

Consultation on the future of The Clere School, Burghclere

This non-statutory consultation will run from Friday 4 September 2026 to Friday 2 October 2026.

This document will be updated periodically throughout the consultation period.

Why is the local authority proposing this?

On 13 May 2026, the Chair of Governors, on behalf of the Governing Body, wrote to Hampshire County Council requesting that it initiate the statutory process to consider the closure of The Clere School and undertake the required consultations. The request was made on the grounds that the school is no longer considered financially or educationally viable.

The Clere School currently has a cumulative budget deficit of £2.7 million. The school's budget first moved into deficit during the 2012/13 academic year, and its financial position has worsened over time, largely due to declining pupil numbers. Schools are funded primarily through the national funding formula, with the majority of funding allocated on the basis of pupil numbers. While some reductions in the deficit have been achieved in certain years, these have been limited, and the deficit is forecast to increase to approximately £7 million by the end of the 2028/29 financial year.

Against a total capacity of 725 places and a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 145, the 382 pupils recorded on roll in Spring 2026 leaves the school with approximately 343 surplus places, representing around 47% surplus capacity. Pupil numbers at The Clere School are expected to remain low, and the school is not the preferred choice for the majority of parents living within its catchment area. As a result, the school is forecast to remain in significant financial deficit, with no realistic prospect of returning to a balanced budget within the current planning period.

The combination of declining pupil numbers and ongoing financial pressures has made it increasingly challenging for the school to deliver education efficiently and sustain a broad and balanced curriculum. These pressures have reduced the school's ability to provide the full range of educational opportunities that are typically available in larger, more financially sustainable secondary schools.

What are the problems with surplus places/declining pupil numbers?

The majority of a school's funding is based on the number of pupils attending the school. Funding is allocated by the Government through a national funding formula. When pupil numbers fall, the amount of funding a school receives also reduces.

A reduction in funding presents significant challenges for a school. While income decreases, many costs, such as leadership, building maintenance and other

operational costs, remain largely unchanged. This can make it more difficult for the school to balance its budget and plan effectively for the future.

Declining pupil numbers can also affect staffing and the ability to deliver the full range of curriculum opportunities to pupils. Reduced funding may limit a school's ability to maintain staffing levels, recruit new staff and retain existing employees. This can increase workload pressures and reduce flexibility in how teaching and support services are organised.

There are also implications for pupils. Smaller year groups may reduce opportunities for social interaction, participation in extracurricular activities and the range of experiences available through school life.

In secondary schools, where sufficient numbers of pupils are needed to make subjects and courses viable, low pupil numbers can make it increasingly difficult to provide a broad and balanced curriculum within the available budget. It can also be more challenging to recruit and retain specialist subject teachers and expertise across the curriculum, which may limit the range of subjects and learning opportunities available to pupils. Over time, this may affect educational outcomes and the school's long-term sustainability.

What is optimum in terms of running a school?

As a rule, Hampshire County Council aims for schools to operate at around 95% of capacity. This allows some flexibility for parental preference and pupil movement while enabling schools to make efficient use of resources and maintain a broad curriculum.

While falling pupil numbers are affecting many schools, The Clere School is operating significantly below this level. Against a capacity of 725 places, the school had 382 pupils on roll in Spring 2026, leaving approximately 343 unfilled places and representing around 47% surplus capacity. This level of surplus places makes it increasingly difficult to sustain a broad curriculum, specialist staffing and the efficient use of resources over the long term.

How can you be sure that the number of pupils expected in the future is accurate?

Hampshire uses a well-established forecasting model to predict future demand for school places. Forecasting pupil numbers is complex and is influenced by a range of factors, including birth rates, housing development, population movement and parental preference. The forecasts are based on historical trends and data, including immunisation and vaccination data, school admissions and local population information and some assumptions rather than certainties. While pupil forecasts are derived from sound methodology, external influences mean pupil forecasts come without a guarantee.

In the case of The Clere School, pupil forecasts have consistently reflected a long-term pattern of lower demand for places. On average, around 60 pupils per year group who live within The Clere School's catchment area attend secondary schools in West Berkshire and, to a lesser extent, Wiltshire. This reflects a long-established pattern of parental preference and cross-border pupil movement. The trend is not

expected to change significantly because there are several alternative secondary schools, including independent schools, within a relatively short distance of The Clere School, particularly in and around Newbury.

Why closure rather than amalgamation or federation?

Other options have been considered in respect of the future of The Clere School, including academy conversion, federation and other forms of collaboration with neighbouring schools.

The Department for Education (DfE) issued an academy order for the school on 2 April 2025, indicating that the school was expected to become an academy. While the academy order remained in place, Hampshire County Council could not progress any structural change proposals. Following discussions between the County Council and the DfE, the DfE confirmed on 5 May 2026 that the County Council could proceed with consultation on closure if governors requested it.

On 13 May 2026, the Chair of Governors, on behalf of the governing body, formally requested that Hampshire County Council begin the statutory process and public consultation to consider closure of the school. This request was made because governors considered the school to be no longer financially and educationally sustainable in the long term.

Amalgamation or federation may change governance or leadership arrangements, but they do not address the underlying issue of low pupil numbers. The Clere School currently has around 47% surplus capacity. As funding is largely linked to pupil numbers, this level of surplus capacity creates ongoing educational and financial challenges that would remain regardless of the school's governance structure.

The school's low pupil numbers, declining demand for places and significant financial pressures mean that alternative governance arrangements alone are not considered likely to provide a sustainable long-term solution. These factors have therefore led to the request from the governing body that closure be considered through a formal public consultation process.

What evidence has informed the proposal?

The proposal follows a formal request from The Clere School's Governing Body for Hampshire County Council to begin the statutory process and consultation to consider closure of the school. Governors made this request because they understand that the school to no longer be educationally and financially sustainable in the long term.

A range of evidence has informed the proposal, including:

- pupil number forecasts
- admissions and place planning data
- patterns of parental preference
- Ofsted inspection outcomes
- financial information and budget forecasts
- wider context of local education provision and future demand for school places

The school recorded 382 pupils on roll in the Spring 2026 census against a capacity of 725 places, representing approximately 47% surplus capacity. As of August 2026, 35 offers had been made for Year 7 admission in September 2026, significantly below the previously forecast intake of 75 pupils. This indicates that the total number of pupil numbers are likely to fall further.

As school funding is largely based on pupil numbers, falling rolls has contributed to increasing financial pressures. The school currently has a budget deficit of £2.7 million, based on budget planning information submitted by the school, is forecast to increase to approximately £7 million by 2028/29.

The evidence also indicates that low pupil numbers and associated lower income are affecting the school's ability to maintain a broad and sustainable curriculum, recruit and retain specialist teaching staff, respond to its Ofsted improvement priorities and achieve long-term financial sustainability. These factors have contributed to significant concerns regarding the school's ability to provide a sustainable educational offer in the future.

Historic data and the current pupil forecast are shown below:

Academic Year	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32
Yr 6 Population	158	137	118	136	138	116	125	120	107
Year 7 Forecast	122	73	57	75	76	64	68	66	59

Pupil forecasts are produced using Hampshire County Council's established forecasting methodology. This uses historical participation patterns, local demographic information and trends in parental preference. Forecasts are based on a weighted participation methodology using data from the previous three years, with greater emphasis placed on the most recent participation trends.

However, as of August 2026, only 35 offers had been made for Year 7 admission in September 2026. While it is not yet known how many of these offers will result in pupils taking up places at the school, the current level of demand is significantly lower than previously forecast and should this reduced number of pupils enter the school it is expected to have a material impact on future forecast numbers. The revised forecast below illustrates the potential impact on future pupil numbers if the September 2026 intake is broadly consistent with the current number of offers made.

Academic Year	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32
Yr 6 Population	158	137	118	136	138	116	125	120	107
Revised Year 7 Forecast	122	73	57	35	52	44	48	46	41

What would happen to the pupils currently at The Clere School?

In accordance with the School Admissions Code, specific arrangements will be determined and published by the Local Authority in collaboration with other schools in the local area to secure provision for affected children who will be on the roll of the school at the time of closure.

Subject to the outcome of the consultation process and any subsequent decision to close the school, the County Council is proposing, with the agreement of The Hurst School, that all the pupils on roll at The Clere School will transfer to the roll of The Hurst School at the point of closure. It is anticipated that any additional accommodation required at The Hurst School site could not be delivered before the potential closure date of The Clere School. Therefore, it is likely that, for a period of time, pupils who were on roll at The Clere School may continue to be educated on the existing school site until suitable accommodation becomes available at The Hurst School. The detail of this is currently being worked through.

Parents can though, make an in-year application for another school place at any time, and request information about schools with places local to them. The County Council's Admissions Team will be able to support each family to ensure they have all the information and guidance around admissions processes and can be contacted via admissions.team@hants.gov.uk.

Any in-year applications submitted will be processed in line with published admissions arrangements. In-year applications in Hampshire are processed on an individual basis directly by the school. If the preferred school has availability, the child will be offered a place at the school. If any applications are refused, the child will be added to the waiting list, and parents will be offered the right to appeal any refusal decisions via an independent appeal panel hearing. Information about a school's oversubscription criteria can be found here: [Find a school | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/find-a-school).

How will pupils with SEND be supported if the school closes?

Supporting pupils with SEND will be a key consideration in any transition arrangements. Hampshire County Council will work closely with parents, schools and relevant professionals to ensure pupils receive the support they need and that any changes are carefully planned. For pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the County Council would work with families and receiving schools to ensure the provision specified in the plan continues to be delivered. The aim would be to provide a smooth transition and minimise disruption to pupils' education, support and wellbeing.

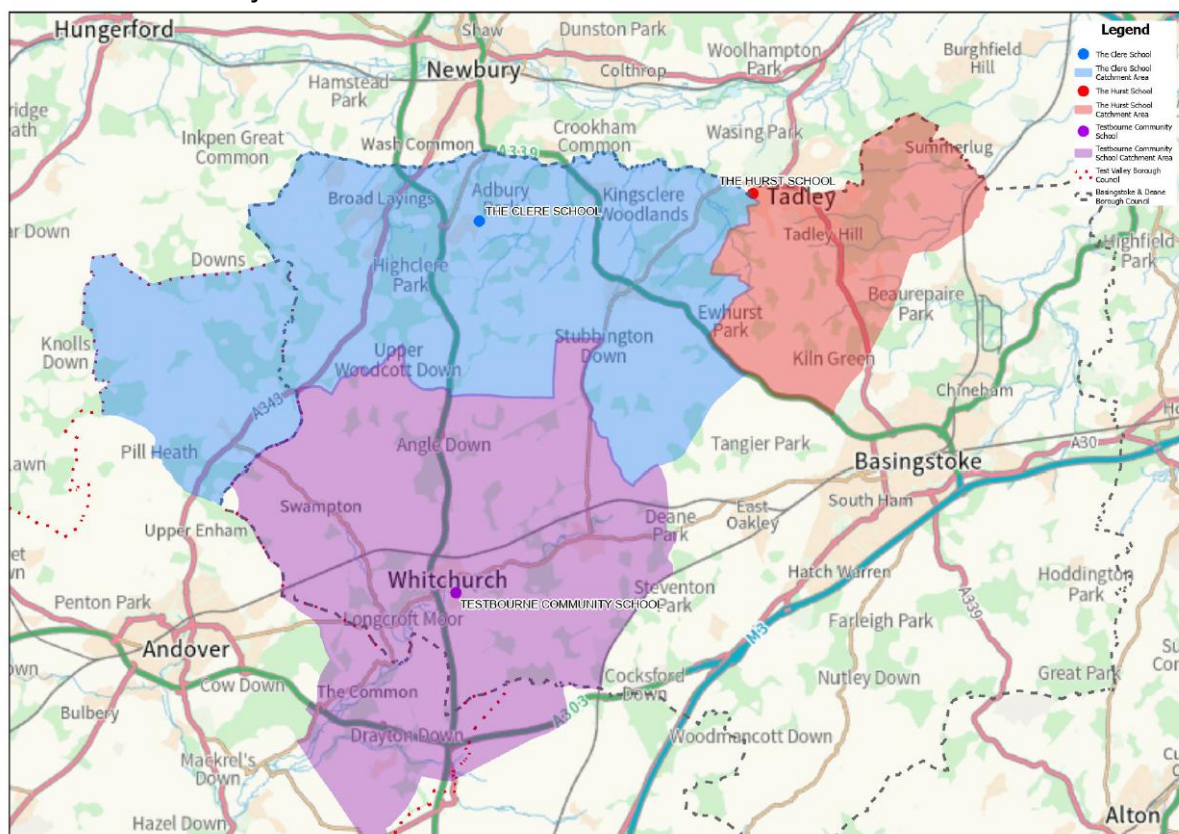
What will happen to current staff?

The retention of high-quality staff is a crucial element in the Hampshire County Council's drive for improving education standards and raising pupil achievement. Should the decision be made to close The Clere School, consultations will take place with all staff who may be affected and with their respective professional associations and trade unions at the appropriate time with appropriate support being provided.

What will happen to The Clere School's current catchment area?

If the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services decides to move forward with the statutory consultation process, The Clere School's admission arrangements will be reviewed. Any proposed changes, including what will happen to the school's current catchment area, will be included in the statutory consultation for the public to consider and comment on.

Current Secondary Catchment Areas:



I am due to apply for a Year 7 place for September 2027; what should I do?

The main admissions round for Year 7 in September 2027 is subject to statutory timescales outlined in the School Admissions Code. In Hampshire, the admissions round will open on 7 September 2026 and the deadline for on-time applications is midnight on 31 October 2026. The deadline cannot change as this is a national deadline, and all Local Authorities must abide by this.

The School Admissions Code does not allow Hampshire County Council to extend the deadline for applications, nor can the outcome of any public notice period be pre-empted. Therefore, The Clere School will necessarily remain as an option for parents to express as a preference. Parents are advised to identify their preferred schools and if they wish, include The Clere School among their preferences, however, the Admissions Team strongly encourages all parents to utilise their three preferences as part of any application. The Admissions Team can support parents in identifying their local schools or parents can access the County Council's school catchment finder [GIS | Hantsweb](#) or find a school [Find a school | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#) webpages. All submitted applications will be processed in line with the published admissions arrangements. Where necessary parents can make late

applications, but it is worth noting that late applications will be considered after all on-time applications.

In the event of a school closing will School Transport be provided?

The Hampshire County Council school transport policy provides local authority funded transport to the nearest school with a space when the home to school journey is more than the statutory walking distance or if the journey is less than the statutory distance, but the walking route is unsafe. The statutory distance is 2 miles for a child who is 7 years or under and rises to 3 miles for children aged 8 or over.

For each child, who is a resident in the Hampshire County Council Local Authority administrative area, who moves school following a school closure an application for school transport would be required and then an individual transport assessment would be made based on their home address and the journey to their new school.

What is the proposed timeline?

Action	Key Date
Non-statutory Public Consultation – 4 weeks	4 September - 2 October 2026
Executive Member Decision Day	20 October 2026
Publish Public Notice – 4 weeks	30 October – 4 December 2026
Executive Member Decision Day	TBC – December 2026
School closed subject to above decisions	31 August 2027

What will happen to the school site?

If, following the conclusion of the statutory consultation process, a decision is taken to close The Clere School, consideration will then be given to the future use of the site and any buildings or land that become surplus to educational requirements. Any potential use or disposal would be subject to detailed evaluation, appropriate legal advice, and all relevant approvals.

Can I propose other options?

During the consultation, Hampshire County Council will carefully consider any alternative options suggested.

Comments on the proposal can be received by emailing strategicplanningunit@hants.gov.uk or by writing to:

Rebecca Prowting, Strategic Development Officer, Children's Services Department, EII Court, Winchester, SO23 8UG

by Friday 2 October 2026.

Will I have the opportunity to discuss the plans and ask questions?

Drop-in events where you will be able to discuss the proposal with County Council Officers will take place on;

- Year 7 and Year 8 families: Tuesday 22 September 2026 between 3:45pm – 5:45pm at The Clere School, Earlstone Common, Burghclere, Newbury, RG20 9HP
- Year 9 and Year 10 families: Wednesday 23 September 2026 between 4:00pm – 6:00pm at The Clere School, Earlstone Common, Burghclere, Newbury, RG20 9HP
- Year 11 families and other stakeholders: Thursday 24 September 2026 between 5:00pm – 7:00pm at The Clere School, Earlstone Common, Burghclere, Newbury, RG20 9HP

These sessions are intended to provide opportunities for stakeholders to discuss the proposal and ask questions about the consultation process. There will be no formal presentation or speech, and attendees are welcome to drop in at any point during the advertised times. We ask all attendees to help create an environment where everyone feels able to ask questions and share their views.

What happens after this consultation?

This consultation will run from Friday 4 September 2026 to Friday 2 October 2026.

The decision-making process is outlined below:

- This initial non-statutory consultation will run from Friday 4 September 2026 to Friday 2 October 2026 and will include drop-in events, detailed above.
- A report setting out the consultation responses received will be taken to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services in October 2026 to decide if the proposal should continue to the statutory consultation stage.
- If approved, a statutory Public Notice would be published for a period of four weeks during which representations can be made to the Local Authority. This will likely run from November to December 2026.
- If, at this stage, a decision is taken to proceed with the closure, a report would be taken to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services for final approval.

Updated 16/09/2026:

What support would be available for children who experience anxiety, have additional needs (but do not have an EHCP), or who may find the proposal or a potential change of school particularly difficult?

At this consultation stage, no decision has been made regarding the proposal. Should a decision be made to close The Clere School, supporting pupils' wellbeing would be an important part of the transition process. Schools would work closely with pupils and families to identify any concerns and ensure appropriate support is in place, particularly for children who may find change more difficult or who experience anxiety.

For pupils receiving SEN Support, schools would work together to share information and ensure that support arrangements, individual needs and effective strategies are understood and taken into account as part of the transition process.

Parents and carers can also access information, advice and support through Hampshire's Local Offer. Should the proposal proceed, further information about transition arrangements and available support would be provided to pupils and families in advance of any changes taking place.

What would happen for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) if the proposal were approved?

For children with EHCPs the school would be required to undertake the annual review process as a priority. Parents / carers would be fully involved and express their views on appropriate school preferences. The annual review process would explore next appropriate placement. Once received, the Local Authority will complete the statutory consultation processes with relevant schools. This would be completed in accordance with statutory timelines to ensure appropriate transition arrangements can be made.

What would happen to Year 10 pupils who have already started GCSE or other examination courses if the proposal were approved? Would pupils be able to continue studying their current GCSE options if they transferred to another school that does not normally offer those subjects?

At this consultation stage, no decision has been made regarding the proposal and current Year 10 pupils should continue their studies as normal.

Should a decision be made to close The Clere School and Hampshire County Council will work closely with receiving schools to review the courses being studied by affected pupils. Every endeavour will be made to ensure that pupils are able to continue their current subjects and complete their examination courses for the duration of the syllabus wherever possible.

Whilst there may be differences between the subjects offered by individual schools, Hampshire County Council would work with receiving schools to understand any implications for pupils and seek appropriate solutions to minimise disruption to their education and examination programmes.

How would option choices be affected for current Year 9 pupils who will shortly be selecting subjects for Key Stage 4 study?

At this consultation stage, no decision has been made regarding the proposal, and the Local Authority advises the current Year 9 pupils to continue to engage with the school's options process as normal.

Should a decision be made to close The Clere School, Hampshire County Council would work closely with affected schools to support pupils through the transition process. Whilst there may be differences between the subjects offered by individual schools, there is generally only minor variation in the subjects schools offer- the ability to be permitted to select for each pupil, is usually affected by internal timetabling and organisation. Local Authority advisers will work closely with all affected schools to ensure pupils retain a strong initial option choice. Hampshire County Council will work with all affected receiving schools to understand the implications for pupils selecting or studying Key Stage 4 courses and seek to retain pupils' preferred option choices wherever possible. Every effort would be made to

help pupils continue with a strong choice of subjects and ensure any disruption to their education is minimised.

Would families receive any support with the cost of purchasing a new school uniform if the proposal were approved?

Hampshire County Council recognises that families may have questions regarding school uniform costs should pupils be required to transfer to another school. We are conscious of the potential costs that families may face and, should the proposal proceed, these matters would be considered as part of any future implementation planning. The Council would consider what options may be available to help minimise the impact on families where possible. Further information would be provided should a decision be made to close the school.

If a pupil attends, or chooses to attend, a school outside Hampshire, would school transport be available?

Eligibility for school transport is based on legislation, Department for Education Guidance and Hampshire policy. Eligibility depends on whether the student is attending their catchment or nearest school. The assessment of which school is nearest is made irrespective of which county the school is in.

What transport arrangements would be put in place for children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) whose school may not be the nearest catchment school?

If a student has an Education, Health and Care Plan the school named in section I of the plan is regarded as the nearest suitable school for transport eligibility purposes.

How have future pupil numbers been forecast and what factors, such as housing, have been considered?

Hampshire County Council has a statutory responsibility to plan for sufficient school places and uses a well-established forecasting methodology to assess future demand. Forecasts take account of a range of factors including historical and current pupil numbers, local birth rate data, housing developments, migration patterns and parental preferences for schools.

The forecasting process also considers pupil movement patterns across local authority boundaries, including where families choose schools outside their designated catchment area, whether in neighbouring authorities or at other Hampshire schools, and where pupils attend Hampshire schools from outside the county. In the case of The Clere School, this is principally reflected in movement to and from West Berkshire and Wiltshire. These patterns of parental preference and school attendance are considered within the forecasting process to help provide a realistic assessment of future demand for places.

Whilst future housing growth forms part of the forecasting process, current forecasts indicate that pupil numbers at The Clere School are expected to remain significantly below the school's capacity for the foreseeable future. These forecasts formed part of the evidence considered by the Governing Body and Hampshire County Council when assessing the school's long-term educational and financial sustainability and the decision to consult on a proposal for closure.

Why is closure being considered if pupil numbers could increase in the future?

Hampshire County Council recognises that future housing growth and changing patterns of parental preference may influence demand for school places over time. These factors have been considered as part of the assessment of The Clere School's future.

Hampshire County Council has a statutory responsibility to ensure there are sufficient school places available for children and young people. As part of this responsibility, the County Council regularly reviews current and future demand for school places, taking account of factors such as demographic change, housing growth and patterns of school attendance.

However, the proposal is based on the school's current position and the forecasting evidence available regarding its longer-term educational and financial sustainability. The Spring 2026 school census recorded 382 pupils on roll against a capacity of 725 places, leaving significant surplus capacity. Current forecasts indicate that pupil numbers are expected to remain substantially below the school's capacity for the foreseeable future.

Whilst future demand can never be predicted with complete certainty, Hampshire County Council and the Governing Body must consider the best information currently available. This includes demographic trends, housing growth, patterns of school attendance, the availability of sufficient school places in the local area, and the school's financial position.

The purpose of the consultation is to seek views on the proposal and ensure that all relevant information, including evidence relating to future demand for school places, is considered before any decisions are made.

What alternatives to closure have been considered?

The Governing Body requested that Hampshire County Council consult on the proposed closure of The Clere School following concerns about the school's long-term educational and financial sustainability.

A range of alternatives have been considered over time, including school improvement support, financial recovery support, federation and other forms of collaboration with other schools. The school has received extensive support from Hampshire County Council and partner organisations over many years to help address both educational and financial challenges.

Reducing the school's Published Admission Number (PAN) has also been considered and the PAN is due to reduce to 100 from September 2027. However, reducing the PAN alone would not address the underlying challenges facing the school, including low pupil numbers across multiple year groups, significant financial pressures and concerns about the school's ability to remain educationally and financially sustainable in the long term. The ability to offer a broad and balanced curriculum and wider educational opportunities is also affected by continued low pupil numbers.

The option of allowing existing pupils to complete their education at The Clere School was also considered. However, a phased closure over a number of years would not address the school's underlying sustainability challenges and could create additional uncertainty for pupils, families and staff.

The Department for Education (DfE) issued an academy order for the school in April 2025. However, despite efforts to identify a suitable sponsor, no academy trust was willing to take on the school. As a result, academy conversion was not considered to offer a viable long-term solution to the challenges facing the school. Whilst the Regional Director at the DfE has given consent to proceed with a consultation on a proposal to close The Clere School, this does not permit any other form of structural change to be considered whilst the academy order remains in place. Should Elected Members decide to proceed with closure following the completion of the statutory process, the DfE will then revoke the academy order to enable the closure to proceed.

No decision has been made at this stage. The purpose of the consultation is to seek views on the proposal and any alternative options that stakeholders believe should be considered before any future decision is reached.

How would The Hurst School accommodate additional pupils should the proposal proceed?

At this consultation stage, no decision has been made regarding the proposal. Should a decision be made to close The Clere School, Hampshire County Council would work closely with The Hurst School to ensure that there are sufficient school places and appropriate accommodation available to meet the needs of all pupils on roll. Detailed assessments of accommodation requirements are currently underway and will help inform any future arrangements.

Hampshire County Council would ensure that all pupils continue to have access to suitable teaching accommodation, specialist facilities and the full range of educational provision required for their year group and courses of study. The current expectation is that pupils would remain within consistent cohorts at the Clere site until such time as sufficient accommodation is available at The Hurst school site. This would help to provide continuity in pupils' education and minimise disruption whilst any longer-term accommodation solutions are delivered.

Any future arrangements would be communicated to pupils, families and staff well in advance of implementation.

Why has the school's financial position reached this point? What support has Hampshire County Council provided to help the school address its financial challenges?

The school has faced significant financial difficulties since first facing concerns about educational standards, and the local authority has worked closely with the school to address this alongside recognising the need to ensure resources were available to continue educational delivery. Financial management is delegated to schools, and national regulation states that, a local authority cannot write off the deficit balance of any school. Significant savings have been achieved over time through prudent financial management by school leaders however reductions in pupil numbers

alongside wider funding and inflation pressures have meant that this has limited the reduction in the overall deficit.

The school would need to reduce expenditure further to recover the accumulated deficit which would lead to further challenges with investing in school improvement and the ability to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum and maintaining specialist subject expertise.

Why was a consultation launched now, and not sooner after May?

The proposal to close The Clere School follows a formal request from the Governing Body. Before launching a consultation, Hampshire County Council needed to carefully consider the request, review the supporting evidence, obtain the necessary approvals, and develop a proposal for stakeholders to consider.

The timing of the consultation was also influenced by national guidance, which advises against undertaking school organisation consultations during school holiday periods where possible, as this may limit the ability of parents, staff and other stakeholders to engage effectively in the process.

As a result, whilst the Governing Body's discussions regarding the future of the school took place earlier in the year, the consultation was not launched until Hampshire County Council had completed its review and was able to present a proposal, supported by the relevant information and consultation materials.

The consultation is intended to provide all stakeholders with an opportunity to review the proposal and share their views before any decision is made.

Updated 17/09/2026:

Would Park House School be an option for my child?

Parents may apply for a place at any other school at any time through the in-year admissions process. Applications will be considered in line with the published admissions arrangements for Park House School.

Park House School is located within West Berkshire Council's boundary. Further information about that school and how to make an in-year application can be found on the West Berkshire Council website: [School admissions and places - West Berkshire Council](#)

Hampshire County Council is not the admission authority for the school. Any applications made to Park House School will be processed in accordance with their published admissions arrangements. Further information can be found on the school's website: [Park House School - Home](#)

If we are eligible for transport to another school, would it be provided for the whole period that my child attends, rather than requiring us to reapply each year?

For students of secondary age, a decision to approve transport is for the rest of their time at the school, unless there is a change of circumstances e.g. a change of home address.

Would there be any financial assistance for other compulsory costs associated with changing schools, such as PE kit, shoes, equipment, trips or other required items?

Hampshire County Council recognises that families may have questions regarding school uniform costs should pupils be required to transfer to another school. We are conscious of the potential costs that families may face and, should the proposal proceed, these matters would be considered as part of any future implementation planning. The Council would consider what options may be available to help minimise the impact on families where possible. Further information would be provided should a decision be made to close the school.

Similarly, Hampshire County Council recognises that families may have questions regarding any other costs that could arise as a result of a change of school, such as PE kit, equipment or other school-related items. Should the proposal proceed, these matters would be considered as part of any future implementation planning and further information would be provided at the appropriate time.

What arrangements will be put in place to protect the emotional wellbeing and continuity of education of pupils who have only just started Year 7?

At this consultation stage, no decision has been made regarding the proposal. Should a decision be made to close The Clere School, Hampshire County Council would work closely with the school, pupils, families and any receiving schools to support a successful transition and minimise disruption to education.

All of the local authority's maintained schools are very regularly monitored for their provision which includes the responsive personal and social curriculum as well as focus on those pupils who may be disadvantaged. Hampshire County Council would build arrangements for pupils affected by the proposal into this ongoing support and monitoring.

The County Council has also recently developed comprehensive guidance about the support arrangements, the emotional provision and practical advice for pupils who are admitted mid-year or out of the normal round to any school. This will be the framework of our work with these pupils and schools.

Will pupils be able to transfer with their existing friendship groups where possible, rather than being separated between different schools?

Hampshire County Council is proposing, with the agreement of The Hurst School, that pupils on roll at The Clere School transfer to the roll of The Hurst School from the point of closure.

Other parents may choose to apply for a place at any other school at any time through the in-year admissions process. All applications will be considered in line with the published admissions arrangements for the relevant school.

Will the Council provide individual support to families who have particular circumstances that make another school move especially difficult?

In tandem with the school, the local authority will consider the nature of the circumstances that may make a move challenging, and if required will support the

school in their curriculum design, their pastoral provision, and their liaison with social care and school transport, in an endeavour to support specific cases.

If parents are unhappy with the proposed alternative school, what formal appeal or review process will be available?

There is no right of appeal against a school place that is offered. Likewise, there will be no right of appeal against the proposal to transfer children to the roll of The Hurst School. However, should parents make an in-year application to another school at any time, and are refused a place, they will have the right to appeal the decision.

Information on making an admissions appeal can be found here: [Making an admissions appeal | Education and learning | Hampshire County Council](#)

If closure is approved, when will parents be given further information?

If final approval for the proposal is given, The Clere School would close as of 31 August 2027. Hampshire County Council recognises that parents and carers will wish to understand what this proposal could mean for their child. Should the decision be made to close The Clere School, information regarding school places, admissions arrangements, transition planning and any other relevant support would be communicated to pupils, families and staff as early as possible to allow sufficient time for planning and preparation ahead of any changes being implemented.

Updated: 28/09/2026

Why doesn't the consultation consider alternative educational uses for the site, such as SEND provision or specialist education?

The current consultation is focused on whether The Clere School should continue to operate as a mainstream secondary school. Alternative forms of educational provision, such as SEND provision, specialist education or post-16 provision, are fundamentally different forms of educational provision and do not form part of the current proposal. Should the proposal proceed, any future use of the site would be considered separately and in accordance with Hampshire County Council's statutory duties, strategic priorities and identified educational needs at that time.

How would pupils who benefit from The Clere School's smaller environment, and whose families chose the school for that reason, be supported if the proposal proceeds?

Hampshire County Council recognises that some families value the smaller environment offered by The Clere School and feel that it has been beneficial for their child. The proposal is not based on a view that larger schools are better than smaller schools. Rather, it relates to concerns about the long-term educational and financial sustainability of the school.

Should the proposal proceed, The Clere School, The Hurst School and Hampshire County Council would work closely together to support pupils and families through any transition process. Whilst detailed arrangements have not yet been developed, these would be expected to include opportunities for pupils and families to visit the school, receive information and ask questions ahead of any move. The aim would be to ensure pupils are well supported and any disruption to their education is minimised. Wherever possible, transition arrangements would seek to maintain

continuity for pupils, including friendship groups, pastoral support arrangements and the sharing of information about individual needs and successful support strategies.

Parents would continue to have the right to express preferences for schools they believe are best able to meet their child's needs. Larger schools can offer a wide range of pastoral support, specialist staff and educational opportunities. Regardless of size, all schools are expected to know their pupils, understand their needs and provide appropriate support to help them succeed. Should the proposal proceed, supporting children who may find change more challenging would be a key priority. The consultation is also an opportunity for families to explain why the size and nature of The Clere School is important to them and their child, so that this can be considered as part of the decision-making process.

What has been done to increase student numbers and promote the school in?

The responsibility for promoting the school and increasing pupil numbers rests with the Governing Body and school leadership, who determine the school's recruitment, marketing and community engagement strategies. Hampshire County Council is responsible for ensuring sufficient school places are available and cannot actively promote one school over another. The Local Authority has worked closely with the school over a number of years and has provided significant educational, leadership and financial management support, particularly following the January 2025 Ofsted inspection. Whilst this support has contributed to improvements in a number of areas, it has not reversed the lowering of pupil numbers or the consequent financial pressures facing the school.

Why is a phased closure, allowing current Year 10 pupils to complete their GCSE studies at The Clere School, not the proposed approach?

Hampshire County Council recognises that current Year 10 pupils are at a critical stage in their education and understands the importance of minimising disruption to GCSE studies. The option of allowing existing pupils to complete their education at The Clere School was considered. However, a phased closure over a number of years would not address the school's underlying sustainability challenges relating to pupil numbers, financial sustainability and the long-term viability of the educational offer. It would also extend the period over which those challenges would need to be managed.

Assessments of accommodation requirements at The Hurst School are currently underway. It is possible that the existing Clere site may continue to be used for a temporary period whilst any additional accommodation requirements at The Hurst School are addressed. Should the proposal proceed, Hampshire County Council, The Clere School and any receiving school(s) would work closely together to develop appropriate transition arrangements, with the aim of supporting pupils and minimising disruption to their education, particularly those studying examination courses.

Why is continued investment in The Clere School not considered preferable to investment elsewhere?

The proposal has not been brought forward solely because of the school's financial position. The concerns identified by the Governing Body relate to a combination of factors, including declining pupil numbers, long-term financial sustainability and the

school's ability to continue providing a broad and varied secondary curriculum over time.

It is important to distinguish between capital investment and a school's ongoing revenue position. Capital funding can be used to provide school buildings, accommodation and facilities. However, the majority of a school's day-to-day funding is revenue funding, which is allocated through the National Funding Formula and is largely based on pupil numbers. The school is significantly below its intended capacity and current forecasts indicate that pupil numbers are expected to remain low for the foreseeable future. Governors' concerns therefore relate not only to the school's financial position, but also to its long-term ability to sustain specialist staffing, maintain a broad and balanced curriculum and provide the range of educational opportunities typically expected within a secondary school. These factors, taken together, informed the Governing Body's request that Hampshire County Council undertake consultation on the proposal.

What places are available in West Berkshire for pupils?

Hampshire County Council is not responsible for admissions to schools in West Berkshire and therefore does not hold up-to-date information regarding the number of places available at West Berkshire schools. Place availability can also change throughout the year as in-year applications are processed and pupils move between schools. Families seeking information about admissions and place availability at West Berkshire schools should contact West Berkshire Council directly, who are best placed to provide the most current information.

How has the potential increase in demand on West Berkshire, arising from the loss of places at The Clere, been assessed?

Hampshire works with neighbouring local authorities, including West Berkshire, as part of its forecasting and place planning work. The County Council's forecasting methodology takes account of parental preference and attendance patterns when assessing future demand for school places. The current proposal, with the agreement of The Hurst School, is that pupils on roll at The Clere School at the point of closure would transfer to the roll of The Hurst School, regardless of where they reside. Detailed work is underway to assess accommodation requirements and ensure that sufficient places and appropriate facilities would be available should the proposal ultimately be approved.

Hampshire County Council recognises that neighbouring local authorities may wish to consider the potential implications of the proposal as part of their own place planning responsibilities. Any representations received through the consultation process will be carefully considered before any decision is made.

What is the current capacity of The Hurst School?

The Hurst School has a published capacity of 1,080 places. Detailed work is currently underway to assess the accommodation required to support all pupils on roll at The Clere School should the proposal proceed. As this work is ongoing, Hampshire County Council is not yet in a position to confirm the number of additional places or accommodation that may be required.

Why has August 2027 been considered as an appropriate closure date if replacement accommodation will not be available by that date?

The proposed closure date of 31 August 2027 aligns with the end of an academic year and, should the proposal proceed, would provide the greatest opportunity for a planned transition. The proposed closure date is intended to reduce the uncertainty currently facing pupils, families and staff and reflects the need to provide greater clarity regarding the future of the school. Delaying any potential closure date until all accommodation works are completed would extend that uncertainty further. The priority would be to ensure continuity of education, pastoral support and curriculum delivery whilst any accommodation requirements are addressed, rather than delay decisions regarding the future of the school until accommodation solutions are in place.

Has ceasing to admit a new Year 7 cohort in September 2027 and retaining existing pupils at The Clere until the Hurst accommodation is available been fully costed and considered?

The detailed assessment of accommodation requirements at The Hurst School remains ongoing and no final accommodation solution has been agreed. It would therefore be premature to comment on the costs or deliverability of alternative implementation approaches, which would need to be considered alongside a range of educational, operational and accommodation factors.

How has the risk of early pupil departures and staff turnover resulting from the proposed closure has been assessed?

The potential for increased pupil movement and staff turnover has been recognised as part of the wider considerations relating to the future of the school. Hampshire County Council and the Governing Body are aware that uncertainty can affect both pupil and staff retention. The current consultation seeks to provide greater clarity regarding the school's future and avoid a prolonged period of uncertainty for pupils, families and staff. Hampshire County Council will continue to work closely with school leaders to support pupils and staff throughout the consultation process.

Have the educational improvements since the January 2025 Ofsted inspection been considered when assessing the school's current viability?

The educational improvements made since the January 2025 Ofsted inspection have been recognised and taken into account when assessing the school's future. Hampshire County Council acknowledges the significant work undertaken by school leaders, staff, governors and partner organisations to improve educational outcomes and attendance. However, the concerns that led to the request for consultation relate not only to educational performance, but also to low pupil numbers, financial sustainability and the school's long-term viability. Whilst progress has been made, these wider challenges remain and have therefore formed a key part of the assessment.

What transitional funding arrangements have been considered as an alternative to immediate closure?

Transitional funding arrangements may provide short-term support, however, they would not address the underlying challenges relating to low pupil numbers, financial sustainability and the long-term viability of the educational offer.

Where will my child be educated in September 2027?

Should the proposal proceed, Hampshire County Council's current proposal, with the agreement of The Hurst School, is that all pupils on roll at The Clere School at the point of closure would transfer to the roll of The Hurst School. Detailed work is currently underway to assess accommodation requirements and determine the most appropriate arrangements for those pupils. As set out in the consultation materials, it is possible that pupils may continue to be educated on the existing Clere site for a temporary period whilst sufficient accommodation is made available at The Hurst School.

How has Hampshire Council taken account of the likelihood that some parents will seek alternative school places before September 2027 due to uncertainty about future availability?

Hampshire County Council fully understands that parents will want certainty regarding their child's education and future school arrangements. Parents remain free to apply for places at alternative schools at any time through the normal admissions process should they wish to do so. However, should the proposal proceed, Hampshire County Council's responsibility would be to ensure suitable educational provision is available for all pupils on roll at The Clere School at the point of closure. The current proposal is that those pupils would move to the roll of The Hurst School, with detailed work underway to ensure sufficient places and appropriate accommodation are available.

Whilst Hampshire County Council recognises that some families may choose to make earlier decisions regarding their child's education, no final decision has been made regarding the proposal, and The Clere School remains open to pupils as normal.

How has Hampshire assessed the impact of continued falling roll as a consequence of the uncertainty created by the closure proposal?

Hampshire County Council recognises that uncertainty regarding a school's future can influence parental decisions. However, it is not possible to predict with certainty how individual families may respond to the current consultation process or whether pupils may choose to move schools prior to any decision being made. No decision has been made regarding the proposal and The Clere School remains open to pupils as normal. Should the proposal proceed, Hampshire County Council's responsibility would be to ensure suitable educational provision is available for all pupils on roll at The Clere School at the point of closure.

What evidence can Hampshire provide that demonstrates that the practical consequences of closing The Clere School in August 2027 have been fully worked through before a decision is made?

Hampshire County Council recognises the importance of understanding the practical implications of the proposal. A range of factors, including school place sufficiency, admissions, transport and accommodation requirements have been considered and continue to be explored as part of the consultation process. No final decision has been made. The purpose of this consultation stage is to ensure both the proposal and associated implications are fully understood and considered before any decision is reached.

If some pupils have to stay on The Clere School site beyond August 2027, what steps will be taken to ensure they continue to receive specialist teaching and a high standard of education until they relocate to The Hurst School site? What specific measures will be put in place to ensure continuity of subject-specialist teaching rather than relying on supply or cover teachers?

Even if pupils remain on The Clere site, they will become members of The Hurst School community and will benefit from its leadership, oversight and wider support. The headteacher and governing body of The Hurst School will work closely with the local authority (LA) to seek to ensure that appropriately skilled and experienced staff are deployed to support all pupils, building on the provision currently in place. While individual staff will, of course, retain the right to make their own decisions about their employment, The Hurst School has a strong reputation for effective leadership and a skilled workforce. The LA will work closely with both schools to retain expertise wherever possible, support a smooth transition and build on the strengths of the existing staff teams, with the needs and continuity of support for pupils at the centre of these arrangements.

If skilled staff leave before the school closes, the LA will work with the headteacher in an endeavour to secure staff support from other local schools to provide teaching support, or engage teaching support from within the LA's school improvement team.

Updated: 30/09/2026

Why was closure consultation considered necessary instead of pursuing a recovery plan?

The Governing Body considered options to address the challenges facing the school before requesting that Hampshire County Council undertake consultation on a closure proposal. This included educational improvement activity, financial recovery measures, leadership support, support from The Hurst School and the academy sponsorship process led by the Department for Education.

Whilst improvements have been made in a number of areas, the Governing Body concluded that there was not a realistic or sustainable recovery plan capable of addressing the school's underlying challenges. These concerns related not only to the school's financial position, but also to declining pupil numbers, the long-term sustainability of the educational offer and the school's ability to continue providing a broad and varied secondary curriculum.

The proposal to consult on closure was therefore brought forward following consideration of the available evidence, including pupil number trends, projected future demand, the school's financial position and the long-term sustainability of the educational offer. Having considered these factors, the Governing Body concluded that the school was no longer educationally and financially sustainable in the long term and requested that Hampshire County Council undertake consultation.

Has the potential reduction in pupil numbers caused by the closure announcement itself been factored into future projections?

Hampshire County Council recognises that uncertainty regarding a school's future can influence parental decisions. However, it is not possible to predict with certainty

how individual families may respond to the consultation process or whether pupils may choose to move schools prior to any decision being made.

It is important to note that pupil forecasts prepared prior to the consultation already indicated that pupil numbers were expected to remain significantly below the school's capacity for the foreseeable future. The concerns that led to the proposal were therefore based on established pupil number trends and projected future demand, rather than any potential impact arising from the consultation itself.

What opportunities for additional income generation have been explored?

Responsibility for the day-to-day management of school finances rests with the Governing Body and school leadership team. The school has implemented measures over a number of years to manage its financial position and has received support from Hampshire County Council's finance and education services. The Governing Body ultimately concluded that the challenges facing the school extended beyond financial management and were fundamentally linked to declining pupil numbers and long-term sustainability.

Why has the school not been given sufficient opportunity to implement a planned strategy for promoting The Clere to local primary schools?

Responsibility for promoting the school and increasing pupil numbers rests with the Governing Body and school leadership team, who determine the school's recruitment, marketing and community engagement strategies.

Hampshire County Council has supported the school over a number of years. However, the County Council cannot promote one school over another. The current consultation follows a formal request from the Governing Body, who concluded that the combination of declining pupil numbers, financial sustainability challenges and concerns regarding the school's long-term viability meant that consultation on closure should be considered. Hampshire County Council is undertaking that consultation in response to the Governing Body's request and to ensure that all relevant information, views and alternative suggestions are considered before any decision is made.

What consideration has been given to vulnerable pupils and those with SEND who rely on established relationships and pastoral support?

Hampshire County Council recognises that some pupils may find change more challenging than others and that established relationships, routines and support arrangements can be particularly important for vulnerable pupils and those with SEND. Should the proposal proceed, schools would work closely with pupils, families and relevant professionals to identify concerns and develop appropriate transition arrangements. Information regarding individual needs, successful support strategies and existing support arrangements would be shared to help support continuity wherever possible.

How has the improvement and increased leadership stability under new school leadership been taken into account?

The improvements made since the January 2025 Ofsted inspection have been recognised and taken into account when assessing the school's future. Hampshire County Council acknowledges the significant work undertaken by school leaders,

governors, staff and partner organisations to improve educational outcomes and attendance. However, the proposal relates not only to educational performance, but also to declining pupil numbers, financial sustainability and long-term viability.

What alternatives to closure have been considered, and why have they been rejected?

A range of alternatives have been considered over time, including academy conversion, federation, collaboration with neighbouring schools, financial recovery measures and a reduction in the school's Published Admission Number.

Following the January 2025 Ofsted inspection, the Department for Education issued an Academy Order for the school and subsequently undertook the process of seeking an academy sponsor. However, no sponsor was secured, and academy conversion did not progress. Whilst the Academy Order remains in place, Hampshire County Council is unable to pursue alternative structural arrangements for the school without the agreement of the Department for Education.

Whilst some of these options may have addressed governance, leadership or organisational matters, they would not have addressed the underlying challenge of declining pupil numbers and the impact this has on the school's long-term educational and financial sustainability.

Could the proposal be changed, reconsidered or withdrawn following consultation?

Yes. No decision has been made regarding the proposal. The purpose of the consultation is to ensure that all relevant evidence, views and any credible alternative proposals are considered before any decision is reached.

There is no single measure or threshold that would determine the outcome. Any future decision would need to consider the overall sustainability of the school, including pupil demand, educational provision, financial viability and organisational resilience. Decision-makers will consider whether there is a realistic, deliverable and sustainable long-term solution capable of addressing the challenges that have led to the proposal.