

Proposal to close Broad Oak Community Primary School

Questions and Answers

Consultation process

Q. Is this really a consultation process or is it a done deal?

Is the consultation process open, fair and non-presumptive? Who is responsible for making sure that any consultation process regarding the school you want to close will be fair and credible – how will we know the process is fair?

A. This is a genuine consultation and we want to hear your views. No decision has been made yet. All responses received during the consultation process will be considered before a decision is made on whether to proceed with the statutory process to close the school. The consultation provides the opportunity to make sure nothing has been missed and see if there is an alternative option that could be considered that places the school in a secure, viable position.

The local authority has a duty to follow a prescribed process when consulting on the closure of a school. Under Section 15 of the Education and Inspections Act (EIA) 2006 a local authority can propose the closure of all categories of maintained school. In doing so a local authority must follow a statutory process set out in the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013 before making a decision on the closure of a maintained school. There are five stages to the statutory process which must be followed:

- Consultation
The publication of the consultation document on 5 July 2019 marks a period of consultation during which the views of interested parties are being sought and which will be considered by the local authority. The consultation period lasts until 11 October 2019.
- Publication
Dependent upon the outcome of the consultation, the local authority will decide whether or not to publish statutory notices regarding the proposed closure.
- Representation
The representation period starts on the date of publication of the statutory notice and must last for a period of four weeks. During this period any person or organisation can submit comments on the proposal to the local authority which would be taken into account before a final decision is taken.
- Decision
Within two months of the end of the representation period the local authority must make a decision on the proposal.
- Implementation
If the proposal is approved, Broad Oak Community Primary School (Broad Oak) would close on 31 August 2020.

The local authority acknowledges that there is a presumption against the closure of rural schools. This does not mean that a rural school will never close, but the case for closure should be strong and in the best interests of educational provision in the area. There are a number of factors set out in the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013 that must be taken into account when proposing to close a rural primary school; the local authority has had regard to these and will continue to take them into account during the consultation process.

As set out above, the local authority will consult with interested parties in accordance with Section 16(1) of the EIA 2006. All responses received during the consultation period will be shared with Cabinet colleagues who will consider the outcome of the consultation and decide whether to proceed with the statutory process to close Broad Oak.

Q. Who is the East Sussex County Council Cabinet and will they make the closure decision?

A. The East Sussex County Council (ESCC) constitution allows for either the Cabinet or the Lead Member to make the decision; the Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability is Councillor Bob Standley. Cabinet is made up of the Leader of the Council and seven Lead Members, one for each service. For more information on ESCC Councillors and committee membership visit ESCC [‘Your Council’](#).

Q. What happens between the December and March dates?

A. If a decision is taken in December to proceed with the statutory process to close the school, a statutory notice would be published in early January 2020. This would trigger a four week representation period when interested parties can object to or comment on the proposal. At the end of the representation period the local authority has two months to make a final decision on whether or not to close the school.

Q. Why didn’t you start the process earlier with an informal consultation?

A. This is in effect an informal consultation. Should a decision be made to publish statutory notices the subsequent representation period would be considered a formal consultation. We engaged with schools earlier in the year through the area review process. If we had consulted with interested parties at that stage it would have had the same effect as the present consultation.

Q. Why was the timing of the consultation changed to run over the school holidays?

A. The consultation period was originally intended to run from 5 July to 27 September 2019. We have extended the consultation period by a further two weeks to reflect the school holiday. This provides interested parties with eight weeks of term time rather than the minimum recommended six weeks to engage in the process and for alternatives to be considered.

Q. Will you give the pupils a chance to have their say about the consultation?

How will you ensure that an equal voice is given to those SEN and autistic children?

A. We will arrange to come and speak to pupils at the school in September to ensure they have a voice. We will be mindful of any additional needs the pupils may have, particularly in relation to their mental health and wellbeing.

Finance and budgets

Q. What is the potential impact of the government’s recent funding announcement for schools?

A: The government recently announced that in 2020/21 there would be 4% increase in a number of school funding rates (compared to 2019/20) that form part of a school’s budget share. While we await more information from the DfE on the detail, an initial analysis by the Council of the potential impact on Broad Oak Community Primary School suggests that the school could see an increase in its budget share of approximately £4,000 in 2020/21. These estimates have been based on the current funded pupil numbers and do not take into account any fluctuation in these numbers. Therefore, these estimates will be subject to change when the 2020/21 budgets are calculated.

Q. Is this proposal merely about saving money, does closing the school save money for the Council?

If Council cuts are not involved then why close the school?

A. The amount the local authority receives for schools funding is calculated by applying the Government's National Funding Formula (NFF) to each school in the county. Funding comes from the DfE via the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Schools funding is not linked to the Council's revenue budget and the proposals are not driven by the Council making financial savings. We have been working closely with Broad Oak to try to address its budget challenges and have provided the school with additional funding in recent years.

Budget deficits are expected to be recouped from future year's school budgets. It is difficult to see how the predicted budget deficit at Broad Oak would be recouped as there is no scope for the school to cover its current costs and operate within its means. If the school does not address its predicted budget deficit, the money could only be found from the overall resources allocated to schools, which would reduce the budgets of other schools.

The staffing budget in 2021/22 far exceeds the total budget share and is simply not sustainable. The budget is generated by the number of pupils on roll; the challenge for the school is about low pupil numbers. Without a significant upturn in pupil numbers it is difficult to see how the position can be reversed.

Q. How many schools will be in deficit in 2019/20?

A. Two. One of these schools has submitted a recovery plan showing that the school will recover the deficit it is forecasting in 2019/20 and will have a balanced budget in future years. The other is Fletching CE Primary School which is unable to demonstrate recovery and is also subject to a closure consultation.

Q. Why have you encouraged the school to recruit a School Business Manager one year and then later encouraged the School Business Manager to leave?

A. Staffing decisions are made by the headteacher and governing board; whilst the local authority might provide advice and insight into what has worked in other schools and federations, the business plan and suitability of any reorganisation must be built on these decisions. Every school is different and decisions about the exact staffing requirements can only be made and managed by the headteacher and governing board. Sharing staff across schools is a major benefit for many federations and the School Business Manager role works very well as a shared role but has to work financially in the context of the school's other staff requirements. When funding levels drop significantly, as in the case of Broad Oak, all roles above the statutory minimum need to be reviewed. The school has recently undertaken such a review and identified savings that can be made from September 2019; these savings have already been taken account of in the budget plans for 2020-21 and 2021-22.

Q. Why don't you wait until the school actually goes into deficit?

A. Schools are required to be able to demonstrate financial sustainability. A deficit in one year reduces the amount of money available to the school in future years which increases the pressure on managing an already challenging budget position. In East Sussex we work with schools where future risks are identified to ensure actions are taken to prevent deficits and secure sustainability. The three year planning process allows future risks to be identified in advance. It is usual that changes are identified and deficits avoided or recovered. We have been going through this process with Broad Oak for some time. It has not been possible to identify any further actions that could be taken to avoid or recover the forecast deficits. Where this deficit cannot be recovered in future years this pressure must be met from within the funding allocated to all East Sussex schools, this would reduce the money available to other schools. It is therefore in the interest of all schools that unrecoverable deficits are avoided or minimised wherever possible.

Education provision including for SEN pupils

Q. What type of education will my child receive in a school that is closing?

A. The school would remain open until the proposed closure date and will continue to offer education and support to the pupils and their families in their care. The local authority would work with the school to support the transition of pupils to their new school. We recognise that this is a difficult and upsetting time for pupils and parents/carers.

Q. The number of SEN children at Broad Oak is high and other schools cannot compare in terms of facilities provided. What can you tell parents who believe this is a special school which deserves every support it can get?

Why do your figures not show the profiles of children at Broad Oak with complex needs? Why have you not looked at attainment data? Why have you not accounted for the nine SEN children who make up some 10% of the school's population and previous SEN children who have successfully made the transition to secondary education through the efforts of this school? Why have you not considered the devastating effect on the families of these SEN children who have had nothing but praise for the achievements of this school? Why have you not taken into account the cost of putting in place revised two-year plans for these SEN children?

A. We do not under-estimate the impact Broad Oak has on its pupils with SEN. However, Broad Oak is a mainstream school and all mainstream schools are required to meet the individual needs of all their pupils, including those with SEN. We recognise that the school has an above average number of pupils with SEN and this will be considered as part of the consultation.

Schools want all pupils to thrive and have access to a range of support to help with their needs. This would be the case for pupils moving from Broad Oak. Resource is provided within a school's budget for additional needs. The needs are identified in relation to what is required in addition or what adjustments need to be made for the pupil to make good progress. Where pupils have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) the additional funding would follow the pupil to their next school.

Q. Broad Oak has a specialist care suite for SEN and children with other disabilities, there is no other school in the area with a similar facility and the one school that does will not accept a child without an EHCP which the Council has made virtually impossible to obtain; what will you do?

A. Four schools in the local area have specialist care suites. The local authority will ensure that suitable facilities are available to support the pupils that require access to special facilities. Where schools have vacant spaces they cannot reject pupils with additional needs but no EHCP.

Consultation meeting presentation

Q. The picture you have presented is very dark and demoralising; why does it not show what the school has achieved and in particular for its disadvantaged children?

You paint a negative picture of Broad Oak, the challenges it faced were under the previous management, and the new management team needs to be shown more faith.

Your presentation is totally negative with no positive points whatsoever which leads this audience to believe that the Council, who own the school land, intends to sell it off to add income to their budget.

A. The data we shared provides the facts and background to why we are consulting. The data shows a very challenging picture for the school; it would have been wrong of us not to share the information with you. The decision to go to consultation was arrived at after working closely with the governing board to find a solution to the significant budget challenges the school faces; none of us have been able to see a viable solution. There is no consideration of land ownership or the future of the site when considering the matter of the school's viability.

Q. Your presentation showed lots of facts and figures, why haven't you shown the numbers of children who have transferred in to this school because parents have discovered that it provides a good, nurturing environment for their children?

A. It is important that interested parties are aware of the facts and figures behind the decision to consult on closure. We acknowledge that pupil numbers can fluctuate throughout an academic year as pupils leave or join the school. It is important to use data from an official data source taken on the same day for every school; using the official school census data released by the Department for Education (DfE) three times a year, we can see there was a net increase of only one pupil (from 82 to 83) at the school during the course of the 2018/19 academic year.

School outcomes and support provided to schools

Q. Have senior officers/Councillors visited the school?

A. Clear objective criteria have been used to assess all schools in the review in order to draw up the recommendations for closure, as listed below. As you would expect, decisions are not made on the basis of officer and Councillor visits.

- Quality of provision and outcomes for pupils
- School leadership
- Federations and collaborations
- Financial viability
- Pupil numbers and the level of surplus places
- Location of schools in relation to local pupil numbers
- Parental preference for schools
- Premises

Data sources and housing

Q. Where do you get your population forecast statistics from? There are inconsistencies in your population forecasts for this area.

A. Short term pupil forecasts are based on actual GP registration data and Office for National Statistics (ONS) live birth data relating to children already born. The local authority's longer term pupil forecasts are derived from its population forecasting model (Pop Group Model). Each spring the five local planning authorities provide the local authority with updated housing projections and trajectories for each parish or ward in their District / Borough. This data is used to update the dwelling led population projections which appear on East Sussex in Figures (ESiF) and the Pop Group Model which generates these projections is used to derive local estimates of future births in the absence of GP registration and live birth data. This data is used to forecast longer term pupil numbers.

Q. What does pupil movement mean?

A. This is the movement of pupils between schools and community areas (mobility).

Q. You have set out the average birth rate, but have you looked at mobility which would increase numbers, or the possibility that new families will move into the area (have you considered the death rate?). There are other schools with lower results than Broad Oak. Yes, there was a decline in pupil numbers after two RI Ofsted inspections, but there has been a change in Head of School and the school is steadily improving. If allowed, then pupil numbers could build up over time.

A. Pupil numbers at Broad Oak have been falling since 2014/15. In the last two intake years only seven reception age children have accepted a place at the school (two in 2018/19 and five in 2019/20). This reflects a change in mobility from outside the area, with fewer parents from other areas stating a first preference for the school. Our pupil forecasts allow for inward and outward migration and there is no evidence that pupil numbers will increase to a level where the school is viable.

Q. The birth rate figures you predict do not match up and you are not taking into account housing developments. Is there planning permission for houses to be built in Broad Oak?

Wealden District Council predicts an 18% increase in housing and the building contractor has since predictably changed the mix to more four and five-bedroom houses; have you taken this into account alongside the traffic chaos in Heathfield during rush hour, the associated carbon cost and the fact that a school, whose numbers you want to increase, has already posted details of its parking crisis?

East Sussex Children's Services have said that the population of the Heathfield area will not increase significantly for 10 years, while ESCC Open Data Policy shows an estimated population increase of 18.6% from 2017-2032, rising every year.

A. Wealden District Council's (WDC) most recent housing update was provided in spring 2019 and showed that just short of 600 homes are planned in Heathfield and Waldron Parish during the Wealden Local Plan period between 2018/19 and 2027/28. Within this total the Wealden Local Plan set a windfall allowance of 50 dwellings for the village of Broad Oak over the same period.

Our published pupil yields from new housing are provided in the table below.

Pupil yield per new dwelling by property type and size	Houses 2 bed+	Flats 2 bed+	Houses / flats 1 bed
Primary school	0.25	0.0375	0.00

Taking these pupil yields into account and assuming all new homes are houses with two bedrooms or more, in Heathfield and Waldron Parish as a whole we estimate 150 additional primary age children would be generated from new homes over a 10 year period. The housing specifically in the Broad Oak community area would, over the same period, generate an estimated 12 to 13 additional children. The demand for places will therefore be in Heathfield rather than in Broad Oak. Our pupil forecasts take account of these housing figures and the likely demand for school places they will generate.

Q. You gave an incorrect number of pupils attending Broad Oak School at the Lead Member meeting on 24 June – we have 84 children on the role, and you advised Cllr Standley that it was 81 and this is the number in your consultation plan?

A. Data used to inform the report to the Lead Member was taken from the January 2019 School Census which showed there were 81 pupils on roll at Broad Oak. The census, which happens three times each academic year, is a statistical publication. We acknowledge that there are 84 pupils currently on roll at the school but, as pupil numbers fluctuate throughout an academic year; we use data from an official data source taken on the same day for every school to ensure consistency.

Q. Broad Oak is a well-respected school in this area producing children who confidently move on to secondary school; Horam is seeing a further 700 homes being built which is placing pressure on Maynards Green whilst many schools in this area have low numbers so why base the decision on numbers?

A. The local authority must ensure there is sufficient provision locally to meet the need for places. Broad Oak is over three miles from Horam. If Horam children could only access Broad Oak because there were insufficient places locally, the local authority would have to fund home to school transport for those children.

School places

Q. Are places available in other schools? / You say there are spare places in local schools but I have contacted local schools and they have said they are full?

Broad Oak has a good, positive environment as evidenced by the number of e-mails received from parents who cannot face the change and have already established that there are not enough places in other schools, reporting that in some schools there are already 34 in a class. Additionally, several Heathfield based parents have moved their children to Broad Oak because of the overcrowding.

A. There are currently surplus places in most schools in the local area, although Maynards Green Community Primary School and Parkside Community Primary School are currently full in every year group.

Pupil numbers fluctuate throughout an academic year as pupils join and leave schools. For this reason we recommend you contact the admissions team to check which schools have spare places. The team can be contacted on 0300 330 9472.

Q. Does Cross in Hand School have, within its existing framework, capacity for additional pupil admissions? Have you considered opening additional classrooms and increasing the PAN?

A. Cross-in-Hand CE Primary School is a two form entry primary school with a published admission number (PAN) of 60 in each year group, and is therefore expected to accommodate 60 pupils in each year group. The school currently has capacity in every year group.

When a school is undersubscribed the leadership often reorganises classes to ensure they make the best use of their limited resources, however the number of pupils the school is expected to accommodate remains the same.

There are sufficient places within the local area without the need for any schools to go over its PAN and open additional classes.

Q. Two separate families each with three children viewed the school recently and even though the school is improving, announcing the consultation process has effectively stopped them coming to the school. How many second choices did Broad Oak receive?

Will parents take the risk now knowing of the possible closure?

If you are putting second and third preference children into other schools then why not into Broad Oak?

A. It is encouraging that families wish to be shown round the school. Unfortunately that does not necessarily mean they will join the school. Our experience tells us that parents will look round a number of schools before making a decision about which one to apply for.

Broad Oak had five first preferences, four second preferences and a third preference for September 2019. Five first preferences were allocated a place. The school received no second or third preferences.

Each school has a set of admissions criteria to rank children in the order they will be offered places if a school attracts more applications than places. As all preferences have to be treated equally, this could mean that some places are allocated to second and third preference applicants, whilst first preferences are refused because they have a lower priority in the criteria.

The relevant criteria are applied individually to each preference. If a child meets the criteria for a place at more than one of the schools named on an application, their highest ranked school will be offered.

If a child meets the criteria for a place at only one of their preferred schools then that school will be allocated. If none of the schools named on the application can be offered, a place will be allocated at the nearest school to the child's home with a place available. Only one school place per child is offered on the allocation day.

Q. What have you done to bring in more pupils to Broad Oak?

A. The school is promoted along with all schools in the admissions booklet. It is for individual schools to promote themselves locally.

Q. The surplus places do not count when looked at by parents. There is a school in the area which has a PAN of 60 but only has 34 first preferences because it is unpopular. The PAN system is antiquated – why can't it be changed?

A. PANs reflect a school's size based on its accommodation and floor space. Reducing PANs in Heathfield schools would remove local places for local children and make for inefficient use of space. If Heathfield children could only access Broad Oak because there were insufficient places locally, the local authority would have to fund home to school transport for those children. This is not a sustainable strategy for the area.

Q. If there are so many places available, why are you building a new primary school at Hellingly?

A. Developers would expect provision to be made in the area local to their development, this helps to promote their new homes. The local authority must ensure there is sufficient provision locally to meet demand for places. Broad Oak is over eight miles from the Park Road development which includes the new school. If Hailsham children could only access Broad Oak because there were insufficient places locally, the local authority would have to fund home to school transport for those children.

Other schools

Q. Why aren't you closing Five Ashes?

A. The school's budget is balanced and there are no surplus places. Plans are in place for the school to form part of a four school federation from September 2019 that presents further opportunities for the school's viability.

Q. Why aren't you closing other small schools? / Why aren't you taking action to close schools in the other review areas? What are the 'other actions that have been identified to reduce capacity and address viability'?

A. Clear objective criteria has been used to inform decisions (as listed below), the same criteria has been used to assess the situation of all schools.

- Quality of provision and outcomes for pupils
- School leadership
- Federations and collaborations
- Financial viability
- Pupil numbers and the level of surplus places
- Location of schools in relation to local pupil numbers
- Parental choice for schools
- Premises

Q. How many schools proposed for closure have come up with acceptable solutions? What were the reasons for the last school closing, was it after consultation or other reason?

A. In the last five years only two schools have been proposed for closure and neither could formulate a plan to avoid it, despite one school being given extra time to find an alternative solution.

The Rodmell CE Primary School governing board was invited to come forward with alternative solutions to closure but could not; the local authority tried to broker a partnership but there was no interest from other schools. The school looked into partnership again after consultation but there was still no interest and, despite a passionate bid to keep the school open, no viable alternative plan to closure could be found.

Q. Broad Oak is one of the very few community schools in the county; by closing it you are forcing parents to look at faith schools – isn't this removing their freedom of choice?

A. There are 45 community primary schools in East Sussex, three of which are local to Broad Oak.

Federation

Q. Broad Oak is in a federation; couldn't more schools join to ease the situation?

Why have you said that closing Broad Oak means that the federation will be stronger and more viable with two schools than it currently is with three?

If you remove Broad Oak from the three-school federation what will happen to the other two? And what percentage of East Sussex schools will also be in deficit in two- and three-years' time?

A. The Punnetts Town Community Primary School and Dallington CE Primary School budget plans indicate that these schools are more financially viable in their own right. The two schools would need to absorb costs that are currently shared with Broad Oak; these costs assume currently planned structures. With some further adjustments this impact could be reduced but it is clear overall that further options would need to be pursued to address long term viability of the federation. However, even with no further action, the potential deficit that the two-school federation would be facing by year three would be significantly lower (in the region of £70k) than the £223k currently forecast across the federation. This position will give the federation more opportunity to explore further collaboration options to help secure a viable future, but not if those schools cost significantly more to run than the income they can generate from pupil intake which is the

challenge Broad Oak faces. Without Broad Oak the federation is in a stronger position to further expand with other schools that are viable in their own right.

15% of schools are forecasting a deficit in year two of their plans and 51% in year three. It is a common pattern to see a declining picture in a three year planning period. The size of deficit and scope for addressing it will inform the actual assessment of risk for individual schools. Plans submitted can vary greatly in approach; some will factor in all potential decisions that could be made to ensure a balanced budget, to demonstrate how resources can be managed. Some plans will forecast forward with current structures with no significant changes, this will highlight issues that need to be addressed. Often a plan with a year two or year three deficit is a catalyst to investigate options to ensure the deficit is avoided.

Broad Oak has been in this position for a number of years foreseeing a budget deficit. Significant changes have been made and further potential savings are now built into plans, however the school is still unable to submit a balanced plan and unable to identify any further savings. This highlights the predicted deficit as being a high risk.

Options to closure

Q. What difference could be made at this stage that would keep the school open?

A. All options would be very welcome and considered carefully. Any potential solution must reduce the predicted budget deficit of approximately £74,000 in 2020/21 and £203,000 in 2021/22 and secure the school's financial viability. If we have missed something in our analysis which might change the situation please let us know.

Q. Have you done a wider impact assessment which takes account of proposals from the governing board and the effects on the staff and children rather than just the finances?

A. The local authority has spent a lot of time working with the governing board looking at budgets, plans and staff restructuring to keep within budget. The governing board was asked to come up with other plans that would achieve this, but could not submit a plan which avoids deficits in 202/21 and 2021/22.

Impact on the community

Q. What about the impact of the school closing on the community?

Apart from the school, the village has just one shop and a village hall with the pre-school, have you considered the wider picture where, after the school closes the pre-school will close leading to the village hall closing and the death of the community?

A. A full Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the consultation and decision making process to identify the equality implications of this proposal and any appropriate mitigation.

Broad Oak Pre-school has confirmed that for September 2019, children leaving the pre-school are feeding into nine primary schools; only two are going to Broad Oak. In the previous 5/6 years very few children from Broad Oak have attended their local pre-school; in order to be viable the pre-school has marketed its offer to a much wider area to attract families.

Admissions and home to school transport

Q. The local authority has a duty of care – why are you denying parents their choice?

A. Parents do not have the right to choose a school for their child; they have the right to state a preference for the school they would like their child to attend.

Broad Oak is no longer the school of preference for parents. In the last two intake years only seven reception age children have accepted a place at the school (two in 2018/19 and five in 2019/20). Based on these numbers the school is not sustainable.

Q. If you use a proper distance calculating tool then it shows an extra 20,000 miles of journeys per year, did you simply measure in straight lines? What guarantee will there be for reliable/free transport to other schools?

A. Free home to school transport would only be provided for eligible pupils who meet the criteria set out in the link below. From our initial analysis we believe the majority of pupils on roll at Broad Oak would have a shorter distance to travel to their nearest alternative school and would therefore not be eligible. At this stage the data tells us that fewer than ten pupils might qualify for home to school transport. The impact of any free home to school transport on the local authority's transport budget is expected to be minimal as there is already transport provision in place to a number of alternative schools. The criteria can be found on the East Sussex website at: <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/educationandlearning/schools/transport/>

In summary, we will provide free transport between home and school if your child is eight years of age or over and lives more than three miles (4,828 metres) from the designated* school, or two miles (3,218 metres) if your child is under eight years of age. Distances are measured by the shortest available walking route using our Geographical Information System (GIS).

* The designated school is the school suitable to your child which serves your area, or if there is more than one school, the nearest suitable school to your home where a place is available.

For information on whether your child/ren would qualify for home to school transport please contact the admissions team on 0300 330 9472.

The effect of the proposal on travel and accessibility will be considered as part of the statutory consultation process.

If the route to the new school is deemed unsafe then your child would automatically qualify for help with transport and the likelihood is that there is already a vehicle running to the school which picks up other passengers. This has been factored in to the initial analysis detailed in the body of the consultation.

The Diocese of Chichester

Q. Why has the Diocese been involved and is quoted in the Broad Oak Community Primary School proposals?

A. The Diocese of Chichester, as a key partner in education provision in East Sussex, has been fully involved in the reviews of rural primary school provision. Of the 68 rural primary schools in East Sussex 49 are Church of England schools. The Woodland Federation includes a Church school, Dallington CE Primary School, and it is therefore appropriate for the Diocese to be involved in any proposals which could impact on the federation. The Diocese is not a formal decision maker in this proposal.

Future of the school site

Q. Are you going to build houses on the school site?

A. If the school closes, the future use of the site would be a decision for the local authority as landowner. No consideration has been given at this stage to what might happen to the site should the school close.

Q. Work by BT for 'fibre cabling through four existing underground structures for a new development site' is for a housing development on the school site, despite the Council saying no decision has been made.

A. The local authority does not have full details of the work being carried out by BT, but can confirm that it is completely unrelated to the consultation on the proposed closure of Broad Oak. No decision has been made on the future of the school and we have not declared the site surplus to requirements.