

Formal consultation on the proposed closure of St Andrew's Church of England High School from August 2020

Representation (formal consultation) Outcomes Report

1 Proposal

- 1.1 The proposal is to close St Andrew's Church of England (CofE) High school in August 2020 following completion of Year 11 GCSE examinations. The reason for the proposed closure is because the school is no longer considered viable both in terms of its ability to deliver a full and balanced curriculum and financial sustainability.

2. Representation Consultation outcomes report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Local Authority, St Andrew's Governing Board, Southwark Diocesan Board of Education and respondents to the consultation with the results of the consultation. The Local Authority is the final decision maker on the proposed closure of the school and the report will be submitted for a decision within the statutory period.
- 2.2 This report is based on the responses received during the representation period when those with an interest were provided with an opportunity to comment or object to the proposed closure of the school. The representation period lasted four weeks from 25 June to 25 July 2019.

3. Background

- 3.1 St Andrew's Church CofE High School is a voluntary aided mainstream school for boys and girls. The school is part of the educational provision of the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education and the London Borough of Croydon. The school is situated in Warrington Road, Croydon, CR0 4BH.
- 3.2 The Governing Board at St Andrew's, with the support of the Diocese and Croydon Council agreed that there would be no Year 7 admission to the school from September 2018 and this was approved by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator. From September 2018, only pupils in Years 10 and 11 would remain at the school to complete their examination courses in 2019 and 2020.
- 3.3 In December 2018, the Chair of the Governing Board of St Andrew's requested that the Council commence the statutory process for the proposed closure of St Andrew's following a review of the financial viability of the school. For the last

3 years, St Andrews has had an in year overspend and falling student roles over the last few years have contributed to this deficit.

4. Statutory requirement

- 4.1 The process for decision making regarding school closures is set out in the Department for Education's (DfE) statutory guidance 'Opening and Closing Maintained Schools' November 2018. The statutory process consists of:
- Pre-publication consultation
 - Publication of statutory notice
 - Representation / formal consultation
 - Decision by the Local Authority on the school closure proposal

5. Pre-publication consultation

- 5.1 A six week pre-publication consultation took place from 15 March to 26 April 2019. Stakeholders were invited to share their views on the proposal to close St Andrew's from August 2020. Respondents were also given the opportunity to include suggestions on how the land may be used should the closure of St Andrew's be agreed.
- 5.2 A total number of 145 responses were received during the pre-publication consultation period; of which 48 were from a Croydon Christian group - St Mark's secondary school - regarding a proposal for St Mark's Secondary School on the St Andrew's site. We also received responses from Waddon ward councillors - Cllr Robert Canning; Cllr Joy Prince; and Cllr Andrew Pelling - who expressed the view that both the school buildings and all of the school playing field should be retained for future educational use and their view is that a safeguard to this effect must be included as an integral part of any decision to close the school from next year.
- 5.3 The pre-publication consultation outcomes report can be requested from the Council or can be found at www.croydon.gov.uk/st-andrews-school.
- 5.4 The Leader of the Council delegated authority to the Executive Director - Children, Families & Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Learning to consider the outcomes of the pre-publication consultation on the proposed closure of St Andrew's to decide whether to proceed to the next stage of the process - representation period. Approval was given to proceed to the next stage - publication of the statutory notice- starting the 4 week representation period.

6. Publication of statutory notice

- 6.1 A notice was published in the Croydon Guardian newspaper and on the Council and school's website on 25 June 2019. A copy of the notice was also displayed in Croydon's libraries and on the school's gates.

7. Representation period

- 7.1 The representation period lasted four weeks from 25 June to 25 July 2019 which allowed any person to send objections or comments to the Local Authority within 4 weeks from the date of publication of the proposal.

8. Decision making

- 8.1 The Local Authority is the final decision maker for the proposed closure of St Andrew's CofE High School and must make a decision within a period of two months of the end of the representation period, otherwise the proposal must be referred to the Schools Adjudicator for decision.
- 8.2 The representation outcomes report will be submitted to the decision maker within the statutory period.

9. Communication and consultation activities

- 9.1 A consultation document including a questionnaire was used as a basis of informing stakeholders, including parents/carers and local residents about the educational rationale for the proposed closure of the school and inviting feedback on the proposal.
- 9.2 Stakeholders were given the opportunity to express their views in writing via a questionnaire, both electronically and via the hard copy attached to the consultation document which could be submitted by email or post.
- 9.3 Different modes and methods of communication were used to inform and facilitate feedback from stakeholders about/on the proposal. Communication activities included notice in the Croydon Guardian newspaper and the circulation of the consultation document, including a questionnaire via;
- The following websites:
 - ✓ Croydon Council
 - ✓ St Andrew's CofE High School
 - ✓ 'Get Involved'
 - Schools Bulletin:
 - ✓ Bulletin sent to all schools in Croydon
 - Social Media/Applications:
 - ✓ Twitter
 - ✓ Facebook
 - ✓ 'Your Croydon'
 - Hard copies of the consultation document, including the questionnaire was available from the school.

10. Equality and Diversity Monitoring

- 10.1 As part of the consultation process, respondents were asked to complete an

equality and diversity questionnaire, looking at Gender, Age, Ethnicity and Disability. The information collected will help identify any special requirements and promote equality and diversity.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 10.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) will be undertaken. The Equality analysis will enable the Council to better understand the potential impact of the proposed closure of the school on the community.

11. Representation period - summary of responses

- 11.1 A total of 42 responses have been received during the representation period. 37 responses were received via the Get Involved website. In addition, we received a letter from Waddon ward councillors - Cllr Robert Canning, Cllr Joy Prince and Cllr Andrew Pelling, a letter from the St Mark's Secondary School Croydon Group with an attachment containing 241 names, a letter from the chairman of governors of a school within the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham and two letters from Croydon primary school Head Teachers.
- 11.2 37 responses were received via Get Involved; of which
- 12 support the proposed change, of which:
 - 3 support the proposed change but only to allow for a new school to open on the St Andrew's site
 - 22 do not support the proposed change, of which
 - 7 do not support the proposed change but expressed support for another school to be opened on the site.
 - 2 were not sure
 - 1 was not affected/did not wish to answer the questions
- 11.3 A letter was received, signed by the 3 ward councillors' for Waddon which stated their position "if St Andrew's School is to close – and we can see the justification for closing this school for a period of time from August 2020 – then both the school buildings and all of the school playing field should be retained for future educational use. Our view is that a safeguard to this effect must be included as an integral part of any decision to close the school from next year. We also take the view that there is a need to plan for a balance of denominational provision of school places within the borough. The closure of St Andrew's CofE School would compromise this balance." – (*extract from response*)
- 11.4 A letter was received from the St Mark's Secondary School Croydon Group containing 241 names, stating "I do not support the closure of St Andrew's CE School. I do support the proposal from St Mark's Secondary School Croydon to open in its place".
- 11.5 A letter of support for the St Mark's Secondary School Croydon group was received from an out of borough secondary school.
- 11.6 Two letters of support for St Mark's Secondary School Croydon Group were received from two primary schools in Croydon.

11.7 The majority of respondents do not support the proposal to close St Andrew's CE School.

11.8 The majority of respondents are local residents.

11.9 The top thematic issues raised by respondents and council's/Diocese response are outlined in the table below:

Key issue	Number of respondents	council / diocese response
The closure of St Andrew's would result in less denominational places in Croydon.	8	<p>The Diocesan Board of Education is in agreement with respondents in their view that closure threatens the number and proportionality of church school places. For this reason, the Diocese is exploring options to retain the use of St Andrew's site for educational purposes to safeguard the number of proportionality of Church of England school places in Croydon.</p> <p>The Diocesan Board recognises that without a plan for maintaining Church of England places, the closure would present a reduction in parent choice in Croydon. Hence they are exploring options for retaining Church of England school places in Croydon.</p>
There are large amounts of planned housing in the area and therefore the school places will be needed in the future	8	<p>The recent pupil forecast of future demand for school places took into consideration likely pupil yield from planned housing developments. Pupil forecasts indicate that currently there are sufficient secondary school places at borough level for the next seven years.</p> <p>Regular review is undertaken to identify any unexpected growth in demand for school places and independent projection is carried out by the Greater London Authority.</p>
Local children will have to travel further to school.	7	<p>Croydon's policy, as far as possible, is to offer a secondary school place within a 3 mile radius from a child's home. However, this is dependent on parental choice. It is also acknowledged that children of secondary school age tend to travel further across the borough and outside the borough to school.</p>

The school will be demolished and the land no longer used for educational purposes / will be used for housing.	7	St Andrew's site has multiple ownership. The usage of the land is to be determined by the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education who are currently exploring options to continue using the site/building for educational purposes to retain proportionality of Church school places.
The school should be improved rather than closed.	5	Over the years, despite best efforts the school has been facing a decline in pupil numbers which has impacted on the curriculum offered and funding received by the school. The school was rated as requiring improvement following an Ofsted inspection in November 2016 and the most recent Ofsted report, published in March 2019, stated the school has been rated as inadequate.
The school and playing field should be retained for future educational use.	Waddon ward councillors	The Diocese is exploring options to retain the use of St Andrew's site for educational purposes to safeguard the number of proportionality of Church of England school places in Croydon. The usage of the land is to be determined by the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education.

11.10 A detailed analysis of the responses can be found below in Annex A.

11.11 Top 3 points made in support of the proposed closure of St Andrew's

- There has been less traffic and parked cars on the roads near the school since year groups 7 - 9 were relocated.
- The school was underperforming.
- Streets are more peaceful as pupils were not well behaved.

12. Next Steps

12.1 The Local Authority will consider the consultation results and decide on the proposed closure of the school. In making a decision, the Local Authority should be satisfied that there are sufficient surplus places elsewhere in the local area to accommodate displaced pupils, and the likely supply and future demand for places in the medium and long term. The decision maker should take into account the overall quality of alternative places in the local area and the popularity of other local schools.

12.2 When issuing a decision, the decision-maker can:

- reject the proposal;
- approve the proposal without modification;
- approve the proposal with such modifications as they think desirable, after consulting the proposer; or

- approve the proposal – with or without modification – subject to certain conditions which are specified by statute in the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013 .

Annex A

Summary of responses

A total number of 42 responses, including a letter signed by the 3 Waddon ward councillors were received during the representation period; 37 responded via the online questionnaire on Get Involved, 4 responded in writing which was hand delivered to the council and 1 response was submitted in writing via email.

Please tell us whether you support/do not support the proposed closure of St Andrew's Church of England High School.

Of the 37 responses received via Get Involved:

Response	Number	%
I support the proposed closure of St. Andrew's.	9	24
I support the proposed closure of St. Andrew's but expressed this is to allow for a new school to open on site.	3	8
I do not support the proposed closure of St. Andrew's	15	40
I do not support the proposed closure of St. Andrew's but expressed support for another school to be opened on the site.	7	19
Not sure	2	6
I am not affected by/do not want to answer	1	3

Response received from Waddon ward councillors

"If St Andrew's School is to close – and we can see the justification for closing this school for a period of time from August 2020 – then both the school buildings and all of the school playing field should be retained for future educational use. Our view is that a safeguard to this effect must be included as an integral part of any decision to close the school from next year".

Reasons listed for retaining the St. Andrew's site for future educational use:

- *"Croydon is already rapidly growing and some 17,000 new homes are expected to be built in the town centre, and up to 12,000 on Purley Way, in the coming years."*
- *"the location of these new homes would have a distinct benefit of being within walking or cycling distance of the current St Andrew's site."*
- *"the need for additional secondary school places in the medium term in [Waddon] is also reflected in the Croydon Local Plan. The plan identifies the site next to Duppas Hill Road... for a future new secondary school."*
- *"it would be a scandalous waste of council tax payers' money to close a secondary school only to then go and build a new secondary school a stone's throw away."*
- *"there is a need to plan for a balance of denominational provision of school places within the borough."*

(Extracts from response)

Response received from St Mark's Secondary School Croydon Group

"The two most important considerations amongst concerned Croydon residents and represented by our group are as follows:

1. *Establish the need for a church school in the borough and at the very least, retain the faith places that do exist and eventually increase them to meet the need and demand in Croydon.*
2. *Identify and support who is best placed to deliver that provision...*

We strongly oppose the closing of St Andrew's and the removal of existing faith places. It is understood that the school will need to close for an academic year to re-brand, recruit high quality teachers and market a new comprehensive secondary school of choice reflecting the socio-economic mix of this part of the borough.

The letter from the St Mark's Group was accompanied by a supporting document which contained 241 names supporting the statement *"I do not support the proposed closure of St Andrew's CE School. I do support the proposal from St Mark's Secondary School Croydon to open in its place."*

(Extracts from response)

Letters of support for the St Mark's Secondary School Croydon Group

Three letters were received in support of the proposal for St Mark's Secondary School opening on the site of St Andrew's should the school close from August 2020.

- A letter from an out of borough school which stated: *"Setting up a new school from scratch is challenging and expensive. Therefore, before the Local Authority makes its decision it needs to be clear that it has considered all alternative options..."*
The fact that we currently have attending our school, who live in the London Borough of Croydon, clearly means there is a local need for a high quality, Church of England secondary school of choice."
(Extract from response)
- Two letters from Croydon primary schools which stated:
 - *"I was a pupil at St Andrew's and the education that it gave me enabled me to go on to great things. More than that, it gave me a moral standing that has been so important growing up in modern society..."*

It would be a real shame for the educational landscape in Croydon to see St Andrew's close with no replacement and I hope that St Mark's will be able to add to the choices that parents have in the borough."
(Extract from response)

- *"It was down to the strong Christian ethos what was promoted at the school that led to my parents choosing St Andrew's, and I feel very grateful for their doing so..."*

The team at St Marks have my full support and I hope that they are able to have the opportunity to provide the families within Croydon with the same opportunities I was once afforded at St Andrew's."
(Extract from response)

Please tell us who you are.

Please tick all that apply*

*53 responses were received from 42 respondents

Response	Number	%
Ward Councillor	3	6
Member of staff at St Andrew's school	0	0
Member of staff at another school	6	11
School Governor at St Andrew's school	1	2
School Governor at another school	3	6
Parent/carer of a child/children at St Andrew's school	4	8
Parent/carer of child/ren at another school	4	8
Pupil at St Andrew's school	1	2
Ex-pupil of St Andrew's	3	6
Local resident	22	42
Member of a local church	1	2
Prefer not to say	2	4
Other	3*	6

*The response received from the St Mark's group has been counted as 1 response under the category of 'other'.