' Junior Schools from September 2025.

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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](#).

If agreed, there follows a four-week period of statutory consultation, which will be the final opportunity for people and organisations to express their views about the proposal to close the 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 begin to consider the difficult option of closure outlined in this report for St Peter in Chain's Infant and St Gildas' Junior Schools.
- 3.5. Significant concerns have been raised about these schools' long-term sustainability in terms of the risks to their financial viability and their ability to attract to new pupils. The latter is, in large part, due to a declining birth

rate which has also been exacerbated by a sharp decline in the demand for Faith school places across Haringey.

- 3.6. For these reasons and having undertaken a full pre-publication consultation on the option of closure, I recommend to Cabinet that the Council now proceeds to publishing the relevant statutory notice on the proposal to close St Peter in Chain's Infant and St Gildas' Junior Schools. You will note that alternative options have been considered by Council Officers and the governing body of the school (including academisation), however, the rapid and significant decline in school places coupled with the current financial challenges that St Peter in Chain's Infant and St Gildas' Junior Schools and other local schools are facing makes it impossible to seriously consider these options. As of March 2025, the school has a combined pupil roll of 51 children with some year groups empty.
- 3.7. We know that many families have already been offered an alternative school via the Council's in-year admissions process and children have settled in well elsewhere. If the final decision is to be closure, then we will ensure that all remaining families of displaced pupils that have remained at the school are 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 displaced pupils.
- 3.8. We also understand there are children on the SEND register attending St Peter in Chain's Infant and St Gildas' Junior Schools that will need to be well supported, including a small number of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). All parent/carers of pupils with an EHCP have undergone a review meeting to evaluate their child's progress at the school and to plan next steps, including the possibility of an alternative provision.
- 3.9. If we decide to move to the next phase, we will also ensure that all staff 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>2</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 following national offer day in March 2024 was 10.3% overall with some school planning areas<sup>3</sup> carrying a higher surplus rate.
- 4.4. As shown in Table 1 below, planning area 2 (PA2) where St Peter in Chain's Infant and St Gildas' Junior Schools are located has seen a significant reduction in pupil numbers.

**Table 1: Total number of pupils on roll in schools in PA2 (reception to year 6)**

| Schools in PA2                        | School Capacity (Mid 2024) | 2019         | 2020         | 2021         | 2022         | 2023         | 2024         |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>Total Capacity</b>                 | <b>4,230</b>               | <b>4,590</b> | <b>4,560</b> | <b>4,440</b> | <b>4,380</b> | <b>4,286</b> | <b>4,230</b> |
| <b>Percentage of Surplus capacity</b> |                            | <b>4.3%</b>  | <b>7.8%</b>  | <b>10.0</b>  | <b>10.6</b>  | <b>11.1</b>  | <b>12.7</b>  |

<sup>2</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.

<sup>3</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).

**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 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](#) <sup>4</sup>published by London Councils in January 2025 provides some wider context and independent analysis of the issue.

### **St Peter in Chain's Infant and St Gildas' Junior Schools**

- 4.10. St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools are substantive two-form entry (fe) Voluntary Aided Catholic Schools. The schools are located at Oakington Way, London, N8 9EP and sit within Planning Area 2 (PA2) 2 which incorporates the following wards: Crouch End, Highgate, Stroud Green and 80% of Hornsey and includes the following schools: Campsbourne Infants, Coleridge Primary, Highgate Primary, Rokesly Infants, St Aidan's, St Mary's CE Primary, St Michaels CE Primary N6, Stroud Green Primary and Weston Park Primary.

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<sup>4</sup> London Councils, Managing school places and admissions in London 2025



- 4.11. Due to a continued fall in demand for school places in PA2 and the fall in demand for local faith places, St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools are currently both operating as 1 FE schools. From September 2019, after a noticeable decline in admissions, the schools reduced their PAN from 2fe to 1fe. From April 2024, some classes were merged, and the governing body moved the infant school to the federation's junior school site on Oakington Way in September 2024.
- 4.12. Over several years, the pupil roll at St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools has significantly fallen. The 2017 May census recorded the schools as having 396 pupils on roll (94% of 2fe 420) and the schools are recorded as having 61 children on roll (30% of 1fe 210) as of January 2025 census. This is the difference in pupil rolls between a sustainable 2fe primary school and an unsustainable 1fe primary school. The number of pupils has now declined even further since the start of the consultation period with only 5 pupils recorded on roll at both the Infant and Junior Schools as of March 2025, 16 of which are Year 6 pupils that will be transitioning to secondary school in September 2025. See map below of current pupil home addresses on page 13.
- 4.13. Table 2 below shows the gradual decline in pupils on roll at St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools since 2019.

**Table 2: Total number of pupils on roll (reception to year 6)**

| School                                 | School Net Capacity | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | Mar. 2025 |
|--|---------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------|
| St Peter in Chains RC Infants (R–Yr 2) | 180 / 90*           | 119  | 89   | 75   | 73   | 64   | 43   | 11        |
| St Gildas' RC Junior (Yr 3- Yr 6)      | 240 / 120*          | 205  | 194  | 173  | 146  | 121  | 92   | 28        |

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

\*Total capacity is shown in line with the determined PANs – a lower figure for both schools is shown to indicate the reduction in PAN implemented from September 2019

\*\*October 2024 census

- 4.14. The low level of admissions in recent years has had a considerable financial effect on the schools, which has led to a substantial and growing in year financial deficit for the Infant school and a significant budget reduction of nearly 50% for the Junior compared to the last financial year 2023-24. Forecasts for the schools and the locality from the GLA show numbers continuing to fall locally and across Haringey. As previously stated, 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.

- 4.15. As regards to the applicants the school has received since 2018, there has been a considerable drop in expressed preferences overall. This, along with the significant drop in births in planning area 2 and across Haringey, make it unlikely that pupil numbers will recover at St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools. Table 3 below shows the falling number of applications that St Peter in Chains RC Infants has received for entry to Reception each year since 2018.

**Table 3: Preference table and Births**

| <b>St Peter in Chains RC Infants</b>  | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025* |
|---------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Total preferences                     | 26   | 17   | 24   | 17   | 21   | 8    | 10   | 0     |
| Births (equiv. year of entry) for PA2 | 636  | 670  | 709  | 659  | 646  | 559  | 580  | 534   |

**Note 1:** For context Total preferences for St Peter in Chains RC Infants dropped from 160 in 2015 to 38 in 2024

**Note 2:** GLA School roll projections for 2025 to 2030 vary between 458 to 478

- 4.16. Furthermore, many families have recently opted to leave the school since the launch of the consultation. Currently only 51 pupils are currently recorded on roll as of March 2025.

### **St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools – financial position**

- 4.17. 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.
- 4.18. 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.
- 4.19. 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.
- 4.20. 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 AWPUP (Age Weighted Pupil Unit) funding per pupil.<sup>5</sup>

- 4.21. 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 (DSG)<sup>6</sup> Schools Block funding based on 2023/24 per pupil funding rates, compared with 2018/19.
- 4.22. 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).
- 4.23. 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.

## **5. St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools - future sustainability**

- 5.1. It has become increasingly clear that the schools are no longer sustainable financially or organisationally, and that, after evaluation of a number of options, closure of the schools should be considered and consulted on formally.
- 5.2. Amongst the considerations for proposing closure are:
  - the financial viability of St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools if they were to remain open;
  - the risk to the quality of provision if they were to remain open
  - the lack of resilience for the schools and their ability to retain and recruit staff at all levels;
  - the opportunity for another primary school to federate or amalgamate with St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools and whether this could lead to a sustainable solution;

- whether or not there would be sufficient primary school places in the local area and in other Roman Catholic schools that could provide a suitable alternative for displaced pupils.
- 5.3. 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 \(January 2023\)](#)". This sets out a five-stage process as outlined at para. 7.15 below.
- 5.4. Council's Cabinet agreed on 11 February 2025 to start a pre-publication consultation on the options for the future of St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools. The Cabinet report to this and the minutes of the meeting can be found here: [Agenda item - St Peter in Chains Catholic Infant and St Gildas Catholic Junior School | Haringey Council](#)
- 5.5. This follow-up Cabinet report seeks approval to move to the next stage of the process, the publication of a statutory notice to close the schools. A final decision on whether to proceed with the closure of the schools would be taken by the Council's Cabinet at the end of the representation period that follows the publication of proposal.

## 6. Alternative options considered and not favoured

- 6.1. The following alternative options were previously considered by decision makers at the 11 February Cabinet meeting and not favoured:
  - no change i.e. continuation of current strategy for school improvement without any further action to address falling local rolls
  - Conversion to academy
  - Federation
  - Amalgamation resulting in the closure of St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools with the displaced pupils being accommodated by another Catholic Primary school
  - Closure
- 6.2. **No change and continuation of current strategy** - This is a highly cost-inefficient option and is not sustainable. The Infant school already 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 Infant school is predicting a deficit closing balance of £121,440 by the end of March 2025. The Junior school has a projected surplus outturn at 31 March 25 of £45,324 compared to £87,098 at 31 March 2024, a percentage reduction of 48%. The Council has a responsibility to ensure the efficient use of public money. In April 2025 the budget will be further reduced as it will be based on the number of children on roll as of October 2024.

- 6.3. 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.
- 6.4. This option was not recommended as it does not provide a long-term sustainable solution to falling local and faith demand. Taking no action to the issues affecting a school with falling rolls is not an acceptable option available to the Council.
- 6.5. **Conversion to Academy** - The Governing Body consulted on the option of converting to an academy and joining a Multi Academy Trust, but this application was withdrawn by the Diocese following discussion with the DfE about the school's ongoing viability.
- 6.6. **Federation** – 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. St Peter in Chains Infant School is already federated with St Gildas' Junior School. Both schools exist as separate organisations but have the same headteacher, deputy headteacher and governing body.
- 6.7. The current federation model is not achieving its desired impact due to the significant drop in pupil numbers and worsening financial position. Federation is therefore no longer a viable option and not achieving any of the benefits that would normally be associated with this partnership.
- 6.8. It is also possible for more than two maintained schools to operate under the governance of a single governing body, however, there has been no appetite expressed as part of this consultation from any other school to be part of the St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' federation. This would also not address the decline in numbers on roll or the financial risk.
- 6.9. **Amalgamation** - 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.
- 6.10. This option was not recommended due to the current financial position of both schools and reduction in pupil numbers which makes this option very

risky and unaffordable. Furthermore, opportunities for a potential amalgamation between St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools and another local Catholic primary school have not yielded any interest from partners.

- 6.11. **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.
- 6.12. 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 St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools 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 and in other Roman Catholic schools in the borough that can provide a suitable alternative for displaced pupils.





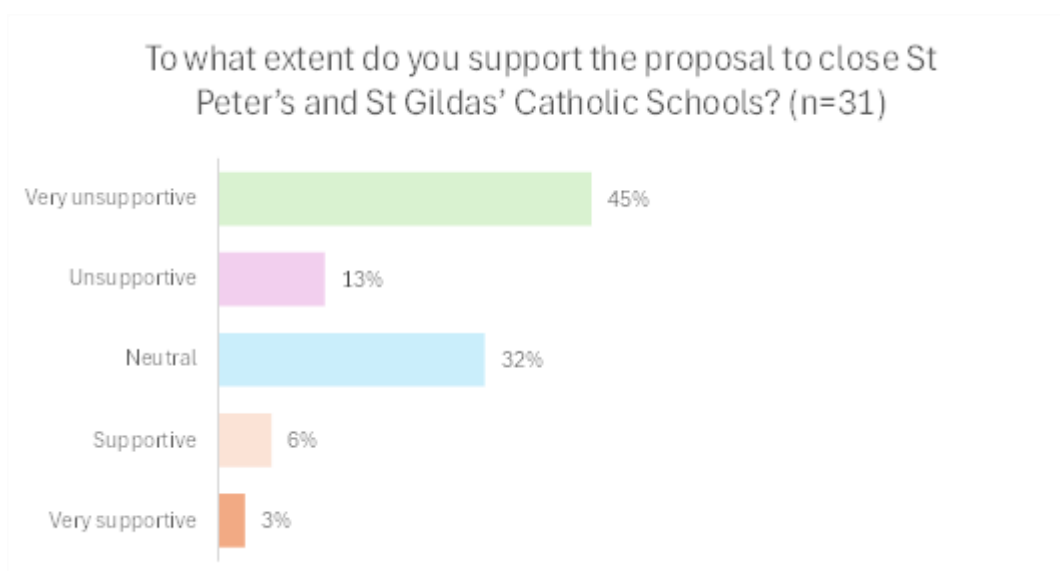
## **7. Consultation process and next steps**

- 7.1. It is a statutory requirement for the proposer (in this case the Local Authority) to consult any parties they think appropriate before publishing statutory proposals. The process includes a statutory element of consultation that lasts for several weeks to allow the widest possible opportunity for views/comments to be made by parents, carers, local residents and other stakeholders.
- 7.2. The pre-publication consultation ran for a four-week period from 24 February 2025 to 24 March 2025. The purpose of the consultation was for the Local Authority to seek the views of and engage with those that could potentially be affected by proposals. A public meeting was held at St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools prior to the launch of the consultation on Wednesday 5 February at 6pm and was well attended. A copy of the minutes to the meeting, including the questions raised by attendees can be found at Appendix 2.
- 7.3. The results of the initial consultation are given below. Appendix 1 provides a more detailed breakdown and lists the individual written responses received during the consultation together with responses from Local Authority Officers.
- 7.4. Consultation included:
- Letter to parent/carers and staff at St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools;
  - Letter to all local schools within PA2 and across Haringey via the Schools Newsletter which is distributed to the headteacher and chair of governors of every school in the borough;
  - email to all Children's Centres in the borough;
  - email to all registered nurseries and child minders and any other early years providers;
  - email to all Councillors;
  - email to MPs whose constituencies are affected;
  - email to the diocesan authorities;
  - email to all residents' groups that the Council hold information for;
  - email to the trade unions;
  - email to neighbouring authorities;
  - publication of information in all libraries across the borough via posters and digital screens.
- 7.5. Stakeholders were given the opportunity to express their views in writing, via a questionnaire – both online via Commonplace and a hard copy, by email and post. A consultation document with key information and an FAQ was also made available via our Commonplace consultation page.

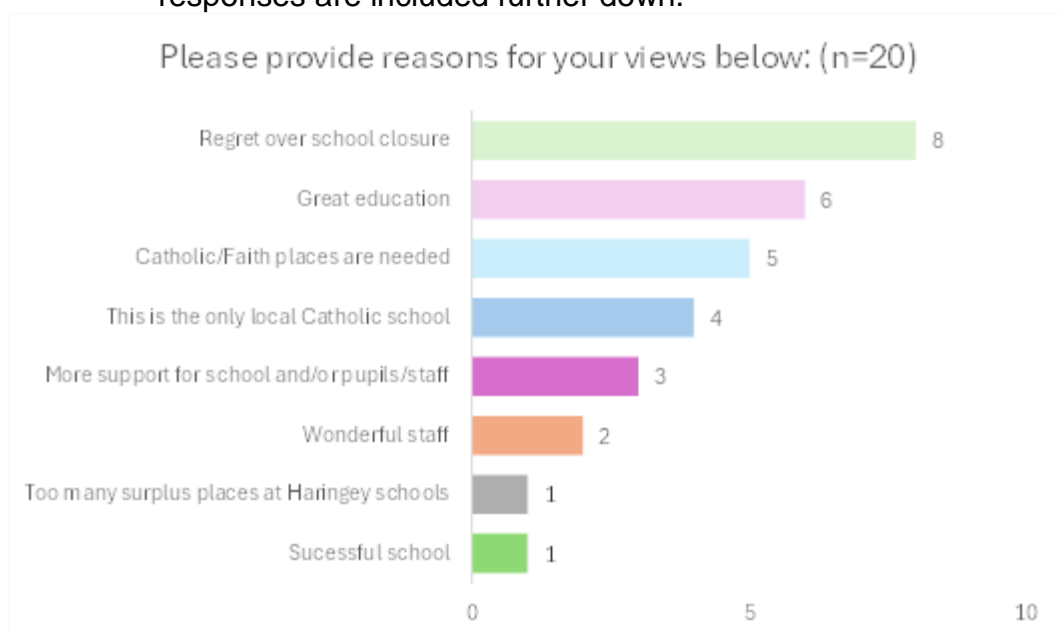


## Responses to the consultation

- 7.6. Some 31 responses were received from the consultation to the question: “To what extent do you support the proposal to close St Peter’s and St Gildas’ Catholic Schools?”

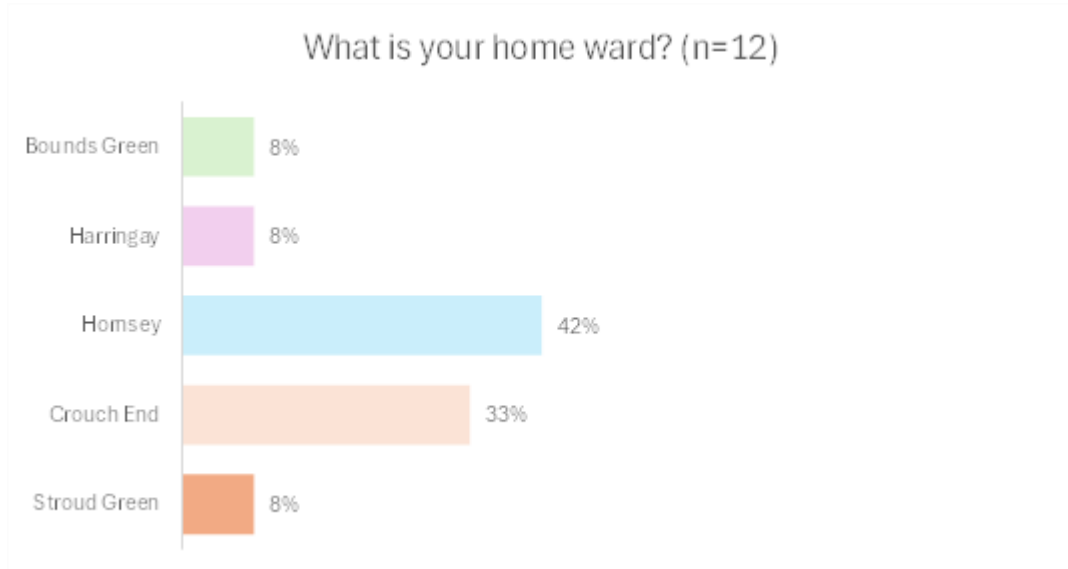


- 7.7. The majority of respondents (14 of 31 or 45%) were very unsupportive of school closure. Around a third (10 or 32%) were neutral whilst 3 (9%) were very supportive or supportive of closure.
- 7.8. Qualitative analysis of to the survey question “Please provide reasons for your views below”. Note: The complete unedited responses with responses are included further down.

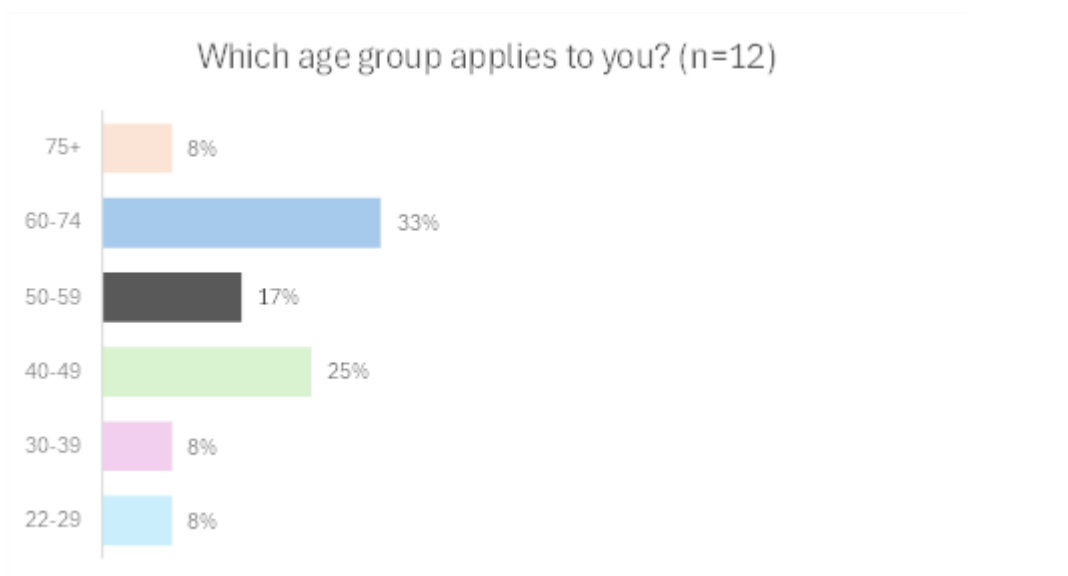


7.9. The following data is a selection of respondent scope data to give a context of who responded to the survey.

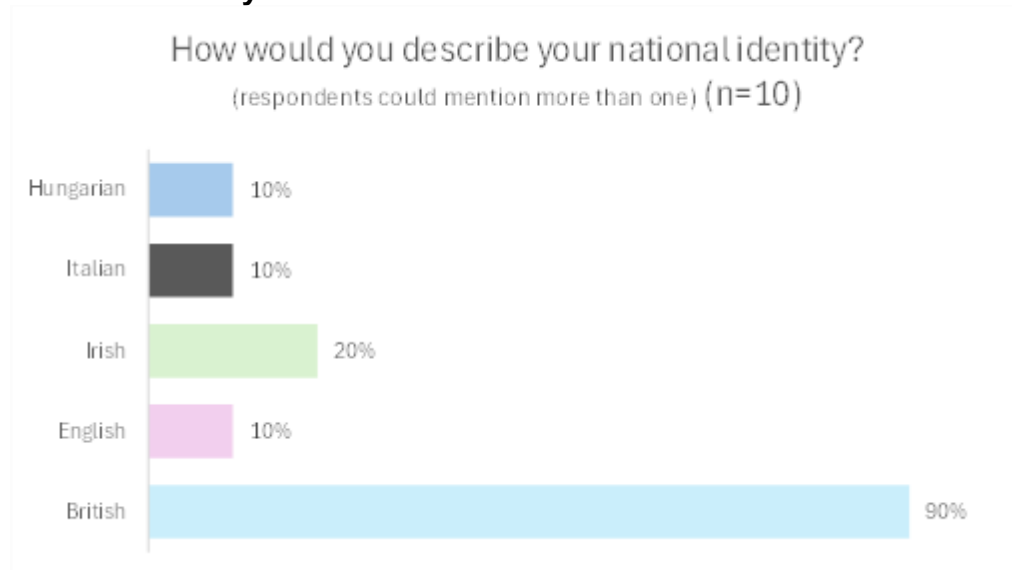
## Home ward



## Age profile



## National identity



## Connection to area

- 7.10. 15 respondents responded to this question. All 15 respondents responded that they lived in the area whilst one also worked in the area.
- 7.11. There were 20 individual responses to the survey question **“Please provide reasons for your views below”**. Appendix 1 para 1.4. lists the individual written responses received during the consultation together with responses from LA Officers for the consideration of decision makers.

## Public meeting with school community

- 7.12. A public meeting (evening) was held at St Peter in Chains and St Gildas’ Catholic Infant and Junior Schools on 5 February 2025. Approximately 20-25 families attended the evening meeting alongside school staff. The views expressed at the public meetings broadly reflected those of the written responses. A question posed by parent/carers related to whether places would be guaranteed for displaced pupils. It was made clear that places would be guaranteed to all families that wanted one if the option of closure was progressed. The minutes of the meetings can be found at Appendix 2.
- 7.13. As the main driver of school funding is pupil numbers there will continue be a significant concern about the long-term sustainability of the schools in terms of the risks to their financial stability and ability to attract additional pupils to the school against a backdrop of falling demand which is projected to remain broadly static until 2029/30.
- 7.14. For these reasons and based on the balance of responses received, together with careful consideration of a number of other material factors

such as a rapid and significant falling roll, the ability of local schools to be able to survive financially and the impact this will have on the quality of education delivered to pupils at St Peter in Chains and St Gilda's Catholic Infant and Junior Schools and other local schools, Council's Cabinet is asked to agree the recommendation to take the proposal forward to the next phase by publishing a statutory notice to close the school. This will trigger a 28-day representation period during which any person could object to or make comments on the proposal.

- 7.15. **Statutory Consultation process and next steps** – there are 5 main stages summarized in the table below, with indicative timescales:

| Stage | Description   | Timescale   |
|-------|---|---|
| 1     | Informal consultation on the proposals set out in this report   | 4-week consultation (24 February 2025 – 24 March 2025)                          |
| 2     | Gathering stakeholder representation and drafting a report with recommendations to Cabinet  | March 2025 – April 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. | 22 April 2025 Cabinet meeting (Representation period from 05 May – 2 June 2025) |
| 4     | Final decision to proceed or not with closure   | June 2025 Cabinet meeting   |
| 5     | Implementation  | Decision made in Stage 4 is implemented on the 31 August 2025                   |

- 7.16. As shown above, the next stage is for Council's Cabinet to agree to the recommendation to publish a statutory notice to close St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools. There follows a four-week period of consultation which is published, which is the final opportunity for people and organisations to express their views about the proposals. At the end of the representation period a report will be presented to Cabinet or Lead Cabinet with delegated authority on behalf of Council's Cabinet for a final decision.

7.17. There are 2 key decision points where Cabinet members will be required to decide how to proceed:

- The first decision is whether to agree to continue the process by publishing a statutory notice.
- The second decision is whether, at the end of the four-week representation period, St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools should be closed.

## **8. Actions to be undertaken for the pupils, parents and carers affected**

- 8.1. The local authority in consultation with the school leadership and the governing body have effectively planned for every eventuality to ensure that all children attending St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools have a place for September 2025. Some families have already started to apply for local schools and Catholic schools in Haringey and across borough boundaries near home addresses.
- 8.2. Additional support will be offered to parents, carers and pupils that remain at the school to manage the transition – should it be decided that the school will close from 31 August 2025. A co-ordinated admissions process, led by the local authority's school admissions team will run to ensure that the parent/carer of each child on the roll of St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools will have access to an admissions application and be able to state preferences for alternative schools. A dedicated admissions officer has been allocated to work closely with families and school staff to ensure that every child is able to secure a school place in advance if a school preference is expressed or for September 2025.
- 8.3. Similarly, children with special educational needs will be fully supported to make this transition with reviews of their Education, Health and Care Plans where appropriate. At St Peter in Chains RC Infant School some 10% of pupils have an EHCP (higher than the borough average) and 16% have SEN support (also higher than the borough average). At St Gildas RC Junior School the percentage of pupils with an EHCP is 7% (very similar to the borough average) and with SEN support 33% (much higher than the borough average). To some extent the variances between these percentages maybe related to the very small sample sizes at both schools. The percentage of pupils on FSM is 15% at St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools (October 2024 census, reception to year 6).
- 8.4. It should be noted that there are 12 Haringey schools (Infant, Junior and Primary) within 1 mile of St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools, all within a reasonable travelling distance. All these schools currently have some vacancies across Reception to Year 6 to be

able to accommodate displaced pupils.

- 8.5. Excluding St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools there are 9 other Haringey Catholic primary schools. All currently have some vacancies in years groups across Reception to Year 6 to be able to accommodate displaced pupils seeking a Catholic school place.

**Actions to be undertaken for the teachers and non-teaching staff affected**

- 8.6. The LA informed staff at the earliest possible opportunity that there was a potential that the school could close in August 2025. The trade unions were also involved at this stage. If the council does decide the school should be closed, the council will ensure that all staff 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.

**9. Contribution to the Corporate Delivery Plan 2024-2026**

- 9.1. 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.
- 9.2. 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.
- 9.3. 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.

**10. Carbon and Climate Change**

- 10.1. 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.

**Statutory Officers comments (Director of Finance (procurement), Assistant Director of Legal and Governance, Equalities)**

## **11. Finance**

- 11.1. The St Peter in Chains Infant budget forecast for the 2024-25 financial year anticipates a deficit of £121,440, an increase of 57% deficit compared to the last financial year. There is a further impact from the reduction in pupil numbers by 19 pupils in October 2024 census which will reduce the school's DSG funding by a further £153,954 for 2025/26.<sup>5</sup>
- 11.2. The St Gildas' Junior budget forecast for the 2024-25 financial year anticipates a surplus of £45,324, a reduction of 48% compared to £87,096 in the last financial year 2023-24. There is a further impact from the reduction in pupil numbers by 46 pupils in October 2024 census which will reduce the school's DSG funding by a further £255,222 for 2025/26.<sup>6</sup>
- 11.3. The combined impact of the federated schools is a deficit closing balance of £76,116 and a combined reduction in DSG income is £409,177.
- 11.4. Below, we offer brief comments on the financial impact of all the options considered and rejected in this report on both the Council and the school.
- No change i.e. continuation of current strategy for school improvement without any further action to address falling local rolls
    - i. Financial Impact: It would seem unlikely that as a result of known reductions in funding and projected future school roll reductions resulting in further reductions in funding that the schools can return to being financially viable.
    - ii. Educational Impact: Without addressing the financial shortfall, schools would face cuts to teaching staff, resources, and programs, directly undermining the quality of education.
  - Federation and Amalgamation
    - i. Financial Impact: The current federation model is not achieving its desired impact, and this is evidenced from their financial returns to the council which has a combined deficit forecast of £76,116 for

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<sup>5</sup> DfE APT tool 2025-26

<sup>6</sup> DSG APT tool 2025-26

2024/25. The further reduction in DSG funding due to lower pupil numbers makes this no longer a viable option.

- ii. Amalgamation can reduce operational costs 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 an amalgamation model through greater efficiency and resource allocation, the current financial projections and reductions in pupil numbers is unlikely to make the schools financially viable.
  - iii. Educational Impact: federation/amalgamation often require shared staffing and resources, which would likely lead to the merging of classes or vertical integration of age groups. This could adversely affect the quality of education provided, particularly for younger pupils and those with specific educational needs.
- Recommendation for School Closure
    - i. School closure has been determined to be the only financially sustainable option that ensures the effective allocation of resources across the local education system. A closure may help support the sustainability and viability of other Haringey schools and beyond by enabling them to increase their pupil numbers from the displaced children.
    - ii. 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 schools' 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.

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

- 12.1. This report sets out the results of the consultation on the proposed closure of St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools, that is a merged voluntary aided Catholic primary school governed by a single governing body and Catholic Dioceses and maintained by the local authority.
- 12.2. 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 where an authority 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.

- 12.3. 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 considers all 3 reasons but recommends closure of St Peters in the Chain and St Gildas Catholic infant and junior school on the first and third ground namely surplus places elsewhere in the local area and the schools financial difficulties causing the Council to consider it to be no longer viable.
- 12.4. The statutory framework entails a two-stage consultation process. With Cabinet approval Officers completed the stage 1 consultation. This report details the outcome and provides details of further consideration undertaken by Officers in response to the consultation concerning the future of St Peters in the Chain and St Gildas’ Catholic infant and junior schools in accordance with the statutory framework. Members are asked to approve the consultation progression to stage 2 that entails the publication of a statutory proposal containing prescribed information compliant with the Establishment and Discontinuance Regulations. If approved the statutory proposal must be published within 12 months of the initial consultation. The Regulations and Guidance also prescribe where and how the statutory proposal is to be published and the persons to be consulted and the timeframe for doing so.
- 12.5. Officers must ensure that the publication and consultation principles are adhered to.
- 12.6. The local authority is the sole decision maker on a school closure. In this instance the decision is to be made by Cabinet as indicated in the report. Officers are reminded that the Schools Adjudicator will also be the decision maker in any case where the local authority does not make a decision within a period of 2 months of the end of the representation period. Where this happens, the local authority must, within a week of the end of that 2-month period, refer the case to the Schools Adjudicator.
- 12.7. Officers are advised to adhere to the decision-making timeline to reserve the sole decision-making power concerning the future of the schools to the Council.

### 13. Equalities Comment

- 13.1. 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.
- 13.2. 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.
- 13.3. Although it is not enforced in legislation as a protected characteristic, Haringey Council treats socioeconomic status as a local protected characteristic.
- 13.4. The report recommends that Cabinet agree to move to the next stage of the process, the publication of a statutory proposal to close the school which will trigger a 4-week representation period (formal consultation).
- 13.5. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) is attached at Appendix 3. 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 and will be further updated if Cabinet decide to proceed to the next phase of consultation.
- 13.6. **Service users (children at St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools primary schools)** - A comprehensive EqIA has identified some potential negative impacts on some children – aged 0 to 11 years old. This decision may particularly impact children who are of White Irish background as they are overrepresented in St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools primary school. Additionally, students at both schools who 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.

- 13.7. In terms of pupil composition St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools shares many similar characteristics with other Haringey primary schools located in Planning Area 2 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.' There are also sufficient spaces available at other Catholic schools within Haringey, should parents wish to keep their children within a Catholic school.
- 13.8. **Children with Special Education Needs (SEN) or disabled children** – St Peter in Chain's Infant and St Gildas' Junior Schools currently has 6 pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) who are a vulnerable group that 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.
- 13.9. **Teaching and non-teaching staff** -The closure of St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools will inevitably negatively impact on teaching and support staff working at the school. Due to the predominance of female staff over male staff in St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools (and indeed in primary schools across the borough and the country), they are likely to be affected in greater numbers.
- 13.10. Additionally, St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools have an overrepresentation of White 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. St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools 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.

## 14. Use of Appendices

Appendix 1 – analysis of consultation responses

Appendix 2 – Minutes of the public meeting held at St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools

## Appendix 3 – Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)

### 15. 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 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).