

Save Colvestone Primary School



Final consultation
submission

3 November 2023

Should you have any
queries, please email:
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Written and
prepared by
Colvestone
parents and
carers

The following report refers to the following documents in these abbreviated forms:

Statutory Guidance for opening and closing maintained schools (Central Government, published January 2023) – referred to here as ‘Statutory Guidance’

Education Sufficiency and Estate Strategy 2021-2031 (Hackney Council, adopted February 2022) – referred to as ‘Estate Strategy’

“Education Sufficiency and Estate Strategy – falling rolls” Briefing Report (Hackney Education / Deputy Mayor Bramble, May 2023) – referred to as the ‘Briefing Report’

“Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission – Response to Informal Consultation” (Cllr Conway and Cllr Gordon authors, July 2023) – referred to as ‘CYP Scrutiny Report’

“Education Sufficiency and Estate Strategy – falling rolls” Briefing Report (Hackney Education / Deputy Mayor Bramble, September 2023) – referred to as the ‘Briefing Report – Informal Consultation’

“Statutory Notice: Proposal to discontinue Colvestone Primary School and amalgamate the student body with Princess May Primary School and accompanying letter to parents”, published 6th October (author: David Court, Interim Assistant Director School Estates Strategy) – referred to as ‘Statutory Notice’

Introduction

This document challenges the proposals and their underlying claims on multiple grounds (and identifying the risks should the Council continue with its proposals) and responds to current data not made available either to the public or elected decision makers through the consultation process. Whilst it incorporates evidence presented for the 'pre-informal' and 'informal' stages of the consultation, it augments this evidence with new research to consolidate challenges and rebuttals to claims made by Hackney Education in the *Briefing Report – Informal Consultation* and the *Statutory Notice*. Crucially this submission includes up-to-date analysis of place data in the borough that significantly challenges the underlying rationale of the proposals and the capacity of the proposals to achieve their stated aims. It also includes, for example, an assessment of the child yield from the Dalston Plan developments (and the relevant timeframes) that are of specific relevance to Colvestone as the nearest primary school provision to all sites – data that Hackney Council have consistently refused to produce or to address its specific impacts on potential place demand at Colvestone in the short, mid- and long-term (as required by Statutory Guidance).

Throughout this process it has been extremely difficult to get underlying data for claims made in the public consultation documents produced by Hackney Education for this consultation, often despite repeated requests (written, in public meetings, at Cabinet meetings, at the CYP Scrutiny Commission, etc.). Where these have not been forthcoming, Council and GLA tools and datasets have been used to produce this data such that it can be scrutinised – forming the basis for many of the rebuttals and challenges to Hackney Education claims in this document. This new research represents vital data that should have been made publicly available, such that the consultation of stakeholders and elected officials could have been conducted in an informed way. It is our conclusion that the way that the consultation has been framed, the limited information available and the failure to address the specific contexts, locality and circumstances of each school in frame as a separate proposal have made informed consultation and scrutiny of each of the proposals impossible.

We agree that Hackney Council has to address the issue of falling rolls, but we insist that this should be done in an informed, holistic and consultative fashion. Parental choice will be a key determinant in the success or failure of any proposed re-organisation of education in the borough; attempting to understand what families will do if faced with a number of possible proposals is vital in assessing which combination of *potential* proposals will achieve the desired aims. Throughout this consultation, no alternatives have been offered or consulted on, even when directly requested: the consultation has been presented from the outset as a set of fixed proposals (apparently bound to one-another) with only a limited number of alternative proposals already discounted at the outset without evidence of research to be conducted to assess viability (or to sufficiently justify their dismissal). This, and the timings of each stage of the consultation process, appear designed to be as damaging as possible to the schools in frame (a claim supported by the *Briefing Report – Informal Consultation*, p.32 – 'Impact of the proposals on current enrolment' – though of course these figures fail to account for the chilling effect of the public consultation on transfers and enrolments into the schools in scope).

It should not be understated how fundamental a change in Hackney's education provision it is that these proposals represent. Councillor Bramble, statutory Deputy Mayor, Cabinet Member for Education, Young People and Children's Social Care in whose name these proposals are made, stated at Cabinet that none of her team had working experience of closing a single school: the proposed closure of four local authority schools at the same time in Hackney is, as far as we can make out, unprecedented in the borough. It constitutes the elimination of over 10% of local authority primary schools in the borough in one decision, whilst at the same time denying the possibility of learning from the consequences of successive, individual closures (not least in understanding choices that families make). This slashing of education provision in the borough also foreshadows further closure proposals forthcoming in the borough should these be carried out – a list that contains 16 further schools, we are told. The place data analysis in this document shows how these proposals will already fail to have the desired consequences – *if* the desired consequences are, as stated, the reduction of surplus places and the strengthening of remaining LA schools in the borough. Increasing flight of families from the borough and the education provision share of academy and free schools run for-profit, we are told, is not a policy aim of Hackney Labour – but if this is what the proposals do, what then?

Because the gravity of the re-organisation of education in Hackney represented by these proposals is underscored by one further danger: there is no going back. Under 'free school presumption' a local authority cannot open a local authority school – new schools will automatically be free schools run by the for-profit sector, with Hackney Council forced to give over the historic (or modern) school buildings to the private company, along with all oversight on how the school is managed and what they teach, on a long lease without generating any rental income (and yet incurring costs) for the Council: in the case of Haggerston School (2023), the academy trust was granted a 125 year lease on the school's Grade II listed buildings on a peppercorn rent. 'Free school presumption' also prevents the Council from merging and amalgamating schools, as it cannot close two schools and open a new one with integrated staff, ethos, and a new identity. It can only close schools (or protect them). It is unclear therefore, after references to 'mergers' and 'amalgamations' of schools was eliminated in the *Briefing Report – Informal Consultation*, why that language has been re-introduced in the *Statutory Notice* letter sent to parents. This danger is clearly outlined in the Council's own Estate Strategy (that frames this consultation) that warns against such actions, and why it advocates protecting schools that may have increased demand in the future.

This report incorporates new data, analysis and the specific case for the preservation and protection of Colvestone Primary School that follows from it. For clarity, this submission also includes a detailed report itemising the numerous instances and contexts in which the consultation has failed to follow the Constitution of Hackney Council, which protects the interests of its constituents, and that would be the basis for Calling In any decision made at Cabinet. Further, it includes a Pre-Action Protocol Letter for Judicial Review prepared for the Save Colvestone campaign group by their legal representation that outlines the basis for taking any adverse decision made in respect of Colvestone Primary School by Hackney Council to Judicial Review. It also includes a point-by-point responses to the Council's 'Response to consultation feedback (Informal Consultation)' document included as an Annex to the *Briefing Report – Informal Consultation* alongside representations made to the informal formal consultation and the summary document produced by Kwest for the consultation process.

In high-level summary, this submission shows that:

- Lack of local places (the proposals cut provision in a local area too deep, leaving displaced pupils without non-faith, in-borough local authority provision / flight from borough.
- Unprecedented cuts, ill-informed, not meaningfully consulted, will not achieve aims
- Despite persistent requests, there remains no cost-benefit analysis of each of the individual proposals. The Council-produced Briefing Reports make clear that the schools in frame are academically strong and that the quality of education provision is not a determining factor of the schools being in scope: the underpinning rationale for the proposals must therefore be financial (unless there exists some undisclosed ideological motivation). As the 'Bases for Calling In' (Chapter 3) chapter makes clear, closing a school is hugely costly, and this report identifies multiple additional costs not budgeted for in any of the consultation documents prepared by the Council – revealing the likely costs declared by the Council for realising the proposals to be a substantial under-estimation.
- This report fundamentally disputes the conclusions claimed by Hackney Education as to the financial viability of the school, asserting that selective reading and quoting has failed to give the true picture of Colvestone's finances and future viability.
- New research establishes the short, medium and long term need for primary school places in the immediate vicinity of Colvestone Primary School.

The chapters that follow establish the financial, educational, legal and social case for keeping Colvestone Primary School open, and establishes why this path would best serve the declared aims of the Proposals under consultation.

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Chapter 1. Analysis of current vacancy and place data: consequences, recommendations and underlying data

The School Estates Strategy report seeks viable sustainable solutions and work with existing primary schools with falling rolls (2.1). The May Cabinet report highlighted that in January 2023 Reception vacancies were 19% and were projected to rise to 23% by 2025/6, falling back to 20% prior to 2031 (without taking any action, and without accounting for Council / borough housebuilding projects, and assuming the current proposals don't cause further family flight from the borough. Figures: *Statutory Notice*). It stated that Hackney Council aims to operate with overall vacancy rates (across all year groups) between 5 – 10%. The May Cabinet report states that the proposal to close four schools (close two and merge four into two) will lead to a total reduction of 135 Reception places per year:

- De Beauvoir closure 30 places
- Colvestone and Princess May amalgamate 30 places
- Baden Powel and Nightingale amalgamate 30 places
- Randal Cremer closure 45 places

The September Cabinet report still refers to over 600 empty places in Reception classes alone (21% surplus). This is based on the School Organisation Plan (SOP) which represents the formal Published Admissions Number for all schools. However, schools can request a temporary cap on their admissions and many schools are choosing to do this in response to falling rolls and to address potential deficit budgets. The Council process has acted as a catalyst for many schools to make those changes. In addition, it is important to acknowledge that school vacancy rates are rapidly changing as;

- Pupils move in and out of the borough
- Pupils move between schools.

The Council is trying to rationalise schools to reduce vacancies across the borough but it does not have the power to control most of the players within the system – free schools, academies, faith schools and even parents.

Parents can make choices within the school system and the Council does not have control of this. Parents will not necessarily take up the offer of guaranteed places. Children are not widgets and cannot simply be moved from one place to another.

The latest school vacancy data (circulated by LB Hackney Education on 19th September) shows very different figures than the May Cabinet report. It shows that there are 391 empty places in Reception classes which has reduced the vacancy rate to 14.5%. Across all year groups, the overall vacancy rate has reduced to 12.7% which is getting close to the target level.

The failure to account for up to date pupil numbers in the September Cabinet Report invalidates many of the suppositions in the report:

- The proposed outcomes (to reduce PAN) will not be achieved
- The vacancy rates are significantly higher in faith schools and the overall target of 5-10% will not be achieved without addressing vacancies in these schools
- There are insufficient places at the nearby schools to accommodate all the pupils being forced out of closing schools.

1. Proposed Outcomes

These proposals will not be as effective at reducing school places as initially anticipated, with a further reduction of only 60 places rather than 135 places.

a) De Beauvoir closure

SOP states that the PAN here is 30 for 2022-23 and 2023-24 but the school is actually operating with a temporary PAN of 15 per year – this is reflected in the latest vacancy rates. Therefore the proposed closure will only lead to a further reduction of 15 places.

b) Colvestone and Princess May amalgamate

SOP states that the PAN is 30 for Colvestone and 60 for Princess May so that closing Colvestone would reduce PAN by 30 places. However Princess May has already agreed a temporary reduction in its PAN from 60 to 30. If two single-form schools amalgamate into one two-form school then **there is NO reduction in overall places!**

c) Baden Powell and Nightingale amalgamate

SOP states that the PAN is 30 for Baden Powell and 30 for Nightingale. The May Cabinet report states that the amalgamation of these two schools would reduce PAN by 30 places. However as stated above, if two single-form schools amalgamate into one two-form school then **there is NO reduction in overall places.** This is acknowledged in the September Cabinet report as the PAN for Nightingale increases from 30 – 60 so no overall reduction.

Therefore this proposal seems to be about the better utilisation of school premises.

d) Randall Cremer closure

SOP states that the PAN for Randall Cremer is 45 and this is reflected in the latest school vacancy data. This proposal will lead to a reduction of 45 places.

2. Vacancies in Faith Schools

The latest school vacancy figures show that the vacancy rates in faith schools are significantly higher than in other schools. Across the borough there are 391 empty Reception places across all schools, and the vacancy rate is 14.5%. In the 14 faith schools, there are 136 empty Reception places – over $\frac{1}{3}$ of empty places in only $\frac{1}{4}$ of the schools. The vacancy rate for Reception places in faith schools is 30%!

For all year groups, the vacancy rate across the whole borough is 12.7%. When considering just faith schools, the vacancy rate for all year groups doubles to 24%.

If the poorly performing faith schools are excluded, then the overall vacancy rates across all other Hackney school types (free/community/academies) reduces to 11%, which is nearly at the target figure.

The Cabinet report acknowledges that the faith schools have responded to the crisis by reducing their Published Admissions Numbers (as other schools have done). It also highlights that the Council has limited powers in relation to the faith schools – they can suggest reductions in PAN but cannot enforce any stronger measures such as closure or merger (as they have done with the community schools).

Looking at the above figures, the Council will not achieve its stated aim of 5 – 10% vacancy rate across the borough unless further action is taken in faith schools. It is neither sufficient nor appropriate to only take action in community schools. They must encourage the relevant faith bodies to have these conversations and make difficult decisions about their schools in Hackney as well, but there is no evidence of this in the Cabinet report.

3. Insufficient Places

The Cabinet report Appendix H presents useful information about the nearest schools and vacancies for each of the four schools proposed for closure. Appendix I to O presents a heat map of the families addresses against school vacancies for each year group. It concludes that across the borough there are sufficient vacancies for all children who need places.

The latest vacancy data shows that both Princess May and Holy Trinity school have restructured into one-form throughout all year groups and have minimal vacancies, which is a significant change to Appendices H-O.

A detailed analysis of vacancies at the nearby schools for all of the schools proposed for closure. It shows that parents are being forced to make very difficult decisions. There may be too many vacancies across the whole borough but in south west Hackney and Dalston there are not enough places at local community schools;

- The popular schools have very few vacancies which makes it very difficult for a family with children in different year groups
- Many of the vacancies are at faith schools which families do not want (evidenced by falling rolls and the Council's own survey where 84% respondents want non-faith schools).
- Some of the closest schools are out of borough – in Islington or Tower Hamlets.

4. Conclusion

This situation across Hackney schools has changed over the last six months. The Council has announced that this is just the first wave of potential closures/mergers, and that more schools will be in scope soon. Schools are taking action to manage falling roll and ensure they do not deliver deficit budgets. Parents are also aware now that other schools will be selected for merger/closure in the 12 – 18 months so are very nervous about choosing a school with a lot of vacancies because it might be under threat in the future.

Despite the public engagement and feedback during the informal consultation this proposal has remained the same since it was first announced but;

- It is no longer based on the latest information
- It assumes that vacancies in community schools and faith schools are interchangeable (when they are not)
- It is forcing parents to choose faith schools or go out of the borough.

This proposal does not consider the specific circumstances for each of the proposed school closures. They are different and it is important that each proposal is assessed individually, in terms of the impact it will have on the Council target of reducing Reception places AND the affect on school options/ parental choice in that part of the borough.

5. Our Response

DEMAND: Urgently review latest vacancy data for each proposed school closure and not the borough as a whole.

DEMAND: Each of the proposed school closures is considered and assessed as a separate recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION: Do not close one of the Dalston one-form community schools but explore a potential merger ASAP.

Appendix One: Detailed Analysis of vacancy data for each affected school

a) Proposed Closure of Baden Powell

Here is the latest vacancy data for the schools closest to Baden Powell. The data has not changed significantly since the report was published. Although Benthall appears to have restructured Year 2 as vacancies have reduced from 30 to 1, and maybe considering this for other year groups, (ie Y5) as well. The table below shows data for the seven closest schools as those are sufficient to meet the demand for places and provide a range of choices.

School	Distance as crow flies	Walking Time	Type of School	Forms	YR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Baden Powell PUPILS			LA	One	20	19	19	28	25	25	17
Nightingale	0.1	2 mins	LA	One*	0	2	0	1	0	0	3
St Scholastica's	0.22	6 mins	RC	One	2	11	1	0	4	13	1
Millfield's	0.31	8 mins	LA	Three	1	0	2	7	3	1	0
Benthall	0.33	10 mins	LA	Two	23	31	1	26	18	33	21
<u>Northwold</u>	0.43	15 mins	LA	Two	27	23	25	16	15	11	16
Southwold	0.43	14 mins	LA	Two	13	3	8	9	5	15	15
Rushmore	0.49	13 mins	LA	Two	0	0	2	2	3	2	2

- The proposal is to increase Nightingale to two form school and take all the pupils from Baden Powell.

Are there enough vacancies in local schools? YES

The expansion of Nightingale means that all children can have a place there. There is sufficient capacity to accommodate larger families with children in multiple year groups and friendship groups. Also there are spaces in most year groups in other nearby schools if parents want to choose a different option.

Is there parental choice for the options?

Baden Powell is a one-form community school. Most of the neighbouring schools are also community schools although they are larger – two or three form entry. The only one form school is a Roman Catholic school. The nearest CofE school is St John and St James which is 0.75 miles and a 16 minute walk although this has minimal vacancies.

Risk of future closure

If Nightingale increases to two-form but not all the children from Baden Powell take the places on offer then it places Nightingale in a difficult situation. It may have increased its capacity to two-form provision (including having additional staff) but be operating well below capacity with high vacancy rates – this may not be financially sustainable.

Based on the figures above, there is clearly still an issue with high level of vacancies in this area of the borough as three of the two form schools nearby are struggling to fill vacancies. Benthall and Northwold are both NW of Baden Powell and Southwold is NE, and it is highly likely that one or more of these school may be under threat in the future.

b) Proposed Closure of Randel Cremer

Here is the latest vacancy data for the schools closest to Randell Cremer. The data has not changed significantly since the Council's report was published. Although St John the Baptist appears to have restructured Year 3 and Year 6 into single forms as vacancies have reduced from 30 to 3 (Y3) and 30 to 0 (Y6), and maybe considering this for other year groups (ie Y Rec) as well.

There are still 118 pupils (excluding Year 6) who need to find new school places if this proposal goes ahead. During the last 12 months, 89 pupils have left the school – presumably most of them in the last six months since these proposals were announced.

	School	Distance as crow flies	Walking Time	Type of School	Forms	YR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
	Randal Cremer PUPILS			LA	Was Two	17	16	22	18	24	21	34
1	Hoxton Garden	0.26	8 mins	LA	Two	4	12	0	6	7	13	18
2	Columbia	0.34	12 mins	LA - TH	Two	2	2	0	3	7	4	0
3	St Monica's	0.39	13 mins	RC	One	15	7	5	5	5	3	4
4	Sebright	0.4	11 mins	LA	Two	0	1	0	0	7	3	7
5	St John the Baptist	0.41	13 mins	CofE	Two	37	21	21	3	24	25	0
6	Virginia	0.45	13 mins	LA - TH	One	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
7	Queensbridge	0.46	14 mins	LA	Two	0	0	0	0	0	10	2
8	Shoreditch Park	0.48	16 mins	LA	Two	0	0	0	0	0	2	5
9	St Pauls with St Michael's	0.52	14 mins	CoFE	One	0	3	5	1	3	8	11
10	Hackney New	0.56	13mins	Free	Two	0	2	0	0	0	10	6
						58	48	31	18	54	79	53
11	Elizabeth Selby Inf/ Lawdale Junior	0.6	19 mins	LA - TH	Two	9	4	4	0	13	4	7
12	St Matthias	0.65*										
13	Thomas Fairchild**	0.69	20 mins	LA	One	3	0	5	6	1	34	30
14	William Davis	0.7	20 mins	LA- TH		12	12	0	1	14	3	1
15	London Fields	0.72	23 mins	LA	Two	0	1	0	0	0	4	5
16	Rotherfield	0.76	23 mins	LA - Is		22	15	12	11	18	16	18
17	Holy Trinity	0.8	24 mins	CofE	One	0	3	0	0	0	0	2
18	St Luke's	0.84	28 mins	CofE - IS		5	1	0	0	0	2	0
19	Gayhurst	0.85	24 mins	LA	Two	0	0	0	2	0	0	3
20	Our Lady & St Joseph	0.86	23 mins	RC		0	0	5	0	0	0	0
	Colvestone	1.09	28 mins	LA	One	18	14	5	3	5	1	14

- * St Mattias is not 0.65 miles but 1.32 miles away so this should not be included as a nearby, unless it was the similarly named school in Bethnal Green, TH but this closed in August 2021.
- ** Thomas Fairchild has Ofsted rating Requires Improvement so not an attractive choice and has also restructured the school from two form to one (except Y5 & Y6?).

Are there enough vacancies in local schools? JUST

There are no schools very close to Randal Cremer but there are lots of schools within a 10 – 15 minute walk in all directions and the top ten are shown above. Looking at just the numbers, then there are sufficient spaces in the nearby schools for all the Randal Cremer pupils – but only just in the case of Year 3.

Is there parental choice for the options?

Randal Cremer is a two-form community school. The closest school is also a two-form community school but surprisingly it has not yet filled up suggesting that local families are not keen on it for some reason. The other local two-form community Hackney schools (Sebright, Queensbridge, and Shoreditch Park) only have a few vacancies and mostly in Year 5 and Year 6 – the lower years are almost full. There are also a small number of vacancies in Tower Hamlets community schools (Columbia and Virginia).

The largest number of vacancies are in faith schools – one Roman Catholic and two Church of England.

Are there other schools further away that provide options (the ten closest schools)?

- Two Tower Hamlet community schools (Elizabeth Selby/Lawdale and William Davis) have vacancies in most years but only 1 in Year 3
- Thomas Fairchild has vacancies in most years inc Year 3 but Ofsted has this as Requires Improvement
- London Fields and Gayhurst has minimal vacancies
- Holy Trinity, Our Lady and St Josephs RC and St Luke's (Islington) are much church schools but have minimal vacancies
- Rotherfield a community school in Islington has plenty of vacancies
- Colvestone is further away but both schools are close to the A10 and the regular buses (13 mins by public transport) means this could be a realistic alternative.

Based on the above list, parents will be forced to choose between a faith school fairly close by or to travel further away to a non-faith school. It is likely that quite a lot of families will choose schools out of borough.

Risk of future closure

This is more uncertain as it depends on where Randal Cremer pupils move to. There are church schools that have high levels of vacancies that may be under threat in the future. We would also

be very concerned about Rotherfield in Islington as we know that other London Boroughs are also looking at school capacity.

c) Proposed Closure of De Beauvoir and Colvestone

Here is the latest vacancy data for the schools closest to De Beauvoir and Colvestone schools. They have similar catchments areas so the top ten closest schools for both of them has led to a list of 13 schools in total. **The vacancy data has changed significantly since the Appendices to the report were produced as Holy Trinity and Princess May have recently restructured.**

	School	Walking Time (De B)	Walking Time (Colv)	Type of School	Forms	YR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
	De Beauvoir PUPILS		8 mins	LA	One	6	7	8	8	10	10	17
	Colvestone PUPILS	8 mins		LA	One	12	16	24	26	12	13	16
	TOTAL PUPILS					18	23	32	34	22	23	33
2	Our Lady & St Josephs	2 mins	10 mins	RC	One	0	0	5	0	0	0	0
2	St Jude & St Paul's	6 mins	10 mins	CofE - Islington	One	14	10	11	8	28	6	11
3	Halley House	16 mins	7 mins	Free	One*	0	9	4	0	2	13	9
4	Holy Trinity	8 mins	8 mins	CofE	One**	0	3	0	0	0	0	2
5	Shacklewell	18 mins	9 mins	LA	Two	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
6	Princess May	16 mins	8 mins	LA	One***	0	11	13	0	9	0	1
7	St Matthias	16 mins	11 mins	CofE	One	10	17	5	7	9	9	6
8	Newington Green	12 mins	13 mins	LA - Islington	Two	5	6	7	12	2	15	15
9	Hackney New	12 mins	20 mins	Free	Two	0	2	0	0	0	10	6
10	Mossbourne Parkside	20 mins	12 mins	Academy	Two****	0	10	0	0	3	4	5
11	Queensbridge	17 mins	19 mins	LA	Two	0	0	0	0	0	10	2
12	Grasmere		20 mins	LA	One	0	0	0	0	0	8	0
13	Gavhurst		20 mins	LA	Two	0	0	0	2	0	0	3
	Total Vacancies					29	68	45	29	53	75	61
	Total Vacancies (exc two Islington)					10	52	27	9	23	54	35

* Halley House has reduced to one form except Year 5 which still has two forms

** Holy Trinity has restructured from two forms to one form for all year groups

*** Princess May has restructured from two forms to one form for all year groups

**** Two form throughout the school but reduced to one form for Year R

Are there enough vacancies in local schools? NO

Based on current vacancy figures, then there are not enough vacancies at local schools to accommodate all the pupils from Colvestone and De Beauvoir, particularly in Year 3. If the two Islington schools are excluded, then the situation is significantly worse with a shortage of places in Reception, Year 2, Year 3, and Year 4 (see highlighted figures in the previous table).

Is there parental choice for the options?

De Beauvoir and Colvestone are both one-form community schools. If they both close, then there are NO similar schools nearby. There are four faith schools in the above list (one Roman Catholic and three Church of England) and a large number of the vacancies are at two of them. The five Hackney community schools (Shacklewell, Princess May, Grasmere, Gayhurst and Queensbridge) have some (often very limited) in each year but would not be able to accommodate a family with children in different year groups. There are three academy or free schools which all have a small number of vacancies, and two Islington schools which both have a higher number of vacancies.

Parents cannot all choose a community school (even a larger one) and will be forced to make compromises. Without alternative options, many will be forced to send their children out of borough.

Risk of future closure

The current proposal guarantees a place at Princess May for Colvestone pupils, if they want it. Many Colvestone families have clearly indicated that they are not interested in Princess May so it is unknown how many places would be needed. After restructuring at Princess May, they are already oversubscribed in Year 3, which is the year group with the least spaces.

Princess May continues to struggle to retain pupils and even if Colvestone pupils move there, it seems as though there will be a risk that this school will be under threat in the future.

Looking at the above figures, it seems very likely that the London Diocesan School Board will be looking at potential mergers and it is likely that both St Jude and St Pauls and St Matthias schools would be suggested.

2. The Case for Colvestone

A vision for the future

We believe Colvestone Primary School has a bright future in Hackney. The school has been an important part of this community for 161 years and with the Council's support it can continue to thrive as a key pillar of the community.

Key benefits of Colvestone remaining open

- Ensures the provision of an academically strong, non-denominational, one-form entry community school for families. The impact of the consultation process has meant that many other local schools that are not in consultation are filling up or already full - see the place data analysis included here. If Colvestone stays open, it is more likely that Dalston families will have a highly attractive, local community school they can walk to at the heart of the new 21st Century Street.
- Enables Hackney to recover Colvestone's budget deficit by allowing the school to pay it down over time.
- Supports the future development of Hackney, attracting families to the new housing in the Dalston Plan and anchoring the borough's first 21st Century Street on Colvestone Crescent.
- Preserves provision that reflects desires of Hackney residents, 84% of whom want non-faith education.
- Provides strong SEND provision that can be expanded to meet the urgent need in the borough.
- Saves the taxpayer the enormous cost of closing the school and of paying off the deficit, which, given the school's potential for financial viability, does not make sense.
- Sends the message that the Council listens and does genuinely take the feedback of residents into consideration. It increases faith in the authenticity of the Council's consultation processes.

The Estate Strategy document that frames this consultation details and encourages proactive measures the Council can take to protect schools under its control. The protection of schools and their education provision is the purpose of the Strategy. Colvestone has shown itself to be financially viable (addressed here, and pp. 30-34, and Chapter 3, pp.107-110 – grounds for calling in 1.2(c) – budget), educationally strong, and with a long-term future in the community that it serves – and which it plays a key role in holding together.

While Colvestone did accrue significant deficit in the past under the Soaring Skies federation (a problem, it should be noted, for which Hackney Education bears some responsibility due to lack of appropriate oversight), a new governing body constituted after Soaring Skies defederated worked closely with Hackney Education to address this problem and the problem of falling roll. They brought in a strong new leadership team and formed a partnership with the Blossom

Federation that has been very successful. Because of these changes the school is being closely monitored and its strong academic performance continues to improve.

The new Senior Leadership Team produced a three-year projected budget and commissioned an independent SRMA report, which improved the overall conservative school budget projections by identifying further highly achievable savings on operating costs. These two reports confirmed both the financial viability of the school and its capacity to pay down the deficit. Hackney Education should be proud of its contribution to establishing the new partnership and leadership and should give them time to continue to succeed.

Curricular improvements, increased social media presence, additional resources, and improvements to security and IT infrastructure have made Colvestone more competitive in the short term. Colvestone is also just finishing a period of substantial works (exterior and interior) that have restored the Grade 2 listed buildings to their historical splendour whilst incorporating new security and technology investments externally, in communal spaces and in the classrooms. In the medium term, the housing created by the Dalston Plan coupled with the attractiveness of Hackney's first 21st Century tree lined pedestrianised street should provide an influx of new families to the area and to the school.

Colvestone is central to Hackney Council's ambitious plans for Dalston (the Dalston Plan / Hackney Local Plan, adopted July 2020). The Plan promises to bring 200 new, genuinely affordable 3-bedroom homes for families to the area. Colvestone is the closest school to all of the major sites and is essential to helping attract new families to the area. Colvestone is also a key component of the fully-funded (and Hackney's first) 21st Century Street that forms part of the Colvestone Crescent masterplan: a community-led project that will make the space directly in front of the school a permanent school play street as part of an ambitious greening / pedestrian-focussed landscaping project around the school. This report includes new calculations using the GLA Population Yield Calculator that establishes the considerable number of pupils to be expected from the Dalston Plan project and clearly contradicts Council claims (without supporting data) that the effect of the Dalston Plan on Colvestone specifically would be negligible.

The school is praised by Ofsted (2018) for building "a strong [knowledge of and] sense of identity and connection to where [pupils] live". Small community schools like Colvestone operate as social binders. Colvestone Primary School is central to preserving the genuinely diverse nature of central Dalston against forces that drive people away - cost of living, Brexit, escalating rent and property prices etc. If you take the social binders away then the community will be gone - and will never return. This consultation gets to the heart of the kind of place the Labour Council and Mayor want Dalston to be - one with a sense of history, solidarity and strength through difference, or the next soulless and transitory zone of 'regeneration'.

The strength of this community is clear from the campaign to save the school that has seen ex-students or friends of the school from age 8-80 campaigning against its closure. Why would a local Council want to destroy that? Hackney Council recognised the centrality of the local

Ridley Road market to the Dalston community by the resistance to plans to remove traders' storage and access, focussing instead on new landscaping and branding to support this asset. To remove the children from this community would further diminish the social relations that bind generations, and communities, together. Why would Hackney close a financially viable, academically strong community school at great expense when it could be championing it as an asset?

Keeping the school open provides a solution to the SEND provision issues Hackney that are clearly identified in the Estate Strategy. One-form entry schools have become more rare, and the small, village-school environment of Colvestone offers a great setting for SEND students allowing them to access integrated education. As such, Colvestone has great success as a gateway school for neurodiverse pupils and those with Social Emotional and Mental Health needs. This integrated provision and current surplus capacity also has the potential to save the council money otherwise spent sending SEND children to independent / private schools outside of the borough at a cost of between £35-70,000 per pupil per year.

The Estate Strategy recommends the expansion of SEN provision in current schools with capacity (p.13), and Colvestone has a track record of excellent provision. Additionally, the Estate Strategy supports the repurposing of underused school infrastructure both for revenue generation and specifically to respond to the strategic need for expanded SEN provision in the Borough (p.14). Independent advice has suggested the currently vacant yet teaching-adapted caretakers house on the school site be used as a viable ARP unit in future funding rounds. This would represent a substantial saving on current arrangements for out of borough provision and promises to be far more successful.

In addition, Colvestone offers a strong option for the remaining De Beauvoir School families as their closest non-denominational school. The consultation process has driven families out of both De Beauvoir and Randal Cremer, who have left in such large numbers that they have filled up local places in the schools that are not under consultation. The families remaining in both those schools are now struggling to find places within walking distance where they can send their children, particularly families with more than one child. Despite the consultation, Colvestone has retained most of its students. Colvestone is similar to De Beauvoir in that it is a small school on a quiet road, and it has space to accommodate groups of classmates and family groups, enabling them to stay together.

Keeping Colvestone open is also a win for the Council, showing the entire Hackney community that the Council does genuinely listen to residents, is carefully considering which schools to close and was telling the truth when it said a decision had not been made. It restores faith in the democratic process, increasing the likelihood that the community will engage in future consultation processes.

Risks of Closure

Key risks of closing Colvestone

- Colvestone students who go to Princess May will increase their exposure to air pollution and run the risk of having their school closed twice due to an already low enrollment at Princess May.
- With the lack of mitigation for Princess May being forced to raise its PAN, it seems likely that the proposals will actively damage Princess May School and make it financially unviable.
- Unlike other London boroughs, Hackney is closing a lot of schools at once, but the consequences of closing a school is still untested. Closing such a large number means any mistakes in the process—academic, financial, social—are amplified. It's a high-cost, high-risk strategy that may accelerate the rate of families fleeing to free schools, academies or private schools or leaving the borough altogether, while costing the taxpayer millions of pounds.
- Closing schools is expensive and the costs could skyrocket. The Estates Strategy report estimates closing and merging these six schools will cost £3.5 million in the first year alone, but warns that the actual cost could be much higher, and Colvestone is a particularly expensive school to close. This submission, and the 'call-in' document that follows, details multiple additional budgetary considerations (costs) that have not been accounted for in these proposals or included to allow for genuine consideration of the proposals or inform any decision.
- The Dalston Plan promises to bring hundreds of new family homes to Dalston, but the closure of Colvestone, the closest school to that development, removes key infrastructure from that project - Nursery and Primary School provision. The analysis of future pupil yield from these developments is included in this submission.
- By removing local primary school provision the developments themselves become less attractive to potential families and would be expected to negatively impact on developers' ability to sell those homes to families.
- The threatened closure of Debeauvoir and Randal Cremer has meant that local school places are already becoming more scarce and families may be forced to attend school out of the area.
- Should Colvestone need to reopen in the medium term due to insufficient places in the area, the borough would be forced to reopen it as a free school, meaning the borough would lose another local authority school (both the leasehold and education provision would be surrendered by the local authority to a private, for-profit business under 'free school presumption' on a peppercorn rent for 125 years - as happened recently with Haggerston school).
- There is a significant increased cost to the council for SEND if Colvestone closes as a result of having to send children out of the borough to private schools.
- Continuity in SEND support is extremely important, relationships that will be lost if Colvestone is closed

- Long term damage to student engagement (after already enduring Covid), increased Emotionally Based School Avoidance, and associated problems could result from breaking hard to establish close-knit communities both internally to the school and with the surrounding area
- Hackney Council risk making further errors by acting rashly in relation to GLA population projections - catastrophically wrong as recently as 2017, whilst also failing to account for population increases predicted by GLA analysis of the Dalston Plan proposals included here. Even the GLA data (included in the Statutory Notice) asserts that pupil numbers stabilise at current levels / start to rise by 2031.
- Loss of faith in the Council and in the Labour Party.

The closure of Colvestone poses a lot of risks for Hackney.

Hackney Education has put forward a high-risk plan to send Colvestone students to Princess May. The Briefing Report projects that 120 children will move to Princess May. Two surveys of parents conducted at Colvestone, an exercise the Council has never bothered to do, showed that 95.7% of parents surveyed did not include Princess May in any of their six preferences when selecting a primary school. Further, 87% said they would not send their children to Princess May, with a further 6% undecided. Their reasons included distance, size and air pollution on the A10 (further details in the report that follows).

There is a significant risk that far fewer than 120 students transfer to Princess May and that the school remains at risk of closure. When the Interim Director of Education was asked at Colvestone's pre-consultation meeting whether Hackney Education could offer any assurances that Princess May would remain open, he said he could not, meaning students who do transfer to Princess May are at risk of having their school closed twice. Given the damage that this would cause to pupils undergoing successive closures, it is a further clear discouragement to making the move to Princess May in the first place. There are no financial protections in place for Princess May should it be forced to raise its strategically-reduced PAN and operate with insufficiently full classes, thereby destabilising it financially. This is a failure of planning, budgeting and mitigation. It is likely that the forced acceptance of pupils will make the school financially unviable after it has (legitimately, as per Council Briefing Documents) limited its PAN for financial stability.

Hackney has undertaken an unusually aggressive closure/merger plan, starting with six schools, in contrast to other inner London boroughs. The process is untested and the consequences unknown—it doesn't know where parents will go when schools are closed; it doesn't know how best to support staff, families and students and minimise damage to educational outcomes; it can't predict what all the costs will be or how to design the process to minimise them. For example, the timing and length of this process means schools will need to pay staff retention bonuses (£100k at Colvestone alone), which may have been avoided had the process been different. Chapter 3 raises multiple other costs not accounted for in the proposals.

The Estate Strategy predicts that closing and amalgamating all six schools will cost £3.5 million in the first year alone. It warns that those costs are likely to go up, and in fact they already have, as the report fails to account for £100k in retention bonuses for Colvestone. Amongst multiple other costs detailed in Chapter 3, the Briefing Reports fail to account for the possibility of increased out-of-borough SEN provision (£35/50-70,000 per student per year) if SEND students in Colvestone are not able to make the transition or thrive in a busier, larger environments. No budgetary provision has been made for the costs of facilitating (even successful, Hackney local authority) SEN and EHCP transfers and access. While Hackney Education did estimate redundancy costs at £1.6 million, it has only belatedly reached out to the schools to get HR data (therefore not informing the public Briefing Reports), so the accuracy of the estimate is highly questionable (carrying 'significant risks of being higher...', p.43, *Briefing Report*). It also does not account for loss of revenue to the borough if families leave the borough or go to free schools, academies or private schools, or the effect this has on the stated aim of reducing surplus places in the LA system. Colvestone's deficit and restrictive covenants on the building make it a particularly expensive school to close, one that could cost the borough for years to come (moth-balling a school site is estimated at between £250-300,000), and for which non-education repurposing is extremely difficult – if not explicitly forbidden in the case of Colvestone – see discussion of protections in this Chapter and Chapter 3. The only other alternatives (i.e. the creation or gifting of the site to a for-profit free school / academy MAT operating outside of local authority control) for the site appear to run explicitly contrary to all of the declared aims of the proposals under consultation.

Colvestone provides strong SEND support and is well situated on a quiet street for SEND children. By losing this school, SEND children who struggle with the transition to Princess May (a much larger school on a busy main road) and may have to be sent out of the borough to private schools (at cost of £35-70,000 per pupil per year) and some will be at risk of being lost to education provision altogether.

In discussions with Planning officials at recent Dalston Plan engagement events it was clear that Colvestone, as the closest primary school provision, was central to the infrastructure for these major homebuilding sites. Why have Planning not been more actively engaged by the Education department in the drawing up of these proposals – specifically as they relate to Colvestone?

It is not clear in either the Briefing Report or the risk assessment why absolute faith is being placed in GLA projections population figures when in 2017 the projections were wrong. Predictions of a shortfall of provision that led to the disastrous greenlighting of free schools in the Borough largely produced the current problem. Shouldn't, following Estate Strategy, viable schools be supported through this period to see what actually happens particularly, in Colvestone's case, given the scale of housebuilding projected in central Dalston?

If the consultation process demonstrates strong objections to the Council's plans (90% of the hundreds of responses received to the Informal Consultation are explicitly against the proposals), but those plans go forward without change, it will appear the Council was lying when it said repeatedly, publicly, that no decision had been made. People will see that the Council consultation was phony because the Council never had any intention of listening to the community, which could significantly erode people's faith in democratic process generally and in this Council and in the Labour Party in particular.

Finally, there is the damage that closing Colvestone would do to the community. The impact of this is hard to quantify, but in a time of continual loss and stress—COVID, the deterioration of public services, the threat of climate change and the associated weather extremes—closing institutions that function as social binders will further exacerbate exactly the kind of social atomisation and flight of families from the Borough that the closures are meant to address. It threatens the mental well being of children in particular, driving phenomena such as Emotionally Based School Avoidance.

Dalston is in the eye of this storm, and closing one of the institutions that is integral to people's connection to the area for generations proposes to initiate a death spiral of lost identification, lost provision and further flight. Small local schools and the generations with attachments to them are key to holding communities together. If the Labour Council moves to destroy this alongside the closure of nearby De Beauvoir, it commits to generations of damage to Dalston – and to the Council's persistent claims to be a Council and Mayoralty that listens to its residents and acts in their best interests.

Flaws in the consultation process

There are multiple instances where the consultation process has failed to follow or deliberately misrepresents both the Statutory Guidance (Statutory Guidance for opening and closing maintained schools, published January 2023) and the Council's own Estate Strategy (Education Sufficiency and Estate Strategy 2021-2031, adopted February 2022) under which the consultation is held. Many of these errors have been repeated in the public forums where the consultation has been discussed by elected officials and representatives of Hackney Education. In addition, both the informal and formal consultation process has been inaccessible and ineffective as well as financially and emotionally damaging to the schools. Examples of these flaws are highlighted below, and are detailed in greater detail where they relate to adherence to Hackney Council's constitution (Chapter 3) and the legal responsibilities inherent upon the Council when conducting a public consultation (Chapter 4). Many of these criticisms are also raised by the Council's own Children and Young People's Scrutiny Commission Report to the Informal Consultation which as yet has not been responded to in detail by the Council.

Key flaws in the process

- The consultation failed follow the statutory guidance and estate strategy
- The Briefing Report prepared for Cabinet was ill informed and lacking detail
- We were told the consultation was intended to help the Council determine whether to close the schools, but its design made it ineffective for that purpose
- The consultation was inaccessible to some of the groups that should have been included
- The consultation process itself damaged the financial viability of the schools in scope

Failure to follow Statutory Guidance and / or the Education Sufficiency and Estate Strategy 2021-2031 under which this consultation is proposed

The “Education Sufficiency and Estate Strategy – falling rolls” Briefing Report (subsequently referred to here as the “Briefing Report”) produced by Hackney Education / Deputy Mayor Bramble describes, frames and justifies the current consultation to both the public and to the key officials in Cabinet who voted to enter into the current ‘informal consultation’ phase. Instances where it fails to follow the Statutory Guidance or the adopted Estate Strategy that empowers the consultation are therefore highly problematic. It should also be noted that these misrepresentations and/or failures have not been corrected when challenged and frame the ‘informal consultation’.

In the Briefing Report prepared for Cabinet members prior to the vote to proceed to informal consultation, clause 3.5 addresses the need to consider “school place demand in the short to medium term”; however both the Statutory Guidance (p.23) and the Council’s own Strategy document that incorporates it (p.16, also quoted in our own submission during the pre-informal consultation) state that potential demand for places must be considered in the “mid- to long-term”. The original *Briefing Report* prepared by Hackney Education misrepresents the terms of reference required when considering potential demand for places to both elected officials charged with decision-making and the public, and subsequently fails to include any mid- to long-term modeling in its report contrary to the demands of both Statutory Guidance and its own Estates Strategy. The *Briefing Report – Informal Consultation* changes the terminology used (from ‘short to mid-’ to ‘mid- to long’) but fails to detail in high level or granular fashion any of that modelling, how it was arrived at, and how the stated conclusions were derived from it.

When considering this future demand for places the *Briefing Report* and subsequent *Briefing Report – Informal Consultation* fail to account for the specific impacts of local development (the Dalston Plan) for Colvestone Primary School – the closest primary school provision for all the main sites (p.16). Both because the Briefing Report (p.16, 3.5) identifies the wrong time frame and fails to address the specific proximity of Colvestone to the development sites, an accurate assessment is not made to the mid- to long-term impacts of these major homebuilding projects. When the quoted timeframe is changed, there is still a lack of underlying data that would support or justify such a claim.

The Briefing Reports also fail to account for financial opportunities provided for by Section 106 / CIL investment levies from major local developments (Estate Strategy – p.19). As the local primary school provision for all of the major Dalston Plan sites, Colvestone would reasonably be expected to benefit financially from this significant infrastructural investment. By failing to address the centrality of Colvestone Primary School to the Dalston Plan and both the financial and demographic benefits of that proximity, the Briefing Report therefore fails to address significant future benefits to the school (identified in the Estates Strategy, p.19) in it's summary of the effect of new housing / regeneration.

The Estates Strategy states that all proposals will “consider land ownership and potential restrictions or impact on future opportunities and any additional land requirements and approvals or consents needed.” (p.14) The Council and Hackney Education have been persistently warned that there are educational use covenants on the Colvestone site. These have been confirmed by campaigners who worked on a previous campaign to save the school (1980) when, in addition to these protections, Hackney Council was shown to be deliberately diverting pupils to other schools to suppress student numbers. Despite being warned about these protections, the Council continues to rely on Land Registry documents based on registration documents from 1912 when the school site was expanded through purchase of additional land at the north of the site (then known as ‘Birkbeck Works’) and not the original deeds (1906) that detail the restrictions on the site – a consequence of the school being acquired from a still-existing educational trust under license from the Charities Commission. It has been confirmed with Land Registry that the Title Registration for the school site does not list the precise nature of the restrictions and covenants on the site, only that they exist. Whilst research is ongoing to locate secondary copies of these documents, Hackney Council (through a detailed FOI request) and Strategic Property Services (through direct approach) have failed to provide copies of the original deeds that transferred to the London Borough of Hackney from the ILEA through the London Residuary Body in 1990. Both have been sent the receipt for the documents (including relevant filing references) produced in 1990 to expedite this search, but no commitment to do so has been received in return, with the FOI request unfulfilled (and now subject to ICO review) and legal requests for this highly relevant material rebuffed without justification.

In addition, the Council has refused to supply requested allocation data to assess whether Council allocated places in preceding years have artificially suppressed pupil numbers at Colvestone. High level analysis of allocations data suggests that Free Schools and Academies have been artificially favoured in this allocation process over recent years with disproportionate allocations going to those schools. The refusal to release this data even as requested as case work to local ward Councillor Zoe Garbett as case work for non-public review (given the sensitive nature of postcode data) leaves open the possibility that admission numbers for Colvestone (and possibly other schools in frame) have been artificially suppressed.

Though further details are given in Chapters 4 and 5, The deeds to the buildings (original, 1906 amended, and all subsequent) were requested in April. As the campaign has consistently stated (since the announcement of the pre-informal consultation, April 2023) we have been informed that there is an educational use protection on the deeds (likely specifically on the deeds produced in 1905/1906 when the ownership of the original school buildings was transferred from an educational charity to the LCC, in a transfer of ownership overseen by the Charities Commission). We have provided the Council with a copy of the receipt from Hackney Council for the deeds from the London Residuary Body dated Dec 1990. These documents are of clear relevance to the consultation as:

1. If restricted by covenants standard disposal of the buildings would not be possible and so consideration of the buildings as an asset in the general Council holdings (and therefore potential source of revenue) as described in the briefing reports / consultation meetings etc. / Cabinet would have been in error.
2. The buildings might potentially be forfeited to the (still extant) educational charity who sold them under restriction should the educational use cease – a clear source of jeopardy for the pursuit of the current proposals, of which public / Cabinet have not been made aware.
3. Should such a covenant be contained within the deeds it limits the reuse of the buildings significantly and would likely force the Council to reopen a school on the site – having paid hundreds of thousands of pounds in retention contracts, redundancies of staff, building protection, and associated costs of transferring pupils (potentially out of Borough at great expense) for SEN provision currently being provided by the school. It would also jeopardise student numbers in the new school as the current pupils would have relocated elsewhere. (N.B. as repeatedly insisted upon by the Council, there is no academic attainment argument for closing the school – it is performing very well). This path would be an egregious waste of public funds. There is recent precedent in Hackney for this wastage – the closure of Hackney Downs School / discovery of covenanted deeds / establishment of Mossbourne Academy.
4. The Estates Strategy is clear about the jeopardy posed by ‘free school presumption’. Closing the school and reopening it would result in a free school where control of the school and land would be forfeit to a private enterprise. This would be a direct consequence of the covenant – and manifestly changes the consequences of the proposals on which decisions are being made.

The requested additional data on place allocation (school place allocation by the local authority where no preference is given or available) is of high relevance to the consultation: as the criteria for selecting schools in scope of the consultation is driven heavily by pupil numbers (specifically in Reception intakes, see scoping criteria) this allocation data is required to check that places have been allocated appropriately and not artificially suppressed by the Council. We have also been told that, as recently as the early 90s, there is precedent within the borough of artificial pupil suppression through the allocations process. See Chapter 3 for further details on this request and the centrality of these materials to the effective consultation on these proposals.

Regarding access to the original deeds, held by Hackney Council, there is clear precedent that establishes the jeopardy that the Estates Strategy is attempting to guard against concerning due diligence on land, sites and protective covenants: in 1995 Hackney Downs School was closed at

great expense to the London Borough of Hackney – local campaigners have told us an estimated £3m was paid in redundancy payments) and the Borough's intention was to sell the land. When the original deeds were addressed however the educational use covenants that protect the school site were discovered (not at that point recorded on the Land Registry Title documents which were subsequently amended) and the Council forced to embark on the project that would become Mossbourne Academy.

To embark on a similar project represents a catastrophic waste of public funds. This jeopardy is increased by 'Free School Presumption' (see Estates Strategy p.15) which dictates that any new school would automatically be a Free School, outside of Local Authority control, which has "key implications for the educational property assets as the building and site would be handed over to the Academy Trust of Free School under a lease agreement." The Council would also be responsible for delivering the capital programme for the new school, incurring yet further costs. In addition to the waste of public money and the loss of one of the area's major heritage sites, the Estates Strategy explicitly advises to support alternate options to this path to avoid "the delivery of a free school" (p.16).

In addition, the Grade 2 listed status of the building, which makes repurposing difficult, the protections against disposal (if possible) that would require Secretary of State approval (Estates, p.19) are similarly unaccounted for in the Briefing Document as required.

Contrary to Statutory Guidance (p.29) the consultation proposals were made public two days before a school holiday (the Easter break), deliberately limiting stakeholder response.

The consultation continues to use the terms 'merger' and 'amalgamation', implying a new school with a new school name, number and continuity of staff and senior leadership from both schools. This impression was also explicitly given in SLT / Governor meetings with the school before the consultation was made public. Both the Briefing Report (p.17) and Estate Strategy ('free school presumption', p.15/16) make clear that this is not possible – the proposals in the consultation are to close four schools as all staff in those schools will lose their jobs and sites will be closed. There would be no continuity of staff, ethos or curriculum. This has led to much confusion publicly as to the ramification of the proposals. To be genuine, consultations should clearly state the ramifications of the proposals being consulted upon. Here this has not been the case.

Briefing Report ill-informed and lacking in detail

Whilst the school satisfied some of the broad determinants for inclusion in the consultation, it fails to satisfy the qualitative determinants and the narrative description of schools considered to be most at risk. In the Briefing Report prepared for Cabinet the intention given was to identify schools under “serious financial pressure” where options to reduce expenditure had already been exhausted and where “efficiency”, “financial stability and education outcomes” have begun to deteriorate (p.11). None of these criteria have been met in the case of Colvestone.

The financial modeling used to assess the financial health and projected finances of Colvestone Primary School was a draft SMRA report commissioned by the school business manager of the Blossom Federation and Senior Leadership team of the school to test the school’s conservative 3-year budget projections (submitted to Hackney Education in November 2022) and to identify further reasonable savings. This budget projection (and in year surplus guarantee for the subsequent two years) remains unchallenged. Indeed, the full independent SMRA report commissioned by the school identifies over £614,000 of ‘high achievability’ savings (and a further £167,00 in ‘medium achievability’ savings) over the next three years. Not only does the complete version of the independent report, used as the Council’s only financial modelling for Colvestone Primary School, suggest financial viability, it proposes a full deficit reduction plan to break-even over five years. Even if this independently-produced data is taken to be optimistic (though it constitutes the only financial projection data the Council has for the school for the purpose of this consultation) it clearly states financial viability with the projection to pay down the deficit accumulated under previous management over time. See this Chapter (A: Financial Viability) and Chapter 3 for further details on this and the SMRA report projections on which Hackney Council signed off as recently as April 2023 (well after the commencement of the consultations on these proposals and yet in contradiction of the proposals underlying rationale.)

The consultation failed to establish a holistic approach to the challenge of maintaining optimal education provision appropriate to the stated desire of the population of the Borough. Why isn’t the whole of an area’s Primary provision being considered at the same time – including Faith / voluntary-aided schools? The Briefing Report goes to great lengths (by using inappropriate metrics to suggest they are at capacity) to mask the fact that vacancy rates are much worse in the borough’s faith schools (local authority 80% capacity, faith/VA schools 60%) and that Hackney data shows that 84% of residents want non-religious educational settings. When other boroughs, Lambeth and Southwark for example, have closed faith schools, why is the Council not taking a more holistic approach that consults on all settings as decisions about local provision mutually affect one another.

In responses given to the Scrutiny Committee it was stated that, as opposed to local authority schools, VA / faith schools are being afforded a more holistic set of criteria in relation to their evaluation – not simply financial viability (or pupil numbers). Why is there a difference in evaluation metrics for faith schools – particularly when there is clearly overprovision (and accordingly low occupancy) in the borough and specifically, as it applies to Colvestone, around

central Dalston? By consulting only on local authority provision, faith / voluntary-aided schools are being given preferential treatment. (See Chapter 1 on Place analysis).

The target of surplus capacity of 5-10% is an advisory figure. Why is the council pursuing this for all schools regardless of financial viability, academic achievement, specific character / social make-up of the school and the well-known and tangible benefits of smaller class sizes (for all pupils, with particular advantages for SEN children accessing integrated teaching)? Staff-pupil ratios vary with need already through TA and support staff provision, and these variations are not reflected in the data provided in the Briefing Report. In addition the consultation fails to make any distinction between large and small schools and their relative merits, or indeed the difference between non-faith and faith schools in regards to available local provision (despite the overwhelming majority of Hackney residents desiring non-faith education). As such the consultation attempts no modeling or research that would identify the significant role of parental choice in pupil movement.

Ineffective

It is not clear how the consultation document will inform the decision. At the May Cabinet meeting Cllr Bramble said that financial viability was key to determining if a school can stay open. But there were no questions on the document related to the financial viability, nor is there underlying data in the consultation documents that address viability on a school by school basis – data presented relates only to ‘lost revenue’ and figures are presented without context (for example: lost revenue is not discussed in relation to overall budget, or in relation to school/site-specific operating costs). Because these questions went unanswered in ‘engagement events’, it has been impossible for stakeholders to understand, let alone scrutinise the Council’s logic or proposals. Councilors and council staff have not been able to explain to us (or the Scrutiny Committee) how the consultation will inform a decision whether to close a school. If, as stated, this is a consultation on *whether* to close schools, not *how* to close schools, why has the Council thus far done no work with schools to develop alternatives to closure? Failure to allow for alternatives or modification within the consultation process – that is, meaningful consultation – the framing of the consultation denies any meaningful learning process or capacity for optimisation. A simple yes-no decision has been presented with scant underlying data. The lack of any framing criteria for the Informal or Formal Consultation is criticised in the *CYP Scrutiny Report*, Chapter 3 (Bases for Calling In), and Chapter 4 (Failure to Conduct a Legal Consultation).

Key decision makers did not participate in the consultation. Repeated attempts by parents and governors to meet with the Mayor and/or Cllr Bramble to discuss alternatives to closure were rebuffed or ignored – a belated meeting was arranged at short notice but only on the explicit condition that it took place *after* the end of the Informal Consultation period. The school engagement meeting offered a repetition of information shared (and previously challenged) at the pre-consultation phase, but did not engage in discussion about alternatives to closure or challenges related to adherence to the Council's own strategy documents, the contents of the presentation or to specific questions concerning underlying data.

Headteachers were not asked for their advice or expertise about how a process to address low enrollment might work. Headteachers were informed of the school closure consultation plan in advance of a public announcement, but never asked about potential consequences, leading to a process that was more damaging than it needed to be.

The staff at Colvestone Primary are Hackney Education employees. There has been no consideration of them in the decision to 'merge/amalgamate' – indeed in initial school discussions prior to the 'Pre-Informal Consultation' staff were told that merging schools (pupils *and staff*) was possible – an indication that key officials failed to understand the Statutory Guidance incorporated into the Council's own Estate Strategy that clarifies the impossibility of merging schools and staff under 'free school provision'. At the initial meetings, even though questions were asked, there were no answers or reassurances given to what the proposal would mean for staff.

It is now clear that staff would have to apply *if* there were vacancies at Princess May and have no guarantee that they would be employed. It is also probable that Princess May, which has recently gone through a staffing restructure, would employ support staff or teachers who are more experienced with UPS or TLRs as they would already have these positions in school and also by employing support staff and teachers in higher pay scales and with TLR's they would be increasing their staffing costs. Colvestone staff are dedicated and experienced professionals which makes them on a higher pay scale therefore at a disadvantage for a school who has restructured recently. There is also no consideration of office staff, cleaners, premises managers and catering staff. These positions will also be in place at the proposed site for merger and there will be no deployment of these positions.

In addition, with three other schools closing and many schools restructuring, there will be a glut of staff on the market, meaning there is no guarantee of any job vacancies for staff.

There were no separate consultation documents for staff and there was no communication made that the consultation documents and websites were for them.

The consultation documents had no mention of staff in them at all. The fact that the words 'merger and amalgamation' were used has led to confusion. Would their jobs be safe? Were they being moved to Princess May? Would they have to reapply for jobs? None of these questions were considered or answered until the second HR meeting and none of these factors were considered in the initial proposal to Cabinet.

The timeline has also been challenging for teaching staff; the resignation date was the end of May – the cabinet decision was not published until the end of that week therefore staff had no time to find a job or resign.

There is also no consideration of the children at Colvestone who have built relationships with the staff at Colvestone. They will move (if they choose too) to a school that has no familiar staff. For children with SEND there are no guarantees or reassurance that their 1:1 LSA will be moving with them, a stressful and concerning issue for both families and the school.

Parents were not consulted about their preferences with regards to potential school mergers. Colvestone parents were never surveyed about the likelihood that they would attend Princess May in the event of a merger. Parents at De Beauvoir asked about the possibility of a merger during their pre-consultation meeting, but they were never surveyed about their preferences. With approx. 70 pupils still on roll at De Beauvoir, this is now a viable merger on the Colvestone site that would accommodate all pupils (maintaining family and friendship groups as intended).

Inaccessible

All published documents up to and including that voted upon and the Decision Paper published after the Cabinet vote to proceed to the 'informal consultation' stage has a clear list of stakeholders to be consulted in this phase of the consultation. This list consistently contains 'all residents. When the printed Consultation document was circulated 'all residents' had been removed as a group being consulted.

The Briefing Report says that local residents are a key group to consult, but the document was not sent to local residents. The Council made token efforts to publicize the consultation—a page on the website, in the Council's own free paper and a couple of tweets—but did not send materials to houses in the vicinity of the school. The infographic leaflet that was to be 'delivered to key stakeholders' was printed (midway through the informal consultation) in a print run of 825 copies (FOI request data). Of these, 100 were circulated to Town Hall staff. Of the remaining 725, not one was sent to a local resident. For comparison, there are approximately 250,000 residents in Hackney, and even minor changes to local parking restrictions results in glossy publications delivered to individual residents in an impressively wide area local to the proposed alterations. It appears clear on this basis that the Council has been keen not to engage relevant stakeholders in the local and wider Hackney community on this issue: the fundamental reorganisation of local authority education provision in the borough and the potential closing of over 10% of the borough's local authority, non-faith primary school provision.

Although Colvestone's consultation meeting was interpreted into different languages at the school's request, the consultation document was not provided in any language other than English even though multiple languages represented in the school community were requested. Alternate language versions have been available for the current stage of the consultation as far as we are aware, but no discernable work appears to have been done by the Council to encourage engagement with this stage of the process.

There was no attempt to get feedback from local organisations that may be impacted by school closures, nor was there any tangible attempt to engage with clear stakeholders in education provision, for example: families and staff at local nurseries, childrens' centres, childminders, playgroups, drop-in play centres, the family sections of the local libraries etc. outside of a single email (to the provision manager) announcing the informal consultation midway through its consultation period. We are unaware of any engagement activities conducted by the Council in relation to the Formal Consultation.

Damaging

We warned the Council before the Cabinet voted to move all six schools to the information consultation stage that the consultation itself would damage the financial viability of the schools and asked what mitigating measures were being put into place. The consultation is supposed to determine whether a school should be closed, which means it should be possible for schools to survive consultation. However, no measures were established and as a result, two of the schools have lost so many they are probably financially unsustainable. In essence the consultation, which was meant to determine whether they should close, has created a situation where they are forced to close.

Because Colvestone is under the consultation, it is not picking up pupils it would normally expect to from families who did not receive offers from the first preference(s), in-year transfers and parents considering leaving local schools undergoing structural turmoil because also in frame (De Beauvoir), about to enter a phase of massive staff turnover (Halley House) or experiencing highly disruptive staffing issues (Shacklewell for example, where one Reception class has had 8 teachers in a year). This damage is particularly acute when Colvestone has recently resolved many of the temporary issues that had made the school less attractive (at the time of visits and application).

We have also recently been made aware of at least one parent attempting to apply for a place at Colvestone since the announcement of the consultation being advised by officials on the Hackney Council Admissions and Pupil Benefits Team Helpline explicitly that the school was closing. This suggests further artificial suppression of pupil numbers, the extent of which is hard to quantify (see Chapter 4: Failure to Conduct a Legal Consultation).

The consultation process has been hugely damaging to school finances because of pupil movement (albeit limited in the case of Colvestone) and potential staff retention payments for 23/24 that have been designated to come from school budgets rather than central funding. There has been a complete absence of mitigation planning or financial support put in place to protect schools damaged by the consultation process itself, or to support them should they go through the consultation process and not be closed (which has to be an option in a genuine consultation).

The consultation has been hugely destabilising for SEN / EHCP parents and pupils for whom promised individual advice and support has been entirely lacking.

These damages are particularly galling at a time where Hackney Council, in partnership with Blossom Foundation and a new senior management team at the school have worked hard to formulate and commence a plan that was working (in the 6 months it was given) to increase financial health (income, savings, structure, oversight and projections), parental offer addressing recent falling rolls and staff and parental satisfaction. The Labour Council should be owning and celebrating their part in this success story that would be given a chance to continue if the school was pulled out of scope.

Because the Council cannot close free schools and academies, there is a possibility that this aggressive schedule of local authority closures and the knowledge that there are more closures to come will scare people away from local authority schools in general and into free schools and academies, which they may view as safe from closure.

As raised in the Scrutiny Commission, schools with higher free school meal uptake, proportion of SEND pupils and greater diversity will overwhelmingly fall into scope of the proposed closures under the current metrics. How can the framework for considering scope of this and future consultations be adjusted such that it will not always be these children whose lives (and access to education, which is often already difficult) are constantly disrupted?

This report and the analysis which follows paint a compelling picture of a 'constantly improving' (Ofsted) and genuinely diverse village school in the heart of Hackney's vision for a vibrant Dalston: the meeting of the affordable, family-focussed new homebuilding of the Dalston Plan with the area's historic, academically progressive past in the setting of the Borough's first 21st Century Street – the vision of a greener, more inclusive public space that connects the youth of the community with the vibrant market and bustle of contemporary Dalston. All of this future planning, to which the school is its academic provision (the Dalston Plan) or direct inspiration (21st Century Street), would be undermined by the closure of the school that is the beating heart of this community.

Reports and underlying data

What follows in this Chapter builds on and expands research submitted for earlier stages of the consultation period that are still pertinent and are augmented by new research and data analysis.

Positive:

- Strong improvements made by the school since Federation with Blossom
- Positive financial outlook
- Continual academic success
- Specific advantages to Colvestone of the Dalston Plan and the 21st Century Street on Colvestone Crescent

In addition the report shows:

- that the Council fails to follow the Statutory Guidance and their own Strategic Plan when planning for future demand for places
- Data showing that parents won't move to Princess May and which identifies key determinants of parental choice for Colvestone families
- Specific SEND impacts of the proposal
- Impacts on local developments
- the Council's briefing report deliberately masks the far worse problems in voluntary aided / faith schools, where capacity is at 60% compared to 80% in local authority schools
- Fails to account for significant increase in pollution (+40%) at the proposed merger site
- Identifies a range of historical protections on the site (and its use) that make re-purposing extremely difficult and risky
- Identifies a failure to follow the Strategic Plan when proposing to close and open school sites rather than to support and protect local authority provision (check clear in report)
- Strongly evidences community support for the school and its protection amongst other conclusions, analysis and recommendations.

Colvestone: A village school in the heart of Hackney

Colvestone Primary School offers a unique opportunity to showcase the future for Hackney Council's ambition for education. The current vibrant, buzzing community – rich in history and local association – has relevance to all the borough's needs for families now, and the future.

Financial viability

Following more turbulence than many other schools have battled over the last 3-4 years, the new school leadership team and partnership with Blossom Federation has turned around the financial position and viability of Colvestone. That transformation is *not solely* as a result of any 'additional investment' made above statutory funding from Hackney Council, but can be attributed to some excellent planning, prudent financial acumen and skilled resource management.

This efficient use of resources – and in some areas – a budget surplus, are a solid commercial reason for Colvestone to remain open. Blossom partnership should be given a chance to continue their skilled and committed financial transformation implementing the deficit recovery plan, taking the school to 'break even' by 2027/28 [1].

Vacant places

Well-documented falling pupil numbers across the borough, and vacancies at schools like Colvestone, can impact the efficient running of a school. But it has *not impacted* the quality of education – and contrary to predictions, Colvestone is proud of its newly found financial stability. These unexpected, but positive outcomes, are because a small school like Colvestone can be nimble, it can be flexible, and it can be quick to adapt and change when needed.

When is a merger a closure?

When planning any proposed merger, many factors clearly need to be considered – this is an exercise in efficient use of public money and Council resources, so due diligence is a critical part of the process. However, regardless of the size of either Princess May or Colvestone, and regardless of the suitability of either site to host the merger – if 87% of those parents (who responded) from one school in the merger, refuse to send their child(ren) to the other site – what happens then? The main reasons people gave for not wanting to send their child(ren) to Princess May were due to its location on a main road (81.5%). So rather than a proposed merger, this plan will effectively close down Colvestone Primary School without necessarily improving the situation at Princess May.

The need for Colvestone

Part of Hackney Council can actually see how special, unique and essential Colvestone is to the development of Dalston, as the school forms part of the planning of a new-build neighbourhood proposed over the road. The Dalston Development Plan includes building more than 600 new homes in the area around the school with around 30% of the housing being family sized units. This could bring 200+ families into the immediate area (see new analysis, this Chapter).

Offering real parental choice and an attractive proposition for families in these ambitious plans for ‘genuinely affordable’ new homes in Dalston *have to be supported by local infrastructure* – Colvestone Primary School was specifically identified as such key infrastructure in recent Dalston Plan / Hackney Planning engagement events. This is a school that will suffer less from pollution and that can be safely walked to. It appears extremely short-sighted therefore to shut down a well-performing school that could form the heart of a family-focussed, community-led Dalston vision.

Ofsted rating and projected outcomes

Colvestone is academically strong. This is due to the excellent and effective staff and leadership team, the closeness and individual attention of a one-form entry environment and the high standards and expectations across the school.

The last Ofsted inspection paid tribute to the school’s excellent community focus, in addition to the effective teaching: “You have a relentless focus on improving the quality of the curriculum. You are providing the pupils with a creative and diverse curriculum which broadens their minds and helps them think critically. The curriculum often focuses pupils’ learning on the community around them. This provides pupils not only with good subject knowledge, such as the geography and history of the area, but also with a strong sense of identity and connection to where they live.” What parent would not want that rich and diverse learning environment for their child(ren)?

Summary

Colvestone Primary School brings together the best of Hackney in a non-denominational, local authority school – and it shows the way forward, by putting a small, well-run financially viable school at the heart of the borough’s future.

Colvestone is a village school, at the heart of a 21st Century Street, in the centre of Hackney. It’s a school where every child matters, and we implore Hackney Council to take Colvestone off the list of schools to merge or close.

Footnotes

[1] School Resource Management Adviser Comprehensive Report for Colvestone Primary School 2042120 Hackney. Education and Skills Funding Agency. 16.03.2023

Context for Colvestone

After a period of instability Colvestone has entered into a successful partnership with Blossom Federation, which is seeing rapid impact on all areas: quality of education, finances, premises, leadership and have kept the community at the forefront of the changes they make. The dynamic and proactive approach has resulted in positive changes that will only continue. The governors have recommended that this partnership continues for the next 1-2 years and a decision about Colvestone's future after that would be made swiftly to ensure stability, continuity and success.

A successful partnership with Blossom Federation

Colvestone has had three years of instability alongside the pandemic. There has been a challenging restructure of support staff, defederation of Soaring Skies and the restructuring of the Senior Leadership Team which led to the unexpected resignation of the Executive Head and resignation of the Head of school in May/June 2022. As a result, Hackney Education asked the governors to seek partnerships with other schools to support Colvestone rather than externally recruiting a Headteacher. At a meeting with parents in May 2022, the then Director of Education Annie Gammon explained this approach and talked about the process. During the meeting, she was asked about the future of Colvestone and she confirmed that there was no intention to close the school.

Altogether 5 partnerships were proposed, which included a proposal from the Princess May leadership team, and 3 were selected for interview – 1 pulled out because of capacity and the other 2 were interviewed. Blossom was selected for many reasons:

- Successful partnership with other schools before their schools joined the federation
- Capacity and experience of Executive Headteacher
- Capacity to have a dedicated and experienced Head of School with a focus on teaching and learning and wellbeing
- An experienced federation school Business Leader which was paramount for the financial management of the school.

This successful partnership is in place and from the start Blossom have brought clear direction both with regards to finance and resources and also the teaching and learning. They have managed to keep the stability of a highly dedicated staff with minimal change to the school and the community.

Building on the success

The Partnership with Blossom Federation only started in September 2022 so it is still very much in its infancy. By proposing the amalgamation (closure) for Colvestone there has been no opportunity to continue to build the successful partnership and see the impact.

With hard work, there have been rapid changes and developments with impact already being seen in only 6 months most notably in:

- Finance: There is an improved financial picture and the team are on their way to bringing the school back to financial health. The school has a clear understanding of the finances with an in year surplus achieved in the school budget.
- Safeguarding: Safety and safeguarding within the school has dramatically improved. The building is compliant and has seen significant cosmetic and structural improvements
- Marketing and Communication: New website and increased use of social media to raise the profile of the school.

Despite the uncertainty around the change of leadership, the staff and parent community are largely stable and overwhelmingly supportive of the partnership and the school development.

Prior to the Council's announcement, the governors had decided to continue to partner with Blossom Federation for another year to continue building a stable and successful school.

Footnotes – Context for Colvestone

Soaring Skies Federation Governing Board minutes September 2020 – July 2021

Colvestone Primary School Governing Board minutes September 2021 – April 2023

A. Financial viability

Through the successful partnership with the Blossom Federation, in only 6 months the new Senior Leadership Team have demonstrated that they can return the school to financial health despite the reduced pupil numbers. We believe there is a strong case for the financial viability of Colvestone for the following reasons:

- New strong financial leadership led by Senior Leadership Team with experienced Senior Business Manager with proven track record of successfully returning schools to financial health.
- The new SLT have delivered a surplus school budget for Colvestone for the years since its arrival (2021/22, 2022/23). This financial modelling has been submitted to Hackney Education by the school and which, viewed in tandem with the independent SMRA report commissioned the school, projects considerable savings and surplus potential (even on reduced pupil numbers).
- The new SLT have worked closely with the Local Authority over the last 6 months to identify detailed cost savings and provided a viable budget deficit recovery plan based on detailed forecasted pupil numbers, evidenced efficiencies and cost saving measures.
- Hackney Funding: whilst significant investment has already gone into the building over the last 12 months, Mr Senior implied at the Colvestone engagement meeting on 24 April that the surplus in the school budget was a result of that investment, but we don't agree with Mr Senior's assumption. The Council invested £50k last year as part of the Schools Contingency Fund and £25k as part of the Supported Schools Programme. Firstly, Colvestone is entitled to de-delegated school contingency funding as much as any other school in financial need so implying that it is only funding from Hackney that has kept Colvestone in surplus is not a fair point. This could also be said of other schools in the borough and historically. Colvestone had received contingency funds from Hackney last year yet were not in further deficit. See below and Chapter 3.
- The deficit situation of Colvestone should have been more closely managed by Hackney Council over the last 6 years. Colvestone's cumulative school deficit has **not** been added to in the last 2 years (School financial years 2021/22 and 2022/23). The deficit has not entirely been caused by falling roll of pupil numbers over the last 2 years (the school has historically been far more resilient to these effects) so the deficit narrative as a result of the falling roll is inaccurate.
- Low reception numbers for Sept 2023: we think the unusually low reception preference numbers were a blip, the result of a building that was under extensive repair during the time when school tours were taking place, a leadership team that was new and unproven in the eyes of a prospective parent, and a reputation that may have taken a hit due to the turbulence of defederation and restructure. We believe the improvements to the physical

building and the new equipment, the increased social media presence, the strong academic performance, the embedding of successful leadership, and the construction of the 21st Century Street will restore sustainable numbers to the school. In addition, an independent report has been commissioned by the Education & Skills Funding Agency titled the School Resource Management Adviser Comprehensive Report for Colvestone Primary School written in March 2023 working with the Local Authority and SLT in which pupil numbers are forecast to rise by 15% [1] from now until 2025. This SRMA report and the pupil projections contained within it were signed off on as recently at April 2023. The claims not to recognise or agree with these projections (Briefing Report – Informal Consultation, 4.22) are therefore both contradicted by this officially-stated position and without substantiating evidence that contradicts the claims produced with, and signed off by, Hackney Education.

- Partnering with the Blossom Federation (that includes Daubeney, Sebright and Lauriston) allows Colvestone to share some costs and deliver cross-federation financial efficiencies. Only incremental costs are being charged to Colvestone by the Blossom Federation for cross-federation support to help the school financially and also realise the benefits of economies of scale through this type of collaboration/structure.
- In the case of closing/amalgamating Colvestone, the historical debt would have to be swallowed by Hackney, making Colvestone an extremely expensive school to close. There may be less risk-taking to first see if the school can be financially viable and run down its own debt fairly rapidly.
- Through proactive marketing measures including social media the new leadership has increased Colvestone's profile and with the recent upgrades in the premises and new hall, we believe Colvestone will further prove it's financial viability by attracting new pupils cementing it's position in the community and establishing new revenue streams through lettings and community events.

Specific rebuttals of claims made in the Briefing Report – Informal Consultation (4.22, p.17, 18, repeated pp.775-6), challenged at Cabinet (Sept 25th, 2023) and repeated in the Statutory Notice.

See also Chapter 3 for where these challenges intersect with a failure to follow the Constitution.

Questions raised at Cabinet challenged the selective representation of financial modelling for one of the schools in frame in the Briefing Report and the conclusions reached in the LA's summary of its resources, underlying data and analysis. It is unclear how these differences can be dismissed by the Cllr without full disclosure of the documents that underpin the conclusions of the LA, disputed by members of the public with access to the same documents, such that decision makers, Council and the public can inform their own evaluation of the situation. The

bases of these challenges to the LA's conclusions are outlined below (and in **Chapter 3 – Appendix A – misrepresentation of financial data – 1.2 (a) – a presumption of openness**): The Briefing Report, Responses to the Consultation (Appendix S, pp. 775-6) and subsequent references to its conclusions at Cabinet, misrepresent the content of the independent SRMA report on Colvestone by omission, and the overall financial analysis on the school presented in the Report – the analysis that concludes with the stark claim that Colvestone is “particularly financially unsustainable” (Briefing Report, 4.22, pp.11/12) – fails to accurately represent the data on which it is based: the school's own conservative budget projections and the savings (and conclusions) of the independent SMRA report “proactively requested” by the school's Senior Business Manager “to support him in improving the financial outlook of CPS (Colvestone Primary School)” (SRMA Report on Colvestone School, p.4). Viewed in combination, the two sources of modelling data the Council are using suggest “highly achievable” savings (SRMA Report) leading to budget surpluses and debt repayment, albeit over a longer period than that modelled in the SRMA report. This is achievable on lower pupil numbers than those used in the SRMA report – lower pupil numbers reflected in Colvestone's own financial modelling.

By referencing a table in the Briefing Report of school deficits as evidence of “financial unsustainability” the Briefing Report conflates debt and financial sustainability. The SRMA Report claims that the rapid running down of the school's deficit in 3-4 years would be “extremely challenging” – a comment the Briefing Report extracts – *but not impossible*. What the SRMA report does not do is suggest that a longer term of deficit reduction would not be viable, or that the running of surpluses be achieved and sustained through the identification of “highly achievable” savings as the deficit is run down over time and pupil numbers improve. The SRMA lists a number of reasons for this recent drop in pupils, many of which have been reversed (see 1.2(a) above). The specific points of misrepresentation are outlined below:

‘High achievability’ of surplus and longer-term deficit reduction

The Colvestone Senior Business Leader produced a 3-year budget projection for the Council, the headline figures of which are included in the Briefing Report for Cabinet (p.11/12). Omitted from the reporting of this highly conservative budget projection produced by the school are a series of caveats to these budget figures that suggest sources of additional funding that would improve the financial projections (as has been the case in 22/23 when the school ran a surplus – see ‘Notes / Assumptions’ in the 3-year budget produced by the Colvestone SLT). Further, when this highly conservative budget projection (that relies on far fewer numbers of pupils joining the school than the SRMA report – see below) is viewed in the context of the SRMA report commissioned by, and to support, the school's Senior Business Leader, a huge volume of additional savings are identified: £614,000 in ‘high achievability’ efficiency savings (and a further £167,000 in ‘medium achievability’ savings) over the next three years. (Note: only £30,000 p.a. is speculative in the form of grant targets). This suggests a ‘high achievability’ of in-year surplus and progressive deficit reduction over time. The Briefing Report prepared for Cabinet fails to reflect the savings identified in a report that is their best financial modelling and on which it signed off, and therefore fails to disclose the positive financial outlook that results from viewing these two documents together (as the Briefing Report purports to do).

Pupil projections

The Briefing Report (4.22, p.11) disputes rising pupil forecasts contained within the SRMA report in which it is quoted “the SRMA and school have discussed the pupil number forecasts with the LA, who advised that these numbers are not unrealistic.” The report states: “The local authority is firmly of the view that the projected number of children joining the school, on which the budget is based, are unrealistic.” It is unclear on what grounds this claim is made as it obscures the Local Authority’s role in producing the SRMA report, including during the pre-publishing review phase of its production, and signing off on its conclusions (without challenging this specific point) in April/May 2023. The relevant section of the Briefing Report for Cabinet (4.22) also fails to disclose that the financial projections produced by the school are not based on such steep rises in enrollment, as projected by the SRMA report, and are therefore far more conservative on this point – in line with what appears to be Hackney Council’s current position.

That the school, as is subsequently pointed out, had 14 new enrollments in Reception in 2023 whilst the school had been under the public threat of closure for several months, and Hackney Education had advised at least one parent (that we are aware of and have signed dispositions from) looking to apply to the school that the school was to be closed and not to transfer, is, frankly, remarkable. The true extent of pupil number suppression due to the consultation will be hard to gauge, but is likely to be considerable – p. 32 of the Briefing Report documents the considerable damage done by the consultation to many of the schools in frame. Further, the allocations data for previous years has been requested (both as casework and through the Pre-Action legal correspondence) but not produced by the Council. By failing to disclose this information it is impossible to ascertain whether pupil numbers enrolling at Colvestone may already have been artificially suppressed through the allocations process over preceding years. (We understand that there is precedent for this mode of artificial suppression by the LA in the borough from education campaigners in the 1990s).

Deficit Reduction

By focussing on a rapid paydown of the deficit the Report fails to model for a more manageable deficit reduction plan that could be sustained by the school. It is unclear from the Report, and from responses received in Cabinet, why this would not be more desirable for the overall Council budgets – a budget that would have to absorb the whole of the deficit were the school to be closed. Indeed, in its responses, the Council appear to focus purely on attempting to produce additional arguments as to why the school should be closed, rather than on possible alternatives (advocated for in the Estates Strategy, p.7) that might enable the protection of a single-form intake LA school.

The comment in the Briefing Report that Colvestone ran a surplus in 22/23 because of ‘a mid year additional cash injection’ suggests that Colvestone was only in surplus in the last financial year because of emergency Council intervention. This insinuation was repeated at Cabinet (25th September). The school received funding from the Schools Contingency Fund, the de-delegated fund to which all schools contribute and to which all are eligible to apply. This money was applied for to help improve the school building and in particular ensure that it was statutorily safe and compliant. The school had a right to apply and were eligible for this funding which is why it is there. One might suggest that the Management Team would have been remiss not to have applied for it – as is the case for all monies that the school applies for and receives from the Council and other funds. To imply that this an emergency intervention by the Council, or the only reason for running a surplus, is highly subjective and contestable at best. Many schools (both in frame of this consultation and outside) apply for and receive this funding, as they are entitled to do. To suggest that it was a vital intervention fails to disclose the nature of the Council funding and its purpose, and thereby misrepresents it as emergency funding.

Without greater clarity it is unclear how Cabinet (and the general public / stakeholders in the further consultation) might be expected to make financially-based decisions on the proposals. Note that the Briefing Report identifies ‘financial sustainability’ as a key metric for both determining schools in scope and for the evaluation of the proposals outlined in the consultation.

Footnotes – Financial viability

[1] School Resource Management Adviser Comprehensive Report for Colvestone Primary School 2042120 Hackney. Education and Skills Funding Agency. 16.03.2023
Soaring Skies Federation Governing Board minutes September 2020 – July 2021
Colvestone Primary School Governing Board minutes September 2021 – April 2023

B. Academic record

Education standards at Colvestone have been consistently high. This is a successful school with children receiving a high quality of education.

Colvestone has a 'Good' Ofsted rating and this has been in place for the last 15 years. There have been three Full Inspections (2008, 2011 and 2014) and a Short Inspection in 2018 that confirmed the on-going rating.

Colvestone achieved excellent KS2 SATs results in 2022 that were well above the national average AND the Hackney average. For instance, 81% of children at Colvestone achieved expected attainment in all three subjects – this is 12% points above the Hackney average of 69% of children.

The attached attainment data for the last three years shows that Colvestone has been improving its outcomes for children, despite challenges at the national level.

RWM	2018	2019	2022 *
	EXS	EXS	EXS
Colvestone	71%	76%	81%
Hackney	71%	66%	69%
National	65%	65%	59%

Reading	2018	2019	2022 *
	EXS	EXS	EXS
Colvestone	71%	79%	88%
Hackney	78%	72%	80%
National	76%	73%	75%

Writing	2018	2019	2022 *
	EXS	EXS	EXS
Colvestone	89%	83%	81%
Hackney	84%	84%	79%
National	79%	78%	70%

Maths	2018	2019	2022 *
	EXS	EXS	EXS
Colvestone	86%	79%	81%
Hackney	79%	78%	78%
National	76%	79%	72%

Colvestone has been noted as a school that centres diversity effectively in its curriculum and that this is a strength which is important in the current climate and Hackney's dedication to Anti-Racism.

A letter of support to keep Colvestone Primary School open has been sent by Hackney National Education Union (see [Appendix](#)).

Summary

In its statement announcing the potential closures and mergers, Hackney Education states that part of the purpose is "to ensure all our schools continue to provide excellent education for our children, with the very best resources and facilities." If the intent of closing schools is to ensure educational excellence, **it doesn't make sense to close a school that is consistently delivering above average performance in the borough.**

C. Parent choice

The merger of Colvestone with Princess May and the closure of De Beauvoir would erode parent choice in two ways:

- It would directly undermine the choices Colvestone parents have made for their children
- It would severely reduce the choices local parents have for educating their children

Impact on current Colvestone families

Hackney Education is proposing merging two schools that are very different. Princess May is a two-form entry school in an imposing Victorian building that sits on a busy main road.

Colvestone is a one-form entry school in a small, intimate building that sits on a quiet side street.

A recent poll of Colvestone parents, in which $\frac{2}{3}$ of households responded, **showed that 95.7 % of respondents did not list Princess May as one of their top 6 choices** when they originally selected a primary school. Out of 70 households, only 3 had originally placed Princess May on their elective list, with only 2 having it in their top 3.

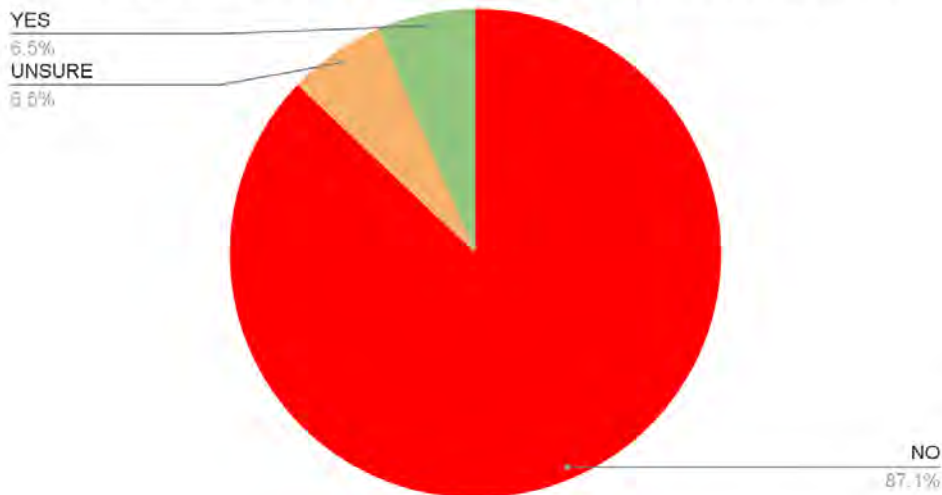
When parents questioned Paul Senior very directly at the Colvestone engagement meeting on 24 April as to what would happen if the Council went ahead with this decision to merge the schools and a majority of parents **chose not** to send their children to Princess May, no clear answer was provided. It doesn't seem Hackney Education has prepared for this scenario.

Colvestone parents then conducted a second survey of our parent and carer community, to provide Hackney Education with some more detailed insight about parental school choices. In our second survey, we reached again approximately $\frac{2}{3}$ of Colvestone households. We were very careful to ask for only one response per household so that we were not doubling up on opinions. **There are 104 households with children at Colvestone and 73 took part in the survey.**

Our first question was very simple: "If the Council were to go ahead with the proposed merger of Colvestone Primary School with Princess May in September 2024, **would you agree to sending your child(ren) to the Princess May Site**. (Please answer as honestly as possible – Please don't answer (this question only) if you only have a child in year 5 or 6.)"

Out of 73 answers, 62 have children who would be affected by the proposed merger in 2024. Of these 62 households, 54 answered **NO, they will not agree to send their child to Princess May. This is 87%**. A further 4 households were unsure at this point. Only 4 households said they would agree to sending their children to Princess May.

WILL YOU SEND YOUR CHILD(REN) TO PRINCESS MAY?



The main reasons people gave for not wanting to send their children to Princess May were around:

- Location on a main road (81.5%)
- Pollution levels (77.8%)
- Not liking the school itself (66.7%)
- Not wanting to send their children to a bigger school (63%)

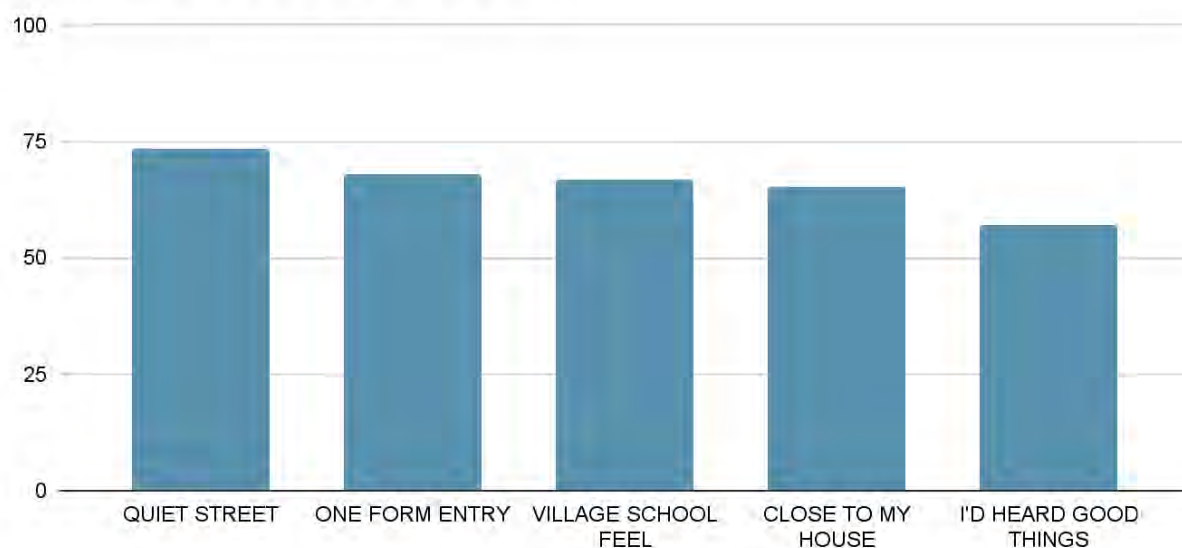
We also asked our families what the principal factors were that they took into consideration when choosing a primary school for their children. **Distance from home** was overwhelmingly the most important (chosen by 70.8% of families). A close second were **pollution levels around the school** (65.3%) and the **size of the school** (63.9%), coming in at **more important** than **academic performance and Ofsted ratings** (58.3%). The **quiet location of the school** was also considered important by over 50% of the parents. Another very important factor for many parents (40.3%) was being able to choose a **non-faith** school. **SEN** support and community feel of school were also repeated themes (22.5% of respondents to our survey have a child with SEN). Most of these categories, such as quiet street, distance and one-form entry, are not qualities that can be fulfilled at Princess May, hence Princess May barely featured on families' radars when they were making their initial choices.

Comments from the survey:

"I sent my eldest son to Princess May 8 years ago and had to change schools after a few months because we were really unhappy with the standards of the school. We visited the school again a couple of years ago, whilst going through the selection process for my youngest child, who currently attends Colvestone and we were disappointed to discover that Princess May is still not a viable option for us to send our children. We would not send our child to Princess May, our child is very happy at Colvestone and we're it to close we would look at finding a similar school to Colvestone probably outside the borough."

We proceeded to ask parents and carers, what were the **specific appeals of Colvestone itself**. See the graph below:

WHY WE CHOSE COLVESTONE



Other important reasons were of course the wonderful staff, and the architecture and layout of buildings, the SEN support, the experience of older siblings, and the strong community feel.

We thought it would also be useful for the Council to know **which schools parents are actually interested in**, should they no longer be able to send their children to Colvestone. Here are the responses, ranked in order of preference:

- 1) Shacklewell Primary (35.3%) – yet this school is oversubscribed
- 2) Out of borough (22.1%) – a clear risk of losing even more school funding for the borough
- 3) None of the closest schools but staying in borough (16.2%)
- 4) Halley House / Queensbridge / Mossbourne Parkside (all 14.7%)

The local faith schools all attracted much lower numbers. The remaining survey results are in the [Appendix](#).

When reviewing what Colvestone Primary School has to offer, it is clear from the factors listed above that parents are choosing it very deliberately. **It is simply not acceptable to ignore all of the factors that go into making this choice.**

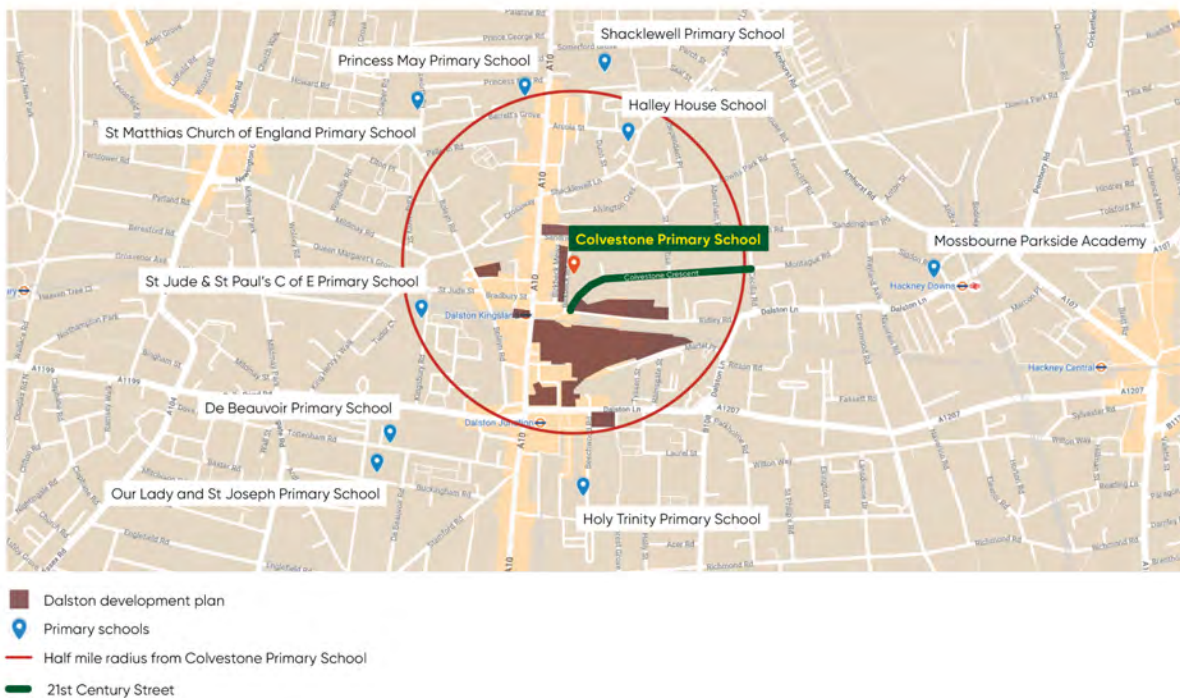
Also, please note that at the 24 April meeting, parents asked Paul Senior if they were to send their children to Princess May what guarantees they would have that Princess May, which is

also struggling with under enrollment, would not be closed in the next 5 to 6 years. Mr. Senior replied that he could make no such assurances.

If a minority of parents send their children to Princess May, the merger could do little to improve the enrollment problem at Princess May. In addition, Colvestone children who move there could have the deeply traumatic experience of having their school closed twice. **If the Council can't ensure the stability of the Princess May/Colvestone merger, it should not be undertaking this plan.**

Reduction of choice for local families

The closure of Colvestone and nearby De Beauvoir Primary School would mean there would be no non-faith, one-form entry local authority schools within a mile of the Colvestone building.



Our local area would have three religious schools, Holy Trinity, St Matthias, and Our Lady and St. Joseph. According to a 2017 consultation report, **84% of respondents agreed that they would like Hackney's schools to be non-denominational.**[1] But the closure of Colvestone and De Beauvoir could force parents to choose between sending their child to a religious school or travelling further for school. And the further they are from a school, the less likely they are to get in.

The area also has an academy, Mossbourne Parkside Academy, and a free school, Halley House.

Halley House has deeply troubling ownership. It is run by the Bellevue Place Education Trust, (BPET) which operates 10 primary schools mostly in London and which is a joint venture of the Bellevue Education Trust and a company called the Place Group. Bellevue Education Trust is owned by GEMS Education, the largest operator of private kindergarten to grade 12 schools in the world, whose founder and chairman is based in the UAE. A consortium led by the private equity firm CVC Capital Partners owns a 30 percent share of GEMS Education including its stake in Bellevue Education Trust. BPET and its related companies have been the subject of several newspaper articles questioning their ownership and business practices. The articles include:

- Trustees of BPET own substantial shares in companies, including the Place Group, to which BPET has awarded large contracts. [2]
- In 2016 the Sunday Times revealed that a Saudi oil tycoon was the largest investor, via a British Virgin Island's company, in Bellevue Education. [3]
- The Good Law Project threatened to issue legal proceedings after the Place Group won a contract to run tender competitions on behalf of public sector bodies to procure services to reach their net zero goals. The framework was valued at £70 billion and the Place Group was the only bidder. The agreement was withdrawn after the Good Law Project exposed this shoddy procurement deal. [4]

It should be noted that although Hackney Council says now it was against the establishment of free schools, in fact BPET says it was fully supported by the Council to open up Halley House.[5] A 2014 article in the Hackney Citizen about the opening of free schools in Hackney states, "Hackney Council's newly-appointed Cabinet Member for Children's Service, Councillor Antoinette Bramble said: 'We've always been very open to innovation within education, and the phenomenal improvements seen in our schools over the last decade are testament to that.'

'We work closely with all of the schools in Hackney and *we look forward to supporting any free schools which open in our borough*. They join a family of schools with high aspirations for all of Hackney's young people.'" (emphasis added) [6]

It appears rich people are using schools, including Halley House, to become richer. Parents in the area should not feel forced to send their children there due to limited options in the area.

The only nearby local authority options would be Shacklewell, which is currently full, and Princess May. Hackney Council is proposing sending students from Colvestone to Princess May. However, as indicated above, Princess May is a very unpopular choice for Colvestone families.

The reduction of choice in the Dalston area also threatens to jeopardise the Council's ambitions for the new development in Dalston Plan (see [Impact on local development](#)). While the Council claims that it wants to attract families to the new flats, **those flats may not be attractive to**

families if the only choices in the area are three religious schools, a free school owned by remote and global corporations, an academy, a school on the busy A10 and a school that is oversubscribed.

The Hackney Labour Party 2022-26 Manifesto states, “We will continue to oppose the forced academisation of schools... and campaign for an education system that is democratic and inclusive.”[7] However, the current proposal could lead to academisation via the back door. **If Hackney closes local authority schools and later demand requires new schools to be built or reopened, the government’s Free School Presumption policy means the Council will be under pressure to reopen them as free schools/academies, further reducing the proportion of local authority schools.** [8]

Hackney Education has already been disproportionately allocating students to free schools, academies and faith schools. In 2022 although academy, faith and free schools represent 33 percent of schools, they received 40 percent of allocations and in 2021 received 46 percent of allocations.[9] Using current per pupil funding figure (£6,484), that means that in 2022, Hackney gave more than £162,000 per year to academy, faith and free schools and in 2021 more than £233,000 per year that might have gone to local authority schools.[10]

In the 24 April Council engagement meeting with Colvestone parents/carers, Hackney Education said that students are allocated to their closest school. In a time of dropping enrollment Hackney Education is allocating students and hundreds of thousands of pounds to schools that it says it has no or limited authority to close. That practice undermines local authority schools, and is based on a presumption that academy, faith and free schools are the same as local authority provision, which this current situation has clearly demonstrated is not the case. **If Hackney were genuinely committed to ensuring local authority schools can survive this period of decreasing enrollment and remain a viable choice for parents now and in the future, it would allocate students to their closest local authority school.**

Summary

The consequences of this proposed merger have not been fully considered. In merging Colvestone and Princess May, the Council is attempting to send families to a very different education environment and our evidence suggests a majority of parents do not want to go to Princess May. In a choice system the Council has limited control over where parents send their children and the question of which school parents will choose is hard to predict. Parents may go to free schools or academies, which doesn't help the Council's finances. They may leave the borough altogether.

The Council appears to have no plan in the event that only a minority of parents send their children to Princess May, which seems likely therefore leaving Princess May in a similar vulnerable position. In the absence of a plan, those who do send their child(ren) to Princess May, run the risk of having their school closed twice.

The proposed merger and closure plan also severely reduces choice for all local parents and prospective parents and increases the proportion of faith, academy and free schools both now and in the future.

Colvestone offers families of this area a choice that should continue to be available. This community deserves to have a non-denominational, local authority school they can walk to, one that has a strong academic record and that offers the closeness and individual attention of a one-form entry environment.

Footnotes – Parent choice section

[1] Hackney: schools for everyone, Consultation Report, Dec. 2017, page 30. See:

https://consultation.hackney.gov.uk/communications-engagement/hackney-schools-for-everyone/user_uploads/hackney-schools-for-everyone-survey-report.pdf

[2] "Will government plans lead to 1,000 academy chiefs paid £150,000+?," The Guardian, 26 Apr. 2016

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2016/apr/26/academy-chiefs-pay-bromley-schools-rachel-de-souza>

[3] Saudi oil tycoon revealed as investor in schools company, The Sunday Times, 10 April 2016. See:

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/f53a9274-fe97-11e5-b5b9-5f40d4ddd6f6?shareToken=06209c7b9c1b19f09b17eec896f6d00b>

[4] Transparency has prevailed this time, the Good Law Project, 11 November, 2022. See:

<https://goodlawproject.org/update/transparency-has-prevailed-this-time/>

[5] Bellevue Place Education Trust—the free school group you've never heard of, Schools Week, 22 Apr. 2016 See:

<https://schoolsworld.co.uk/bellevue-place-education-trust-who-are-they/>

[6] Three new free schools approved for Hackney, Hackney Citizen, 19 June 2014 See:

<https://www.hackneycitizen.co.uk/2014/06/19/three-new-free-schools-approved-hackney/>

[7] Hackney Labour Party 2022-26 Manifesto, page 26. See:

<https://www.hackney-labour.org.uk/hackney-labour-2022-26-manifesto/>

[8] The free school presumption, Jan. 2023. See:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/113056/5/Free_school_presumption_guidance.pdf

[9] Applications and Offers at Hackney Primary Schools 2018-22, See:

<https://education.hackney.gov.uk/sites/default/files/document/Applications%20and%20Offers%20at%20Hackney%20Primary%20Schools%202018-22.pdf>

[10] Primary schools potential closure / merger plans, See:

<https://education.hackney.gov.uk/content/primary-schools-potential-changes#:~:text=Hackney%20Council%20is%20considering%20consulting,September%202024%20at%20the%20earliest.>

D. Impact on children with special educational needs

Colvestone has a high proportion of children who are on the SEND register (25%).

Seven percent of Colvestone students have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), above the 4.3% average across the borough and significantly above the national average of 2.2%. This is 10 individual children with a range of identified needs.

In addition, there are another 25 children who have identified as needing additional support due to their special educational needs. This 17% is similar to the Hackney average but much higher than the national average.

This proposal will affect the majority of children on the SEND register as they are concentrated in the lower year groups (rather than Year 5 and Year 6 who will not be directly affected).[1]

Year Group	EHCP	SEN Support
Reception	0	6
Year 1	3	6
Year 2	2	2
Year 3	1	2
Year 4	1	1
Year 5	1	4
Year 6	2	4
Total	10	25

There were 16 SEND families who responded to the second parental survey about parental choice. ALL of those families affected (14 families) stated that they would NOT send their child(ren) to Princess May.

For SEND families the main reasons people gave for not wanting to send their children to Princess May were around:

- Not wanting to send their children to a bigger school (71%)
- Pollution levels (64%)

We also asked our families what the principal factors were that they took into consideration when choosing a primary school for their children. For SEND families, the **size of the school** was significantly more important (chosen by 81%) than **distance from home** (chosen by 38% of SEND families but 71% of all families). In second place were **pollution levels around the school** (63%).

“Colvestone is the ideal school for my 6-year-old autistic son,” said one parent. “As a one-form entry school, tucked away from busy roads, it provides a calmer, less overwhelming environment, which is of utmost importance to children that are autistic and struggle to process overstimulating surroundings. I could never imagine him settling into a two-form entry school and being as happy as he is at Colvestone. Losing this school would be devastating for him.”

We also asked SEND parents which schools they are interested in. Again there are very broad responses:

- Queensbridge (25%)
- Out of borough (25%)
- Shacklewell Primary (19%) – yet this school is oversubscribed
- None of the closest schools but staying in borough (19%)
- Halley House / Mossbourne Parkside (both 13%)

The local faith schools were not chosen by faith schools at all. Two SEND families stated that they would not choose another school and would consider home-educating instead. The remaining survey results are in the [Appendix](#) to this Chapter.

Once again, it is clear from the factors listed above that parents are choosing Colvestone very deliberately. At the public meeting, a parent talked about how they travel from Newham with their SEND child because it is a small, friendly, inclusive school where her son is supported and encouraged rather than feeling excluded from the other pupils. We are aware of another family who travels from Islington for similar reasons.

This informal proposal to close/amalgamate Colvestone, places these SEND children in a very vulnerable situation as they would have to move to another school. The parents are particularly concerned about potential transitions as these children need stability and routine.

It should be stressed that Colvestone’s position with regards to children with SEND (and the excellent access to education and provision that it provides) differentiates it from other schools in scope. It should be noted that the new Equality Impact Assessment accepts this (*Briefing Report – Informal Consultation*, pg 68); the response is that the level of support provided by Colvestone will inevitably fall because of the financial impact of low pupil numbers. There is no evidence provided that this would be the case, or concern from the school that given future projections that it would be impacted as is suggested in the future. Also it should be noted that an Education, Health and Care Officer from the Hackney SEND team responded to the consultation with concerns about the proposed closure (*Briefing Report – Informal Consultation* p.345), highlighted by Kwest, but unresponded to by Hackney Education in the report.

Two example letters from parents of children with special education needs can be found in the [Appendix](#).

The Council should understand that Colvestone is a positive choice for many SEND families, and this is a strength to build on for the future as there is increasing demand for SEND places.

Footnotes – Impact on children with special educational needs

[1] Colvestone SENCO presentation to SEND parents in October 2022

E. Impact on local development

Impact on the Dalston Development Plan

The Draft Dalston Plan has ambitious plans for Dalston with Hackney's population set to increase by 16% [1], which, as the Mayor stated, was created so that "Residents' priorities will be put at the heart of the Council's work in Dalston". The Dalston Plan forms parts of commitments made and adopted in 2020 as part of the Hackney Local Plan (LP33). These proposals would benefit Colvestone by delivering new children to the immediate locality in need of primary school provision in the short to mid-term, and long term place demand downstream from these projects. These committed projects would be harmed by the closure of Colvestone Primary School.

In summary, these plans include:

- [Building more than 600 new homes in Dalston](#) [2]. For all of the major new developments, Colvestone would be the closest primary school provision. There is no similar development plan near Princess May.
- Turning Colvestone Crescent into the [first 21st Century Street](#) [3], the borough's first permanent play street.

Most of the development would be concentrated at the [Kingsland Shopping Centre](#) [4] (see reference image below) with around 30% of the proposed housing being 3 bedroom family sized units and the aim of 50% of the development to be affordable housing (as well as smaller residential developments at surrounding sites) [5]. This could bring 200+ new families into the immediate area. See the new, specific analysis included below. If Colvestone and De Beauvoir schools were closed, parents in that development would have to travel almost half a mile to get to a non-denominational school. And even the closest one, Princess May, sits next to the A10 (see map in [Air pollution](#)).



Reference image: Hackney Local Development Plan 2033 – opportunity site D5 – Kingsland Shopping Centre

[Government guidance](#) [6] on school closures advises that local authorities can close schools when “there are surplus places elsewhere in the local area which can accommodate displaced pupils and there is no predicted demand for the school in the medium to long term”. The Dalston Plan makes it clear that there is demand for Colvestone’s school places in the medium to long term, because of the large number of new housing which the SPD will encourage in the immediate vicinity, and for which Colvestone will be the nearest primary school. The specific impact for Colvestone for the homebuilding projects are detailed in the following GLA-modelled child yield analysis.

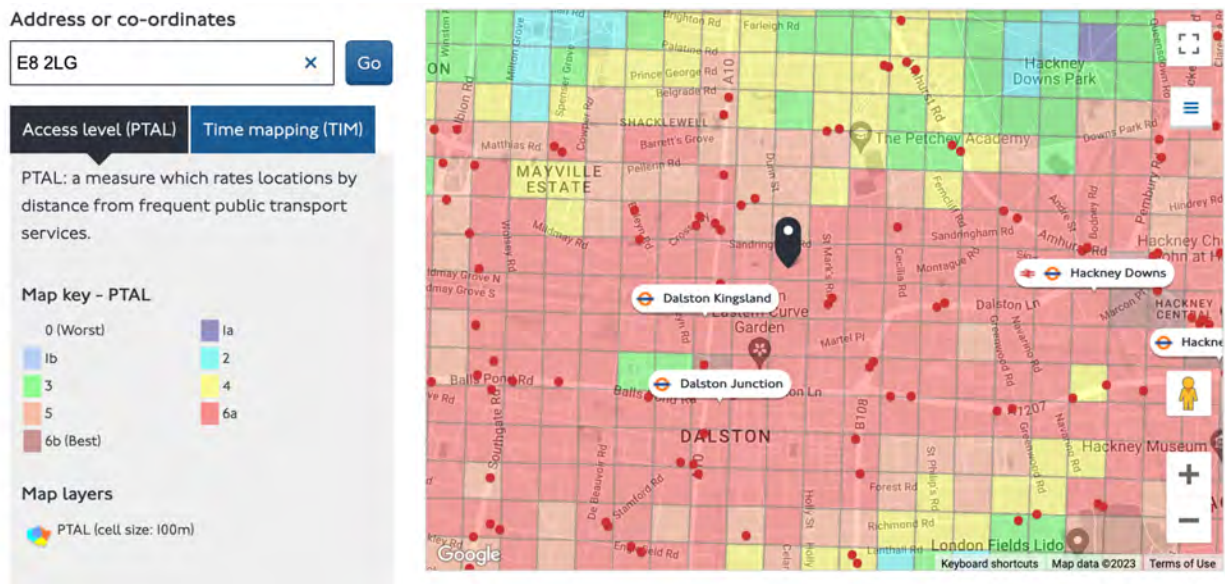
New expected child yield data from the Dalston Plan and homebuilding commitments made by Hackney Labour for new housing delivery (2019-2029)

Despite housing, and affordable family housing being identified as a key driver, very little attention or scrutiny is given to the question of housing in the Briefing Reports. Where the *Briefing Report - Informal Consultation* addresses housing development – §§4.37-4.43 - the references are generic and don’t respond to the specific position of Colvestone in relation to particular proposed growth – this is why the response in Appendix S §43 / p.776 is not convincing. Despite repeated requests for the underlying planning materials for the specific

allocations close to Colvestone (for all of the Dalston Plan developments Colvestone is the nearest primary school provision), with details of the mix of housing (ie how much is family housing), and the necessary underlying data / population calculations necessary to arrive at the conclusion in the Briefing Reports that homebuilding - and specifically the Dalston Plan and its proximity to Colvestone - would have negligible effect, none of these resources have been produced by Hackney Council for the consultation. This is particularly alarming as the recent Dalston Plan engagement events repeatedly identified Colvestone as key infrastructure for the project and further, that responses in Cabinet to questions regarding this that 'children wouldn't arrive soon enough' (Sept. 25th, 2023) suggests that either this data was being withheld, the elected official failed to understand the necessary timeframes that should be respected when considering future demand for places ('mid- to long term', Statutory Guidance), or to understand that the Dalston Plan developments are scheduled for delivery in the 'short to medium term' (Dalston Plan planning documents). In the absence of these materials from the Council, we have used Council figures and the GLA Population Yield Calculator to predict the child yield from the developments.

Dalston Plan Analysis

The following child yield figures for the Dalston Plan (delivery: short to mid term) were calculated using the projected housing mix for each of the developments identified in the Draft Dalston Plan and using the GLA's current Population Yield Calculator (v3.2). For this, the location of Colvestone Primary School was identified as Inner London (Geographic Aggregation) and with a PTAL of 5-6 (confirmed by TfL's WebCAT PTAL identification tool, as pictured below:



Source:

<https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/urban-planning-and-construction/planning-with-webcat/webcat?lat=51.54912&lon=-0.07257&type=Ptal&locationId=ChIJSbNPHY0cdkgR3dziaXv3R8s&input=E8+2LG&>

[zoomLevel=15&places=Stations+stops+and+piers&places=Stations+stops+and+piers&comparePtaYear=&scenario=2021+%28Forecast%29&name=2011](https://www.google.com/maps/@51.525,0.125,15z/data=!3m1!1e3!3m2!1sStations+stops+and+piers&places=Stations+stops+and+piers&comparePtaYear=&scenario=2021+%28Forecast%29&name=2011)

For each of the Development Sites the number of proposed 1, 2 and 3 bed units were identified from the planning documents (Draft Dalston Plan). Using the LP33 (Hackney Local Plan) the target dwelling mixes were identified as 50% affordable housing. These mixes are accessible here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HRu0A_fdoWUi3OBfzUT03TT4S9gYwHDq/view

Of these, the affordable housing is split 60% social rent / 40% Intermediate 'affordable'. For the GLA calculations, 'intermediate' dwellings are classed as the same class as 'market rent'.

One development site, D5, has upper and lower values of dwelling yields, and so the following total numbers of dwellings (market / intermediate and social) have a higher and lower set of values. Child yield figures were produced for both.

Once each of the proportional values are applied (market / affordable, then subdivided social / intermediate) the following number of total units for the Dalston Plan by size, type, and GLA class are as follows:

Using the upper unit value of D5, the Development yield totals are:

1 bed: 62 social, 146 market and intermediate
2 bed: 67 social, 157 market and intermediate
3 bed: 67 social, 155 market and intermediate

Using the GLA Population Yield Calculator with the above criteria, this dwelling mix would deliver:

Children aged 0 - 4: 132.7
Children aged 5-11: 103.4

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed
Market and Intermediate Units	146	157	155	0
Social Units	62	67	67	0

Total Units	654
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Geographic Aggregation	Inner London
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PTAL	PTAL 5-6
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Notes

Sample size of 23 sites

Shaded cells require user input

Select both geography and PTAL

For developments in Outer London with PTAL 5-6 use [London/PTAL 5-6] or [Outer London/3-4] to calculate yield

Yield from Development (persons)

	Market & Intermediate	Social	Total
Ages 0, 1, 2, 3 & 4	41.0	91.7	132.7
Ages 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11	29.5	73.8	103.4
Ages 12, 13, 14 & 15	11.0	38.6	49.6
Ages 16 & 17	5.8	20.4	26.2
18-64	873.7	313.7	1187.5
65+	20.9	7.3	28.1
Total Yield	981.8	545.6	1527.4

For the lower unit value of D5, the Development yield totals are:

1 bed: 46 social, 107 market and intermediate

2 bed: 50 social, 116 market and intermediate

3 bed: 49 social, 113 market and intermediate

Using the GLA Population Yield Calculator with the above criteria, this dwelling mix would deliver:

Children aged 0 - 4: 97.6

Children aged 5-11: 76

GLA Population Yield Calculator

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed
Market and Intermediate Units	107	116	113	0
Social Units	46	50	49	0

Total Units	481	
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Geographic Aggregation	Inner London
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PTAL	PTAL 5-6
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Notes

Sample size of 23 sites

Shaded cells require user input

Select both geography and PTAL

For developments in Outer London with PTAL 5-6 use [London/PTAL 5-6] or [Outer London/3-4] to calculate yield

Yield from Development

(persons)

	Market & Intermediate	Social	Total
Ages 0, 1, 2, 3 & 4	30.0	67.6	97.6
Ages 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11	21.6	54.4	76.0
Ages 12, 13, 14 & 15	8.0	28.4	36.4
Ages 16 & 17	4.2	15.0	19.2
18-64	640.5	231.8	872.3
65+	15.3	5.4	20.7
Total Yield	719.7	402.6	1122.2

As can be seen from the above figures, the Dalston Plan developments (planned for delivery in the short to medium term) will deliver 76 and 100 children to the immediate vicinity of Colvestone primary school - between 2.5 and 3.5 entire year groups of school aged children within very short (most sites, less than 100m), fully pedestrianised access to primary school provision. This is anything but negligible, and the proportion of 0-4 year olds suggests an even healthier future demand for places downstream. This data draws a compelling picture of future demand for places in the short to medium term.

Note, all of the Dalston Plan sites are scheduled for completion in the short to medium term, timeframes identified by the Planning documents in the Draft Dalston Plan. With the exception of site D2, this short or medium timeframe designation projects completion by 2029. D2 is still classed as a 'Medium Term', for completion by 2033, but is a much smaller proportion of the total dwelling mix.

Closing Colvestone could impede the success of the development by making it hard for developers to sell those apartments to families, given the limited schooling options. The closure of so many local authority schools, and particularly one close to a new development, threatens

to lock Hackney into a death spiral when it comes to families living in the area--a reduction in families leads to the closure of schools and reduction of choice, which makes the area unappealing to families, which leads to more closed. If Hackney wants to get out of that pattern, it has to fight to keep as many schools afloat as possible during these difficult times, especially ones near new family-friendly developments, in order to make it possible to bring families back to the area.

Additional Hackney Council Homebuilding Commitments in Dalston

Hackney Council have committed to delivering 1330 new homes per year to Hackney over ten years, 10% of which are designated in Hackney (i.e. 1330 over 10 years). Assuming all houses are sold at market rates (the Hackney Planning document above states that the borough struggles to enforce affordable provision in dwellings of 0-9 units, but this should be assumed to be a low estimate), and using the guideline planning size guidelines (equal 1/3rd proportions of 1, 2 and 3 bed dwellings) the new homebuilding will add:

Dalston plan upper limit subtracted from 1330 = 676 new homes.

Of which 226 x 1 bed, 225 x 2 bed, 225 x 3 bed.

Child yield:

Children aged 0 - 4: 56.6

Children aged 5-11: 41.2

Dalston plan lower limit subtracted from 1330 = 849 new homes.

Of which 283 x 1 bed, 283 x 2 bed, 283 x 3 bed.

Children aged 0 - 4: 70

Children aged 5-11: 51

Note these are additional children to the numbers generated by the Dalston Plan developments: new to Dalston, in the immediate vicinity of Colvestone, in need of education provision.

Impact on Hackney's first 21st Century Street

Colvestone Crescent is slated to become the first 21st Century Street, a long tree-lined pedestrian walkway with lots of new plantings, ecology gardens, spaces for congregating and a small playing field. A key tenet of the 21st Century Street is that it is located next to a primary school. Explicitly, without the school, that plan makes less sense.

[The plan](#) [7][8] says “The first phase – positioned directly next to Colvestone Crescent Primary School presents an opportunity to create a permanent school street. It will expand the existing school playground into the street, creating a safe space for children to play on the street itself”

(see more about 21st Century Street in [Colvestone Crescent 21st Century Street](#)).

Summary

The proposed closure of Colvestone could be potentially damaging to Hackney's plans for Dalston's future, making the new developments a harder sell to parents and ripping out the heart of the first 21st Century Street.

Footnotes – Impact on local development section

[1] 16% Hackney's population to increase by 2033, LP33 Supplementary Planning Document – Draft Dalston Plan – Summary Doc – Buildings 2021.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WNNYPAJpZAItdq3nOnJDWtwbQOtyl8LI/view>

[2] Hackney Local Plan 2033 – Development Plan – Dalston Opportunity Sites.

<https://dalstonplan.commonplace.is/en-GB/proposals/opportunity-sites-in-dalston/step1>

[3] Hackney's 21st Century Street consultation – Colvestone Crescent, Dec 2020.

<https://consultation.hackney.gov.uk/streetscene/21cstreets2/>

[4] Hackney Local Plan 2033 – Opportunity Site D5 – Kingsland Shopping Centre.

<https://dalstonplan.commonplace.is/proposals/opportunity-sites-in-dalston/step6>

[5] DfE paper on Opening and closing maintained schools – Statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers, Jan 2023,

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1131568/Opening_and_closing_maintained_schools_Jan_2023.pdf

[6] LP33 Supplementary Planning Document – Draft Dalston Plan, Hackney, 2021.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ARhuxFDHuwAC8_sYifs7LhSkdgbJFqYk/view

[7] LP33 Supplementary Planning Document – Hackney Draft Dalston Plan – Implementation Strategy May v13, 2021. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GDFSBDiMkl5cz5g-XMebwQxjYvvzhqIF/view>

[8] Colvestone Crescent Engagement Pack prepared by 00SW for London Borough of Hackney, Nov 202.

https://consultation.hackney.gov.uk/streetscene/21cstreets2/user_uploads/266_221129_cc_consulationpres.pdf

F. Air pollution

This section details London-wide and London Borough of Hackney policy commitments regarding pollution generally and specifically in relationship to schools, the problems inherent to proposals to merge Colvestone Primary School with Princess May School on the Princess May site, and landmark planning commitments to make Colvestone Crescent the first London Borough of Hackney 21st Century Street.

Background

The Mayor of London and the London Borough of Hackney have both made commitments to reducing pollution generally and the Mayor of London has made reducing pollution specifically around schools a key policy focus. As identified by the Mayor of London: 'There are two main air pollutants of concern in London, based on their impact on human health: nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). Poor air quality stunts the growth of children's lungs and worsens chronic illness, such as asthma, lung and heart disease. There is also emerging evidence of impacts on mental health and an increased vulnerability to the most severe impacts of COVID-19. For particulate matter the challenge is even greater still. All schools in London still exceed the World Health Organization guideline for PM_{2.5}.' [1]

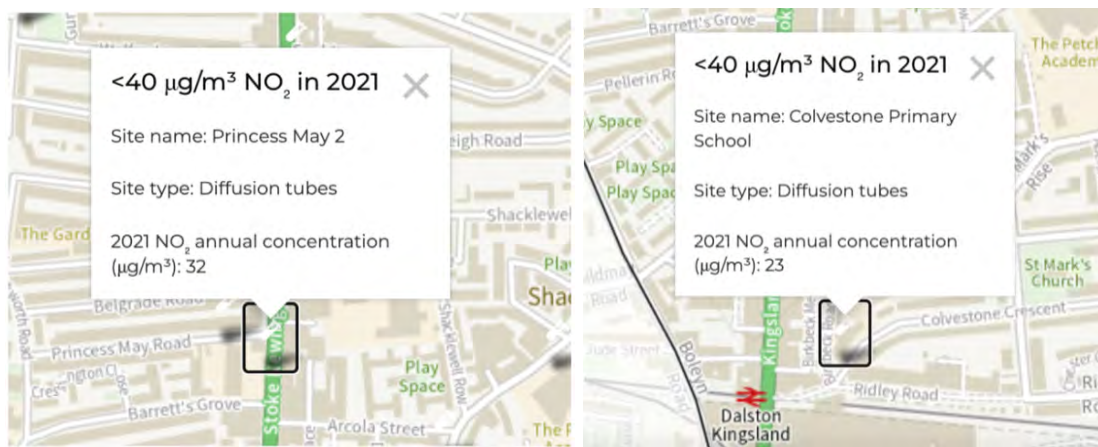
Each year, 'the capital's poor air quality contributes to around 1,000 emergency hospital admissions for children with asthma and other respiratory conditions.' [2] Furthermore, 'children growing up in polluted areas in London showed significantly smaller lung volume, with a loss of approximately five per cent in lung capacity – equivalent to two large eggs – compared to their peers in the rest of England...[and] research shows that *those exposed to the worst air pollution are more likely to be deprived Londoners and from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities*.' [3] Furthermore, pollution has been shown to 'also affect [children's] working memory and hence their ability to learn' [4]

In 2018 the Mayor of London launched the School Air Quality Audit, a scheme in which the London Borough of Hackney took part and committed to further measures across the Borough [5] – a pledge to expand these schemes borough-wide is an explicit commitment to funding received under the Mayor of London's Clean Air for Schools Audit. As part of these initiatives, a greater number of pollution monitoring sites have been installed enabling us to see clear disparities between sites across the borough.

Hackney's own Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2025 identifies school communities as amongst the most susceptible groups to the serious health impacts of air pollution within its strategy to improve air quality throughout the borough. [6]

Proposed merger of Colvestone Primary School with Princess May School on the Princess May site

The Council is proposing to send students from Colvestone Primary School to Princess May Primary, whose playground is right next to the A10. To get to and from Princess May many Colvestone students would be forced to walk along the A10.[7] As [Hackney's Local Plan 2033](#) states, "Kingsland High Street (A10) is the main route through this area and is heavily traffic dominated. As a result of this, it suffers from high noise and air pollution levels." [8] The Council's [air quality monitoring system](#) shows that the Princess May site had 40 percent higher levels of Nitrogen Oxide (NO₂) in 2021 than the Colvestone Primary School site.

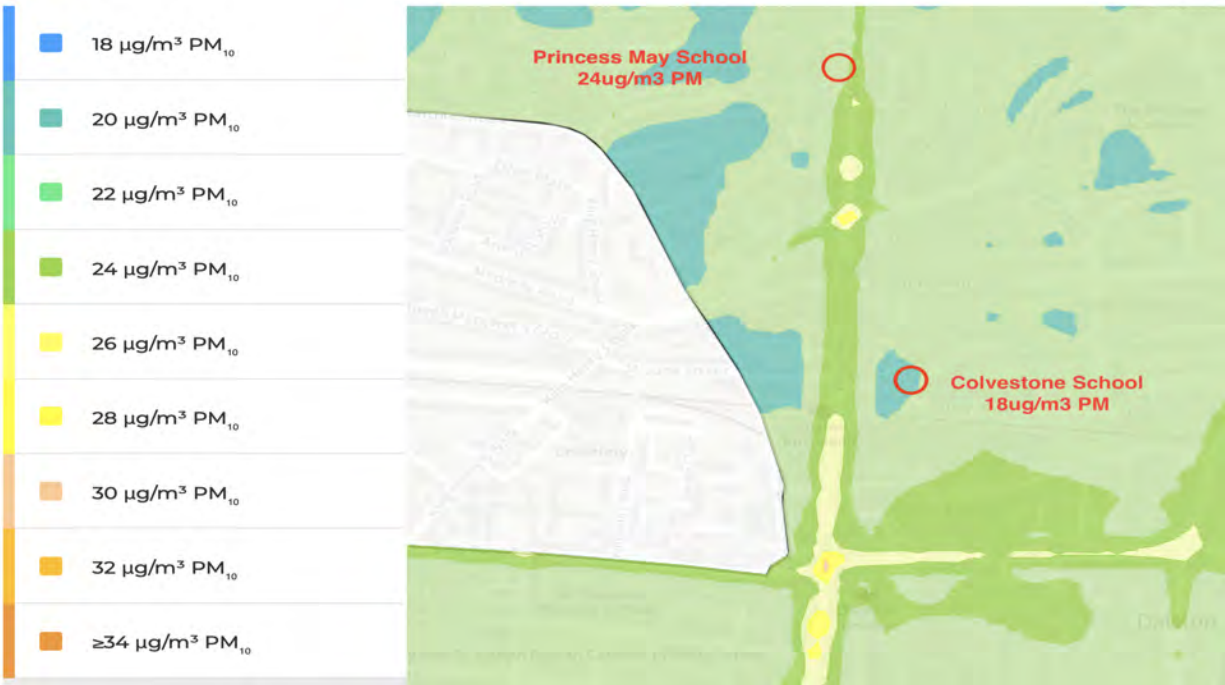
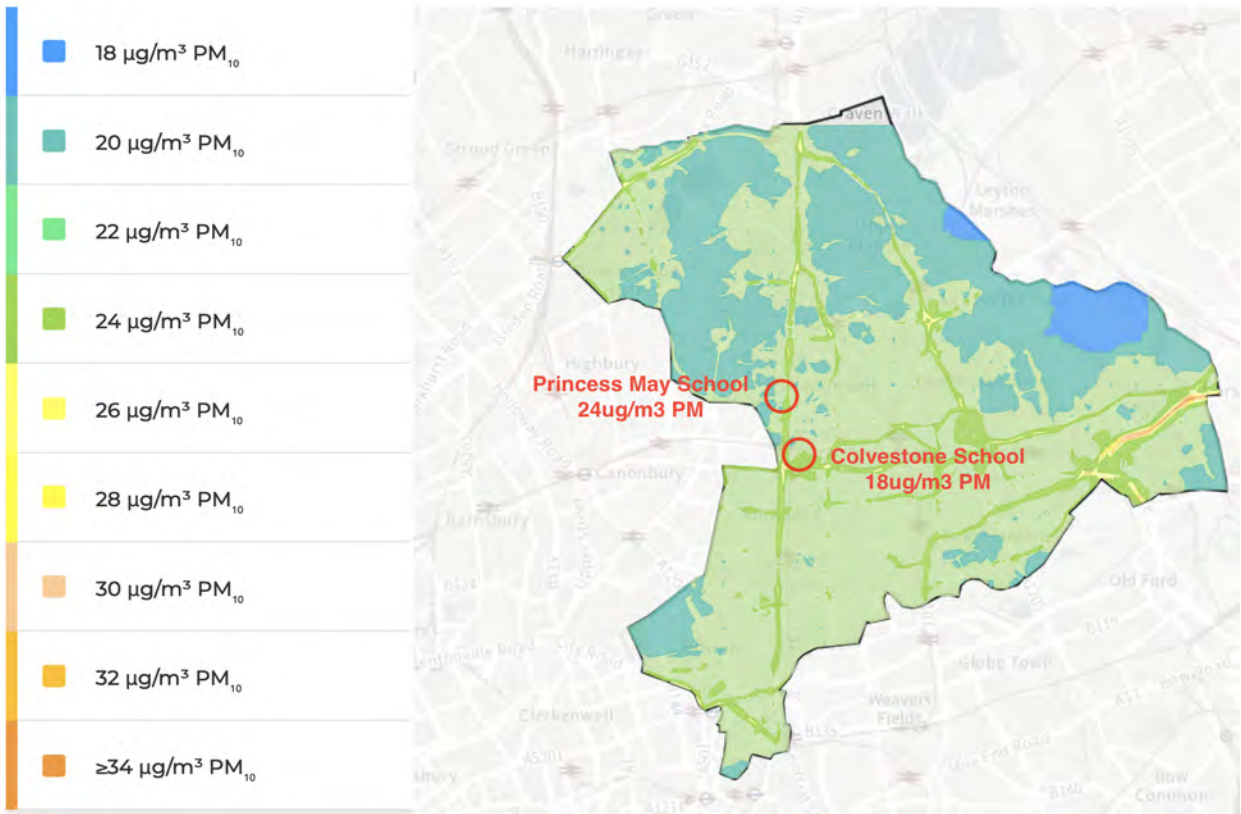


Key: Hackney Council air quality monitoring figures from 2021 showing that the Princess May site has 40% higher concentrations of NO₂ compared to the Colvestone Primary School site. It is reasonable to assume that the completion of the Colvestone Crescent 21st Century School Street with 40% tree canopy and other pollution-mitigating measures will reduce it further around Colvestone Primary School, whilst Princess May will remain on the A10, further increasing this disparity.

Ref: <https://hackney.gov.uk/air-quality>

[Note the WHO annual mean air quality guideline is 10 µg/m³ for NO₂.]

In addition to Breathe London air quality monitoring project figures that show 'almost 40 per cent of the NO_x pollution at schools comes from road transport, with diesel cars being the single biggest local contributor to NO_x pollution at London primary schools...' [9] the borough is also recording dangerously high levels of particulate matter (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀). Whilst more dangerous PM_{2.5} levels are not currently available on the London Borough of Hackney website [10], it is reasonable to assume that these figures track (if not exceed, owing to the types of vehicles on main roads) PM₁₀ concentration comparisons between the Princess May site and that of Colvestone Primary School. These comparisons, using London Borough of Hackney data, show particulate pollution at least 20% higher at the Princess May site compared to those at Colvestone.



Reference images: Hackney Council air pollution mapping (2018, prior to LTNs and removal of parking / School Street at southern end of Colvestone Crescent) shows PM₁₀ levels at least 20% higher at the Princess May Site.

Ref: <https://map2.hackney.gov.uk/maps/air-quality-pm10/index.html>

[Note that the WHO annual mean air quality guideline for PM10 is 15 µg/m³]

At the Princess May site approximately half of all available outdoor space sits next to the A10 with a bus route and a traffic-light-controlled pedestrian crossing immediately adjacent that serves to further concentrate congestion and idling traffic. As noted above, these stark differences in levels of pollution are likely to increase both with recently completed and future plans at both sites: the greening of Colvestone Crescent as it becomes the borough's model 21st Century Street (see below) contrasting with LTNs that entrench Princess May's position on the main road traffic route through the local area.[11]

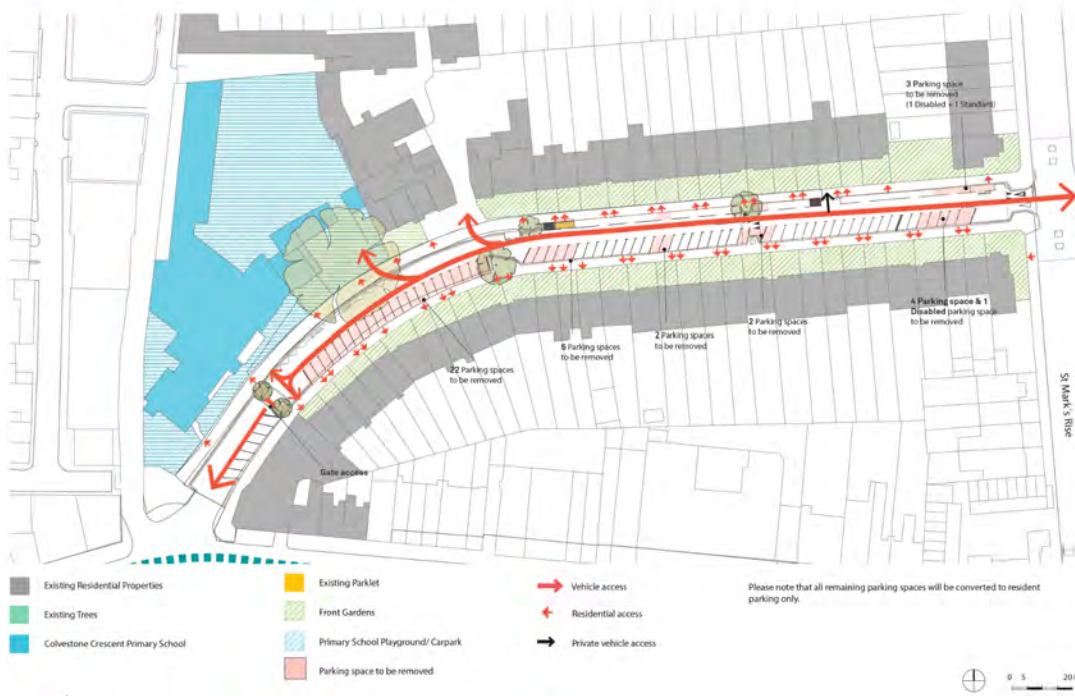
Colvestone Crescent 21st Century Street

Adjoining the £1m Ridley Road Market scheme that incorporates local landscaping (portions of which are already completed at junction of Colvestone Crescent and Ridley Road) the Colvestone Crescent 21st Century Street forms part of the Colvestone Crescent masterplan.

The Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and School Streets the Council have established to improve air quality in the borough could drive even more traffic to the A10. By contrast, Hackney Council already has an intelligently-designed and fully-funded plan to reduce air pollution around Colvestone Primary School. Colvestone Crescent, the road on which the school is located, is already a [School Street](#)[12], closed to traffic during the school run. The next fully-funded[13] stage is to develop it into the borough's first 21st Century School Street, the initial phase of which, 'positioned directly next to Colvestone Crescent primary school – presents an opportunity to create a permanent school street. It will expand the existing school playground into the street, creating a safe space for children to play on the street itself.'[14]

The consultation documents notes that the project, with the school at its heart, builds on 'a highly successful parklet project on Colvestone Crescent, instigated in 2019 by an active and passionate group of residents' and has 'been developed in collaboration with residents to ensure that the proposed green space will serve as an extension of an active and passionate local community.'[15] The Colvestone Crescent 21st Century Street is a community project formed around a community school, and a bold and forward-looking plan that promises both to draw and retain families in the heart of Dalston.

Existing Site & Proposed Parking Removal



The Colvestone Crescent 21st Century School Street reinvents Colvestone Crescent into a long tree-lined pedestrian walkway with lots of new plantings, ecology gardens, spaces for congregating, 'wobble walks' and informal play structures.

Proposed_Overall Masterplan



① School Street/ Parklet

② New trees/ kerb build out

③ Entrance Zone with greening, cluster seating & cycle stands



Paving enhancements & greening replace car parking at intervals along the street.

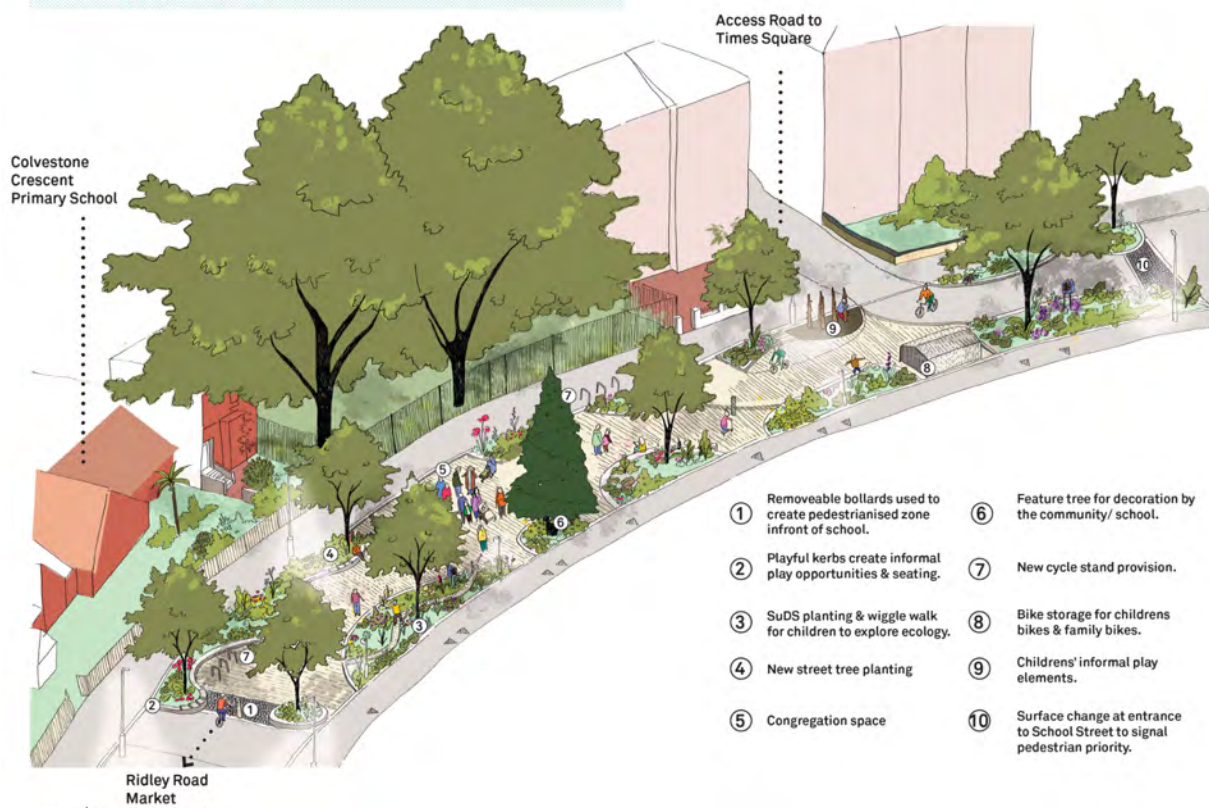


Clustered seating along the whole length of the western stretch of the street





Illustrative Axonometric



Whilst remaining accessible, the scheme incorporates an ambitious tree-planting strategy, significantly increasing the tree canopy of the street, active travel infrastructure and an innovative play strategy.[16] It could be assumed that further funding for the expansion of this

plan, if desired, would reasonably be derived from Community Infrastructure Levies on the Hackney Local Plan (LP33) / the Dalston Plan – CILs having the intention of ‘ensuring that a new development contributes to the cost of the infrastructure that the development will rely on, such as schools and roads.’[17]

The Colvestone Crescent 21st Century Street will be the London Borough of Hackney’s first demonstration of how ‘streets can adapt to help tackle the climate crisis’.[18] Oliver Lord, Head of policy and campaigns at Environmental Defense Fund Europe has said: ‘The health burden of air pollution is not equal. Whether kids attend school on a main road or in a leafy suburb should not determine the quality of air they breathe, which will affect them for the rest of their lives. Our schools should become a catalyst for safer, quieter and less polluted roads.’[19] Colvestone Primary School is a shining example of exactly this catalyst: an historic school, imbedded in its local community, directly inspiring the model 21st Century Street project – a progressive prototype of which the London Borough of Hackney should be extremely proud.

It is impossible to see how a proposal to move children, one of the most vulnerable groups in the borough to the ruinous effects of pollution[20], to a site with higher levels of pollution is either defensible on duty of care terms or commensurate with Hackney Council’s public pledge to ‘no increases in pollution at schools in Hackney’[21]. Indeed the site at Colvestone – embedded as it is in the landmark 21st Century Street project, adheres to bolder commitments to *lower* pollution specifically around schools, in accordance with the Mayor of London’s strategy to improve the air quality around all London schools.

Summary

As identified by the Mayor of London and Hackney Council there is a clean air crisis in London. Children are amongst the most vulnerable groups to the damaging long-term effects of pollution: it determines future quality of life (in terms of health, attainment and other vectors of inequality). The pollution at Princes May Primary School, the proposed site for a merger with Colvestone Primary School, is drastically higher than at the Colvestone Primary School site (as demonstrated by London Borough of Hackney figures). The Council has an innovative, fully funded plan to continue to further reduce air pollution near Colvestone. No such plan yet exists for Princess May. While it is incumbent on the Council to protect the children who attend school there currently, it makes no sense in the meantime to move children from a school with lower pollution and a plan for further reductions to a school with higher pollution and with limited scope for further reductions.

The landmark London Borough of Hackney Colvestone Crescent 21st Century Street is a signature demonstration of how our streets and our communities can adapt to rise to the challenge of the climate crisis, and it has Colvestone Primary School at its heart. To remove the vulnerable group for whom, in the first instance, the project has been designed would be perverse: moving students from a school where there is a clear plan for improving air quality to a school whose playground and buildings are close to a high traffic, high pollution street simply doesn't make sense – either for a proposed merger or for prospective parents. On the contrary, the position of Colvestone Primary School at the heart of the model 21st Century Street greatly enhances its offer to families, the retention of whom in the heart of Dalston is a priority concern for Hackney Council with ramifications across education, planning and community cohesion. Further, given concerns for falling roll numbers (challenged in 'Financial Viability' and 'Impact on the Dalston Development Plan' earlier in this document), the Colvestone Primary School site is a more viable and attractive destination site for pupils affected by any proposed mergers or closures of primary schools in the borough.[22]

Footnotes – Air pollution section

[1] Press Release / Policy Announcement, Mayor of London, 1 November 2020. See:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-unveils-plans-to-reduce-toxic-air-at-schools>

[2] Harriet Edwards, Senior Policy and Projects Manager, Air Quality, at Asthma UK and the British Lung Foundation, quoted in Press release, Mayor of London, 6th Aug 2021:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/31m-kids-going-to-schools-in-areas-with-toxic-air>

[3] Emphasis added. Press release, Mayor of London, 6th Aug 2021:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/31m-kids-going-to-schools-in-areas-with-toxic-air>

[4] Larissa Lockwood, Director of Clean Air at Global Action Plan, quoted in Press Release / Policy Announcement, Mayor of London, 1 November 2020. See:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-unveils-plans-to-reduce-toxic-air-at-schools>

[5] Mayor of London School Air Quality Audit (2018), re: Local Implementation Plan (funding that could be applied for, for work 2019/2020), p.46/7, quoting from the bid guidelines: '2.34 In the short- to medium-term, there must be a particular focus on action to reduce air, pollution, reducing exposure to it and tackling pollution hotspots, which boroughs should support through their LIP. Locations that have

large numbers of vulnerable Londoners, such as schools, should be prioritised for action. In particular, the boroughs have an important role in ensuring recommendations from the Mayor's school air quality audit programme are implemented, and LIP funding can be directed at both the audits and the delivery of measures.' Accessed here:

https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/saq_report_-_de_beauparc_hackney_final_draft_-_inc_appendices.pdf

[6] London Borough Hackney Clean Air Plan 2021-25, section 3.8 (p.35). Accessed here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1g2gQvKM71Fto95rw0rdYo8sPtJAM1kjo/view>

[7] See the Mayor of London's School Air Quality Audit documents on the importance of considering travel to and from school in the overall consideration of a site's pollution impact / potential for mitigation.

Accessed here:

https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/saq_report_-_de_beauparc_hackney_final_draft_-_inc_appendices.pdf

[8] Hackney Local Plan 2033, adopted July 2020, p.22. Accessed here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HRu0A_fdoWUi3OBfzUT03TT4S9gYwHDq/view

[9] Press Release / Policy Announcement, Mayor of London, 1 November 2020. See:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-unveils-plans-to-reduce-toxic-air-at-schools>

[10] The link from <https://hackney.gov.uk/air-quality> is a dead link and no other published monitoring data for PM2.5 from the London Borough of Hackney can currently be found.

[11] Even if, as is hoped, LTNs bring down overall traffic volumes in the borough, the relative positions of the two sites in regards to road infrastructure / traffic, the surrounding buildings, vegetation and use are so manifestly different that this stark difference in levels of pollution between the two sites is long set to remain.

[12] <https://hackney.gov.uk/school-streets>

[13] Confirmed by Cllr Woodley, Colvestone Primary School public consultation meeting, 24th April 2023

[14] Colvestone Crescent / 21st Century Street, London Borough of Hackney, November 2021. Accessed here: file:///Users/mc/Downloads/266_221129_CC_ConsultationPres.pdf

[15] Colvestone Crescent / 21st Century Street, London Borough of Hackney, November 2021. Accessed here: file:///Users/mc/Downloads/266_221129_CC_ConsultationPres.pdf

[16] Colvestone Crescent / 21st Century Street, London Borough of Hackney, November 2021. Accessed here: file:///Users/mc/Downloads/266_221129_CC_ConsultationPres.pdf

[17] Community Infrastructure Levies (Planning Act 2008) are due on local developments and here specifically the developments committed to in the Hackney Local Plan (LP33 / 'Dalston Plan', adopted July 2020). See Mayor of London School Air Quality Audit (2018), section 5.8.10. See also 'Financial Viability' and 'Historical Significance and Protections' (this document).

[18] Colvestone Crescent / 21st Century Street, London Borough of Hackney, November 2021. Accessed here: file:///Users/mc/Downloads/266_221129_CC_ConsultationPres.pdf

[19] Quoted in Press Release / Policy Announcement, Mayor of London, 1 November 2020. See:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-unveils-plans-to-reduce-toxic-air-at-schools>

[20] In addition to impeding brain function, 'primary school children are amongst the most vulnerable of the at-risk groups, as their lungs are still developing, and toxic air can stunt their growth, causing significant health problems in later life.' Mayor of London School Air Quality Audit (2018), accessed here: https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/saq_report_-_de_beauparc_hackney_final_draft_-_inc_appendices.pdf

[21] Mayor Philip Glanville, quoted 2018, accessed here: <https://www.cleanair4schools.co.uk/about>

[22] It might also be assumed that the Princess May site also offers the Borough greater asset value for repurposing without the listing and local protections that apply to the Grade II listed / Asset of Community Value / potentially covenanted Colvestone Primary School site in Colvestone Crescent (see [Historical significance and protections](#)).

G. Historical significance and protections

This section details the history of the building, its continuous operation as a school for the past 161 years, the existing protections on the building and site, and research relating to a possible covenant(s) on the building stipulating its educational function.

Built in 1862, Colvestone Primary School is a Grade II listed building[1] designed by TE Knightley in a Gothic Revival Style, which is situated in the St Mark's Conservation Area and to which it forms a protected architectural gateway[2]. It was one of six Birkbeck Schools founded by businessman and educational philosopher and philanthropist William Ellis. The schools were named after George Birkbeck, founder of Birkbeck, University of London, and pioneer in adult education.

The Colvestone building (formerly known as the 'Kingsland Birkbeck School') was purpose-built to reflect Ellis' radical ideas about education. Richard Clarke (Birkbeck / University of Westminster) writes: 'The Birkbeck Schools were secular, often for girls as well as boys, emphasised teaching through dialogue, rejecting rote learning (as well as corporal punishment)' with an emphasis on "'social economy" and "useful knowledge"'[3]. Ellis' schools and social focus to learning were explicitly aimed at widening access to education.[4]

'Its premises, which today remain nearly intact as Colvestone Primary School, reflect in their architecture some of the most progressive elements of Ellis' philosophy', Clarke continues. 'Two aspects of the Kingsland School's design stand out...: the presence of individual classrooms and good lighting and ventilation' – here in contrast to the heavier, more overbearing and larger-scale architecture of the London Board schools which were built from 1870 onwards (for example, Princess May School, built 1899 and which is not a listed building). The small scale of the school building is particularly appealing to children – both in establishing a proximity with their peers in a school community in which familiarity is the rule, but also in the way that this nurturing environment is reflected through the architectural detailing – for instance, the low-level eaves and the decorative elements of the building. These features, combined with the overall layout of the school – including the main hall which is central to the plan form – is both comforting for SEN children and helps them to navigate the building.

The Council has recently invested in sensitive refurbishment works to the listed school building, undertaking long-awaited and significant repairs to the external envelope including to the brickwork and stonework, as well as to the tiled roof and leadwork. The separately Grade II listed front railings have been also been carefully restored. The works have noticeably enhanced the school's appearance as a landmark building in Colvestone Crescent, marking the western gateway to the conservation area. The children's internal learning environment has also been brightened up by the decoration of classrooms, communal teaching spaces and corridors.[5] Whilst the building was shrouded in scaffolding and subject to both internal and external renovation over the last year (sadly also through the Reception open days) the wonderful benefits of these sensitive works are now being enjoyed as they reach completion and manifestly improve Colvestone's offer to prospective parents and pupils.

In addition to the light, airy nature of the purpose-built teaching, study and recreation spaces, the school benefits from two separate playgrounds: one for the Nursery and Early Years provision and one for the main school. The larger of its two playgrounds is calm, well-landscaped and proportioned, and insulated further from the road network by the enclosing school buildings and surrounding houses, together with the drop in land levels away from Colvestone Crescent. **The smaller of the two playgrounds, appearing on Council-produced pollution 'heat maps'[6] as having one of the lowest levels of pollution in the local area, is an outdoor classroom for Nursery and Early Years pupils and as such is designated an Asset of Community Value (2021).**

Most significantly, the Heritage Statement prepared in 2020 for the school refurbishment works writes in glowing terms of the contemporary condition of Colvestone Primary School, noting that 'in heritage terms, the original use is synonymous with the optimum viable use.'^[7]

A note on ownership

The Kingsland Birkbeck / Colvestone Primary School building was independently financed by William Ellis to house the school he founded in 1852, the building being completed in 1862. Initially built on leasehold land, the freehold was acquired 20 years later.^[8] It remained unaffiliated with the School Board (founded 1870) but, in 1904, motivated by a shortage of secondary school provision in the area its foundational trust (The Birkbeck and William Ellis Schools Trust) entered into negotiations with the LCC initially for a grant to support the change to secondary use (and specifically the installation of a science laboratory).^[9] By early 1905 however LCC demand in Hackney was specifically for girls secondary provision, and the trustees of the Birkbeck and William Ellis Schools Trust were under financial pressure relating to a second school (the William Ellis School, then in Gospel Oak).

In January 1905 a proposal was made to sell the Kingsland Birkbeck School (and site) to the LCC directly.^[10] It was initially thought that the Trust could 'sell the freewill outright to the Council... free of all restrictions under the Endowed Schools or Charitable Trusts Acts'^[11] though subsequent legal advice received in July 1905 advised that the Trust was determined an 'educational (as opposed charitable) trust' and therefore could not sell off educational assets, without condition and agreement by the Charity Commission, unless the Trust was wound up.^[12] The Trust however continued to operate (not least with regards to the William Ellis School) and agreement of terms was not reached until November 1905^[13] and the purchase completed in 1906.^[14] Such was the pressure on provision the LCC committed to the conversion works on the site and the first new pupils began at the school in October 1905 prior to the LCC taking ownership.

Given the time taken to find an equitable solution for the Trust, LCC and Charities Commission it is suspected that a covenant exists on the building pertaining to its ongoing function as a school as a condition of its purchase. This is the subject of ongoing research, not limited to a request made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to the London Borough of Hackney (ref: 16591453), further research in the archived papers of the LCC (London Metropolitan Archive) including legal advice received around the purchase of the school buildings in 1906, the archives of the Charities Commission (held in the National Archives at Kew) and the Land Registry.

The Birkbeck and William Ellis Schools Trust is still extant as a charitable foundation (and still appoints governors to the William Ellis School, in Highgate Road, Kentish Town).

It is now established that Hackney Council took possession of the original deeds in 1990. Hackney Council, through the pursuit of an FOI request, have been supplied with the copy of this receipt and the relevant cataloguing details contained in that documentation. Hackney Council continue to refuse to locate the deeds (see Chapter 3, and following subsequent legal requests for them – see Chapter 4). Failure to establish the legal conditions on the building is a failure of due diligence identified in the Council's own Estate Strategy, and prohibits any participant in the consultation in engaging with the precise questions around the reuse of the building and therefore on the ramifications of closing the school (financial, legal, academic and otherwise).

Summary

Colvestone Primary School is the last remaining Birkbeck School building and has functioned as a school for 161 years. Its architectural design and scale explicitly reflects the socially-minded and community-focus ideals of its founders – ideals specifically focussed on increasing access to education. As a purpose-built grade II listed school building, its best use is its optimum viable use as a fully-operational school educating local children. Recent restoration works on the building and internal modifications manifestly improve the school's appeal and parental offer.

Closing it as a school would be a significant historical loss to Dalston, one named in its listing, but would also remove the social heart from the St Marks Conservation Area and the community of Dalston. The school carries multiple site protections: two separate Grade II listings; its position as integral and planning-protected 'gateway' to the St Marks Conservation Area; an outdoor classroom designated an Asset of Community Value; with a potential covenant on the site protecting its educational function the non-disclosure of which prohibits informed participation of stakeholders and elected officials in the Formal Consultation.

Footnotes – Historical significance and protections section

[1] 'Colvestone Primary School was added to the National Heritage List for England in February 1975 at Grade II and is of special heritage interest on account of its architectural and historical value.' Heritage Statement (prepared for London Borough of Hackney Planning), *Heritage Collective*, 2020, p.9. Listed building entry (Historic England): 1265832. Separate Grade 2 entry for railings: 1226422. Accessed: historicengland.org.uk

[2] For the identification of the Grade II listed Colvestone Primary School as a protected / locally important view see Draft Dalston Plan Supplementary Planning Document, May 2021, p.99, and recent planning applications on Colvestone Crescent. DDP SPD accessed here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JKYYxGAtynP0NsxumGUAq_tR70Lg90_a/view

[3] 'Self-Help and the London Mechanics' Institution – Birkbeck After (George) Birkbeck', Richard Clarke, Birkbeck College, University of London, 2009

[4] 'Social Economy in the Classroom: The London Birkbeck Schools', Richard Clarke, in *The London Journal*, 2023

[5] It is suggested that these and potential future (unforeseen) works that benefit the school (for example the expansion of the (funded) 21st Century Street) could be financed by the Community Infrastructure Levy (Planning Act 2008) due on local developments and specifically the developments committed to in the Hackney Local Plan (LP33 / 'Dalston Plan', adopted July 2020). The intention of CILs: 'a means of ensuring that a new development contributes to the cost of the infrastructure that the development will rely on, such as schools and roads.' See Mayor of London School Air Quality Audit (2018), section 5.8.10. See also 'Financial Viability' and 'Pollution' (this document).

[6] See 'Pollution', this document. Images: <https://map2.hackney.gov.uk/maps/air-quality-no2/index.html>

[7] Heritage Statement (prepared for Hackney Planning), *Heritage Collective*, 2020, p.39

[8] 'Social Economy in the Classroom: The London Birkbeck Schools', Richard Clarke, in *The London Journal*, 2023

[9] Educational Committee Report, 1st November 1904, LCC Minutes, London Metropolitan Archive, p.2363

[10] Higher Education and Scholarships Sub Committee: Agenda Papers, LCC Archive, London Metropolitan Archive, 27th Jan 1905

[11] Higher Education and Scholarships Sub Committee: Agenda Papers, LCC Archive, London Metropolitan Archive, 5th May 1905

[12] Higher Education and Scholarships Sub Committee: Agenda Papers, LCC Archive, London Metropolitan Archive, 21st July 1905

[13] Higher Education and Scholarships Sub Committee: Agenda Papers, LCC Archive, London Metropolitan Archive, 17th November 1905

[14] Educational Committee Report, 8th May 1906, LCC Minutes, London Metropolitan Archive, p.1169

9. Campaign summary

Colvestone Primary School's campaign to be taken off the list for merger has captured people's attention locally, regionally, nationally – and even internationally.

The strength of feeling across the Colvestone community has been remarkable.

In a short period of time, we have rallied support and endorsements from school families, ex-pupils, local residents and the wider Dalston community.

Petition

Since the launch of our petition at the start of April, we have amassed 1,701 signatures each putting their name to: *...remove Colvestone from the potential closure list, thereby ensuring security and stability for staff, pupils and parents.*



The screenshot shows a Change.org petition page. At the top, the Change.org logo is visible. Below it, there are navigation tabs for 'Petition details', 'Comments', and 'Updates'. The main title of the petition is 'Save Colvestone Primary School in Dalston'. A progress bar indicates that 1,697 signatures have been collected, with a goal of 2,500. A message states: 'At 2,500 signatures, this petition is more likely to get picked up by local news!'. There is a green banner image with the text 'SAVE COLVESTONE PRIMARY SCHOOL'. Below the banner, the petitioner is identified as 'Colvestone FSA', with a description of the petition's purpose: 'In response to falling enrolment across the borough, Hackney Council has made an initial proposal to merge Colvestone Primary School with Princess May Primary School at the Princess May site from September 2024, which means the closure of Colvestone school.' To the right of the text, there is a 'Sign this petition' section with input fields for 'First name' and 'Last name'.

The petition is still gaining signatures and supporters every day:

www.change.org/p/savecolvestone-fsa-colvestone

Some people who signed the petition also added their thoughts about the Council's proposal:

“This school is a vital part of Dalston’s community, as a parent of a child who attended Colvestone it was brilliantly placed with no other schools nearby. He went on to study chemistry at Oxford, as did another of his classmates. I cannot imagine this school no longer existing, it must not close.”

Former parent

“Colvestone Primary School is an essential part of the Ridley Road area community.”
Local resident

“Colvestone is a valuable part of the Dalston community, our children benefited from a fantastic educational experience that is as open and diverse as the local area. It is really important for future generations of children.”
Former parent

Local support

Our cause has caught the attention of Dalston’s local Councillor including Zoe Garbett – and the campaign made the neighbourhood update mailed to every household in the ward.



Hackney Council wants to close Colvestone Primary School, leaving parents and staff in shock. The council wants to move the school’s students to Princess May Primary School, due to falling pupil numbers across Hackney.

Colvestone is Dalston’s only non-denominational school. It is a tight-knit community with one-

form entry. The council has recently spent more than £200,000 to help the school improve.

Zoë Garbett, Dalston’s Green councillor, is backing local parents who want Colvestone to stay open. Parents are also worried about air pollution in the playground at Princess May.

Zoë said: “This announcement

has shaken parents, staff and the whole school community. Parents tell me that they want Colvestone to stay open and have time to keep improving.”

Want to help support Colvestone Primary? Visit: www.change.org/SaveColvestone or contact: zoe.garbett@hackney.gov.uk

Press coverage

Our story has been featured in the Hackney Gazette and Hackney Citizen multiple times:

www.hackneygazette.co.uk/news/23469925.author-michael-rosen-joins-bid-stop-hackney-school-merger/

<https://www.hackneycitizen.co.uk/2023/04/20/parents-dalston-primary-school-merger-council-boosts-rethink/>

Hackney Gazette

Author Michael Rosen joins bid to stop Hackney school merger

20th April

HACKNEY COUNCIL

MICHAEL ROSEN

EDUCATION

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

PEOPLE

HACKNEY



By Julia Gregory

Children's author Michael Rosen has added his name to a campaign to save a Hackney primary school at risk of closure because of falling school rolls.

'It's not a commodity': Parents from Dalston primary school at risk of a merger urge council bosses to rethink plans

By [Julia Gregory](#), Local Democracy Reporter | Thursday 20 April 2023 at 17:32



Protest outside Colvestone Primary School. Photograph: Julia Gregory

A group of Hackney parents have launched a campaign to save their children's primary school.

Colvestone is one of four primaries that could merge under plans that also include the potential closures of De Beauvoir and Randal Cremer schools in September 2024.



Parents Corine and Brandon Bishop at Colvestone Primary School, Hackney. Their child has special needs. Because of falling school rolls Colvestone primary could merge with Princess May School. Photo: Julia Gregory

We were also featured on ITV News:

<https://www.itv.com/news/london/2023-04-24/school-closing-as-young-families-are-driven-out-by-spiraling-london-costs>

itvX

School closing as young families are 'driven out' by spiraling London cost of living

LONDON | EDUCATION | POLITICS | ⌚ Monday 24 April 2023 at 6:27pm



And we are in conversation with German broadcaster ADR who would like to feature Colvestone's story in an extended report later in May "to look at the bigger picture and what these developments mean for a city like London and what possible solutions would be to keep a city attractive for families".

We have also featured in the Financial Times, The Guardian and BBC London:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-67275173>

BBC Sign in Home News Sport Weather iPlayer Sound

NEWS

Home | Israel-Gaza war | Cost of Living | War in Ukraine | Climate | UK | World | Business | Politics | Culture

England | Local News | Regions | London

Hackney mayor candidate campaigns under way as by-election looms

9 hours ago



Colvestone Primary School parents Hendrik Elstein and Mike Cooter for whom school closures is an important issue

Social media

Our campaign on social media (Facebook and Twitter) has seen tweets, posts and the petition shared by our supporters to help us reach thousands of people, including previous Colvestone parent, the renowned poet and activist Michael Rosen.

Public meeting

On Monday 24th April, 135 people attended the public meeting at the school. The session ran for 1 hour and 45 minutes, as parents, teaching and support staff and the local community voiced their deep concern for the plans.

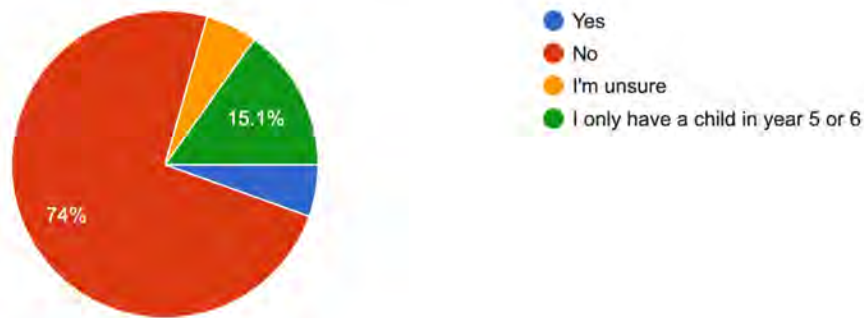
10. Appendix

Appendix 1: Full Results of survey conducted during 26 – 28th April, after the April 24th meeting.

Colvestone Parents Choice Factor Survey

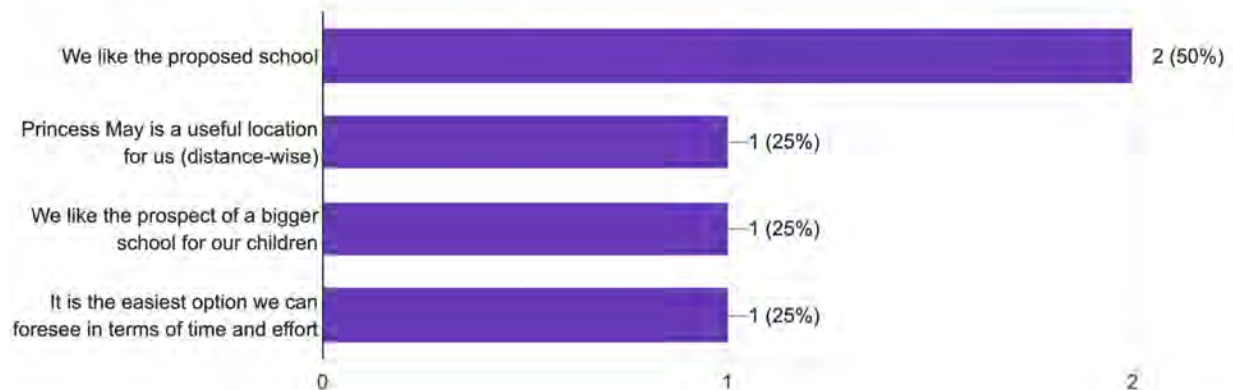
If the council were to go ahead with the proposed merger of Colvestone Primary School with Princess May in September 2024, will you agree to sen...tion only!) if you only have a child in year 5 or 6.

73 responses



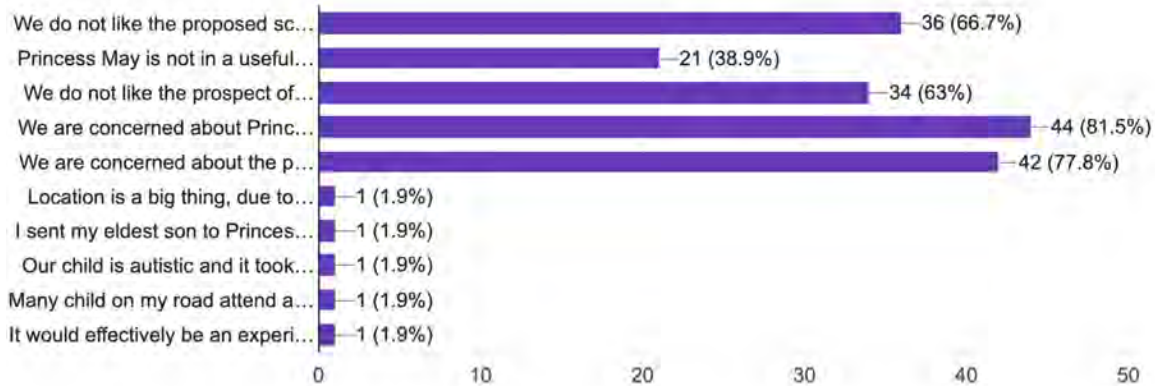
If you are happy to send your child to Princess May in September 2024, please help us understand the main reasons - please check all that apply

4 responses



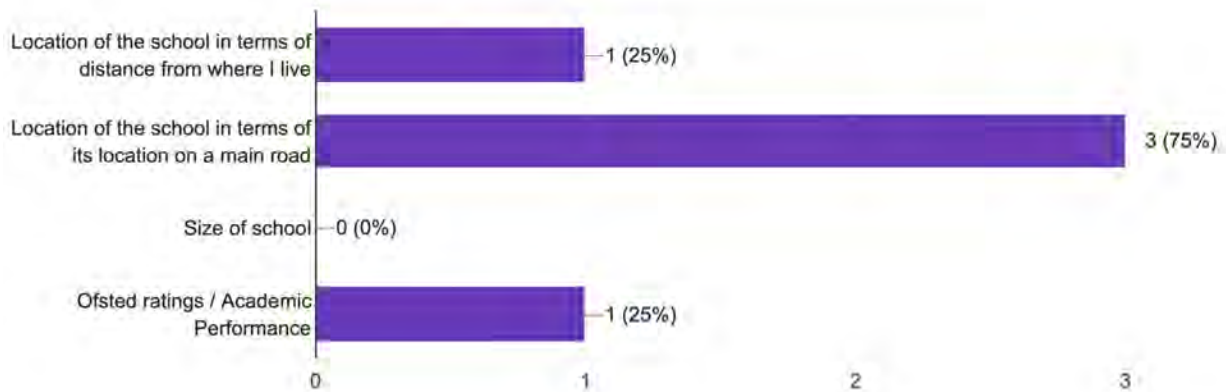
If you have no intention of sending your child to Princess May in September 2024, please help us understand the main reasons - please check all that apply

54 responses



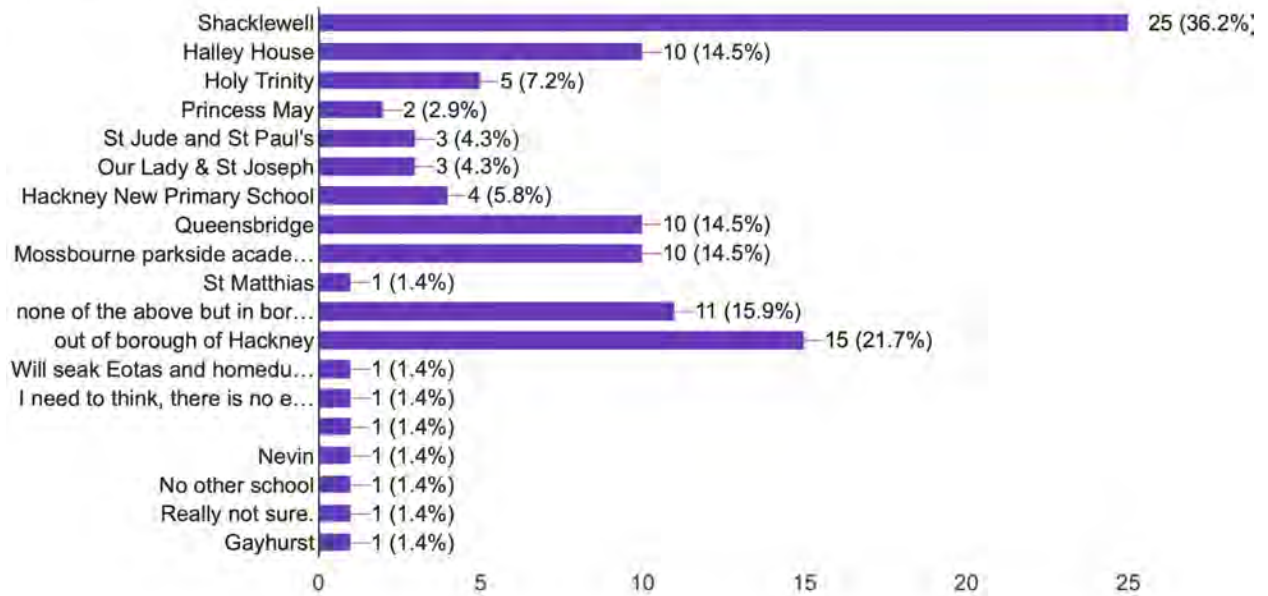
If you are unsure about whether you would send your child to Princess May, what factors will affect your decision? - please check all that apply

4 responses



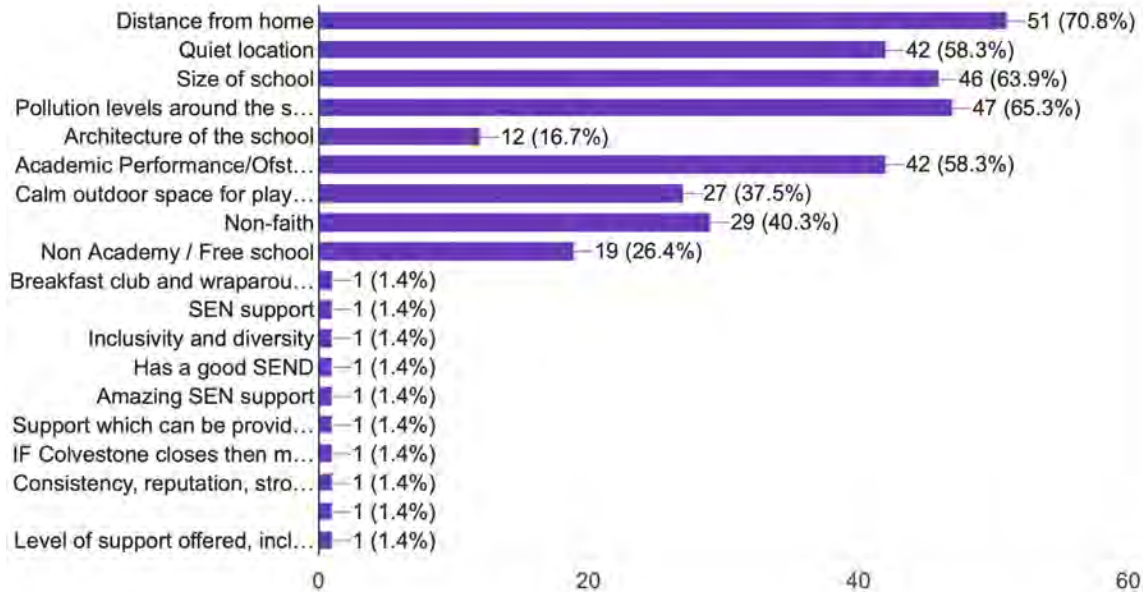
If Colvestone were to merge, what would be your preferred choices of school for your child - please answer this question whether or not you answered yes or no above (and please check all that apply)

69 responses



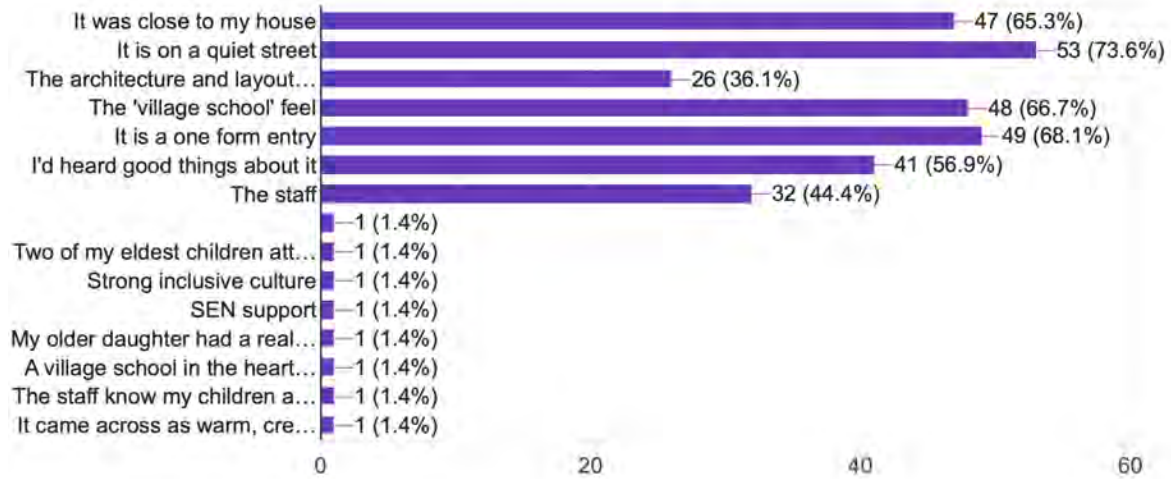
What are the main factors you take into account when choosing schools for your child(ren) - please check all that apply

72 responses



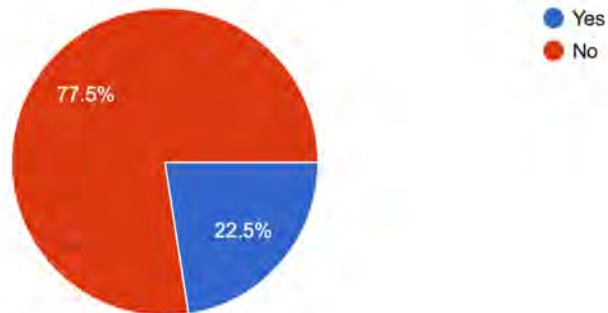
Why did you choose Colvestone - please check all that apply

72 responses



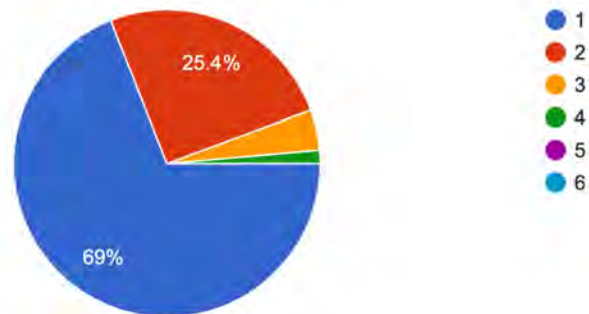
Does your child(ren) have Special Educational Needs

71 responses



How many children do you have /care for who attend this school?

71 responses



Final survey question: Anything else you think the Council should know:

“Our child is autistic and it took us a long time to settle her and be happy at Colvestone. It will be extremely difficult and impossible to move her to another school at this stage.”

“Many children on our road attend [Princess May] and both parents and children are not happy”

“I sent my eldest son to Princess May 8 years ago and had to change schools after a few months because we were really unhappy with the standards of the school. We visited the school again a couple of years ago, whilst going through the selection process for my youngest child, who currently attends Colvestone and we were disappointed to discover that Princess May is still not a viable option for us to send our children. We would not send our child to Princess May, our child is very happy at Colvestone and we’re it to close we would look at finding a similar school to Colvestone probably outside the borough”

Some powerful statements from families about Colvestone and the proposed merger:

“A village school in the heart of the city. A place the children could ‘own’ and know ALL their peers.”

“It came across as warm, creative, fostering community feel, inclusive of parents”

“The Staff take the ethos of the school very seriously”

“[Colvestone has a] Strong, inclusive culture”

“Closing Colvestone would push us as parents away from the centre of Dalston and potentially out of the Borough. It’s an academically strong and inclusive school with an excellent community whose non-faith, non-academy/free status, and single form intake gives it a village feel in the centre of bustling Dalston and is unique to the area.”

“A big school is not suited to every child's need and therefore the reason why Colvestone was chosen even though it was a bit of a distance.”

“The new leadership team have worked hard to create a viable school going forward – with a little support (and at least not being shot in the foot by our own education authority) I believe we are the model for Hackney’s future. A 21st century school on a 21st century street.”

“My daughter has additional needs and I would be looking for an out of borough move to find something similar to Colvestone”

“I don’t know a single parent that would consider sending their child to Princess May. I think it would be a shame for Hackney Council to have to close both schools as I’m almost certain that Princess May will close after Colvestone because it will not get the pupil numbers. I don’t see why Princess May couldn’t close if it was needed and pupils transfer to Colvestone. Colvestone is flourishing currently and I’m sure with the new management structure it will continue to do so.”

“No other school we looked at had the small, family feel that Colvestone had.”

“The emotional impact on children’s well-being will be the biggest issue if the merger happens, not the finance element.”

“I’d prefer to not go to a faith or free school; however I feel this is all I’ll be left unless I accept a school on the A10 that is twice the distance from my current school”

“We believe that Colvestone primary school is a unique offering in the area, we are adamant that we will not be sending our children to Princess May”

“Please save Colvestone for future generations. This school is unique.”

“[Please tell Hackney] That my daughter loves Colvestone Primary School and the teachers that teach there and closing a community primary school will send out a very negative and lasting message to young families looking to live in Hackney.”

“Colvestone and Princess May schools are the worst match for merger, they are completely different.”

“Princess May has been an unpopular school for a long time. For the Council to decide that a good plan/good offer would be to shut Colvestone and move all the children to Princess May shows a massive lack of understanding of the Dalston community and/or a flippant attitude to families at Colvestone.”

“If Colvestone Primary School closes the wider community will become impoverished.”

“This will not only affect school age children and their families but the wider community too. Don’t do it”

“I am very worried about the outcome of this proposal as there doesn't seem to be any real choice here – there is no nearby one form non religious option – other than keeping Colvestone open.”

“It is discrimination against non-religious people to only close non-faith schools in this proposal. I would like to speak with a legal team to understand if we have a discrimination case. The Councillors have a legal responsibility to provide quality education for our children so why is the Council not closing the academically worst performing schools and sending those pupils to better schools? If the worst academic schools have a chance to improve then Colvestone should be afforded equal rights to improve pupil numbers.”

“If The school was to close, this would have a knock on effect with my job and being able to get to work on time.”

Appendix 2: Emails sent by parent of children with special educational needs

Email from [parent A] sent 25.4.2023

Dear [councillor]

I hope you are well.

Thank you for attending the meeting at Colvestone on Monday, and thank you for giving me your email address so I could write.

My name is [parent A] and I delivered my rather emotional speech advocating for the SEN children and families of Colvestone.

I wished to write and further express to you what this school means for my [child] in particular.

[child] is a wonderful little [child].

[They are] pure joy and sunshine.

[They] owns any room he walks in.

[They are] creative and unique.

[Their] greatest superpower is that despite being autistic, [they] has and is able to show great empathy and a strong ability to express and discuss [their] emotions.

Despite all the struggles [they have] had to face due to [their] neurodiversity, [they remain] self-confident in all aspects of [their] life.

The biggest challenge [they are] facing is school and access to education, which is due to the fact [they] struggles with visual and auditory stimuli processing by [their] environment and has learning difficulties.

Attending a school even like Colvestone that is a one form entry is already a hard mission for my [child].

[Their] first year at reception (Sep 2020) was pretty much a write off, as [they] needed time to climatise and adapt to the new environment.

Despite the fact that [their] then teachers took things really slow with [them], [they] found the demands of school extremely challenging and cried every morning when I was dropping [them] off.

At the end of the reception year we could see that academically [they were] more than a year behind [their] peers, so we decided to have [them] repeat reception. This decision was taken in the August before the school year started and the school supported us fully in our decision to keep [child] back. There was no argument or discussion, they just listened to what [our child] needed and what [their] parents advocated for [them] and gave [our child] that.

My husband and I have no words for how grateful we are that [their] needs were respected in such an immediate and supportive way.

Reception the second time round (Sep 2021) was hard again, [they] cried a lot at drop offs, but gradually became more accustomed to the school environment.

[Their] writing improved and [child] started writing [their] name and being able to copy letters. [Their] recognition of letters was much slower, and by the end of the second year at reception [they] still had not mastered the letters or numbers, however [they] seemed more comfortable with the school setting and started to make friends.

Forming friendships is one of the things we always worried about, so to see [them] play with other children, request their company and to be included was a wonderful development.

When we started year one in (Sep 2022) [our child] was almost fully adapted to the school environment and would only have the occasional cry in the mornings.

However the educational challenges of year 1 were too much for [them].

[They] became withdrawn and anxious, [their] sleep got affected and overall [they] seemed lacklustre and sad.

When we spoke to [them] about [their] sadness, [our child] would say things like

“I hate my brain”

“ I want to kill my brain”

“ I don’t understand and I don’t want to go to school”

“numbers and letters are moving in my head, I don’t know what to do with this mama”

As you can imagine it was heart breaking for myself and my husband to realise that [our child] has these feelings of sadness, frustration and unworthiness.

So we discussed this with the school, who listened to our concerns, and adapted [our child]’s learning environment and curriculum so that [they] would learn **in [their] way and [their] pace.**

Moving forward to this week, I can tell you that with the love and investment of his teacher, [name removed], his TA, [name removed], [name removed] our Headteacher and the school Senco [name removed], [they are] able to count to multiples of 10! And [our child] has started to be able to read a few words!

This week [our child] is also **receiving an achievement award** from [the] school for all the progress [they have] made.

[Our child] gave me the letter inviting me to the ceremony with such pride.

[Our child] now skips to school most mornings and only ever asks to stay at home towards the end of the week when [they are] tired.

[Our child] is finally able to access education in [their] terms in an environment [they are] happy in

Both my husband and I are amazed by the progress and the happiness we see in our little [child]. We believe that moving [them] to a different setting would devastate [them] and settling [our child] will most likely take another two years, by which time we will be looking at the end of Primary.

We will most likely have to apply for EOTAS and homeeducate.

You must understand after our meeting this evening the significance of Colvestone for the SEN families of Dalston.

All be it emotional, I believe I made my point loud and clear.

Colvestone is not an accident, it is not a postcode lottery, it is our choice, our **ONLY CHOICE**.

There is no other school in the area that can ensure that our SEN children get the **access to education they have a right to.**

Closing this setting would mean the removal of that right to access education for **35 SEN kids** that are currently on the register for Colvestone.

Another point that I would like to visit that I did not have time to elaborate on during my speech was the recent announcement that Hackney will be investing FIVE MILLION pounds across the borough to support SEN kids and services.

What about these 35 kids that will loose their school?

Their little family in which they feel **comfortable to access education?**

Might I ask what does it take so that the Council will consider making Colvestone an autism provision school?

Or an autism and SEND friendly school?

I mean it is well on its way there, as 24% of the children that attend have some sort of special education needs.

Double the national average which is 13.2%.

Please do note that the only two schools in the area that have autism provision are both two form, and they only have 10 places each in their units.

So not only they are two form and therefore **tragically unsuitable for autistics** due to the overwhelming and noisy environment, but they also **only offer 10 places**.

It is my understanding that there is to be additional autism provision units established in more schools in Hackney, however all the proposed schools like Nightingale, are two form schools.

I implore you to consider Colvestone as the perfect school to create an autism friendly environment.

Below, I am including the main points of my speech from Monday the 24th of April.

The Cull de sac nature of Colvestone facilitates a safe access to school.

SEN children get overwhelmed when they are walking through busy streets and can often run into traffic. This has happened to us a few times when walking the Dalston high street. You can imagine how scary this is for us but also for [our child], first to be overwhelmed and then to have [their] parents grab [them] to save [them] from traffic. Once a week when we go shopping on the high street is bad enough, but to have to deal with this twice a day on our school run, would bring so much danger and anxiety in our daily routine.

The neutral tones of this grade 2 listed building are ideal for SEN children as they offer a calm and unintrusive environment in which to play, so rather than being overwhelmed, autistic children can be free and comfortable and able to access PLAY.

Being a one form entry Colvestone is naturally a calmer and less overwhelming environment. A busy assembly in the morning stays with SEN children for the whole day, and that overwhelm makes their access to education impossible.

SEN children thrive in caring and loving environments that are willing to listen and really “SEE” them and their additional needs.

A home from home family that is willing to support them in ways that allow them to access education and realise their potential.

The Colvestone team operating as a close knit and caring family, achieves just that.

This school is a rare gem because of the wonderful humans that work there.

The small community of Colvestone gives SEN children much needed access to friendship and inclusivity. Attending a school with a smaller community provides fertile ground for **inclusive friendships to grow**. It is often the case that neurodiverse children struggle to create relationships as a rule and that becomes even harder in large, two form settings.

Finally, please do take note that for my [child], and for most of the SEN children of our school, adapting to new environments and routines is a herculean task and a big change such as their school environment will be detrimental to their education, well being and happiness.

Please listen and take note to the Sen parents and the School community, please show us that our choice matters. That we have the right for a non faith, local **one form** school.

And that our children will be given the **fair and suitable access to education they have a right to**.

Note that the majority of the families WILL NOT BE SENDING THEIR CHILDREN TO PRINCESS MAY.

So that will continue to be an empty school as it will not be brought to capacity by Colvestone students. If we wished for our kids to attend that school, we would have made it so already.

I do hope that during the Monday evening meeting you could see the passion demonstrated by the parents and wider community, but also that you have taken note of how organised and clearheaded we are.

This is not going to be another school closure that will go unnoticed.

In the three weeks since this proposal has been announced, we have come together to fight for our school.

We have researched and pulled together our historical, scientific and personal evidence and created a website for our cause :

<https://www.savecolvestone.com>

We have run a very successful petition that keeps gaining traction:
<https://www.change.org/p/savecolvestone-fsa-colvestone>

Our cause has attracted local press:

<https://www.hackneygazette.co.uk/news/23469925.author-michael-rosen-joins-bid-stop-hackney-school-merger/>

We were also featured in ITV news:

<https://www.itv.com/news/london/2023-04-24/school-closing-as-young-families-are-driven-out-by-spiraling-london-costs>

And we have attracted international press, from a German TV channel, as they are working on a documentary about London and how “friendly” it is for families.

And we are only three weeks in.

We will keep fighting this, until the Council realises how important this ONE FORM ENTRY school is.

We have the strength of parents fighting for their children and the support of the local community.

Please take note, please fight alongside us.

Thank you for your time

With Respect

[parent A]

A SEN parents representative for Colvestone Primary School

Email from [parent B] and [parent C] sent 26.4.2023

Dear [councillor],

We are writing to express our disagreement regarding the recent proposal to include Colvestone Primary School in the consultation to close schools in Dalston (Hackney) by Hackney Council.

We are very disheartened by this proposal and in the worst case scenario that this is going ahead, in total honesty, this will have a tremendous effect on [our child]'s education and subsequently in [their] future academic life.

We believe this will be an ill-considered and damaging move for children especially for our SEN children, parents and carers and the community in this area. As one of the only non-religious, non-academy, non-free schools in Dalston, it should remain open to offer families the choice to be part of a small, close-knit community school – run by the local education authority.

We live [very local to the school] and have been part of the Dalston community for a long time, we love our diverse community. We have chosen Colvestone Primary school for our little [child], who is [age removed] years-old and autistic because it provides a required quick journey access to school (5 minutes), a safe and happy environment (that a small one form school offers) and a wonderful SEN support ([our child] has a experienced SEN one to one). These are the 3 fundamental poles for [our child] to access education. It has taken time and great effort for [our child] to be happy and settled in [their] school (3 years now) and changing school at this stage will have an incredible difficult impact on [them] and it will be practically impossible for [our child] to access education, and this also will have an enormous impact on [their] mental health.

Let me give you a brief history of [our child]'s life so that you have an insight of where [they are] coming from:

[Our child] was diagnosed at 2.5 years' old with Autism by Hackney Ark (with severe delays in communications, severe delays in social interactions and severe repetitive behaviour). [Our child] regressed from age 18 months, she was prior to that stage able to say 5 words: Maman, Daddy, cheese, hello and bye (I am [redacted] and Daddy [redacted] – I only spoke [redacted] to [our child] from note to 2) and literally became non-verbal and lost [their] sounds capacity A, E, I, O, U, [our child] was now only screaming, lost eyes contact and only presented with repetitive behaviours. With tremendous tenacity we managed to access straight away hackney services of Speech Therapy (once a week where Specs was implemented) and Portage ([our child] attended the later services for one year, at home and at the Guarden (in pre-school) once a week alternatively).

At this point when I thought I would get back to my career I realised that [our child] needed so much support and decided to stopped my career to support [our child] full time and at this point I went on a mission and to become my child's therapist and a nucleus that would utilise all services offered and my own therapies. I taught myself an american therapy which is called ESDM (Eearly Start Denver Model), taking my child everyday to Gymboree (a pre-school private center) and implementing ESDM at the same time, helped also [our child] to support [their] physical mobility as at this stage [our child's] upper-body and hands were going inwards (I used

daily at home a school bench at home, making [our child] copying me standing on one leg and other leg and also using a climbing wall we had at home). With all these combination of supports from Hackney services and my own therapies, [our child] progressed, we retrieved her eye contacts and [their] body posture developed now to a straight posture.

At the end of the year, when [our child] turned 3, Portage Coordinator asked me what we foresee for [our child] academically and I expressed at this point that [our child] could go mainstream to a nursery, which was 7mins from home, Portage facilitated transition to nursery and [our child] entered nursery with an EHCP and worked hard at making sure [our child] has all support needed so that [they] attend nursery. The setting kept on using PECS for promoting speech and in 2019, when [our child] started to make the sound A, I, O, I found the Gemini therapy programme and within a month [our child]'s perceptive communications improved tremendously. We have used this programme since then and [our child] is now talking more, single words and understand everything we are saying to her. [Our child] attended nursery for two years 3 days a week with allocated one to one.

We then chose Colvestone Primary School because it is a one form small school and just 5 mins from home. [Our child] remained in one corner of the Reception class for a term and half and by the end of that year [they] had ventured in all corners of the school with a phenomenal support of [their] allocated TA. [They] attended Reception (with of course the pandemic, and attended school during the second lock-down).

When [our child] was in year 1, after a week at school (Sept. 22) [they] refused to go to school and leave the house, it took us 7 months to bridge [our child] back to school and as you can imagine, it was a real isolated work for us as [our child] didn't want to go out anymore but with great effort, determination and tedious work we thankfully managed for [our child] to be happy going out and then managed to bridge [our child] back to school, with the School Senco we worked very hard collaboratively to get [our child] back and [they] did for the end of year one. [Teacher, name removed] has done a tremendous work. Now, we have complete faith in the school SEN support which as you may have heard from other families is not a given, [our child] has an EHCP and now a level 5 in funding which goes towards [their] SEN and [their] needs to be cared by someone all the time.

But even though, we have all in place on paper, the tremendous work we have had to do with the school in order to secure [our child]'s support has been a real effort, as well as working hard to make sure that [our child] is happy attending Colvestone and this in view to attend [their] years at Colvestone to year 6.

To be honest I can't believe we have to write this and the idea of this plan going ahead is very difficult for us and we are trying not to think about it!

We know our child feels safe and happy at Colvestone, [our child] receives a wonderful SEN support with a fantastic experienced SEN one to one [name removed] and a brilliant teacher/senco [name removed]. Moving our child to another school will be strongly difficult and

disruptive in our child's education and have consequences on [them] achieving long term education goals. And it will take us years to get to where we are and by then, it will be the end of primary school. This will literally damage all the hard work we have put together for the past 5 years. I hope you realise the difficulty of what we have to do on a daily basis to get to where we are. We are working hard at [our child]'s school foundation so that [our child] can thrive in the future and become the astronaut [they] want to be (I asked lately [our child] what she wanted to be and [they] astonishingly responded to me: "Astronaut" and repeatedly saying: "Captain [our child], to the rescue").

I have added few pictures below so that you can see how amazing [our child] is doing at Colvestone. In January, [our child] was awarded a Colvestone's Achiever for:

"[Our child] enjoys the creative aspects of the curriculum. In art lessons and in Music, [child] shows good level of engagement. [Child] takes part in daily phonics lessons where [they are] exploring environmental sounds with [their] peers. [Child] enjoys drawing and will often draw pictures that are detailed in design. [Child] has drawn pictures linked to [their] favourite stories, such as "Class Two at the Zoo". Which [they enjoy] listening to and reading alongside the adult, some of the known phrases. [Child] takes part in PE lessons and will join the class line when [they] knows that it is time for PE. Well done [child]! – [our child] went to receive her award in front for Y1/Y2 asseemlee.

Last Friday [our child] was awarded 100% attendance Award, there again [our child] during full school assemble stood up when [their] name was called and went to receive [their] award and came back to sit with everyone else aside [teacher's name removed]. Yes 100% attendance! Incredible! What a journey, what an amazing achievement! And this done to the wonderful work of the school, one to one, Senco, staffs and the Leadership team, [Head of School], [Executive Headteacher] and team.

I also included a picture showing how [our child] is happy at school with [teacher's name removed] during Easter parade.

Colvestone is a unique primary school offering my child an opportunity to develop and thrive in a single-form entry, community-focussed environment, which we strongly beleive in and is required. We strongly hope that our wonderful Colvestone Primary School can stay open and all is done to support our school and for our [our child] to keep accessing education as well as all the SEN children and all the children.

Yours sincerely,

[parent B] & [parent C]

Parent of [name / year removed] at Colvestone Primary School

Appendix 3: Excerpt from an email sent by a local historic and town planning specialist

Uncertain Future of the School Building and Site

Our foremost concern is the potential loss of Colvestone Primary School, but we also wish to stress the negative impacts its closure would have on the school building and the surrounding area. I write here in my capacity as a historic buildings and town planning specialist.

The school building dates from 1862, and was designed by architect Thomas Knightly in a Gothic Revival style. As such, it is one of Hackney's oldest surviving school buildings. It is a grade II listed building, which means that there is a duty under the Planning Acts to preserve its special interest as a building of outstanding historic and architectural significance for future generations. The optimum use for a listed building is its original use, which in this case is as a school. It is also possible that there is a deed of covenant on the site stipulating that the building should be used solely for educational purposes. If the school is to close, the building will lose the vital use for which it was designed and built – most likely forever.

Closure will also see the building become redundant. There are suggestions locally that the Council intends to keep the building vacant for the foreseeable future. As such, it will be sealed up and rendered lifeless within the community. The recently completed refurbishment works will be wasted, as the building will become a target for vandalism and unlawful entry. Disused buildings deteriorate at a rapid rate, as they are more prone to water ingress, damp and a lack of ventilation. Only recently, thieves stole lead from the school roof, an unwelcome act which inevitably will increase if the building falls empty. If the school use ceases, the building is likely to feature on the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register, which identifies those historic sites that have an uncertain future and are most at risk of being lost as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development.

There are fears locally that the Council will sell the school site to a private developer, preventing it from ever returning to use as a Hackney-run primary school. Although the school is not currently an opportunity site in the Council's draft Dalston Plan, it lies midway between sites D6 (Ridley Road) and D7 (Birkbeck Mews). Undoubtedly it will be attractive to housing developers as it is located on the western side of St Mark's Conservation Area, a leafy sought-after Dalston residential neighbourhood made up of houses dating from the same period as the school building. The site is adjacent to Dalston Town Centre and excellent transport links, including two Overground stations and numerous bus routes; a Crossrail 2 station entrance is also proposed within metres of the site boundary.

The redevelopment of the site at minimum will require a change of use for the listed building, resulting in internal and external alterations detracting from its special historic and architectural interest. But the pressure for development and the developer's profit margins will inevitably result in the large-scale redevelopment of the site, which at best will harm the setting of the listed building and at worst destroy it.

There will also be a negative impact on the character and appearance of the St Mark's Conservation Area. Firstly, the character of the area will be severely affected by the loss to the community of an important primary school attended by many local children. The hustle and bustle of school life will disappear forever, including the noise of children in the playground, children walking to and from school, children singing and playing musical instruments, performing in plays and partaking in sport. There will be no more school fetes, no more Christmas concerts, jumble sales or sports days – activities shared with the wider community.

Secondly, the physical changes to the site, whether simply the deadening effect of closing up the school building or the more drastic visual harm arising from a major redevelopment, will have a negative impact on the appearance of the conservation area. This is particularly pertinent as Colvestone Primary School is not only a landmark building at the western entrance to the conservation area, but it is also one of a handful of buildings in the neighbourhood which have a community use, the loss of which would have an homogenizing effect on the conservation area and a reduction in the quality of life of its residents.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above, please review and reconsider the Council's plans to close Colvestone Primary School and merge it with Princess May Primary School in 2024. Nobody in the school or in the wider community wants to lose this very special school just to balance the Council's books. Nobody wants it to be subsumed into another much larger school with very different values, with which it has nothing in common. **To close Colvestone would be untimely, misguided and short-sighted. Please let Colvestone rise again, above all for the children of Dalston.**

Appendix 4: Hackney National Education Union letter of support

Hackney NEU comments on the closure of Colvestone school

We have been asked by parents and NEU members of Colvestone school to briefly outline some of our concerns regarding the potential merger with Princess May.

Colvestone school is a small one form entry school that has served the local community in the heart of Hackney for over 170 years. It has historic significance as the last remaining of William Ellis's "Birkbeck" schools and is currently a Grade II listed building.

The proposal to close Colvestone school and merge it with Princess May is based on financial considerations rather than any social or educational benefit.

Hackney NEU believes that there are significant benefits in retaining small one form entry primary schools wherever possible. Whilst we understand the financial difficulties presented by years of government underfunding we believe that smaller schools and smaller class sizes are a desirable aim for our students.

As the recent Sutton Trust report has stated the UK has the largest class sizes in Europe* and all efforts should be made to arrest this trend. Research by the Education Endowment Federation suggests that *"The average impact for reducing class size is around 2 months additional progress over the course of an academic year."*

As well as improved academic progress we would argue that smaller schools and smaller class sizes have the following benefits.

Tailored learning

With small classes, teachers can more easily monitor every pupil's progress and tailor learning to each pupil. Teachers get to spend more individual time with each child, so they have a better idea of what they may need some extra support with. Pupils will also feel more confident talking to their teacher about any issues they are facing or areas of work they need some help with.

More social confidence

In smaller classes, pupils will usually feel more confident talking in front of a group. You also find with small schools, there is a greater sense of community and less cliques. The community spirit between pupils helps children to socially interact better and feel safe to try new things and discover new interests.

Teaching staff know their pupils better

At a school with a smaller community, teachers know more about their pupils, across their academic, emotional and even medical needs. Sometimes at larger schools, problems impacting a child's mental health or other aspects of their life can be missed.

More inclusive

At smaller schools, unique characteristics are embraced more, and students who are less outgoing can feel more relaxed about being around peers and have a better chance of enjoying their school experience.

Parents have a better relationship with the school

It is also easier for parents to be more involved in the school community, whether that is having a quick chat with their child's teacher about their progress or getting involved with school events and social events. Many parents make friends with other parents or getting involved with events related to their hobbies.

Colvestone school has consistently performed above the national and local average at both KS1 and KS2 with the last published SATs results showing 76% of children reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (compared with a 65% national average)

This speaks to the value of having a small local community school.

The transition to a new school, especially a larger one located further away (and the other side of one of the busiest roads in Hackney) would be very traumatic to the current pupils and the Council need to give serious consideration to this.

Chapter 3. Failure to consult in adherence to Hackney Council's Constitution: bases for Calling In any adverse decision on Colvestone Primary School.

Grounds for calling-in the adverse decisions in CE S247 (School Estates Strategy) are set out below:

1.1 The decision-maker did not take the decision in accordance with the principles set out in Article 1.2;

1.2 All decisions of the Council will be made in accordance with the following principles:

1.2 (d) – the decision maker failed to consider relevant evidence when making the decision

- Information was circulated to Cabinet on the day of the meeting with analysis of current vacancy place data, published by LB Hackney on 19th September. A copy of the full report is attached and further analysis is provided as Appendix C. It shows that the projected consequences of the proposals made in the Briefing Report are contradicted by actual place data calling into question key suppositions and the achievability of stated aims of the proposals. Schools are responding to falling rolls and the need to avoid deficit budgets, so have requested temporary caps on their Published Admission Numbers thereby reducing the overall vacancy rate.
- The Briefing Report refers to over 600 empty places in Reception classes alone (based on Jan 23 census) and this is a 21% surplus of places. The latest school vacancy place data shows 391 empty places in Reception classes so the vacancy rate has reduced to 14.5%. Across all year groups (and all school types) the vacancy rate has reduced to 12.7%, which is approaching the target of 5 – 10% vacancy rates.
- The analysis also shows that projected (systemic) place reductions in the Briefing Report will not be achieved by the proposals. The target was a reduction of 135 places in Reception but some of these reductions have ALREADY been achieved through voluntary caps on PAN at De Beauvoir (30 to 15) and Princess May (60 to 30). If the proposals to close these four schools goes ahead, it will only lead to a further reduction of 60 places. It was always incorrect to suggest that a merger of Baden Powell and Nightingale would reduce PAN.
- The analysis of current place data highlights the challenges the Council faces in achieving their target of 5 – 10% vacancy rates as faith schools have some of the highest rates but have not been in scope under the current proposals. For Reception, the faith schools have 136 empty places which is over 30% of all vacancies in just 14

schools. Across all year groups, the vacancy rate in faith schools is 24% which is twice as high as the overall Hackney figure of 12.7%. If the faith schools are excluded from the data, then overall vacancies across other school types reduces to 11!

- The analysis of current place data shows that there are insufficient local places to accommodate pupils from the schools in scope aside from faith schools and schools outside the borough.
- The failure to account for actual, up to date pupil movement invalidates many of the suppositions in the Briefing Report and calls into question the capacity of the proposals to address / reduce falling rolls.

1.2 (a) – clarity of aims and desired outcomes

- Informal Consultation. There has been a failure to provide clear and unambiguous expectations of information required from stakeholders to inform the Informal stage of the Consultation, details of the process of analysis of opinions, information and challenges received, and specifically how information received would inform the next stage of the consultation. (See also pt. 1, p.3 of the CYP Scrutiny Report submitted to the Informal Consultation).
- Formal consultation. No response was received at Cabinet when the Cllr was asked how stakeholders would be engaged for the next stage of the consultation given the lack of change to proposals after representations in the Informal stage of the Consultation or the failure to engage stakeholders (or the elected representatives) from the majority of schools in scope.
- Outcomes. If the merger of Baden Powell and Nightingale will not contribute to the overall outcome to reduce surplus places then why has this been included. Are there other outcomes that the Council seeks that are less clear?
- The focus on single outcome metric and two primary criteria for being in scope (falling rolls and financial unsustainability) means that the Council fails to account for any context-specific issues; such as the location, building types (affordances and efficiencies), staff costs, proportion of SEN provision, ideal class sizes / surplus places and how that might affect SEN provision success and access to integrated provision, operating expenditure (and capacity to identify savings) etc.
- The failure to provide school by school analysis (as requested but denied without grounds at Cabinet) fails to allow decision makers and the Council at large the capacity to scrutinise the underlying basis for each of the proposals.

1.2 (a) – consideration and evaluation of alternatives and reasons for decisions

i. The local interventions were not fully considered prior to being included in these proposals.

- The Briefing Report suggests that local interventions to help the schools in frame had been exhausted prior to the public announcement of the Consultation, although no evidence to the nature of interventions, timescale, cost or efficacy are offered. This was specifically challenged by parent/carer representatives from Colvestone Primary School at Cabinet. Details of the ongoing, recent and positive interventions at this school are detailed in Appendix B below.
- Without reporting on claimed interventions at all schools it is impossible to ascertain what has been done by the Council to protect schools in frame prior to the consultation, whether due support was given proportionally to all schools, the efficacy of these interventions, and how future LA policy might be informed through an evaluation of the efficacy (or otherwise) of these or alternative (untested) interventions.
- The Briefing Report suggests that the impact of these interventions have been tested and evaluated – however an analysis of their success or insufficiencies on a school by school basis is omitted from the report.
- The CYP Scrutiny Report also notes the lack of evidence of the impact of any claimed interventions across the schools in scope – which were positive and ongoing in the case of Colvestone, and in their infancy (pt. 4, p.4, CYP Scrutiny Report).
- These evaluations should have been carried out and made available to decision makers for all schools in scope to inform current and future proposals. The Save Colvestone campaign, public submissions to the consultations and representations to Cabinet have consistently questioned why these successful interventions have not been allowed to run their course given their recent, highly positive impacts.

ii. The consultation did not engage with parents properly to really understand their preferences, despite parental choice being a key factor that the Council cannot control.

- The process of consultation could have been understood as an opportunity to understand what stakeholders might do or prefer when offered a number of options, to potentially order those options in order of preference, with the goal of allowing the LA to make informed decisions.
- Understanding parent / carer preference is key to evaluate potential impacts of the proposals, and the failure to account for preference – evidenced by the failure to consult on a broader range of options – fails to inform decision makers of the potential consequences of their actions.

iii. No information about to suggest alternatives

- From the outset of the consultation (the 'pre-informal' phase), schools and families have been presented with a closed set of proposals with no alternatives offered. If there are no alternatives suggested (or subsequently consulted upon) other than 'no action' (also discounted) then the Council has failed to consult in a real or effective way.
- A failure to consult on a range of options from the outset is problematic for a number of reasons: the appearance of democratic process is undermined by decisions already being made; a failure to consult on a wider range of options results in a situation where the intentions of families should the proposals be adopted is unknown, and therefore there is no way of accurately understanding if the proposals as framed will have the desired effect (here: of pupils moving to other local LA schools resulting in reduction of surplus in the Local Authority system / way that guarantees the financial stability of the destination school(s)); it is impossible to understand if this is the best possible set of proposals for the communities that will be effected to address the identified problem; the framing of the consultation (pre-determined plans to close four specific schools as opposed to a range of *possible* options) makes the consultation far more damaging to schools in frame – and fundamentally affect the capacity of those schools to address one of the key criteria used to put schools in scope of the consultation: to attract more pupils; the failure to consult at a formative stage exposes the consultation (and the Council) to legal jeopardy: the responsibility to consult at a 'formative stage' is the first of the Gunning / Sedley principles for public consultation as reflected in the Cabinet Office's 'Consultation Principles' 2018.
- The Briefing Report briefly addresses alternative options identified through the 'pre-' and 'informal' consultation periods. By dismissing these requests for consultation out of hand the Council deny further engagement by stakeholders, and foreclose any possibility of creatively addressing a problem that might better reflect stakeholders desires and intentions. It is unclear therefore what the Council proposes to learn from the process of consultation.
- By failing to offer a range of scenarios to stakeholders, pupils are at risk of enduring successive closures at a vital formative stage of their education. This risk is even greater when the high proportion of pupils with SEN / EHCPlans or as members of more vulnerable communities at the schools in scope is considered.
- That consulting at a formative stage has effectively been discounted from the outset of the process is addressed in 5.9 (Briefing Report, p.18 – reason: staffing – though this erroneously suggests that a wider consultation would require more mergers or closures) and Responses to the Consultation (p.770, pt. 18) on the basis of time – though this overlooks the extremely long period over which the consultation is being considered, and the potential problems that would be avoided by better informing the

proposals, the resources available to decision makers, and the consultation's capacity to achieve its aims.

- Despite talking about 'thinking creatively' there has never been any engagement with alternative ideas or help on how these could genuinely be considered as part of the process. Alternate merger possibilities have not been consulted on even when requested in Council-run school engagement meetings.
-

Iv. Specific SEND options

- The Cllr at Cabinet was asked about the specific, repeated, requests to consider expanding the already successful SEND provision at the schools in frame to accommodate demand in the borough – and in the awareness that most of the schools in frame have higher than borough average levels of pupils with EHCP or SEN support.
- The potential for expanded SEN provision at Colvestone was discounted in the Briefing Report presented to Cabinet (repeated in responses given at Cabinet, 25th Sept) by a claim that expanded provision would require the school to be completely decanted for works to take place (5.16, p. 19). This was erroneous and misguided. Full background for this claim and specific rebuttals can be found in Appendix B (notes to **1.2 (a) – consideration and evaluation of alternatives and reasons for decisions**).
- The use of vacant buildings to aid schools financially and the expansion of SEN provision to meet borough need are both identified as warranting Council support in the Estates Strategy (pp.7, 10-14). The CYP Scrutiny Report also advocates for the promotion of 'inclusive schools and education to ensure that more children are supported in mainstream local educational settings' (pt 8, p. 6). The positive potential to exploit surplus space / buildings on school estates, as identified as a potential revenue stream in the Estate Strategy, is not addressed in the Briefing Report presented to Cabinet and is detrimental to schools in scope (and Colvestone specifically) by its omission ('Schools with Excess Physical Space...' (Briefing Report, 4.27-29, p.12).
- Similarly the considerable additional savings to the borough of reducing out of borough SEN provision (currently between £35-70,000 per pupil per year) are not reflected here either. These points are reiterated in the consultation responses that quote expert testimony from an Education, Health and Care Officer from the Hackney SEND team, a CAMHS social worker and an Inclusion Expert all specifically in relation to protecting and expanding Colvestone's SEN provision

(Supplementary Papers, Appendix P – Kwest Report on the Informal Consultation, p. 26 / PDF p.345). The Equality Impact Assessment appears to acknowledge the particularly high impact of the proposals on the SEND pupils at Colvestone, but fails to incorporate any of the above mitigation / arguments in favour of retaining and expanding provision and the relevant benefits to pupils at Colvestone, the borough in general, and to the financial advantage of the school – because of the erroneous discounting of these proposals through a misrepresentation of the site / buildings and required works.

1.2 (e) – the decision would not be in the interests of the borough’s residents and a preferable alternative decision could be adopted

The detailed analysis of the vacancies for each of the proposed school closures shows that these proposals are forcing parents to make very difficult decisions. There may be too many vacancies across the whole borough but in south west Hackney and Dalston;

- The popular schools have very few vacancies which make it very difficult for a family with children in different year groups to move to.
- Many of vacancies are at faith schools which families do not want (evidenced by falling demand and Council own survey).
- Some of the closest schools with vacancies are out of borough – in Islington or Tower Hamlets.

The analysis of these unforeseen consequences and the material effects for the aims of the proposals as outlined in the consultation is included in **Appendix D – 1.2 (e) – the decision would not be in the interests of the borough’s residents and a preferable alternative decision could be adopted** below.

- Assess each proposal. The Cabinet report does not look at the specific circumstances for each for the proposed school closures. They are different and it is important that each proposal is assessed individually – as requested by public questions and through individual representations to the Pre-and Informal Consultation – in terms of the impact it will have on the Council target of reducing Reception places and the effect on school options/ parental choice in that part of the borough.
- Out of Borough. It is hard to see how losing pupils from rolls to other boroughs helps the outcomes. The response in Cabinet from the Cllr that ‘I can’t change geography’ appears to misconstrue the challenge: it is precisely in the power of the LA to chose which schools to put in scope of the consultation and to consider relative proximity in that process. The CYP Scrutiny Report (submitted to informal consultation) comments on the necessity to act in a way ‘that minimises the loss of pupils through cross-border flows where neighbouring authorities may have a comparatively better borough wide offers’ (pt8, p.6).

- Faith Schools. Given that 84% of Hackney residents want non-denominational schools in the borough it is unclear why the Council appears to be treating faith and non-faith schools as interchangeable forms of provision, or to produce localised parts of the borough where parents are left with only a choice of faith school for local education provision.
- Repeat Closures. More broadly, the Cabinet Briefing Report fails to address, or propose mitigations, for the potential for pupils to be caught in a cycle of repeated closures, an issue of particular importance as many of the children affected fall within the most vulnerable in the community: as identified in the Report, the proposals disproportionately affect communities with above-average prevalence of free school meal eligibility, ethnic diversity, and SEND / EHCP provision.
- Financially Unsustainable. Cabinet has failed to respond to the clear jeopardy presented to one of the schools in scope (Princess May) were it to be forced to expand, as a consequence of LA commitments within these proposals to families from Colvestone, from (near full) single form to a two-form entry school with substantial surplus places. Such a move would clearly undermine Princess May's current financial model by burdening the school with additional staffing costs but with insufficient pupil numbers to avoid instability and potential subsequent closure – a disastrous outcome for the school and pupils both current and recently transferred as part of the proposals. The budgetary consequences of necessary protections for Princess May are not identified in budget considerations.
- Alternative Merger Option. The rejection (5.15, p.19) of a potential merger / accommodation of De Beauvoir families on the Colvestone site because of the 'financial position' of the school is nonsensical: more pupils, as has been stressed throughout the consultation process, would radically improve the financial position of any of the schools in frame – potentially pulling them out of scope of the consultation and enable them to pay off the historic deficit.

1.2 (a) – a presumption of openness

- As detailed in [1.2 (a) – due regard for the statutory framework, guidance and code of conduct] below, the LA has consistently refused to release information related to the deeds of one of the schools in frame – denying both FOI requests and legal representations. As detailed below, this information is of clear material importance to the evaluation of the proposals outlined in the consultation as protective covenants would manifestly affect the range of alternate uses of the site in question (Colvestone Primary School) which are discussed only in general, asset use/disposal terms in the Briefing Report.

- The refusal to detail possible land use due diligence (as demanded by the Estates Strategy) in this instance suggests that this due diligence has not been conducted for any of the sites in frame.
- Additional requests (made both as casework and under legal representations) to disclose the allocation data for schools in south west Hackney prevents an assessment as to whether schools (and particularly schools in scope of the consultation due to roll numbers – a key criteria used by the LA to identify schools in scope) have been fairly treated over recent years in this allocation process, or whether any of the schools in scope have suffered from an artificial suppression of pupil numbers through this process.
- High level (non-postcode-based) analysis appears to suggest disproportionate allocations to free schools in the years 20/21 and 21/22 (with 22/23 data as yet unanalysed), for example.
- Questions raised at Cabinet challenged the selective representation of financial modelling for one of the schools in frame in the Briefing Report and the conclusions reached in the LA's summary of its resources, underlying data and analysis. It is unclear how these differences can be dismissed by the Cllr without full disclosure of the documents that underpin the conclusions of the LA, disputed by members of the public with access to the same documents, such that decision makers, Council and the public can inform their own evaluation of the situation. The bases of these challenges to the LA's conclusions are outlined below in **Appendix A – misrepresentation of financial data – 1.2 (a) – a presumption of openness**
- Without greater clarity it is unclear how Cabinet (and the general public / stakeholders in the further consultation) might be expected to make financially-based decisions on the proposals. Note that the Briefing Report identifies 'financial sustainability' as a key metric for both determining schools in scope and for the evaluation of the proposals outlined in the consultation.

1.2 (a) – due regard for the statutory framework, guidance and code of conduct

- School Building Titles. Due diligence has not been conducted on the status of school buildings as demanded by the Estate Strategy (p.14) with regards to building deeds / titles, particularly with regards to restrictive covenants, and specifically with regards to restrictive covenants believed to be included in the transfer deeds (1906) of the Colvestone school buildings when they were acquired by the LCC in 1906 from an educational charity (still extant). These deeds have been subject to an unfulfilled FOI request currently under Internal Review (Ref: 16591453, originally submitted 14th April 2023), requests made in each of the reports prepared by Save Colvestone for each stage of the consultation, and legal requests made (11th September, 2023) on behalf of the parent's organisation of the school in a pre-action letter. The Council

has been provided with a copy of the receipt from Hackney Council for the deeds from the London Residuary Body dated Dec 1990. These documents and consideration of them are of clear relevance to the consultation and the choices to proceed on proposals relating to Colvestone as:

1. If restricted by covenants standard disposal of the buildings would not be possible and so consideration of the buildings as an asset in the general Council holdings (and therefore potential source of revenue) as described in the briefing reports / consultation meetings etc. / Cabinet would have been in error.
 2. The buildings might potentially be forfeited to the (still extant) educational charity who sold them under restriction should the educational use cease – a clear source of jeopardy for the pursuit of the current proposals, of which public / Cabinet have not been made aware.
 3. Should such a covenant be contained within the deeds it limits the reuse of the buildings significantly and would likely force the Council to reopen a school on the site – having paid hundreds of thousands of pounds in retention contracts, redundancies of staff, building protection, and associated costs of transferring pupils (potentially out of Borough at great expense) for SEN provision currently being provided by the school. It would also jeopardise student numbers in the new school as the current pupils would have relocated elsewhere. (N.B. as repeatedly insisted upon by the Council, there is no academic attainment argument for closing the school – it is performing very well). This path would be an egregious waste of public funds. There is recent precedent in Hackney for this wastage – the closure of Hackney Downs School / discovery of covenanted deeds / establishment of Mossbourne Academy.
 4. The Estates Strategy is clear about the jeopardy posed by ‘free school presumption’. Closing the school and reopening it would result in a free school where control of the school and land would be forfeit to a private enterprise. This would be a direct consequence of the covenant – and manifestly changes the consequences of the proposals on which decisions are being made.
- Dalston Local Plan. Failure to account for long term demand produced specifically for Colvestone (as opposed to the borough in general) and role of school as infrastructure for Dalston Plan homebuilding (see also below, 1.2(d)). Consideration of the relevance of the Dalston Plan continues to fail to account for the proximity of all of the main sites specifically to Colvestone and the more general relevance to south west Hackney that has been disproportionately targeted for closures and for which there is now a shortage of non-faith provision. Colvestone School would be the nearest primary school provision for all of the major Dalston Plan sites. By failing to address the specific relevance of the Dalston Plan to Colvestone (as opposed to all the schools in frame in general) the Report deliberately obscures its relevance and potential impact. Further, no depositions are included from Hackney Planning that discuss the primary school provision for these homebuilding projects (Colvestone was identified as key infrastructure for the project in recent Dalston Plan public events) or any analysis as to the chilling effect removing local primary school

provision would have on the Council's stated aims to attract / retain families in Dalston (Estates Strategy pp. 12-13, target housing mix) and reiterated by the CYP Scrutiny Report, p.6, re: conditions for 'retention of families in borough'. (Further: although the wording in the Report has been changed, there still remains a lack of evidenced long term planning (in addition to consideration of long-term place demand) more generally – an oversight reiterated by responses at Cabinet that children won't come into schools 'early enough').

1.2 (c) – the decision-maker did not act in accordance with the budget

- The Briefing Report lacks even high-level cost benefit analyses that weigh the considerable expense of closures against the potential financial advantages of proceeding with proposals. No modelling for these comparative costs / budget effects are contained in the Briefing Report, even when this must be the key driver of the proposals (it is repeatedly noted that the quality of education is high (rated Good / Ofsted) at all schools in scope and that all schools with vacancies in the borough are rated Good or below).
- No costings of alternate proposals (alternate mergers / closures / wider consultation) are included in the Briefing Report nor are they weighed against one-another (a point also noted in the CYP Scrutiny Report pt.7, p.5). Similarly there are no details given of potential savings to the borough of alternate proposals (for example, increased SEN provision at Colvestone to reduce the huge expense of out-of-borough SEN provision – see 1.2 (a) above).
- Part 1.10 of the Cabinet Report states that “where we might merge schools, we will have to work with those schools to ensure they have the right facilities and investment on the new sites to meet the aspirations of their respective schools and communities.” No reference to these potential costs (or their size) is made in the very brief comments in the Report by the Interim Finance Director.
- There is a lack of short or long-term budgetary considerations to support a school compelled to expand by these proposals (Princess May) but likely to have considerable surplus at new scale and therefore to rapidly fall into deficit as a result. Given the LA's role in this potential destabilisation it would seem beholden that the school be given some guarantees in this regard, and estimations of shortfalls budgeted for.
- Additional costs for SEND provision for pupils currently being cared for schools in scope are absent from the Interim Financial Director's brief survey of potential costs for the proposals. It is noted that, due to in-borough shortfalls in provision, out of borough SEND provision currently costs the LA between £35-70,000 p.a. per pupil. As noted in the Briefing Report, a number of the schools in scope have high levels of

SEN pupils that currently access provision in those settings (and education itself more broadly). No costs are outlined to support transfers, access, additional support provision and possible out of borough resources. The general outline of support offered at Cabinet (the use of picture stories etc.) failed to address the extent and complexity of enabling large numbers of vulnerable children with SEN / EHCPs to access education in new settings, or to estimate the level of funding required to achieve these aims.

- The responses given at Cabinet failed to engage with these substantive points (identification of revenue streams, overlooked budgetary consequences of the proposals, etc.) or challenges to the LA's interpretation of underlying financial data. The assertion that the deficit of a school should be written off to limit further growth of that debt is undermined by figures that suggest a capacity of the school to pay it down over time. Understanding the basis of this difference of interpretation is key to evaluating the proposals upon which Cabinet are asked to make a decision.

Appendix A – misrepresentation of financial data – 1.2 (a) – a presumption of openness

The Briefing Report, Responses to the Consultation (Appendix S, pp. 775-6) and subsequent references to its conclusions at Cabinet, misrepresent the content of the independent SRMA report on Colvestone by omission, and the overall financial analysis on the school presented in the Report – the analysis that concludes with the stark claim that Colvestone is “particularly financially unsustainable” (Briefing Report, 4.22, pp.11/12) – fails to accurately represent the data on which it is based: the school's own conservative budget projections and the savings (and conclusions) of the independent SMRA report “proactively requested” by the school's Senior Business Manager “to support him in improving the financial outlook of CPS (Colvestone Primary School)” (SRMA Report on Colvestone School, p.4). Viewed in combination, the two sources of modelling data the Council are using suggest “highly achievable” savings (SRMA Report) leading to budget surpluses and debt repayment, albeit over a longer period than that modelled in the SRMA report. This is achievable on lower pupil numbers than those used in the SRMA report – lower pupil numbers reflected in Colvestone's own financial modelling.

By referencing a table in the Briefing Report of school deficits as evidence of “financial unsustainability” the Briefing Report conflates debt and financial sustainability. The SRMA Report claims that the rapid running down of the school's deficit in 3-4 years would be “extremely challenging” – a comment the Briefing Report extracts – *but not impossible*. What the SRMA report does not do is suggest that a longer term of deficit reduction would not be viable, or that the running of surpluses be achieved and sustained through the identification of “highly

achievable” savings as the deficit is run down over time and pupil numbers improve. The SRMA lists a number of reasons for this recent drop in pupils, many of which have been reversed (see 1.2(a) above). The specific points of misrepresentation are outlined below:

‘High achievability’ of surplus and longer-term deficit reduction

The Colvestone Senior Business Leader produced a 3-year budget projection for the Council, the headline figures of which are included in the Briefing Report for Cabinet (p.11/12). Omitted from the reporting of this highly conservative budget projection produced by the school are a series of caveats to these budget figures that suggest sources of additional funding that would improve the financial projections (as has been the case in 22/23 when the school ran a surplus – see ‘Notes / Assumptions’ in the 3-year budget produced by the Colvestone SLT). Further, when this highly conservative budget projection (that relies on far fewer numbers of pupils joining the school than the SRMA report – see below) is viewed in the context of the SRMA report commissioned by, and to support, the school’s Senior Business Leader, a huge volume of additional savings are identified: £614,000 in ‘high achievability’ efficiency savings (and a further £167,000 in ‘medium achievability’ savings) over the next three years. (Note: only £30,000 p.a. is speculative in the form of grant targets). This suggests a ‘high achievability’ of in-year surplus and progressive deficit reduction over time. The Briefing Report prepared for Cabinet fails to reflect the savings identified in a report that is their best financial modelling and on which it signed off, and therefore fails to disclose the positive financial outlook that results from viewing these two documents together (as the Briefing Report purports to do).

Pupil projections

The Briefing Report (4.22, p.11) disputes rising pupil forecasts contained within the SRMA report in which it is quoted “the SRMA and school have discussed the pupil number forecasts with the LA, who advised that these numbers are not unrealistic.” The report states: “The local authority is firmly of the view that the projected number of children joining the school, on which the budget is based, are unrealistic.” It is unclear on what grounds this claim is made as it obscures the Local Authority’s role in producing the SRMA report, including during the pre-publishing review phase of its production, and signing off on its conclusions (without challenging this specific point) in April/May 2023. The relevant section of the Briefing Report for Cabinet (4.22) also fails to disclose that the financial projections produced by the school are not based on such steep rises in enrollment, as projected by the SRMA report, and are therefore far more conservative on this point – in line with what appears to be Hackney Council’s current position.

That the school, as is subsequently pointed out, had 14 new enrollments in Reception in 2023 whilst the school had been under the public threat of closure for several months, and Hackney Education had advised at least one parent (that we are aware of and have signed dispositions from) looking to apply to the school that the school was to be closed and not to transfer, is, frankly, remarkable. The true extent of pupil number suppression due to the consultation will be hard to gauge, but is likely to be considerable – p. 32 of the Briefing Report documents the considerable damage done by the consultation to many of the schools in frame. Further, the

allocations data for previous years has been requested (both as casework and through the Pre-Action legal correspondence) but not produced by the Council. By failing to disclose this information it is impossible to ascertain whether pupil numbers enrolling at Colvestone may already have been artificially suppressed through the allocations process over preceding years. (We understand that there is precedent for this mode of artificial suppression by the LA in the borough from education campaigners in the 1990s).

Deficit Reduction

By focussing on a rapid paydown of the deficit the Report fails to model for a more manageable deficit reduction plan that could be sustained by the school. It is unclear from the Report, and from responses received in Cabinet, why this would not be more desirable for the overall Council budgets – a budget that would have to absorb the whole of the deficit were the school to be closed. Indeed, in its responses, the Council appear to focus purely on attempting to produce additional arguments as to why the school should be closed, rather than on possible alternatives (advocated for in the Estates Strategy, p.7) that might enable the protection of a single-form intake LA school.

The comment in the Briefing Report that Colvestone ran a surplus in 22/23 because of ‘a mid year additional cash injection’ suggests that Colvestone was only in surplus in the last financial year because of emergency Council intervention. This insinuation was repeated at Cabinet (25th September). The school received funding from the Schools Contingency Fund, the de-delegated fund to which all schools contribute and to which all are eligible to apply. This money was applied for to help improve the school building and in particular ensure that it was statutorily safe and compliant. The school had a right to apply and were eligible for this funding which is why it is there. One might suggest that the Management Team would have been remiss not to have applied for it – as is the case for all monies that the school applies for and receives from the Council and other funds. To imply that this an emergency intervention by the Council, or the only reason for running a surplus, is highly subjective and contestable at best. Many schools (both in frame of this consultation and outside) apply for and receive this funding, as they are entitled to do. To suggest that it was a vital intervention fails to disclose the nature of the Council funding and its purpose, and thereby misrepresents it as emergency funding.

Appendix B – specific supporting materials relating to challenges posed at Cabinet that underpin challenges to the grounds for Decision CE S247 School Estates Strategy.

1.2 (a) – consideration and evaluation of alternatives and reasons for decisions

- It has been stated at Cabinet that positive interventions (with the engagement of the LA) at Colvestone were in their infancy and having a positive effect – on both the school community, parental satisfaction, finances and improving the attractiveness of

- the school after a period of turbulence. They include: an entirely new Senior Leadership Team, new rolling Federation partnership with associated benefits, new Senior Business Manager and fiscal acumen, expanded social media and communications capacities, rising parental and staff satisfaction with the school under new Federation, improved financial situation (including running surplus and Federation benefits) and thorough financial planning, improved building conditions with extensive restoration works on the listed buildings now complete etc. No clear answer was given as to why these successful but relatively recent interventions (including LA investment) had not been given time to prove themselves.
- The Save Colvestone campaign has consistently asked, at the last two stages of consultation and at Cabinet, that the vacant caretaker's house on the school site be considered for either ARP or behavioral / SEN resource as the building is already converted into teaching spaces, is of appropriate size, and would complement the excellent integrated SEN teaching already being practiced by the school. It was also stated that the expansion of this capacity at Colvestone would help the borough address the huge shortfall in provision in borough, build on the school's current good practice and successes in that provision and financially benefit the school. The use, for this purpose, of the vacant space on the school site and specifically the caretaker's house, was subject of conversations during the Mayor and Paul Senior's scoping visits in early 2023. Heads of schools have been invited to make expressions of interest in advance of a likely new round of applications for ARP provision, to which the school would be eligible to apply. Previous dismissal of this idea on the basis that the call was in 21/22 (as the school was undergoing its change in leadership) and now closed also no longer holds. The caretaker's house has its own self-contained perimeter, street access and parking / works space, and it was here in this outdoor space separate to the playground where building materials and site equipment were stored for the major building works completed over the last year and a half – all completed without closing the school.

Appendix C – Analysis of current place data (Sept 2023) – 1.2 (d) – the decision maker failed to consider relevant evidence when making the decision

1. Latest Data: The September Cabinet report is not based on the latest information about school vacancy data.
2. Proposed Outcomes will not be achieved: The proposals will lead to a further reduction in school places (from current vacancy data) of 60 places rather than the 135 places quoted in the May report.
3. Vacancies in faith schools: A large proportion of the vacancies are in faith schools and the target of 5 – 10% cannot and should not be reached without addressing vacancies in

these schools. The Council may not be fully responsible for them, like the community schools, but it has to encourage the relevant faith bodies to take action.

4. Not sufficient places: Analysis of vacancies at schools closest to the four proposed for closure demonstrates that there are insufficient places

1. Latest Data

The Schools Estates Strategy reports seeks viable sustainable solutions to address falling rolls. The May Cabinet report highlighted that in January 2023 Reception vacancies were 21% and were projected to rise to 25% over the next few years (without taking any action). It stated that the aim is to operate vacancy rates across all year groups at about 5 – 10%. The May Cabinet report states that the proposal to close four schools (close two and merge four into two) will lead to a total reduction of 135 Reception places per year:

- De Beauvoir close 30 places
- Colvestone and Princess May amalgamate 30 places
- Baden Powel and Nightingale amalgamate 30 places
- Randal Cremer closure 45 places

The September Cabinet report still refers to over 600 empty places in Reception classes alone (21% surplus). I think this is based on the School Organisation Plan (SOP) which is reviewed annually. However this is a dynamic situation and school vacancy data is rapidly changing as;

- Pupils move in and out of the borough
- Pupils move between schools
- School review budgets and change their structure and number of forms*

*There seems to be a discrepancy between the official PAN and an unofficial PAN where schools are requesting that their pupil numbers are capped at a certain level.

The latest school vacancy data (circulated by LB Hackney Education on 19th September) shows very different figures! It has 391 empty places in Reception classes which has reduced the vacancy rate to 14.5%. Across all year groups, the vacancy rate has reduced to 12.7%.

2. Achieving the proposed outcomes

If you look at the proposals again, based on the latest school vacancy data then they are not as effective at reducing school places as initially anticipated, with a reduction of only 60 places rather than 135 places.

a) De Beauvoir closure

SOP states that the PAN here is 30 for 2022-23 and 2023-24 but the school is actually operating with an unofficial PAN of 15 per year – this is reflected in the latest vacancy rates. Therefore the proposed closure will only lead to a further reduction of 15 places.

b) Colvestone and Princess May amalgamate

SOP states that the PAN is 30 for Colvestone and 60 for Princess May so that closing Colvestone would reduce PAN by 30 places. However Princess May has already undertaken an unofficial reduction in its PAN from 60 to 30. If two single-form schools amalgamate into one two-form school then **there is NO reduction in overall places!**

c) Baden Powell and Nightingale amalgamate

SOP states that the PAN is 30 for Baden Powell and 30 for Nightingale. The May Cabinet report states that the amalgamation of these two schools would reduce PAN by 30 places. However as stated above, if two single-form schools amalgamate into one two-form school then **there is NO reduction in overall places**. This is acknowledged in the September Cabinet report as the PAN for Nightingale increases from 30 – 60 so no overall reduction.

Therefore this proposal seems to be about the better utilisation of school premises.

d) Randall Cremer closure

SOP states that the PAN for Randall Cremer is 45 and this is reflected in the latest school vacancy data. This proposal will lead to a reduction of 45 places.

3. Vacancies in Faith Schools

The latest school vacancy figures show that the vacancy rates in faith schools are significantly higher than in other schools. Across the borough there are 391 empty Reception places across all schools, and the vacancy rate of 14.5%. In the 14 faith schools, there are 136 empty Reception places – over $\frac{1}{3}$ of places in only $\frac{1}{4}$ of the schools. The vacancy rate for Reception in faith schools is 30%!

For all year groups, the vacancy rate across the whole borough is 12.7%. When considering just faith schools, the vacancy rate for all year groups doubles to 24%.

The Cabinet report acknowledges that the faith schools have responded to the crisis by reducing their Published Admissions Numbers (as other schools have done). It also highlights that the Council has limited powers in relation to the faith schools – they can suggest reductions in PAN but cannot enforce any stronger measures such as closure or merger (as they have done with the community schools).

Looking at the above figures, the Council will not achieve its stated aim of 5 – 10% vacancy rate across the borough unless further action is taken in faith schools. It is neither sufficient nor appropriate to only take action in community schools. They must encourage the relevant faith bodies to have these conversations and make difficult decisions about their school in Hackney as well, but there is no evidence of this in the Cabinet report.

4. Not sufficient places

The Cabinet report Appendix H presents useful information about the nearest schools and vacancies for each of the four schools proposed for closure. Appendix I to O presents a heat

map of the families addresses against school vacancies for each year group. It concludes that across the borough there are sufficient vacancies for all children who need places.

A key issue is distance and the Cabinet report is inconsistent in its application of an appropriate distance to travel to school. It acknowledges that the statutory distance is 2 miles – on that basis a family should be able to travel to almost any school in the borough and there are times when the report seems to expect that. It is a difficult issue because families do generally want to go to a school nearby but quite often they will travel longer distances to keep a child at a familiar school if they had to move away.

When they undertook the options appraisal around potential amalgamation, it is clear that they considered a much smaller distance. So schools selected for merger were generally less than 0.5 miles apart so that the total distance was approx 1 mile.

The latest vacancy data shows that both Princess May and Holy Trinity school have restructured into one-form throughout all year groups and have minimal vacancies, which would be a significant change to Appendices H – O.

We have prepared a report looking at the vacancies at the nearby schools for all of the schools proposed for closure. If both De Beauvoir and Colvestone school close then there are not sufficient places at local schools to accommodate all the pupils. Many of the vacancies are in faith schools or schools across the border in Islington. Please see full analysis and figures in the separate report.

Appendix D – 1.2 (e) – the decision would not be in the interests of the borough's residents and a preferable alternative decision could be adopted

- Current pupil / place data suggests that parents in south west Hackney are being forced to choose either a faith school (because it is the closest school with vacancies) or a school out of borough for local provision.
- This is a choice created by the focus of closures in too small a geographic area and is a direct consequence of the consultation. Challenged at Cabinet it appears that no consideration has been made as to the possible (and now actual) consequences of over-targeting a specific area in this manner.
- The Cabinet report does not look at the specific circumstances for each of the proposed school closures. They are different and it is important that each proposal is assessed individually – as requested by public questions and through individual representations to the Pre- and Informal Consultation – in terms of the impact it will have on the Council target of reducing Reception places and the affect on school options/ parental choice in that part of the borough.

In the south west area of the borough, a lot of pupils have already moved away from Randal Cremer and this has already affected the vacancy rates at local schools. There are more details in the full report submitted to Cabinet (Sept 2023) but a few figures are highlighted below. There are still 118 pupils (YR – Y5) looking for new school places. In the top ten closest schools, there are JUST enough places to accommodate them all. Year 3 is particularly tight because St John the Baptist has restructured this year to one-form entry and has limited vacancies.

If you exclude the vacancies at the three church schools, then there are NO vacancies at other schools in Year 2 and insufficient places for children in Year R, Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4. So families either choose the faith schools or look further afield but the options are limited;

- More faith schools but with limited vacancies
- Popular community schools with limited vacancies
- Tower Hamlets/Islington community schools have plenty of vacancies
- A school that is rated by Ofsted as Requires Improvement

The circumstances suggest that there is a lack of local vacancies in non-faith schools. The September Cabinet report explained the alternative options that had been considered for Randall Cremer. It concluded there was no merger options as no schools nearby were large enough to accommodate all the pupils but there were vacancies at nearby schools.. However there are now approx 20 children per year group that need spaces and are struggling to find them so are there alternative options?

- i) Keep Randall Cremer open as one-form entry
- ii) Merge Randall Cremer with another local school (increase PAN in nearby school by half-form per year group if necessary)
- iii) Close Thomas Fairchild instead (this school has been rated as Requires Improvement since 2017 Ofsted visit. It is also struggling from falling roll as the PAN was capped at 30 (from 60) in 2020-21 and officially reduced in 2021-22).

In Dalston, Holy Trinity and Princess May schools have restructured with a temporary cap on their admissions number at 30 rather than 60 for all year groups. There are significantly less vacancies and there are NOT sufficient places at the neighbouring schools for all children at De Beauvoir and Colvestone schools, particularly in Year 3. It is a similar picture to the south west – the community schools are largely full and the vacancies are in faith schools or two Islington schools. If you exclude the vacancies at the faith schools, then there are a shortage of places in Reception, Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4.

It is not in resident's interests to force families into faith schools that they do not want or a school out of borough.

Are there alternatives in Dalston?

The September Cabinet report explained the alternative that it had considered for De Beauvoir – either merger with Randall Cremer or Princess May but it was felt that both schools were too far away and that a merger with Princess May would not stabilise numbers.

Pupils from Colvestone are guaranteed a place at Princess May but;

- Families at Colvestone have consistently said during consultation that they do not want to move to this school
- The restructure at Princess May means they have capped places and have limited vacancies. They could be forced to take more pupils but this is unlikely to be sustainable financially and may not stabilise numbers.

The considered alternatives for Colvestone school were to;

- Merge with Princess May at Colvestone site but there is insufficient capacity
- Merger Colvestone with other schools in Blossom Federation but there are too far away
- Merge De Beauvoir with Colvestone at Colvestone but this was not feasible initially based on pupil numbers. It acknowledges that due to drop in pupil numbers this is now a feasible option but is not preferred due to Colvestone's financial position.

Whilst the overall objective is to reduce vacancy rates, this has been achieved in Dalston through temporary capping of number at two local schools and it is no longer appropriate to close both one-form community schools in the area and force families towards faith school or out of borough. These options need to be looked at again.

Colvestone has a historic deficit of nearly £0.5m from 3 – 4 years ago from the previous leadership. It has addressed these challenges and has achieved an in-year budget surplus in 2021-22 and in 2022-23 and is projecting a small in-year deficit for 2023-24 due to the new leadership and financial management with Blossom Federation. If the school closes then the Council will be liable for the deficit.

There is some dispute between the Council and the Save Colvestone campaign about the future pupil and financial projections for the school. The Council argues that the figures are unrealistic and Colvestone is particularly unsustainable, though this was disputed at Cabinet without satisfactory response (see: failure to fully disclose financial data). However an immediate increase in pupil numbers (by merging Colvestone with De Beauvoir) would clearly improve the financial position and create a sustainable school with a stable roll.

The dismissal of the merger (adding more pupils) due to the financial position (which is created by low pupil numbers) is a circular argument.

4. Failure to conduct a legal consultation:

Included here is the Pre-Action Protocol Letter for Judicial Review prepared for the Save Colvestone campaign group by our legal representation and sent to Hackney Council during the Informal Consultation.

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11 September 2023

**PRE-ACTION PROTOCOL LETTER FOR JUDICIAL REVIEW
LETTER BEFORE CLAIM
THIS LETTER REQUIRES YOUR URGENT ATTENTION**

Dear Madams and Sirs

Potential legal challenge to the decision to put forward Colvestone Primary School for a statutory process for closure and “amalgamation” with Princess May School

1. This is a letter before action sent in accordance with the pre-action protocol for judicial review.

Claimant

2. Colvestone Family and Staff Association, a legally registered charity, acting on behalf of Save Colvestone Primary School (“**Save Colvestone**”), a group of Colvestone parents and carers (“**the Proposed Claimant**”).



Proposed Defendant

3. Hackney Council (“the Potential Defendant”).

Decision(s) to be Challenged

4. The ongoing decisions to put forward Colvestone Primary School for the statutory process for closure and “amalgamation” with Princess May School, including but not limited to informal consultation carried out from 5 June – 16 July 2023 and the decisions made subsequent to the informal consultation to progress the statutory process.

Interested Parties

5. (1) Colvestone Primary School; (2) The Governing Body of Colvestone Primary School (3) the Blossom Federation.
6. Should you consider that there are other third parties with a distinct interest who should be served as an Interested Party in the proposed proceedings, please provide us with their details and an explanation of their interest.

Factual background

7. There is a long and complex factual background, but the salient points are these. Colvestone Primary School experienced a period of instability in 2021-2022, but from the Summer term of 2022, the School was working intensively with the Council to stabilise matters. There were a number of meetings from June 2022 – January 2023. Steps taken included the School deciding to partner with the Blossom Foundation (note that partnership with Princess May was rejected as an option) and a school resource management advisers (“SRMA”) audit of the School’s financial position. At no point during this period did the Council mention the potential for Colvestone Primary School to be closed or amalgamated.
8. On 30 January 2023, the Council’s School Estates met with the senior leadership of the School, unminuted, to have an initial conversation about possible steps being taken by the Council in relation to school closures, with an indication that Colvestone Primary met some of the criteria for consideration. A further meeting was held on 22 February, where “amalgamation” with Princess May School was proposed.

9. It should be clear that what was, and is, being proposed is the closure of Colvestone. The terms “merger” or “amalgamation” with Princess May only mean that parents/families are offered a place at that school. There is no actual merger, nor any amalgamation of staff or quality of education or ethos etc.
10. The selection criteria¹ identified by the Council for schools to be considered for closure were:
- (1) Schools most financially at-risk;
 - (2) Number of vacant places
 - (3) Physical size of schools and suitability of sites to host a merger
 - (4) Geographic partnership options (such as the existence of other schools within walking distance)
 - (5) Whether new neighbourhoods and new-build estates will create significantly more need for school places in the future
 - (6) Current Ofsted grading and projected outcomes for pupils
 - (7) Community impact
11. In March 2023, the governors and leadership team of Colvestone Primary School opposed the school being considered for amalgamation or closure even at the initial stages of an informal proposal, on the basis that the school was in a unique position, different from the other schools under consideration. In particular they drew attention to the financial stability of the School and stabilising roll, and that the partnership with the Blossom Federation, which had contributed to that stability, was in its early stages. It also drew attention to the high proportion of children at Colvestone on the SEND register.
12. Despite this the Council moved to a pre-informal consultation. Save Colvestone prepared a detailed submission, in particular setting out how Colvestone Primary had delivered a surplus school budget for the year ending 2022/23 and projected an in-year surplus for the years ending 2023/24 and 2024/25; and that a survey of 73 households with children at the School indicated that 87% would not agree to their children going to Princess May School. The Council (through Paul Senior) agreed that any representations made by 1 May would be considered in the preparation of the Briefing Report for the Cabinet meeting on 22 May on whether to go to the next stage. Save Colvestone’s detailed 63-page dossier was submitted

¹ <https://education.hackney.gov.uk/content/primary-schools-potential-changes>

on Monday 1 May. The Council then erroneously suggested the material was submitted too late for inclusion. The Education Sufficiency and Estates Strategy – falling rolls Open Report (CE S190) (“**the Report to Cabinet**”), published on 12 May for consideration by the Council’s Cabinet, appended Save Colvestone’s representations. Initially the representations withheld from publication, but they were published on 19 May after challenge by Save Colvestone. However, the substance of the Report failed to address the majority of Save Colvestone’s points, failing either to challenge them, to adjust the proposals in light of them, or even to acknowledge them in any substantive form.

13. On 22 May, the Council’s Cabinet agreed to move on to the informal consultation stage. The parts of the Report to Cabinet concerning Colvestone Primary School proceeded on the basis of a projection that 120 children from the School would move to Princess May, but without having carried out any survey of parents at the School. It contained a table purporting to set out the financial position at Colvestone, showing it to be in deficit, but did not provide any information from the three-year projected budget produced by the new Senior Leadership Team (provided to the Council in November 2022) or the independent school resource management advisers (“**SMRA**”) report, which affirmed the projections and identified further highly achievable savings on operating costs. These two reports confirmed both the financial viability of the school and its capacity to pay down the deficit.
14. The Report to Cabinet considered expected demand for school places, but focused on the short to medium term, including when considering whether planned new housing or regeneration would impact the demand.
15. The Report to Cabinet provided information about an air quality review which, when it went before the Cabinet, showed the 2021 NO₂ annual concentration at Colvestone Primary School as 23µg/m³, and at Princess May 1 as 23µg/m³, and Princess May 2 as 32µg/m³. However, this second figure was recorded in the Cabinet’s Decision Document as 20µg/m³, causing concern that the Cabinet had not appreciated the true air quality impact on children moving to Princess May School. When Save Colvestone pointed out the error, the Cabinet Decision Document was amended.

16. The informal consultation ran from 2 June to 16 July 2023. The consultation document described the consultation as considering “a proposal to amalgamate (‘merge’) Colvestone Primary School with Princess May Primary School. If agreed, the amalgamation will result in a single primary school being established on one site for 60 pupils in each year group.” (emphasis added). It should be noted that this suggests the establishment of a new school, which is not possible as any new school is automatically a free school under ‘free school presumption’, as warned in the Strategic Plan; Princess May School is already “established”.
17. The document did explain that “amalgamation” meant closing Colvestone on 31 August 2024 and Princess May school “providing spaces for displaced children”, “if that is what the parents prefer for their children”. It did not explain that, if fewer than the 120 projected children moved from Colvestone to Princess May, then Princess May is also at risk of closure, or that, even if 120 children did transfer, there would still be approximately a 23% vacancy at Princess May.
18. The consultation document provided general information about the financing of schools, stating that “[s]chools with unfilled places lose £6,484 per place every year”, but did not provide, even in high-level form, any of the financial information verified by the SMRA report showing Colvestone School to be financially viable. It did not address SEND at all.
19. Save Colvestone provided a detailed submission on 16 July 2023. This referred again to two surveys of parents at Colvestone, which showed that 95.7% of parents surveyed did not include Princess May in any of their six preferences when selecting a school, and that 87% would not send their children to Princess May, with a further 6% undecided.
20. Save Colvestone’s consultation response identified both the key benefits and the key risks of closing Colvestone and included information on:
 - (1) the financial position of Colvestone Primary School;
 - (2) future demand, including in light of the adopted Local Plan, the draft Dalston Plan and the fully-funded 21st Century Street on Colvestone Crescent;
 - (3) the air quality impact of closing the school and offering provision at Princess May School; and

(4) the high number of children with SEND at Colvestone and the risk of significant cost if children have to be sent out of the borough to private schools.

21. It should be noted that the process of pre-informal consultation and informal consultation has already harmed Colvestone Primary School. The threat of closure is enough to cause pupils to move or to change parental school preferences. Save Colvestone is aware of at least one parent who applied for a place at Colvestone, only to be advised by Council officials that the school was closing. The extent of artificial suppression of pupil numbers is difficult to gauge. Save Colvestone considers that moving Colvestone School forward in the process and issuing a formal statutory notice would be even more damaging to the School.

Proposed Grounds of Challenge

22. Save Colvestone considers that the Council's decision-making regarding the proposed "amalgamation" of Colvestone Primary School with Princess May School is unlawful for the following reasons:
- (1) Failure to take into account the relevant statutory guidance;
 - (2) Failure to comply with the public sector equality duty;
 - (3) Failure to take material considerations into account;
 - (4) Failure to conduct a lawful informal consultation.

Proposed Ground 1 – Statutory Guidance

23. When making decisions about closing Colvestone Primary School, the Council is required to have regard to the relevant statutory guidance – "Opening and closing maintained schools – Statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers" (January 2023) ("the Statutory Guidance"). Where there is such a duty, the decision-maker must proceed on a proper understanding of what the guidance requires. The decision-maker is also obliged to take the guidance into account and to act in accordance with the guidance, unless clear and cogent reasons are given for departing from the guidance: see, eg, *R(Britwell Parish Council) v Slough Borough Council* [2019] EWHC 988 (Admn) at §§ 27 and 33; *R(TG) v Lambeth LBC* [2011] EWCA Civ 526; [2012] PTSR 364 at §17 per Wilson LJ.
24. The Council proposes to close the School because of the fall in predicted demand and there are surplus places elsewhere in the local area which can accommodate the displaced pupils. This reason is addressed explicitly in the Statutory Guidance,

which requires the Council to consider whether there is predicted demand “in the medium to long term”. It is understood that is the reason on which the Council is relying.²

25. The Council has consistently considered predicted demand on the basis of short to medium term, rather than medium to long term. This is particularly apparent when the Council considered the demand from planned new housing in the borough (addressed further below). The Report to Cabinet explicitly considers this in relation to “demand in the short to medium term”.
26. While there is no definition in the Guidance of what “medium term” and “long term” mean, the Council’s other relevant documents³ define medium term as 5-10 years and long term as 10-15 years.
27. The Council has either failed to understand the Statutory Guidance, or is departing from the Guidance but without giving clear and cogent reasons for that departure.

Proposed Ground 2 – Public Sector Equality Duty

28. The public sector equality duty (“PSED”) is laid down in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The duty is to have “due regard” to the relevant matters, and although this does not require the achievement of particular outcomes, it is not “a question of “ticking boxes: Aikens LJ, giving the judgment of the Divisional Court, in *R(Brown) v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions* [2008] EWHC 3158 (Admin). The duty must be “exercised in substance, with rigour, and with an open mind. There is no duty to make express reference to the regard paid to the relevant duty, but reference to it and to the relevant criteria reduces the scope for argument. The duty must be fulfilled before and at the time when a particular policy is being considered. It must also be fulfilled by the actual decision-maker; knowledge of the duty by another officer is not sufficient: see *R(Danning) v Sedgemore DC* [2021] EWHC 1649 (Admin) at §55.
29. An important evidential element in the demonstration of the discharge of the duty is the recording of the steps taken by the decision maker in seeking to meet the

² See section 3.5.2 of the Report to Cabinet. The Council has not identified any other reason, for example, that the School is not considered viable. If the Council is not relying on the reason stated in the Guidance, but on some other reason, that should be made clear when responding to this letter.

³ <https://hackney.gov.uk/dalston-spd#happen>;
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JKYYxGAtynP0NsxumGUAq_tR70Lg90_a/view eg pg 146.

statutory requirements: *R (BAPIO Action Ltd) v Secretary of State for the Home Department* [2007] EWHC 199 (QB) (Stanley Burnton J (as he then was), confirmed by McCombe LJ in *Bracking v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions* [2013] EWCA Civ 1345, [2014] EqLR 60 at §25.

30. The importance of the PSED was emphasised by the Court of Appeal in *R(Bridges) v Chief Constable of South Wales* [2020] EWCA Civ 1058 at §176ff. The Court held that the duty includes a public body taking reasonable steps to obtain information about whether the decision-making would result in direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics.
31. The duty to comply with the PSED is a continuing one.
32. The Council carried out an undated Equalities Impact Assessment (“EIA”), which was provided as Appendix L to the Report to Cabinet. This demonstrates that the Council failed to comply with the PSED in at least two regards relating to Colvestone School.
33. First, although the EIA addressed children with special educational needs and disabilities (“SEND”) in general, it failed to consider the specific position at Colvestone School, which has a high percentage of children with SEND: 17.31% of pupils have special educational needs (the national average is 13.2%) and 8% of pupils have an education, health and care plan (“EHCP”), meaning that 25% of children have SEND. The 25% figure was confirmed to the Council by the School in March 2023. The EIA only lists the pupils with an EHCP, indicating that the Council failed to consider the true extent of the impact.
34. Furthermore, the EIA suggested that the outcome for pupils with EHCPs “may be improved”, because “the educational quality of any school they move to is graded either ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’ by Ofsted”, which ignores the fact that Colvestone is already graded ‘Good’.
35. Second, the Council has wholly failed to factor air quality impact into the PSED analysis. Negative air quality impacts are known to harm those who are more vulnerable, in particular, children. Hackney’s own Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2025 identifies school communities as amongst the most susceptible groups to the

serious health impacts of air pollution within its strategy to improve air quality throughout the borough.

36. Air pollution levels are significantly higher at Princess May than at Colvestone. Princess May is on a main road (the A10); Colvestone is on a quiet back street, part of a fully-funded re-greening project which will further improve air quality, meaning that closing Colvestone will inevitably expose children to poorer air quality.

Proposed Ground 3 – Material Considerations

37. There are a number of considerations which are obviously material to the Council's decisions which do not appear to have been taken into account.
38. First, the relevant financial information does not support Colvestone's inclusion, even at pre-consultation stage. The only financial information that the Council has in relation to the financial position at Colvestone is the three-year projected budget produced by the new Senior Leadership Team (provided to the Council in November 2022) and the SMRA report, which affirmed the projections and identified further highly achievable savings on operating costs. Given that these two reports confirm both the financial viability of the School and its capacity to pay down the deficit, it is unclear on what basis the Council has concluded that Colvestone is one of the schools most financially at risk, or has "a budget deficit in top 10 schools raising the most financial concern" (per pg 42 of the Report to Cabinet).
39. Second, planning-related considerations. As the Report to Cabinet tacitly acknowledges, planned future housing and regeneration is obviously material to the predicted demand for the School. The Council has dismissed any short to medium term planning matters that weigh against the proposed school closures, but in so doing has failed to take into account the Colvestone 21st Century Street, which is a fully-funded, short-term (ie 1-2 year) initiative focused on Colvestone Crescent. The adoption of the street on which Colvestone Primary School sits as the Borough's first permanent play street plainly has the potential to increase the number of families drawn to the area, requiring a proper medium to long term analysis of the expected child yield from the development. The Council has not undertaken any such analysis.

40. As set out above, the Council has only considered the impact of proposed new housing in the short to medium term (and has not even done that lawfully). The Council does not appear to have taken any account of the fact that the Local Plan LP33 focusses growth in Hackney predominantly in the two designated town centres of Dalston and Hackney Central. The Council plans to deliver a minimum of 1,330 homes a year up to 2033 across the Borough, maximising the supply of genuinely affordable housing with up to 2,000 homes for Dalston. In Dalston, the majority of the allocated sites are clustered around Colvestone Crescent, some in very close proximity to Colvestone Primary School.
41. The draft Dalston Supplementary Planning Document (May 2021), to which weight must be given as an emerging plan in late stages of preparation, makes clear that there is a particularly high need for 3 bedroom (family) housing and that key to the vision for Dalston is child-friendly planning. Approximately 200 affordable family homes (plus others at market rates) are planned in close proximity to the School. All of this is plainly relevant to the medium and long term predicted demand for Colvestone Primary School; none of it appears to have been taken into account. Instead, the Council has undertaken a generic consideration of planning matters, which ignores the specific considerations relevant to Colvestone.
42. Furthermore, the Council does not appear to have taken into account the potential negative impact of the closure of Colvestone on proposed future housing provision and regeneration in Dalston. The School is key infrastructure, the ramifications of the removal of which are not addressed by generic reference to the need for developer contributions when infrastructure is not present. The whole point of concentrating development in Dalston is that some of the requisite the infrastructure is already there.
43. Third, SEND-related considerations. As set out above in relation to the failure to comply with the PSED, the Council has failed to take into consideration in relation to Colvestone specifically, the high proportion of children with SEND. The school has implemented a SEND strategy which has excellent feedback from parents/carers and staff. Parents chose a 1 form entry school for their children with SEND needs as this is shown to support children's emotional and wellbeing needs. This is relevant both to the medium to long term demand for places at Colvestone and to the likelihood that Colvestone parents will not choose to take up places at Princess May.

44. Colvestone's integrated provision and current surplus capacity also has the potential to save the council money otherwise spent sending children with SEND to independent / private schools outside of the borough at a cost of between £35-70,000 per pupil per year. Given that potential financial losses appear to be driving the Council's decision-making, this is further material consideration weighing against the closure: keeping Colvestone open has clear financial benefits; closing Colvestone risks the Council having to find yet more expensive out-of-borough SEND provision.
45. Fourth, community impact. Colvestone is the last surviving Birkbeck school - a historical and socially important part of London and Hackney's past. It is also by Ridley Road market, one of the most historic markets in London. It is also a key part of the Colvestone Crescent 21st Century Street. The Council does not appear to have researched or obtained any information about the potential negative community impact of the closure of Colvestone School, nor does it appear to have taken these matters properly into account.

Proposed Ground 4 - Consultation

46. If a public body chooses to consult, it must do so lawfully. The basic requirements for a lawful consultation process were established in the case of *R v Brent London Borough Council, Ex p Gunning* (1985) 84 LGR 168 and are known as either the *Gunning* Principles, or the Sedley Principles, as Hodgson J set out and accepted the submissions of Mr Sedley (as he was then):
1. Consultation must be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage.
 2. The proposer must give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit of intelligent consideration and response.
 3. Adequate time must be given for consideration and response.
 4. The product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising any proposals.
47. The Supreme Court in *Moseley* stated at §25 that it is "hard to see how any of [Sedley's] four suggested requirements could be rejected or indeed improved".

48. The *Gunning* Principles are reflected in the Cabinet Office's 'Consultation Principles 2018',⁴ to which the Court referred in *R(British Blind and Shutter Association) v SSHCLG* [2019] EWHC 3162 (Admin) at §31.
49. There is considerable case law on each of the four requirements. The focus of this proposed challenge is on the first and second requirements
- (1) formative stage: it is not a formative stage where an option of central significance has already been excluded⁵ or where a definite solution has evolved;⁶
 - (2) sufficient reasons: a consultation document must present the issues in a way that facilitates an effective response;⁷ the scope of the consultation must be clear⁸ and non-disclosure of information can, depending on the circumstances, make the consultation unlawful.⁹
50. The informal consultation failed to comply with these requirements in a number of ways. First, the consultation did not take place at a formative stage, but at a time when a "definite solution" had evolved. This is evidenced by the following:
- (1) The Report to Cabinet set out efficiencies and innovations which could be implemented to manage and balance budgets (pg 37), then claimed a far more limited set of options has been tried (pg 38), stating that further details would be in the school specific section. These measures are not addressed in the school specific section (pgs 46-51), nor are they addressed in the 'Details of Alternative Options Considered and Rejected' section (pgs 57-58), where 'doing nothing' or 'alternate mergers' are the only other options on the table;
 - (2) The fact that the consultation only concerned school closures and did not invite consideration of alternative models and options to reduce vacancies in the local school system; and
 - (3) Officials on the Hackney Council Admissions and Pupil Benefits Team Helpline told a parent explicitly that Colvestone School was closing.

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>.

⁵ *R(Montpeliers & Trevors Association) v City of Westminster* [2005] EWHC 16 (Admin) at §§25-29.

⁶ *R v North East Devon Health Authority; ex p Pow* (1998) 1 CCLR 280.

⁷ *R(Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Foundation Trust) v Joint Committee of Primary Care Trusts* [2012] EWCA Civ 472 §9. See also *Holborn Studios Ltd v Hackney LBC* [2020] EWHC 1509 (Admin) at §71.

⁸ *R(Jones) v Denbeighshire CC* [2016] EWHC 2074 (Admin) at §§70-74.

⁹ See the considerations set out in *R(Law Society) v Lord Chancellor* [2019] 1 WLR 1649 at §73.

51. Second, the consultation was in breach of the second *Gunning* principle, for the following reasons:

- (1) The consultation documentation and surrounding information did not present the issues in a way that facilitated an effective response, as they caused confusion about the “amalgamation” of the schools and failed to make clear (a) that both Colvestone and Princess May schools could close, depending on parental choice, and (b) Colvestone staff would not be “merged” into Princess May; they would have to re-apply, only if there are vacancies. This confusion arguably meant the scope of the consultation was unclear;
- (2) The consultation document also did not facilitate an effective response simply providing an open-ended invitation to comment on the proposals, rather than giving guidance as to the information that would be helpful or needed to develop proposals for the next stage of the process. This failure has recently been highlighted by the Council’s own Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission;¹⁰
- (3) The scope of the consultation was also unclear as regards the timeframe that consultees should be considering. As set out above, in light of the Statutory Guidance, that is a medium to long term timeframe (ie 5-10 yrs to 10-15 yrs). No indication was given of this at all;
- (4) Crucial information about the true financial position of Colvestone was withheld, meaning that consultees could not properly engage with the question whether Colvestone was financially viable. Instead, the consultation focused on alleged revenue lost to the Council. These failures prejudiced consultees. They were criticised by the Council’s Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission. Both the provision of proper financial information and giving consultees a proper understanding of the financial questions on which they were being asked to provide views were crucial to the Council being able to take a decision in line with the criteria it identified for determining which schools to close;
- (5) The consultation documentation was not provided in languages other than English, despite the Council being aware that support was needed in multiple languages and platforms; and

¹⁰ <https://hackney.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s84677/Final%20Cllr%20Bramble%20-%20School%20Estates%20Strategy%20-%20Google%20Docs.pdf>.

- (6) The Report to Cabinet identified that a wide range of stakeholders would be included in the consultation, including “all residents”, but that group was excluded from the stakeholders to whom the consultation document was sent.
52. Accordingly, the consultation was legally flawed and does not provide a lawful basis for the Council to move to the next stage as regards Colvestone School.

Details of Information Sought

53. The Council is required to make full and frank disclosure in judicial review proceedings. Save Colvestone has already made a freedom of information request to the Council which has not been answered satisfactorily. The Council is asked to disclose the information sought, namely the original, amended 1906 and subsequent Deeds of the Colvestone Primary School building, receipt of which was taken by the Council in 1990.
54. On 27 July 2023, Save Colvestone made a request to Councillor Garbett for information about reception intake and allocations. The Council is asked to provide the information sought, details of which are annexed to this letter.

Details of the Action the Council is Expected to Take

55. In light of the above apparent errors of law, Save Colvestone asks that the Council removes Colvestone Primary School from the proposal to close schools.
56. The Council is asked to respond to this letter in writing within 14 days (ie by 25 September 2023) so that Save Colvestone may consider whether further legal action is necessary.

ADR Proposals

57. We would welcome any proposals to engage on the substantive issues raised by the draft legislation so as to resolve or narrow the dispute.

Other applications

58. If the claim proceeds the Proposed Claimant will apply for a protective costs order (PCO) pursuant to CPR 45.43 on the basis that the claim is an environmental matter in light of the air quality and human health impacts raised: *Venn v Sec State*



CLG [2015] 1 WLR 2328. If you disagree that this is an Aarhus matter or with the making of a PCO please give your reasons.

59. If it is not accepted that the Proposed Claimant is entitled to Aarhus costs protection, then the Proposed Claimant will invite the Court to make an order capping the parties' costs liability in accordance with its power at section 88(6) of the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015.

Details of Legal Advisors Dealing with this Claim

60. Counsel

[Faint, illegible text, likely contact information for legal advisors]

Address for Reply and Service of Court Documents

61. You are requested to respond by email to ensure we have your response in a timely manner. Please send your response to all the following e-mail addresses:

- *[Faint email address]*
- *[Faint email address]*
- *[Faint email address]*

Yours sincerely



[Faint text, likely name of the signatory]

[Faint text, likely address or contact information]



Annex: Reception Intake and Allocations Information Sought

1. For the 2023 Reception intake, for each of the individual applications that included Colvestone on their list of preferences, please inform the Proposed Claimant:
 - a. at which place (number) on the preference list Colvestone was placed
 - b. which preference (number) was the school offered by Hackney Education to the applicant.
2. For the 2022 Reception intake, for each of the individual applications that included Colvestone on their list of preferences, please inform the Proposed Claimant:
 - a. at which place (number) on the preference list Colvestone was placed
 - b. which preference (number) was the school offered by Hackney Education to the applicant.
3. For the 2021 Reception intake, for each of the individual applications that included Colvestone on their list of preferences, please inform the Proposed Claimant:
 - a. at which place (number) on the preference list Colvestone was placed
 - b. which preference (number) was the school offered by Hackney Education to the applicant.
4. Also, please provide the full postcodes of each of the allocations made to the following schools for Reception intake in the years 2021 and 2022 (and 2023 if available):

Halley House
Mossbourne Parkside
Princess May
St Matthias
De Beauvoir
Holy Trinity CofE
Our Lady and St Josephs



5. Annex A: Informal Consultation responses including expert testimony, Briefing Report – Informal Consultation'

Annex of Informal Consultation responses including expert testimony

Owing to the failure to respond in detail to many of the responses to the Informal Consultation they are included here for re-submission. Included is the submission to the Informal Consultation by the Governing Body of Colvestone Primary School. Attention should be drawn to the expert testimony (flagged in the official summary of the Consultation Responses produced by Kwest, also included here - Chapter 6).

All Comments On Consultation Proposals

Excludes comments submitted by respondent(s) who requested that their comments not be shared in public domain.

Comments On Proposals - Consultation Questionnaire

- closing a school is very expensive (the Council estimate well over a million pounds, plus £250-300,000 each year to maintain closed buildings). The school is very strong academically, has hugely beneficial class sizes for its diverse pupils and is running a surplus - how can closing it make financial sense?

- Colvestone is a unique primary school offering children an opportunity to develop and thrive in a single-form entry, community-focussed environment.
- Colvestone is in the centre of the Dalston Plan, which includes commits to building 600 new homes, including 200 affordable family homes. Shutting Colvestone - the closest school to this development - is a short-sighted action, that will negatively impact the community.
- Colvestone Primary School is central to a pioneering proposal to turn Colvestone Crescent into 21st Century Street, Hackney's first permanent play street. A long tree-lined pedestrian walkway with lots of new plantings, ecology gardens, and innovative play spaces. A key part of the 21st Century Street is that it's located next to a primary school. Explicitly, without Colvestone school, that plan makes less sense

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- the Council say that it can re-open the school if demand increases in the future, but if it does this under current legislation all new schools are automatically Free Schools - run for profit by the private sector, completely outside local government control. Hackney would lose control of the school and the land (and will have spent a huge amount of money in the process).

- the site has multiple protections - two Grade 2 listings and an outdoor classroom / playground that is an Asset of Community Value - it is not a building easily repurposed but it is an excellent building purpose-built as a school. We also strongly suspect that it has protected educational use and are searching for the deeds.

- with the threatened closure of De Beauvoir Primary, closure of Colvestone will leave Dalston without a single form entry, non-faith or Academy/Free school within a mile of the Colvestone site.

- small schools are great for kids with diverse needs - Colvestone has an amazing track record of producing great results for kids of all abilities (the school is particularly strong in integrating children with SEN - special educational needs or learning support plans - into the wider community to the advantage all pupils). The small community context is key to this. A single form school enables kids to be supported by their peers across age groups and produces a real sense of belonging and pride in their community.

- Colvestone is the closest Primary School to all the main Dalston Plan homebuilding sites (200 of which will be affordable family housing). As a small school it only needs a small number of kids per year to be full - closing it would be incredibly shortsighted (the council should consider demand for places in the mid- to long-term, as per statutory guidance, but it is not factoring long-term demand at all).

- Colvestone is central to the 21st Century Street - the play street and re-greening project that joins Colvestone Crescent to the market. Removing the school will rip the heart out of this project and the neighbourhood.

- closing a school is very expensive (the Council estimate well over a million pounds, plus £250-300,000 each year to maintain closed buildings). The school is very strong academically, has hugely beneficial class sizes for its diverse pupils and is running a surplus - how can closing it make financial sense?

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- Colvestone is central to the 21st Century Street - the play street and re-greening project that joins Colvestone Crescent to the market. Removing the school will rip the heart out of this project and the neighbourhood.

All Comments On Consultation Proposals

- I will not send my child to Princess May, it was never on my list of chosen schools. The council has not given us any other options, which does not feel like a consultation but a done deal. 98% of parents i have spoken to have no intention in sending their children to princess May for different reasons.

- Princess May is on a major road and has high pollution levels (which every study has demonstrated particularly affect young people). It is also a really big (double form) school.

- The council has not actually consulted the parents, meaning the "consultation sessions" were just about telling us how much money schools are loosing. We have not been given the overall figure for the budget you are measuring this "loss" from. We have not been presented with data on financial viability, we have not been shown financial modelling (except one that is several years old made by the school itself) that takes all aspects of the proposed closure into account, there is a clear lack of long term thinking, including the refusal to assess mid to long term impacts while that is your policy. No one has spoken to the community, to the market traders, to local parents. Your "consultation team" has not been interested in hearing about our concerns.

- Colvestone is a very diverse school with high number of SEND as well as kids with free school meals, and all the school children whose lives you are proposing to disrupt are in such schools. There is a fundamentally unequal treatment as none of the schools in the more wealthy parts of hackney are in danger.

- Colvestone has a really strong community, and is really important for the wider community of Dalston. Which is why we chose it. Colvestone is at the heart of the Ridley Road and Dalston community, and removing a school and its children from this area will have a detrimental impact on the local area.

- Colvestone is in the centre of the Dalston Plan, which includes the commitment to building 600 new homes, including 200 affordable family homes. Shutting Colvestone - the closest school to this development - is a short-sighted action, that will negatively impact the community. This is part of an important move to try and get families to stay in the borough and keeping this local school is a huge part of that.

- the closures planned are unfairly hitting dalston, with too many community schools close together being affected. You have not put any faith schools in this plan, which means there is nowhere left to go for pupils who do not want to go to faith schools. Leaving the one school with a strong community to continue, as a single form school, would be a fair way to rectify this problem.

I don't have an issue with the Council adjusting school numbers for falling birth rates in the Borough. That seems sensible, but there are 2 concerns I have over the proposed closure of Colvestone/ merging them with Princess May.

The first is pollution. Why move a school set back from the main road, to one that must be far more polluted? Princess May's right on the main road. Air quality matters.

The second is over the reasons for the fall in the numbers at Colvestone over recent years. A lot of the reason for the decline in numbers there is that parents were unhappy, so a lot have moved their children - mostly to Shacklewell. It seems now that that the statistical fall in numbers is being used as a justification to close the school. That seems unfair as it's a hidden factor in the debate.

BP school is over 30 year old, staff are very friendly and dedicated to their jobs and pupils. They take responsibilities really seriously: looking after the kids, helping them with classwork and encourage to achieve the best grades of education. Teachers gives regularly updates to the parents how their kids where been in the classroom that day. At this moment school has a few amazing young pianists, few tallented chess players, 2 wonderful violinists and etc.

Moving to new school would be really stressful for everyone: teachers, parents, pupils. Some teachers would loss the job, some pupils would development anxiety and stress, friendship between kids would be broken and all school structure would be shattered.

- Colverstone is a well loved school, and one of the only non-religious, non-academy, non-free schools in the area, it should remain open to offer families the choice to be part of a small, close-knit community school – run by the local education authority.
- Colvestone is a unique primary school offering children an opportunity to develop and thrive in a single-form entry, community-focussed environment.
- Colvestone is in the centre of the Dalston Plan, which includes commits to building 600 new homes, including 200 affordable family homes. Shutting Colvestone - the closest school to this development - will negatively impact the community. This school is needed where it is.
- Colvestone Primary School is central to a pioneering proposal to turn Colvestone Crescent into 21st Century Street, Hackney's first permanent play street. A long tree-lined pedestrian walkway with lots of new plantings, ecology gardens, and innovative play spaces. A key part of the 21st Century Street is that it's located next to a primary school. Without Colvestone school, that plan makes less sense.
- Colvestone is at the heart of the Ridley Road and Dalston community, and removing a school and its children from this area will have a detrimental impact on the local area.

All Comments On Consultation Proposals

- Colvestone is at the heart of the Ridley Road and Dalston community, and removing a school and its children from this area will have a detrimental impact on the local area.
 - This is an ill-considered and damaging move for children, parents and carers in Dalston. As one of the only non-religious, non-academy, non-free schools in the area, it should remain open to offer families the choice to be part of a small, close-knit community school – run by the local education authority.
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 - Colvestone is in the centre of the Dalston Plan, which includes commits to building 600 new homes, including 200 affordable family homes. Shutting Colvestone - the closest school to this development - is a short-sighted action, that will negatively impact the community.
 - Colvestone Primary School is central to a pioneering proposal to turn Colvestone Crescent into 21st Century Street, Hackney's first permanent play street. A long tree-lined pedestrian walkway with lots of new plantings, ecology gardens, and innovative play spaces. A key part of the 21st Century Street is that it's located next to a primary school. Explicitly, without Colvestone school, that plan makes less sense.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a badly thought-out and damaging move for children, parents and carers in Dalston. As one of the only non-religious, non-academy, non-free schools in the area, it should remain open to offer families the choice to be part of a small, close-knit community school – run by the local education authority. • Currently Colvestone is the only local school with such a high number of SEND children because many of them cannot go anywhere else, cannot go to a bigger school, and have found at Colvestone the only nurturing environment that means they can remain in school. Otherwise it means for many of these kids staying at home as there is no SEND provision of this level anywhere else locally. The council knows this and will spend 70k/year per child sending them somewhere really far away to get the care they are getting at colvestone right now.
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<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Closing Colvestone would have a devastating impact on Dalston and the community. As a single form entry non faith school it offers a uniquely attractive option to parents wishing to move INTO the area. 2) It’s a much needed source of customers for Ridley Road market. 3) The Dalston plan includes housing for 200 families and colvestone is the nearest primary school to those. 4) Colvestone has a covenant attached to the deeds since it was gifted to the Borough which stipulates that the building can’t be used for anything other than education. So it can’t be turned into flats (unlike princess May and De Beauvoir) 5) colvestone IS financially viable. It’s already in surplus this academic year, and needs only a handful of children to be at capacity numbers wise. 6) the air pollution at Princess May is higher than at Colvestone. As per hackneys own records. Does the Borough really want to put children at an increased health risk from air pollution and be responsible for that? 7) over 90% of colvestone parents polled stated that princess may was not in their original 6 schools applied for. It’s not an option to send Colvestone kids there. In addition Paul senior confirmed that Princess May is probably in the list of 10/12 schools to be considered for consultation next year. Fundamentally immoral of the LEA to expect Colvestone pupils and families to go through this process more than once; surely? 8) the school sits at the heat of the plans for Hackneys first 21st century street in colvestone crescent. 9) SEN children often manage better in a small school and environment, as seen by the increase in average no of SEN kids at Colvestone. Why remove that option for Dalston parents?

Objections to the Informal Consultation by Hackney Council to ‘merge’ Colvestone Primary School on the Princess May site, authored by the Governing Body of Colvestone Primary School, July 2023

Below are the objections and concerns over the proposed closure of Colvestone. It is referred to as a closure because that is what is happening. The ‘merger’/‘amalgamation’ of Colvestone to Princess May only means that parents/families are offered a place there. There is no merger/amalgamation of staff/quality of education etc. The governors feel that the use of the terms “merger”/‘amalgamation’ are purely used so that the metrics of closing 2 schools instead of 4 look better for the council.

Part 1 is the objections and concerns against the ‘factors considered by the council’

Part 2 is a response to the statement relating to the benefits of merging schools stated on the website.

Part 1: The objections are taken point by point from the website <https://education.hackney.gov.uk/content/primary-schools-potential-changes> and the Councils: *Factors considered by the Council when considering possible alternatives and solutions include:*

- *Schools most financially at-risk*
- *Number of vacant places*
- *Physical size of schools and suitability of sites to host a merger*
- *Geographic partnership options (such as the existence of other schools within walking distance)*
- *Whether new neighbourhoods and new-build estates will create significantly more need for school places in the future*
- *Current Ofsted grading and projected outcomes for pupils*
- *Community impact*

Point	Objections	Concerns
School at financial risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The school has indicated that it would be financially viable for the next academic year and pre the decision to close would be financially viable for 23/24 ● The school has been proactive in making decision to ensure financial viability ● The partnership means that there is shared resourcing in both staff and resources making financial savings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The SMRA data was in draft form and the final report seems not to have been taken into account, which indicated huge cost savings . ● The schools commissioned the SMRA report in good faith to explore and take all avenues available to get

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This partnership is continuing for the next academic year and has the potential to continue - meaning that cost savings would continue • There is an in year surplus this year and also the financial management of the school is accurate meaning the any projections are also accurate - this was not the case at the end of 21/22 • There has been a surplus for 2 years running. • The last financial year has seen significant investment in capital costs: building repairs and refurbishment, security and IT investment. These costs will not be required for future years. 	<p>a more accurate picture and to make cost saving.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By using this data as a way of supporting the argument to close Colvestone, which would not have been available otherwise and also was not available for all schools in Hackney, is unfair. • Financial viability of schools is addressed in regards to a school's capacity to deal with repair and maintenance costs (3.4.3). Colvestone has made substantial capital investments over the last year to ensure that its site is fit for purpose and resilient for future years This future-proofing is not accounted for.
Number of vacant places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the initial conversation the projections for Colvestone Reception were 7. After questioning at the meetings the SLT and governing body was told that this projection was unlikely to change. However when we received the Reception offers (the first time) the number was 12. We believe that with one of the nearest schools (Shacklewell at 0.4 miles, the same distance as Princess May), being oversubscribed and with the proposed closure of Debeauvoir, (0.5 miles distance from Colvestone) Colvestone would have had more children attending the initial offers. In fact there has been a parent who was not on the list who has subsequently applied to come. • Having 40 parents tours indicates that there is interest. The context of Colvestone's change in leadership, state of the building (there was scaffolding around it, lack of care and a 	<p>The projections were changed from 7 to an actual figure of 12 indicating that modelling data was not accurate There seems to be no account taken of changing circumstances for other schools such as the other proposed closures and also how this would affect nearby schools - this was modelling that the governors asked for at the initial meetings with HackneyEd. (minuted by Hackney Ed)</p>

	<p>hall that was out of action due to Hackney's errors) and resourcing of the school meant it was less desirable than the nearby school. This situation has been remedied and the stability of the partnership would have meant that this year it would have been a preferred choice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is also 'easier' to fill a 1 form entry school than a 2 form entry school. Other schools in the local area (Princess May being one of them) are operating as a 1 form entry school even though the capacity is for 2 or 3 form entry. ● There have been in year admissions this year and less movement compared to the pandemic years. ● The fact that there is not a mass exodus after the announcement shows the desire for a 1-form community school with Colvestone's uniqueness is needed. 	
Physical size of school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Colvestone is a 1-form entry school which would not be able to grow into a 2 form entry school. However, Colvestone uses all the space creatively. As a 1-form entry school it has a dedicated art, music and computing space and has more than enough capacity to be a full 1-form entry school with additional space to provide high quality of education. In Colvestone's case the concern around having large schools that are a financial drain does not apply as it is an appropriately sized site. In the cabinet meeting 22nd May: <i>'Schools with excess physical space and large sites Reduced budgets impact on schools' ability to set aside sufficient budget to deal with day to day repair and maintenance issues as resources must be prioritised to deal with staffing and delivery of education. This can have a significant impact on larger school buildings and sites with fewer pupils which will have higher premises costs. Underinvestment in the premises will create longer term issues and increased need for capital funding to deal with a lack of maintenance.</i> As pointed out in previous objections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There has been no risk assessment or costs of the size of schools and ongoing costs done in any financial modelling. Comparisons of schools and cost have not been made.

	<p>this was not the case for Colvestone which is a 1-form entry school with appropriate physical space. It is not a 3 or 4 storey Victorian building. Currently all parts of the school are utilised and used. There are no larger areas not in use yet still having to be heated and maintained. In addition investment into capital works such as the school hall, the roof etc. mean that the school premises are in a manageable state for the near future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In addition there is a school keeper's house that could be used more creatively to support children at Colvestone and across the borough as an ARP at a future date as Hackney have secured more SEND funding. Historically at other schools, school keeper's houses were looked at and developed to provide such places. There is precedent. In addition, in the Estates Strategy doc it states that schools should be supported to repurpose school property to support them economically (1) and specifically to expand SEND provision (2). 	
Geographic partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Choosing Princess May as the 'merger/amalgamation' school was done on distance. There seems to have been no other consideration that Debeauvoir, which is also less than a mile away (0.5miles) would be closing. Their nearest schools are church schools (1 RC) and the closest non-denominational schools would be Queensbridge - a large 2-form entry school with limited space and a full ARP) and Colvestone - a 1-form entry school with space and a good reputation for supporting children with SEND. It seems logical that Colvestone would have been a choice for some of those families. ● No planning of the overlap of schools closing and their proximity to each other. With De Beauvoir and Randal Cremer closing there is more movement to other local schools, which then are full (apparently the case now). By 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There has been no pollution consideration of commuting to school in scope. ● There have been no surveys done for parents/carers about what type of school they would like their children to attend. The ratio of community schools to faith schools and their proximity to other schools has not been analysed.

	<p>closing Colvestone - the next nearest non-denominational school near De Beauvoir (0.5 miles) - further diminishes local provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Princess May is geographically near Colvestone (0.4 miles), however travelling there involves a walk along the A10, which is a large and busy road. For young families, children with SEND and older children who cycle/scoot/walk to school, this is an additional concern. (In addition the playground is on the A10) There are no ways of walking to Princess May without a walk along this road compared to the walk from De Beauvoir to Colvestone, for which families can walk alongside it and then come out at the pedestrian crossing to Ridley Road market. Currently children living nearby to Colvestone can walk on a school street and quiet roads avoiding heavily congested and polluted areas like the A10. ● Geographical distance is a factor, however for many families who live on the east side of Colvestone, Princess May would not be geographically closer and will have a longer commute. 	
<p>New neighbourhoods and new builds will create significantly more need for school places in the future</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There are plans for 600 new homes in Dalston, of which there are family homes. Colvestone would be their nearest school. ● There has been no strategy between Education and Planning. It was apparently clear in the council's Dalston Plan walk yesterday that those working for the planning department view Colvestone as key infrastructure / provision for the project yet this has not been considered by the school estates strategy. ● Colvestone Crescent, as part of the Dalston plan, is to be a 21st century street which has been agreed. The school is an integral part of the plan. According to the councils website: <i>As a part of our broad vision for this scheme, we</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There has been no discussion of the centrality of Colvestone Primary School to the Dalston Plan in any of the conversations or information put to cabinet. It is only mentioned through objections by the families of Colvestone. Again the decisions seem to not have looked at all factors involved and there is a failure to consider other plans developed by other council departments. Further, the council's committed spending on Colvestone

	<p><i>intend to deliver a new, green space, cycle parking, electric vehicle charging, a School Street, and an increase of tree canopy cover to 40% along Colvestone Crescent. How is this street going to work with no school on it?!</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In addition part of the aim of the 21st Century street would be to attract people to live there. This again brings families in and Colvestone is their nearest school. 	<p>Crescent's 21st Century Street has not been considered when choosing to consult on closing Colvestone.</p>
<p>Current OFSTED grades and predicted outcomes for children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Colvestone is a 'good' school and all indications from SIP visits and one day reviews indicate that it will continue to be a good school. ● Outcomes are good and there has been a significant improvement in EYFS data this year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This as a metric is irrelevant as we keep being told that there are hardly any schools in Hackney that are not good or outstanding and Hackney is one of the top performing boroughs in KS1 and KS2 data in England.
<p>Community Impact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Colvestone is by Ridley Road market - one of the most historic markets in London. The impact of a school being mothballed to this historic area is unimaginable (and also under researched by Hackney) ● It is the last surviving Birkbeck school - a historical and socially important part of London and Hackney's past 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There has been no consultation done on community impact by Hackney. ● There is no detail about what that even means! ● Again no consideration of the Dalston Plan and 21st Century Street which have been formed with the community.

Part 2: The points below demonstrate why the 'merger/amalgamation' with Princess May in terms of benefits to Colvestone are null and void - even though as Colvestone would be closed all of these points stated by the consultation documents are irrelevant such as school improvement, resourcing etc.

Merging schools that have seen large decreases in pupil numbers brings significant benefits, including:

- ***Creation of one new, stronger school community, maximising the funding available to it***
- ***Increased specialist expertise from a wider teaching and pupil support team***

- **Stronger finances, with consistent resources and stable staff workforce**
- **Increased potential for school improvement and targeted support in response to local needs**

Context:

The Blossom federation has only been supporting Colvestone since September 2022. Hackney Education insisted on a partnership for the academic year 22-23 after the resignation of both the exec head and head of school after May half term. This left only the assistant head as a SLT member in place. Hackney Education organised applications and interviews and were adamant with the governing body that this was the only solution. The governing body interviewed 2 potential partners and chose Blossom federation for the following reasons:

- Strong, secure and a wealth of experience in financial management. They had a federation business manager who would be able to support the school. The other applicant had no business manager for their own school and therefore no capacity to take on a school with the financial. An understanding of the situation and the difficult restructuring of support staff. The school emphasised creative ways and more understanding of how the school could make cost savings and explore other avenues as well.
- A potential head of school who had experience with EYFS and wellbeing - ensuring that staff and children would feel safe, secure and be able to achieve their potential. The wellbeing of staff and children was a concern as there had been te defederation, restructuring of support staff and the Executive head leaving at short notice with the resignation of the head of school.
- An experienced executive head who led 3 other schools which also continued to thrive with their own unique identity.
- The potential to receive support through resourcing and expertise from a wider group of schools in all areas e.g. premises, finance, resourcing and teaching and learning.
- The federation had identified areas for development which would attract new families including a better website, more social media output and also cosmetic and infrastructure changes. These have all been actioned without time to see the impact.

The partnership was agreed to be extended for the academic year 23/24 by the Colvestone governing body in December. This was going to be put to all stakeholders in the first half of the Spring term and to the Blossom Federation governing body. There were preliminary discussions of federation although it was felt that the school needed to continue with the partnership before any discussions for this would take place. After the Soaring Skies federation, which did not bring many of the above benefits of school partnership stated in the consultation benefits, there was an understandable objection to partnership and federation. The deficit, the restructuring of support staff and the lack of infrastructure in the school to support teaching learning was a direct result of the previous federation. The partnership with Blossom has been positive and impactful in all areas. This is seen not only through SIP visits, ODR and Tags meetings with Hackney Ed but also through the SMRA report.

	<p>In preliminary meetings the SLT and chair of governors asked for partnership to be given time to build on the short successes that had been achieved within a term of the partnership. The successes and achievement of being with Blossom Federation can be seen below:</p>	
Point	Objection	Concern
<p>Creation of one new, stronger school community, maximising the funding available to it</p>	<p>With the Blossom partnership a stronger school community has been built. In parents, staff and childrens surveys taken 100% surveyed said that the Blossom partnership has had a positive impact. The Blossom partnership has also led to a larger and more stable governing body with 3 new governors recruited with a wider base of knowledge resulting in wider and more targeted scrutiny.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There has been no consideration of this when putting forward the proposal to Cabinet even though there has been extremely positive feedback through Hackney Education scrutiny. ● In addition the governors were told that if it wasn't for the Blossom Federation then the school would be considered for closure rather than amalgamation. When asked why this would be the case there was no answer.

<p>Increased specialist expertise from a wider teaching and pupil support team</p> <p>Increased potential for school improvement and targeted support in response to local needs</p>	<p>This is already in place through the Blossom Federation. There have been leadership visits in the key school development priorities to other schools in the federation: phonics, science, maths, literacy, art and SEND. This has resulted in an improved teaching profile moving from good to outstanding and progress in core areas. Phonics provision has been identified as a strength within a term due to the support and development in place from the Blossom federation.</p> <p>Staffing structure: The development of middle leaders has meant that there has been an improvement in teaching and learning. This has been supported by an experienced exec head and a dedicated head of school. Support from leaders across the federation has also supported this development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In thinking about school support there has been no consideration of the partnership in place. The council does not seem to have taken in consideration any of the reports by Hackney Education on the successful impact on teaching and learning of the partnership. ● Hackney Education's processes and structure to ensure that a school does not have a deficit of this level is called into question. The fact that a remote audit was carried out and did not flag that there were no systems in place for purchase ordering, HR files were not up to date and other key areas were missing is a concern.
<p>Stronger finances, with consistent resources and stable staff workforce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An in-year surplus has been identified this year. When speaking to the C of G at a governors conference it was stated by the director of education that many schools would go into deficit. Colevstone has done this with the strong and secure financial stability brought in by the federation business manager and a dedicated 1x week finance officer from another federated school. ● There have been suggestions made at meetings that the surplus has been down to investment by Hackney Education. The school received funding from the Schools Contingency Fund, the de-delegated fund to which all schools contribute and to which all are eligible to apply. This money was applied to help improve the school building and in particular ensure that it was statutorily safe and compliant. The school had a right to apply and were eligible for this funding and are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There has been a comparison on schools budgets for this year - have any schools gone into deficit within a year and if so by how much? Colevstone has - even in difficult circumstances and with money being spent on the schools infrastructure and teaching and learning have been in surplus. ●

	<p>entitled to the finding. The fact that the school had not accessed this fund previous to this leadership could be attributed to the deficiencies in the state of the building and resourcing. One might suggest that the Management Team would have been remiss not to have applied for it - as in the case for all monies that the school applies for and receives from the Council and other funds - and to imply that this an emergency intervention by the Council, or the only reason for running a surplus, is highly subjective and contestable at best. Many schools (both in frame of this consultation and outside) apply for and receive this funding, as they are entitled to do.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Financial accuracy: budgets set are achievable and reflective of the situation Colvestone is in. There are systems in place to ensure that spending can be carefully monitored through secure purchase ordering systems. There has been an SMRA process which has identified key ways the school can make cost cuts when contracts end e.g. catering/energy. There are clear systems in place to chase debts which have historically been allowed to grow.● The school has achieved a surplus even though there have been debts/invoices that should have been paid or accrued from the previous year. The in year surplus would have been considerably higher had these been properly accrued. The lack of oversight by Hackney Education and the fact that an audit - which was done remotely - did not pick up on these financial discrepancies raises questions.● Computing and IT support is delivered through the federation● PE support is delivered through links with the federation	
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<p>1) The school (Colvestone) is an asset to the community. 2) The kids will have to walk up the A10 which is very congested and polluted - that is not fair. 3) They have been sorted financially this year. I read about the Blossom Federation. Give them another chance! Poor kids!</p>
<p>1. A crucial part of the community in Dalston and Hackney. 2. Proving the community a place for their children to be educated which is close by to their residents 3. Will have a detrimental effect on the education of so many important younger members of the community 4. A historic school that will probably now be converted into another block of flats 5. A local community school and should not be closed 6. Good ofsted reports and will have a detrimental impact on all the current and future children who will be given a crucial educational 7. A decision based on cost saving and not the requirements of the community</p> <p>An absolutely outrage.</p>
<p>1. Save funding/ resources through amalgamation of schools 2. Enable Provision for social housing 3. Enable Provision for specialist schools</p>
<p>1. The economics are nonsense. The enormous cost of closing followed by the maintenance of empty buildings, and the certain need to reopen in the long-term will mean the council will lose the building and land under current law, and that after the huge cost to the tax-payer already incurred. Plus Colvestone being small is full and runs a surplus budget! 2. Closure would render current council homebuilding plans - e.g.the Dalston Plan and the21st Century Street - unfeasible. 3. Colvestone is a protected site - 2 Grade 2 listings & it's playground is an Asset of Community Value. Plus the building is specifically built as a school and the deeds forbid other use, so not suitable or available for any other purpose. 4. It is an excellent school, with outstanding results in diverse community needs.</p>
<p>A small school that caters for all abilities and has a significant number of SEN pupils should be cherished. Their pupils flourish, are happy and feel cherished in such a caring environment. Colvestone is sited in a residential area, away from main roads and with no heavy traffic nearby. It is an established part of the local community. I have experienced working at a merged school. Despite every effort, the atmosphere of both schools changed significantly and affected many of the pupils and the staff - a point that would be dangerous to ignore as the school ethos disappears. It would be tragic to destroy an absolute gem of a school by a merger which would remove all the characteristics chosen by parents and loved by the children.</p>
<p>Agreed to merge both school due to low number of children for the benefit of our children continuing their education. What I will suggest is that the leadership of Princess May school should be changed as we want a leadership that embrace the community as the school was previously a community and a lot of parents were happy to stay in the school even when moved out of Hackney as the leadership was welcoming and recognised parents needs.</p>
<p>All I can do is continue to strongly object to this 'merge' proposal. The schools have NOTHING in common and I have NEVER considered sending my child to Princess May. It feels as though you want to call it a merger so that Colvestone parents feel like they have no choice but to send their children to Princess May but this is ill-thought through. I, along with many other parents, will simply not send my child there and LOVE what Colvestone has to offer. Give Colvestone the chance to thrive as it undoubtedly will once 21st century plans come into place. Do NOT PROCEED PLEASE.</p>
<p>Although I understand the financial reasons for the closures in general, Covestone should not be treated as just a "head count" to be saved. As a single form entry school, largely on one level, it is an essential option for our SEN and disabled children. As great as many other Hackney schools are, they are generally huge and overwhelming for children with sensory issues. I cannot imagine how the autistic and ADHD children happily settled at Covestone will transition to the much larger Princess May, however great it may be as a school.</p> <p>Surely if you are closing De Beauvoir (which, unlike Covestone, had been troubled for all of the years I've lived here), Colvestone could easily be filled with De Beauvoir pupils, who otherwise might have to travel much further, as many of the other schools in South Hackney are oversubscribed?</p> <p>Also, if Covestone were closed, what would happen to the site? While many of the other sites considered for closure seem valuable for residential development, and therefore of some alternative (financial) value to Hackney, it is hard to see how else Colvestone can be used? Leaving it as an empty decaying hole in the heart of the Ridley Road community and the broader Dalston Plan (including the Colvestone Play Street) would be terrible for the market and wider community.</p>

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<p>am writing to express my disagreement regarding the recent proposal to include Colvestone Primary School in the consultation to close schools in Hackney.</p> <p>I believe this will be an ill-considered and damaging move for children, parents and carers in this area. As one of the only non-religious, non-academy, non-free schools in Dalston, it should remain open to offer families the choice to be part of a small, close-knit community school – run by the local education authority.</p> <p>As a parent of a child at Colvestone Primary School, I know my child feels safe, happy and secure at Colvestone. We have been part of the school community for over *** years. *** of my children have attended the school. Moving my child to another school will be extremely traumatic and disruptive.</p> <p>The new leadership team, through the Blossom Federation partnership, has made a positive impact on the school – and with the extra funding from Hackney Council – we have seen great improvements to the facilities, redecoration of internal spaces and a renewed energy at the school.</p> <p>Colvestone is a unique primary school that has offered my children an opportunity to develop and thrive in a single-form entry, community-focussed environment.</p> <p>My older [child] with [SEND] went to *** schools in Hackney, including outstanding schools. * was facing being out of mainstream education and Colveston showed * love, acceptance and support which totally changed things around and * is now at a mainstream secondary. The fact that Colveston accommodates for so many children with additional needs and keeps them in mainstream schools saves Hackney a lot of money. My younger [child], like so many other children, is on a 2-3 year wait list for a diagnosis with CAMHS and therefore is not part of the SEN stats we were discussing at the meeting today which were already higher than other schools in the area.</p> <p>I believe the education department are cherry picking the figures to suit their agenda and are not looking at the bigger picture or the cost of cleaning up the mess that will be left by traumatising the SEN children who will have their fragile world torn apart, including providing for many children who will be left outside of the school system.</p> <p>Our children have been through so much from being scared that they will die due to a terrifying virus, mask wearing whereby they can't read people's facial expressions and emotions accurately, being locked down in their homes without socialising with their peers or teacher's, too returning to school and losing their TA's and headteachers and now just as things were beginning to become "normal" again the council are taking away their normality. This is horrendous for children's social and emotional well-being.</p> <p>Putting Colvestone up for closure has sabotaged our chance to bring up numbers, who will send their kids now? The council's policies that have reduced affordable housing for families has had a direct result on these dwindling numbers. Proposing to spend millions to make Colveston Crescent into a 21st century Show road while closing the school is a ludicrous proposal that shows how inverse the council's priorities are in this.</p> <p>Please support us and oppose these short sighted proposals that will have detrimental effects on the most vulnerable young people in our community.</p> <p>Signed ***</p> <p>Parent at Colvestone Primary School</p>
<p>An historic building probably being sold out to a Developer for flats at over inflated prices. All the efforts of the Head and her Staff have made over the years thrown out the window. Not to mention the vulnerable local children being farmed off. I am against this Social cleansing. The future should be for all not just the privileged few.</p>
<p>Areas go in cycles, while they may not be sufficient children to fill the school now, there will be again. This is a short term move which is emblematic of agreement that London can be a city without children. The closure must not go ahead.</p>
<p>As a buildings and Heritage Conservator I am well aware of the fragility of graded buildings which are unoccupied. I am also aware of the cultural importance of this fine example of a purpose built Victorian school. From a heritage point of view I would be interested to know what alternative plans for the buildings on this site and the footprint of the school have been put forward if the school were indeed closed to intake. We are all aware that protecting and maintaining an unoccupied listed building,(Colvestone School is Grade II listed) is costly.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Will Hackney Council justify this cost to preserve this valuable and important cultural addition to the history of the borough? 2. Do Hackney Council intend to sell the site? 3. Do Hackney Council have a plan to re-utilise the site for future public or council use?
<p>Colvestone School is a rare example of continuation of purpose in that it was built as a primary school and has continually served that community purpose. Credit to Hackney Council for it's continuous use to date and I hope this building,ongoing, continues to be a building of importance on Hackney Councils register.</p>
<p>As a former teacher in a one form entry primary school in the east end of London, I feel I have some understanding of the value of a school like Colvestone to its community. Part of its ethos, care and commitment to individual children is enhanced by its one form entry nature. I would want to support Colvestone continuing to offer quality education to it's present and future pupils.</p>
<p>As a local resident and parent in Hackney for over two decades I am shocked by the proposals to close or amalgamate schools in Hackney. With classrooms already packed, schools need more funding rather than closures. We need our local community schools and I cannot foresee where this heading ? Many thanks</p>
<p>As a local resident I would be very unhappy to see the school left empty (if that is the plan). I am concerned that the listed building, which has had recent renovations, be allowed to deteriorate.</p>
<p>The school is appreciated and enjoyed by a wide range of children and parents.</p>

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<p>As a parent I don't understand why the last school in Hackney was completed in 2019 and now they are wanting to close a school that has been around for years and years. It has affected so many families and the community. So many schools are situated around De Beauvoir because the council has built them. It is not fair for the families of the children in the school.</p>
<p>As a parent of a child at Colvestone I think there are many reasons to keep our school open. It is the only single form entry school in the area - which is very beneficial for children with special needs. It is the only non faith council run school in the area. It is the only one of the Birkbeck schools still in existence and a key part in your proposal to make Colvestone Crescent a 21st Century Street.</p>
<p>Furthermore I have found your consultation very unsatisfactory. It says on the previous page that the proposal is a merger of Colvestone with Princess May. This statement is completely misleading; as far as I know there has been no suggestion that any of the Colvestone teachers will go to Princess May. As I understand it, you are closing Colverstone and we can send our children to Princess May (which no-one wants to do). This is not a merger at all. I am afraid to say that this sums up my experience of the consultation; disingenuous. Not at all how I would expect a Labour council to do things.</p>
<p>As a parent, I don't want these two schools to merge. Preferably, I would like my child to finish at this school like their sibling, but whatever we say, nothing will happen because Hackney education has already come to a decision. I believe there will be a lot of problems at the schools when they come together. Current students will be in groups and how will the kids handle this situation. What help will Hackney give kids and parents?</p>
<p>As an ex-student and one of several generations of fortunate people who have attended Colvestone Primary School, I am extremely disappointed and angry about the proposals to close the school's site and merge it with Princess May School.</p>
<p>Not only would this permanently deprive the residents of Dalston (and broader Hackney) of extremely rare and valuable access to a single-form entry state-funded primary school, it would also precipitate a significant reduction in the quality of education received by those communities and existing students. I know from my experiences and that of my sibling who later attended Colvestone that the single form entry and therefore smaller schooling environment created a far more hospitable environment for children with SEND, as for many of these kids the enormity of a school with 400+ children would have been unmanageable. If the pupils currently at Colvestone are forced to move to Princess May, I feel the care afforded to children and the educational options available to their parents will suffer a serious deterioration, as they would likely be forced to disturb their childrens' education and transfer them to a school exclusively for SEND children.</p>
<p>Removing a single-form entry primary school from Dalston would also have the effect of more broadly undermining the educational provision available to local residents unable to afford to privately educate their children and desiring a local education for their children.</p>
<p>Closing the Colvestone site would have a deleterious influence on Dalston's broader community, and would likely enable more extensive anti-social behaviour on Colvestone Crescent and its environs as there would be few or no regular use of the building. Furthermore, the empty building site would comprise a significant disused space in an area desirous of better resourced, more accessible and multi-purposable community spaces.</p>
<p>As one of the parents and carers that has contributed to the extensive submission prepared for this 'informal consultation' under the name Save Colvestone Primary School I do not feel it necessary to reiterate all those points here. I stand by them all. What I will do here is to implore you to read them closely, to allow your assumptions to be challenged, to engage finally in the consultation.</p>
<p>Too often in this process I have witnessed elected Labour councillors (some of whom I may have canvassed for) and others with oversight for this process adopting highly confrontational positions, refusing to meet or to discuss the proposals, to allow any challenge to the Council's starting position. I have got the impression that these officials are affronted to have a member of the public challenging arguments that claim that Colvestone, a local community primary school, must be closed – even if these arguments appear on weak foundations or deserving of scrutiny. Why would someone who is elected to serve a community be so resistant to hearing arguments that suggest a school that has been at the heart of Dalston life for over 161 years could be saved? That it actually is financially viable, and that they had the figures all along? That these hugely damaging proposals can be stopped? That they don't have to be the Councillors and Cabinet members, Mayor and Deputy Mayor who closed a school that didn't need to be closed, that scarred the lives of many children, parents, carers, teachers and support staff whose lives didn't need to be scarred. Who wouldn't want to hear a compelling argument for that?</p>
<p>I and many members of the Colvestone community have persistently tried to engage with the officials charged with running this process. We have been refused all meetings. We have been met with an unwillingness to discuss the proposals in even the broadest terms if the questions challenge the assumptions already made in the briefing documents produced by the council. We have been told repeatedly though that you are listening, that Hackney Labour is a council that listens to its residents. Well, this is the time to listen – and to respond. It should not require stating in a consultation that proposes to close four schools that making sure you are making the correct decision is of high importance: given the lives that will be affected it might be the most important set of decisions you make in your political career.</p>
<p>We believe we have built a compelling argument as to why Colvestone Primary School should be saved. It is your responsibility now to scrutinise those arguments – because if we are right then you get to preserve one more local authority school in Dalston and allow it to thrive. A genuine consultation compels you to respond to the information that you receive in it. Please allow yourself to see that changing your received ideas here might actually lead to something amazing: the realisation that yes, this school is viable, it has value, it doesn't have to be closed, and that it is integrally important to the community around it and that that too is important. Because to act to close it on weak data or inertia or an ill-thought through proposal would be an act of gross dereliction of duty, of harm on a community that will echo through generations and that will not be forgotten.</p>
<p>I implore you to finally engage with this consultation and listen to what your community, your electorate, has to tell you. The news might be good.</p>
<p>As someone who lives between colvestone and de Beauvoir I was wondering about merging these two schools. Both have lovely building and communities and it would be a shame not to have a secular school in the area.</p>
<p>As stated above: some children need smaller, quieter spaces. Colvestone School is at the top of a non through less polluting road, the building is attractive and not overpowering. It's close to a wonderfully diverse market where excursions for recognising fruit and the country it's grown in, working out prices is great for maths and the former general knowledge. My daughter loved her class outings along the market being told where certain fabric designs are from plus the above teachings. Small is more.</p>
<p>Bad to move children, this school, community run, non religious non free school is a valuable part of the community & it's loss will upset & disrupt parents & children alike. It's loss is just another deprivation forced on vulnerable people already struggling to sustain a supportive environment for their children</p>
<p>Baden Powell is nearest to my home and also easy for my job. They have grown up in this school from nursery until now. Also, the teachers of Baden Powell are very helpful and kind. They are like friends and family to the children and are happy and interested to go to Baden Powell School. My children are not interested in going to Nightingale School.</p>

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<p>Baden Powell is nearest to my house and easy for my job. Also they have grown in this school from nursery up until now. Also, the teachers at Baden Powell are very helpful, like friends and family. The children are happy and they are interested in going to Baden Powell school. My children don't want to go to Nightingale School.</p>
<p>Baden Powell Primary School is 30 years old, staff are very friendly and dedicated to their job and pupils. They take responsibilities really seriously: looking after the kids, helping them with classwork and encouraging them to achieve the best grades of education. Teachers regularly give updates to the parents about where their kids are in the classroom that day. Moving to a new school, some pupils will develop anxiety and stress, friendships between kids would be broken, some teachers would lose their jobs and all Baden Powell Primary School structure would be shattered.</p>
<p>Birth rates and population rates rise and fall. What evidence does the council have that birth rates and population of Hackney will continue to decline? History says this is unlikely to be the case as dips in birth rates often follow a rise.</p> <p>Whilst the private sector values smaller class sizes due to the educational advantage it distills on pupils, what other ways have been explored to share resources more equitably between Hackney schools?</p>
<p>Parents needs local schools that are convenient and walking to school is encouraged by the council. What are the implications for local traffic flows and ease of movement if parents are potentially travelling further?</p> <p>Both De Beauvoir and Colvestone Primary Schools provide high-quality education rooted in local communities and this should be allowed to continue.</p>
<p>As one of the only non-religious, non-academy, non-free schools in the area, Colvestone should remain open to offer families the choice to be part of a small, close-knit community school – run by the local education authority.</p> <p>De Beauvoir School has a large amount of safe outdoor space for education and exercise, compared to nearby Hackney New Primary, which has virtually none and where pupils have to leave the school for exercise.</p> <p>*** my children have been educated at Colvestone Primary School. The school is special for a number of reasons but probably the most important aspect has been the single form entry. The playground too is both contained and ideally suited for parents picking up their children to get to know each other. This is essentially a village school at the heart of Dalston. It is hard to describe how these two aspects come together to create a school community around which children can thrive but it does.</p> <p>I think closing Colvestone Primary School is a huge mistake because this kind of school is exactly what local authorities need right now to tackle a number of growing problems in our student population. probably the single biggest problem to affect children across the country is Emotionally Based School Avoidance.</p>
<p>As a *** for another borough I work a lot with children who have been unable to return to school since the pandemic lock down or who have simply developed anxiety attending a large two form primary school. The numbers of such referrals have increased enormously and I imagine the same is true for Hackney. The solution is rarely in my experience therapy but a period of individual tuition followed by re-integration into a smaller single form school.</p> <p>Another trend since the pandemic, that has affected children in the London borough for whom i work, is the growing number of Primary School children permanently excluded for emotionally dysregulated and often aggressive behaviour. These children go on to receive an EHC plan and are then eventually (after months of being out of school) placed in a spot purchased alternative provision in the private sector. What makes the difference for them is that the school they attend are small and so less overwhelming.</p> <p>If the same is true in Hackney then Colvestone Primary School offers the opportunity for many of these children to find a way back into an education without having to spend months failing to face a large primary school they are never likely to re-integrate into or wait for an EHC plan to come through so they can access an independent school outside of the borough. Colvestone Primary School is a HUGE resource precisely because it is small and nurturing.</p>
<p>Closing it would be an absolute waste of a precious and valuable resource already up and running, improving every day under a new leadership team and capable of serving children who have been unable to manage in a larger two form entry school. Surely we could be using money from the SEN budget that is spent on out of borough alternative provision and work creatively to enable Colvestone Primary to continue doing what it does best.</p> <p>*** of my children attended Colverstone and because of the nature of a single form entry have done extremely well. Without Colverstone their early years needs would not have been recognised. I fear that children of Hackney will not have the same opportunity as my children have. Everyone at Colvestone is valued and everyone is included. Colvestone is a special place which as a parent who no longer has children at the school does want to take away the opportunity to other children that my children had.</p>
<p>Both of my children have attended this school and we would like to see it remain open as it is a convenient and well orchestrated school.</p> <p>Calverton school serves the community in and around the Dalston area the only primary school that have been serving the local community for years. I've had children attending the school and found it to be a very good school with dedicated staff all the families and children that attend love the school and object to the closure</p>
<p>Change is not good for children. They like their place. They get used to the building, classes and playground. They know where everything is. They don't want to change school. It will be stressful for children, they don't understand why school will be closed and why there is no money for their school. Please do not close this school.</p>
<p>Closing a school means that school and nits identity is lost forever. Amalgamation is not an even merger. One school disappears, absorbed into the other, usually larger one. Teachers are lost to the borough, and don't come back. If pupil numbers increase in the future it is too late to change course. A far better strategy would be to put pressure on the government to increase per-pupil funding for schools with falling rolls.</p>
<p>Closing Academy/Free Schools in the neighbourhood reduces the options for us all to keep a diverse and socially intersectional community.</p> <p>Closing and amalgamating primary schools in this area will have a huge be detrimental effect on the community and the children and parents of the schools.</p>
<p>The smaller school, create a local focus for the area, crating a better more engaging community. It is better for the children of primary age as it makes for a more nurturing and safe feeling environment for them. Closing them has a detrimental effect on the community at large in almost every way possible.</p> <p>It better for working parents as they are usually easier to get to too.</p>

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<p>Closing Colvestone and moving the school to princess May would have an extremely negative impact on the community. Colvestone is the beating heart of Dalston. It creates natural surveillance in the area and makes Dalston the vibrant , diverse , friendly community that it is. Without it I believe we would soon see a rise in the levels of anti social behaviour.</p>
<p>Closing Colvestone would cause a deterioration of the surrounding area, making it unattractive for young parents to move into the area. Geographically it connects different parts of Dalston, which is integral for a functioning community. Former students have excelled academically in their respective secondary thus providing a good standing for the school's pupils in future application processes.</p>
<p>Closing De Beauvoir Primary School would cause so much upset to a lot of students.</p>
<p>To close Colvestone would cause disruption to parents and students. To find a new school would also cause a set back as students will struggle to fit in as they are so close to the teachers and the friends they have made along the way.</p>
<p>Closing school removes parent choice RE SEN schools/ one form entry, non religious, local schools. Princess May is an unsuitable option. No real consultation has so far happened.</p>
<p>Closing schools is not the answer. The community will suffer. Children need a sense of belonging. Amalgamation is not the solution as it will uproot the children with no guarantee that the alternative will be any better.</p>
<p>Closing schools like these one kills even more the sense of community that's so much needed nowadays Closing the local small school has a negative impact on the pupils' education and the entire community and nothing positive.</p>
<p>From my social circle and professional experience in the field/system of education, merging two schools into one is one of the worst things the council could do to the community. For example, large schools are well known for being unable to solve inside problems such as bullying or unprofessional teachers' behaviour for years. These issues in small and calmer schools are easier to detect and solve. In a small school is a stronger sense of connection between the staff and pupils. This means staff have an in-depth knowledge of every child. In that case, a student who needs extra support will unlikely be ignored and slip through the cracks.</p> <p>"Research tells us that belonging to a close-knit community is vitally important in developing a child's resilience. It is also a protective factor for mental health and bullying issues. Smaller schools allow for more freedom, collaborative work between school and pupils, encouraging fun activities which bring education to life."</p> <p>The benefits of a small school education by Oonagh Turner. Fri 20th Aug 2021. https://www.independentschoolparent.com/school/the-benefits-of-a-small-school/</p>
<p>If Hackney Council needs space for upcoming projects - closing a small school is beyond the ridiculous idea. Some areas need extra attention from the council - for example, a small square of the ship containers between ***. This square is an epicentre of antisocial behaviour!</p>
<p>Closing the school is disrespectful to the community. Colvestone has always been part of the community and closing it would have a huge impact on Ridly Road</p>
<p>Closure of Colvestone School will lessen the footfall and diversity of Dalston and Ridley Road, especially the market as the community (Parent/Teachers/other workers) shop and pass through Ridley Road very frequently, which would be a great shame as real efforts were made to take over the shopping village to encourage local people and businesses.</p>
<p>It also opens the way to further development which is incompatible with Ridley Road Market for example the "concrete triangle" (area adjacent to Colvestone School) which is detrimental to the Market as it will end up being the source of many complaints if and when it is approved.</p>
<p>Closing of the school is very short sighted and the area has a growing population and it is highly likely more places will be needed in future so short term it will destroy a long established community. Around the borough and in Dalston there are plans for more homes which will require more primary places, so why close a well established and liked school with a good reputation.</p>
<p>It will be hugely disruptive of all children/parents etc attending or anyone involved in the school. What appear to be a small step of moving all pupils and closing Colvestone will have much larger consequences as Colvestone School is very much embedded in the local area.</p>
<p>More effort should be made in the short term to attract more pupils as it is a long established school in pleasant green surroundings. The adjoining street is a 21st century street and closure will heavily impact the street and area. Long Term as mentioned it will likely cause overcrowding in other schools and a new community will have to be build possibly around a new school, so very short term thinking.</p>
<p>As a resident of Hackney who has lived in Hackney and worked around Dalston my whole life I am very disappointed by the suggestion that there is a proposal to close Colvestone Primary. I hope that this objection to the proposal and the others will be properly considered unlike some of the other decisions which were made even though there was widespread opposition, otherwise it just confirms a large number of views which I hear saying these are exercises to give the appearance of a consultation even though the decisions have already been taken and erodes the faith democratic process.</p>
<p>Colverstone have a number of SeNCO children. Parents have chosen this school due to the size and expertise of the staff. It will be unfair to move these children to a large school. This will cause emotional distress. Opposite to what we should be doing for the well being of all children.</p>
<p>Colverstone is a fantastic community resource. It was key in the campaign to keep *** and her *** children in the U.K. and stop their deportation to India in the 80s.</p>
<p>More recently staff from 2015 when I was a solicitor at Hackney Law Centre have supported children whose mothers are Persons Subject to Immigration Control and unable to access public funds whilst working .</p>
<p>Rolls are falling due to gentrification , the opening of free schools in the borough and accommodating homeless families out of Borough. The Council should take effective action against these changes not penalise local children by closing the school they love.</p>
<p>Colverstone is a small family community school, that serves the immediate area</p>

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Colvestone offers choice to parents who want a small community school that is not part of a large academy. It offers the caring environment needed to help children thrive.
Colvestone Primary School is at the heart of Dalston community. It's a very different school to Princess May. Merging two completely different schools needs more thought.
Colveston Primary School forms the heart of the Dalston community, Ridley Road and the new Green streets.
Colvestone provides the cleanest air, and safest amenity space for play over and above other Hackney primary schools.
Several dissability children travel from *** London to Colvestone because it is the ONLY school in London where their children learn anything despite having tried numerous other schools across london. This is because it is single form entry and in its design is a calm place to learn.
In no other school have I heard of all the kids in each year organising games for themselves that involve all of their year in the same playground activity. This extends to care and cross-play between reception and year 6's playing together too.
Colvestone Primary school is a unique primary school offering children an opportunity to develop and thrive in a single-form entry, community-focussed environment.
Proposed new development of Ridley Road and flats on shopping centre land will require school infrastructure. The many new homes should be using this tailor made legacy school.
Colvestone Crescent is becoming the first 21st Century street in Hackney. The school and children are very much at the heart of this project.
Colvestone has a long and significant history, having been part of the original Birkbeck Schools founded by William Ellis. The building is in fact the last remaining original school as the only other surviving Birkbeck schoo, William Ellis Secondary School in Camden, moved to new premises in the 1930s. It would be tragic if it wasn't retained for educational purposes and in particular to support the type of ethos and curriculum promoted by William Ellis. From what I can understand the school does this and also has a key role in the local community. Its closure would reduce parent choice, be bad for the environment and deprive parents of a thriving small institution with strong historic roots. Please think again.
Colvestone has served as the primary school for many parents in this area. It is well regarded and I was hoping to send my 2 year old son there when he is old enough. It's close by and means we can stay local.
Colvestone is a close knit, small community school. Closing it will negatively affect the children at the school.
Colvestone is a gem in the community. With 1 form entry and strong sense of community and care for the children, every child flourishes - where some would not in mainstream larger schools. Not every child suits a larger school so stop the consultation and fill the spaces at Colvestone. Keep the school where it is, with one form entry. Not every decision should be based on money and numbers. Create solutions to enable those children who thrive in smaller school environments and reconsider merging Colvestone. Humanity is more important than money.
Colvestone is a good inclusive school in a unique place in a Dalston ensuring a safe place for children to grow and learn with a beautiful historic building from the Birkbeck foundation of education . It dwarves to be a Hackney flagship and let off the regeneration of a Dalston not to be closed . Its proximity to Shacklewell Primary an outstanding school that is oversubscribed suggests they should merge since they need the overspill . Princess May is in Shacklewell a different part of the Kingsland Road and ward.
Colvestone is a Grade 2 listed building, built in 1852 as a pioneering co-ed school. Closing it would mean losing a well designed dedicated school building, and an unreplacable publicly owned resource.
Without Colvestone and de Beauvoir schools the dalston area would be left with no non-faith, one-form entry local authority schools - only religious schools, free schools and academies, which are not being considered regardless of numbers.
7% of Colvestone students have an Education Health and Care Plan, well above average in the borough. Many of these children and many others would find the transition very challenging. Closing a school with such a high proportion of vulnerable children is unfair and wrong.
Also, the playground at Princess May is right next to the A10 and had 40% higher levels of Nitrogen Oxide than Colvestone (according to the Council's own monitoring system, 2021). Adding more students to a school with much higher pollution levels is obviously damaging to children's health.
Colvestone is a huge part of the community of Dalston and Ridley Road. It is a community hub and serves as a real small local school amidst hundreds of larger, less intimate and welcoming places of education.
Colvestone is a key school very valued in the local community.
Additionally you should consider that closing a school is very expensive and given that this school is very strong academically, has hugely beneficial class sizes for its diverse pupils and is running a surplus, how can closing it make financial sense?
+ with the threatened closure of De Beauvoir Primary, closure of Colvestone will leave Dalston without a single form entry, non-faith or Academy/Free school within a mile of the Colvestone site!!
- small schools are great for kids with diverse needs - Colvestone has an amazing track record of producing great results for kids of all abilities
- Colvestone is the closest Primary School to all the main Dalston Plan homebuilding sites
Colvestone is a rare gem in Hackney's primary provision as a non denominational school. I am aware that as a single form entry school it is discriminated against in terms of funding, but this small scale is also one of its great strengths. Children feel safe here. They are known by all the staff, and by all the other children. That is one of the (many) reasons children with SEN thrive in this mainstream setting. My children loved this school, and the strength of the friendships they made here endure many years later despite all going to different secondary schools, their Colvestone connections have remained strong, enriching and protective. This will be lost if this special place is engulfed by a much larger school.
Colvestone has a history of providing great quality, creative and lively teaching. It holds strong values and builds strong self esteem, equipping its students very well, not just for the next stage of education, but for life.

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<p>Colvestone is a small community school of the road in secluded safe area. The children get individual attention. The children are happy and content in Colvestone. I strongly disagree with Colvestone joining Princess May.</p>
<p>Colvestone is a small school which is inclusive and has a unique character. My son attended more than 30 years ago and got a great deal from it. 10 years before he attended ILEA Division 4 had tried to close it and had manufactured low admissions. I hope this is not happening again! I recognise there is a problem of falling rolls, but we should hold onto our schools and diversify them Colvestone because of its family atmosphere has been very good at including disabled children especially diverse and those with Social Emotional and Mental Health issues. I propose that the school keepers house currently vacant should be made into resourced provision with children who have SEMH and Neurodiversity. The Resopurece base should have 2 specialist teachers and 6 specialist TAs who work to support the children in mainstream class and the resource base. In addition the AWPU should be adjusted so that classes of 20 rather than 30 should be the norm. With this support and good marketing of the excellent practice at the school parents will be encouraged to enroll in the school and it will have a future.</p>
<p>Colvestone is a unique LEA-run community school in the heart of Dalston. Its single-form status makes it very close-knit and children thrive there. Children and families with SEND particularly benefit from this smaller, nurturing environment. The Dalston area has a Plan to build more housing very nearby. The proposed closure feels extremely short-sighted in light of this - will families have the choice they deserve? Or will families even choose to live there if there is no community school nearby? The Dalston community deserves to retain this wonderful school.</p>
<p>Colvestone is a unique primary school offering children an opportunity to develop and thrive in a single-form entry, community-focussed</p>
<p>Colvestone is a unique primary school offering children an opportunity to develop and thrive in a single-form entry, community-focussed environment.</p>
<p>Colvestone is a unique small community school cherished by its families and staff. The head knows everyone's name and we must keep a place for this type of school in Hackney. Also, it is an eco school and on a quiet school street serving the community. It has great potential for growth if given another chance.</p>
<p>Colvestone is a unique, caring and academically strong school. It is vital to the local community.</p>
<p>Colvestone is a unique, caring and academically strong, one-form entry school. It is a vital part of Dalston and should NOT be closed.</p>
<p>Colvestone is a vibrant SMALL school with a very happy parent teacher and student community. To merge it into a super school would be a great disservice to the public and go completely against any notion of school choice</p>
<p>Colvestone is a wonderful school and one of the only single-form, non-religious schools in the area. It's accepting, creative and nurturing. It must be protected. Whilst pupil numbers have dropped, the local area has huge plans for residential development so I strongly believe this to be a temporary issue. The school is under new management and even in these difficult times it is at the beginning of a change and it must be allowed to continue. We do not want our children to go to Princess May and we will not send our children (x2) there.</p>
<p>Colvestone is an amazingly friendly, welcoming single form entry community school, and one of the only non-faith, non-academy, non-free schools in the area. The plan to merge with Princess May seems completely ill thought out, and is not talking to the community into consideration at all. The plans for the re-development of dalston, plus the new 21st century street plan all require a thriving school to be up and running on the colvestone site. The fact that only state primary schools are being considered for closures / amalgamations is completely unbalanced when looking at the range of different schools in the area, all which which are suffering from low pupil roll numbers</p>
<p>Colvestone is an asset to our local community. I live on ***, in ***, overlooking the playground of the school. The school is part of our daily life and we are planning to send our three children aged 2 and 6 months respectively to Colvestone. We love that it is a community school, not a faith or free school. We also love that it is single form of entry and that teachers and students all really know each other. The school building is also of special architectural interest. It is an important building in the street scape of Colvestone Crescent and Ridley road market. The plan of turning Colvestone Crescent into Hackney's first 21st century street goes hand in hand with the use of this beautiful building and an empty building would be detrimental to the character of the area.</p>
<p>Colvestone is an excellent school that is close to my house and I get excellent support for my children here. They are very happy at the school and in the school community. It is very important to have the school in the area. There are no other small schools like it.</p>
<p>Colvestone is an excellent school. Being one form entry gives us a much more accessible culture which is particularly important for children with special needs. If it didn't exist they'd have to invent it. It has been disappointing to be patronised by officials from Hackney who have clearly made the decision to close the school. When confronted by counter-arguments from parents who have done their research they simply ignore them. Their approach makes people cynical and ambivalent about democracy in general and Hackney council in particular.</p>
<p>Colvestone is at the heart of the Ridley Road and Dalston community, and removing a school and its children from this area will have a detrimental impact on the local area</p>
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<p>Colvestone is great with SEND. It's help so many kids.</p>
<p>Colvestone is in the centre of the Dalston Plan, which includes commits to building 600 new homes, including 200 affordable family homes. Shutting Colvestone - the closest school to this development - is a short-sighted action, that will negatively impact the community.</p>
<p>Colvestone is one of a few primary schools that provides a community setting which is able to nurture and support children with SEND, and is only able to do this due to its long-standing experience and direct involvement of local parents. A friend of mine with a child with SEND at the school is now in a hugely stressful situation, as she knows her child could do really well in a mainstream setting, but will suffer from this change to a much larger school. Amalgamation of the school moving it to different space, further away, in a much bigger setting, will remove this close contact and necessary more personal and direct support currently provided.</p>
<p>Colvestone is one of the only non-religious, non-academy schools in the area and I feel it should remain open to offer families in the community the choice to be part of a small, close-knit community school. It is a single-form school which helps to foster a sense of family and community, as well as connection between the teachers and the pupils, which is particularly important for younger kids and an important consideration for me when choosing schools for my daughter.</p> <p>Furthermore, Colvestone is at the centre of the Dalston Plan, which includes plans to build affordable housing in the area, so it seems a little short-sighted to close the school when some of the new homes will be populated by families that require a nearby school for their young children. The current site of the school is set back from main roads whereas the proposed merger is with a school close by but sat right on a busy road, which is very concerning with regard to pupils' exposure to traffic pollution while at school and on their commute. Given that the school is the best part of 200 years old, the plans also appear to fly in the face of the Dalston Plan's purported aim to protect and celebrate Dalston's built heritage – if this is truly the case, why is the council removing teaching from a historic building that has been serving its community for this length of time? It would be a great shame for this building to be used for anything other than that intended so many years before.</p> <p>Furthermore, unless I'm mistaken, Colvestone Crescent is part of development plans to create a "safer, greener and more accessible public realm for Ridley Road Market" (see https://consultation.hackney.gov.uk/streetscene/21cstreets2/, slide 6) – if this is the case, this would create a safer and greener place for pupils at the school to be educated. To be perfectly honest, accounting for the fact that Dalston is a heavily populated urban area, with these new developments Colvestone Crescent seems to me to be a perfect site for a primary school and I'd like to know why the council disagrees. On top of this, I feel that the plans to develop this street as outlined in the presentation above make much less sense if the school is removed from the area - you'd be moving children from a small community setting that is green with low traffic to a larger school with less access to greenery and with a great deal more exposure to traffic and its consequent pollution.</p>
<p>I'd welcome hearing the council's reasoning on this.</p>

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<p>Colvestone is uniquely placed as a one-form entry, non-religious, non-academy, non-free school which should be celebrated instead of being punished - it is harder for the council to propose to close religious schools, free schools or academies so it chooses the easier option of proposing to close this school instead of protecting it.</p> <p>Colvestone School is a listed Victorian purpose-built which should remain true to the purpose it has been fulfilling for over 150 years. Too many new schools in the area are occupying completely unsuitable buildings eg Halley House which has no outside space to speak of.</p> <p>Colvestone is in the centre of the Dalston Plan which says it will build family homes. Colvestone needs to be kept open as it is the closest school to this development.</p> <p>Colvestone Crescent is planned to turn into a 21st Century Street, Hackney's first permanent play street. Crucial to this plan is that it's located next to a primary school. Colvestone School is essential to this ground-breaking proposal.</p> <p>Hackney Council need to look solutions for the dropping enrolment in the borough: lack of affordable family homes.</p>
<p>Colvestone is very important to the local community and should be left alone for sure</p>
<p>Colvestone needs investment not closure. It is only a year since the previous head left, giving the school not enough time to rebuild and strengthen. It is at the heart of Dalston, a historic building and site that could serve the needs of the many future parents and children to be housed nearby as part of the Dalston plan. Without it, the council will be looking at new school provision in a few years' time, making this a short-sighted and senseless proposal. My children benefited from its unique single form environment and close-knit community and teaching staff - it would be a great loss for Dalston to simply close the school rather than build on its strengths to make it the best it can be.</p>
<p>Colvestone new management need to be given the time and opportunity to succeed - in the short window they have already proved financial resilience and pupil success.</p>
<p>Colvestone primary is a community hub as well as a school, its small size as well as location on a quiet road make it particularly effective at creating the community spirit, the benefits of which are important far beyond the school gates, creating social cohesion and providing community members with key mental health benefits.</p> <p>It is a truly mixed non-denominational school that welcomes all, and with its one-form entry also provides a safe environment for children who can't overwhelmed in larger academic institutions, children who need to feel more personal contact with staff in a nurturing environment.</p> <p>The school is also pivotal in the plan to turn Colvestone Crescent into a 21st Century Street, the borough's first permanent play street. This will not only be an incredible community asset, but will make. Hackney an example for other boroughs to follow in the necessary move to make cities more human-friendly and sustainable, which is all key to ensuring improved mental health across our city communities.</p>
<p>Colvestone primary is a fabulous local primary school and it's going to be very damaging to the children to have this upheaval. I am particularly worried by the impact on my god[child] and [sibling] for whom the stability of school life is tantamount to their well being. Once lost we'll never get back these schools back. Hackney is loosing its children and if the council continues with these measures it'll loose more.</p>
<p>Colvestone Primary School has just undergone an extensive building restoration, and is the life and soul of this street. The fact that this historic building is still being used as the school it was built for is something that should be cherished and enjoyed. School intake is always in flux and the council should support the school through lean times.</p> <p>Closing the school will mean the street has an unused empty building deteriorating after expensive refurbishment and selling the site to developers flies in the face of the council's own strategy for the conservation area and it's 21st century street.</p> <p>The daily presence of families and small children in this street is a life enhancing experience for all of our residents.</p> <p>It is a safe street for children to arrive at school in as it is a no through road, and the site offers good out door space not surrounded by traffic fumes.</p>
<p>Colvestone Primary school is a big part of our community and one of the reasons I moved to this area. I wanted to live close to the school so when I have children they can go there and I don't have to worry, as it's close by, the classes are small so the children get individual attention. The school has recently undergone a massive makeover (which looks great btw). Please don't close our school.</p>
<p>Colvestone Primary school is a medium sized local school that myself and my partner feel would be an excellent starting point in education for our child. The reasons for amalgamation seem to be driven by the economics of property sales and the value of the site as potential revenue for the council rather than the best interests of children in the borough.</p>
<p>Colvestone Primary School is a nice school for our community that is close to a lot of families. Especially to children with special education needs, it is easy for them to travel to school. Having a greater distance travelling to school would be physically and mentally difficult for kids like my child</p>
<p>Colvestone Primary School is a relatively small school with good community connections and positive spirit that supports the loca area well. This should be keptto support current and future demand. Primary schools should not become too large or cover too large an area at the expense of community cohesion and the wider benefits they bring to the locality.</p>
<p>Colvestone Primary School is an integral part of the community - it would be a big loss for the community to lose the school</p>
<p>Colvestone Primary School is at the heart of the Dalston community, and removing a school and its children from this area will have a detrimental impact on the local area.</p>
<p>This is one of the only non-religious, non-academy, non-free schools in the area, it should remain open to offer families the choice to be part of a small, close-knit community school – run by the local education authority and offering children an opportunity to develop and thrive in a single-form entry, community-focussed environment.</p>
<p>Colvestone is in the centre of the Dalston Plan, which includes commits to building 600 new homes, including 200 affordable family homes. Shutting Colvestone - the closest school to this development - is a short-sighted action, that will negatively impact the community.</p>

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<p>Colvestone Primary School is part & parcel and a staple part of the Dalston/Hackney area. In recent years, children of friends and family have attended this wonderful school. They have all had positive time at this wonderful primary school.</p> <p>I attended Colvestone over 45 years ago; it was filled with unforgettable experiences and the most amazing years of my youth and my life! From music (which is a huge part of my life), with ***, (who was also my [child]'s music teacher too); to sport, which was inclusive back then and ahead of it's time! I played football, cricket, basketball etc. Also academically, we were all taught in a caring & supportive manner; teaching in a way for every individual child to understand, this is extremely important. English and Maths were extremely important and the teachers made sure the pupils were well equipped, when going on to attend secondary school.</p> <p>Colvestone Primary School has shaped so many children, young people and adults over the years and to date, that no-one will understand, unless they have actually attended this unique school. Colvestone Primary School, is where students have gone on to have very successful futures!</p> <p>We implore everyone involved to listen to the community to keep this fantastic primary school open. It is detrimental to the whole community and is vital that this one-in-a-million, iconic school stays open; otherwise, the community of Dalston and Hackney will suffer a severe loss.</p>
<p>Colvestone Primary School is so important to the local community. The school is very strong academically, has hugely beneficial class sizes for its diverse pupils and is running a surplus. If you close it and need to re-open the school if demand increases in the future, it would automatically be a Free Schools - run for profit by the private sector, completely outside local government control. Hackney would lose control of the school and the land. With the threatened closure of De Beauvoir Primary, closure of Colvestone will leave Dalston without a single form entry, non-faith or Academy/Free school within a mile of the Colvestone site. Colvestone is the closest Primary School to all the main Dalston Plan homebuilding sites so closing it would be incredibly shortsighted.</p>
<p>Colvestone Primary school really adds to the community around the heart of Dalston and Ridley Road market. The closure of the school would leave a hole in that community, and diminish the social infrastructure at the centre of Dalston. As a single form school, it is really able to provide a child-centred experience which we particularly appreciated with our child with SEN when * may have found a larger school over-whelming. It was important for us also to have a non-denominational school for our children and Colvestone has always been diverse and welcoming in every way. Without Colvestone I feel that you are depriving future parents in the catchment area of having a local, community-focused school.</p>
<p>Colvestone provided me with an incredible primary education, and the teachers and environment were incredibly welcoming. Bullying problems were dealt with immediately, and the size of the school led every student to be familiar with everybody else, leading to a place where students rarely felt uncomfortable, leading everybody to feel very welcome and able to develop bonds with others. I am still in contact with most of my friends from Colvestone, which I believe to be due to the close-knit structure. Additionally, I have heard very little praise of Princess May, and many of tales of parents regretting sending their children there, due to the rampant bullying issues and difficult integration of SEN students. I feel that the closure and integration of Colvestone into Princess May will only harm the local community.</p>
<p>Colvestone School has been through a lot of big changes in the last few years, including two restructures, a defederation, and now we are facing closure - and some of these quite frankly could have been avoided if the Learning Trust at the time did their job of monitoring the school much better! First and foremost, why did Thomas Fairchild even federate with Colvestone when their last Ofsted was good? And then secondly, the school went on to have two further Ofteds whilst in the federation, which were both requires improvement - why wasn't proper support given from the Learning Trust after the first Ofsted? The federation caused a lot of damage to both schools in terms of their reputations and clearly their budgets that the Learning Trust were not keeping proper track of. Yes this is historical, however it is a major starting reason as to why Colvestone has such a big deficit. The Learning Trust could have done a LOT more to stop this from happening.</p>
<p>This year has seen huge developments at Colvestone since the Blossom Federation partnership, which can clearly be recognised in all the ODR and SIP reports - yet we need more time to be given a chance to develop further (and build a new reputation under the new leadership) to attract new families, increase our numbers of children, and therefore really begin to lower the deficit again. Being on the list to close (or merge - which essentially means our school will close), completely diminishes our chances of attracting more families - and yes, if we were not on the list, with all the work that Blossom have helped the school to do this year, we would have absolutely taken a lot of the surplus school children in the area looking for Reception places because that's how much we believe in the impact they have made to our school!</p>
<p>Colvestone school is a huge part of the Ridley Road community and contributes to the intergenerational value that the area holds. It would be a shame to lose this important asset after so much effort and investment has gone into the market and surrounding area, much of it with an intention to retain and strengthen community. Additionally the draft Dalston Plan sets out ambitious goals for family housing in Dalston, which if fulfilled will surely result in viable admissions for the school without the enormous and shortsighted costs of closing and reopening Colvestone School.</p>
<p>Colvestone school is a small (single form entry) school with a rich history & deeply embedded links in the community which provides a haven for children that would struggle in the larger environment of Princess may or other bigger schools in the area. For neurodivergent children especially, it is a less challenging environment where they are more likely to get the sensitive, personalised focus that will enable them to thrive.</p>
<p>Colvestone School is a unique, historic and much loved part of central Dalston and its community, as the organised and passionate campaign to save it has shown. It is a central part of the Dalston plan that aims to bring 600 new homes including families, which will increase the need for schools in the future. The proposed closure seems short sighted.</p>
<p>Colvestone School is a very important focal point of positive, visible activity for the immediate area. It matters very much to have it there operating in such a different way from all that is going on around it - mainly retail, business, cafe etc. It adds significantly to the fabric of what makes up Dalston and enriches it as a result. It's important that younger aged children go to somewhere as local as possible to foster a sense of belonging. We know this from talking to children we know. It's important to be near as the children can easily walk to school - a point which is always being emphasised from a health point of view. Obviously then, more convenient for working, busy parents to accompany them. It is less likely for them to be driven to school. If Colvestone is amalgamated with Princess May, more cars will be heading that way adding to pollution and traffic jams. Princess May school has a playground right along a heavy polluted road! Colvestone is well sheltered from traffic - much more healthy place to play.</p>

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Colvestone School is a very special school and the amalgamation will take away from what makes this school special.

It is one of the smaller schools but by being a small school, it is able to take on the paramount responsibility within the heart of the community for inclusivity, celebrating culture, and giving each and every student with such diverse backgrounds the focus and attention they need for their futures to thrive. There was never a lack of exposure and opportunity this school gave to each and every one of their students from music and arts to sports and individual study support - the needs of each and every student considered.

Growing up in a small working class family that are an ethnic minority where my parents were busy working to make ends so I was predominantly looked after by my grandmother who spoke minimal English and whose age meant her mobility would continue to reduce over the years, the accessibility, placement, community aspect of the school was important to my family and my development. It will be a loss in many ways with the amalgamation of the school as one of the only non-religious, non-academy, non-free schools in the area. It should remain open to maintain right for families, especially those like mine and all those I met during my time at Colvestone, the choice and accessibility of a small, close-knit community school – run by the local education authority.

I am proud to be an ex-student of Colvestone school and I am proud that this gem of a school exists in the heart of the community. The proposal if it were to go through will rip away such a vital part of the community and will be a long-term loss in the area for the future development plans and opportunities for the youth and families to come.

Please save this Colvestone School.

Colvestone school is a well-loved and well-used local resource at the heart of our community. If Dalston is to remain a hospitable environment for families to live we need local schools, particularly one offering the choice of non-academy and non-faith based education. If closed and empty, the former school building would be a magnet for anti-social behaviour, already prevalent in the street.

Colvestone school is a wonderfully small school which caters for, not only a child's educational needs but their social development. My [child] attends this school and is growing in confidence socially, mixing with Year 6s when * is only in ***. Further, * is excelling in all areas of * learning.

This school needs to be supported to remain at the heart of the community and continue to develop smart and fully rounded young people.

Colvestone school is an integral part of my local area. Due to

The schools location children and carers walk to and from their school day. This encourage a sense of community for the children, builds confidence and well being physical and mental. Many local residents say good morning to parents and carers on their way to school, which helps bring a community together. I live directly opposite the school, I am always encouraged by the sense of community the school brings to the area. There is a feeling of protection and calmness in the morning and afternoons when the children arrive and leave the school. I believe the whole community benefit from this.

I believe the school is a 1 year in take, a rare thing within central London and I believe must be a benefit to the children. I believe a smaller school can provide a calmer and more individual experience for the children and will help them grow up to be secure, responsible assets to our Community

Colvestone School is at the heart of the local community, and closing it will have a detrimental impact on the local area

Colvestone school is uniquely built and located, giving it a distinctive identity and relation to its community. It has much of the appealing and welcoming character of a village school. The children are very well cared for and receive a high quality of education. It is far better for children to be able to walk to school. This proposal (as well as the other three) will lead to much more car use and toxic air pollution.

Colvestone School is well renowned in Hackney for being a small community school, with a nurturing and caring ethos and a particularly positive approach to SEND children. They have small classes and are rare in that they are a one form entry. This matters to children in terms of their mental well being and development. Additionally, Colvestone has been at the heart of Hackney for 161 years and has a very interesting history. If Colvestone is closed, we will lose this for all future generations, not just now and the unique nature of Colvestone will be lost. The current cohort will be mentally distressed by the proposed merger; after two years of distress caused by covid, it is unthinkable to impose yet more disruption on these young people. We also know that the CAHMS referrals in Hackney have sky rocketed. It is unacceptable to add to existing stresses. It will also impact on the well being and mental health of the staff, let alone their job security. People will leave and the school will feel like a ghost school for those remaining. Finally, Princess May is a very different school. It is across a busy main road. The air quality in Princess May is worse than the air quality at Colvestone. As a clean air borough, why would the council knowingly put children in harm's way from air pollution? Why would they put children at greater risk from crossing a busy main road, when they purport to promote school and safer streets? With respect to roles, demographics change. When I moved to London, I taught classes of 12 children. I now teach classes of 24 max. Small classes are a benefit not a problem, to improving education and this will change as people start to have children. Demographics change, but never permanently. As an educator with 33 years' experience, I urge the council to rethink, on the grounds of health and safety of the pupils, historic value and legacy to the community and lead by good educational practice. Small community schools are a good thing. Do not be the ones who destroy that legacy for the people of Hackney. After all, politicians are merely the current caretakers. Colvestone has been there a lot longer than the current administration.

Colvestone school means such a lot to the community that it would be a travesty for it to close

Colvestone should not close.

De Beauvoir should merge with Colvestone.

Our kids have been through so much over covid and lockdown. We need the school and they need the school.

We don't want this to go legal!

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<p>Colvestone should not close. It is a vibrant, well functioning school with a potential to recover from the current drop in pupil numbers. The council could well help Colvestone get back on its feet and get more students if the council took steps leading to promoting the school instead of steps leading to discouraging parents of potential new students from enrolling them in Colvestone as is currently the case.</p> <p>The school has a great deal to offer - the building and schools grounds are beautiful and unique, it is a single form school which has a friendly, special atmosphere and is especially good for children with special needs, allowing them to thrive.</p> <p>Colvestone Crescent is apparently set to become a 21st Century street, which would be an additional incentive for parents to send their children there.</p> <p>It is not fair on Colvestone students to have their education disrupted in this way. They are not pawns on a chess board that can be just moved from one place to another.</p> <p>I, and many (probably most) other Colvestone parents, have no intention of sending my child (their children) to Princess May.</p> <p>This is just not a good solution to this problem. There are many other, better ways to approach current issues at Colvestone and they can result in Colveston thriving again. The council need to abandon this plan and create a new one in the light of the information suggesting that the merger with Princess May is not going to be successful.</p> <p>Concerned about the attention of teachers on individual students in case of an increase of classroom. I am also concerned about kids' association with their classmates as it may affect their understanding.</p> <p>De Beauvoir has been apart of our community since I was a child. My children have all attended and it has contributed to the growth and wellbeing of all three of my children. The teachers are compassionate and generally care about the students. They know each and every student by their name which makes the children feel special. We are a community and closing it would affect our wellbeing. The kids are settled and happy. This sudden closure proposal has left the kids unsettled which can have an impact on their mental health.</p> <p>De Beauvoir is a family, it is not fair! We have a huge playground. Some schools don't even have one. Just because Colvestone parents have the cash to protest doesn't mean other parents do too. I'm not asking to close Colvestone but I am asking to amalgamate De Beauvoir. It is hard to see my school disintegrate.</p> <p>De Beauvoir is a top school, and it would make more sense closing schools that are under performing and keep the schools that are thriving. I dont see know schools being advertised or promoted in the media or around the borough. Invest your funds into schools that do well and close the schools that don't do so well, those pupils will than fill up the school places resulting in funding etc</p> <p>De Beauvoir is a wonderful community school and there are limited options available in walking distance for a 4 year old. The school does wonderful work because it is small and can treat students as individuals.</p> <p>De Beauvoir is an old school. It has something to offer to the community.</p> <p>For historic reasons alone, please keep De Beauvoir for the coming generations. Let it reach 200 years. It is nearly there.</p> <p>Hackney, WE CAN DO BETTER THAN THAT!!</p> <p>De Beauvoir primary has been in our community for many years. Four of my children have attended this school. *** and the teachers and staff at this school have been extremely supportive when I have had health and personal issues. My children love coming to this school and are devastated about the possible closure. This school is one big, supportive family. It is not just bricks and mortar. I highly doubt that I will have this support from another school. The children at De Beauvoir are happy and content. They have made bonds with teachers and friends. Please don't take this away from them.</p> <p>De Beauvoir Primary school should be the main local school in the area. Many residents have attended this school in their primary school age.</p> <p>The Council has given permission to a free school to open nearby with a controversial history linked to a secondary school that has terribly failed in the past.</p> <p>The free school has indubitably taken most of the primary school age in the De Beauvoir area.</p> <p>Learning Trust has also a responsibility in the last troubled years for De Beauvoir Primary school. They have changed head teachers many times and chased results above building the community spirit that was much needed in the school. Community spirit that keeps alive the other primary schools in the small neighborhood</p> <p>Detrimental effect on families and children - deprived families with mental health issues will suffer - not conducive to the evolution of the area in a social and educational context.</p> <p>Disagree, I would like to see these school not merge</p> <p>Do not want baden powell to close down.</p> <p>Don't close local authority schools at the heart of squeezed london communities</p> <p>Education in Hackney, one of the most deprived boroughs in the country, is inadequate, underfunded and undervalued. Closing down some of the existing institutions is exactly the opposite of what the Council should be proposing : it shows a deplorable lack of vision, a desperate short-termism and lack of the required leadership for the Borough.</p> <p>We need more and better educational facilities in Hackney. Failing that, we have to retain what we have, nurture and develop them, and give the parents and children of Hackney to feel a sense of purpose, clarity of the path ahead for education, and optimism to see that path realised. Closing the schools down will only achieve the opposite of these goals.</p> <p>Falling school rolls are not an excuse to close down these institutions. They are an opportunity to improve them, with smaller class sizes and better results.</p> <p>Even if our [child] is in schaklewell, Colvestone is an important part pf the neighbourhood.</p> <p>The closure of Colvestone and nearby De Beauvoir would eliminate non-faith, one-form entry schools in our area, leaving a dominance of religious schools, academies, and free schools. This disregards parental choice and diversity. Additionally, closing Colvestone could negatively impact the Dalston development plan, hinder children with special educational needs, increase air pollution exposure for students, and erase a historically significant Grade 2 listed building from the 19th century radical education movement.</p> <p>Everyone in the school are stressing about this proposal I have two special needs kids you are not thinking about us at all kids are struggling</p> <p>Firstly, I do not understand why the school budget has been cut and they have to merge schools. What happens when they agree to close the school and the birth rate goes back up? Secondly, I chose Baden Powell as my [child]'s school because it is considered a family school. My [child]'s aunties, cousins, grandmother etc went there and the education that was provided is excellent. My [child] has had a big improvement in * learning and confidence because it is a small class. This school has benefitted * so much. I believe in a bigger school, this might change. Also, I have no idea which teachers and even the headteacher will move, who have not only helped my [child] but me also with his development.</p>
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<p>For it takes a village to save a school and also for the pupils that are attending and enrolled to Colvestone, it is vital for this community, however small or insignificant they seem, they still need their school that has been an essential part of their community and education. Please save this school for the sake of the caring community that it's home to.</p>
<p>Fully appreciate dilemma Council faces but Colvestone is an integral part of the local community. The building is beautiful and to close it would be to create a blight on the landscape. That end of the street needs occupying to create a transition from market place to dwelling place.</p>
<p>Generations and generations of children have been attending this school and Baden Powell has been in the heart of the community of Hackney for many many years with nothing but good things to say about it. I am a mother of *** whose [child] is in year ***. However, I also attended this school when I was in primary years and I am *** years of age now. My friends children were sent to this school as part of the history of attending Baden Powell. My *** is a Teaching Assistant for over *** years or more and started when I was in year *** class. Many local residents to the school and within Hackney have worked here for over 20 or 30 years at this school making a huge impact on the children's lives. I'm worried for my *** that * will be without a job if you decide to close. If you do close the school - please ensure you can arrange to have the teaching assistants placed in Nightingale or near by schools so they can continue to work and not be unemployed as it's not their fault. I really hope you can leave the school to remain and not merge the school. Thank you</p>
<p>Hackney Council has disregarded many points prior to taking this decision which is very appalling. There are many schools in Hackney, each of which is different, and Colvestone is unique with its catchment area.</p>
<p>Hackney council have told parents that De Beauvoir school should close because pupil numbers are falling and will continue to do so in the future. The council cited three driving factors; Brexit, covid and the cost of living crisis; all of which were pushing families out of London. Shortly after the consultation I asked the council to provide source for their predictions and to explain why they believe these trends will continue. I have not received a satisfactory response. I was simply told that the predictions were made by "experts."</p>
<p>Brexit, covid and the cost of living crisis are all recent events. Although they have had an impact on pupil numbers recently, there is no evidence that these trends will continue in the long term. In fact shortly before these events, pupil numbers in Hackney had been rising.</p>
<p>The school has been serving the community for over one hundred years and once it's gone it will be gone forever. I strongly believe that the closure of De Behaviour School will be one of the biggest mistakes that Hackney council could make.</p>
<p>Hackney needs all its schools</p>
<p>Hackney requires more not less schools. Class numbers increasing is putting too much pressure on each teaching institution</p>
<p>Hackney should not only have large schools in the borough. Some pupils are better suited to small schools and learning environments. In addition having large schools in busy urban areas is often overwhelming for residents at critical times of the working day.</p>
<p>Happy about the merger</p>
<p>Having joined the Blossom Federation, Colvestone has really improved. It is shortsighted in the extreme to close a school which is on an upwards trajectory. The effort which has been invested by all staff has been fantastic and this will be thrown away if the school were to close. The decision to close a school without any plan for the future of the site is bizarre. I understand it is to be a community asset, but this is vague and without a clear plan and funding will likely see the site lay vacant for a long time, draining further resources. This lack of plan is compounded when you consider the very recent (and long overdue) capital works to the buildings. Colvestone currently provides a wonderfully caring and welcoming environment for pupils and families and given time to grow I have no doubt that the current leadership can provide a thriving and viable school. I understand that the need to balance budgets but Colvestone could become financially stable if given time and support. I do hope that the Council reconsider these proposals and keep this school available for the local community.</p>
<p>Having the option of a small community single form entry school in the heart of Dalston is invaluable.</p>
<p>I agree with the proposals if it saves money and reduces the costs to the taxpayer. Obviously merging the schools will help to reduce financial loss. However my concern is why children left the schools leading to a significant reduction in attendance. The question we should be asking is</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the reasons parents opted to remove their children from these schools? 2. How the closing schools be used as learning hubs, centres of excellence, alternative learning spaces to engage the children that have left? 3. Where are these 45% of children being educated? 4. When will Hackney Council implement activities that support homeschool children and their their parents?
<p>I agree with the two amalgamations and disagree with the other two non-amalgamations, i.e., I believe the other two Primary schools should also be amalgamated instead of being closed down.</p>

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I am a local Dalston resident and parent of a [child] and [children], all teenagers now. who attended Colvestone Primary School from nursery to year 6.

My ***** family SEN requirements mean the intimate environment of a one form entry school in a small building with an enclosed playground are very important criteria for us as is the case for current and (we hope) future Colvestone families. We understand that the current SEN offer is very good and has improved since the school has a new leadership team. Therefore to merge the school with another larger one which we do not consider to be in our neighbourhood and is located on the busy and polluted A10 will be harmful to special needs children as well as all other Colvestone pupils.

Colvestone Primary School is a non-denominational school located in the residential district east of Kingsland High Street. The building was opened as a school in 1862 and has been educating children from the area ever since regardless of their gender, faith, socio-economic and ethnic background. As such it attracts a diverse section of the community adding to the richness of the pupils' educational experience. As such, it varies from other schools in Hackney which have a narrower demographic. This is an important reason to keep the school open on its existing site.

We are aware that pupil numbers have fallen since our children left the school. It is claimed by the Council that this is due to fewer primary school children living in Dalston, partly due to extortionate property prices, a lack of affordable social housing and the cost of living crisis, partly due to Continental European families leaving because of Brexit, and partly due to young families leaving London during Covid. Whilst these may be contributory factors, we cannot stress enough the decline in recent years of the school when it was part of the Soaring Skies Federation under the leadership of the former headteacher ***. We watched her run down Colvestone, putting all resources available into the partner school Thomas Fairchild. Eventually there were insufficient teachers for each year class and a couple years ago she let go of several much valued and long-serving teaching assistants. It is no surprise that high numbers of parents reluctantly took their children out of the school due to the inadequate educational provision.

However, it cannot be stressed enough that due to the small-scale nature of the one-form entry school thr new leadership team and federation since last September has completely turned around the decline of Colvestone, returning it to the positive learning environment my children experienced when they were younger, The school interior has finally been redecorated, the playground upgraded, and long-awaited IT equipment has been provided to support the children's education. It shows how Colvestone is like a phoenix, risen again from the ashes To close the school on this attractive and historic site effectively would destroy the school forever - especially for its current pupils and staff.

Colvestone should remain as a fully functioning nursery and primary school on its current site as it is central to the local community and residential neighbourhood. There has been a school in the current building and site since 1862 when houses around St Mark's Church down the road were first built. The school building is one of the oldest school buildings in Hackney, predating the larger London Board Schools which were built from the 1870s onwards. Originally one of six Birkbeck schools, it was originally founded by the educational philanthropist William Ellis to educate boys and girls, which has been happening ever since - for more than 160 years. So to close the school on its historic and established site would be extremely short-sighted and regrettable for the school and local community.

Furthermore. the school premises are statutorily listed grade 2 as a recognition of their special architectural and historic interest, The Council. as the owner and guardian of the building has a legal duty to safeguard the building to preserve it as part of our cultural heritage for future generations. The optimum viable use for a listing is its original use for which it was purpose-built. So in the case of this listed building, the Council should continue its use as a primary school for local children.

The Council also has a duty to maintain the listed building and ensure it does not fall into disrepair. In the last year, following many years of neglect, the school building and its railings have undergone a comprehensive and sympathetic series of repairs and roof renewal works. But if the school were to leave the site, it is likely it would fall vacant with no foreseeable future educational use, leaving the building vulnerable to squatters, vandalism and water ingress - reversing all the recent renovation works welcomed by the community. The listed building no doubt would be added to Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register for Greater London, due to its uncertain future and vulnerability to decline.

The school site also falls within the St Mark's Conservation Area. It is one of a few landmark buildings playing an important role in the community. The loss of the school on this site and the resultant deadening effect of s vacant and declining historic building containing no children or teaching staff would be enormously harmful to the conservation area, the character and appearance of which the Council has a statutory duty to protect in its function as the local planning authority.

Finally, it cannot be stressed enough that the loss oc Colvestone on its historic site is contrary to the Council's adopted Dalston Local Plan which projects the need for around 600 new homes of a variety of tenures including high numbers of affordable family homes in the next few years. This is because there is an identified need in the area for more family homes, partly so that young families are no longer driven away from the area. Some oc the allocated housing sites are in close proximity to Colvestone Primary School. This is clear evidence that there will be high demand for school places at Colvestone in years to come, do to close the school on its current site and merge it with an another illmsgchdd school outside the neighbourhood would not only be short-sighted, educationally ineffective and morally wrong. but inconsistent with the Council's own local plan for Dalston.

I am a neighbour and think it's insane you want to close a school. It's very short sighted. And irresponsible.

I am a parent and my children go to school here because it is close to my house and we are used to other parents.

I am a parent at another school that is being proposed for closure but after hearing about Colvestone, I would like to keep it open so we can join. We need an option for a small school and it seems to be the only one in the area. My [child] has asthma and I am not sure how we will manage to avoid all the traffic.

I am a parent of a 2 year old in Hackney Downs that would likely have enrolled in one of the 4 schools involved in the merges. I was not aware of the falling enrolment numbers but agree Hackney council should protect the funding and quality of the school provision by merging. My only concern is whether there will be enough places in future years if numbers start to rise again and the closed school buildings have been repurposed/sold to developers.

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<p>I am a parent of a child at another local school, but feel it is really important for our community to have a choice of non-denominational schools. I understand that Colvestone has had some troubles in recent few years but that the new head is doing an amazing job at turning it around again. I expect the recent troubles were the main contributing factor for lots of children leaving to join alternative schools.</p>
<p>The Dalston Development Plan proposes to build 600 new homes, which will surely increase demand significantly in the immediate area.</p>
<p>The existing building is also a beautiful asset to the local area, and would be terribly sad to see this turned into something else or extended in a way which did not honour its original purpose. It feels like a little bit of village school amidst what used to be a series of villages. It has a massive connection to its local community and I believe it should be saved.</p>
<p>I am a proponent of the Dalston Plan, which commits to building 600 new homes, including 200 affordable family homes. Shutting Colvestone - the closest school to this development - is a short-sighted action, that will negatively impact the community.</p>
<p>I am very concerned that the option for these children is a school on the A10, where pollution is 40% higher. Children are uniquely vulnerable to air pollution, breathing faster than adults on average and taking in more air relative to their body weight. Exposure to toxic levels of pollution, particularly at these early stages of development, exacerbates respiratory diseases, reduces lung function development and increases asthma incidence, as well as having an impact on brain development</p>
<p>I am a ***. My grand[child] joined *** at Colvestone last autumn. I have been to the class several times & assisted on a school outing & ***. This school is impressive, providing a welcoming learning environment that meets the needs of all abilities, including those with special educational needs. Hackney Council should take note of the concerns of the families of those statemented children who are well catered for at Colvestone ie they are integrated into main stream education. This is a cost effective arrangement as it reduces the need for expensive SEN provision in separate schools for those settled at Colvestone. The school is a resource at the centre of Dalston. The response to the proposed amalgamation (closure) demonstrates how much it is valued by the whole community. It is a purpose built school in a listed building. Until the terms of the restriction in the deeds of the school is known, Hacknet Council can not consider it's future.</p>
<p>I am a resident of Colvestone Crescent and galvanised with my peers on the street who object to the closure of Colvestone primary. The school is an integral part of the community and identity of this neighbourhood and should be preserved as a social priority.</p>
<p>I am an immediate neighbour living on Colvestone Crescent. I am also a full time teacher (state school, elsewhere in London).</p>
<p>I attended one of the parent/council meetings held in the Colvestone Primary School hall. In my professional judgment as a teacher, it was crystal clear that CPS is an exceptional school. I heard stories of children with autism and special needs thriving, in a huge part due to the personal small space that this school offers. This will not be reproduceable in a larger merged school - and there will be the added challenge of meeting the special needs of these students which will not be so straightforward in Princess May. Furthermore, teaching in a school myself that has a large autistic student group, I understand the importance of routine and of familiar faces and of quiet spaces. The disruption caused by the merger to these students could be permanent, both on an emotional level and on an educational level. Safeguarding these young people who form a significant proportion of the school should be a priority for Hackney. The Hackney representative's pre-prepared speech kept stating that CPS was unremarkable in that ninety-something percent of Hackney schools were outstanding, but I am not convinced. I witnessed stories of an exceptional school that should be fought for, not abandoned.</p>
<p>I also heard the transformational story of a [parent] and [child] from *** who started attending CPS. The [child] went from being disruptive and failing to becoming engaged and thriving. The attention that * received at CPS and the belief that the teachers had in * allowed * to flourish. The whole hall was hugely moved by this [parent]'s speech. I sense that moving back to a larger (Princess May) school * might fall back into bad habits and lose interest in learning. The [parent] is astute enough to see just how [their child]'s future depends on this. A move to a bigger school and * could be lost. It makes me think that there must be other parents and carers across London who could only dream of their child studying at a school like Colvestone Primary School. If this parent could move to CPS from ***, why can't others? Make it happen!</p>
<p>Meanwhile, we learn about Hackney's 21st Century Streets plan, with God knows how much spent on computer-generated images and public relations. If only this budget could be invested in keeping CPS afloat another year while further strategies are planned and attempted. The irony of closing down a primary school on the very street proposed as Utopian is just too much. It reminds me that this is all political and arbitrary - if you want to find funds you find them, and if you don't want to find them, then we have crises of depleting student places. Again, if the time invested in promoting the 21st Century Streets were invested in finding more parents in ***, then perhaps CPS would have greater funding for next year. As I say to my students, "Solutions, not Excuses!". If you want a solution then you make it happen.</p>
<p>On a practical note, what will happen to the building and how expensive will that be to maintain? I understand that Hackney cannot grant permission for another surprise block of luxury apartments like Fifty-Seven East (above Dalston Kingsland) to be built on the site. So what will happen to the phantom school? How expensive will it be to maintain as a listed building with no purpose? I feel like Hackney will shoot itself in the foot by closing a beloved school that will actually not save them much money but lead to a lesser education for so many students.</p>
<p>On a personal level, it is also just really lovely to have a primary school on Colvestone Crescent. It is the heart of the community, and something that cannot quite be quantified on some spreadsheet at the town hall. Give me a primary school any day over the 'child-friendly place' provided by a 21st Century Street!</p>
<p>I am concerned about the effective closing on two counts. 1) It contributes so much to a dynamic, multi-generational neighbourhood, with families around the local streets. 2) The building is an architectural gem which brings dynamism to the street scope. Also, it has recently had substantial sums spent on its upkeep.</p>
<p>I am concerned about the level of teaching at an increased capacity school</p>
<p>I am deeply concerned by the proposal to amalgamate Colvestone with Princess May. I don't see either what proper analysis you have done and shared with the community of either the extent of the problem that requires such a solution, OR what other options were available to you, or why this is the necessary solution. You risk giving the impression that this is a fait accompli. On top of this, I don't see what evidence you have put forward of a proper risk assessment, in terms of the impact on the cohort of the children who currently attend and how the proposals will impact them over the coming year OR on future generations of local children. There is a significant consequence to reducing your offer of non-denominational school places.</p>

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I am not really happy that the school is closing because I wanted my child to finish primary there. But unfortunately the school is closing and we need to look for another school.
I am really angry about the decision to close De Beauvoir school because this school has so many special needs kids and it is very difficult for them.
I am strongly against this proposal. Dalston is changing rapidly and the pace of gentrification is almost frightening. Colvestone has all kinds of families and is right in the heart of Dalston, represent inclusive education. Further, the building is listed and must remain as a school and a non-profit space in the midst of soaring rents. I live *** and it is very much part of our community. Please don't remove it.
I am very sad and disappointed that Hackney Council have not engaged with the parents or the local community about this proposal. Colvestone is a small one form entry school and by closing it you take away all choice -we do not accept the merger proposal We do not want a bigger school. We do not want a playground on an extremely busy road where pollution has been recorded as much higher than Colvestone. We are concerned about the SEN children who will suffer in a bigger school. We feel that there has been no discussion or interest in any other possible outcome - as though merge with PM school is the only option. Colvestone is thriving under the new Blossom management is now financially viable. It will cost a fortune to close the school and keep it mothballed bt Hackney Council's own figures show this and cannot be justifiable-it will be a disgrace to do so. We need to be listened to and engaged with so that we can help the Council to find a way out of this and protect a vital part of Dalston's community.
I am worried if Baden-Powell is closed that Hackney council will build a tower block in its space blocking out light and scenery. Making it harder to find a parking space due to more people living on this road. And you will probably only provide minimal amount of social housing.
I appreciate the falling rolls issue at Colvestone, but the smaller groups there have made it possible to offer real child-centred support which has especially benefited children with special needs and those on the autism spectrum. I feel that there are strong equity-based reasons for keeping the school open. As a close neighbour for over 30 years, I have been able to observe the great, positive atmosphere around the school.
I believe Colvestone should not be closed as this school is best for the local community. The kids will be affected.
I believe it should not go ahead as it will have a devastating impact on the children that are going to Colvestone primary school. Not only are they being displaced from the school they have been going to, and feel comfortable in, it will unhealthily stress the children, as they must get used to a completely new environment, with more students than they are used to being around (as colvestone is a 1 form entry school) which is a very difficult and extremely scary prospect.
I believe our school provides an important and vital role in the community and the future of children in the area - many of which are already disadvantages in many ways. Our school has recently received good Ofsted reviews as a testament to the quality of the education and support we offer. I in particular work with children with special needs and I have seen great progress in them. It would be a shame for that not to continue. I therefore urge you to reconsider your plans of closing this school. Thank you!
I believe that the children of De Beauvoir are well placed and supported in their educational advances. The staff are caring and nurturing and have successfully adapted teaching and learning styles to suit all types of learners. As a parent who is unable to drop off and pick up my child regularly, I have been able to reach out to staff whenever needed, including sending late night emails which have received instant replies. During the Covid 19 lockdowns, the school was quite quick in implementing online learning which many private schools still have not been able to implement. I believe De Beauvoir is key to the community and should remain open for more parents to share the same experiences I have had.
I believe that the community benefits greatly from the support received by the staff at De Beauvoir. I believe that the school is a supportive team to both (especially) the students, but to parents as well. De Beauvoir were one of a few schools that were very quick with offering parents and pupils alternative access to education during the critical covid times. Having friends who have children in private education, De Beauvoir surpassed even what high costing private school were able to do for young people. As a parent, I was supported in every turn of my child's education, with late night replies to emails and raising concerns during the school day. I have always been and felt supported at every turn and believe that more and more children need to benefit from this caring community.
I believe the loss of Colvestone will be a loss to the street, future children of Hackney and the community.
I can understand the pressures on the Council budget but once community assets are gone they are very hard to recover. I would prefer to see part of the assets (eg the house at the front of the school) sold and a combination. Of alternative uses (eg extended nursery provision) rather than the merger.
I did not pick Princess May - this is on the main road. Concern with pollution. Concern with the suppose for my [child] with SEND - currently * needs being met are outstanding. (Non EHCP) Concern that so much money has been spent on Colvestone - de federation / 2 restructures / building works - concern out the use of hackney money and not forward planning. Lack of other options of school - only faith / academy or free school left I didn't want Baden Powell to close because I got used to that school
I disagree to the closure, because kids mindset will shift drastically.some children do not take likely to changes or will ever get use to changes, stepping out of their comforts zones. This would have a very serious impact on their mental health and that will certainly disrupt their abilities to learn. Some of the children has friends from Nursery going on to year one and ect that they became best friend with, that they may never see again, that will have so much emotional trauma going forward for them if they should change schools. My [child] attend Baden-Powell Primary school and if this merge happens * WILL no be moving forward with the merge, Already * thinks about the possibilities of not been able to see * friends and the sadness and question i have to face already from * is overwhelming and sad at the same time when i look at the worry on * face. So i really do hope that Baden-Powell Primary school will stay open for the future generations. Thank you.
I disagree with the proposal and Hackney's housing policy and benefits cap. This has a direct effect on the number of school age pupils in the borough. This disproportionately affects working class families and means that important schools like De Beauvoir who provide educational/socio emotional function have fewer pupils than they would have if people with a local connection were being housed locally in the borough. This has not been carried out in a strategic manner; places should have been held until the end of the school year, schools are being destabilised by in-year transfer as parents panic at the news. Hackney appear to act amorally and irresponsibly.

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<p>I disagree with the proposals as the number of the students in the classes are going to increase so much. It would also affect the teaching as the increased number of students and teachers aren't going to teach effectively.</p>
<p>I do not agree on closing schools. Especially when children get used to it. Colvestone primary school is very close to me and my daughter built a strong relationship with her classmates and teachers.</p>
<p>I do not believe that school closures will benefit any children</p>
<p>I do not feel that this merge would be beneficial to Colvestone children due to:</p> <p>Lack of parental choice (only church, free or academies)</p> <p>Impact on Hackney's developmental plan (21st Century street)</p> <p>Impact on SEN pupils - of which are well supported</p> <p>Air pollution at Princess May</p> <p>Historical significance (last of the Birkbeck School)</p> <p>Hackney have been chipping away at Colvestone over the last 4 years which has impacted on the pupils number - the school has been through a period of instability due to the decisions of Hackney. Finally the school is settled and in a good place.</p>
<p>I do not think closing any primary schools is in the long-term interests of the borough and its residents. The borough should be asking itself why the numbers of children have gone down and why you continue to allow the development of one bedroom apartments which nobody can have a family in (or can afford).</p>
<p>I know the area well (I lived 1.5 miles away for 20 years and worked in Haggerston for 6 years) and I support the parents and teachers wanting to keep Colvestone open. I believe that the school contributes to the long-established community in the local area and could contribute to the improvement of the area for families, particularly the school being a focus for the eco-friendly plans for Colvestone Crescent.</p>
<p>As a small and "calm" school, it provides very important benefits to those children. There should be other ways to make up the funds, not creating a larger school where the risk is that less-able children will be left out or less able to cope.</p>
<p>It is important that the school is so close to Ridley Road market, meaning the school, and the market, can benefit from this link. Schools contribute to the liveable-ness of a place especially long-established schools with traditional buildings that people appreciate.</p>
<p>Colvestone is slightly further from the main road and therefore has less traffic pollution than Princess May.</p>
<p>Colvestone is a rare non-religious school and it is important to retain that choice for parents.</p>
<p>Extensive new housing in Dalston will require school places, so it is very short-sighted and wrong to close Colvestone.</p>
<p>I do not want the school to close because the head teacher is doing a great job in the school and I can see the improvement in my son's education</p>
<p>I do not want the school to close. I am worried for parents and staff. It is a wonderful school and should stay open. The setting enables children to learn. The school has a high quality of teaching. The work environment is friendly. We have a great team. It is very stressful for everyone. The school accepts children from all backgrounds and needs, and are very well supported.</p>

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<p>I do not want to send my child to a religious school (especially as a gay parent) or a free school (the funding of which is cloaked in secrecy) therefore there are no other options available to us a family in this area. The schools we would otherwise choose are full. Colvestone has a village feel in bustling Hackney and this is the reason we chose it.</p> <p>Had you chosen to merge De Beauvoir and Colvestone this would have been a different matter as they are very similar in ethos and size but going to Princess May is not an option for us.</p> <p>The other thing I have major concerns about is the talk of further closures after this. So whatever school we choose might then be closed again (particularly Princess May) as there are so few parents at Colvestone willing to send their kids there. This is a perfect example of Hackney Council putting money before children's lives and my family and I feel incredibly let down by this proposal.</p> <p>The consultation process has been a sham. Every time we have asked a specific question of the council we have been answered in generalities and every time we've asked a more broad question, we've been answered with specifics. Imagine attending a meeting about your child's future and the future of the community we have built and answering every point of criticism presented by the council only to be repeatedly told 'the numbers are the numbers' (when we've just proved we're financially viable).</p> <p>In short, I very strongly object to this proposal.</p>
<p>I do not wish for my child to merge with another school as this disrupt their educational achievement that they already accomplish at Colvestone. Colvestone primary school is also in a convenient location for majority of parents.</p>
<p>I do not wish my child's school to merge with another school. We are very sad to find out that our lovely school will be shut down. We are all very happy in our school and we love our little community. Children are learning, playing and growing up in a close and peaceful environment. I deliberately have chosen a one entry form school for my child. Not everyone can cope with busy environments. From my personal point of view it's going to be devastating for year *** children to move once in year *** and then move to a secondary which is a huge change in their life in general. My [child] has [SEND] and * struggles to cope even with little changes during * daily routine. This will completely mess * up. Please leave our children to learn and grow up in their lovely, safe place Baden Powell! We have enough struggles in our lives! Don't mess us up and then offer support and help. I am against the proposal of Baden Powell to be merged with Nightingale. Thanks for your time.</p>
<p>I do not wish to comment because the decision has been made and sadly the school will close.</p>
<p>I don't agree with the proposal Baden Powell is an amazing school with spacious two playgrounds with many teachers who are dedicated to their work and positive attitude towards pupils</p>
<p>I don't want larger amalgamated schools , small and local schools for the community surrounding them.</p>
<p>I don't agree with the proposal to close Colvestone primary school</p>
<p>I don't think the children will benefit from bigger classrooms as its better to have small class so the teacher can better identify children needs and support them where if you have bigger classrooms some children will go under the radar and be missed and not get help if needed and also I'm worried that when it's time to apply for a place I might not get a place in the school of my choice. This proposal is absolutely outrageous and Hackney should not be considering closing schools or merge two school</p>
<p>I don't want to close De Beauvoir Primary School</p>
<p>I feel it would be a loss to the community and a shame for all the Colvestone pupils and a big upheaval for them to join another school.</p>
<p>I feel that due to Covid that these numbers have been pushed more in decline and the regeneration of Hackney so a lot of unfavorable homes have been built so people are forced to live out of London, if this was the prediction forecast why is that intake for schools with low numbers were still allowed to continue, also why wasn't parents informed before hand that over subscribed schools were originally designed to house more children How can we guarantee that in few years this solves the issues and again we aren't in same position</p>
<p>I feel that Randal Cremer is a strong community school which works well with marginalised families and children with high levels of SEND - perhaps it would of great benefit to offer more funding to increase and extend this work.</p>
<p>I have an [SEND] child and one with needs in years *** & ***. They both don't like change and do not like too many children around them. It took more than a year for each of them to get settled in Baden Powell. It is going to be so unsettling for them to change into a large school with so many pupils. I chose Baden Powell as it was small for both their needs. We love all staff. All staff know the pupils and parents. Please don't merge. If you do I will move them to a smaller school like Baden Powell.</p>
<p>I have been a parent of children who have both completed their schooling in various schools in Hackney. I strongly believe that the amalgamation of schools creates less diversity and less ability for the borough to deliver the specific and attentive requirements of children needed from schooling in contemporary daily life. I am a senior professor at a British University and see the results of the watered down education that is provided by larger schools with more pupils and less time for individual pupil attention over many years. In my view, this type of amalgamation goes against the ethos of delivering education in Hackney in the context of its important crosscultural and multiethnic environment. Children need time and individual attention; they do not need to be squashed together in an environment that cannot give them the care and attention that they need. In addition, Colvestone Primary has been an important part of Dalston's social infrastructure for decades, prized precisely because of its small size..</p>
<p>I have direct access to how this proposal has affected pupils, their families and staff members. I have direct access to children crying and emotionally drained as their peers leave for another school one by one. I have direct access to children as young as 4 only having 1 day to process that it would be their last day with their friends and favourite teachers; as parents frantically do in-year applications. I have direct access to parents who struggle with the English language asking for support and guidance on how to do transfer applications and what to do. Every day we are seeing a lack of content from staff members who have dedicated over two decades of service to De Beauvoir Primary School, only to now have to worry about whether they will be able to secure a job anywhere else. It is very sad to have to watch children say goodbye to their home. Yes, De Beauvoir is and was a home to many. Parents know they can come to De Beauvoir in any moment of stress or destitute and we would always support. They fear they are now left hopeless with one to turn to. Please reconsider as this will negatively affect more lives than you can imagine.</p>
<p>I have had 2 children, now aged 13 and 16, who went to Colvestone and had an excellent education. They're now excelling at Secondary school with my eldest having offers for Sixth Form from Latymer and Harris Westminster amongst others. And it wasn't only academically they were thriving but also socially in a wonderful community. Now my third child, aged 4, is about to start at Colvestone because I think it's the best primary in the area. I will not send * to Princess May. What would a 21 Century Street be without a school?</p>

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<p>I have lived at my address for over 14 years. When I moved in, I searched for schools in my area and found the best school near my house. I registered my first [child] and * finished at this school two years ago and is now in secondary school. I have two more children attending De Beauvoir - one is year *** and one is ***. I have one more child that I will register in school next year. We are happy and don't want De Beauvoir closed. Please don't close the school. Thanks.</p>
<p>I have lived opposite the school for 24 years, both my children were extremely happy pupils there and I was involved as a school governor for five years. The school needs to remain open because it is a vital hub in the community and serves the families and children of Dalston better than any other school can. Its small village like size is an absolute prize for the children and their education. I believe the SEN teaching and support there is so strong that it brings children from across the borough.</p> <p>If schools are to be amalgamated then it should involve pupils coming to Colvestone, not leaving.</p> <p>As a resident I'm aware of how the school would be a lynchpin of Hackney Councils 21st Century Street plan for Colvestone Crescent. It seems absurd, when one of the main beneficiaries of the plan would be the school and its staff and pupils, to consider closing the school.</p> <p>Moreover, I am very concerned about an increase in anti social behaviour and crime , including burglary, drug taking and violence, which would follow the closure of the school. This again would fly in the face of creating a peaceful and green haven as part of the 21st Century Street plans.</p> <p>As a resident and former parent I object most strongly to the proposal of Colvestone Primary being closed to allow for its amalgamation with another school.</p>
<p>I have not and would not pick Princess May as a school. I like the village-like atmosphere of Colvestone, plus my child has severe [SEND] and the change will really affect *. I have a good relationship with Colvestone and with my children's teachers.</p>
<p>I have spoken to a few parents from Nightingale who do not want a merger. I know a few parents who have a lot of problems with a few teachers, pupils and even their *** who takes everyone's business. I know a lot of what goes on. My *** went to a *** from Nightingale and they said they don't want to merge because we are riff raff. Now children act upon their parents if we merge. I can see a lot of problems with pupils who are already there. My children will be subjected to bullying.</p>
<p>I just don't understand why the school will close. If the number of children in Hackney is so low so why did the new Hackney school open. It doesn't even have a playground.</p>
<p>I live in *** and have 2 children who are at nursery. I would like to send them to Colvestone primary once they are school age. I wouldn't send them to Princess May as I wouldn't want them to go to a school so close to a main road, with everything we know about pollution now. If you merge the schools I would probably move out of hackney</p>
<p>I live in the area and feel that schools like this are so important and the history should be continued. I hope to have children one day in this area and send them to a small school like this.</p>
<p>I live next to Colvestone Primary School in *** and have been a resident there since 2004. The school has been an integral part in the development of the area and its diverse mix of pupils celebrate everything that is great about the area.</p> <p>In the more recent years the investment in the school has reflected positively on the activities at the school - I love hearing the sports, music, after school activity etc! it seems absurd to close the much loved and cherished school after recent investment in its refurbishment and its record in diverse background of pupils including those with learning disabilities. It would send a wrong signal to the community already dealing with increase in drug dealing and addiction and crime at our doorstep.</p>
<p>I live on **** to Colvestone school. I feel the proposals to close the school would have a detrimental effect on the local community. The school is at the centre of the thriving community around Dalston and Ridley Road. If it were to be closed the building would be left empty and open to vandalism and squatters, while simultaneously costing the council thousands of pounds in upkeep until redevelopment. It would leave many local children and parents without somewhere to go and difficulties with moving schools. Furthermore, as one of few non-religious and non-academy schools in the area, it is open to all people and allows parents to choose for their child to be taught in a secular way. As more houses are planned in the local area through the development of Dalston, closing the local school would be negative in the long run as with the development of more houses, the necessary amenities, especially the school will be required. And on a more personal note, should I choose to have children, I would like the opportunity to send them to Colvestone School, as I am sure many others in the local community would.</p>
<p>I love the area and its attributes. So for me to get a such inspirational school out of the area is a tragedy</p>
<p>I much prefer the school class sizes to stay as they are. One class per year seems to help the children and teachers focus better on each other.</p>
<p>I much prefer the school class sizes to stay as they are. One class per year seems to help the children and teachers to focus better on each other</p>
<p>I strongly disagree because my kids are doing well in this school and don't want to change it because it could affect my kids since they cannot concentrate. A new beginning would just stress my kids out since they will have to make new friends.</p>
<p>I strongly disagree because my kids are doing well in this school, and don't want to change it because it could affect my kids since they cannot concentrate. It would just stress my kids out since they will have to make new friends since they don't want to have new beginnings.</p>
<p>I strongly disagree for closure at colvestone primary school, because this school has set a wonderful community within hackney. My daughter has gained a great experience academically and socially. And there is a really good support with parents also... colvestone primary school has brilliant support all round when it comes to children's education and wellbeing. This closure has to stop.</p>
<p>I strongly disagree on the closure of De Beauvoir Primary School because it is a part of the history of De Beauvoir Town. It's very sad for the parents and children because the school is a nice school. Education always comes first, the staff are amazing, always listening to the children's needs, they work very hard at making sure every child has a right to learning. My children are happy with the school and as a parent too because they have learnt a lot and I can see the progress everyday. They are sad because the school is most likely to close and they don't want to move to another school, affecting their friendships and mental health.</p> <p>When it was lockdown the school helped many families to deal with the hardest time and my family was one of them. *** is more than a headteacher, having extra time to listen to parents' issues.</p> <p>We will appreciate if the Council can review the proposal to close De Beauvoir Primary School.</p>

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I strongly disagree with the plan to close Colvestone Primary School and here's why:

1. It is not an amalgamation, but a closure because it has become clear that many of the wonderful staff from Colvestone will not be transferred to Princess May and based on this information and the survey that was carried out, many, if not most of the families (ourselves included) will not go to Princess May. So the result would be that Princess May will still suffer from low numbers and also face closure in not too distant future. Colvestone, being a small on-form entry school, could be filled by just a handful of new students and saved. One of these two schools could be saved and it is much more achievable in the case of Colvestone.

2. The 21st Century Street by Hackney Council is a brilliant plan and demonstrates everything Hackney is and what the residents want it to be like in the future. Colvestone Primary School is at the centre of this plan. The vision for such a street is built on creating a child-friendly safe environment. Closing the school makes no sense, whilst the plan itself is funded to go ahead. Without a school in that street, this investment is entirely pointless and a misuse of public finance.

3. Closing the school is very expensive. In addition to the usual costs Hackney Council will need to swallow Colvestone's historic debt. As a protected building, it cannot be sold for other development to earn this expense back. Under current management, however, Colvestone is already reducing its historic debt and with recently concluded upgrade works as well as the 21st Century Street, there is no question that this school will operate successfully and reduce its debt further. Hence, it is very likely that the cost of closing this school will be greater than keeping it open in the long run. The same mistake was already made by Hackney Council when closing Hackney Downs School, which cost several million, only to reopen as a new school due to restrictions on the site. I strongly object to such misuse and clear waste of public funds. The council will not only lose a great school, but also a great deal of money, reputation and local families, who will start leaving the borough due to poor management.

Colvestone Primary School could be the most wonderful setting for early years students, with clean air and a safe streets offering the ideal conditions particularly for children within the SEND provision. Whilst I appreciate that the council needs to take strong action to adapt to new numbers of children in the borough, this particular school is most clearly not the right one to be closed and this proposal should be taken off the table.

I strongly disagree with the proposal to close Colvestone Primary school. My child has done really well at this school. There are Faith schools with a higher vacancy rate and as a parent who doesn't believe in faith schools I'm upset that Colvestone would be chosen to close over these schools

Out of interest I looked at the reception intake for 2023 and saw that all the schools in my locality have a full allocation for this September, the only exception being Princess May. This was not on my list of schools and I would not send my child to this school. I'm concerned about the lack of parental choice if Colvestone closes. Also given that a high percentage of current Colvestone parents will not send their child to Princess May, would there be capacity in the other non faith (and potentially non free) schools in the area to accommodate these children?

The school has shown they can be financially viable with lower numbers and I feel this is not being taken into account in the consultation, along with the cost of closing the school, after a period of investment in the building. With the proposed housing in Dalston and Dalston plan there is likely to be an increase in families very close to Colvestone.

I have a concern about the long term cost on children of closing these schools. I work in *** and research is emerging about the long term impact on children of pandemic and school lock-downs, For a current year 4 pupil, they will have had big disruption to year 2 and year 3, then will move to a new school for year 6 and then to secondary school. Princess May is running at a higher vacancy rate and we were told in a recent consultation that could be considered for closures in the next round. So a child who started reception in the pandemic may move there and then have to move again before the end of primary school. This could be especially difficult for SEN children.

I feel the council's proposals are rather simplistic. They focus on numbers and perceived savings but don't explore or propose alternative models.

I also have considerable concerns how genuine this consultation is, I don't get the impression the council are open to taking on any points or concerns raised. They don't go away and consider them. My experience when I raised a question I was told the information is available but no attempt was made to give me the information and no signposting was made to how to access the information. I feel very strongly that the decision has been made, and that the council is looking like it is following the correct process rather than actually doing so. If it did it would properly respond to the points raised by parents.

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I strongly disagree with the proposal to close De Beauvoir school. I have been looking at other schools nearby and their numbers on roll and percentage of surplus places on the government website which is updated regularly. Overall the vast majority of neighbouring schools, particularly those South of Dalston Lane, have been largely unaffected by the fall in pupil numbers in Hackney and London overall, and this is with no halving of overall spaces available by the council as has happened with De Beauvoir. Some local schools only have as little as 2% of spaces free but have an overall maximum pupil roll number of 500 or even more. In fact I am very reluctant to send my [child] to any of those schools as they seem too big and overcrowded, especially as * has additional needs and they will have to spread any support staff between more pupils.

A school does not go from being oversubscribed in several year groups 6 or 7 years ago meaning my children had to wait until nearly the end of the school year for a place, to virtually empty now in comparison, as has happened with De Beauvoir. When this has happened elsewhere it has taken decades.

I do feel like the council have somehow pursued an internal unwritten policy of diverting potential pupils whether they are reception age or in year admissions for older year groups, away from De Beauvoir and into other neighbouring schools, to keep pupil numbers up at the other schools so they don't have to consider closing more schools and the council admitted at a parent's meeting that they have no power to close free or academy schools and religious schools, so siphoning children into those schools saves the headache of trying to reason with those schools to close of their own accord.

In the current climate of falling pupil numbers in London and Hackney, for multiple nearby schools in one of the worst affected boroughs to have no issue at all maintaining pupil numbers despite having a massive overall pupil number on roll for primary level De Beauvoir has been a sacrificial lamb so to speak. I don't have definite 'scientific' proof of this but there is anecdotal evidence. Some months ago I was speaking on twitter to some parents whose children attended Hackney New Primary school and they were also living in the catchment area for De Beauvoir, some claimed had they known of the safety issues with traffic outside that school they would never have put their child in there but now felt it was too late to uproot them. Some said had they known about De Beauvoir, they would have sent their children there instead. There are still more social family sized homes that are still in council and housing authority hands within the De Beauvoir catchment area than around any other school nearby, including the large council estate opposite the school and the huge De Beauvoir estate further down in De Beauvoir town, while that isn't the only factor to consider, it does seem odd that De Beauvoir is the worst affected school in the borough.

Hackney will never admit to having this policy and the policy will massively backfire in the long run. Eventually if the demographic forecast does play out as the research suggests, more and more neighbouring schools will have to be sacrificed to keep numbers at the maximum in what Hackney sees as their flagship schools for some reason. Then if there is a sudden shift demographically due to unforeseen factors, Hackney will be stuck with not enough school places and no space to open new schools or expand existing ones because they will have sold off all the land to private interests. I have seen this happen in other boroughs and this includes some outer London boroughs. It also happened in the area I grew up in, the council pursued the unwritten policy of sending children to one particular large school until they could close all the others. A few years later there were several large family housing estates built in the area including, ironically a new council estate on the site of my old primary school. They had to expand the number of pupils allowed to be on roll at the one primary school left but could only do so by 75, they are close to the 75 now and there is no room for further expansion.

I strongly disagree with the proposal to close De Beauvoir school. This is not just a school for my children, it is a second home where my children feel safe and loved by all the members of staff. I myself used to work in this school for five years, so I know *** as a parent/employee. Many headteachers put on an act when talking to parents, but not *** Since * came to De Beauvoir, * has turned things around and made this school what it is now. * is the most loving and caring *** I have ever met and my children love *. Since this proposal has come to light, my eldest [child] has been feeling very anxious and upset as some of * friends have left during this process.

I strongly disagree with the proposal to close Randal Cremer primary school. I am very pleased about the school, especially the head teacher ***. Great atmosphere for parents and children. My [child] is so upset and sad about the proposal. I change the school for * this year and * is so happy. To take * from Randal Cremer again is like a nightmare and disappointment.

I strongly disagree with this proposal because I believe that it will negatively impact all students. In addition, it will limit the space provided for the students when schools are put together.

I strongly disagree with this proposal if closing Colvestone Primary school.

It is a school in central dalston and it is a very small school which makes it so special to all the children and their families in the area. It makes the city into a village and has grown an ongoing community around the school and the area since decades. There is so much love for this school which is very special - to close Colvestone would be heartbreaking for so many people and unforgivable for the future of dalston. Holstein and their families. As there is no other school in the area which could give children what they get in Colvestone. Think about now and the future of the area - there will be always more children being born. You are redoing all the playgrounds in hackney - which is great! Thisnis attracting more families with chikdrenor planning to have kids into the area but where will all the kids go to school who are playing on these playgrounds at the moment if you are closing the schools.
Save Colvestone school

I strongly disagree with transferring my son to a new school as I know this will impact his final *** years of primary school. He is currently at his best academically because he has a fantastic support system from both his peers and teachers and other staff members who have known him since the beginning. Moving him will make him feel alienated and in a completely new environment and I know this will affect his mental wellbeing as it will be difficult to handle this change and will be a completely new academic curriculum which will in turn worsen his grades.

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<p>I strongly object to the proposal to close Colvestone Primary School and amalgamate it with Princess May Primary School for the following reasons:</p> <p>It demonstrates the same short-sightedness that we have seen in approaches to Ridley Road Market and the Ridley Road Shopping Village + Ridley Road Studios (51-63 Ridley Road) over the past 5 years. Hackney Council is consistently failing to acknowledge assets of community value and various facilities (including for schools for local children and affordable artist studios) that are vital to the survival of Dalston as a diverse and inclusive neighborhood. Hackney Council MUST reconsider its priorities and resist forces that are making Dalston unaffordable for families, cultural institutions and small independent businesses.</p> <p>In particular, Colvestone Primary School is a vital part of the Dalston community and I urge Hackney Council to consider the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colvestone is at the heart of the Ridley Road and Dalston community, and removing a school and its children from this area will have a detrimental impact on the local area. • This is an ill-considered and damaging move for children, parents and carers in Dalston. As one of the only non-religious, non-academy, non-free schools in the area, it should remain open to offer families the choice to be part of a small, close-knit community school – run by the local education authority. • Colvestone is a unique primary school offering children an opportunity to develop and thrive in a single-form entry, community-focussed environment. • Colvestone is in the centre of the Dalston Plan, which includes commits to building 600 new homes, including 200 affordable family homes. Shutting Colvestone - the closest school to this development - is a short-sighted action, that will negatively impact the community. • Colvestone Primary School is central to a pioneering proposal to turn Colvestone Crescent into 21st Century Street, Hackney's first permanent play street. A long tree-lined pedestrian walkway with lots of new plantings, ecology gardens, and innovative play spaces. A key part of the 21st Century Street is that it's located next to a primary school. Explicitly, without Colvestone school, that plan makes less sense.
<p>I think closing down Colvestone Primary School and merging it with Princess May School will be detrimental and a terrible loss for our local community. Colvestone School is a very important part of the neighborhood. If the demography has currently lesser children this may not be the case in the far future. Demography constantly fluctuates and changes. Hackney should take a long term view and not close down important long established Schools like Colvestone School, De Beauvoir School and the others.</p> <p>Having worked in education most of my life I believe that teaching smaller cohorts of pupils is better for children's learning and development. I understand the financial constraint imposed by the government but these need to be fought back.</p>
<p>Please not close our local schools, keep an open mind on how changes can be implemented in each school and keep a long term view for future generations.</p>
<p>I think it is a sticking plaster approach to a wider, systemic issue that has real life, negative consequences for the lives of children and their families. Given the impact of the pandemic on young children's education and the poly crises hitting the parents (cost of living to name one). Any further disruption should be strongly avoided. Focus on the root of the issue instead.</p>
<p>I think it is disgusting, my child will be starting her final year of primary school and will have to transfer to a new school then a secondary school all in a year! I think the emotional well being of the children is not being considered, she is not sleeping properly and worrying so much.</p>
<p>I think it is important to keep the school open as i do not wish to send my kid to an religious school, an academy or a free school. I want a community non religious school for our children</p>
<p>I think it is terrible proposal and will have a negative impact on the school children and their families. The playground of Princess May is on main road, this raises concerns about air pollution. Amalgamation of the schools would mean more children in the playground, less space means pushing kids all the way up to the fence. It will also force families to walk a further 15mins across busy roads. This would put more stress on families. Closing Colvestone Crescent is a short sighted solution to the current trend of fewer school admissions over the past decade. The council should be encouraging families in Hackney and champion policies that address the issues of gentrification and affordable housing.</p>
<p>I think that I am not alone in this, I sincerely enjoyed sending my children to De Beauvoir because the staff are very helpful and engage all parents in solving problems. Looking back, my children learned a lot, made new friends and they have wonderful memories. It will affect them mentally and emotionally when the school closes. What an experience.</p>
<p>I think that if you joined schools the classes would be crowded and the quality of education would go down. I think one class should not be more than 12-20 pupils.</p>
<p>I think that it would be disastrous to amalgamate both schools and would have a terrible effect on the whole school community, especially for children and their families.</p>
<p>I think that single entry schools are very important and need to be preserved. Parents need choice, and the local school in any area is crucial to families building a support network for them selves and their children. The larger amalgamated academies and corporations don't have the same ethos which a school like Colvestone projects, they are less intimate, have more issues and problems to deal with simply by having a larger population. They are also more focused on their own business interests and public image, and less concerned with the needs of local families who see the school as community hub, which has always been one of the social values of small local schools. The smaller schools can suit vulnerable families better, and children with SEND can thrive in a less pressured environment with more space, less crowding, and a community ethos, which Colvestone has.</p>
<p>Families I have known over our 22 years of running a nursery in Dalston and out-of-school care with families at Colvestone have always expressed their preference for a smaller school, and currently are giving their support. All schools go through ups and downs over time, and I think that Colvestone is definitely on the up with very strong parental support. Colvestone as a building is quite unique and historic, and I'm sure will thrive again once we have all recovered from pandemic effects and Brexit changes in the demographic. I believe that Hackney's plan to develop more homes in the area will also require more school places in the coming years. The architecture and spaces of the school are both intimate and impressive, and it would be a shame to see it become something that is not accessible to the local community, which the school has been strongly connected to for a very long time.</p>
<p>I think that there is still a need for De Beauvoir Primary School. The school promotes diversity and provides quality education to the community. They have lovely staff who look after the children very well. I hope alternative options will be considered before the final decision is taken.</p>

All Comments On Consultation Proposals

I think that this is a very badly thought through proposal as Colvestone parents have already outlined. We do not want our children to go to Princess May school. Colvestone is a small friendly village school that has suffered less falling roll than many other schools. It seems as though we are in this process mostly due to the large historic debt but Hackney Education supported the school to choose Blossom Federation as new leadership going forwards and they are taking proactive steps to address the deficit. YOU HAVE NOT GIVEN THEM A CHANCE.

We have asked what it would take to change the proposal - after all it is supposed to be a consultation process. You have stated that we would have to change the numbers against the criteria that led to our selection for the process in the first place. BUT we cannot improve pupil numbers or school finances whilst the school is under threat of closure so it does not feel fair.

We believe that Colvestone could be an asset:

- as a small one-form entry school it is great environment for SEN kids whether as a formal SEN unit or just somewhere that kids who find other school overwhelming could be directed to
- it is beautiful Grade II listed building that should be kept as a school to reflect its radical roots
- as part of the 21st Century Street proposals for Colvestone
- the fantastically strong Colvestone community

We think these arguments are strong enough for you to change your proposal and take Colvestone off the list, and this could be presented in a positive way for the Council.

You have asked us for practical solutions to our problems of falling roll and this is very difficult at the current time but I think there are options;

1. Colvestone as a merger school for De Beauvoir. They are a much better fit and are not far geographically. Initially there may have been too many pupils at De Beauvoir but many of these have now transferred to other local schools. In fact we understand that as families have moved away from Randall Cremer and De Beauvoir in light of the proposal many of the school in that part of the borough are now FULL and these families need another option.
2. Promote Colvestone for SEN families
3. Attract other families. Our campaign over the last few months has raised our profile and I think families will be attracted to the school and the strong community . This includes families currently at Halley House that is currently undergoing a change of leadership and significant change of staff.

TAKE US OFF THE LIST and demonstrate that this is a real consultation.

I think this is a consequence of Brexit, House prices and the cost to rent. We should rejoice in a reduced pupil to teacher ratio and produce excellent results which will attract pupils. We need more families locally. Pupil number will pick-up once the UK understand Brexit resulted in an exodus of families and we now need family homes not just one bedroom flats.

I understand that numbers are low etc, however the council has not allowed the community to respond or even local area. Tell us what can be done to recover the numbers, support the school, talk about alternatives to keeping the school open. I'm disappointed that the council are ready to give up. We as parents have not had this insight that you have. It's unfair to say we have given it a chance when really you haven't. My children are at the school and have learning disabilities and struggles with transitions who is to support them or me, I have my own health I have ***, ***, ***. Who will support me with a new setting for my children. De Beauvoir was a decision I made thoroughly I put a lot of thought into choosing a school for my [children] and now it's closing. I will keep them in there until the last day and probably won't get them back into a school until something magical happens and a school pops up like de Beauvoir small, intimate, family friendly environment, everyone knows everyone, everyone feels safe. Your taking that away not just from me and my [children], this is affecting all these families and the council don't care. Just like raising the rent on people and kicking them out all you care about is money. We want to help and support the school at least give us a chance.

I understand that the council needs to make the argument for sound use of resources across local schools and that falling pupil numbers is hugely challenging. As a parent of a child at DeBeauvoir Primary I feel it's my responsibility to advocate for the school. It's my opinion that the school offers excellent value across a number of social indicators, that may be overlooked in the reductionist population data driving the recommendation for closure.

My [child] is a pupil at DeBeauvoir Primary school. * has ***** SEND needs. I have found the school to be welcoming, accessible and incredibly supportive. After a difficult journey through early years DeBeauvoir Primary has been a sanctuary. The staff team have developed a culture across the school where children are nurtured, valued and can thrive. They are led by a fantastic headteacher, ***, who masterfully engages with the community to promote the wellbeing of everyone connected with the school.

The latest OFSTED inspection and rating of Good with Outstanding Features speaks to the quality of teaching in the school. Teachers work tirelessly and dynamically to provide a rich and engaging curriculum. This is particularly impressive when the social context of the school community is considered; with approximately 65% of children in receipt of pupil premium and similar numbers where English is not the first language spoken at home. There is clearly a great deal of skill and expertise within the staff team, which is sensitive and responsive to the specific needs of the local community. I worry that the sudden closure of the school will result in the abrupt loss of this valuable resource. Once dismantled there's no way to reinstate this ecosystem, it would be lost entirely. The school community is a partnership of people that is rooted in 100 years of history. I really urge careful consideration to be given to the social losses that are incurred as a result of closure.

This thriving school is at the heart one of London's most sought after and affluent neighbourhoods. But my experience of living in DeBeauvoir for the past 6 years has been that this is a very divided area, with extremes of experience in terms of wealth and wellbeing. Increasingly the amenities of the local area are orientated towards the needs of wealthy residents. There are few spaces for children and young people. The school is a much valued community resource for families. I'd argue that the tokenistic closure consultation process has served to further disempower local residents who perhaps already feel marginalised and neglected in local planning decisions. The decision of the council to close the school will have a social impact beyond the disruption of those children who are currently being educated in the setting.

The school is the only local authority maintained secular school in walking distance of Debeaviour Primary. In a multicultural community of many faiths (and none) a faith school may not be the most appropriate setting for children. There is an argument for retaining Debeaviour primary to reflect the needs of the population it serves.

The school is a one form entry school. This is increasingly rare, but it is right that families are offered the choice of smaller school setting. My child has [SEND] and has thrived in a small familiar setting. * also has *** and knowing that all staff know * and have been trained to support * is invaluable. As a parent of a child with complex needs the individualised support we have received has been greatly appreciated and reduced our reliance on other health and social care services, for which there is an economic argument.

The schools finances are well managed and it is currently operating with a surplus budget. I wonder how this compares to other schools in the borough and if there are schools operating in deficit which are more of a financial burden.

The school estate is well maintained and provides a good environment for children; it benefits from ample outdoor play spaces, which may not be the case for many schools. It is located on a quiet side street with no through traffic, which is beneficial in terms of air quality and children's health. The building is listed and has been in use as a school for over 100 years. It's part of our collective heritage.

My personal experience has been that the school is excellent at managing complex needs. There is a real competency in dealing with challenging health and social issues, and this has been evident during the consultation process with many families sharing personal testimonies of the great work done by the school. I urge the council to think carefully about the loss of this resource in our community. It's hard to quantify the value of this work, but as a health and social care professional I am very aware of the cost of placement breakdown for young people with complex needs. I urge the council to scope the SEND work the school is currently providing and consider carefully how these needs would be met in other settings. I think DeBeauvoir should be recognised as model of good practice and excellence, and this should be considered in the evaluation of which schools are ear marked for closure and merger.

In future think it's important the council reflect on messaging and communications about maintained schools, and offer more support to schools with low pupil numbers to promote their good work and appeal to prospective parents. If pupil numbers follow the trajectory the council is predicting then schools will needs support to recruit new staters and avoid further disruptive closures. There is open criticism of the free school model that has put pressure on pupil numbers, but the council must find ways to compete in the current landscape and appeal to more families.

I think it would be wise for a third party to check the data informing the school closure policy. There is low public confidence in the data interpretation. Many parents are sceptical, and cite examples such as the closure and reopening of hackney schools previously.

I want to raise the point that many children in the DeBeauvoir catchment are Islington residents and will potentially have a preference for relocating to an Islington school, where they will have no priority in terms of waiting lists. Has the council considered how it might support in such cases?

In summary I feel strongly that the closure of DeBeauvoir primary school would be a sad loss for our local community. I feel that the impact of closure will be most keenly felt by children experiencing disadvantage and disability, and those with the broadest shoulders are not being asked to bear impact of this policy. It is disappointing that the consultation process has failed to engage the community in problem solving and left few with hope of being listened to. People feel real distress at the forced loss of something so integral. There are lessons to be learnt should further school closures be necessary in future.

Debeaviour primary offers enormous value as small, inclusive setting. There are intrinsic structural advantages to the estate and a wealth of expertise in the staff team. Children with complex needs really thrive in this very special local school.

All Comments On Consultation Proposals

I understand that the merger proposal is essentially a financial proposal. I am concerned that this very nice little school in a lovely building built in 1852 and Grade 2 listed should be preserved as a school partly because it was purpose built as a school. It is aesthetically pleasing and has a nice small feel for pupils and staff alike. To close it would be a very sad loss not just for the pupils and staff but would affect the whole feel of that corner of Dalston.

The knock on effects for the aesthetics of the area if the building is turned to another use would affect that area of Hackney and the community detrimentally, uglifying the area and removing the 'soul' of a part of Hackney. I feel the proposal is very short sighted and that immediate financial gains (which I understand would be for the Local Education Authority) should be considered to be of far less importance than the above considerations and the long term value for Hackney of the school's preservation.

I understand the council needs to take some action due to decreasing numbers. I think the school proposals are too concentrated around dalston.

I think the proposals do not take the current children in years rec -5 into enough consideration, particularly in terms of parental choice as there will not be enough places in dalston for these years

I think the proposals do not consider the increase of housing and families being proposed with the local dalston plan, they seems dis connected

I think the proposals are adversely affecting lower economic communities and SEND children

I think colvestone school is in a prime central location within dalston to help facilitate spaces and place. As a single form entry it is not as difficult to fill as an entire form

I understand the rationale for the consultation for the closure of schools in Hackney.

My concern is the length of time it has taken to LA to address the problem of falling rolls - it has been clear London, including Hackney, was likely to be put into a difficult position.

Other LAs adjacent to Hackney acted sooner. It is difficult for governors to understand why the timing in Hackney has been so different.

De Beauvoir is now a highly successful school, popular with the local community, with good levels of achievement for all pupils. It is difficult for parents and carers to understand why this has happened to the school.

The well-being of the Headteacher and the school team at this time is so important. -They will continue to provide the best education they can to the children and their families but no-one can underestimate the impact of this process of their well-being. I am not sure there has been sufficient support for staff since the start of the process.

I would like there to be a school in my area when I have children in the future. Im also concerned that Dalston is becoming a place to live for young single people.

I would like to express my serious concern and dismay at the proposals to amalgamate Colvestone school.

Colvestone is a successful, intimate school in a purpose built listed building offering the children of local families a calm and inclusive educational environment in which they can thrive.

Unusually it offers a maintained (ie free) nursery facility in a separate space providing a seamless progression to the main school.

More broadly, the proposals seem to ignore the transformative 'Dalston Plan' which comprises of 600 new homes (including 200 affordable family homes). These would place Colvestone as the school nearest to and best serving the new found needs.

For years Colvestone has shown great energy and commitment to the local community, be it fundraising for deserved improvements to the school, to fighting insensitive developments encroaching on its space.

Far from being threatened with closure it deserves full backing and recognition for the important function it serves in the area. Please reconsider these plans.

All Comments On Consultation Proposals

I would like to register concerns from a SEND perspective about closure/merger of Randall Cremer Primary School and Colvestone Primary School.

Hackney currently has very significant challenges with inclusion of pupils with SEND and with EHCPs in their mainstream settings. Many of our settings leave a lot to be desired in terms of proactive child centred work to include SEND students. This is not just a secondary school issue. As you will know, Hackney specialist settings and ARPs are full, with many many more requests for placements than we have available. We spend an extraordinary amount on out of borough independent settings for this reason.

However, Randal Cremer and Colvestone are in my experience very inclusive and nurturing environments. I am fairly certain children in these settings with SEND are currently doing well, and as such not much on the LA's radar, because their needs are being met there. I am concerned that the proposal has not sufficiently considered both the distress and cost implications of closing our most inclusive primary schools. I think it is likely we will see children come onto our radar, when/if not coping in less inclusive environments, perhaps needing more costly specialist settings. I think this could be avoided by these two schools remaining open, but working with them to expand much needed SEND provision on their sites or as part of their schools. There is an opportunity to build on and expand good practice of SEND provision in mainstream schools here.

I would encourage decision makers to consult further with the EHCP and wider SEND Team, as well as the Re-Integration Unit, as I believe my sentiment is shared amongst SEND and inclusion professionals.

Ofsted says about Randal Cremer:

"Staff and governors share high expectations for their pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are no exception. Leaders work closely with external professionals. Together, they find the best ways to meet pupils' needs. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are also well supported. The partnerships that leaders have formed with families contribute to this work. Pupils' wider development is very important at this school. Pupils learn about life in modern Britain. For example, all pupils took part in a community project with a local organisation. They learned how to celebrate other cultures and faiths".

Ofsted says about Randal Cremer:

Leaders promote equality and tolerance well. I found pupils to be kind and caring towards each other and adults. Pupils who joined the school recently commented on how they received a warm welcome and settled in within a few days. The vast majority of parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that the school is friendly and inclusive. Parents also noted that the school encourages 'a love of learning'. Pupils told me that they enjoy lessons because they are interesting.

Thanks for considering these comments.

Kind Regards,

T: ***

E: ***

I would love to have children in the next few months and this campaign has brought to light what a wonderful school this is. If it closed, I would have to move to a different area as I would like a small school with low pollution levels, and ideally, not have to walk down the A10 for 10 minutes. Colvestone is perfectly situated for our future family! Please keep it open!!! Thanks for listening.

I would strongly encourage you to seriously consider all options and think laterally and with an eye to the long term before making any decision on what might be done with school buildings if schools do close or amalgamate with other schools.

Outside of my role as a governor in a hackney primary school, I work in *** and I advise ***** in the urban context.

Falling school roles and forced school closures can be an indicator of systematic problems making cities hostile to families and children. Hackney and London are not alone in this struggle and there are innovative and valuable examples to learn from in the international context especially around municipalities and councils retaining real estate even if schools close, to be repurposed to generate income for the municipality and also to be held for use in the event that populations swing upwards in the future.

The loss of the existing schools and school communities is challenging and emotional for all involved. The loss of these buildings forever I believe could be a strategic error on the part of the councils which will have further negative impacts on the viability of cities for children and families in the short medium and long term.

I'm not understanding why De Bevoivre can not merge into Colvestone which is a central hub for the market and Dalston

I'm worried about the pressure the closure of De Beauvoir Primary will put on other schools in the area. Our most local school (Hackney New) has no outside space so it is important to us to have other options with outside space when our son starts reception in Sept 2025. We're worried if De Beauvoir Primary closes that not only takes that option away but possibly others as the other schools will be full with children who would have gone there.

If consolidation needs to happen, OK. But to close four schools is disruptive, surely more can be merged. De Beauvoir primary has been improving their standards of teaching and it will be a loss to the local community to see that school close. Especially those in close proximity to the school

If numbers on enrolment are dropping, it makes sense to close the schools

All Comments On Consultation Proposals

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<p>If schools close it will make it progressively more difficult for people to bring up a family in the borough. This combined with lack of affordable housing means that people have to move out of the borough to do so, which seems like it will have a negative impact on being a borough of only transitory people without people making roots in the places where they live.</p>
<p>If the school closes I fear for the building, which is both a purpose built school but also a community asset, may be sold off to private owners at a loss to the community.</p>
<p>This will also have an impact on the travel distances for pupils and may encourage people to drive to school which has a negative impact.</p>
<p>If the Council closes Colvestone primary school, the impact on the local community will be devastating.</p>
<p>A unique and historic primary school will disappear, taking with it the Council's chance to use the school as the central part of its ambitious plans for the local area. These plans include affordable housing developments, a new 21st century street, improved transport plus wider activities regarding jobs and culture.</p>
<p>The school is academically strong - as proved by my son's excellent Sats results last week - and now led by an excellent team in partnership with the Blossom Federation. Despite the financial deficit, the school is financially viable due to efficient use of resources, and the school would move from strength to strength if given a chance.</p>
<p>We have received huge support for our campaign including 2,100 signatures on our petition, press stories from across London, UK and Europe, but critically a real sadness from local people about the short-sighted actions of Hackney Council.</p>
<p>Finally, I believe that writing off Colvestone's deficit, and paying for security costs whilst the school is mothballed, is an egregious use of public funds.</p>
<p>If we do not close / merge schools even though there are less children, everyone else in Hackney schools will need to pay for it as the £30 million will have to be found somewhere else in the education budget. I strongly support the mergers and closures.</p>
<p>If you are closing the school the market is finished and we will lose our business</p>
<p>If you close the school, we will lose out on the business of parents and children of the Colvestone school coming to the shop - this will have a huge impact on our business</p>
<p>Ill considered and damaging for the children.</p>
<p>Ill-thought! Think about the pupils mental state following such sudden change. Kids cannot manage change generally so for it to be so rushed - why?</p>
<p>Important school for our family. Have been in the area for 12 years. Another poor judgement from Hackney council</p>
<p>Instead of closing long standing primary schools Hackney council and residents should be fighting the creation of yet more schools set up outside council control. These establishments creating yet more tiers within the education system, with many of the children in most need having yet more resource taken from them and their families.</p>
<p>It feels that the only consideration for this proposal is to do with pupil numbers and funding. These are crucial, of course, schools have to be viable, but they're not the only factors. I haven't seen evidence that enough consideration is being given to providing a suitable learning environment for children, especially those who learn best in a smaller, calmer environment.</p>
<p>It's obvious that some schools in Hackney will have to close, but please consider what makes Colvestone special and unique - it is different from the other schools in the proposal and could be supported as a real asset to Hackney Education, especially in support of children with SEND and neuro-diversity.</p>
<p>The proposal is in response to falling family numbers in Hackney but I believe that closing a school like Colvestone will further push families out of the borough. Parents want choice, smaller school options, non-denominational options, and these are being severely reduced.</p>
<p>Finally, Colvestone is in a different position from the other schools in scope because it has recently entered a partnership with the Blossom Federation which is having an incredibly positive impact. It's not right to judge the school on the falling numbers of the last few years, we parents really believe Blossom Federation will make Colvestone a really desirable school for future families.</p>
<p>It is a good school. I don't want it to close. They help me with my son.</p>
<p>It is a historic school, providing an important service to the community. I live on Colvestone Crescent with a new born infant and it is concerning that this consultation did not reach my via the council but the campaign. The proposal ignores the need for local schools serving the educational needs of local children. The dedicated staff and community was evident at a recent event I attended and this type of school community and success should be celebrated rather than shut down.</p>
<p>It is a historical institution, a centre of the local community and should be developed as such with Dalston and Ridley Road.</p>
<p>Please</p>
<p>It is a wonderful school with so much space. An asset to it it's surrounding neighbourhood and it would be a tragedy if it closed...</p>
<p>It is crucial to have a small school in the area.</p>
<p>Colvestone has had new management and there was no financial deficit this year.</p>
<p>We are a crucial element in the council 21st century street plan.</p>
<p>We don't want to merge with a school where the pollution is 40percent higher - closing Colvestone in light of this would be an abuse to young lungs and a step backwards as congestion would be increased on A10.</p>

All Comments On Consultation Proposals

It is important for the community as well as the benefit of local children to keep Colvestone School open.
It is important to keep many smaller schools actors the Borough
It is not in the best intrest of the children and community.
It is out of consideration
It is really sad to hear the is school closing. For our children, it is the best school and very close to our home. It is hard to hear from the council. The school teachers are very active in teaching our children's future. I hope they think again about the proposals. I hope the plan won't go through. We need a better future for our kids. Please give our children's future the best.
It is unfair and unjust to be closing an historic and community school. This school has served the local community and more for years, generations have attended De Beauvoir, friendships have been started, children have grown. No school can or will give children what De Beauvoir and its staff can, and to shut it is a CRIME. I hope the building isn't given to a free school when it does. No MORE FREE / INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS e. G. , Hally House etc.
It is unfair to the parent and students. Having a small number of students jn a class is good. They must be other ways jn which tye school could be use for to raise money.
It is very bad, we need the school to be open - we will lose on all customers/parents taking their kids to school. I will lose business - kids' parents are the market's customers - you are killing the businesses.
It is very distressing to hear of the proposed closure of De Beauvoir. This school has been part of the community for decades and a place I feel safe for my child to attend. My child has developed friendships, confidence, resilience, but more than that, knowledge and a vast amount at this school. Closing it down would cause such upheaval and distress for my child, myself and many families.
It is very important to retain small primary schools. Some children will be much better suited and have much better learning outcomes from a smaller primary school. Colvestone has had a brilliant track record in the past and we should not lose this choice for parents and children in the area. Dalston has been a brilliant place to raise a young family; we should be fighting to retain the family feel of the area, not adding to transient younger professionals moving into the area.
I understand that there has been a change in leadership and management structure, this is not mentioned in the report. Has this been taken into consideration at all? The school should be given a chance to improve enrolment numbers.
In addition, I am acutely aware that there has been great interest in building development in the adjacent lot, which has not been successful due to covenants. The local area is under great pressure due to redevelopment and must not lose vital community services.
This decision has a huge impact on the area, and will likely shape the character of the neighbourhood. Please save Colvestone and let the more timid children have a chance to thrive in a smaller, close knit school.

It is with a heavy heart I am responding to this Informal consultation addressing the closure of one of the best schools Hackney Council could have asked for; De Beauvoir primary school. I do wonder if filling this form is merely a process with no clear facts that it would be read and understood. This is because I cannot believe we are even at this stage considering the comments and issues raised at the first stage and the lack of answers and explanations provided by Hackney Council.

First Stage:

The first stage process was an absolute nightmare and scaremonger approach. It seemed the council attendants either rehearsed their speeches or was wobbling their way through it. Many questions were not answered with great certainty, clarity and precision which makes me wonder if this decision has been properly thought through. For example, whether our children are guaranteed places to their chosen school if the school is closed. Children with special needs, where do they go given the competition already to get into those schools? Why could they not seek an open consultation to take to cabinet to address the issue of all these free school openings in the borough which they have no control over and which also has a knock-on effect on the closure of this school? I do not recall the free school issue being factored in as a reason for the low population in state funded schools like De Beauvoir. Every answer was a repeat of what was rehearsed. Hackney Council Head of Education who has brought us here expressed sympathy at the emotions displayed in the meeting as though he could not do anything more than proceed with the decision to close. There was no real sense they would also do their best to save the school or work with us to achieve a better outcome.

Informal Consultation Stage:

The decision made is premature and based on graphs and charts by a prediction which we have no resources to independently challenge or have re-assessed. To this date, I do not know how it can be predicted that the birth rate is going to drop. Our children's future are based on predictions. Predictions such as the cost of living crisis. A crisis which, if put into perspective, is now even more devastating because of the Council's premature approach to close this school. Life is hard enough as it is, so to be adding further pressure on children and families at this difficult time is harsh, immoral, unreasonable and irrational. I look at mortgage rates increasing and, despite the impact, many are finding ways to cope and are not seeking the easier option to sell. Why is the council trying to find an easier option only to make their job easier at the expense of parents and children. Children who are in a safe, secured and currently within their yearly budget.

The Council has no regard to the BEST INTEREST OF CHILDREN. They talk about predictions for years down the line. Predictions that can change. The things I feel are not factored in to this decision are as follows:

1. Predictions can change so we are not dealing with a real time issue that justifies this decision
2. The issue of too many free schools
3. The fact that the school ratings have changed from 2018 to Good in 2022. The increase in pupils changing also as the ratings changing also as the ratings changed. There may have been a drop, as per the graphs which presented what ratings fell. This was not factored in. The school has not been given a chance having worked so hard to improve over the years and during a difficult time such as COVID to now being recognised as a Good school. The school has not been recognised by Hackney Council for its strengths, otherwise they would not have put this school on the list for closure.
4. The fact that there is a cost of living crisis and having to deal with a school at this time is ill-thought and self fulfilling to the Council members who joined together to make this decision to start this process.
5. Some parents arguing that the school building is also a building which should be classified as a landmark building.
6. There is no clear answer on what will become of this building when closed. Are our children being moved out so another financial stream is created whilst our children suffer the loss of a good school; a school with quality and supportive teachers. A school that is safe.
7. The fact that Hackney in general pushes people out the borough through, for example, their own housing schemes, increase in rental properties, lack of initiative to encourage people to come and live in the borough, road closures where many consultation processes showed more voted "no" to closure than "yes" but they still proceeded. They have not factored in their own conduct as a borough into this decision to close De Beauvoir. Why do the children have to suffer?

Solutions:

I strongly endorse that De Beauvoir remains open. The following things could be done by Hackney Council to help:

1. Request for an increase in budget if so needed
2. Merge the school with another school they are looking to close, even on a temporary basis to give the children from both schools the benefit to continue to get the support from teachers and staff they are used to. The merging of the schools could take a temporary approach of 3 to 5 years within their prediction graph to see how it works. Hackney Council made excuses to merge when the question was put forward and made no excuses for closure. They talk about the issue of creating a strong school. You are currently tearing apart a strong school.
3. Merge curriculum or areas from other schools where the budgets will be affected the most and there is an excess or unused amount. This way we can keep all the schools alive rather than trying to maximise on every school budget.

Overall, the decision is premature, irrational and a cowardice approach. The decision does not show children are at the heart of this borough. The decision shows lack of thought and certainty. The best interest of children should remain paramount.

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<p>It makes no sense to close this school. It was second on our list for our [child] (we went with a closer school otherwise would have chosen Colvestone) because we came away with the impression that the quality of care and education our child would get there would be outstanding. All the children looked happy. The teachers, including the new head who we found to be very impressive, were clearly passionate about and committed to giving their students a love for learning. I know ex students who loved it there. The school is central to the Dalston community and its closure would be devastating in many ways.</p> <p>Then you look at the data - it's not a cheap option closing a school (the Council estimate well over a million pounds, plus £250-300,000 each year to maintain closed buildings). The school is very strong academically, has hugely beneficial class sizes for its diverse pupils and is running a surplus - how can closing it make financial sense?</p> <p>- the Council say that it can re-open the school if demand increases in the future, but if it does this under current legislation all new schools are automatically Free Schools - run for profit by the private sector, completely outside local government control. Hackney would lose control of the school and the land (and will have spent a huge amount of money in the process). This is hugely concerning.</p> <p>What I also find very concerning is that with the threatened closure of De Beauvoir Primary, closure of Colvestone will leave Dalston without a single form entry, non-faith or Academy/Free school within a mile of the Colvestone site.</p> <p>Seeing the smaller class sizes as a reason for closure is short sighted - small schools are great for kids with diverse needs - Colvestone has an amazing track record of producing great results for kids of all abilities (the school is particularly strong in integrating children with SEN - special educational needs or learning support plans - into the wider community to the advantage all pupils). The small community context is key to this. A single form school enables kids to be supported by their peers across age groups and produces a real sense of belonging and pride in their community.</p> <p>There is so much building going on in Dalston and Colvestone is the closest Primary School to all the main Dalston Plan homebuilding sites (200 of which will be affordable family housing). As a small school it only needs a small number of kids per year to be full - it makes absolutely no sense to close it now when it already occupies a strong position at the heart of the Dalston community, providing a diverse range of students with exceptional care and can serve an increase in students in time to come.</p> <p>I strongly oppose the closure of the school and urge you to see the opportunity in keeping it open and serving the Dalston community.</p> <p>It seems that it is only certain parents who fundamentally prefer the aesthetics of the school that are insisting on it remaining open. This preference is to the detriment of properly funded education for the pupils. The council is not to blame for the way in which education is funded, and it is not within the Council's gift to modify the national system of education funding. Wishing that it were different does not address the present problem. Amalgamation of the schools will deliver better outcomes.</p>
<p>it seems unfair to disrupt so many children, parent and carer's lives by doing this, especially when new developments are constantly going up in the area and there will likely be more demand in future.</p> <p>Merging schools will increase journey times for many, and will force parents to send their children to a school based on the busy A10.</p> <p>Limiting parents' choice of non-religious schools is particularly damaging, no-one should be forced to send their child to a faith school simply because there is no other option. It is key to keep state-run schools open, in contrast to the academies etc nearby.</p> <p>It will have a seriously detrimental impact on the local community and the children who live in these neighbourhoods. Things haven't been this hard on families for years, and the council and education authorities have a duty to deliver local, high quality and accessible education for all, especially given how far behind they have fallen in recent years. Closing these schools will be yet another failure on the part of the Learning Trust, another casualty of its multi-decade long experiment on our children's educations.</p> <p>It will increase the class size of the nearest school.</p> <p>It would be a disaster to the local community if Colverstone Primary School was moved or closed. The school brings much needed community life to the area and supports so many of my friends and family in the area.</p> <p>It's a single form entry school which is close and serves the local community and is deeply loved . It's a pity</p> <p>It's very sad that local schools have to consider closing. It's another unwanted impact from the cost of living crisis and the environment from the last few years of life. I live by De Beauvoir primary school and it's a pillar of the areas community. It'll affect the community feel if it were to close. What will happen to the school buildings and land if it were to close? Will the council keep ownership and use the space for another positive community benefit? It would be a shame if the space went to waste or to private development.</p> <p>Its a tragedy that hackney is so underfunded that this may happen I think we should demand funding from government rather than closing schools</p> <p>It's an incredibly bad idea.</p> <p>Closing Colvestone means removing a key part of the community that many people rely on, and that cares greatly about their pupils wellbeing and provides incredible support for those with special needs. Furthermore, due to the small size of the school it's very close-knit which allows for tight bonds to be created between different students and the teachers.</p> <p>Also, I have only good things to say about my time Colvestone and while talking to friends I've made in secondary school (who went to different primary schools) I realised this wasn't a common experience. Almost all the people I know constantly complain about their primary schools and talk about how horrible they were, but this is the complete opposite of most people's experiences at Colvestone.</p> <p>It's incredibly disheartening given all the hard work staff have put in over the years to come to such an abrupt end. As a teacher (one of many!) that has started their career at DeBeauvoir as an *** and now in a leadership role, it is strange to think that I will never be able to return to the place that gave me the foundations in my career.</p> <p>My wellbeing is deteriorating as I have to constantly readjust and support my children as their friends leave randomly week by week. The anxiety in my class of *** year olds is completely unfair and out of their control. As someone who has had their own primary school from childhood close down, I know how saddening it is to walk past a derelict building thinking of the memories it once held. Children deserve to feel safe and considered in every part of their education. Right now it doesn't seem like Hackney has considered the children at all.</p>

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<p>I've worked at De Beauvoir and Randal Cremer for *** years. While I understand why De Beauvoir has to close, I struggle to understand why Randal Cremer also needs shutting down. I know both schools really well: staff, families and pupils. These schools share a similar ethos and demographics. Why can't De Beauvoir be amalgamated with Randal Cremer? Randal Cremer has enough space to accommodate all De Beauvoir children.</p> <p>Just make sure enough funding is in place for teachers and cover any additional needs kids might present.</p> <p>Keep the school</p>
<p>less than 10 years ago there were not enough school places - surely this could be cyclical so very soon there could be a shortage of places again</p> <p>Loss of public amenity, costly. I do not want schools to re-open in the future as private as too costly for residents and I do not want any faith based schools</p> <p>Major disruption for the children involved</p> <p>Making sudden changes to a child's school can have a negative impact. Children settle and become familiar with their surroundings. I didn't change my [child]'s school even when I moved home only to be told the school will be merging. This was disappointing. I feel Nightingale will not be able to handle the extra children and will also not be able to employ everyone to come over either. Their after school clubs do not tie in well with working single mums as well and it will cause a real disruption to my work as well as my son's schedule. I do not see the point of this merge and can only see Nightingale being overwhelmed by the extra students.</p> <p>Already a class of 30 students to one teacher is not beneficial and to increase that by merging is jeopardising children's best chance at learning properly.</p> <p>Many of us picked Nightingale because it's a small school. As a parent of a SEN child, I am worried how a busier school will affect * day. I also hope that the kids won't be torn apart as they a lovely little community with many friendships already formed.</p> <p>Most of the parents who are collecting their kids from Colvestone stop in my shop and if you close the school, I will lose business. They are part of the Ridly Road community and you are killing the community.</p> <p>Moving children after settling them in is highly disruptive to their education. A small village-like school in the heart of the city should be praised and supported, not made bigger. Not every child thrives in a big school. Often these are the most vulnerable SEN children who will excel in a quieter, one form entry setting. These are children who need stability, not the disruption of closing their school and putting them into a noisy strange environment</p> <p>My [SEND] *** attends Colveston School and has thrived in this diverse school community. It makes no sense to move the school out of the area and will increase stress to the pupils and parents with the increased journey times traffic and congestion added to the local roads and the adverse effect of air pollution. The new local developments in housing will have MORE children requiring a local school not fewer school places. The impact on local schools increased classroom sizes will have detrimental effect on educational standards for years to come. I hope the council will reconsider the proposal and realise the terrible impact on the community there action will have</p> <p>My child and lots across Hackney who started their journey through education in September ***, have had to face an unprecedented impact on the nature of their learning. There are reports currently emerging about the severe impact the pandemic had on the mental health and well being of many, many children. School is meant to be a place that offers learning, security and safety; it can be an anchor for a child in otherwise difficult circumstances. Colvestone Primary School excels in creating a community among its pupils. The power this can have is impressive and the size of the school lends itself to this development.</p> <p>The merger is a simple exercise in statistics, which can be manipulated to whatever the user of them wants. In-takes to schools across the country have been affected by the last 3 years. Yet within Hackney and specifically around Dalston there has been a noticeable upturn in the birth rate (the lockdown babies). What are the provisions for them in 3 years or less?</p> <p>Disruption to education is what many children have known. You actually have an opportunity to secure their future and development, not further disrupted it. Colvestone Primary School is part of a community, it is not just some school. I have spoken to people who went to Colvestone Primary School in the 1970s and 1980s, they have nothing but praise for it, and the part it played in their lives and their communities. This school has history and needs to remain as it is, central to the community.</p> <p>My child has SEN and needs to be educated in a small, calm school. It has taken * three years to settle at Colvestone, so any disruption to her routine will harm * health and education. * also suffers from [health conditions], so both will be exacerbated if transferred to Princess May.</p> <p>My child went to Concessions from year 2 to year 6. * benefited hugely from the supportive environment that could be delivered by the single form entry structure after moving from a much larger school. The loss of secular single form entry schools puts at risk the well-being of children who are challenged by the pressures of larger schools.</p> <p>My children now aged *** and *** both attended Colvestone Primary from nursery to Year 6. They received an excellent education in a caring and nurturing environment. Both of my children were diagnosed with ASD and they benefitted greatly from the small one form entry school. I believe that it is short sighted to propose the school closure, in essence robbing the local children, especially those with SEN, of a local school which has a long record of offering excellent and inclusive education.</p> <p>My children went to Colvestone before and I have a lot of customers whose children go there - I will lose business if the school closes.</p> <p>My children went to Millfields Community School, an extremely overcrowded school with very little outdoor space. That should not be the norm and had they gone to a school with fewer pupils and more space, their primary school education would have been much better and all children would have been safer and much better looked after. Merging these schools is an ignorant way of solving a primarily financial problem. Why not move some of the children from other schools to balance student numbers? Had these been private schools, these student numbers would be the norm. But we can't allow that to be the case for children who can't afford that, we must put them in overcrowded and at times, unsafe spaces.</p> <p>My concern is that no information was given about birth rates projections for the future and the level of confidence the council have that numbers will not rise again in the foreseeable future that would impact on these proposals.</p> <p>I am also concerned about the loss of publicly provided nursery places, I do feel this is a loss to the local area and that alternative provision will not have the same outcomes for the children that they currently get being on the same site</p>

My [child] goes to Colvestone Primary School which, in the proposal, is planned to close. It is proposed that all pupils be moved to Princess May Primary School however, this is not a school that I would choose for * to attend and was not one of my choices when applying for a primary school in the borough of Hackney. There are a number of reasons for this:

1. Colvestone Primary School is a small, welcoming, creative school with a unique feel and benefits hugely from single form entry in terms of the focus and attention this afford the teachers and pupils. In conversations with other parents the reasons they repeatedly give for choosing Colvestone Primary are exactly these and are the reasons that I chose Colvestone. As a smaller single form entry school I believe this affords more individual attention and a more nurturing environment which has benefitted her development and learning. Choosing a single form entry school was a deliberate choice based on the experience we wanted for our [child] and the closure of Colvestone Primary School would unfairly remove parental choice for this form of school in the borough.

2. Colvestone Primary School is in a sheltered but stimulating area of Dalston which provides distance from traffic pollution but exposes our [child] to the bustling market life of Ridley Road Market and all the community and history that accompanies it. The pollution levels at Princess May Primary were 40% higher than Colvestone Primary School in 2021 due to the extremely busy main road that the school sits on. With 70% of eligible roads in Hackney becoming LTNs and the councils drive to promote LTNs in the borough the diverted volume of traffic is only going to increase this pollution. Also, the risks and dangers of having my child arriving and leaving a school on such a busy main road are not risks and dangers I would ever choose.

3. Colvestone Primary School is not a Free School, a Faith School or an Academy. I chose Colvestone Primary School because I believe in the Council State-run school model. I am bewildered as to why so many Free Schools and Academies have been granted permission to open with no consideration for the possibility of fluctuating pupil numbers. Why was there a lack of focus on the healthy maintenance of th existing schools in the borough?

My [child] has had a fair amount of disruption in * Education already with, COVID, redundancies and a change of Head teacher. The council's proposal to close the school is another forced disruption which is not taking * education and well being as its priority.

The consultation has listed 6 out of 38 primary schools in the borough to merge or close but Paul Senior, in a consultation meeting on the 27th of June, said this is only the first stage of the 'process' and more schools, including faith and free schools, would be consulted in the next stages. If Princess May Primary is included in the next stage of closures this will mean more disruption to my [child]'s education which, as a parent, makes me question whether the well being of my [child] and * education is a priority to Hackney Council and whether the borough is the best choice for raising a family.

This brings me as to why the consultation has chosen Colvestone Primary School as a school that needs to close. The reasons for placing Colvestone Primary School on the list of potential closures is unclear and has been unclear from the start. In a number of meetings with Paul Senior the only reason given was that Princess May Primary is a larger building with a two form entry so can accommodate more children. Again, this does not imply that the children are at the forefront of this 'process' and purely financial and logistical factors are at the forefront. I am aware that all schools in the borough are facing financial challenges due to falling child numbers but Colvestone Primary, under it's new Blossom Foundation partnership and with proactive help from Hackney Council, has started to reverse its financial situation and is on a path to recovery. To close it now would remove the schools chance to complete its journey of recovery and remove its potential to become a strong and flourishing asset to the borough.

I feel that the consultation 'process' as a whole has been completely unfair to the six schools thrown into the melting pot with no solid reasons given as to why they have been singled out. If this was a fair and considerate consultation all schools in the borough would have been included in the 'process' from day one. The six school chosen are now having to fill their enrolment quotas for the coming school year with the shadow of closure hanging heavy above them. This is obviously going to have a massive negative influence on their success. If this was a 'consultation' I do not understand why Hackney Council would put a small number of the boroughs schools at such a debilitating disadvantage.

There have been discussion as to what will happen to the Colvestone School building when it is closed as an educational establishment. The council has stated that it will not be sold and will be kept as a 'closed school' with the potential to reopen. Surely the cost of moth-balling a historic building, already undergoing remedial work, will be considerable. Could we not forecast the potential spending of these funds into the existing and active School? In the duration of this consultation I have not heard of any creative 'outside the box' suggestions to counteract the closure of Colvestone Primary School, only that numbers of children in the borough have fallen and so we must close schools. This also highlights a bigger question as to where Hackney Councils sees the future of the borough and whether this included the a thriving family friendly, diverse and desirable borough with children at its heart.

I am grateful for the chance to put forward my concerns and objections to the closure of Colvestone Primary School as my [child] loves attending the school and the closure would leave a gaping and irreversible hole in the community of Dalston. We, as a family, have chosen to make Hackney our home and I hope the council will listen to ours and all the voices put forward to find a way to prove that children in the borough are its foremost priority.

My [child] has been going to Colvestone for two years, I have already moved * from a different school. * loves Colvestone, * loves * teachers and loves * friends. * would be devastated. Colvestone is also perfect for me to get to work, The breakfast club starts at 7:45 and I head straight to work. Getting to work from Princess May would add more pressure and probably make me late. Princess May also has higher air pollution due to the school being so close to the main road.

My [child] started at Baden Powell primary school when * was 3 years old and * loved the school and still loves it. Please do not close the Baden Powell primary school. All the children have a lot of memories and it is not fair.

My daughters have attended Colvestone school and now my grand[child] is attending this school. * is excelling educationally and because it is one class for each year, * has made friends in each year including year 6, while * is only in year ***.

My grandchildren go to this school and there future is important

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<p>My [child] attends Baden Powell Primary School, the same school I went to as a child. The close nit nature of the school has allowed children to thrive in a comfortable friendly environment. This is reflected by a consistent year on year Ofsted rating of "Good". Nightingale Primary School cannot make such claim. I'm concerned that the increased class sizes and an overall bigger school will destroy the close teacher child relationships found at Baden Powell, and have a detrimental affect on my [child]'s education.</p>
<p>The schools in the current wave of mergers proposed by Hackney Education have a total deficit of £30M. Baden Powell Primary School contributes approximately £300k to this deficit. This represents 1% of the total deficit. How will this help reduce the deficit in real terms? Taking this further, how does Baden Powell's deficit (£300k) compare to other expenses within Hackney Education and the wider council. e.g. Stationary, coffee machines ?</p>
<p>This has the makings of landgrab. i.e. Hackney council are very aware of the increasing land value in the area, and closing Baden Powell is an easy way to sell off valuable land to the next property developer waiting in line. There are already a number of new builds are under construction in the area. The likelihood of young families occupying these units is rather high, thus there's likely to be increased demand for school places within close proximity.</p>
<p>When the performance of Baden Powell is compared to that of Nightingale Primary School, it's clear that Baden Powell is a better performing school year in year out, and that the proposed merger has the potential to reduce or even undo all the hard work that has been done over recent years to get Baden Powell Primary School reaching the high standards it does today. With pupils routinely being exemplars of the school logo "Reaching for the Stars!"</p>
<p>My [child] has [SEND] and will find it difficult to communicate and interact with other school's staff, children and environment.</p>
<p>My [child] is an ex pupil of Colvestone and I have had a lot of dealings with DeBeauvoir School. I feel that the closure of both of these schools would have a real detrimental effect on the area. In an area full of Academies and religious schools both of these schools offer an important alternative and are integral parts of the community. Closing them will only encourage more families to move away from the area and further narrow Hackney's demographic. If "The Dalston Plan" goes ahead there will also be another 600 new homes (200 affordable) in the area and will undoubtedly mean a surge in demand for primary school places. Removing Colvestone school would also seem a bad idea in light of the plan to turn Colvestone Crescent into a play street. Both schools have an important role in the community and closing them, along with the pubs and independent businesses that I see go each month will only create space for more Starbucks and the like which recently appeared on the high street. Please don't let Dalston lose it's identity for the sake of short term financial gain.</p>
<p>My [child] went to Colvestone Primary school for 8 years (* started at the nursery). It felt so good to have this small local school in the heart of the community. London is a big and busy city as it is so small local schools I think is really important to keep the children feeling safe and grounded. My [child] had a great time at Colvestone - please don't close it! I think we need small local schools in big busy towns. Kind regards ***</p>
<p>My wife and I are expecting our first child and live on Colvestone Crescent and would like to be able to send our child to the school. The area also suffers from significant anti-social behaviour issues and if the school is left vacant these will only increase. The school is the heart of the community and we are very much opposed to the proposal to close it /merge with the nearby school.</p>
<p>Nightingale is already a relatively small school, which also benefits from a distinctive admissions process that prioritises children in care and those subject to a child protection plan. There is a delicate ecosystem and one that will be particularly destabilised by the sudden arrival of so many additional pupils. Proximity should be just one measure of the suitability of a potential merger.</p>
<p>Nightingale school does not have the space to accommodate a merger. It may be possible but the quality of learning and the children's experience will not be fulfilling,</p>
<p>Also I don't think merging the school solves the financial difficulties but merely shifts the problem and slows it down for the time being.</p>
<p>Nightingale school is currently in between residential homes. I believe by amalgamating 2 schools it will become more busier, noisier and the quality given to each child would be reduced. Class sizes should be reduced. I feel we are heading towards Prison like schooling. Condensing kids in a small space.</p>
<p>No short sighted children join mid year overwhelmed school in two years</p>
<p>Not only are you taking away our school, you are taking away our family. My children have progressed so much since they have been here.</p>
<p>On one hand, I understand the proposals as a logical step forward. Baden Powell is an older building in disrepair and it makes sense that we would move into the newer and better equipped Nightingale premises. I have been anticipating this change for sometime and, if it's handled well, I think it could be beneficial for the children and families we work with. On the other hand, schools are important and complex institutions which become an integral part of the community they serve. Schools can be very different. I chose to work at Baden Powell because I liked the atmosphere and ethos of the school. It is a friendly place with happy students and staff. I like that it is a small school with staff who have worked there for many years - it has a close, traditional, family-like feel. I respect the senior leadership there and I am grateful for the way they have supported me to grow and develop professionally. In my role, I have worked hard to implement changes to continually improve and refine the way we do things to make sure the teaching and learning is first class. It would be a shame to lose all of this with the move to Nightingale - it needs to be recognised with the amalgamation that Baden Powell has a lot to offer and everything possible should be done to preserve the soul of the school within the new premises. To do this, I would like to see all Baden Powell children offered a place at Nightingale. I would like all Baden Powell staff offered a job at Nightingale to ensure a smooth transition for the children. I would like there to be extensive collaborative work between Baden Powell and Nightingale in the lead up to September 2024 to ensure that this is a proper amalgamation of systems & ethos and not just Baden Powell becoming taken over by Nightingale. I would like the leadership at Baden Powell to move with us as the leadership in Nightingale. I am not against change and progress, but I think it would be a shame to lose what we have at Baden Powell. If I am offered a position at Nightingale, I need to be sure my skills and experience are recognised. I would want my job, including leadership responsibilities, to be the same or equivalent with opportunities for progression. I would not be satisfied if Baden Powell staff were put second to Nightingale staff. If I am not to be offered a role at Nightingale, I would need to know as soon as possible so I can make plans for my future. I love teaching in Hackney and have worked in the borough my whole career, working passionately to help the amazing children and families in our community. I hope I can continue to do what I love in the Nightingale premises and I believe it will be a terrible shame if Hackney loses experienced and motivated staff (the best!) on the basis of this move. I would also like to see the former Baden Powell site used for something that would benefit the community.</p>
<p>Other schools will be overwhelming and cause alot problems</p>

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<p>Our children is our future in the Country. Education make the change the country and strong our children future. In my opinion continue carry on the the study same School where children and parents fill comfortable and safe , stress free and friendly environment's most important to grow our children .</p> <p>Thanks</p>
<p>Our group of parents has worked tirelessly to articulate the many reasons why closing Colvestone is a bad idea, and to rest their arguments on data, numbers, facts. Something the Council has not done. All of the actual consultation has been done by ourselves, meaning noone from the Council has engaged with the community or even tried to listen to market traders, stakeholders, residents, parents and neighbours. It is hard not to despair at the lack of response we have been getting, at how badly the documents from the council are prepared, at the lack of data, research, or even just answers, at the fact that there is no discernible scope of the actual consultation that has been outlined, and how much this process reveals a broken democratic process and a disfunctional education department. The only financial modelling has been provided by the school itself and our group of parents, and as it emerges that clearly closing the school will be more expensive to the tax payer than keeping it open one wonders if anyone really cares what a decision like this one is being based on.</p> <p>But who do you think these parents are? they are the same people who have been voting and canvassing for labour and there is no way to hide how unpopular and damaging this proposal is for Hackney education, but also for our local representation as a whole. I just vainly hope we will not come out of this process completely cynical and against you, and that our kids will regain some sense of hope and agency in spite of this. Our children do not think you are listening, and I doubt this "consultation" documents will even be read.</p>
<p>Ourselves and many other families from Colvestone have absolutely NO intention of allowing our children to attend Princess may school. Colvestone only needs a handful of students more to become fully functioning allowing us to recoup the historical debt. It is shortsighted to close this school having also approved a development of 600 homes in such close proximity.</p>
<p>Closing it is an ill-considered and damaging move for children and parents in Dalston. As one of the only non-religious, non-academy, non-fee schools in the area, it should remain open to offer families the choice to be part of a small, close-knit community school.</p>
<p>further more, the closure of Colvestone will cost the council a huge amount of money, which I believe to be a miss use of tax payers money that I strongly object to.</p>
<p>Overcrowding of pupils, overload of teachers with workloads, inadequate facilities</p>
<p>People won't come to my shop if they close the school. This will be the end of the market and my business</p>
<p>Pleaae do not go forward with any closures. It is counterproductive and benefits no child.</p>
<p>School classes and schools are already overwhelmed. Closing the school will simply make the problem worse.</p>
<p>I urge you to listen to psrents and think aboutbthe children's education as your own child's education</p>
<p>Please don't close local authority schools in the hearts of already squeezed inner London communities.</p>
<p>Please keep Colvestone open. We would like to move from De Beauvoir Primary to Colvestone. It would be a good transition as they are small and it has a great community. The Save Colvestone Campaign showed us that it would be a great option. I heard the Blossom Federation did a great job to keep it in credit this year. It has just had a fresh start and has good potential.</p>
<p>Please save the Colvestone School as it is heart of community</p>
<p>Post brexit and pandemic naturally There's less pupils in primary schools but closing or merging them isn't the best solution-smaller classes and less staff in existing schools could work better</p>
<p>Pretty simple really. Build more affordable housing so families can afford to stay and live in London. What a dystopian fucking country this is.</p>
<p>primarily, the plan has no regard for the value of the school to the local community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - closing a school is very expensive (the Council estimate well over a million pounds, plus £250-300,000 each year to maintain closed buildings). The school is very strong academically, has hugely beneficial class sizes for its diverse pupils and is running a surplus - how can closing it make financial sense? - the Council say that it can re-open the school if demand increases in the future, but if it does this under current legislation all new schools are automatically Free Schools - run for profit by the private sector, completely outside local government control. Hackney would lose control of the school and the land (and will have spent a huge amount of money in the process). - the site has multiple protections - two Grade 2 listings and an outdoor classroom / playground that is an Asset of Community Value - it is not a building easily repurposed but it is an excellent building purpose-built as a school. We also strongly suspect that it has protected educational use and are searching for the deeds. - with the threatened closure of De Beauvoir Primary, closure of Colvestone will leave Dalston without a single form entry, non-faith or Academy/Free school within a mile of the Colvestone site. - small schools are great for kids with diverse needs - Colvestone has an amazing track record of producing great results for kids of all abilities (the school is particularly strong in integrating children with SEN - special educational needs or learning support plans - into the wider community to the advantage all pupils). The small community context is key to this. A single form school enables kids to be supported by their peers across age groups and produces a real sense of belonging and pride in their community. - Colvestone is the closest Primary School to all the main Dalston Plan homebuilding sites (200 of which will be affordable family housing). As a small school it only needs a small number of kids per year to be full - closing it would be incredibly shortsighted (the council should consider demand for places in the mid- to long-term, as per statutory guidance, but it is not factoring long-term demand at all). - Colvestone is central to the 21st Century Street - the play street and re-greening project that joins Colvestone Crescent to the market. Removing the school will rip the heart out of this project and the neighbourhood.
<p>Primary school should not be closed.</p>

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Princess May has a highly polluted site and will harm the lungs of my asthmatic child.
Randal Cremer has been a very big part of the local community. All *** of my kids have had the pleasure of studying there and going on to further education. The school really sets up the children well for their future. There is a great sense of community which is key to a child's development. The children have grown to love their school and they should not be made to suffer by having to move schools and be parted from their peers due to funding issues. The closing of Randal Cremer is unfair and should be reconsidered.
Randal Cremer is a school that has long supported children who would otherwise be excluded from other schools in the area. They are a fantastic support for children with SEN and other needs. They have also been a hub for Refugee families and other minority groups within the area. The loss of this school will be an incredible blow to an already marginalised community with no thought to where these families will be sent across the borough.
Randal Cremer is the only school in the borough that will take pupils who have been excluded from other schools. It provides absolutely essential services for pupils who are our most vulnerable, and they have been directly impacted by the Hackney New School opening nearby - but this school won't address the needs of the very disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils served by Randal Cremer. Not enough thought has been given to the long distances children will have to travel, what will happen to the vulnerable children who rely on Randal Cremer and the divide that is opening up between schools serving middle class pupils and those from working class families.
Randal Cremer is a great school. They are great with SEN kids and do their best. Our kids are mentally affected because of the school closing. We want the school to stay open.
Regarding the proposed closure of Baden Powell Primary School at Ferron Rd, Lower Clapton, London E5 8DN, due to the declining numbers of children, it is important to note that there is a growing child population within the Orthodox Jewish community in Hackney, with an annual growth rate of more than 4%. Currently, nearly 30% of children in the borough are Charedi children.
In September 2021, Hackney conducted a Social Infrastructure Needs Assessment for the Stamford Hill AAP, which revealed (in paragraph 2.26) that Orthodox Jewish schools "have a total of 9,354 pupils, while capacity indicates there is space for 7,933." This means that Charedi schools were already overcrowded by more than 1,421 in 2021, and this number has likely increased since. The survey also highlighted that 82.3% of respondents stated that the settings are overcrowded.
Given these circumstances and considering the proximity of this site to the Stamford Hill Jewish community. I request that the council explore the possibility of leasing or selling the school premises to one of the Jewish schools in the area as part of this consultation process. This would alleviate some of the overcrowding issues faced by the Charedi schools and help accommodate the increasing number of students more effectively.
Right now this seems short sighted: Dalston is an area that has seen a large amount of growth in residential properties. There are developments being built nearby the school which will increase the number of students. This in the long run will lead to over crowding in the schools Colvestone is merged with. It also doesn't take into account the number of SEND pupils within the school, who could flounder in a school that is further away and larger. On top of this, the future plans for Colvestone School aren't clear: what will the council be using the site for? Will it benefit the community rather than investors??
School are oversubscribed as the population increases the demand for school is needed by merging school and selling of public land to develops is taking the interest away from residents and more of a money making scheme
School closure is not good for children. It's very stressful for them. They like their building. They know where everything is. They like their classes and playground. Every change of school causes stress for children. They don't understand why school will be closed. They don't understand why there is no money for this school. They want to stay in this school. They feel very good here, a new place will be too stressful. Please don't close this school.
School is heart of community and so any closure or amalgamation hurts the community. Colvestone is the only non-religious, non-academy, non-free schools and it is important to families. This school is also part of the Dalston plan for affordable housing. Building affordable housing and closing the closest school is not a good idea.
Schools are extremely important for the community. The Colvestone Primary School serves many students with special abilities that will need to find education elsewhere - far from where they live. The school is located in a quiet street and with lower emissions than Princess May Primary School. Better air quality is beneficial for students with asthma and the quiet location is more fitting to students with certain disabilities. The school also serves a less privileged community. Moving it will force students of that community to travel a longer distance to go to school along a large and busy street.
Schools are part of the local life, colvestone is only a 2 entry school and is vital for a lot of pupils in the neighbourhood. Even if number of pupils have reduced in the council the last years, won't be ready if number were increasing again and loose resilience in closing all those schools.
Schools need to stay open and not shut down. Even if there are less children. A lot of people choose to home school because they don't like certain policies. While homeschooling has its benefits it also has the downsides.
You need to let the schools thrive and welcome pupils. Right now you have allowed for several schools to be swallowed up by academies which are money making enterprises, not caring about children. Look at the shoreditch park secondary school and haggerston which have such rough behaviour by the pupils as they go and leave their schools. Why not allow children to develop, learn and grow without cramming them in to institutions that does not help them learn and develop. These schools would be better off at teaching smaller groups and give pupils a chance to learn. Do not shut these schools down.
Short termist. Poor strategic planning. Gentrification programme - eg new flats built in south Hackney and Woodberry Down - means fewer children.
Shutting Colvestone - the closest school to this development - is a short-sighted action, that will negatively impact the community. Colvestone is in the centre of the Dalston Plan, which includes commits to building 600 new homes, including 200 affordable family homes.
Since I entered this school, I recognised its value. Children are engaged in their learning, there is a strong sense of community, not to mention the friendly and warm environment created by all members of staff. It would be a disgrace to lose such a strong, caring and high standard of learning school.
Small classes benefit children therefore there is no need to merge or close schools School estate cannot be returned to the LA once it has gone Demographics and populations change dynamically We need all our community schools
Small school benefit children social and emotional development, specially on their first years. It's of absolute importance to keep them. Big school may come up cheaper but at what cost?! Education is about investing in young human beings not saving at cost of their happiness, fulfillment and mental health. Less is often more!

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<p>small schools are great for kids with diverse needs - Colvestone has an amazing track record of producing great results for kids of all abilities (the school is particularly strong in integrating children with SEN - special educational needs or learning support plans - into the wider community to the advantage all pupils). The small community context is key to this. A single form school enables kids to be supported by their peers across age groups and produces a real sense of belonging and pride in their community. Coke vesting is essential to the Hackney community.</p>
<p>Smaller local schools have Always been better for children education</p>
<p>Such a great family based school, that also support SEND children so well . They are more then a school Great staff that have the children at heart and will go that extra milestone with you and your child and would be so sad to see this school close</p>
<p>Terrible idea - these are precious schools, especially Colverstone</p>
<p>Terrible idea that will run a great school and waste precious tax payer money at the same time</p>
<p>The amalgamation of Colvestone Primary School would not only mean the closing of an excellent school (where I'd like to send my future children) but it would also decrease safety in the neighborhood. As someone living right next to the school (Time Square), I'm also concerned that all the issues we are currently having around drugs and anti social behaviour will get worse once the school is emptied out.</p>
<p>The benefits of small one form entry schools are well documented. The council is showing an interest only in it's spreadsheets and not in it's responsibility in helping to raise and preserve a generation of well educated citizens that participate fully in society. Where are the long term goals? What about the housing that's planned in the development of the area? It feels very short sighted.</p>
<p>Further to this is the shocking information (taken from the councils website https://hackney.gov.uk/air-quality) that clearly shows decrease in air quality on Kingsland road in comparison to Colvestone Crescent. It should not be legal to put schools in areas of moderate risk to NO exposure. Guidelines state that individuals who are unusually sensitive to nitrogen dioxide should consider limiting prolonged outdoor exertion when in an area such as Kingsland road - how are kids to do PE under these circumstances? There has been no consideration for health outcomes from our council (who should be on our side!) when making these decisions.</p>
<p>The closure by amalgamation of Colveston removes a unique, academically strong school, that is a traditional, essential part of the local community.</p>
<p>The closure of Colvestone PS will stop parents who have kids in that school to come and buy from my stand. I will lose my business if I lose my customers.</p>
<p>The closure of local authorities schools is going against the community that is already with overly crowded growing populations.</p>
<p>The closure of schools in hackney seems to be a foregone conclusion. We found out about it earlier this year but I feel this has been years in the making, especially given the councils gentrification of Hackney in recent years. The reasons for closure are valid but most are caused by Systemic issue with social housing and social care that mean people have not been able to stay in the area.</p>
<p>I have had to move *** of my children to a different school and leave *** at Randal Cremer until they go to Secondary school. This is not because I wanted to or because it is a bad school but because I had to give my kids some stability in the situation that Hackney Council have created. There are children still at Randal Cremer seeing their friends leave because their parents, like me want to give them stability. I have no faith that Hackney can meet their promises of supporting parents to find appropriate places. Moreover, I have seen the staff at Randal Cremer lose heart and although they are all doing amazingly to support the children, who is supporting them? They are about to lose community that can't be replaced and jobs that are hard to find elsewhere. To top it off, our head *** is visibly heartbroken each week to see more kids leave. And then there are many kids left with SEN, who have no easy way to stay or move to somewhere else as places are so limited.</p>
<p>Hackney decided to do this, and will continue to justify it but the way in which it has been handled is disgusting and heartless.</p>
<p>The closure of these schools will have an impact on the students and their families but also the staff and their families. Detrimental effect.</p>
<p>However the impact will be so much greater. The schools around those proposing to be closed and amalgamated will also be adversely impacted. The class sizes (which are already too high) will only further increase. And where teachers and non teaching staff are already struggling will only find it harder.</p>
<p>The Colvestone children would be exposed to more traffic pollution and much more noise; removed from a safer dead end street abutting a traditional market; and close to 2 overground stations and more bus routes than Princess May. If anything, Princess May should be absorbed by Colvestone.</p>
<p>The council has no choice but to make these hard decisions, if they don't then a high quality of education is not achievable for all Hackney pupils.</p>
<p>The falling roll in Hackney is certainly an issue and this is recognised. The proposal to merge two different schools has not been thought through. The closure of Colvestone limits parental choices and solutions to this are not available. There is short sightedness of the closure when a proposed development is due in a few years. There is a lack of recognition of the values of a small school and the school was not asked to produce structural options in light of a reduced roll. The lack of council oversight of the previous federation/defederation/deficit increase has contributed to the school being left vulnerable.</p>
<p>The impact of closing De Beauvoir Primary School is catastrophic for the families and children who attend it and devastating for the staff and community. As one of the few community schools in Hackney, De Beauvoir Primary School offers an education to many families who do not feel the other local schools are representative of their families. Whilst the school has had a falling roll for a number of years, the opening of Hackney Free School severely impacted on the number of children applying. When the area was already suffering with many unfilled Reception places, Hackney's decision to allow an additional Free School to be built is baffling. The closure of De Beauvoir, we believe, is related to this decision and seeing as the school has recently achieved a good Ofsted, the timing of the proposed closure is devastating for everyone involved. In addition, due to the lack of specialist places in ARPs/special schools, we are particularly concerned for the high percentage of children with SEND who attend the school (35%) and worry that these extremely vulnerable children will move from a school that knows, supports and actively advocates for them, to non-specialist provisions who may not be able to meet their needs. Our school has offered support beyond the pupils we have, our role has been much greater than the teaching of students from 4-11 years, supporting parents, offering addition resources to families, and once again, we fear that this support may look very different once the school has closed, meaning that our pupils, particularly those PPG students, do not have access to the same resources.</p>

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<p>the locals dont want it closed. it's liable , once closed that the site will be sold. later the numbers may increase but by then it'll be too late. it costs more to close it and keep it vacant than to operate it as a school. even if it does re-open it would have to be as a 'free school' the proliferation of which im oposed to.</p>
<p>The merge will come with its pros and cons. Indeed, the school building will live up to its potential but the new students and the new staff will bring some disruption and moment of instability. But we are sure it will all come together in the end.</p>
<p>The merging of the schools is liable for an increased number of pupils per class, and in the school in general. There is concern for the availability for school places for children/pupils who may want to enrol with school. This particularly for children whose siblings are already at the school. Also, with the increase in pupils number due to the merging, this will impact the learning of pupils - especially with larger classes of pupils.</p>
<p>The proposal is damaging and short sighted ; the plan to reduce hackney to just flats will damage its heart and soul for generations to come. The school supports many local children and with the ever increase in high rise developments the rise in need for local school places will also rise. How about focusing on preserving the integral parts of our community and not only bowing to developers . Be a beacon of hope for current and future generations, protect what we have all nurtured and all care about show that local community can really be a support for everyone and be a council who listens and stands with us. History always remembers those who stood strong for its community and its values; who protected smaller but significant community institutions .</p>
<p>The proposal to close De Beauvoir and Randal Cremer without any amalgamation offer reflects the council's lack of care or consideration for schools with higher levels of disadvantage in their school community. There aren't any other schools in easy walking distance which aren't church schools or part of the consultation process. The children who end up not having a place at their school will end up having to travel to a new school which they didn't choose. The council continue to protect the gentrified schools. We all know that in a couple of years once the dust settles they are going to sell off the school buildings. The council doesn't care about the communities in De Beauvoir or Randal Cremer because they don't reflect the type of people the council wants to have in Hackney. The type of people who will be living in the flats they make out of the school buildings in a couple of years. The council isn't Labour really, it's Tory Lite.</p>
<p>The proposed merger of Colvestone into Princess May is not a merger it is a closure of Colvestone with children being offered a place. My objections to this are the following:</p> <p>Partnership: Colvestone has entered into a partnership with Blossom Federation which has had a positive impact on Colvestone both financially, aethetically, structurally and most importantly academically. There should be time given to embed this partnership which will result in Colvestone being an attractive school to families - which it has until the pandemic - historically been. Working in partenship has also made the school more financially secure and stable. There are many benefits to the partnership from sharing of resourcing to financial management that have had an impact on Colvestone.</p> <p>Community school: Colvestone is a 1-form entry school in a quiet and safe street. There are no other 1 form entry non-faith school near by. It is importat to maintain a balance of non-faith schools in Hackney. It is also more likely that a 1-form entry would fill up than a 2 for entry school. In comparision to other schools that have gone from 2 form to 3 form colvestone has 'lost' less children and therefore could, with the current leadership and positive experiences when entering the building, build back up.</p>
<p>SEND - by proposing to send the children with SEND to Princess May there has been no consideration of the difficulty in taking a child on a longer walk across and alongside a major road. Also the small and supportive community has seen children with SEND flourish at Colvestone. This year there has been a positive impact as SEND is one of the schools strategy.</p>
<p>Loss of Money by council - there has been investment made in the building from the sand blasting of teh outside, the repacement of lead on the roof and the school hall being fixed. This along with the cost of mothballing a school, cost of redundancies and also the loss of any repayment of the deficit is a huge waste of money.</p>
<p>Part of the regeneration plan for Dalston - Colvestone is integral to the Dalston plan. The investement made takes into account the school and making a 21st century street. There is no consideration of this in the proposal.</p>
<p>The school has always been a fundamental part of the Ridley Road community and it shows the kids of the community life.</p>
<p>The school has come so far over the last few years and plays a big part in the local area. Some of the parents of the children were pupils at De Beauvoir themselves and have strong feelings for the school. To close De Beauvoir would be tragic and have a poor impact on the children who attend as well as the parents and staff.</p>
<p>The school has low uptake, perhaps because of second to last Ofsted review. Resources spent here could be better deployed to other local schools.</p>
<p>The school is a community hub for the area and it would be a terrible loss for cross cultural integration and cross curricular education to close it down.</p>
<p>The school is a very good school running for a lot of years now. My kids and I are unhappy with the decision that the school is closing. My child is attached to the teachers because of how friendly and helpful they are, making it a positive environment.</p>
<p>The school is an active part of the street and of the local community. Moreover, as Colvestone Crescent had been neglected in the past years, being one of the poorer maintained road in the neighborhood and therefore preferred spot for anti social behaviors, I fear the closure of the school will have a further negative impact on the street.</p>
<p>The school is an integral part of the community of the local area. The plans to close the school are shortsighted and more funds are needed to save this school and others like it. It isn't right that families from poorer areas of Hackney without the resources to help fund there schools are so detrimentally impacted by the governments cuts to public funding and investment. It should not be the responsibility of parents to protect schools it should be the first priority of government and local authorities.</p>
<p>the school is in perfect condition and is part of the heritage of Dalston and Hackney, it supports the merchants of the district and its inhabitants.</p>
<p>The school is part of the community and bring such a contrast within the Ridley Market area that's great for diversity. It also brings a sense of peacefulness in the area.</p>
<p>The school is part of the community and closing it will have huge damage on the community. The market won't be the same.</p>
<p>The school roll will change in time. This happens to my cousin family in Leeds. When the numbers went up again they had no places and children were bused to schools further away. Public educational building need to be used for education. Make the building a community arts centre and a school. Then the building has dual community uses. There are millions in funding available for the arts in communities like Hackney. You are not thinking ahead, being honest or looking after the interests of the community long term. I am really shocked by this lack of insight and expertise.</p>
<p>The school should remain open</p>

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<p>The school should remain open for the following reasons.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. the performance is good2. staff is brilliant, helpful, understanding and always put children and families first.3. Children are settled well and by closing the school it has created panic and stress for their children.
<p>The schools are all unique, caring and academically strong.</p>
<p>We need schools of all shapes and sizes within our community to keep it diverse and unique for all children.</p>
<p>They should not be treated as a mass of beings that all need to be trained in exactly the same way.</p>
<p>The schools are vastly different in culture and management. Princess May has a very bad reputation among schools and continues to say one thing and do another. ***** This is not how Colvestone would treat their parents or children. If Colvestone merge into Princess May I fear the culture *** has maintained will continue to affect more and more children in the borough, whether * remains *** or not. Colvestone has a more family oriented culture which will be lost at Princess May. Colvestone children will be done a disservice if they are to merge with Princess May.</p>
<p>The schools will be more populated and the children from both schools won't get along well. The teachers won't be able to support everyone as it will be a packed classroom. My child wants to swap schools but he doesn't understand the outcome because he is still young. We don't want our school to change. We like our school!!</p>
<p>There are a lot of parents and children from the school buying from my stall and if they close the school they won't come anymore - it will have a huge impact on my business - the school is part of Ridly Road community</p>
<p>There are both positive and negative effects to school amalgamations. Positive: increased resources, improved curriculum, larger population, enhance social interaction, extracurricular activities etc. However, I see challenges with student/staff experiences of adjustment, disruption during the process. Students need to be properly supported and needs must be met. The merging of different school cultures whilst creating a cohesive and inclusive environment. Communication is key and concerns should be considered. Possible job losses. Different leadership styles. Poor communication. Children may not identify with the school.</p>
<p>There are kids in the area which need the school</p>
<p>There is a covenant on the school building and the entire cartilage of its site stipulating the school site should be solely used as a school. For Colvestone Primary School to leave this site would be unlawful as it would be contrary to the covenant.</p>
<p>There is a covenant on the school building and the entire cartilage of its site stipulating the school site should be solely used as a school. For Colvestone Primary School to leave this site would be unlawful as it would be contrary to the covenant.</p>

There is no good reason to force this closure on Colvestone Primary School. It is, I believe, unnecessary and wrong - misguided, myopic, and a needless violence.

Under new leadership Colvestone Primary has a lack of recent deficit: Blossom Federation - who also run three other schools successfully in the borough - are the new leadership of Colvestone Primary since 2022. The Federation has turned a budget surplus - despite a low pupil roll - in its first 6 months in charge. So doing Blossom Federation has shown that the school can be financially viable under its new leadership. We, as parents, carers and students, love the stability and improved facilities Blossom Federation has brought the school. Colvestone is financially viable in the future.

Colvestone Primary is core to the future of Dalston: it is situated central to your (now) approved policy 'Hackney's first 21st Century Street' on Colvestone Crescent. Without families, children and the school it was envisaged around, this street will be a tragic token. Furthermore, Colvestone Primary is situated just 200m from the recently approved Dalston 2033 development plans. To me and my family it feels wrong, simply bad policy, and tragically myopic of the council to close this successful, high-academic achieving community school, when plans are in place to build affordable housing, and create civic environments/streets designed to attract families but with no school within a short walking distance.

It is clear from the information we shared with you during our public meeting on April 24th, and the summary document we submitted in advance of the cabinet meeting on May 22nd that with the support of Hackney Council, Colvestone Primary can turn into an even more definitive example of a one-form entry, local authority school to attract pupils from across the borough, and beyond, in a pioneering future facing 21st century street.

As parents we worked hard to produce and submit that summary document of reasons to you in advance on the cabinet meeting on May 22nd 2023. Please read it if you have not done so, and take time (as professionals) to re-read it if you have time. In it you will find our additional evidence for why: Colvestone Primary should be taken off the list; and hackney Education's proposal is flawed.

As you will see, with careful planning, Colvestone can serve as an attractive local one-form community school that parents from the closed schools will want to send their children to. To re-iterate, as well as the lack of deficit under our new leadership, key reasons are as follows:

- Lack of parental choice

The closure of Colvestone (and nearby De Beauvoir) would mean there would be no non-faith, one-form entry local authority schools within a mile of the Colvestone building. Our local area would be dominated by religious schools, free schools and academies, which are currently not being considered for closure, regardless of numbers.

- Impact on the Dalston development plan

Colvestone plays a key role in the Council's development in Dalston. Closing Colvestone could have a significant impact on the new housing development and plans for greener pedestrian spaces. Closing Colvestone will also mark a tragic absence - children and families - in Hackney's 21st Century Street on Colvestone Crescent.

- Impact on children with special educational needs

Seven percent of Colvestone students have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), well above the 4.3 percent average across the borough. Many of these children would find the transition particularly challenging. Closing a school with such an unusually high proportion of the most vulnerable children is cruel. In doing so, you are choosing to harm children.

- Air pollution

The Council is proposing to send students from Colvestone to Princess May, whose main playground is right next to the A10. The Council's (missing words - possibly "environmental report") shows Princess may had 40 percent higher levels of Nitrogen Oxide (NO2) in 2021 than Colvestone. Adding more students to a school closer to the A10 with higher pollution levels is a backwards step in the effort to reduce children's exposure to air pollution. In doing so you are choosing to harm our children.

- Historical significance

Built in 1852, Colvestone is a Grade 2 listed building. Closing it would mean shutting the last surviving example of an important 19th century radical education movement. This is a loss of national significance.

Finally, we did not choose Princess May (it was a second choice school for only a very small percentage of Colvestone families). We do not want our children to go there, and like most families at Colvestone, will not send out children there. We chose and want our children to go to Colvestone Primary School, like all of the other families who send their children to this wonderful school.

As it is clear from the above, there is no reason to force this merger and closure on Colvestone and its families. Doing so, you are choosing to do lasting, life-long harm to children and families. Please do not act with such violence towards our children, us, and Colvestone's children and families. Please do not close Colvestone Primary School.

There is no point closing our school

There needs to be choices of schools - it's important to have different types of schools in a neighbourhood. Why are none of the schools in the proposed mergers and closures faith schools? They are emptier than community schools and it's very strange that Hackney council, which is a Labour council, is protecting them and sacrificing really good and old local school.

Colvestone Primary School is central to a pioneering proposal to turn Colvestone Crescent into 21st Century Street, Hackney's first permanent play street. A long tree-lined pedestrian walkway with lots of new plantings, ecology gardens, and innovative play spaces. A key part of the 21st Century Street is that it's located next to a primary school. Explicitly, without Colvestone school, that plan makes less sense.

This proposal has made huge improvements already and it seems illogical that the council would sabotage its own actions by closing the school at the heart of the 21st century street.

There should be more choice in primary schools not less due to closure.

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<p>There's no point me reiterating all the many reasons why closing Colvestone is a bad idea because I don't think you're really listening anyway. But I will tell you this. My daughter, a student at Colvestone, was getting frustrated when I dragged her to yet another meeting related to trying to get the Council to listen to our arguments. She told me making all this effort to engage with the Council was a waste of my time and hers because no matter what we do the Council was going to close the school anyway. She's *** years old. At such a young age she is already cynical, already has no faith in democratic institutions and processes. She still believes in unicorns, but she doesn't believe in you. This is the lesson you are teaching hundreds of children across the borough, that elected officials lie, that democratic processes are phony, that engagement is fruitless and that they are powerless. So when they grow up and they don't want to vote or get involved with local government or when they turn to more extreme means to respond to societal problems you can know that you helped contribute their sense of hopelessness.</p>
<p>These are community schools</p>
<p>These are public local authority schools. Once closed, because of government policy, they can only reopen as academies, which are secretive schools outside democratic control. Many problems have recently come to light in Hackney academies. Working class and black students are less likely to thrive. It is very disruptive to children's education to uproot them from their school community. School staffs too will experience great disruption. Small classes and small schools are better for children's welfare. I find the financial arguments unconvincing.</p>
<p>These proposals as they currently stand offer no benefit to the children, parents, school staff, or the wider community. All this is as a result of this tory government's dogma of cut and cut again. Unfortunately Hackney Labour Council like a lot of Council's have carried out the bidding of this government which sanctifies profits above the needs of local populations. The Council should join with the parents the local community and the Trade Unions in common cause for the resources that are needed to to take advantage of smaller class sizes for the benefit of children's education.</p>
<p>These schools are these kids' safe space. Larger class sizes do not work for a lot of children. Families love their schools, their kids want to stay where they're happy.</p>
<p>They shouldn't close the school as they (parents and kids) are part of the community and if the school is closed it will have a huge impact on my business and the community</p>
<p>This a huge shame to the local area and the cost to maintain the property when it is no longer in use as a school, are far higher than simply investing in young families in the area and providing jobs and a local vibrancy</p>
<p>This fall in pupil numbers is a real opportunity to provide a proper education in smaller classes and should be welcomed. Why cram everyone together in large classes where it's all about crowd control when you can have smaller classes where children can be supported properly and actually achieve their full potential.</p>
<p>This is a fantastic school because of its size and the single form entry. This give the children an opportunity to mix with all years and have different friendship groups. Please keep this school open!!</p>
<p>This is a great decision for the Government</p>
<p>This is a hugely valuable school to the local community</p>
<p>This is a small school in a close-knit community. It is counterproductive for the area to close this school for many reasons. At primary level, small schools of this kind are very effective in promoting well-fare of the children and their families and of the community. While Colvestone seems to be a particularly small school at the moment, it is in the centre of the Dalston Plan, which includes building 600 new homes, including 200 affordable family homes. Shutting Colvestone is a short-sighted action, that will negatively impact the community. The school is also central to a pioneering proposal to turn Colvestone Crescent into 21st Century Street, Hackney's first permanent play street. A key part of the 21st Century Street is that it's located next to a primary school. Explicitly, without Colvestone school, that plan makes less sense.</p>
<p>This is an excellent little school and worth saving in an age when bigger is not always better.</p>
<p>This is an ill-considered and damaging move for children, parents and carers in Dalston. As one of the only non-religious, non-academy, non-free schools in the area, it should remain open to offer families the choice to be part of a small, close-knit community school – run by the local education authority.</p>
<p>This is an ill-considered and damaging move for children, parents and carers in Dalston. As one of the only non-religious, non-academy, non-free schools in the area, it should remain open to offer families the choice to be part of a small, close-knit community school – run by the local education authority.</p>
<p>This is giving no consideration to Colvestone Community and to our children.</p>
<p>This is not a consultation process. The decision has already been made. There seems be no opportunity to amalgamate. Parents and staff have not been given adequate notice. It is opportunistic as undoubtedly the building will be sold to developers to turn into private housing for large amounts of Money. Children will have to attend new schools, siblings may have to attend different schools, which amalgamation would have avoided.</p>
<p>This is not an amalgamation: Colvestone primary school would effectively close. If it re-opens in the future, under current legislation it would do so automatically as a Free School, ran for profit by the private sector. This is a gateway to privatising education. Privatisation didn't work for trains, it's not going to work for primary schools. Colvestone is a small school offering amazing value for the local community, don't take that away.</p>
<p>This is short sighted and with proposals to make the surrounding area a pedestrian area will shoot that proposal in the foot! No school - no reason for it to be pedestrian! Short sighted and shameful closing this multi racial school down. Please reconsider this closure - it's such a happy and nurturing school it would be such a loss to this area!</p>
<p>This is the most incorrect proposal for closing the school. For us as parents it is very difficult to talk to children about this. My children are very sad. It is not right to take away the children's right to the school where they have spent their quality time there, they are happy and satisfied with their teachers. This is a bad decision of yours.</p>
<p>This isn't great. Colvestone is one of the only local feel intimate schools across Hackney. It's such a disappointment that it is even thinking of closing.</p>
<p>This proposal is a betrayal of hackney children. Sharing already limited resources will seriously impact on their educational progress. I have been a hackney resident my whole line and each of these schools has benefitted local community and ensure children do not have to travel miles to attend a school. This proposal should be scrapped</p>
<p>This proposal sound like a rushed decision by the Hackney Education council and very unprofessional in the sense that proactive steps should have been made long before now and the parents and members of public should have been involved long before this stage. This proposal/decision is only conducive and only sooth the Hackney Education board just to make them cover their inadequacy for not doing their job. It should not have gotten to this stage at all. I personally do not like or support this merger and I WILL NOT be taking my kids to the proposed merged school. In fact, my kids will not be schooling again in Hackney as it is clear that the Education board only care about the politics and not the effects it will have on kids and family. My *** kids are [SEND]. This is a massive disruption and having a year for the change is not right at all. You all new about this problem and didn't inform the parents long before now. What about the new houses been built around the school. Has consideration been given to when the statistics change.</p>
<p>This proposal will increase lack of confidence and self esteem as to children and parents.</p>
<p>This school had just had a lot of money spent on upgrading it. It is a family school. It has a very strong community and is the heart of Dalston. This area does not need another block of flats or whatever would be built in the beautiful listed building. Colvestone is the heart and soul of the area, so unique and charismatic. It is a safe haven for many children with disabilities and is truly rooted within the community.</p>

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<p>This school has helped many children over the years, especially those with ecp plans when other schools lack in the help. Not only now are children going to lose their school place , they will get moved from their friends and social circles which are vitally important to them.</p> <p>All *** of my children attend here and they have all excelled in their subjects and that's thanks to the teachers who put 110% in and actually care about the children!</p> <p>The teachers are going to be out of their jobs some of the teachers have been there over 20 years!</p> <p>I don't see why you can't merge the 2 schools that your proposing to close, yes there may still not be loads of children but it will be better then closing 2 schools down and distrusting many people's lives.</p>
<p>This school has provided very local, community-focused, excellent education, in a truly multi-cultural, multi-religion setting, provided by local authority not private bodies, where children thrive and develop. The nursery alongside provides continuity from early years. The threat of closure has already been detrimental to children's progress and the local community. I note that of families I have talked with NONE had put Princess May as even their 3rd choice of school for their children! This school is central to a street with plans to become pleasanter, healthier, more community-focused. A further large housing development is due in Dalston soon; a number of these homes will have families and children wanting this local facility. Please keep what is local and good.</p>
<p>This school is a useful iconic and has so many memories for most people in this community past and present. It will be part of history for a lot of this communities and families who have been pupils there.</p>
<p>This school is at the heart of the local community and removing it will have a detrimental impact on the local area. As one of the only non-religious, non-academy, non-free schools in the area area, it is being unfairly targeted. It should be kept open to offer parents the choice. Whilst pupil numbers have dropped, there are huge building plans in Dalston and the families moving into the new homes will need a local school. The decision is very short-sighted.</p>
<p>This school is incredibly important to the Dalston Community. Amalgamation is not the answer.</p>
<p>This school should not be closed ever. Please reconsider this proposal.</p>
<p>This will adversely impact the tightly knit local community and in particular its young people. How can it make sense to close the school in light of plans to build 600 homes in the area? Wont there be children who move 8nto those homes?</p>
<p>This is a rare a valuable LA home. The budgetary constraints are known but we beg you not to close a community provision which once lost will be lost forever with lasting impacts for the community.</p>
<p>This will be devastating news to so many families. I'm extremely disappointed to hear that we are closing down schools, which are a pillar of our society. This will be seen as a failure of government, more than a failure of individual schools.</p>
<p>This will her extremely disruptive to all involved and result in the loss of Colvestone as an asset at the heart of the community. If streamlining is required I urge you to explore options for some partnership and shared facilities between these schools which retains their independent status rather than wholesale amalgamation.</p>
<p>This will reduce the care and wellbeing of children of Hackney</p>
<p>This would be terrible.</p>
<p>Those schools shouldn't be closed, while certainly there's enough financial support from the government. Hackney council shouldn't waste money such as Hackney fashion district which is an immense waste of money. Do not closed the schools, they are vitale to our community and children's future. It displaced family, and community resilience and spirits.</p>
<p>Three of my children currently attend this school. They are very happy everyday, the staff are very nice and friendly and push my children to reach their full potential. The headteacher is brilliant, always available and approachable to handle any concerns. I do not wish to change schools as I do not hear the same feedback from parents at other schools.</p>
<p>To some extent, I agree with the proposals as I do understand the reason behind merging the two school together due to financial reasons. However, to some extent I disagree with the proposals as well. I feel it will affect the children who are already at Nightingale Primary School, who have bonded and made strong friendships within the class. Having new staff and new children in the class will be overwhelming for the children. I will be very very disappointed if the class get divided; as I said the children of my child's class have bonded very well and all are very close to each other. I do not want schools merging together to affect my child's emotional and mental wellbeing.</p>
<p>Totally disagree with such decisions being made. Randal Cremer has been around for many years and has a huge reputation. We as a community definitely do not want this school to close. That sounds absurd! For one, I do not want the children's happiness to be taken away from them. As well as their education being affected, I believe a huge change like this will affect the students in their work. They are in a happy environment with the teachers and classmates they have grown with through-out the year. The amount of children that is attending from around the area, every single one will have a hard time moving schools, as well as the parents. I personally am extremely sad and anxious about such proposals and to not condemn this action. My little brother is currently at Randal Cremer and I do not want him to move into a new school! This will affect him hugely, especially mentally! I do not want his confidence to be taken away from him. I would like this to be taken into serious considerations and am totally against this proposal. Hoping this message will help give you understanding on such matter and make the right decision.</p>
<p>Unfortunately these schools have falling numbers of children attending. No fault of the schools problem across London. But the way school are funded it unfair to disportiontantly spend money on these few children when this money could be spread out amongst all Hackney schools.</p>
<p>Uprooting all these kids in the middle of a key development phase will not only cause distress to the child, but add more financial pressure onto each parent from having to buy new uniforms for their children and additional travel costs, which in this day and age is one more nail in the coffin</p>
<p>Very few parents from Colvestone will move their children to Princess May, if this merger goes ahead. They will seek to move to an alternative school. Therefore the number of children at Princess May will pretty much remain the same, meaning this amalgamation will not work to increase the number of children at Princess May.</p>
<p>We are about to have a kid. We need these primary schools to stay open. They are needed by families in Hackney.</p>

We are in favour of keeping Colvenston open

We are writing to express our disagreement regarding the recent proposal to include Colvestone Primary School in the consultation to close schools in Dalston (Hackney) by Hackney Council. We are very disheartened by this proposal and in the worst case scenario that this is going ahead, in total honesty, this will have a tremendous effect on [child]'s education and subsequently in * future academic life as * would take a really long time to adjust to a new setting and it will take years for [child] to re-access education. Princess May has never been a choice of us to move [child] to, it is a two forms school (too big and not safe for [child]), the school run would be too noisy and too dangerous, not a all a good school that would suit [child]'s need.

We believe this will be an ill-considered and damaging move for children especially for our SEN children, parents and carers and the community in this area. As one of the only non-religious, non-academy, non-free schools in Dalston, it should remain open to offer families the choice to be part of a small, close-knit community school – run by the local education authority.

We live on *** and have been part of the Dalston community for a long time, we love our diverse community. We have chosen Colvestone Primary school for our little [child], who is *** years-old and [SEND] because it provides a required quick journey access to school (5 minutes), a safe and happy environment (that a small one form school offers) and a wonderful SEN support ([child] has a experienced SEN one to one). These are the 3 fundamental poles for [child] to access education. It has taken time and great effort for [child] to be happy and settled in * school (** years now) and changing school at this stage will have an incredible difficult impact on * and it will be practically impossible for * to access education, and this also will have an enormous impact on * mental health.

Let me give you a brief history of [child]'s life so that you have an insight of where * is coming from: [Child] was diagnosed at 2.5 years' old with [SEND] by Hackney Ark (with severe delays in communications, severe delays in social interactions and severe repetitive behaviour). [Child] regressed from age 18 months, * was prior to that stage able to say 5 words: Maman, Daddy, cheese, hello and bye (I am *** and [parent] *** - I only spoke *** to [child] from note to 2) and literally became non-verbal and lost * sounds capacity A, E, I, O, U, [child] was now only screaming, lost eyes contact and only presented with repetitive behaviours. With tremendous tenacity we managed to access straight away hackney services of Speech Therapy (once a week where Specs was implemented) and Portage ([child] attended the later services for one year, at home and at the Garden (in pre-school) once a week alternatively). At this point when I thought I would get back to my career I realised that [child] needed so much support and decided to stopped my career to support [child] full time and at this point I went on a mission and to become my child's therapist and a nucleus that would utilise all services offered and my own therapies. I taught myself an american therapy which is called ESDM (Early Start Denver Model), taking my child everyday to Gymboree (a pre-school private center) and implementing ESDM at the same time, helped also [child] to support * physical mobility as at this stage * upper-body and hands were going inwards (I used daily a home a school bench at home, making [child] copying me standing on one leg and other leg and also using a climbing wall we had at home). With all these combination of supports from hackney services and my own therapies, [child] progressed, we retrieved * eye contacts and * body posture developed now to a straight posture. At the end of the year, when [child] turned 3, Portage Coordinator asked me what we foresee for [child] academically and I expressed at this point that [child] could go mainstream to a nursery, which was 7mns from home, Portage facilitated transition to nursery and [child] entered nursery with an EHCP and worked hard at making sure * has all support needed so that * attend nursery. The setting kept on using pecs for promoting speech and in 2019, when [child] started to make the sound A, I, O, I found the Gemini therapy programme and within a month [child]'s perceptive communications improved tremendously. We have used this programme since then and [child] is now talking more, single words and understand everything we are saying to *. [Child] attended nursery for two years 3 days a week with allocated one to one.

We then chose Colvestone Primary School because it is a one form small school and just 5 mns from home. [Child] remained in one corner of the Reception class for a term and half and by the end of that year * had ventured in all corners of the school with a phenomenal support of * allocated TA. * attended Reception (with of course the pandemic, and attended school during the second lock-down)

When [Child] was in year *, after a week at school (***) * refused to go to school and leave the house, it took us 7 months to bridge * back to school and as you can imagine, it was a real isolated work for us as [child] didn't want to go out anymore but with great effort, determination and tedious work we thankfully managed for [child] to be happy going out and then managed to bridge * back to school, with the School Senco we worked very hard collaboratively to get [child] back and * did for the end of year one. [Teacher] has done a tremendous work. Now, we have complete faith in the school SEN support which as you may have heard from other families is not a given, [child] has an EHCP and now a level 5 in funding which goes towards * SEN and * needs to be cared by someone all the time.

But even thought, we have all in place on paper, the tremendous work we have had to do with the school in order to secure [child] 's support has been a real effort, as well as working hard to make sure that [child] is happy attending Colvestone and this in view to attend * years at Colvestone to year ***.

To be honest I can't believe we have to write this and the idea of this plan going ahead is very difficult for us and we are trying not to think about it! We have put a considerable effort for the past *** years for [child] to be finally happy where * is.

We know our child feels safe and happy at Colvestone, * receives a wonderful SEN support with a fantastic experienced SEN one to one *** and a brilliant *** **. Moving our child to another school will be strongly difficult and disruptive in our child's education and have consequences on * achieving long term education goals. And it will take us years to get to where we are and by then, it will be the end of primary school. This will literally damage all the hard work we have put together for the past *** years. I hope you realise the difficulty of what we have to do on a daily basis to get to where we are. We are working hard at [child] 's school foundation so that * can thrive in the future and become the astronaut * want to be (I asked lately [child] what * wanted to be and * astonishingly responded to me: "Astronaut" and repeatedly saying: "Captain ***, to the rescue".

In January, [child] was awarded a Colvestone's Achiever for: "[Child] enjoys the creative aspects of the curriculum. In art lessons and in Music, [child] shows good level of engagement. [Child] takes part in daily phonics lessons where * is exploring environmental sounds with * peers. [Child] enjoys drawing and will often draw pictures that are detailed in design. [Name] has drawn pictures linked to * favourite stories, such as "Class *** at the Zoo". Which * enjoys listening to and reading alongside the adult, some of the known phrases. [Child] takes part in PE lessons and will join the class line when * knows that it is time for PE. Well done [child]! - [Child] went to receive * award in front for Y***/Y*** assemlée.

In April [Child] was awarded 100% attendance Award, there again [child] during full school assemble stood up when * name was called and went to receive * award and came back to sit with everyone else aside *** Yes 100% attendance! Incredible! What a journey, what an amazing achievement! And this done to the wonderful work of the school, one to one, Senco, staffs and the Leadership team, *** and team. [Child] has received a fantastic report for this year and this is done to the great work of ***, *** ([Child]'s one to one) with our constant support to take [child] to school and support * with learning at home.

Colvestone is a unique primary school offering my child an opportunity to develop and thrive in a single-form entry, community-focussed environment, which we strongly beleive in and is required. We strongly hope that our wonderful Colvestone Primary School can stay open and all is done to support our school and for our [child] to keep accessing education as well as all the SEN children and all the children.

The council is making such a fundamental mistake in planning on closing Colvestone:

- Colvestone is at the heart of the Ridley Road and Dalston community, and removing a school and its children from this area will have a detrimental impact on the local area.

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<p>We believe it is a huge mistake closing De Beauvoir! It is such a wonderful community school, with amazing staff and children. Our [child] went there and our [child] has year *** left to go. There are many kids and families at De Beauvoir who need additional support and I worry that they won't continue getting such dedicated levels of support if the school closes and they have to find new schools. Why can't Colvestone merge into De Beauvoir? De Beauvoir has space and the schools are near to each other.</p>
<p>We chose Nightingale largely due to the fact it was a single form entry school and our child does not thrive in environments that are too busy or noisy. We feel quite strongly that the proposed merger will have a negative impact on his confidence, security and ability to learn.</p>
<p>We don't want the school to close.</p>
<p>We have an amazing school with amazing staff. We maybe a small school but we are valued. I could have sent my child to any school, Morningside is the end of my road. But I didn't I chose to send her to Baden Powell as its a better school with good of steady. Even during covid the school was beyond supportive and after they worked hard to help our children be where they should be. I could not be more grateful for Baden Powell it is an experience you will not receive anywhere else. Please do not deprive other parents and future children this wonderful experience.</p>
<p>We have customers who come all day with their children because they come from Colvestone school, they shop in my business, buy trainers, tracksuits, sweaters. If you close the school, I will lose all of my customers.</p>
<p>We have lived in Dalston for the last 16 years. Next year our daughter will go to school. We wanted to send her to Colverstone primary. We will not consider Princess May as it's too big and next to a main road. We will instead consider moving out of Hackney to find a more family friendly environment. The other day I spoke to *** from local council, even * agreed that nobody wants this merger.</p>
<p>Please do not take an affluent small neighbourhood away from Dalston. The result will be a corporate class moving in replacing the families. Dalston will be for bankers and city clerks who want cocktail bars. Preserve Colverstone Primary and Ridley Road Market as areas of the community.</p>
<p>Colvestone is at the heart of the Ridley Road and Dalston community, and removing a school and its children from this area will have a detrimental impact on the local area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is an ill-considered and damaging move for children, parents and carers in Dalston. As one of the only non-religious, non-academy, non-free schools in the area, it should remain open to offer families the choice to be part of a small, close-knit community school – run by the local education authority. • Colvestone is a unique primary school offering children an opportunity to develop and thrive in a single-form entry, community-focussed environment. • Colvestone is in the centre of the Dalston Plan, which includes commits to building 600 new homes, including 200 affordable family homes. Shutting Colvestone - the closest school to this development - is a short-sighted action, that will negatively impact the community. • Colvestone Primary School is central to a pioneering proposal to turn Colvestone Crescent into 21st Century Street, Hackney's first permanent play street. A long tree-lined pedestrian walkway with lots of new plantings, ecology gardens, and innovative play spaces. A key part of the 21st Century Street is that it's located next to a primary school. Explicitly, without Colvestone school, that plan makes less sense.
<p>We have more and more beautiful children being born and we need more schools not close them down.</p>
<p>We need local authority schools serving the community.</p>
<p>We need more primary schools and spaces and smaller class sized. Closing down schools is also a detriment to the local community.</p>
<p>We should be encouraging families to stay in Dalston, not closing local authority schools at the heart of the community.</p>
<p>We should be keeping schools local & small. Creating bigger schools does not support students with additional needs & will cause significant stress to many having to move.</p>
<p>Once a school is shut, it will most likely never re-open again.</p>
<p>It is a loss to our community & distills the creativity & uniqueness of each school. We should be fighting to keep them open.</p>
<p>We want to move from De Beauvoir to Colvestone. Please KEEP IT OPEN!</p>
<p>We will lose Colvestone - we love the school, it is part of our community</p>
<p>We will not be sending our child to Princess May school. Absolutely no chance we are sending our child to a school on one of the busiest roads in London. We are also extremely unhappy regarding the process the council has taken in putting forward this proposal; in particular the lack of alternatives for a school like colvestone</p>
<p>What will be happening to the buildings once those 4 schools close?</p>
<p>Where are all these kids going to go? I don't want my kids in a class where 35 kids is the norm. You are pushing families out of central London. This is gentrification in full effect.</p>
<p>While I appreciate the problems associated with falling numbers in the Borough, I am also aware of the recent increase of young professional adults in Dalston and am certain that the birthrate in the Borough will be starting to increase.</p> <p>It will be tragic if there are no local schools to send their young children.</p>
<p>My children went to Colvestone. It was a 4-minute walk to a beautiful building. A very mixed demographic. A lovely community and a strong sense of identity. Friends just around the corner. Having to go further away for ones early school experience would interfere with these important early life experiences. Important bonds between the parents would be harder to forge for similar reasons.</p>
<p>Primary schools must above all be local.</p>
<p>Furthermore, smaller class sizes are better for young children. As I understand it, Colvestone has a relatively large proportion of children with additional needs. The small size of the school gives them a better chance to develop skills and confidence.</p>

<p>Whilst falling school rolls may be a fact, the plan to close Colvestone Primary School is a badly thought through response.</p> <p>To date, the 'consultation' process has been unclear and feels like a sham. And worse than this – that a Labour administration is primarily targeting and closing local authority schools is unforgivable.</p> <p>If the Council does close Colvestone primary it will have a deeply felt impact on the local community. We have received huge support for our campaign including 2,100 signatures on our petition, press stories from across London, UK and Europe, but critically a real sadness from local people about the short-sighted actions of Hackney Council.</p> <p>We are constantly told that Hackney Education is one system, that needs to meet the needs of all our schools - including Academies, Free Schools and Faith Schools. But the only perception we have is that local authority schools have been unfairly targeted in these proposals. If there is ONE system - then it needs to be considered as A WHOLE. Not in this piecemeal manner, crudely picking off the easiest, and smallest targets.</p> <p>As a result, the plans have not been properly thought through. The 'term' merger does not fool anyone. It is a closure of Colvestone with a presumption that our pupils will transfer to Princess May. This is not borne out in our consultation with parents and carers at Colvestone - and betrays a real lack of understanding behind parental choice. There is a real demand for a single form entry Local Authority school in Hackney. That need should be respected and met. Colvestone IS that school.</p> <p>Colvestone Primary is a unique opportunity for Hackney!</p> <p>We understand the pressures of falling pupil numbers. But a way of addressing this is not to simply force children into schools with empty spaces – but to attract them back into vibrant, caring community based environments. After a period of disruption, Colvestone has turned a corner. We have just had significant investment in the physical structure of the school with the Grade 2 listed building restored and accessible. Colvestone has a new and highly successful partnership with the Blossom Federation. Having returned the school to be running in surplus for at least the next two years, the new leadership team has proven itself, and the school is benefitting from its new partnership. The school is academically strong as shown by my [child]'s excellent Sats results last week.</p> <p>We need very few pupils to join our school to make a massive difference. There are a number of factors that could affect this – but as no 'creative' or positive solutions have been proposed in the Strategy – these appear to have been individually discounted and their cumulative effect not considered.</p> <p>For example, the proposed closure of nearby De Beauvoir Primary, a 700m walk away, could have a substantial impact on us. Keeping Colvestone open would give parents at DeBeauvoir an option that is close to them, is small and non-denominational like DeBeauvoir and has enough space to allow friend and family groups to remain together. This, could have been prepared for if it was not for the threat of closure that also hangs over our head. Again the manner and nature of the proposal put forward is itself the most damaging factor in Colvestone's continued turnaround of its fortunes, both financial and in pupil numbers.</p> <p>Colvestone Primary School is in the centre of the Dalston Plan which commits to building 600 new homes in Dalston, with nearly 200 being affordable 3-bedroom family homes. The overwhelming majority of these will be built at Kingsland Shopping Centre, with a number of smaller development sites nearby. For almost all the new developments, Colvestone would be the closest school.</p> <p>Colvestone Primary School is also central to the pioneering decision to turn Colvestone Crescent into a 21st Century Street, Hackney's first permanent play street. A long tree-lined pedestrian walkway with lots of new plantings, ecology gardens, spaces for congregating and innovative play spaces. Councillor Mete Coban confirmed that work is due to commence as early as next year. This would in no doubt further improve Colvestone's appeal as a destination school and be a showcase for Hackney's commitment to the future. A small, village school, in the heart of Hackney on a pollution-reduced, tree lined 21st Century street. What's not to like?</p> <p>We firmly know and believe that closing Colvestone would be a bad decision, not just for the school, but for Hackney too. It does so little to address the over capacity of the system. So why close a genuinely diverse, financially-viable school with a recently much-improved parental offer and an academic record that outperforms Borough and National averages? When simply removing the threat of closure could be a springboard to the financial viability that is attainable.</p>
<p>Why are families not being consulted or involved in any of the decisions?</p>
<p>Why do you close a school after you leave children to spend 1 to 5 years there. Then you decide to close it. Why not leave all the children to finish their primary school and do not let any more children join this school, and after 6 years when everyone has finished then you can close it for good because this is unfair for the kids and parents.</p>
<p>Why is this proposal being made</p>
<p>why merge a good school that is perfect for SEN children to a big school that would increase their anxiety, chances of being bullied, not enough time for their learning, higher level of noise pollution that these kids can't cope with, high level of dangerous location (princess may school location). don't merge colvestone primary school pls. it is a safe haven for our children.</p>
<p>Why shut down a good school that has served the community so well for so many decades. The staffs and teachers are friendly, dedicated and helpful, the children attitude to learning is fantastic. Also in colvestone, the air and noise pollution is minimised. It also a school where the children with special needs are being looked well after.</p>
<p>Without the school many children with special needs are going to suffer greatly. Children with autism in particular are going to feel the effects in very negative ways. Not only will they not receive the wonderful educational benefits of the small school environment. But also the upheaval in their day to day routine that will set them back. Some to the point of not being able to cope with a new travel route, larger environment, bigger classes. Not having the trained staff needed.</p>
<p>Would be a crying shame for the kids to lose this special school that supports so many families</p>
<p>Yes I agree</p> <p>We need more housing</p> <p>Ore more business</p> <p>Ore more green spaces</p>

All Comments On Consultation Proposals

<p>You can't close schools, what happens if there is a population increase - where will the children go. This affects my child's education..never mind the fact that your poor housing policy - which has led to a lack of affordable and social homes in hackney is largely to blame for this.</p>
<p>You have no clue what you are doing</p>
<p>You're dressing this up as a 'merger' but it a closure, pure and simple. You have no intention of taking any Colvestone teaching staff who children (particularly those with SEN)are familiar and happy with. There is no parental choice being told your child is going to Princess May with the only other alternatives in the area with current space being a free school or faith school. Paul Senior - Princess May is not a 'good offer'</p>
<p>Comments on Proposals - Email</p>
<p>Dear all, I am extremely concerned that the informal consultation documentation sent out to schools has not been provided in other languages for parents/families for whom English is not their first language. This is hugely disadvantageous for a large number of parents and carets who will be unable to express their views. In fact if a school or family want it in another language the only way to do so is buried on the final page : "If you require this document in a different format please contact us and we will get back to you in the next five working days." Which obviously if English is not your first language or a language you fluently read and speak would be difficult to find and understand. I know that this was raised by *** after the first parental engagement documents and I raised this when I was sent the document at the end of last week. Other schools must have the same concerns. Already we have had parents/families who are unsure of what is happening as they are unable to read this. The least we would expect is for the documents to be available in the main languages spoken in Hackney or for the census information submitted by the schools to be used to ensure that the documentation would be produced in other languages. Alongside that adjustments should also have been made for families who are unable to read in English or their home language as well. Please can you let us and the other schools know how this will be rectified. Many thanks *** *** Colvestone Primary School</p>
<p>Hello Hackney, De Beauvoir is an old school. It has something to offer to the community. For historic reasons alone, please keep De beauvoir for the coming generations. Let it reach 200 years. it is nearly there. Hackney, WE CAN DO BETTER THAN THAT!! A parent ***</p>
<p>I wish to object to the closure of Colvestone Crescent School and THE AMALGAMATION OF COLVESTONE PRIMARY SCHOOL WITH PRINCESS MAY PRIMARY SCHOOL FROM SEPTEMBER as from 2024</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A crucial part of the community in Dalston and Hackney. 2. Proving the community a place for their children to be educated which is close by to their residents 3. Will have a detrimental effect on the education of so many important younger members of the community 4. A historic school that will probably now be converted into another block of flats 5. A local community school and should not be closed 6. Good ofsted reports and will have a detrimental impact on all the current and future children who will be given a crucial educational 7. A decision based on cost saving and not the requirements of the community <p>An absolutely outrage. ***</p>
<p>To whom it may concern, Please see the attached response and objection to the proposal of a closure of Colvestone primary school and merger/amalgamation with Princess May Primary School from the Colvestone Governing body. Also attached are the objections from the parent / carer group Save Colvestone Primary School which you should have also received separately. Please confirm receipt of this email by replying to this email address, Many thanks, *** *** Colvestone Primary School In partnership with Blossom Federation [Attachment: Objections to the Informal Consultation by Hackney Council to 'merge' Colvestone Primary School on the Princess May site. See Additional Responses Report appendix 2]</p>

All Comments On Consultation Proposals

Hi there.

Attached our response to the consultation regarding schools in Hackney.

Please can you confirm safe receipt?

Thanks.

[Attachment: Save Colvestone. See Additional Responses Report appendix 3]

Hello all

Hope you are well. Thanks again for the time given to Colvestone parents at Cabinet. I have had a few questions from parents regarding the pre-consultation and next steps for Colvestone.

I understand that a meeting is scheduled for 27th June but none of you will be in attendance, parents would like the opportunity to continue discussions with you as key decision makers - particularly after the responses & engagement at cabinet. I wasn't aware of the meeting on the 27th - are ward councillors being informed of meetings & activities in schools in their wards? They would also like to know a bit more about the format of the meeting on 27th.

Other questions/ comments:

Will responses / input sent in previously count during this consultation phase or do they need to be sent again?

Consultation response format is very structured and does not really allow for real consultation. The consultation is structured to only give comments about individual schools in response to restricted questions. Will you be expecting input in other formats?

There are also the emails from *** who is yet to receive a response, *** emailed again on 19 June.

Best wishes

[Council member]

All Comments On Consultation Proposals

Dear Councillors Caroline, Antoinette and Mayor Granville

I hope my emails finds you well.

I am reaching out to follow up the council meeting we attended two weeks ago.

I was hoping to be in touch sooner than now, however with half term holidays and busy work, it has been a challenge finding time to compose my thoughts and an email.

To put a face on this email, I am ***** and was at the council meeting accompanied by my son ***.

Firstly I would like to thank you for the impromptu meeting outside the chambers, all be it brief, it was great to be able to have a bit of a conversation regarding the situation we are in, as we were unable to do so during the official meeting, and have not been given much opportunity to discuss our concerns.

I must admit that I am extremely disheartened that the meeting as well as the whole process of the consultation, feels very much like a done deal.

We do not feel heard, we do not feel supported by the council, we do not feel like we matter.

During the meeting in chambers I mentioned how disappointed we have been upon receiving a standardised reply to most of the emails we have sent yourselves and the rest of the councillors and team working on this consultation.

I am hoping that this email will receive a more detailed reply to the actual questions I am going to be asking.

To make it easier I will bullet point the subjects and highlight my actual questions in blue, so that there is nothing missed.

*Please note that capitals are used in the email only for emphasis and not in frustration :)

Regarding SEND services and the creation of an APR unit in Colvestone:

As I mentioned in my email dated 25th of April, there are currently only two schools in Hackney that have an APR unit and they are both two form, and oversubscribed.

I understand that there are more APR's being created, but those are again in naturally unsuitable, very busy and overwhelming two form schools.

Colvestone would be AN IDEAL candidate for an APR. PLEASE I implore you to consider the possibility of creating such a unit in our school.

If the council really cares about SEND kids and wishes to support them in getting the education they have a legal right to, they need to acknowledge the scientifically proven fact that SEND kids do better in smaller, less busy environments.

Question 1: Why is the council ignoring this scientific fact and refusing the right to a suitable education to these SEND children? Why is the school not considered for an APR unit and what do we have to do to make it so?

Regarding the Deficit of the School and Due diligence from Hackney council:

During our informal chat outside chambers I cheekily asked Councillor Bramble if she could promise that if one school was to be saved it will be Colvestone. She replied something along the lines of: "How would it look if we save the school with the biggest deficit?"

It is my understanding that Colvestone pupil numbers have been falling over the last 5 years, however the deficit of the school dates prior to that, and that it is one of the highest deficits in the Hackney area. This deficit was created whilst the school was at full capacity.

Fast forward to the current academic year, where the school is operating with a reduced capacity and therefore reduced income, but has a better management and is managing to be viable.

Question 2: When the deficit first appeared in the school, why did Hackney council continue to pour money into the school but did nothing about auditing the books and checking how the deficit was created in a fully subscribed school. Was due diligence done in this instance?

According to the reasoning behind this merger, a school that is not full can not sustain itself. Why was then a full school not sustaining it self? Why did Hackney not investigate when this deficit was being created?

Regarding the merger with Princes May:

During the impromptu chat we had outside chambers, Mayor Granville said something along the lines of: "it is interesting that parents from Colvestone are really opposed to their children attending Princes May- we had not realised"

How can that be the first instance the Mayor was made aware? How can he not be aware of our preferences and opinions regarding Princes May when:

1) We were very clear during the meeting at the school on the 24th of April. ***, one of the Y3 parents specifically asked Paul Senior " what will the council do if we all refuse to send our kids there?"

2) I mentioned it in my original email on the 25th of April to all of you.

3) It is included in the 62 page document we have composed and send you prior to the council meeting. We run a sensor and the results were overwhelming. Not only parents do not wish to send their kids to Princes May, but they never had the school in their choice of schools when applying. Please see a more detailed analysis in the folder we have already provided.

Question 3: Has the Mayor actually seen our dossier? Is he now in possession of all our evidence and campaign points?

Question 4: What will the council do when most of the Colvestone families refuse to go to Princes May?

Question 5: When can we expect to have a further meeting with the council regarding the consultation and what is the council planning on doing to ensure that there is an open channel of communication?

There are many other points that we would like to discuss but if I can get some answers on my above questions it would be a great start.

Thank you all for your time, I appreciate this is a challenging task for you all.

I very much look forward to hearing from you

Best wishes

All Comments On Consultation Proposals

Dear Anntoinette,

I hope you are very well. Thank you for the updates on the proposed school closures.

I'm getting in touch as residents and ward members have raised the issue of the school buildings and what might happen to them. They are concerned first of all that these historic schools could be closed at all, leaving us with less local authority run schools in a borough with a high proportion of academies, which are harder to hold to account and often do not recognise unions and employ staff on less favourable contracts (such as Mossbourne Primary, who hires new staff on less favourable contracts than the previous local authority school on the site ever did, leading to old staff on old contracts anecdotally feeling hounded out).

Residents have asked for guarantees that any closed schools will not be sold off and turned into flats, which would leave us in a difficult situation if the population of children were to increase and we wanted to reopen a school on the same site.

Do you have any information or guarantees about the sites that I could share with residents?

Thank you very much, [Council member]

Dear all,

Re: Consultation, Education Sufficiency and Estate Strategy - falling rolls, parent consultation, April 24th 2023

I am writing again to request the financial modelling data and projected budgets prepared by Hackney Education that challenge the projected budgets submitted by Colvestone Primary School / Blossom Foundation prior to the pre-informal consultation phase of the above consultation.

These materials were requested in the public meeting at Colvestone on April 24th, 2023. Paul Senior (Interim Director of Education and Inclusion) stated then that the financial modelling and projected budgets prepared by Hackney Education in regards to Colvestone Primary School would be sent at speed to the Governing Body. In the Council's minutes of that meeting, page 193 of the Public Information Pack prepared prior to the Cabinet meeting on the 22nd May, you will see the response to this request summarised as follows:

'We can make this information available to the Full Governing Body [action] if they haven't received it already.' (Red highlight in original).

We are still waiting for these materials over 2 months later. You will also note that we are now almost half-way through the informal consultation period and we have still not received this information - despite the school, governing body and parental body requesting it both in private meetings, by email, and in public engagement events.

We have been repeatedly told by the Interim Director of Education and Deputy Mayor Bramble that 'financial viability' is the key determinant of Colvestone being in frame of this consultation. How Hackney Education's modelling and budget projections for Colvestone differ from those prepared by the school are therefore essential in understanding why Colvestone is in the consultation - and to allow stakeholders to democratically interrogate the modelling and assumptions made by Hackney Education to arrive at the conclusions they have. Without this information it is impossible to know how Hackney's projections differ from the School's own or to scrutinise the Council's methodology.

Given that this modelling is so central to the Council's case it must have been prepared - the response from the Interim Head of Education implies that it has been, its forwarding to the Governors a formality. Why are we still waiting for this vital piece of financial modelling that underpins Hackney Education's case for including Colvestone in the current consultation?

Given that we have already been waiting over two months for this, I would appreciate this budgeting, financial modelling data and analysis being forwarded to us (I'm cc'ing *** from our Board of Governors if you would prefer to send it to *) by the end of the week (30th June 2023) so that we have time to digest it and respond before the end of the consultation period.

If this modelling and projected budgeting has not been prepared, I would appreciate a response from Group Director (Children and Education) Jacquie Burke, within the same timeframe, to explain why it has not been - given how fundamental we have been informed it is to Hackney Education's decision to consult on closing Colvestone Primary School.

I have cc'd *** and *** from the Scrutiny Commission, who heard us request these materials again yesterday and are scrutinising this consultation. I am also cc'ing *** from Governance, Cllrs Bramble and Woodley who were present at the meeting on the 24th April (the Deputy Mayor having responsibility for the preparation of the above-named report) and the school's local elected Councillors. My apologies for filling everyone's inbox, but it has been extremely frustrating attempting to get anyone to honour this straightforward request and promised reply.

I thank you in advance for your rapid response.

Best wishes, yours sincerely

Save Colvestone Primary School

Consultation On Amalgamation Or Closure Of Six Hackney Primary Schools

Additional Responses & Engagement Workshops

Report Date: September 2023

Report author:

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Additional Consultation Responses

Introduction

Additional responses to the consultation were received by email, sent to school.sufficiency@hackney.co.uk, Council members and the Mayor's Office. The comments in the additional responses have been classified in line with Kwest's qualitative analysis classifications.

Responses

A total of 9 additional responses were received by email during the informal consultation period (5 June to 16 July 2023.)

Key themes identified

The chart below presents the key themes identified across the additional responses.

Classification key theme	
General statements:	13
Criticism of consultation / expectation buildings will be sold	5
Comments on the decision to consult & wider context	4
General comment that do not want school to close / amalgamate	4
Positive comment about existing schools:	13
School is at the heart of local community	5
Staff go the extra mile / school has a good reputation / facilities	3
Existing school provides good support for children with SEND (special educational needs and disabilities)	2
Small class sizes / schools are better for children	2
Other positive comment about existing schools	1
Other:	7
Comments about school places:	6
Demographics of population can change	2
Impact of free schools / and religious schools in the area on enrolment at the school(s).	2
Other comment about school places	1
Other local schools do not have many spaces	1
Negative comment about other schools / process of moving:	5
Move will negatively affect children	2
Parents will need support with paperwork etc	1

Impact on staff and potential loss of jobs	1
Other negative comment about other schools / process of moving	1

Overview of comments

A summary of the comments within the additional responses is provided below. Where the responses were significantly longer and included comment on a larger number of issues, a summary of the key themes has also been provided. Please note that Hackney Education responded directly where questions were raised by email respondents about the proposals or consultation process.

Responses related to Colvestone Primary School

Response 1

The respondent raised an equality concern regarding the translation of consultation documents and support for parents/families for whom English is not their primary language. The respondent requested for information to be translated.

Response 2

The respondent objected to the closure of Colvestone and amalgamation with Princess May. The respondent stated that the school is a “crucial part of the community in Dalston and Hackney” and that it is close to residents, that the closure will be detrimental to children’s education, that the school is a historic school and expressed concern that flats would be built on the site, that it has good Ofsted reports and lastly, that a decision should not be made for cost saving reasons.

Response 3

The respondent requested financial modelling data and Hackney Education projected budgets. The email states that this information had first been requested during the Colvestone engagement session in April 2023, prior to the consultation, and requested the data be provided before the end the consultation period. The respondent states that: “How Hackney Education’s modelling and budget projections for Colvestone differ from those prepared by the school are therefore essential in understanding why Colvestone is in the consultation - and to allow stakeholders to democratically interrogate the modelling and assumptions made by Hackney Education to arrive at the conclusions they have.”

Response 4

Submitted by the governing body of Colvestone Primary School, the document sets out objections and concerns over the proposed closure of Colvestone. The document notes that the governing body does not view the proposals as an amalgamation as the proposals only offer children a place at Princess May and do not include an amalgamation of staff and education. The document also states the view that the term “merger/amalgamation” has been chosen by the Council to avoid being seen to close four schools. The objections are divided into two parts. The full document is provided in Appendix 2.

Part 1 refers to the Hackney Education webpage on the proposals and responds to the

following factors considered by the Council when considering alternatives and solutions to the proposals. It raises objections and concerns related to:

- School at financial risk
 - Objections: The response states that the school has indicated it is financially viable for 2023/24; the partnership with Blossom Federation enables financial savings and has the potential to continue beyond the next academic year; there is an in year surplus this year and for two years running; and there has been significant capital investment in the last financial year and so no additional costs will be required in the future.
 - Concerns: The response states that final SMRA data has not been taken into account and was commissioned to make cost savings; the data was used unfairly to support closing Colvestone; and that Colvestone has future-proofed with recent capital investments.
- Number of vacant places
 - Objections: The response states that more children could attend Colvestone in reception if De Beauvoir closes, due to oversubscription of other local schools; that there would have been more interest in the school this year following partnership and repairs work; that it would be easier to fill a one form entry school; there has been less movement of pupils this year compared to pandemic years; and that many parents have remained at Colvestone despite the proposals.
 - Concerns: view that Hackney Education modelling was not accurate and the changing circumstances of the school have not been taken into account.
- Physical size of school
 - Objections: States that Colvestone has the ability to provide high quality education as a 1 form entry school on an “appropriately sized” site with all aspects of the site utilised and in a manageable condition; and proposes that the school keeper’s house could be used as an ARP.
 - Concerns: States that no risk assessment or costs of the size of schools has been done, or comparisons of schools.
- Geographic partnership
 - Objections: States that Princess May was selected as a merger site based on distance and that other nearest schools are church schools with full ARP; comments on the proximity of schools in the proposals (Colvestone, De Beauvoir and Randal Cremer); sets out concern about the route to Princess May and the proximity of the playground to the A10 and the impact of pollution; and states that Princess May is not geographically closer for many families.
 - Concerns: States that pollution has not been considered; and parents/carers have not been surveyed about their preferences.
- New neighbourhoods and new builds create significantly more need for school places in the future
 - Objections: The response refers to plans for 600 new homes in Dalston; shares view that Hackney Education and Planning do not have a coordinated strategy and belief that the school is key to planning aims; similarly, refers to Colvestone school as a part of aims for Colvestone Crescent, 21st Century street; and states view that the 21st Century street would bring more families to the area and school.
 - Concern: States that there has not been a discussion of the role of the school in the Dalston Plan and 21st Century Streets.
- Current OFSTED grades and predicted outcomes for children
 - Objections: The response refers to the ‘Good’ Ofsted rating; and to significant improvements at the school in EYFS data.

- Concerns: States that schools have been told that Ofsted grades are not relevant as the majority of Hackney schools are good or outstanding.
- Community impact
 - Objections: Located near Ridley Road Market, the response raises the historic significance of the area; the school is a Birkbeck school and is of historical significance.
 - Concerns: The response shares the belief that the local community has not been consulted; and again raises concerns regarding the Dalston Plan and 21st Century Street.

Part 2 states that the merger/amalgamation with Princess May has no benefits for Colvestone. The objections cover the following points, referencing the benefits of a merger stated by Hackney Education

- Context [of the Colvestone as part of the Blossom Federation]
 - Part 2 highlights successes and achievements of the school as part of the Blossom Federation. The objection states that “The deficit, the restructuring of support staff and the lack of infrastructure in the school to support teaching learning was a direct result of the previous federation.”
- Creation of one new, stronger school community, maximising the funding available to it
 - Objection: The response quotes a parent survey and states 100% of parents surveyed believe that the Blossom partnership has had a positive impact; and raises the positive impact of the partnership on the governing body.
 - Concerns: The respondents believe this has not been considered by Hackney Education in the Cabinet proposals; and the response states that governors were told that the school would have been considered for closure, if not for the Blossom partnership.
- Increased specialist expertise from a wider teaching and pupil support team
 - Objections: The response states that specialist expertise is already in place through the Blossom Federation.
 - Concerns: The respondents believe that the partnership has not been considered by Hackney Education.
- Increased potential for school improvement and targeted support in response to local needs
 - Objections: The response states that teaching and learning has improved with the development of middle leaders supported by the executive head and head of school.
 - Concerns: Questions Hackney Education processes to ensure a school does not have a deficit and states that issues were not raised in a remote audit.
- Stronger finances, with consistent resources and stable staff workforce
 - Objections: Colvestone has identified a surplus this year; the surplus has come from funding from the Schools Contingency Fund, which it had not previously accessed and objects to the suggestion that the surplus has been achieved due to emergency intervention from the Council; the respondents believe that Colvestone budgets are achievable and states that systems are in place to resolve historic debts; surplus has been achieved despite historic debts and again the respondents raise questions about the Hackney Education audit; it is also stated that the federation delivers IT support and PE support.
 - Concerns: The respondents ask whether any schools have gone into deficit within a year.

Key themes:

- Comments about school places:
 - Demographics of population can change
 - Other local schools do not have many spaces
 - Impact of free schools / and religious schools in the area on enrolment at the school(s).
 - Other comment about school places
- General statements:
 - Comments on the decision to consult & wider context
 - General comment that do not want school to close / amalgamate
- Positive comment about existing schools:
 - School is at the heart of local community
 - Staff go the extra mile / school has a good reputation / facilities
- Other
 - Other comments raised in the summary that do not fit into the key themes are included in the summary above.

For the full comments provided in the Objections document, see Appendix 2.

Response 5

The Save Colvestone document was submitted twice by email.

Save Colvestone states that Colvestone Primary School is a pillar of the community and should be able to continue in its role. The document details reasons for the school to remain open, opposition to the proposed merger with Princess May, and raises multiple questions regarding the decision to include Colvestone in proposals and raises criticism about the consultation process. The summary below provides an overview of the issues and arguments raised in the document. Headings are taken from the document. The full document is provided in Appendix 3.

- Key benefits of Colvestone remaining open
 - The response states that Colvestone as an academically strong, non-denominational, one-form entry school and the attraction of Colvestone to Dalston families.
 - Keeping Colvestone open is an opportunity for Hackney Council to recover the budget deficit.
 - The response discusses the role of Colvestone Primary School within the Dalston Plan and Colvestone Crescent 21st Century Street.
 - Provision of non-faith education at Colvestone, quoting a survey of resident support.
 - States that there is strong SEND provision at Colvestone.
 - Keeping Colvestone open would avoid the costs associated with closing the school and paying off the deficit.
 - View that Colvestone remaining open reassures residents that their views have been considered and increases faith in consultation processes.
- Key risks of closing Colvestone
 - The response states that closing Colvestone exposes pupils to air pollution at Princess May.
 - Comments on the negative impact of closing/amalgamating schools at once and cost impact.
 - Comments on the cost of closing schools.
 - Again discusses the role of Colvestone Primary School within the Dalston Plan.
 - Suggests that the closure will also negatively impact developers associated

- with the Dalston Plan.
- States that there will be a lack of school places in the area, with the proposed closure of De Beauvoir and Randal Cremer.
- Raises concern that Colvestone could be reopened as a free school.
- States that it will have a negative impact on children with SEND.
- States that it will have a negative impact on school engagement and Emotionally Based School Avoidance and damage the local community
- Challenges GLA predictions.
- States that the closure would have an impact on faith in the Council and Labour Party.
- Flaws in the consultation process
 - View that the consultation did not follow statutory guidance or the Education Sufficiency and Estates Strategy.
 - View that the Cabinet Briefing Report did not include sufficient detail.
 - View that the design of the consultation is ineffective.
 - View that the consultation was inaccessible to some groups.
 - View that the consultation process has been damaging to the schools in scope.
- Reports and underlying data
 - Resubmission of the full report prepared in the pre-engagement stage, May 2023 (referred to as the 'pre-informal' stage of the consultation.) The document states that the views in the report were not considered in the Cabinet report ahead of the decision to informally consult.
 - The Case for Colvestone Primary School
 - Addressing falling role
 - Positive financial management
 - Strong Academic record
 - Correcting future development impact assessments
 - Air pollution threat
 - Historical significance and site protections
 - Risk of current proposal: parental choice
 - Alternative options
 - Conclusion
 - Submission to the School Sufficiency team at Hackney Council, for inclusion in the Cabinet Report ahead of the meeting on Monday 22 May 2023
 - The case for Colvestone Primary School
 - Colvestone: A village school in the heart of Hackney
 - Context for Colvestone
 - Financial viability
 - Academic record
 - Parent choice
 - Impact on children with special educational needs
 - Impact on local development
 - Air pollution
 - Historical significance and protections
 - Campaign summary
 - Petition
 - Local support
 - Press coverage
 - Appendices - 1) Colvestone Parents Choice Factor Survey
2) email from a parent of children with SEN.

Key themes:

- Positive comment about existing school
 - Existing school provides good support for children with SEND (special educational needs and disabilities)
 - School is at the heart of local community
 - Staff go the extra mile / school has a good reputation / facilities
 - Small class sizes / schools are better for children
- Negative comment about other schools / process of moving:
 - Move will negatively affect children
 - Impact on staff and potential loss of jobs
 - Other negative comment about other schools / process of moving
- Comments about school places:
 - Impact of free schools / and religious schools in the area on enrolment at the school(s).
- General statements:
 - General comment that do not want school to close / amalgamate
 - Comments on the decision to consult & wider context
 - Criticism of consultation / expectation buildings will be sold
- Other
 - Other comments raised in the summary that do not fit into the key themes are detailed in the summary above.

For the full comments provided in the campaign document, see Appendix 3.

Response 6

The respondent, speaking on behalf of parents of children with SEND at Colvestone, expressed that the consultation feels like a done deal and Colvestone parents feel unheard and unsupported by the Council: “We do not feel heard, we do not feel supported by the council, we do not feel like we matter.” The respondent also expressed disappointment at receiving a standard reply to emails and raised the following comments and questions:

- Questions about the SEND services and the creation of an ARP unit in Colvestone. The respondent stated that ARP units in Hackney are oversubscribed and that Colvestone would be an ideal candidate for an ARP, citing that SEND children do better in smaller classes.
 - “Why is the council ignoring this scientific fact and refusing the right to a suitable education to these SEND children?”
 - “Why is the school not considered for an APR unit and what do we have to do to make it so?”
- Questions regarding the deficit of the school and due diligence from Hackney council
 - “When the deficit first appeared in the school, why did Hackney council continue to pour money into the school but did nothing about auditing the books and checking how the deficit was created in a fully subscribed school. Was due diligence done in this instance?”
 - “According to the reasoning behind this merger, a school that is not full can not sustain itself. Why was then a full school not sustaining itself? Why did Hackney not investigate when this deficit was being created?”
- Questions regarding the merger with Princess May, stating that Colvestone parents had made their views on Princess May clear in April, 2023 and had included survey evidence stating that Colvestone parents did not wish to send their children

to Princess May:

- “Has the Mayor actually seen our dossier? Is he now in possession of all our evidence and campaign points?”
- “What will the council do when most of the Colvestone families refuse to go to Princes May?”
- “When can we expect to have a further meeting with the council regarding the consultation and what is the council planning on doing to ensure that there is an open channel of communication?”

Response 7

Member enquiry raising a number of questions from Colvestone parents regarding the workshop events for parents:

- Whether ward councillors would be informed about parent meetings at schools in their wards
- Whether responses and information shared in the pre-engagement stage would need to be resubmitted to be included in the consultation.
- Criticism of the consultation format and structure and asked whether consultation responses could be submitted in other formats, external to the consultation questionnaire.

Responses related to De Beauvoir

Response 8

The respondent stated that “for historic reasons alone” De Beauvoir should not close. The parent referenced the age of the school and stated that it is part of the local community.

General responses or responses related to all proposals

Response 9

Member enquiry raising questions from residents and ward members regarding the use of school buildings, namely:

- The loss of historic school buildings.
- As a result of closures, concerns that there will be fewer local authority run schools in the borough and a higher number of academies.
- Resident requests for a guarantee that school sites will not be turned into flats.

Engagement Workshops

Parents and carers were invited to attend workshops at each of the schools to provide an opportunity to ask questions about the consultation proposals. Workshops were developed in partnership with school leadership teams and were adapted to meet the needs of each school community. Schools were asked to identify the language support needed for each event and interpreters were provided at the events to support parents and carers who speak English as an additional language and who may need additional support to engage with the consultation.

Overview of the workshops approach

All workshops followed a similar format and agenda, agreed with school leadership teams ahead of the events. This included a presentation from Hackney Education to provide, or reiterate, the context behind the proposals. Participants were then given the opportunity to ask questions. After the Q&A, participants could speak to Hackney Education officers about admissions, SEND support, and general concerns specific to individual circumstances in a smaller group, surgery style format. Participants were also encouraged to share their views and comments through the formal consultation process by completing the consultation questionnaire.

The above format was adapted for each school following school leadership teams' direction and understanding of their school community's needs. Baden Powell held two workshops, one focused on SEND and one on admissions. Colvestone held one workshop for parents and another for staff. The Princess May workshop was held online.

As stated, interpreters were provided at events to help parents with limited English or who do not speak English as a primary language. Schools were asked whether interpreter support was needed, parent/carer invitations were translated into the languages requested and interpreters were provided at the workshops. Colvestone requested support for Bengali, Turkish, Portuguese, Slovak and Spanish speaking parents and Baden Powell requested support for Turkish speaking parents.

The following details the questions and comments raised at the engagement events.

Overview of workshop questions and comments

Comments and questions in each of the workshops have grouped to align with the broad themes identified in the Kwest Consultation Report.

Baden Powell Primary School
Two workshops were held at Baden Powell, the first focused on admissions and the second focused on SEND.

1. Workshop 1, 26 June 2023, 3:30pm

Negative comments about other schools / process of moving:

- Participants were concerned that the move to another school will negatively affect children, stating that the move will “mentally damage” children.
- Participants asked why Baden Powell had been selected for closure and not Nightingale. Other participants questioned why Nightingale had been built, if school rolls were declining. Some participants compared staff at Nightingale and Baden Powell, stating that there is more parent interaction with teachers at Baden Powell while other participants stated that “parents at Nightingale say they do not want our children to go there.”
- Participants questioned whether there would be enough space and facilities, such as playground space and swings, for all pupils on one site.

Other comments:

- Participants made a range of other comments including:
 - Stating that closing children’s centres and nurseries would make more sense.
 - Asking what the plan is for children with EHCPs.
 - Asking whether the Scrutiny Committee had reviewed the proposals.
 - Asking how parents can know whether their voices will be heard.
 - Suggesting the government could afford to keep schools open.

Comments about school places:

- Some participants commented that current nursery enrollment is not low, stating 2020-2022 nursery children are expected to go to Baden Powell. Participants stated that most years are full at Baden Powell currently. Other participants thought enrollment could increase with new house building.

Positive comments about existing schools:

- Participants stated that they were happy with Baden Powell and praised the education at the school. One participant stated “we want a small school.”

General statements:

- One participant stated that it felt like parents do not have a choice about the closure and amalgamation.

2. Workshop 2, 3 July 2023, 3:30 pm

The second Baden Powell workshop focused on questions around SEND.

Negative comment about other schools / process of moving:

- Multiple participants commented that they do not know what Nightingale is like as a primary school and requested an open day at Nightingale to view the school and meet the teachers. Some participants asked whether the schools could work together through the amalgamation.
- Participants largely wanted Baden Powell children to move to Nightingale with their friends, in the same classes and be taught by Baden Powell teachers. Some parents shared that their children are anxious about the move: “My child is anxious about some lessons and needs more help.” One participant was concerned about bullying at Nightingale.
- These concerns were particularly shared by parents of children with SEND. Participants asked whether their children will have EHCPs and asked about the impact of the transition on children with SEND’s CAT and SATs tests. One parent stated that it would be helpful for their child to visit Nightingale weekly.

- Some participants expressed the belief that Nightingale children and parents do not want Baden Powell children to join the school and are not welcoming. Other participants stated that they would not send their children to Nightingale.
- Participants were concerned about staff jobs, asking about the number of redundancies.
- Participants also commented on the size of Baden Powell.

General statements:

- Participants stated that the decision to close the school had already been made. Some felt that the decision had already been made by the council, others felt that there was no choice other than to close Baden Powell and wanted the process to be completed: "We would rather it was decided and we had longer to prepare."
- Participants also asked if alternative solutions had been considered.
- Multiple participants raised issues including increases in cost of living, affordable housing and gentrification, commenting that housing is unaffordable and "we are being forced out of Hackney." Participants felt that other issues affecting residents in Hackney were not being adequately addressed and are a more urgent issue than school enrollment.
- Some participants also suggested that information about the proposals had been unevenly shared between schools, stating that Nightingale parents knew about the proposals before Baden Powell parents.

Other:

- Participants raised a number of other comments including:
 - Questioning whether government intervention or funding could prevent schools from closing and asking how the school will be funded if the merger does not go ahead.
 - Other participants asked how involved the headteacher of Baden Powell would be at Nightingale.
 - Other participants wanted to explore alternatives to closing, one participant suggested only closing reception.

Randal Cremer Primary School

Workshop, 30 June 2023, 9am

Negative comment about other schools / process of moving:

- Participants commented on the negative impact of the proposals and transition to a new school for children, causing stress for children and their families.
- Two participants commented on the negative impact on children with SEND and the need for more support for children.
- One participant also talked about the costs associated with moving schools such as buying uniforms.
- One participant also commented on the negative impact on staff and the stress caused by the proposals.

Comments about school places:

- Participants wanted to know when they should move their children to a new school and whether they should wait for the final cabinet decision. Parents were worried about losing out on places at their preferred schools and being able to find a school that could accommodate siblings, and the impact on children with SEND and those with an EHCP.

- Participants also commented on the impact of the proposals on enrollment at Randal Cremer and concerns about moving children to a school that may be in scope for closure in the future.

Positive comment about existing schools:

- One participant praised the SEND support their child has received at Randal Cremer.

Other:

- One participant asked why academies have been opened while birth rates and enrollment has been declining, and the level of control Hackney Education has over the opening of academies.

Colvestone Primary School

Colvestone Primary School held two workshops, one for staff and one for parents.

1. Staff workshop, 27 June 2023

General statements:

- Staff stated that they should have had the opportunity to meet with Council representatives at an earlier stage.
- Participants also wanted more clarity about the proposals and what a merger would entail: "Is it a physical move to Princess May? There needs to be clarity."
- Participants also made broad statements such as "more needs to be done" and asked that learning be taken from this process, if further closures are proposed.

Negative comment about other schools / process of moving:

- Participants asked about the process for redundancy, pension entitlement, and whether there is scope for pay protection.
- Participants commented on the negative impact of the proposals and potential job loss on staff. One participant stated: "There has been a lack of professional respect."
- One participant also stated that unions had not been in contact with staff.

Comments about school places:

- Participants asked about enrollment data and why more schools have been built if enrollment and birth rates have declined.
- One participant also commented that parents have not been given enough time to look for a new school.

Positive comment about existing schools:

- Participants stated that the quality of education has not gone down at Colvestone and that staff are dedicated to pupils. Participants cautioned that messaging needs to be sensitive to the dedication of staff.
- Participants also alluded to the changes in leadership at Colvestone: "There has been no acknowledgment of the changes we have had."

2. Parent workshop, 27 June, 2023

General statements:

- Participants raised multiple questions about the data behind the proposals, challenging birth rate data in Hackney, asking about the budget for schools in

Hackney and future modelling. Participants stated that requests had been made for financial modelling data and requests were repeated in the session. Participants also stated that Colvestone had higher enrollment than other schools in scope. Participants stated that they had provided information to Cabinet and Hackney Education and felt that their contributions had not been reflected in the previous Cabinet report.

- Participants were critical of the consultation process, asking what the purpose of the consultation was and whether consultation responses would be considered in the decision making process. Participants also asked how local residents were being consulted, stating the belief that residents had not been included in the consultation.
- Participants were dissatisfied with the workshop approach, stating that they were not aware that the workshop had been planned with space for individual conversations. One participant also stated that parents had asked for a SEND specific meeting. Participants also stated that they wanted the opportunity to talk with Councillors.
- Participants asked what information they would need to present to stop the proposals from going ahead.
 - "What do you need to decide not to close the school?"
 - "If we could wipe the deficit out, would we not be in scope?"
- Participants also expressed frustration with communication and the provision of information. One participant stated that they hadn't received a reply to email requests, another participant asked if more information was available.
- One participant commented that other schools have closed across the country.

Comments about school places:

- Participants questioned why free schools and faith schools had not been included in the proposals and asked what Hackney Education will do in regards to faith schools.
- Participants asked whether Colvestone could be a school for pupils with SEND and asked whether SEND children will be provided with alternative places in the borough. One participant stated that as a small school, Colvestone supports their child with SEND.
- Participants stated that the proposals and consultation had a negative effect on enrollment at the schools, one participant stated that it had been a "death sentence because potential parents expect closure." Participants felt that the news prevented the school from improving its enrollment figures.
- Participants also asked whether more schools would be identified for closure, including secondary schools. One participant was concerned about sending their child to a school that could also close.
- Two participants also stated a preference for one form entry.

Positive comment about existing schools:

- Participants commented on the strengths of Colvestone. One parent stated "This school is a safe haven for my child, a mini heaven, comfort zone." Participants commented on the small class size, the environment and lower pollution levels.
- Participants were also positive about joining the Blossom Federation and asked for more time to improve under the federation: "Take us off the list for two years to allow the partnership to take effect."
- Participants also referenced developments in the area, specifically new housing developments.
- One participant also commented that the school has good transport links.

Negative comment about other schools / process of moving:

- Participants stated that they did not want to send their children to Princess May, with two participants stating that their children were scared of going to a new school. One participant was concerned about bullying if their child moved to Princess May.
- Participants also wanted to know when the decision would be made and stated that December 2023 would be too late for a decision.
- One participant commented on the impact on staff, stating that morale was low.
- One participant stated that closing the school would negatively impact the local community.

Nightingale Primary School

4 July 2023

Negative comment about other schools / process of moving:

- Participants were concerned about the negative impact on Nightingale families and stated that better communication was needed throughout the process. This included the need to communicate the benefits of the merger to parents and the details of the proposals. Participants also wanted the school to provide more information to parents. One respondent commented on support for non English speaking parents.
- Participants were concerned about the impact of stress and increases in responsibilities for staff and the headteacher following a merger.
- Participants also warned that the merger will be disruptive and impact Nightingale pupils' education. Participants asked how pupils will be supported and stated that a transition plan should be in place for all children.

Other:

- Participants made other comments related to:
 - Managing the merger: Participants wanted to ensure the merger would be managed for Nightingale and Baden Powell families alike. Some suggested that there should be an induction for new parents or events to help parents to transition. Participants also wanted parents to have information about and set expectations about education.
 - Activities, clubs and trips: Participants wanted to know whether activities and school trips would be available following the merger and commented on the cost of Forest School.
 - Funding: Participants asked whether the merger would provide more funding and whether parents would have a say on how additional funding is used.

Comments about school places:

- Participants also asked a number of questions about the process for selecting schools included in the proposals, including asking about the impact of falling birth rates, demographics, and the number of schools in the area:
 - "Was the birth rate a factor?"
 - "If the birth rate keeps falling, will there be another merger?"
 - "Has Hackney closed schools before?"
 - "Apart from capacity and numbers, which factors did you consider?"
 - "Were space, money, demographics considered?"
 - "Did you look at how many schools there were nearby?"
 - "Are potentially closing /merging schools taking children for 23/24/25?"
 - "Why were parents not directed to schools with low numbers?"

- Participants asked multiple questions about the process of amalgamating Nightingale and De Beauvoir:
 - "Is there a set number of SEND children you can take on?"
 - "How are places allocated?"
 - "Why are closing schools open for 24/25/26 applications?"
 - "Will Baden Powell applicant automatically go to Nightingale?"
 - "Will there be another meeting to tell us the merger is happening?"
 - "Will parents need to apply to other schools apart from Nightingale?"
- Participants also asked whether schools in scope could become academies.

General statements:

- Participants wanted more information on the benefits of the proposed merger with some participants expressing scepticism that there would be any benefits for Nightingale: "We are worried we will not get the benefits of merger."
- Participants asked about the next steps in the process, including the date of the Cabinet meeting following informal consultation and how soon parents would be informed of a Cabinet decision.
- Other participants questioned why falling enrollment had not been addressed earlier.
- One respondent stated that the proposal would go ahead, regardless of comments provided at the workshop.

Princess May

6 July 2023, 11am

There were fewer comments and questions at the Princess May workshop, reflecting a lower turn out of parents. Five questions were asked, primarily around SEND management and funding:

- The school's senior leadership team asked how additional children with EHCPs from Colvestone would be managed alongside children with EHCPs at Princess May and stated that a support plan is "most important for the children that need specialist provision as moving to a mainstream school is a huge transition for these children and their families."
- The team asked about funding, stating that funding is Princess May's main concern and asked if the school could move to a two-form entry to provide additional teachers to support the increased class sizes following a merger. It was emphasised that the financial question and avoiding a deficit is the most serious concern for Princess May.

De Beauvoir Primary School

14 July 2023, 9am

General statements:

- Participants were highly concerned about the use of the school site, if the school closes. This included concern that the school site could be sold and converted to housing or that a free school would be set up. One participant commented on house prices in Hackney.
- Participants stated that the views of children have not been gathered as part of the consultation and engagement process. However, in response the headteacher stated that children's responses had been gathered at the start of the process.
- Participants also asked how their comments would be included in the consultation

- and how information would inform the decision making process.
- Other participants felt that the decision had already been made

Comments about school places:

- Participants asked whether alternative options had been explored, such as merging with De Beauvoir with Princess May. Many participants were concerned about securing a place in a nearby school, stating that some schools in the area have full enrollment. Other participants stated that other schools were not in walking distance or felt that other school options were not suitable, for instance faith schools.
- Participants asked about the criteria for proposing mergers and the data used to select the schools included in the proposals. Questions included:
 - "Who decided which schools would merge?"
 - "What basis was used to decide which schools merge?"
 - "Why were parents not consulted about the schools chosen?"
 - "Do you consider all years when considering which schools to close?"
 - "Do you consider where children live when deciding on closure?"
 - "Have you considered pupil/parent satisfaction?"
- Participants also asked about the impact of the proposals and consultation on enrollments, which the headteacher addressed, stating that 20% of children have already left De Beauvoir.

Negative comment about other schools / process of moving:

- Participants were concerned about the impact on staff, asking whether staff will be supported to find jobs and asking how their mental health has been supported through the process. Participants commented on the role of staff in supporting the children. Other participants praised the support they received from the headteacher, one stated: "Every point I have raised has been dealt with properly by the Head."
- Some participants also commented on the impact on children, stating that moving to an "unwanted" school would affect mental health and children would be exposed to pollution when travelling to school.

Positive comment about existing schools:

- Participants stated that the school is a historic building and has existed for a long time. Participants asked why closing a newer school had not been considered.
- One parent stated that "the school has done a lot for my child."

6. Annex B: Summary of informal consultation findings, prepared by Kwest (Appendix P, Briefing Report, Informal Consultation)

Main Report – Final

Prepared August 2023

Hackney Council

Consultation On Amalgamation Or Closure Of
Six Hackney Primary Schools



**Kwest
Research**

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Appendix 1 - Report from the Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission

Appendix 2 - Copy of the Questionnaire Used in the Consultation

1. Introduction & Background

During June and July 2023, Hackney Council undertook an informal consultation on the following proposals:

- Closure of De Beauvoir Primary in September 2024
- Closure of Randal Cremer Primary in September 2024
- Amalgamation of Colvestone Primary and Princess May Primary, onto the Princess May site, in September 2024
- Amalgamation of Baden Powell Primary and Nightingale Primary, onto the Nightingale site, in September 2024

The consultation ran for six weeks between 5th June and 16th July 2023 and aimed to gather feedback on the proposals, not just from parents and staff of the schools in scope, but also from wider categories of stakeholders that may be impacted by the decisions.

The consultation was hosted on Hackney's Citizen Space and was open to residents and stakeholders across the borough. A copy of the questionnaire is included in appendix two.¹

In addition, paper consultations and questionnaires were sent to the following numbers of staff and parents at each affected school:

- Randal Cremer - 400
- De Beauvoir - 250
- Baden Powell - 300
- Nightingale - 350
- Colvestone - 300
- Princess May – 350

In June 2023, Hackney Council commissioned Kwest Research to analyse and report on the results of individual paper and online forms returned during consultations on the proposals.

Additional responses to the consultation, not submitted through the consultation form are being collated by Hackney Council in a separate report and will be added, by the Council, as an appendix to this report. Similarly, responses and comments shared during consultation events will also be included in Hackney Council's report.

1.1 Response Rates

At the end of the consultation period, a total of 613 postal and online questionnaires had been received, three-quarters of which were commenting on the proposed amalgamation of Colvestone Primary with Princess May.

¹ <https://consultation.hackney.gov.uk/children-education/primary-schools-amalgamation-closure/>

The following table shows the number of responses to each proposal that were received by the time the consultation closed on 16th July 2023.

Proposal	Number of online replies	Number of paper forms	Total responses
Closure of De Beauvoir	117	37	154
Closure of Randal Cremer	98	8	106
Amalgamation of Colvestone with Princess May	400	63	463
Amalgamation of Baden Powell with Nightingale	116	41	157

Table 1 Number of responses per proposal

Some of the online questionnaires contained a paragraph of identical comments so a review of the IP addresses used to complete the forms was conducted to check for the likelihood of multiple submissions from the same source. The vast majority of online forms (403/467) were found to come from a unique IP address. There were three IP addresses where four forms in each case were submitted, one with three forms and 25 where two forms were submitted.

The source of these identical comments has been identified as the Save Colvestone Primary School website. This contains a link called “council consultation tips” which leads to a list of points that can be used when responding to the survey. ²

² <https://www.savecolvestone.com/council-consultation>

2. Overview Of Response To The Proposals

The proposals are universally unpopular, with 89% of respondents reporting that they disagree and 8% that they agree.

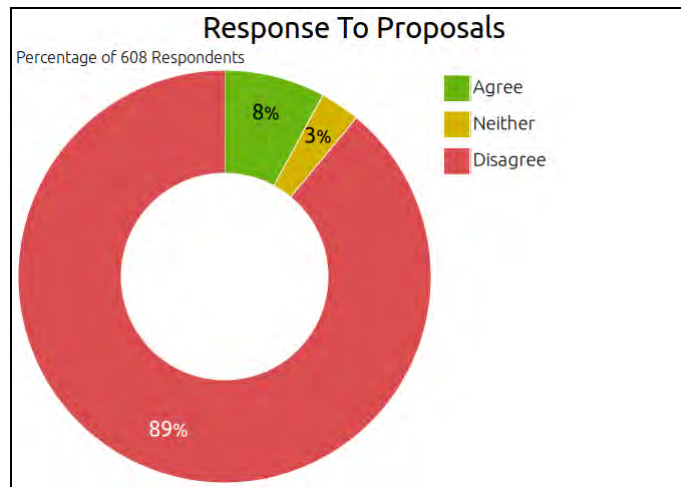


Figure 2.1

A breakdown of the results for each proposal is shown below.

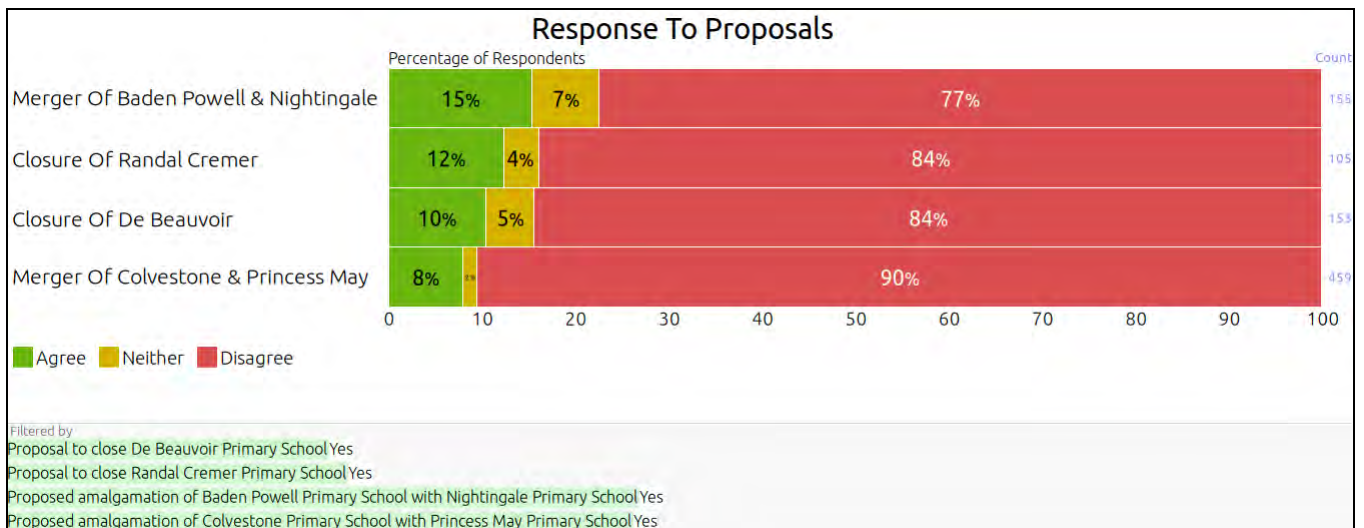


Figure 2.2

The graph below shows the results from the different respondent groups to the consultation. This is shown at an overall level due to the small number of responses in each group when broken down by proposal. It should be noted there were only 19 responses from staff or governors at schools included in the proposals and only 12 from those at another school in Hackney. Therefore, when looking at the percentage of these respondents who agree/disagree with the proposals the accuracy of the data is extremely poor.

Response To Proposals By Reason For Interested In Consultation

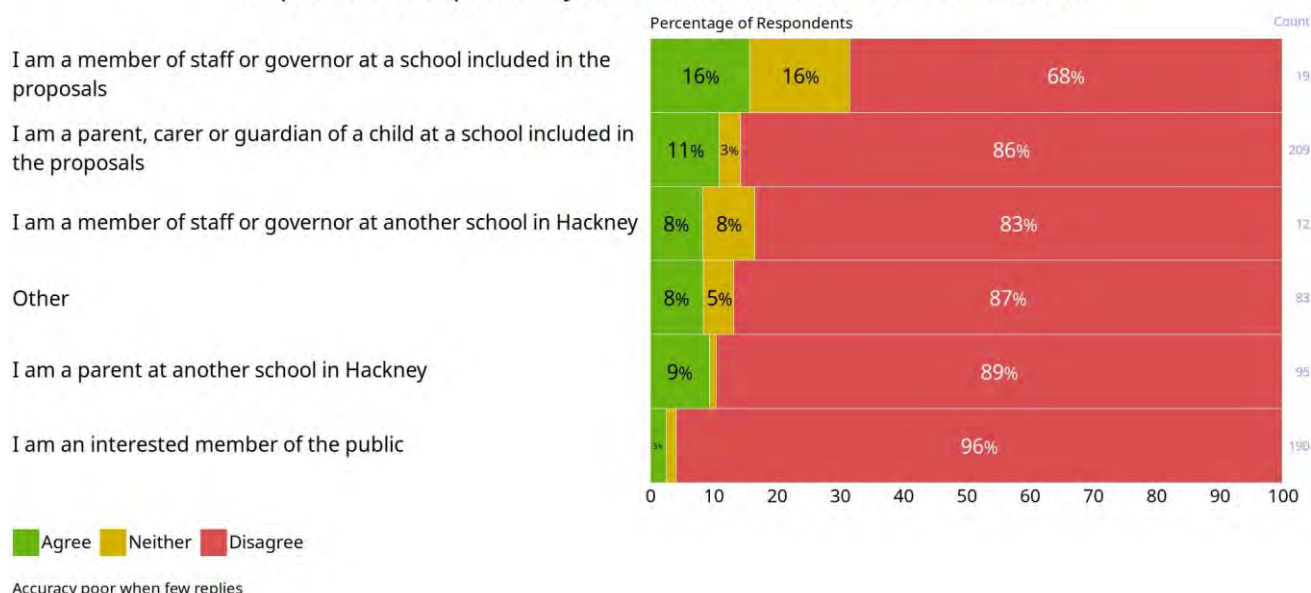


Figure 2.3

2.1 Strategic Themes In The Consultation Feedback

The consultation feedback received is wide ranging, including many testimonials from parents in support of their current school. The key themes in the comments are discussed in more detail in the sections on each individual proposal.

Some of the feedback received was more strategic in nature, offering alternative approaches to the issue of falling rolls and/or suggestions on how to move forwards, and the key points from these comments are discussed below.

Use Existing Schools To Address Borough-Wide Shortage Of SEND Places

A number of SEND professionals responded to the consultation making the case for keeping one or more of the schools open and working with them to expand the SEND provision on their sites. The feedback encourages decision makers to consult further with the EHCP and wider SEND team, as well as the Re-Integration Unit, with a view to building and expanding on the good practice of SEND provision in a mainstream setting that already exists in Randal Cremer, De Beauvoir and Colvestone. In addition, De Beauvoir and Colvestone receive extensive praise from parents of pupils with SEND who chose these schools due to their small size and worry about whether their children will be able to cope in larger schools.

More Mergers Instead Of Closures

Some respondents have asked why the Council is considering school closures, rather than mergers, since this would ensure friendship groups could stay together and potentially allow some staff to transfer alongside them, thus making the process slightly less difficult for children and parents.

Some respondents consider De Beauvoir and Colvestone to be schools with a similar ethos, and as they are located half a mile apart, several respondents suggest this would be a more suitable merger than Colvestone and Princess May.

Many respondents say they chose their children's existing school specifically because it was single form entry.

Future Use Of School Buildings

Respondents comment that some of the schools are listed buildings which are over 100 years old. A Buildings and Heritage Conservator responding to the consultation points out the fragility of listed buildings when left unoccupied. As an original Birkbeck school, Colvestone Primary is believed by some respondents to have a restrictive covenant meaning it can only be used for educational purposes.

There is a perception amongst respondents that the buildings are likely to be sold off for development, into further unaffordable housing, increasing the perceived "gentrification" of Hackney.

One respondent to the consultation states that they work in "child-friendly urban planning and design", advising cities across the world. Their comments are shown below.

Falling school roles and forced school closures can be an indicator of systematic problems making cities hostile to families and children. Hackney and London are not alone in this struggle and there are innovative and valuable examples to learn from in the international context especially around municipalities and councils retaining real estate even if schools close, to be repurposed to generate income for the municipality and also to be held for use in the event that populations swing upwards in the future.

The loss of the existing schools and school communities is challenging and emotional for all involved. The loss of these buildings forever I believe could be a strategic error on the part of the councils, which will have further negative impacts on the viability of cities for children and families in the short, medium and long term.

A respondent from the Orthodox Jewish Community makes the point that Charedi schools in Stamford Hill are oversubscribed. Referring specifically to Baden Powell primary school, they suggest:

Given these circumstances and considering the proximity of this site to the Stamford Hill Jewish community. I request that the council explore the possibility of leasing or selling the school premises to one of the Jewish schools in the area as part of this consultation process. This would alleviate some of the overcrowding issues faced by the Charedi schools and help accommodate the increasing number of students more effectively.

Impact Of Extended Consultation Process On Trust & Confidence In The Council

Many respondents to the Schools Consultation suggest the decision to close or merge these schools has already been made. There are concerns among respondents about the process exacerbating the sense of disempowerment amongst communities already feeling marginalised and neglected in local planning decisions taken as part of the perceived 'gentrification' of Hackney.

There are questions raised in respondents' comments about the data being used and the lack of answers provided by Hackney Education. Respondents express frustration at being "refused all meetings" with officials in charge of the process, about the lack of data and financial modelling provided, and the lack of Council engagement with the local community.

The following comment encapsulates the feelings expressed by these respondents.

*There's no point me reiterating all the many reasons why closing Colvestone is a bad idea because I don't think you're really listening anyway. But I will tell you this. My daughter, a student at Colvestone, was getting frustrated when I dragged her to yet another meeting related to trying to get the Council to listen to our arguments. She told me making all this effort to engage with the Council was a waste of my time and hers because no matter what we do the Council was going to close the school anyway. She's *** years old. At such a young age she is already cynical, already has no faith in democratic institutions and processes. She still believes in unicorns, but she doesn't believe in you. This is the lesson you are teaching hundreds of children across the borough, that elected officials lie, that democratic processes are phoney, that engagement is fruitless and that they are powerless. So when they grow up and they don't want to vote or get involved with local government or when they turn to more extreme means to respond to societal problems you can know that you helped contribute their sense of hopelessness.*

3. Response To The Proposal To Close De Beauvoir Primary

At the start of the consultation period, 250 forms were given out to parents and staff at De Beauvoir primary school, although replies were also accepted from wider stakeholders and interested parties. In total, 154 responses were received to the consultation on the proposal to close the school.

32% of respondents are a parent, carer or guardian of a child at the school, 27% are interested members of the public, 21% are parents at another school in Hackney and 6% are staff or governors at the school.

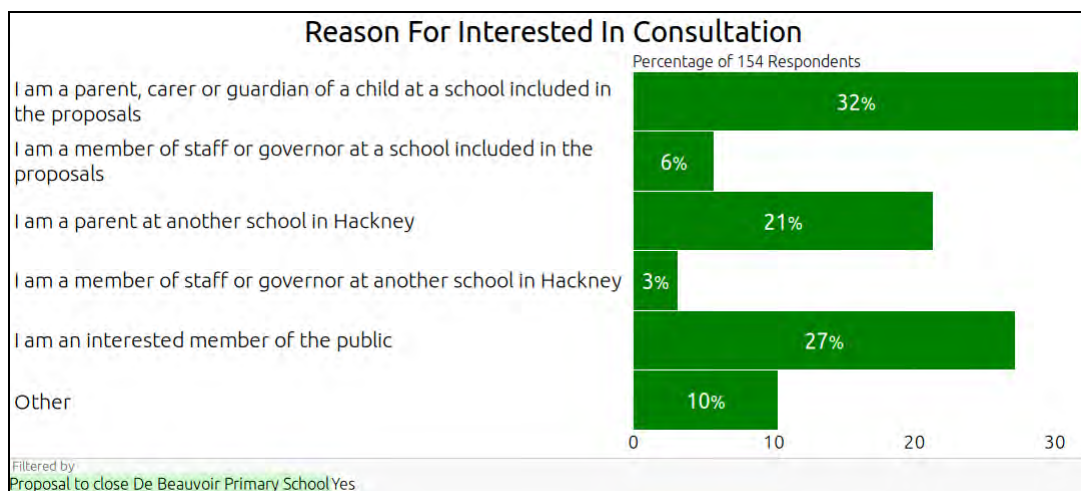


Figure 3.1

Overall, 10% of respondents agree with the proposal to close De Beauvoir, whilst 84% disagree.

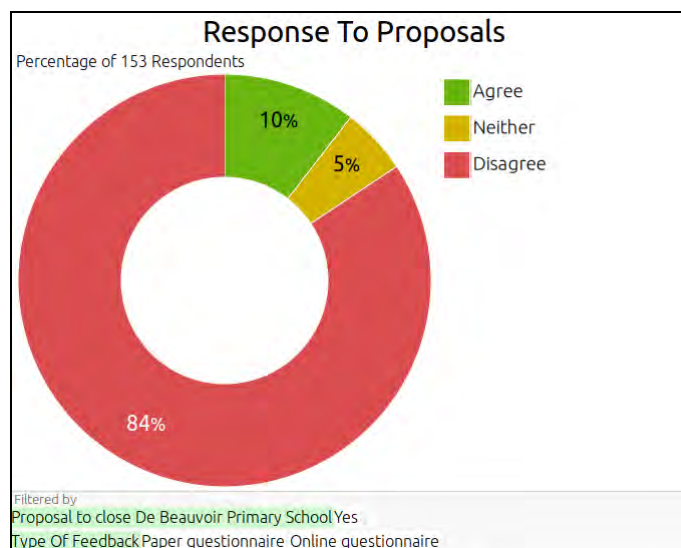


Figure 3.2

6% of parents, carers and guardians agree with the proposals to close the school, compared to 12% of other respondents. Caution must be used when interpreting these results due to the small numbers of respondents.

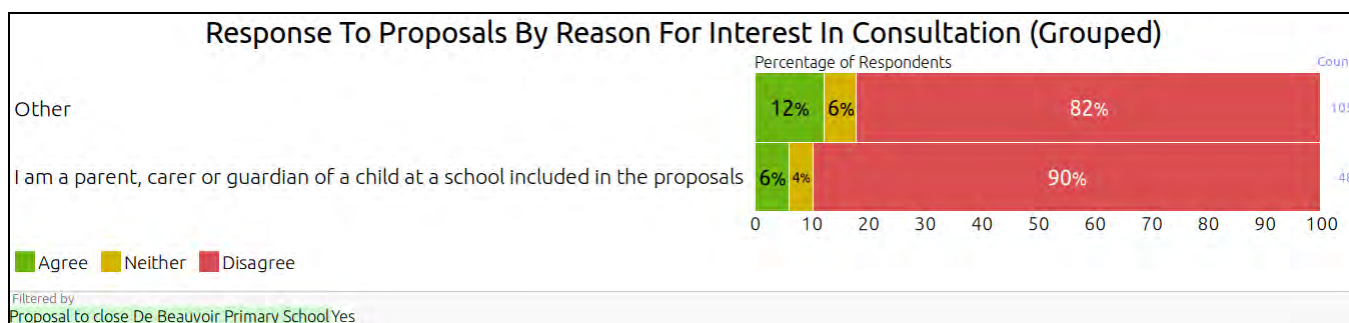


Figure 3.3

3.1 Analysis Of Comments On Proposal To Close De Beauvoir

Respondents were able to comment on the proposals and the feedback received has been classified into a number of broad themes. 43% of respondents gave positive feedback about the school, whilst 26% made negative comments about other schools or the process of moving. 24% gave broader feedback about school places in general and 23% discussed the wider context of the consultation.

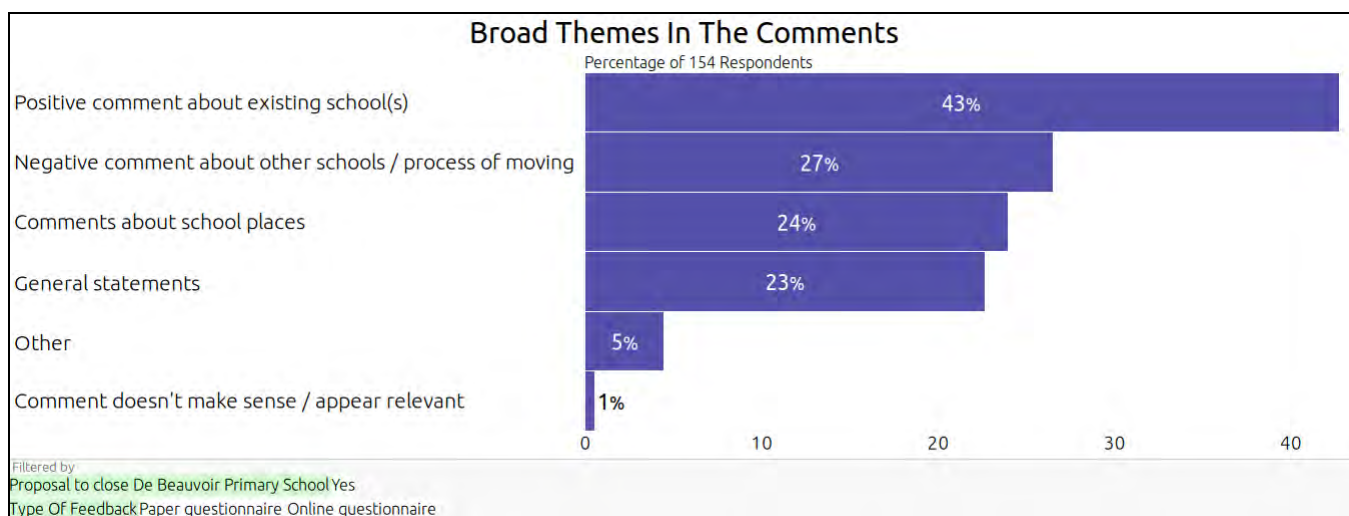


Figure 3.4

The qualitative feedback was further analysed to identify more specific themes, which are shown in the graph below and discussed in more detail in the sections that follow.

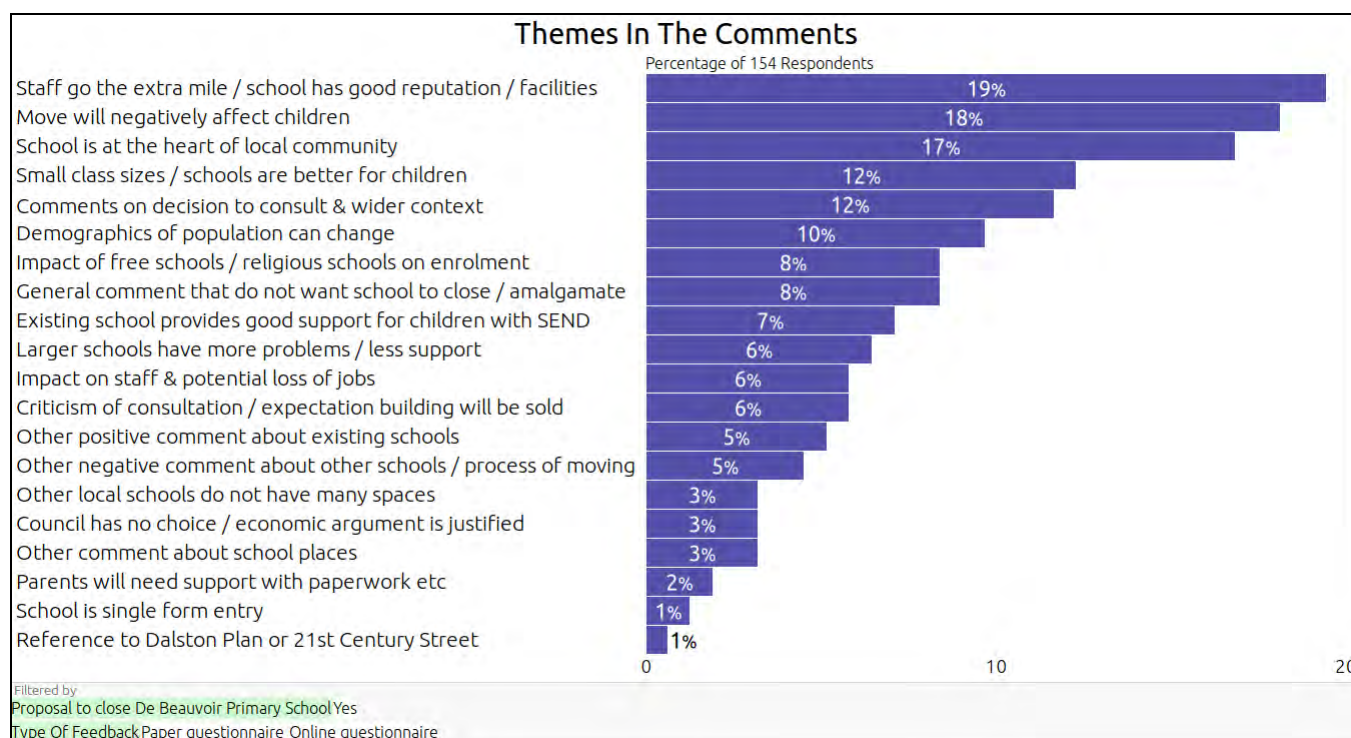


Figure 3.5

3.2 Positive Feedback About De Beauvoir

19% think that staff go the extra mile, the school has a good reputation and/or good facilities

17% say that the school is at the heart of the local community

12% think that small class sizes are better for children

Some specific points raised by respondents in their comments include the following:

- The latest OFSTED inspection (2022) is cited by respondents, one of whom points out that this rated De Beauvoir as 'Good with Outstanding Features', despite approximately 65% of children being in receipt of pupil premium and a similar proportion living in homes where English is not the first language.
- The school is currently believed by respondents to be operating with a surplus budget.
- A high proportion of children with SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) attend the school (one respondent puts the figure at 35%). Concern was expressed, by several respondents, about the lack of specialist places for such children in the borough. A health and social care professional responding to the consultation urges the Council to consider the loss of this resource to the community, scope the SEND work the school is currently providing and carefully consider how these needs would be met in other settings. They consider De Beauvoir to be a model of good practice and excellence in this regard.
- Alternatives to closure were also suggested by respondents, including amalgamating with one of the other schools in the consultation.

The comments also include many testimonials from parents about how they and their children love the school and feel well supported by staff. A selection of this feedback is shown below.

Four of my children have attended this school. [Name] and the teachers and staff at this school have been extremely supportive when I have had health and personal issues. My children love coming to this school and are devastated about the possible closure. This school is one big, supportive family. It is not just bricks and mortar. I highly doubt that I will have this support from another school.

The staff are caring and nurturing and have successfully adapted teaching and learning styles to suit all types of learners. As a parent who is unable to drop off and pick up my child regularly, I have been able to reach out to staff whenever needed, including sending late night emails which have received instant replies. During the Covid 19 lockdowns, the school was quite quick in implementing online learning which many private schools still have not been able to implement.

*My children are at the school and have learning disabilities and struggle with transitions who is to support them or me, I have my own health I have ***, ***, ***. Who will support me with a new setting for my children? De Beauvoir was a decision I made thoroughly I put a lot of thought into choosing a school for my boys and now it's closing. I will keep them in there until the last day and probably won't get them back into a school until something magical happens and a school pops up like De Beauvoir small, intimate, family friendly environment, everyone knows everyone, everyone feels safe.*

3.3 Negative Comments About Other Schools / Process Of Moving

18% think the move will negatively affect children

6% feel that larger schools have more problems / less support

6% comment on the impact on staff / potential job losses

Some specific points raised by respondents in these comments are shown below:

- Respondents believe that walking to school is encouraged by the Council. However, if De Beauvoir closes and parents want to keep their children in local authority maintained schools, respondents fear there may be insufficient places to allow children to walk to school. The only nearby non-voluntary primary school not proposed to close is Princess May, and it is mentioned by respondents that this is also included in the consultation process and so may not be attractive to parents.
- Respondents make a comparison between one of the nearby free schools, Hackney New, which does not have a playground, and De Beauvoir, which has ample outdoor space and is on a quiet side street with no through traffic.
- Concern was also raised by respondents about the potential impact on local traffic flows as they feel that large schools in busy urban areas can be overwhelming for residents at pick up and drop off times.
- Staff members taking part in the consultation report a deterioration in their own well-being as they try to help children manage their anxiety.

Some parents and school staff submitted anecdotal evidence of how their children have been or will be negatively affected by the move. A selection of this feedback is shown below.

Moving [my son] will make him feel alienated and in a completely new environment and I know this will affect his mental wellbeing as it will be difficult to handle this change and will be a completely new academic curriculum which will in turn worsen his grades.

*Since this proposal has come to light, my eldest [child] has been feeling very anxious and upset as some of * friends have left during this process.*

Uprooting all these kids in the middle of a key development phase will not only cause distress to the child, but add more financial pressure onto each parent from having to buy new uniforms for their children and additional travel costs, which in this day and age is one more nail in the coffin

I have direct access to children crying and emotionally drained as their peers leave for another school one by one. I have direct access to children as young as 4 only having 1 day to process that it would be their last day with their friends and favourite teachers; as parents frantically do in-year applications. I have direct access to parents who struggle with the English language asking for support and guidance on how to do transfer applications.

*My wellbeing is deteriorating as I have to constantly readjust and support my children as their friends leave randomly week by week. The anxiety in my class of *** year olds is completely unfair and out of their control*

3.4 Comments About School Places

10% think the demographics of the population can change and are concerned about what will happen should there be a future shortage of places.

8% discuss the impact that free schools and faith schools have on enrolment

3% believe that other local schools do not have many places

3% feel that the economic argument is justified / the Council has no choice

Examples of specific points raised by respondents in their comments include:

- There is confusion amongst some respondents about why there is now a surfeit of primary school places when permission was given recently for Hackney New Primary school, in De Beauvoir's catchment area.
- Respondents consider it unfair that free schools, academies and faith schools cannot be included in action taken by the Council to address falling rolls. There are questions in the feedback about the rationale behind closing and amalgamating so many local schools, whilst leaving the voluntary sector out of the equation, particularly when any future new schools in the borough would have to be free schools.

- Other local schools are believed to be mostly full already following the proposals being publicised. One respondent makes reference to a government website that they say shows many local schools, particularly those to the south of Dalston Lane, have been largely unaffected by the fall in pupil numbers, with some having as little as 2% of spaces free, despite an overall maximum pupil number of 500+.
- Respondents comment that some children at De Beauvoir are resident in Islington and may have a preference for relocating to an Islington school, where they believe they will have no priority in terms of waiting lists.
- There is doubt amongst respondents about the evidence for the predicted decline in demand for school places. Brexit, covid and cost of living, all cited as possible influences, are perceived as recent events, whose longer term impact may still be unknown.

Some examples of the comments received on these topics are given below.

Hackney council have told parents that De Beauvoir school should close because pupil numbers are falling and will continue to do so in the future. The council cited three driving factors; Brexit, covid and the cost of living crisis; all of which were pushing families out of London. [...] Brexit, covid and the cost of living crisis are all recent events. Although they have had an impact on pupil numbers recently, there is no evidence that these trends will continue in the long term. In fact shortly before these events, pupil numbers in Hackney had been rising.

A school does not go from being oversubscribed in several year groups 6 or 7 years ago meaning my children had to wait until nearly the end of the school year for a place, to virtually empty now in comparison, as has happened with De Beauvoir. When this has happened elsewhere it has taken decades. I do feel like the council have somehow pursued an internal unwritten policy of diverting potential pupils whether they are reception age or in year admissions for older year groups, away from De Beauvoir and into other neighbouring schools, to keep pupil numbers up at the other schools so they don't have to consider closing more schools and the council admitted at a parent's meeting that they have no power to close free or academy schools and religious schools, so siphoning children into those schools saves the headache of trying to reason with those schools to close of their own accord.

There is low public confidence in the data interpretation. Many parents are sceptical, and cite examples such as the closure and reopening of Hackney schools previously.

Whilst the school has had a falling roll for a number of years, the opening of Hackney Free School severely impacted the number of children applying. When the area was already suffering with many unfilled Reception places, Hackney's decision to allow an additional Free School to be built is baffling. The closure of De Beauvoir, we believe, is related to this decision and seeing as the school has recently achieved a good Ofsted, the timing of the proposed closure is devastating for everyone involved.

I'm worried about the pressure the closure of De Beauvoir Primary will put on other schools in the area. Our most local school (Hackney New) has no outside space so it is important to us to have other options with outside space when our son starts reception in Sept 2025. We're worried if De Beauvoir Primary closes that not only takes that option away but possibly others as the other schools will be full with children who would have gone there.

3.5 General Feedback

12% commented about the decision to consult and the wider context of falling school rolls.

8% just said they do not want the school to close, with little additional detail

6% are critical of the consultation and/or fear the building will be sold to developers

Some specific points raised in the feedback from respondents around these topics include:

- There are questions in the feedback about the slow response to the problem of falling rolls and the pressure this has placed on schools. Respondents believe that other local authorities took action sooner to address the issue.
- The feedback suggests many parents feel they are not being listened to, that the Council has already given up and the outcome of the consultation is a foregone conclusion. There are references to the ‘gentrification’ of Hackney as well as other council consultations where the proposals have subsequently been adopted despite a majority expressing disagreement.
- There are concerns in the comments about the perceived lack of answers from the Council to questions raised during meetings about the proposals. Additionally, there are reports of low public confidence in the data being used to inform decisions.

Examples of comments around these issues are shown below.

I do wonder if filling this form is merely a process with no clear facts that it would be read and understood. This is because I cannot believe we are even at this stage considering the comments and issues raised at the first stage and the lack of answers and explanations provided by Hackney Council.

Hackney in general pushes people out the borough through, for example, their own housing schemes, increase in rental properties, lack of initiative to encourage people to come and live in the borough, road closures where many consultation processes showed more voted "no" to closure than "yes" but they still proceeded. They have not factored in their own conduct as a borough into this decision.

There are few spaces for children and young people. The school is a much valued community resource for families. I'd argue that the tokenistic closure consultation process has served to further disempower local residents who perhaps already feel marginalised and neglected in local planning decisions. The decision of the council to close the school will have a social impact beyond the disruption of those children who are currently being educated.

I think it would be wise for a third party to check the data informing the school closure policy. There is low public confidence in the data interpretation. Many parents are sceptical, and cite examples such as the closure and reopening of Hackney schools previously

I understand the rationale for the consultation for the closure of schools in Hackney. My concern is the length of time it has taken the Local Authority to address the problem of falling rolls - it has been clear London, including Hackney, was likely to be put into a difficult position. Other LAs adjacent to Hackney acted sooner.

4. Response to Proposals To Close Randal Cremer Primary

At the start of the consultation period, 400 forms were given out to parents and staff at Randal Cremer primary school, although replies were also accepted from wider stakeholders and interested parties. In total, 106 responses were received to the consultation on the proposal to close the school.

35% of respondents are interested members of the public, 25% are parents at another school in Hackney, 17% are a parent, carer or guardian of a child at the school and 3% are staff or governors at the school.

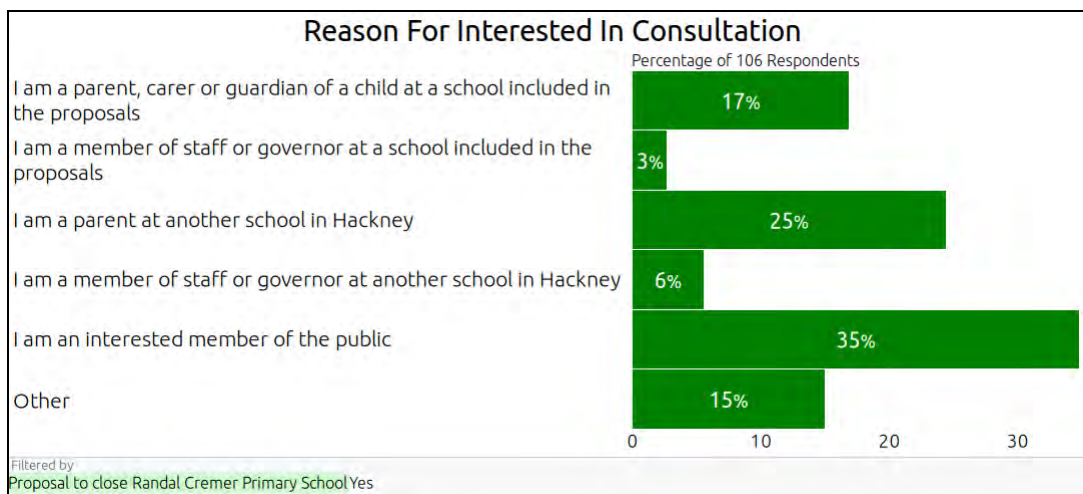


Figure 4.1

Overall, 12% of respondents agree with the proposal to close Randal Cremer, whilst 84% disagree.

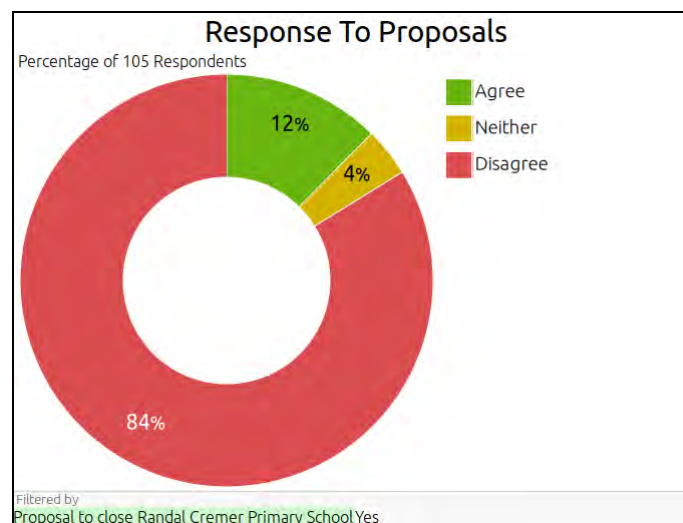


Figure 4.2

6% of parents, carers and guardians agree with the proposals to close the school, compared to 14% of other respondents. Caution must be used when interpreting these results due to the very small numbers of respondents.

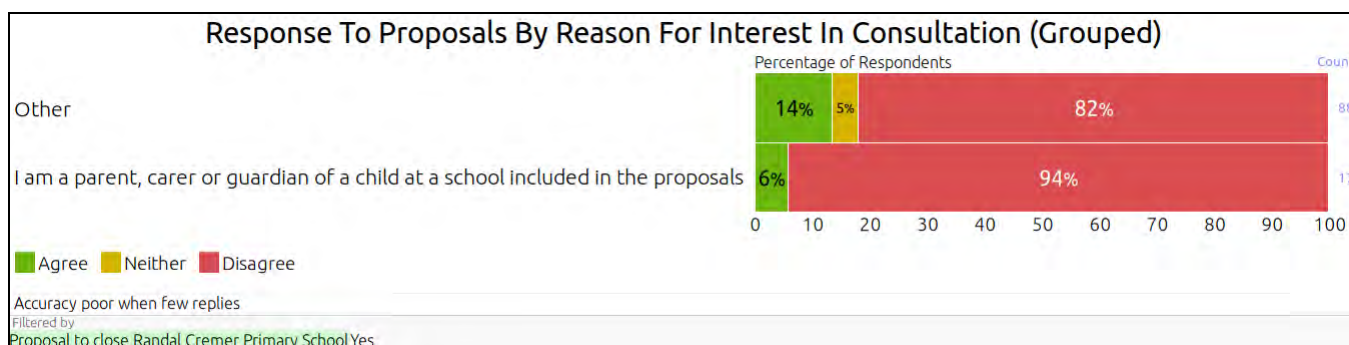


Figure 4.3

4.1 Analysis Of Comments On Proposal To Close Randal Cremer

32% of respondents gave positive feedback about the school, whilst 25% made negative comments about other schools or the process of moving. 22% gave broader feedback about school places in general and 18% discussed the wider context of the consultation.

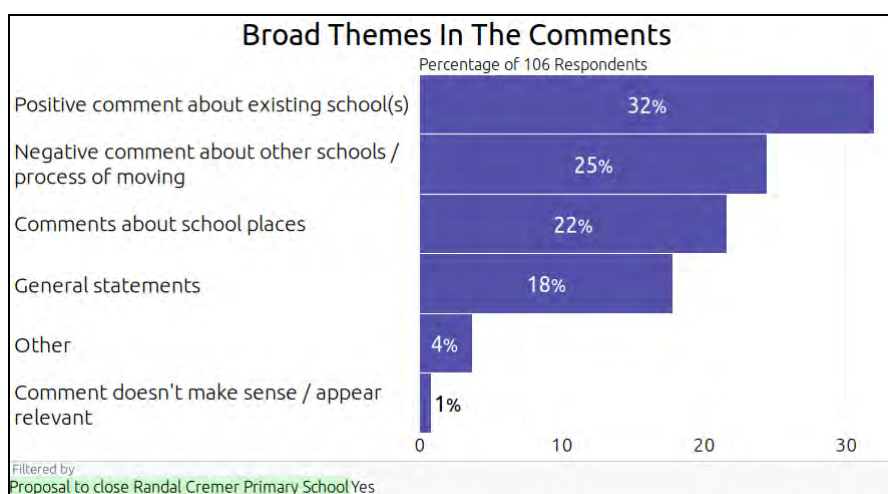


Figure 4.4

The qualitative feedback was further analysed to identify more specific themes in the comments, these are shown in the graph below and are discussed in more detail in the sections that follow.

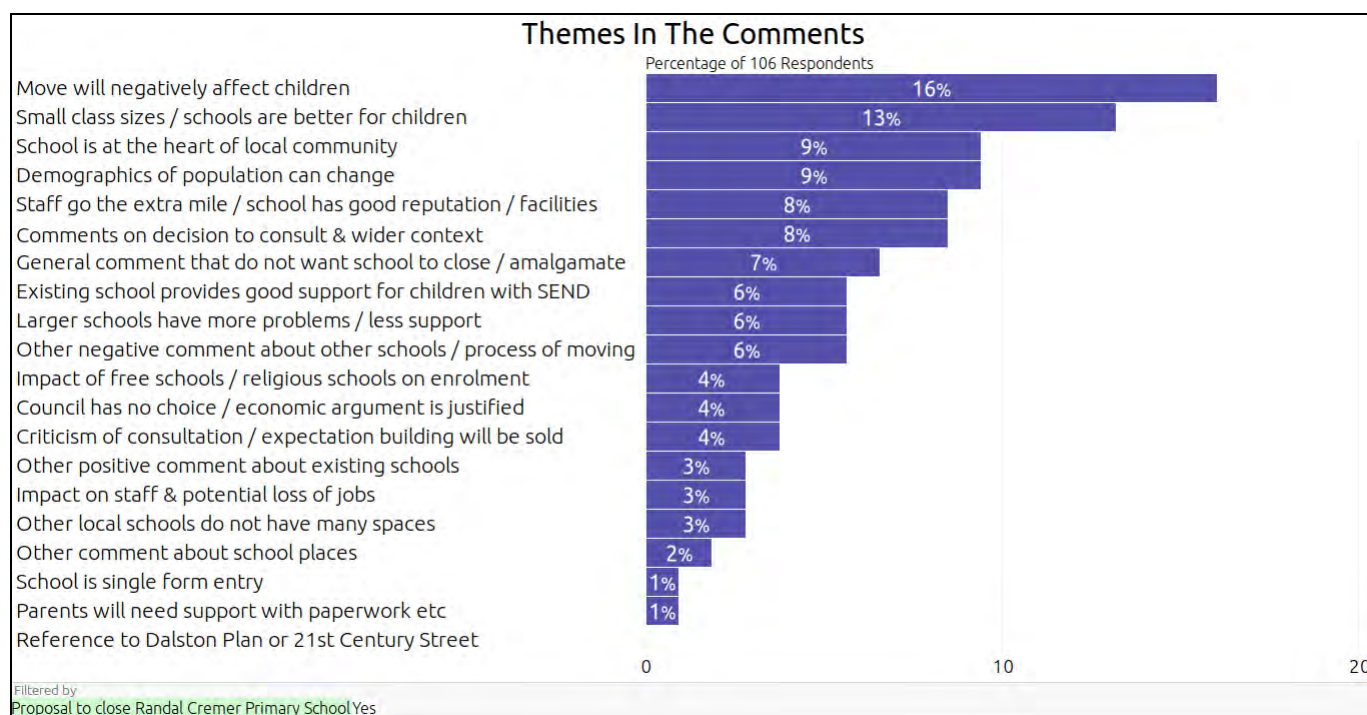


Figure 4.5

4.2 Positive Feedback About Randal Cremer

13% think that small class sizes are better for children

9% say that the school is at the heart of the local community

8% think that staff go the extra mile, the school has a good reputation and/or good facilities

Some specific points raised by respondents in these comments include the following:

- An Education, Health and Care Officer from the Hackney SEND team has responded to the consultation to raise concerns about the closure from a SEND perspective.
- Randal Cremer is also seen as a hub for refugee families as well as other minority groups.
- Additionally, the school is described by respondents as being somewhere that accepts those who have been excluded from other schools.
- Alternatives to closure were also suggested by respondents, including amalgamating with one of the other schools in the consultation.

The Education, Health and Care Officer from the Hackney SEND team highlights the very significant challenges the borough faces with the inclusion of such pupils in mainstream settings. With specialist settings and ARPs full, and more requests for placements than space available, “an extraordinary amount” is spent on out of borough independent provision.

Due to the inclusive, nurturing environment at Randal Cremer, the respondent feels that the children with SEND are less on the local authority's radar because their needs are being met, whereas this is likely to change if these children are required to move to a larger, less inclusive environment. There are concerns that these children may then require more costly specialist settings. The respondent expresses concern that "the proposal has not sufficiently considered both the distress and cost implications of closing our most inclusive primary schools". This could be avoided by working with Randal Cremer to expand on its current SEND provision. The respondent encourages decision makers to consult more widely with the ECHP, wider SEND Team and the Re-integration Unit.

Randal Cremer is also perceived to be a hub for refugee families. A respondent cites the latest Ofsted report, which confirms that pupils who do not speak English as a first language are well supported, helped by the partnerships the staff have formed with their families. There are concerns expressed by respondents about what will happen to these children if the school closes.

A selection of the positive comments about the school is shown below.

Randal Cremer is the only school in the borough that will take pupils who have been excluded from other schools. It provides absolutely essential services for pupils who are our most vulnerable, and they have been directly impacted by the Hackney New School opening nearby - but this school won't address the needs of the very disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils served by Randal Cremer.

They are a fantastic support for children with SEN and other needs. They have also been a hub for Refugee families and other minority groups within the area. The loss of this school will be an incredible blow to an already marginalised community with no thought to where these families will be sent across the borough.

I feel that Randal Cremer is a strong community school which works well with marginalised families and children with high levels of SEND - perhaps it would be of great benefit to offer more funding to increase and extend this work.

4.3 Negative Comments About Other Schools / Process Of Moving

16% think the move will negatively affect children

6% feel that larger schools have more problems / less support

3% comment on the impact on staff / potential job losses

The feedback collected in the consultation includes testimonials from parents about the negative impact the situation is having on their children.

Everyone in the school is stressing about this proposal. I have two special needs kids. You are not thinking about us at all. Kids are struggling

*I have had to move *** of my children to a different school and leave *** at Randal Cremer until they go to Secondary school. This is not because I wanted to or because it is a bad school but because I had to give my kids some stability in the situation that Hackney Council have created. There are children still at Randal Cremer seeing their friends leave because their parents, like me, want to give them stability. I have no faith that Hackney can meet their promises of supporting parents to find appropriate places. Moreover, I have seen the staff at Randal Cremer lose heart and although they are all doing amazingly to support the children, who is supporting them? They are about to lose community that can't be replaced and jobs that are hard to find elsewhere. To top it off, [teacher] is visibly heartbroken each week to see more kids leave. And then there are many kids left with SEN, who have no easy way to stay or move to somewhere else as places are so limited.*

Not enough thought has been given to the long distances children will have to travel, what will happen to the vulnerable children who rely on Randal Cremer and the divide that is opening up between schools serving middle class pupils and those from working class families.

4.4 Comments About School Places

9% think the demographics of the population can change and are concerned about what will happen should there be a future shortage of places.

4% discuss the impact that free schools and faith schools have on enrolment

4% feel that the economic argument is justified / the Council has no choice

3% believe that other local schools do not have many places

A selection of the comments on this topic is shown below.

Birth rates and population rates rise and fall. What evidence does the council have that birth rates and population of Hackney will continue to decline? History says this is unlikely to be the case as dips in birth rates often follow a rise.

These are public local authority schools. Once closed, because of government policy, they can only reopen as academies, which are secretive schools outside democratic control. Many problems have recently come to light in Hackney academies. Working class and black students are less likely to thrive.

Unfortunately these schools have falling numbers of children attending. No fault of the schools - a problem across London. But the way schools are funded, it's unfair to disproportionately spend money on these few children when this money could be spread out amongst all Hackney schools.

4.5 General Feedback

8% made comments about the decision to consult and the wider context of falling school rolls.

7% just said they do not want the school to close, with little additional detail

4% are critical of the consultation and/or fear the building will be sold to developers

Some specific points raised in the feedback from respondents around these issues are:

- Many parents feel that the decision has already been made and the outcome of the consultation is a foregone conclusion.
- There are references in the comments collected during the consultation to the 'gentrification' of Hackney and concerns that long-standing council policies have created the current situation.
- Respondents suspect that the land will be sold to developers.

Some of the comments illustrating these points are shown below.

The closure of schools in Hackney seems to be a foregone conclusion. We found out about it earlier this year but I feel this has been years in the making, especially given the council's gentrification of Hackney in recent years.

This is not a consultation process. The decision has already been made. There seems to be no opportunity to amalgamate. Parents and staff have not been given adequate notice. It is opportunistic as undoubtedly the building will be sold to developers to turn into private housing for large amounts of money. Children will have to attend new schools, siblings may have to attend different schools, which amalgamation would have avoided.

5. Response To Proposals To Merge Colvestone & Princess May Primaries

At the start of the consultation period, 300 forms were given out to parents and staff at Colvestone primary school and 350 to those at Princess May, although replies were also accepted from wider stakeholders and interested parties.

In total, 463 responses were received to the consultation on the proposal to close Colvestone and merge with Princess May.

Colvestone parents have created a website setting out their “case for Colvestone” with a link to the consultation and tips for what to say in response. Many comments received in response to the proposals appear to have been copied and pasted from the website.

40% of respondents are interested members of the public, 21% are a parent, carer or guardian of a child at the school, 19% are parents at another school in Hackney and 1% are staff or governors at the school.

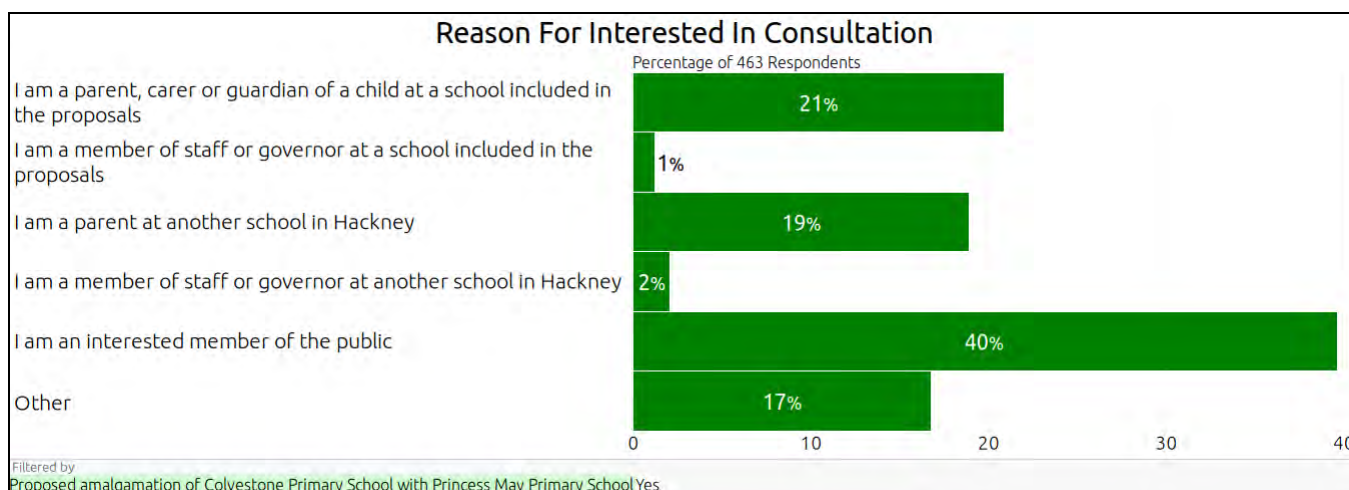


Figure 5.1

5.1 Response To Proposals

Overall, 8% of respondents agree with the proposal to merge Colvestone and Princess May, whilst 90% disagree.

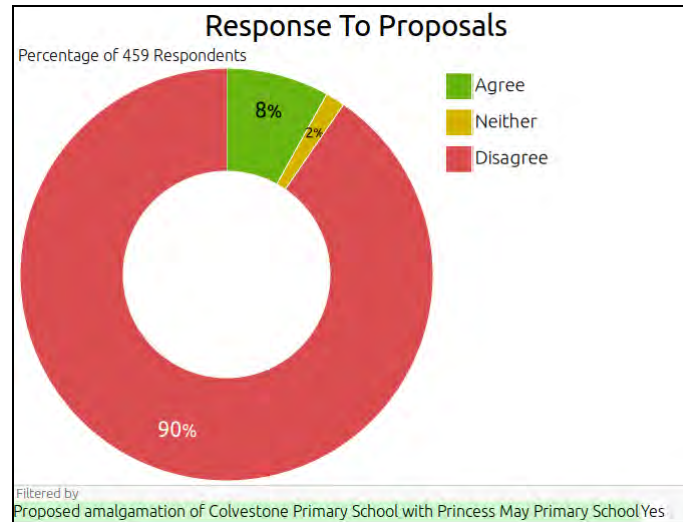


Figure 5.2

Due to the larger number of responses to the Colvestone consultation compared to the other proposals, it is possible to break results down in more detail by 'reason for interest in the consultation'.

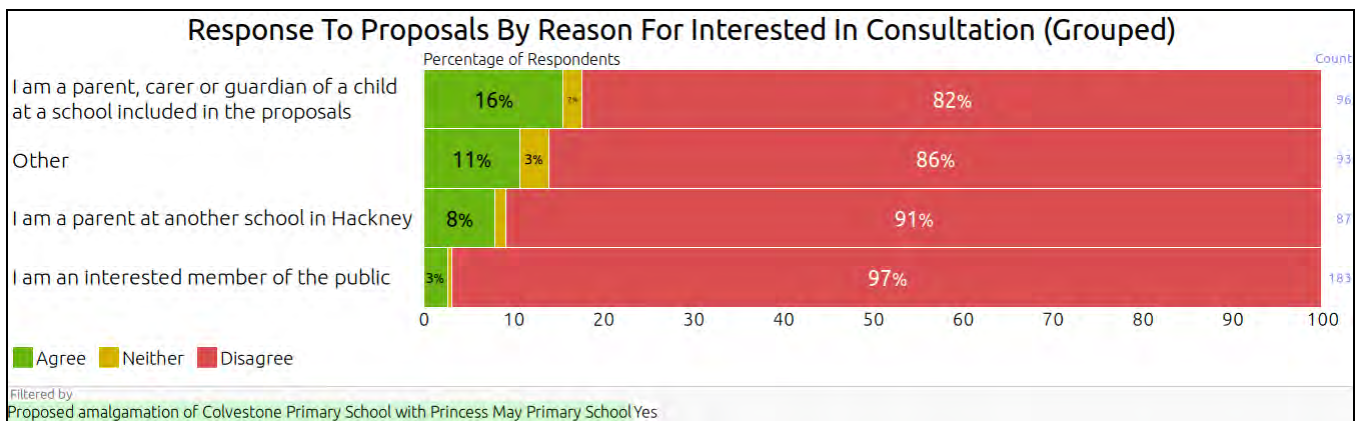


Figure 5.3

5.2 Analysis Of Comments On Proposal To Merge Colvestone & Princess May

58% of respondents gave positive feedback about the school, whilst 24% made negative comments about other schools or the process of moving. 26% gave broader feedback about school places in general and 19% discussed the wider context of the consultation.

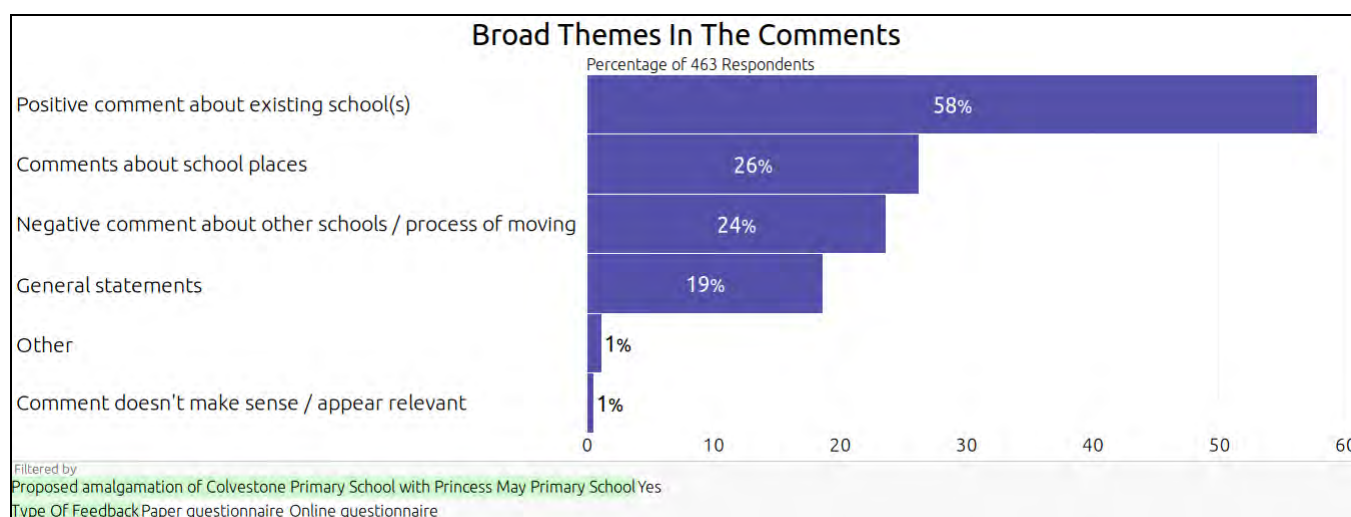


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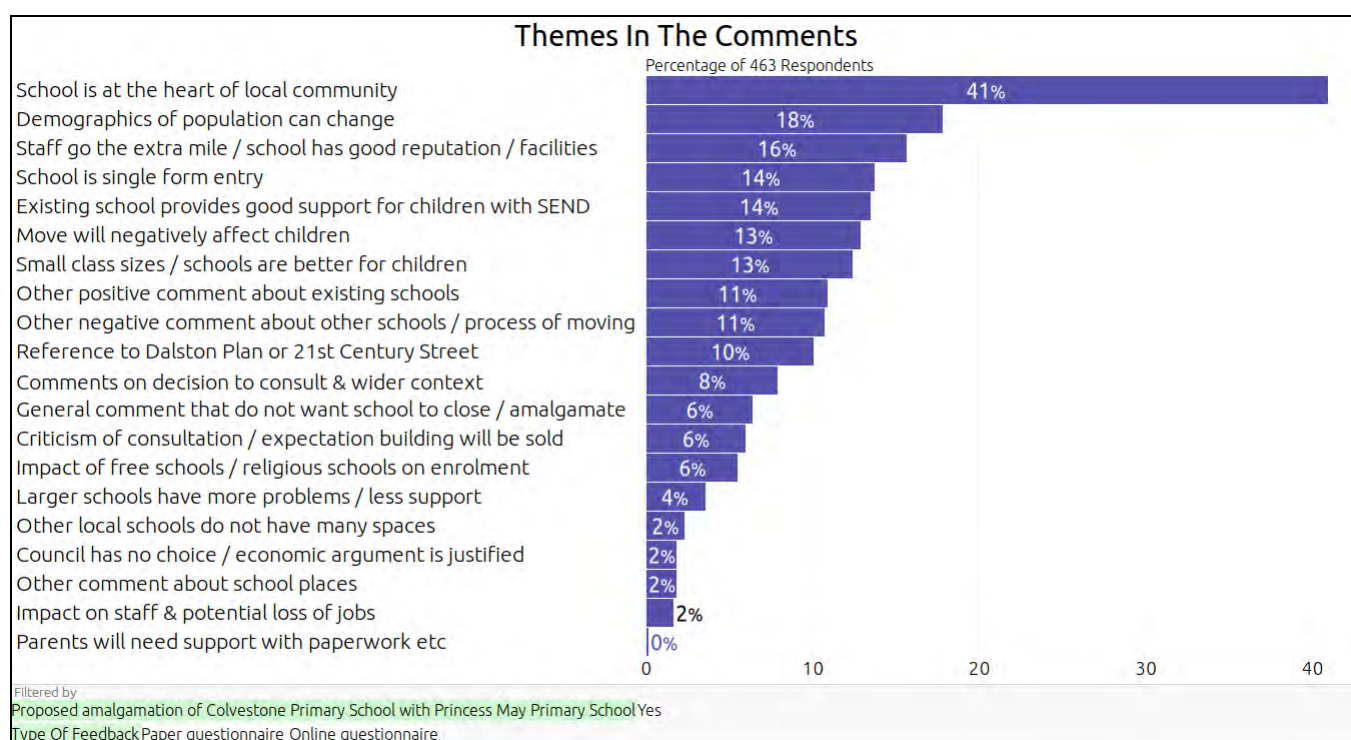


Figure 5.5

5.3 Positive Feedback About Colvestone

41% say that the school is at the heart of the local community

16% think that staff go the extra mile, the school has a good reputation and/or good facilities

14% mention that the school is single form entry

14% feel the school provides good support for children with SEND

Some specific points raised by respondents in these comments include the following:

- 10% of respondents mention the Dalston Plan and/or the 21st Century Street that is to be created in Colvestone Crescent, the area around the school.
- The comments suggest that the school has strong links with the local community. Traders in Ridley Road market responded to the consultation expressing concern about the reduction in footfall as the parents and children of the school are currently regular customers.
- Respondents state that 7% of Colvestone students have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), well above the 4.3% average across the borough. In addition, a number of SEND and Inclusion professionals responding to the consultation express concern about the merger. They consider the small, single form entry school to be “exactly what local authorities need right now to tackle a number of growing problems in our student population”.
- The grade two listed school buildings are believed to be of historic significance, being part of the original Birkbeck Schools founded by William Ellis. Some respondents believe there is a restrictive covenant on the building, barring its use for anything other than education provision. Respondents report that the building has also recently undergone an extensive restoration process.
- Respondents feel that joining the Blossom Federation in September 2022 has had a positive impact on Colvestone. The introduction of the new leadership team has been well received and the school is perceived by respondents to be on an upward trajectory with proactive steps being taken to address its budget deficit, including running an in-year surplus for 2022. Respondents believe this partnership deserves to be given more time.

Dalston Plan & 21st Century Street

The Dalston Plan aims to shape the future of the area by building over 600 affordable new homes. A key feature of the Plan involves turning Colvestone Crescent into the borough's first 21st Century Play Street. As the primary school is located at the end of Colvestone Crescent, a number of respondents to the consultation feel it is an integral part of the creation of the Play Street. This is viewed by respondents as being the case as the Plan aims to create a child-friendly, safe environment. Similarly, Colvestone is the closest primary school to the main location proposed for the new homes.

A selection of comments about the Dalston Plan and 21st Century Street is shown below.

The school is pivotal in the plan to turn Colvestone Crescent into a 21st Century Street, the borough's first permanent play street. This will not only be an incredible community asset, but will make Hackney an example for other boroughs to follow in the necessary move to make cities more human-friendly and sustainable, which is all key to ensuring improved mental health across our city communities.

Whilst pupil numbers have dropped, the local area has huge plans for residential development so I strongly believe this to be a temporary issue.

The 21st Century Street by Hackney Council is a brilliant plan and demonstrates everything Hackney is and what the residents want it to be like in the future. Colvestone Primary School is at the centre of this plan. The vision for such a street is built on creating a child-friendly safe environment. Closing the school makes no sense, whilst the plan itself is funded to go ahead. Without a school in that street, this investment is entirely pointless and a misuse of public finance.

The Dalston area has a Plan to build more housing very nearby. The proposed closure feels extremely short-signed in light of this - will families have the choice they deserve? Or will families even choose to live there if there is no community school nearby

Colvestone is in the centre of the Dalston Plan, which includes the commitment to building 600 new homes, including 200 affordable family homes. Shutting Colvestone - the closest school to this development - is a short-sighted action, that will negatively impact the community. This is part of an important move to try and get families to stay in the borough and keeping this local school is a huge part of that.

SEND Provision

An Education, Health and Care Officer from the Hackney SEND team has responded to the consultation to raise concerns about the closure from a SEND perspective, highlighting the very significant challenges the borough faces with the inclusion of such pupils in mainstream settings. They state that as specialist settings and ARPs are full, and there are more requests for placements than space available, “an extraordinary amount” is spent on out of borough independent provision. Due to the inclusive, nurturing environment at Colvestone, the respondent feels that the children with SEND are less on the local authority’s radar because their needs are being met, whereas this is likely to change if these children are required to move to a larger, less inclusive environment. There are concerns that these children may then require more costly specialist settings. The respondent expresses concern that “the proposal has not sufficiently considered both the distress and cost implications of closing our most inclusive primary schools”. They feel this could be avoided by working with Colvestone to expand on its SEND provision. The respondent encourages decision makers to consult more widely with the ECHP, wider SEND Team and the Re-integration Unit.

These comments are echoed by a CAMHS social worker responding to the consultation, employed by another borough, whose children went to Colvestone. They consider the school to be a “huge resource precisely because it is small and nurturing” and suggest it would be waste of resources to close the school. Their suggestion is to use money from the SEN budget that is currently spent on alternative provision, out of borough, and work to enhance the SEND provision already offered by Colvestone. Similarly, an Inclusion Expert responding to the consultation suggests converting the currently vacant school keeper’s house into a resource base for children with SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs) and Neurodiversity. They believe this could be staffed with specialist teachers and teaching assistants who work to support children in mainstream classes.

Many parents of children with SEN included testimonials within their feedback about how happy and well-supported their children are at the school. Some examples are shown below.

*My older [child] with [SEND] went to *** schools in Hackney, including outstanding schools. * was facing being out of mainstream education and Colvestone showed * love, acceptance and support which totally changed things around and * is now at a mainstream secondary. The fact that Colvestone accommodates for so many children with additional needs and keeps them in mainstream schools saves Hackney a lot of money. My younger [child], like so many other children, is on a 2-3 year wait list for a diagnosis with CAMHS and therefore is not part of the SEN stats*

*My child has SEN and needs to be educated in a small, calm school. It has taken * *** years to settle at Colvestone, so any disruption to* routine will harm * health and education.*

*We have chosen Colvestone Primary school for our little [child], who is *** years-old and [SEND] because it provides a required quick journey access to school (5 minutes), a safe and happy environment (that a small one form school offers) and a wonderful SEN support ([my child] has an experienced SEN one to one). These are the 3 fundamental poles for [my child] to access education. It has taken time and great effort for [my child] to be happy and settled in * school (***) years now) and changing school at this stage will have an incredibly difficult impact on * and it will be practically impossible for * to access education, and this also will have an enormous impact on * mental health.*

Historical Significance & Future Of The Building

Colvestone has been a school since it was built in 1852 as one of the six Birkbeck schools. Respondents report that there has recently been investment in the fabric of the building: the exterior has been sand blasted and the lead on the roof replaced.

Campaigners believe there is a restrictive covenant on the site, which prohibits its use for anything other than education. The example of Hackney Downs School is cited in the feedback with respondents suggesting it closed and then had to re-open as a school (Mossbourne Academy) due to restrictions preventing the site being used for anything else.

Council figures are cited by respondents in reference to the cost of maintaining an empty listed building: £1m to close the school and £250-£300,000 each year to maintain the closed buildings. In addition to these costs, respondents comment that the Council would have to absorb Colvestone's historic debt, which respondents believe is currently being reduced under the new management.

Local residents of Colvestone Crescent responded to the consultation expressing concern that an empty, disused building could increase the risk of anti-social behaviour in the area. Many stated that they feel the school is an integral part of the community.

Examples of comments about the historical significance and future use of the building made in response to the consultation are shown below.

The site has multiple protections - two Grade 2 listings and an outdoor classroom / playground that is an Asset of Community Value - it is not a building easily repurposed but it is an excellent building purpose-built as a school. We also strongly suspect that it has protected educational use and are searching for the deeds.

Colvestone is the beating heart of Dalston. It creates natural surveillance in the area and makes Dalston the vibrant, diverse, friendly community that it is. Without it I believe we would soon see a rise in the levels of anti social behaviour.

The decision to close a school without any plan for the future of the site is bizarre. I understand it is to be a community asset, but this is vague and without a clear plan and funding will likely see the site lay vacant for a long time, draining further resources. This lack of plan is compounded when you consider the very recent (and long overdue) capital works to the buildings.

I believe that writing off Colvestone's deficit, and paying for security costs whilst the school is mothballed, is an egregious use of public funds.

Impact Of Joining Blossom Federation

Respondents to the consultation are very positive about the stability, new leadership and improved facilities Blossom has brought the school since it began in September 2022 and they believe the school is now running an in-year budget surplus and can start to reduce its financial deficit.

Feedback has also been provided in the consultation about the previous partnership with Thomas Fairchild primary as part of the Soaring Skies Federation. Substantial criticism is levied by some respondents towards the previous leadership of the school and the oversight from the Learning Trust. Respondents feel the new leadership and partnership with Blossom has seen the school turn a corner and they feel this should be given further time to develop to fulfil its potential.

Some of the comments about the new partnership with Blossom are shown below.

This year has seen huge developments at Colvestone since the Blossom Federation partnership, which can clearly be recognised in all the ODR and SIP reports - yet we need more time to be given a chance to develop further (and build a new reputation under the new leadership) to attract new families, increase our numbers of children, and therefore really begin to lower the deficit again.

It seems as though we are in this process mostly due to the large historic debt but Hackney Education supported the school to choose Blossom Federation as new leadership going forwards and they are taking proactive steps to address the deficit. YOU HAVE NOT GIVEN THEM A CHANCE.

The Federation has turned a budget surplus - despite a low pupil roll - in its first 6 months in charge. So doing Blossom Federation has shown that the school can be financially viable under its new leadership. We, as parents, carers and students, love the stability and improved facilities Blossom Federation has brought the school.

Being on the list to close (or merge - which essentially means our school will close), completely diminishes our chances of attracting more families - and yes, if we were not on the list, with all the work that Blossom have helped the school to do this year, we would have absolutely taken a lot of the surplus school children in the area looking for Reception places because that's how much we believe in the impact they have made to our school!

5.4 Negative Comments About Other Schools / Process Of Moving

13% think the move will negatively affect children

11% comment on other negative aspects of moving

4% feel that larger schools have more problems / less support

The feedback from respondents in the consultation suggests that many Colvestone parents are unhappy at the idea of sending their children to Princess May. Some say they will chose another school, even if they have to move out of the area. Their comments cite a number of specific reasons for this:

- Several respondents mention a poll of parents that revealed that over 90% did not include Princess May as one of their original options when applying for a school place for their child. 13 respondents explicitly state that they will not be sending their child to Princess May and many others express concern about doing so.
- There are multiple references in the feedback to a meeting on 27th June 2023 with Paul Senior (Hackney Education) who confirmed that Princess May is on the list of schools to be considered for consultation next year. Thus, there is a fear amongst some respondents that sending children here may result in them being subject to a second school closure or amalgamation in the future.
- Many comments make reference to Princess May being on the A10 with its playground backing directly onto the main road. Additionally, to get to the school, respondents say many children would have to walk directly up the main road, which they believe is very polluted and congested, and would be particularly difficult for children with SEND.

Examples of the comments on these topics are shown below.

The pollution levels at Princess May Primary were 40% higher than Colvestone Primary School in 2021 due to the extremely busy main road that the school sits on. With 70% of eligible roads in Hackney becoming LTNs and the council's drive to promote LTNs in the borough, the diverted volume of traffic is only going to increase this pollution.

If the pupils currently at Colvestone are forced to move to Princess May, I feel the care afforded to children and the educational options available to their parents will suffer a serious deterioration, as they would likely be forced to disturb their children's education and transfer them to a school exclusively for SEND children.

It has become clear that many of the wonderful staff from Colvestone will not be transferred to Princess May and based on this information and the survey that was carried out, many, if not most of the families (ourselves included) will not go to Princess May. So the result would be that Princess May will still suffer from low numbers and also face closure in the not too distant future.

Had you chosen to merge De Beauvoir and Colvestone this would have been a different matter as they are very similar in ethos and size but going to Princess May is not an option for us.

5.5 Comments About School Places

18% think the demographics of the population can change and are concerned about what will happen should there be a future shortage of places.

6% discuss the impact that free schools and faith schools have on enrolment

2% believe that other local schools do not have many places

2% feel that the economic argument is justified / the Council has no choice

Many of the comments about future changes to the demographics of the population refer to the Dalston Plan and the intention to build 600 new affordable homes by 2031. Colvestone is believed to be the closest primary school to the main site earmarked for this development so many respondents argue that closing it is short-sighted.

Other specific points about school places raised by respondents in the consultation feedback are shown below.

- Merging Colvestone with De Beauvoir is suggested as an option by some respondents, since otherwise children may have to travel long distances, if parents reject Princess May, as they believe that many other schools in south Hackney are oversubscribed.
- Without Colvestone, many respondents believe there will be a lack of future parental choice as those schools that remain are religious, academy or free schools. The comments mention the perceived unfairness that only community schools can be included in any consultation.
- There is concern amongst some respondents about the loss of the maintained (free) nursery facility on the site, which currently enables seamless transition to the main school.

A selection of comments about school places is shown below.

Colvestone as a merger school for De Beauvoir. They are a much better fit and are not far geographically. Initially there may have been too many pupils at De Beauvoir but many of these have now transferred to other local schools. In fact we understand that as families have moved away from Randall Cremer and De Beauvoir in light of the proposal many of the schools in that part of the borough are now FULL and these families need another option.

I do not want to send my child to a religious school (especially as a gay parent) or a free school (the funding of which is cloaked in secrecy) therefore there are no other options available to us a family in this area. The schools we would otherwise choose are full.

Out of interest I looked at the reception intake for 2023 and saw that all the schools in my locality have a full allocation for this September, the only exception being Princess May. This was not on my list of schools and I would not send my child to this school. I'm concerned about the lack of parental choice if Colvestone closes. Also given that a high percentage of current Colvestone parents will not send their child to Princess May, would there be capacity in the other non faith (and potentially non free) schools in the area to accommodate these children?

It seems that it is only certain parents who fundamentally prefer the aesthetics of the school that are insisting on it remaining open. This preference is to the detriment of properly funded education for the pupils. The council is not to blame for the way in which education is funded, and it is not within the Council's gift to modify the national system of education funding. Wishing that it were different does not address the present problem. Amalgamation of the schools will deliver better outcomes.

The closures planned are unfairly hitting Dalston, with too many community schools close together being affected. You have not put any faith schools in this plan, which means there is nowhere left to go for pupils who do not want to go to faith schools. Leaving the one school with a strong community to continue, as a single form school, would be a fair way to rectify this problem.

5.6 General Feedback

8% made comments about the decision to consult and the wider context of falling school rolls.

6% just said they do not want the schools to merge, with little additional detail

6% are critical of the consultation and/or fear the building will be sold to developers

Some respondents mention that they have formed a campaign group, Save Colvestone Primary School, but say that they do not feel the Council is listening to them. Criticisms from respondents of both the wider context and the Council's approach to the consultation include the following points:

- Respondents comment that despite being told that Hackney Education is one system, that has to meet the needs of all the borough's schools including academies, free and faith schools, the perception is that local authority schools have been unfairly targeted in the proposals. Their argument is that "if there is ONE system - then it needs to be considered as A WHOLE".
- Respondents believe that the threat of closure makes it impossible to increase numbers on Colvestone's roll. However, they think that the campaign has raised the school's profile and those involved feel it would be possible to increase numbers if the school is removed from the list.
- These respondents do not see the proposals as a merger but rather a closure of Colvestone with a presumption that children will transfer to Princess May.
- Campaigners believe they have articulated the reasons not to close Colvestone using facts, data and numbers, whereas, in their opinion, the Council has not taken this approach. For example, respondents say that financial modelling has only been provided by the school itself and the campaign group, rather than by the Council.
- Respondents describe officials as reluctant to discuss the proposals, with meetings with councillors said to have been blocked, although the comments also make frequent references to meetings, including with the Director of Education & Inclusion. Campaigners argue that a genuine consultation requires the Council to respond to the information received and that to act "on weak data or inertia or an ill-thought through proposal would be an act of gross dereliction of duty".
- The perception of respondents is that the Council has not engaged with the wider community, such as the market traders, neighbours and other local residents.
- Many comments from the campaign group express increasing cynicism as well as concern about how the experience is affecting their children's view of the democratic process.

The graphical documents provided to the Council alongside this report include all the comments submitted as part of the consultation. Extracts from the campaigners' responses to the consultation are shown below.

I feel that the consultation 'process' as a whole has been completely unfair to the six schools thrown into the melting pot with no solid reasons given as to why they have been singled out. If this was a fair and considerate consultation all schools in the borough would have been included in the 'process' from day one. The six schools chosen are now having to fill their enrolment quotas for the coming school year with the shadow of closure hanging heavy above them. This is obviously going to have a massive negative influence on their success. If this was a 'consultation' I do not understand why Hackney Council would put a small number of the borough's schools at such a debilitating disadvantage.

It is hard not to despair at the lack of response we have been getting, at how badly the documents from the council are prepared, at the lack of data, research, or even just answers, at the fact that there is no discernible scope of the actual consultation that has been outlined, and how much this process reveals a broken democratic process and a dysfunctional education department. The only financial modelling has been provided by the school itself and our group of parents, and as it emerges that clearly closing the school will be more expensive to the tax payer than keeping it open one wonders if anyone really cares what a decision like this one is being based on.

The plans have not been properly thought through. The 'term' merger does not fool anyone. It is a closure of Colvestone with a presumption that our pupils will transfer to Princess May. This is not borne out in our consultation with parents and carers at Colvestone - and betrays a real lack of understanding behind parental choice. There is a real demand for a single form entry Local Authority school in Hackney. That need should be respected and met. Colvestone IS that school.

6. Response To The Proposal To Merge Baden Powell & Nightingale Primaries

At the start of the consultation period, 300 forms were given out to parents and staff at Baden Powell primary school and 350 to those at Nightingale, although replies were also accepted from wider stakeholders and interested parties. In total, 157 responses were received to the consultation on the proposal to merge the schools.

40% of respondents are a parent, carer or guardian of a child at the school, 24% are interested members of the public, 20% are parents at another school in Hackney and 3% are staff or governors at the school.

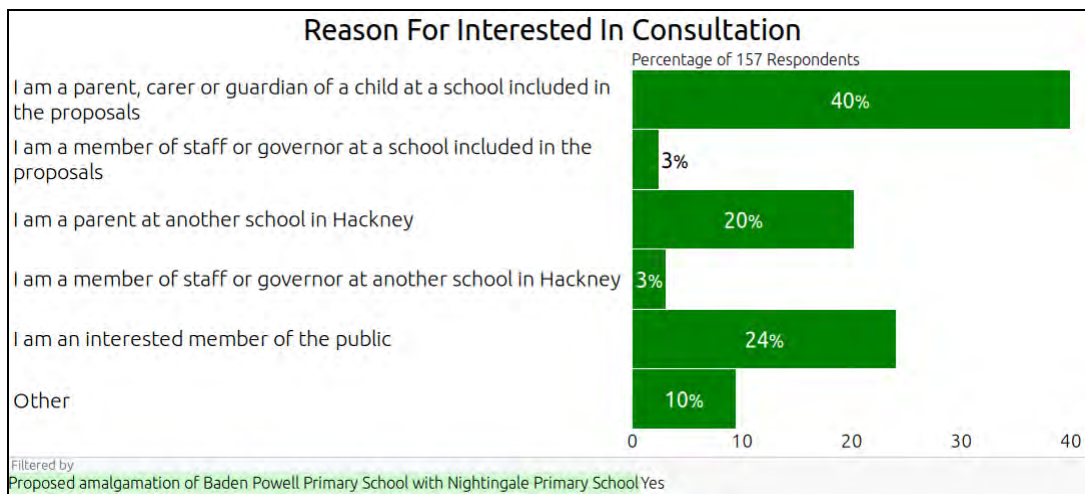


Figure 6.1

Overall, 15% of respondents agree with the proposal to merge Baden Powell and Nightingale, whilst 77% disagree.

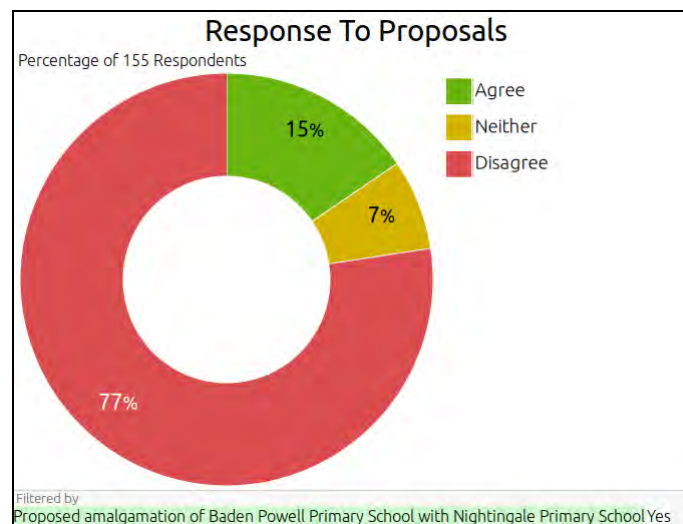


Figure 6.2

11% of parents, carers and guardians agree with the proposals to close the school, compared to 18% of other respondents. Caution must be used when interpreting these results due to the small numbers of respondents.

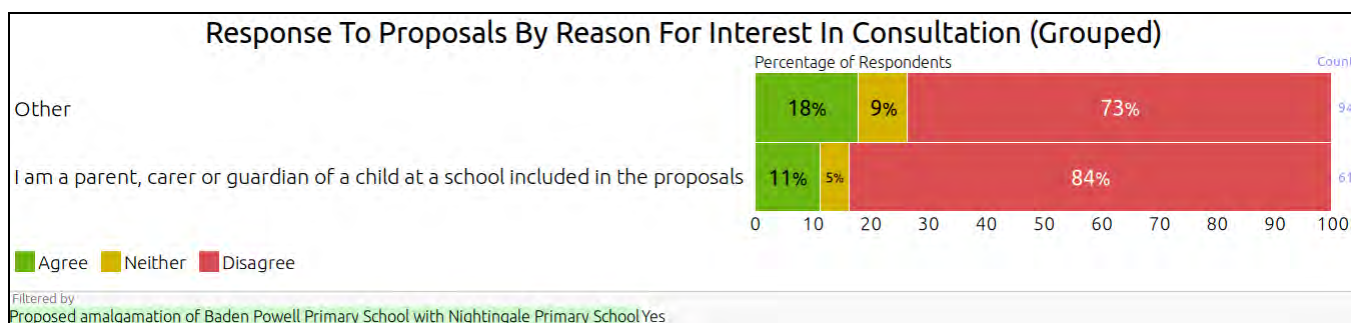


Figure 6.3

6.1 Analysis Of Comments On Proposal To Merge Baden Powell & Nightingale

31% of respondents made negative comments about other schools or the process of moving, whilst 27% gave positive feedback about the school. 20% discussed the wider context of the consultation and 17% gave broader feedback about school places in general.

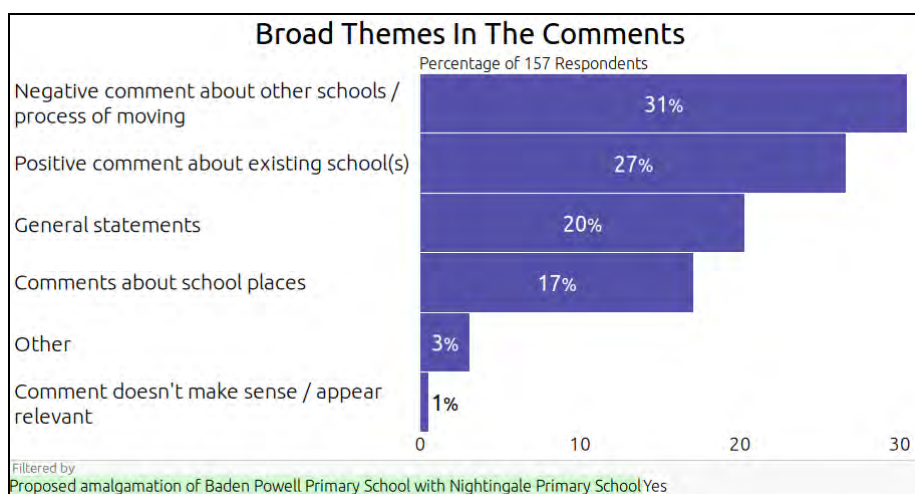


Figure 6.4

The qualitative feedback was further analysed to identify more specific themes in the comments, these are shown in the graph below and are discussed in more detail in the sections that follow.

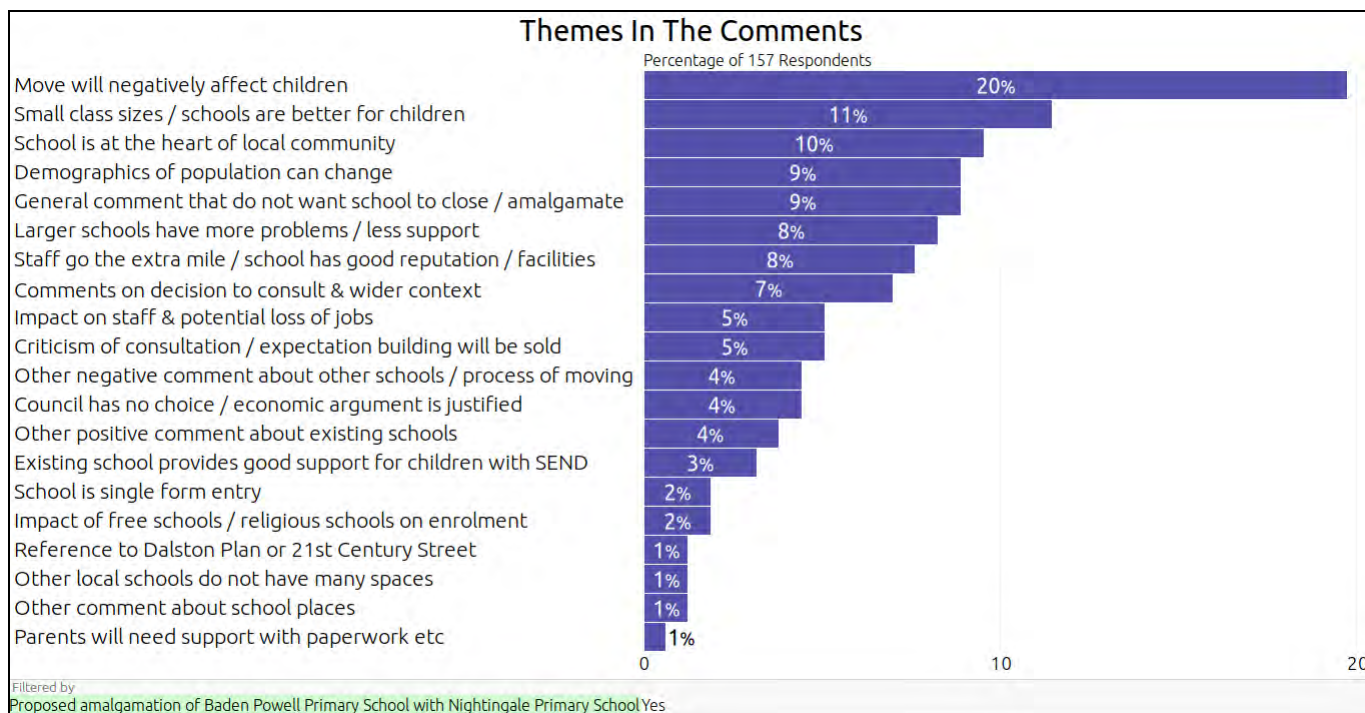


Figure 6.5

6.2 Positive Feedback About Baden Powell

11% feel small class sizes / schools are better for children

10% say that the school is at the heart of the local community

8% think that staff go the extra mile, the school has a good reputation and/or good facilities

Many comments included testimonials from parents about the school as shown below.

BP school is over 30 years old, staff are very friendly and dedicated to their jobs and pupils. They take responsibilities really seriously: looking after the kids, helping them with classwork and encourage to achieve the best grades of education. Teachers give regular updates to the parents on how their kids have been in the classroom that day. At this moment the school has two amazing young pianists, a few talented chess players, 2 wonderful violinists etc.

Generations and generations of children have been attending this school and Baden Powell has been in the heart of the community of Hackney for many, many years with nothing but good things to say about it.

We are all very happy in our school and we love our little community. Children are learning, playing and growing up in a close and peaceful environment. I deliberately have chosen a one entry form school for my child.

*I have an [SEND] child and one with needs in years ** & **. They both don't like change and do not like too many children around them. It took more than a year for each of them to get settled in Baden Powell. It is going to be so unsettling for them to change into a large school with so many pupils. I chose Baden Powell as it was small for both their needs. We love all staff. All staff know the pupils and parents. Please don't merge. If you do I will move them to a smaller school like Baden Powell.*

Although there are only a small number of responses that were clearly from families of Nightingale pupils, their comments also related to the benefits of small schools, as shown in these examples.

Nightingale is already a relatively small school, which also benefits from a distinctive admissions process that prioritises children in care and those subject to a child protection plan. There is a delicate ecosystem and one that will be particularly destabilised by the sudden arrival of so many additional pupils. Proximity should be just one measure of the suitability of a potential merger.

*Many of us picked Nightingale because it's a small school. As a parent of a SEN child, I am worried how a busier school will affect * day. I also hope that the kids won't be torn apart as they are a lovely little community with many friendships already formed.³*

³ Nightingale has capacity for 60 children per year group but currently operates to 30 children per year group.

6.3 Negative Comments About Other Schools / Process Of Moving

20% think the move will negatively affect children

8% feel that larger schools have more problems / less support

5% comment on the impact on staff / potential job losses

Many respondents are worried that children will struggle to adapt to the change, especially those with SEND. There are also concerns expressed by respondents about whether all Baden Powell staff will be offered a job at the merged school.

Examples of the comments on this topic are shown below.

Moving to a new school, some pupils will develop anxiety and stress, friendships between kids would be broken, some teachers would lose their jobs and Baden Powell Primary School structure would be shattered.

*It's going to be devastating for year * children to move once in year * and then move to a secondary, which is a huge change in their life in general. My [child] has [SEND] and * struggles to cope even with little changes during * daily routine. This will completely mess * up.*

I feel Nightingale will not be able to handle the extra children and will also not be able to employ everyone to come over either. Their after-school clubs do not tie in well with working single mums as well and it will cause a real disruption to my work as well as my son's schedule. I do not see the point of this merger and can only see Nightingale being overwhelmed by the extra students.

I would like all Baden Powell staff offered a job at Nightingale to ensure a smooth transition for the children. I would like there to be extensive collaborative work between Baden Powell and Nightingale in the lead up to September 2024 to ensure that this is a proper amalgamation of systems & ethos and not just Baden Powell becoming taken over by Nightingale. I would like the leadership at Baden Powell to move with us as the leadership in Nightingale.

6.4 Comments About School Places

9% think the demographics of the population can change and are concerned about what will happen should there be a future shortage of places.

4% feel that the economic argument is justified / the Council has no choice

2% discuss the impact that free schools and faith schools have on enrolment

1% believe that other local schools do not have many places

Many of the comments received on this topic are general in nature, as shown in the examples below.

Firstly, I do not understand why the school budget has been cut and they have to merge schools. What happens when they agree to close the school and the birth rate goes back up?

I am a parent of a 2 year old in Hackney Downs that would likely have enrolled in one of the 4 schools involved in the merges. I was not aware of the falling enrolment numbers but agree Hackney council should protect the funding and quality of the school provision by merging. My only concern is whether there will be enough places in future years if numbers start to rise again and the closed school buildings have been repurposed/sold to developers.

My concern is that no information was given about birth rate projections for the future and the level of confidence the council have that numbers will not rise again in the foreseeable future that would impact on these proposals. I am also concerned about the loss of publicly provided nursery places, I do feel this is a loss to the local area and that alternative provision will not have the same outcomes for the children that they currently get being on the same site.

6.5 General Feedback

9% report they do not want the schools to merge, with little additional detail

7% made comments about the decision to consult and the wider context of falling school rolls.

5% are critical of the consultation and/or fear the building will be sold to developers

There are concerns amongst respondents about what will happen to the school buildings if the merger goes ahead. A representative of the Orthodox Jewish community taking part in the consultation suggests the Council should consider the possibility of selling or leasing the school to one of the local Jewish schools as there is extensive overcrowding in these establishments.

Examples of the comments received about the building/repurposing are shown below.

I am worried if Baden-Powell is closed that Hackney council will build a tower block in its space blocking out light and scenery, making it harder to find a parking space due to more people living on this road. And you will probably only provide a minimal amount of social housing.

This has the makings of landgrab. i.e. Hackney council are very aware of the increasing land value in the area, and closing Baden Powell is an easy way to sell off valuable land to the next property developer waiting in line.

I would also like to see the former Baden Powell site used for something that would benefit the community.

Merging schools and selling off public land to developers is taking the interest away from residents and is more of a money making scheme.

The loss of the existing schools and school communities is challenging and emotional for all involved. The loss of these buildings forever I believe could be a strategic error on the part of the council that will have further negative impacts on the viability of cities for children and families in the short medium and long term.

7. Feedback - Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission

The Hackney Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission met on 27th June 2023 to scrutinise the proposals and has submitted a short summary of its conclusions in response to the consultation.

The Scrutiny Commission's role is strategic and, therefore, its submission to the consultation avoids commenting on the proposals for specific schools. Instead, it aims to highlight issues that can positively contribute to decision-making. The summary report, which is presented in full in Appendix 1, makes the following key points:

- Any decision to close a locally maintained school is likely to be irreversible, as the 2011 Education Act requires future demand to be met by the academy or free school sector.
- The impact of falling rolls is a long-term policy issue, as GLA modelling does not suggest a stabilisation until the end of the decade. Therefore, the Commission suggests conducting broader engagement with stakeholders and the public across the borough about the implementation of the School Estates Strategy. This would also provide an opportunity for the Council to clarify the restrictions of the existing legal framework, which does not permit them to effect direct change equally across all schools.
- The Commission acknowledges that the 20% pupil vacancy rate across the borough's primary schools is not sustainable and the Council needs to act to maintain the quality and integrity of education in Hackney.
- A number of concerns with the approach used in the consultation are highlighted in the Commission's report. In particular, it was not clear to the Commission how the information would be analysed and used to develop proposals for the next stage of the process, given the volume and wide ranging nature of the feedback likely to be received.
- Whilst accepting the financial impact falling school rolls is having, the Commission would have welcomed the provision of further evidence to demonstrate this impact on schools. More details from the affected schools would have helped those responding to the consultation to understand the implications of the situation and the Commission believes this could assist the case for change.
- The Commission also considers that it would be helpful for the Council to provide further information, going forwards, on the number of school places that need to be removed and a more detailed review, with costs, of possible alternative models for delivering the required reduction. For example, other local authorities have chosen a merger-led approach rather than school closures.
- Falling school rolls impact the wider community. In addition, they are an indication of a loss of children and families from the area, which will need the Council to make maximum use of all available options to deliver on its broader aims to create diverse and sustainable communities.
- Financial viability is clearly a key factor to be considered when determining the future of schools with falling rolls. The latest figures indicate the number of local schools carrying forward a budget deficit at the end of 2022/23 will rise from 11 to 13. However, the picture for the schools in the consultation is mixed, with some managing to maintain a surplus whilst others have a substantial deficit.
- If all the proposals go ahead, the cost to the Council is estimated to be £3.4m, of which £1m will be ongoing (for security of the vacant sites).
- The provision of further information on the additional support that may be made available to help children with SEND transfer to new schools might give some reassurance to parents.

8. Demographic Profile Of Respondents

Postcode Areas Of Respondents

Responses were received from postcodes across the borough and further afield.

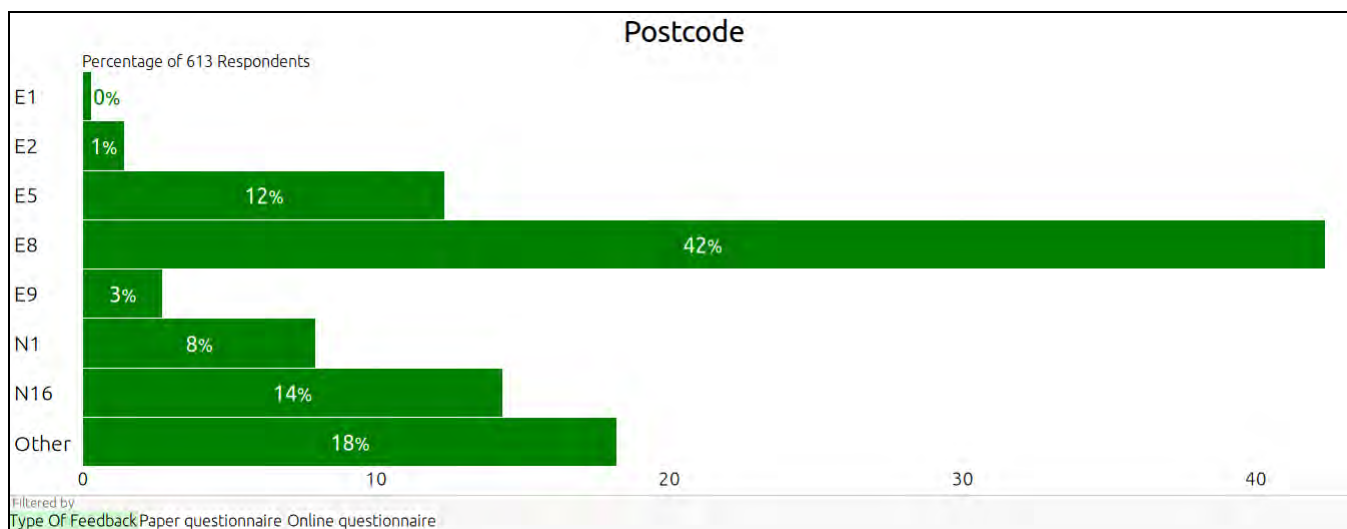


Figure 8.1

Gender Of Respondents

68% of respondents were female and 29% are male. 1% describe themselves as non-binary and a further 1% using another term.

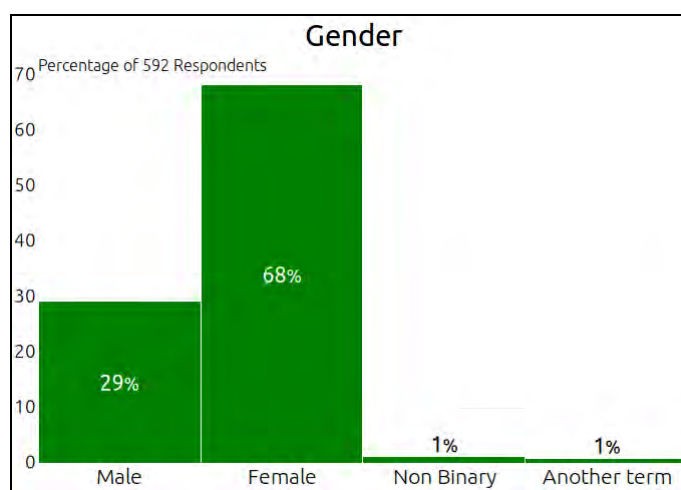


Figure 8.2

Age Profile Of Respondents

Responses were received from a broad cross section of age groups. Eight in ten respondents are under the age of 55, whilst the remainder are aged 55 or over.

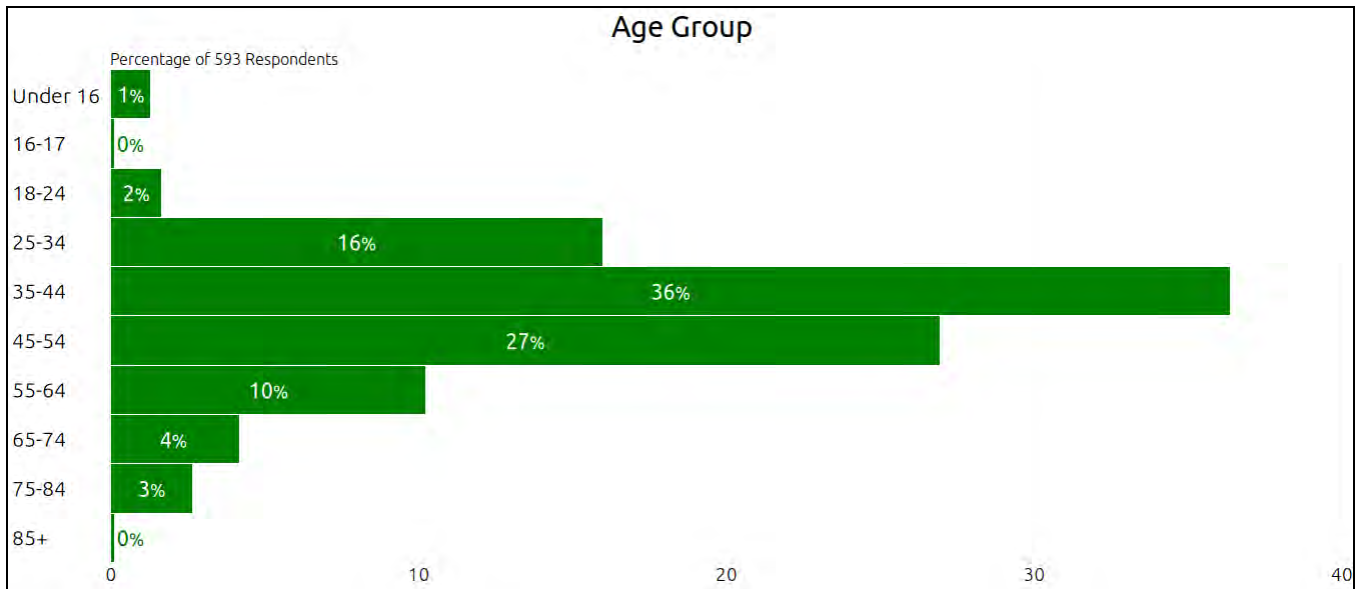


Figure 8.3

Disability

10% of respondents have a disability and 18% have caring responsibilities.

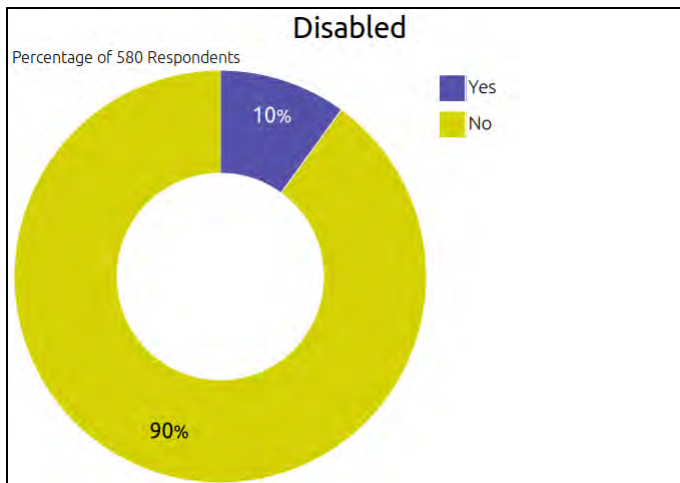


Figure 8.4

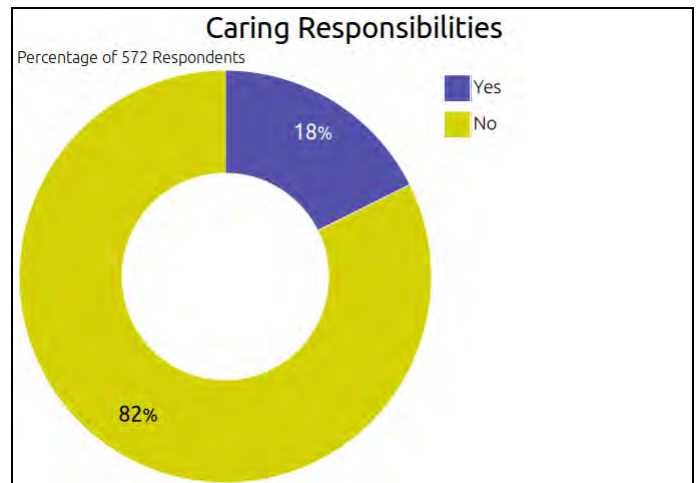


Figure 8.5

Ethnicity Of Respondents

58% of respondents are White, 15% are Black and 8% are Asian. 17% of respondents describe themselves as being from another ethnic group and 1% say they are from a mixed background.

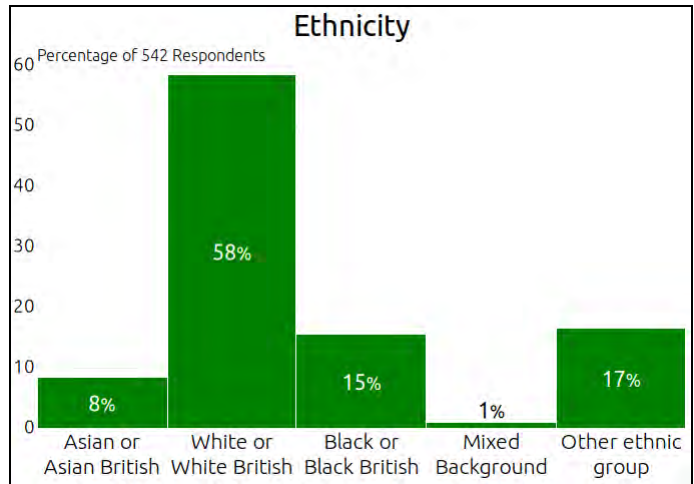


Figure 8.6

Religion Of Respondents

46% of respondents describe themselves as being atheist/having no religious belief.

27% of respondents are Christian and 13% Muslim. Smaller proportions are Jewish (2%), Buddhist (1%), Hindu (1%) or Sikh (1%). 6% describe themselves as having another belief or religion.

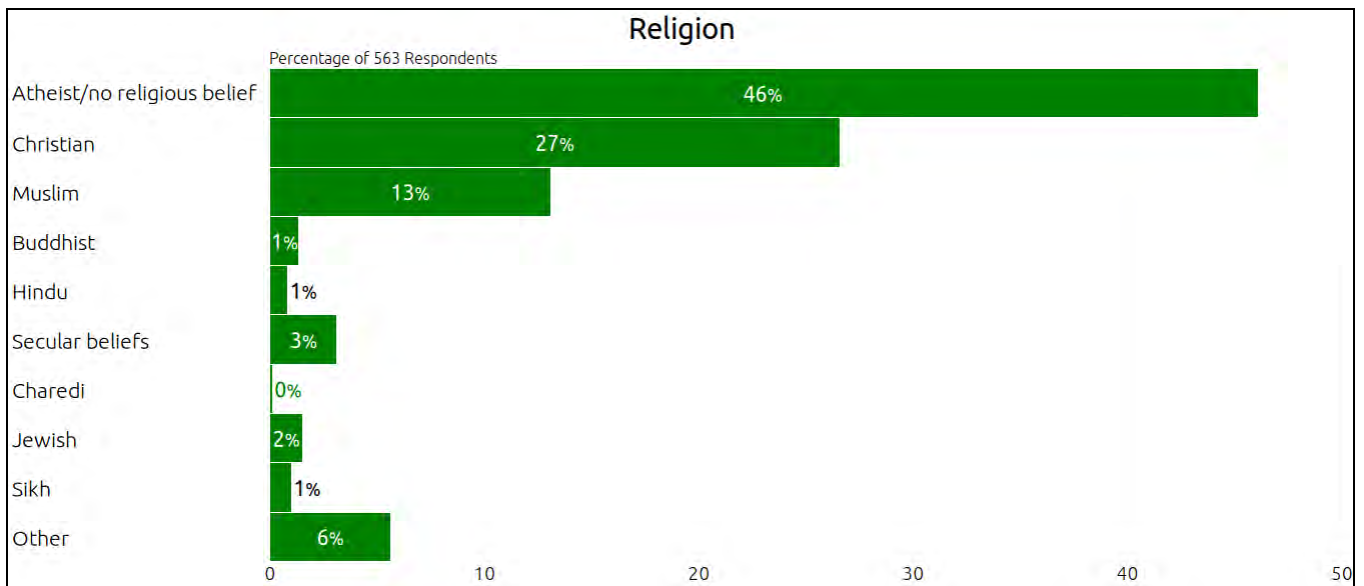


Figure 8.7

Sexual Orientation Of Respondents

19% of respondents reported that they prefer not to answer the question about sexual orientation.

74% say they are heterosexual, whilst 2% are bisexual. 1% in each case describe themselves as a gay man, lesbian or gay woman, pansexual or queer.

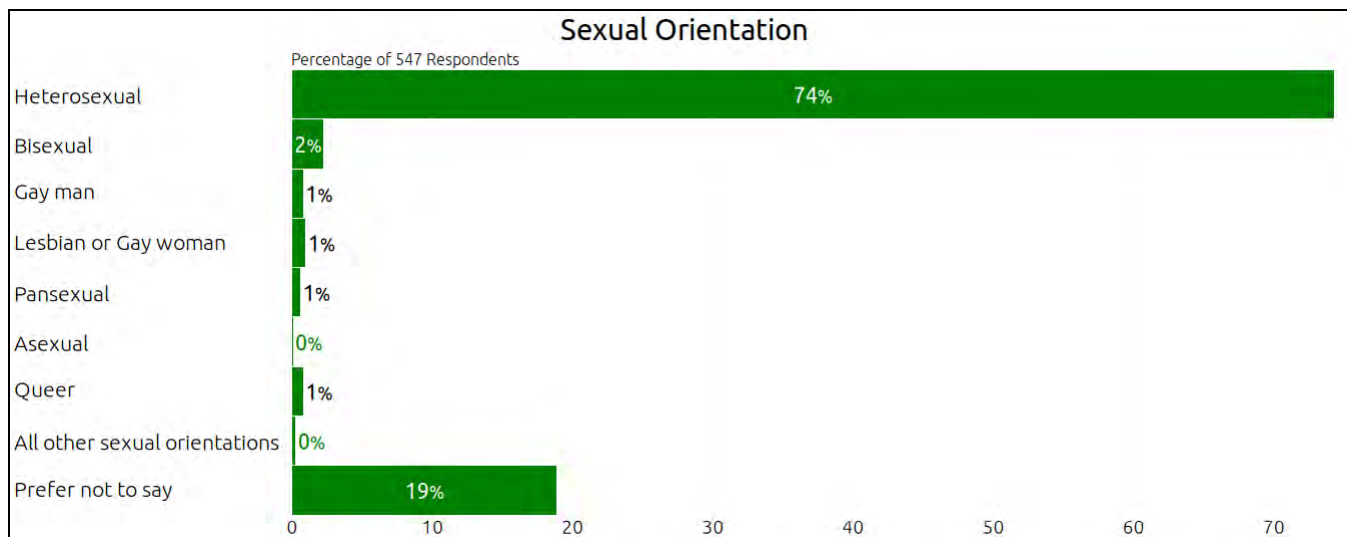


Figure 8.8

Housing Tenure Of Respondents

67% of respondents are in rented accommodation. 24% rent from the council and 16% from a housing association, while a further 27% rent privately.

23% of respondents own their home outright, whilst 3% have a mortgage. 6% are in a shared ownership property.

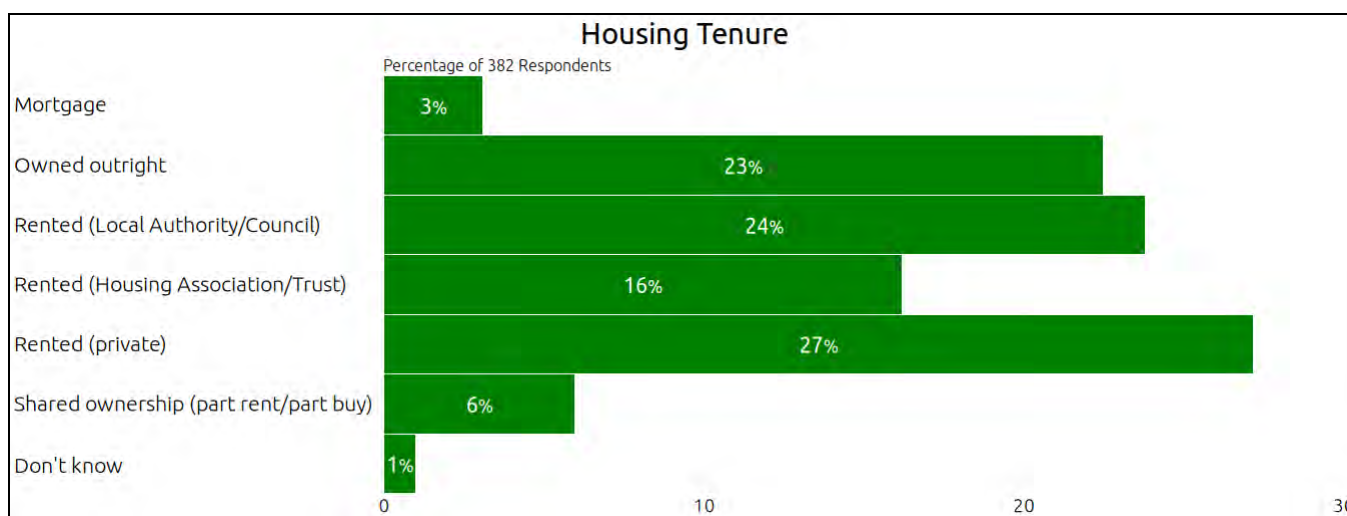


Figure 8.9

Appendix 1

Report from the Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission

**Children and Young People
Scrutiny Commission**

Room 118, 2nd Floor
Hackney Town Hall
Mare Street
London, E8 1EA

15th July 2023

martin.bradford@hackney.gov.uk

Cllr Anntionette Bramble,
Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education,
Young People and Children's Social Care
London Borough of Hackney.

Dear Cllr Bramble

School Estates Strategy (Falling School Rolls) - Informal Consultation Response

At its recent meeting on the 27th June 2023, the Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission scrutinised proposals emerging from the School Estates Strategy to close two primary schools (De Beauvoir and Randal Cremer) and to merge a further four (Baden-Powell with Nightingale and Colvestone with Princess May). At this meeting, members of the Commission agreed to submit a short summary of its conclusions which were to be submitted to the informal consultation on these proposals (ending 16th July 2023).

The Commission is grateful for the support and contributions from local parents representatives (from Colvestone Primary School and Baden Powell Primary School) as well as those officers that attended the meeting and who responded to questions raised by members. All these contributions have helped to shape and inform the Commission's response to the informal consultation which is attached to this letter. A full record of this meeting is provided through the [audio visual recording](#) and the [draft minutes](#).

Schools are anchors within local communities. As well as being a hub for learning, creativity and inclusion schools are also commonly the centre of community and social networks of local children, families. Children over multiple generations have often attended these same local schools which help to create long-standing bonds and ties to the community, therefore changes to the local school establishment undoubtedly raises concerns among local children and families, school staff and among the wider community. With a 20% pupil vacancy rate across local primary schools the Commission acknowledges that the current position is not sustainable

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and there is a need for the Council to act to preserve the integrity and quality of local educational systems.

The Commission understands the difficulties and challenges of falling school rolls and accepts that there are no easy pathways ahead in making such difficult decisions about the future of our local schools. The existing legal framework for education provision by the local authority compounds the difficulty of such decisions, which whilst placing a duty on local authorities to ensure that there is sufficient education does not give them jurisdiction to effect *direct change* equally across *all* educational settings. Furthermore, the Commission is all too aware that any decision to close a locally maintained school now is likely to be final as any future increase in local demand for education provision will need to be met through the academy or free school sector (*the academy and free school presumption* as set out in the Education Act 2011).

Scrutiny can play a positive and constructive role in local decision making, particularly where decisions might be difficult and challenging. Engaging and bringing local stakeholders together helps to bring a shared understanding of the issues and challenges at hand and can help to identify a common way forward. Scrutiny, where proposals are challenged and tested in public can also provide assurance to both local decision makers and the local community that subsequent decisions are taken in the public interest.

Attached is the submission of the Commission to the informal consultation to the School Estates Strategy (Falling Rolls) and the proposal to close two primary schools and merge a further four which we hope will prove helpful. As the focus of scrutiny is strategic it has necessarily avoided commenting on individual proposals for specific schools but has sought to draw together issues which can positively inform current and future decision making in this area.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Sophie Conway

Chair, Children and Young People Scrutiny
Commission

Cllr Margaret Gordon

Vice Chair, Children and Young People
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Cc:

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Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission Submission to the Informal Consultation on the Proposals to Close Two Primary Schools and Merge a Further Four

Consultation

1. The Commission welcomes the ambitions of the informal consultation as an opportunity to engage and involve a wide range of local stakeholders ahead of any statutory consultation and formal decision making process on the future of local schools. Given that the consultation is likely to cause concern and anxiety among children and families likely to be impacted by the proposals to close or merge local schools however, it is important that there are clear and unambiguous expectations of the information which is required from contributors in this consultation.

The [consultation documentation](#) sets out just one question (whether contributors agree or disagree with the proposals) and one open-ended invitation to comment on the proposals more broadly. Alongside some stakeholders, the Commission wish to highlight a number of concerns with this approach:

- a) The agree/ disagree questioning infers that there is some form of ballot on the proposals which may inflate expectations arising from this consultation.
- b) Whilst understanding there is genuine desire to garner wide ranging feedback on the proposals, with little guidance as to what information is being sought through this open-ended questioning, stakeholders may be confused as to what practical, useful or meaningful information might be required which may influence or provide mitigation for the proposals or future subsequent plans.

In relation to above, given the volume and wide ranging nature of contributions likely to be received through the consultation, it was not clear to members of the Commission as to how this information would be analysed and used in developing proposals for the next stage of this process. In this context, further clarification was needed.

2. GLA modelling forecasts that school rolls will continue to decline in Hackney over the medium to long-term with rolls not expected to stabilise until the earliest in 2029/30. Given that the impact of falling rolls is a long term policy issue and likely to impact on a growing number of schools across the borough, the Commission suggests that this might be the basis for broader borough wide public conversation on the *implementation* of the School Estates Strategy. Such a process with broader stakeholder and public engagement may help to further develop overarching principles and guidance which can inform future proposals in relation to school place planning. Equally importantly, this would also be a further opportunity for the Council to clearly again set out its duties and obligations in respect of school place planning and in maintaining high quality education for all young people across Hackney, but to also highlight the limitations and the legal framework in which it can act to reduce provision, which is perhaps less widely understood.

Falling School Rolls - Impact and Evidence

3. The Commission acknowledges the financial impact that falling school rolls is having across the local education system and indeed the wider community. In Hackney Education's own estimate, falling school rolls has meant that local schools are missing out on up to £30m of central government funding due to places going unfilled in local primary schools. In making the case for proposed primary school closures and mergers, the Commission would have welcomed further evidence to illustrate how falling school rolls have begun to impact on the delivery of local education. In particular further evidence would have been welcome in respect of the following:
 - The number of teaching and other support staff (classroom assistants) lost in the local educational system;
 - Impact on extra -curricular activities on local schools (visits and after school clubs etc);
 - Impact on building maintenance and other physical investments.

A more detailed narrative from schools themselves would help stakeholders and the wider community to fully understand how falling school rolls impacts on schools, teachers and of course the educational support and development provided to children themselves. Such data would help stakeholders understand the impact of falling school rolls and assist the case for change.

4. Officers presented evidence to the Commission that local proposals to close or merge schools were delayed to ensure that the impact of those local interventions to help maintain the viability of local schools were fully tested and evaluated. Whilst officers noted that a number of actions that local schools had taken to help improve financial viability and long-term sustainability (e.g. shared leadership, vertical classes, clustering/ Federation) the Commission felt it would have been useful to share further evidence of the impact of these interventions.

Understanding that the issue of falling school rolls is likely to be an ongoing issue for the medium to long-term in Hackney and other central London boroughs, it is important that there is a open and transparent evidence base about what actions are effective, not only to inform future policy and decision making but to also ensure that there is greater community awareness and understanding of the reasonings behind future decision making.

5. Recognising that falling rolls is a London wide issue where a number of other boroughs are having to make similar difficult choices about the future of local schools, the Commission believe that in future decision making, it would be helpful to understand more about the different approaches taken across these authorities (for example, why Lambeth has adopted an approach which is more focused mergers rather than closure of schools under its jurisdiction). This underlines the importance

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of the need for London boroughs to work collectively and to develop and share local innovations and solutions to the challenges of falling school rolls which can help develop and extend best practice across London. The work of London Council's on this issue is noted by the Commission as this can provide a conduit for such intelligence and information sharing.

Objectives of the Proposals and Possible Alternatives

6. Whilst the need to remove surplus places in the primary sector has been made clear to the stakeholders, further clarification was perhaps needed as to the *numbers of places* that are needed to be removed to ensure the ongoing sustainability of local education systems. Whilst assessment criteria used to assess and identify which schools fall into scope (based on financial viability, falling school rolls etc) it is not apparent if there is a 'target' figure which the planned closures or mergers aimed to achieve in reducing school places through this process.
7. The Commission would also welcome further clarification as to possible alternative models and options to reduce vacancies in the local school system. In particular, the Commission is keen to understand why it may be preferable to close rather than merge schools and why (for example) [other authorities](#) have opted for a predominantly school merger approach rather than a mixed model of closures and mergers. Given the possible liabilities to the Council, it would also be helpful to have financial assessment of the different options (noting that London wide documentation suggest that school mergers may be preferred by some authorities as the liabilities to the Council could be minimised (particularly in relation to staff redundancy costs)).

Going forward therefore, the Commission felt it would be helpful in further delivery stages of the School Estates Strategy to have a clearer understanding of the number of places that need to be removed (for sustainability) and a more detailed appraisal (with costs) of the different options which may deliver the required reduction in places.

Coordinating a cross-department local response

8. Falling school rolls is a clearly systemic issue in which a range of national and regional issues (e.g. falling birth rates, Brexit and the housing crisis) have interacted to precipitate widespread migration of families from inner city areas. Whilst the Commission accepts that there is no easy solution which will resolve this problem at either national or local level, it does believe that a more coordinated and consistent local approach which seeks to utilise and align those levers over which the local authority does have control, may help to *mitigate* some of the impact of falling school rolls.

The Commission suggests that there are a number of local processes over which the Council does exert some control, which albeit on their own may appear to have

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limited impact, but if aligned to this purpose may have some cumulative impact.

Examples noted by the Commission include:

- Further promotion of inclusive schools and education to ensure that more children are supported in mainstream local education settings;
- Minimise the loss of pupils through cross-border flows where neighbouring authorities may have comparatively better borough wide offers (e.g. FSM provision, wraparound school provision or holiday programme activities);¹
- Ensure that there is effective, regular and ongoing engagement with parents whose children are receiving Elective Home Education and that they are aware of the pathways back to mainstream education;²
- Further assurance that Housing and Education services are working closely together so that where possible, families can be supported to stay within the borough (e.g. particularly in relation to placements of Temporary Accommodation)
- Ensuring local development plans and other planning policies reflect the need to develop family accommodation.³

In this same vein, the Commission wishes to emphasise that falling school rolls is not an issue solely for local education and children services as the impact and repercussions of such closures and mergers are likely to be felt much more widely across the community and across the wider family of council services. Falling school rolls is an indicator of the loss of children and families from local communities which will need the local authority to maximise the use of all those levers at its disposal if it is to deliver on broader local ambitions for genuinely diverse and sustainable communities.

Plans to Support Local Secondary Schools Against Falling School Rolls

9. Falling school rolls in the primary sector will inevitably soon impact on secondary education. With demand for primary places peaking in 2019 it is likely that demand for secondary schools will peak this or next academic year. The Commission notes that there have already been recent reports of secondary school closures in other parts of London - 2 of these in Lambeth.

[Local admissions data](#) suggests that, without any reductions in PAN, surplus places in the secondary will begin to accumulate in Hackney from 2022/23. This data estimates that surplus places will increase year on year, so that in 2028 there will be an estimated 367 surplus places in secondary schools across Hackney (which is the equivalent of 12 Form Entry).

¹ 2022 [admissions data](#) suggest that **135** children were offered reception places outside of Hackney.

² Currently over **200** children (excluding those from the Charedi community) are in EHE.

³ Data submitted to the Cabinet report suggests that 70% of planned new homes for the borough comprise 1 and 2 bedroom accommodation.

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The authority's ability to act to address growing numbers of pupil vacancies in the secondary sector will however be more limited, as the majority of schools in the secondary sector in Hackney are academies, free schools or faith schools (16 out of 18 schools) over which the Council has no direct jurisdiction (in terms of reduce PANs or decision to close). In this context, the Commission is concerned that measures to reduce local places may fall disproportionately on the small number of local maintained secondary schools. The Commission would therefore welcome further assurance on how local secondary schools are being engaged in preparation for prospective falling school rolls and how the authority intends to protect the local diversity of provision in secondary settings.

Managing school deficits

10. Financial viability is clearly a key determinant in the future of local schools facing challenges from falling school rolls. Data submitted as part of the Cabinet report suggests that this is a complex and varied picture however, where some schools in the scope for closure or merger have managed to maintain a significant budget surplus whilst others have accumulated substantial deficits. Whilst wishing to avoid comment on any singular schools financial situation it was not clear to the Commission how the authority had allowed a school to have an ongoing budget deficit of around £500k for the past three financial years and what support had been provided to turn around this position. This clearly presents a financial risk / exposure to the wider DSG budget if proposals are confirmed.
11. The scale of the financial challenges facing schools is clear. The most recent data published at Schools Forum suggest a deteriorating financial position across local community schools which indicate that the number of schools carrying forward a deficit revenue balance at end 2022/23 has risen from 11 to 13 local schools and where the total budget deficit across these schools has risen from £2,254,228 in 2021/22 to £3,463,813 in 2022/23 (a 53% increase). Nine of these schools will carry forward a revenue budget deficit in excess of £200k.

In the context of the above, the Commission welcomes the establishment of a dedicated schools strategy team to support schools in face of ongoing falling rolls and make sure schools are making appropriate plans to mitigate against falling rolls, and working together to minimise disruption and for the continuation of education. In addition however, the Commission is seeking further assurance as to what specific business planning and financial support will be made available to local schools to help contain and manage budgets, and there are effective plans in place to reduce budget deficits. The Commission is also keen to understand if there will be any additional capacity within the existing business support/financial planning function in Hackney Education, given that demands upon this service are likely to increase.

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Budget impact for Hackney Education and Council (General Fund)

12. Should the proposals to close two schools and merge a further four be confirmed by Cabinet later this year, it is estimated that this will result in an estimated £3.4m cost of which £1m will be recurring (for security of vacant sites). There are a number of uncertainties about the projections and accountabilities within this budget for which the Commission would like further reassurance:
- a) How confident are officers that the projected costs and financial liabilities in administering the proposed closures and mergers are realistic given the i) expected deteriorating financial positions of schools in scope as roll numbers may decline ii) the unknown contracted liabilities of the schools in scope?
 - b) Further clarity is also needed as to the financial responsibility of these costs and which local budgets will be accountable for any occurring losses/liabilities (e.g. which will be met by Direct Schools Grant and those by the Hackney Council General Fund).
 - c) The Commission is particularly concerned about those liabilities from the proposed closure and mergers which may fall within the Council General Fund, not only in the context of the broader pressures this budget is under, but also if this may impact on the Hackney Education budget (where discretionary spending is limited and budget savings adversely impact a small number of services).

Mitigations - SEND

13. Accepting that what has been presented thus far are just proposals for school closures and mergers, along with other stakeholders, the Commission would welcome further details in respect of the possible mitigations which *may* be put in place to support affected children, families and schools should these be approved.

The impact of prospective school closures and amalgamations on children with SEND has been a key feature in many of the consultation responses, with many parents anxious about the upheaval that a school move would have on their child. In particular, parents were concerned that they would be required to move their child with SEND from a one form entry school (which had been their preferred choice) to a larger two form entry school which may be a more challenging experience.

At present, documentation proposing the closure and merger of schools notes that 'additional provision' will be provided to support children with SEND, with no illustrative examples of what that might look like. In the context of the above, further details of the mitigations which might be put in place to support transition of children with SEND to new schools may provide some reassurance to parents impacted by this change.

Impact on the diversity of schools

14. A long-standing area of interest to the Commission has been diversity of children within local schools. The Commission believes that a key aim of local education provision is not only to ensure that there is diversity of schools in terms of range and type of settings available for parents to choose from, but also to ensure that there is diversity of children within local schools which reflect the rich and vibrant social, economic and cultural mix of local communities in Hackney. [For example the Commission notes that with the exception of one school in scope for proposals for closure or amalgamation, all have significantly higher rates of Free School Meal entitlement than the Hackney average (36%) for primary schools.]

Accepting the supremacy of parental choice in this matter, the Commission is keen to understand what assurance can be provided that current and future school place planning (or admissions processes) can protect and promote ambitions for diversity *within* and across local schools.

Appendix 2

Questionnaire Used in the Consultation

Consultation on the amalgamation/closure of 6 Hackney primary schools

Introduction

1. (Optional) Your name:

2. Which of the following best describes your interest in this consultation?

(Required)

- I am a parent, carer or guardian of a child at a school included in the proposals
- I am a member of staff or governor at a school included in the proposals
- I am a parent at another school in Hackney
- I am a member of staff or governor at another school in Hackney
- I am an interested member of the public
- Other

If other, please specify:

3. Which of the proposals do you wish to comment on?

Select all that apply

(Required)

- Proposal to close De Beauvoir Primary School
- Proposal to close Randal Cremer Primary School
- Proposed amalgamation of Colvestone Primary School with Princess May Primary School
- Proposed amalgamation of Baden Powell Primary School with Nightingale Primary School

Response to the proposals

4. Do you agree or disagree with the proposals?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

5. Please comment on the proposal(s) in the space below:

About you

This information will help us to understand our service users and residents, allowing us to establish if the response to the questionnaire is representative of the borough. All information is used under the strict controls of the 1998 Data Protection Act and the 2016 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

This information is optional and will not be used in a way that identifies you.

6. Postcode: Please provide the first half of your postcode followed by the first number of the second half

For example, if your postcode was E8 1DY, you would write E8 1. If your postcode was N16 5HB, you would write N16 5.

Postcode:

7. Gender: Are you...

- Male
- Female
- Non Binary
- Another term

If you prefer to use your own term please provide this here:

8. Age: what is your age group?

- Under 16
- 16-17
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75-84
- 85+

9. Disability: Under the Equality Act you are disabled if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities. Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

- Yes
- No

10. Caring responsibilities: A carer is someone who spends a significant proportion of their time providing unpaid support to a family member, partner or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or substance misuse problems. Do you regularly provide unpaid support caring for someone?

- Yes
- No

11. Ethnicity: Are you...

- Asian or Asian British
- White or White British
- Black or Black British
- Mixed background
- Other ethnic group

Other (please state if you wish):

12. Religion or belief: Are you or do you have...

- Atheist/no religious belief
- Christian
- Muslim
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Secular beliefs
- Charedi
- Jewish
- Sikh

Other (please state if you wish):

13. Sexual orientation: Are you...

- Heterosexual
- Bisexual
- Gay man
- Lesbian or Gay woman
- Pansexual
- Asexual
- Queer
- All other sexual orientations
- Prefer not to say

Other (please state if you wish):

14. Housing Tenure: Which of the following best describes the ownership of your home?

- Being bought on a mortgage
- Owned outright
- Rented (Local Authority/Council)
- Rented (Housing Association/Trust)

- Rented (private)
- Shared ownership (part rent/part buy)
- Don't know



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