

Equality Impact Assessment

What is an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and why does the County Council do them?

The [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) (PSED) is an obligation within the [Equality Act 2010](#) (“the Act”), which asks public authorities, like Hampshire County Council, to give ‘due regard’ to equality considerations, in particular to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

This includes assessing the impact of policies and practices on individuals and communities with a protected characteristic, as defined in the Act and some other specific groups. The County Council uses EIAs to ensure it has paid ‘due regard’ to equalities considerations when there are changes to a service or policy, a new project or certain decisions.

EIA author	Position & Department	Contact
Amy Chambers	Senior Operations Officer Children's Services	amy.chambers@hants.gov.uk

Title:	The future of The Clere School, Burghclere
Related EIAs:	None
EIA for Savings Programme:	No
Service affected	The Clere School, Burghclere.
Description of the service/policy/project/project phase	The Clere School is a 725-place secondary school for pupils aged 11-16 years, located in the village of Burghclere in the north-west of Hampshire, close to the border with West Berkshire. The school has experienced a sustained decline in pupil numbers over a considerable period. During the last ten years, pupil numbers have remained below 500. In the Summer 2026, the school census recorded 366 pupils on roll however, at the start of the September 2026 academic year, that number had fallen further to 290 pupils. This represented approximately 60% surplus capacity and leaving 435 places unfilled. In January 2025, the Chief His Majesties Inspectorate considered that the school required significant improvement after having judged the school to be “inadequate” in Behaviours and Attitudes, and Leadership and Management, and “Requires Improvement” in both the Quality of Education and Personal Development judgement areas. Prior to, and following, the Ofsted judgement, Hampshire County Council provided

	significant support to The Clere School through Hampshire Improvement and Advisory Service (HIAS), Education Finance Services (EFS), Education People Services (EPS) and wider Children's Services teams. Following the Ofsted judgement, The Hurst School also provided significant support to The Clere School, in agreement of both Governing Bodies and the Local Authority. In April 2025, the school was issued with an Academy Order by the Department for Education following its Ofsted judgement. However, despite efforts to identify a suitable sponsor by the DfE, no academy trust has been willing to take on the school. During that time, the County Council maintained ongoing dialogue with the Department for Education regarding the support being provided to the school. However, the existence of the Academy Order has limited the County Council's ability to plan strategically for the future provision of school places in the area, no structural change can be progressed by the Local Authority where an Academy Order is in place. Following extensive discussion between Children's Services and the Department for Education (DfE) regarding the viability of the school, taking account of local demographics and the school's financial position, on 5 May 2026 the DfE Regional Director confirmed with the Local Authority that she was, "content to allow HCC to proceed with a consultation on the full closure of The Clere School" subject to any request from the governing body. On 13 May 2026 the school's chair of governors on behalf of the governing body. On 13 May 2026 the school's chair of governors on behalf of the governing body wrote to Hampshire County Council requesting that it initiate the statutory closure process, and undertake the required consultation/s, on the grounds of financial and educational unviability of the school.
New/changed service/policy/project	Following discussions and concerns about the future of The Clere School, the governing body formally requested that Hampshire County Council undertake a consultation on the proposal to close The Clere School with effect from 31 August 2027. Should the decision be made to close the school, the proposal is that all children on roll at The Clere School at the time of it's closure would automatically move onto the roll of The Hurst School. Accommodation planning is underway to ensure sufficient capacity is available to accommodate additional pupils. Every effort would be made to avoid the need for education to be delivered across two sites; however, temporary use of the existing Clere site may be required whilst longer-term accommodation arrangements are implemented. Should this be necessary, arrangements would seek to maintain established cohorts and minimise disruption to pupils' education, wellbeing and pastoral support. In addition to the proposed arrangements for existing pupils on roll, when considering the admission arrangements, the proposal also includes changes to secondary school catchment arrangements. It is proposed that Vernham Dean Gillum's Church of England (CE) Primary School and Hurstbourne Tarrant CE Primary School be linked with Testbourne Community School, and those individual school catchment areas form part of an enlarged catchment area for Testbourne Community School, and that Burghclere Primary School, Ashford Hill Primary School, Woolton Hill Junior School, Echchinswell and Sydmonton CE Primary School, Kingsclere CE Primary School and St Martin's East Woodhay CE Primary School be linked with The Hurst School, and those individual school catchment areas form part of an enlarged catchment area for The Hurst School.

Engagement
A non-statutory consultation ran from Friday 4 September 2026 to Friday 2 October 2026. The proposal was included on the Hampshire County Council's consultation website: https://www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/haveyoursay/consultations/theclereschool-burghclere

Included on the consultation website was a complete background on the school and proposal, a 'Frequently Asked Questions' document that was frequently updated throughout the consultation period and a map of the current catchment area.

Letters were sent to; •Parents of children at the school (via the school) •Headteachers and Chairs of Governors of schools within 3 miles •Local childcare providers • Staff union representatives • MP •HCC Elected member – Cllr Roz Chadd • Local District Council •Local Parish Councils • Other relevant HCC Officers.

Three drop-in events were arranged at The Clere School, Earlstone Common, Burghclere, Newbury, RG20 9HP for:

- Year 7 and Year 8 families: Tuesday 22 September 2026 between 3:45pm – 5:45pm
- Year 9 and Year 10 families: Wednesday 23 September 2026 between 4pm – 6pm
- Year 11 families and other stakeholders: Thursday 24 September 2026 between 5pm – 7pm
- Staff had the opportunity to meet with officers on Thursday 24 September 2026 between 4pm – 5pm

The purpose of these drop-in event were to enable members of staff and the public to discuss the proposal with Hampshire County Council officers. The consultation drop-in event was designed to provide an informal space for parents and stakeholders to ask questions and share views.

During the consultation period, 164 comments on the proposal were received from stakeholders. Comments received during the non-statutory consultation period have been addressed in the decision day report this EIA is attached to. This report is being taken to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services Decision Day in October 2026 to decide if the proposal should continue to the statutory Public Notice stage

Equalities considerations - Impact Assessment

Age

Impact on public	Negative - Low
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	The Clere School is a 725-place secondary school for pupils aged 11-16 years. Subject to approval to proceed to the statutory consultation stage, and should a final decision be taken to close The Clere School it is proposed that all pupils on roll at The Clere School at the point of closure would transfer to the roll of The Hurst School. The proposal affects approximately 290 pupils currently on roll at the school and would require them to move to another educational setting. Pupils in current Year 9 & 10 may experience disruption to GCSE courses so this will need to be carefully managed should approval be given to close the school.

	Appropriate individual advice and support will be provided as part of any workforce change process.
Mitigation	As part of the mitigating factors for this proposal, there will need to be detailed transition planning for all students on roll at the time of closure. The receiving school will also need to ensure that, where possible, there is continuity of GCSE courses available. Collaboration between The Clere School and The Hurst School will be vital in arranging any pastoral support arrangements for all incoming students. Some families may have to travel further to receive their children's education, though some may be eligible for School Transport assistance. Eligibility will be assessed in line with the HCC School Transport Policy, and all eligible children will be provided with School Transport assistance. Further information, including the county council's policy on assistance with travel to school, can be found here: https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/schooltransport

Disability

Impact on public	Negative - Low
Impact on staff	Negative - Low
Rationale	Pupils with disabilities, particularly those with Special Educational Needs (SEN), Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs), Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs and who experience anxiety, may be disproportionately affected by a change in educational setting. Many consultation responses specifically referenced the benefits of The Clere's smaller environment for vulnerable learners. Employees who have a disability may experience additional barriers in securing or transitioning to alternative employment, particularly where workplace adjustments are currently in place.
Mitigation	For pupils with EHCPs, statutory review processes would be undertaken and parents and carers would be fully involved in identifying appropriate future provision. The Local Authority would work with families and receiving schools to ensure appropriate support continues to be available and that transition arrangements are carefully planned. For pupils receiving SEN Support, schools would work together to share information regarding individual needs, successful support strategies and existing support arrangements. Transition arrangements would be developed with the aim of minimising disruption to education and wellbeing and supporting pupils to settle successfully into their new school environment. Should the proposal proceed, Hampshire County Council's Education People Services (EPS) would work with the Governing Body, school leaders and recognised trade unions to support staff in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures with reasonable adjustment

	as required.
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Gender Reassignment

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	The proposed change is expected to have a neutral impact on people who share gender reassignment as a protected characteristic. Any receiving schools will have a policy in relation to this protected characteristic which will be adhered to if required. Hampshire County Council's Educational People Service (EPS) will work with the governing body of the school to support members of staff in line with all appropriate policies.
Mitigation	

Pregnancy and Maternity

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Negative - Low
Rationale	The proposed change is expected to have a neutral impact on the public who share pregnancy & maternity as a protected characteristic. Any receiving schools will have a policy in relation to this protected characteristic which will be adhered to if required. Employees who are pregnant or on maternity leave could be affected by the closure.
Mitigation	Particular care will be taken to ensure that affected staff are fully included in consultation and workforce processes and that relevant statutory protections are observed. Hampshire County Council's Educational People Service (EPS) will work with the governing body of the school to support members of staff in line with all appropriate policies.

Race

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	The proposed change is expected to have a neutral impact on the public who share Race as a protected characteristic. Any receiving schools will have a policy in relation to this protected characteristic which will be adhered to if required.

	No particular or disproportionate impact has been identified in relation to the employment consequences of the proposal. Hampshire County Council's Educational People Service (EPS) will work with the governing body of the school to support members of staff in line with all appropriate policies.
Mitigation	

Religion or Belief

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	The proposed change is expected to have a neutral impact on the public who share Religion or Belief as a protected characteristic. Any receiving schools will have a policy in relation to this protected characteristic which will be adhered to if required. No particular or disproportionate impact has been identified in relation to the employment consequences of the proposal. Hampshire County Council's Educational People Service (EPS) will work with the governing body of the school to support members of staff in line with all appropriate policies.
Mitigation	

Sex

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	The proposed change is expected to have a neutral impact on the public who share sex as a protected characteristic. Any receiving schools will have a policy in relation to this protected characteristic which will be adhered to if required. The school employs more female staff than male staff and as a consequence, a greater number of female employees will be affected by the proposed closure. This reflects the existing workforce profile. All posts would be affected by the closure, irrespective of the sex of the postholder and on the information available, no disproportionate adverse impact has been identified. Hampshire County Council's Educational People Service (EPS) will work with the governing body of the school to support members of staff in line with all appropriate policies.
Mitigation	

Sexual Orientation

Impact on public	Neutral
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Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	The proposed change is expected to have a neutral impact on the public who share Sexual Orientation as a protected characteristic. Any receiving schools will have a policy in relation to this protected characteristic which will be adhered to if required. No particular or disproportionate impact has been identified in relation to the employment consequences of the proposal. Hampshire County Council's Educational People Service (EPS) will work with the governing body of the school to support members of staff in line with all appropriate policies.
Mitigation	

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	The proposed change is expected to have a neutral impact on the public who share Marriage and Civil Partnership as a protected characteristic. Any receiving schools will have a policy in relation to this protected characteristic which will be adhered to if required. No particular or disproportionate impact has been identified in relation to the employment consequences of the proposal. Hampshire County Council's Educational People Service (EPS) will work with the governing body of the school to support members of staff in line with all appropriate policies.
Mitigation	

Poverty

Impact on public	Negative - Low
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	The proposal to close The Clere School from 31 August 2027 could disproportionately impact children and families experiencing financial hardship. Potential impacts include: • Increased transport costs • Additional uniform costs • Increased travel times/ distances
Mitigation	Should the proposal proceed, transition arrangements would be developed to support pupils and families through any change of school. All pupils' eligibility for School Transport assistance will continue to be assessed in accordance with Hampshire County Council's School Transport Policy.

	Eligibility for support including Free School Meals and Pupil Premium funding will remain in place at an alternative school, provided individual circumstances remain unchanged. Should the proposal proceed, Hampshire County Council would consider the potential impact of school uniform and other school-related costs on families as part of future implementation planning. Hampshire County Council's Educational People Service (EPS) will work with the governing body of the school to support members of staff in line with all appropriate policies.
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Rurality

Impact on public	Negative - Low
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	The Clere School serves a largely rural area of Hampshire and consultation responses highlighted the importance of local access to secondary education, travel times and school transport arrangements for some families. It is recognised that alternative employment may require some staff to travel further or less than they currently do.
Mitigation	The proposal has been developed taking account of geography, travel patterns, transport networks and accessibility. Under the proposal, pupils on roll at The Clere School at the point of closure would transfer to the roll of The Hurst School. In addition, longer-term secondary catchment arrangements are proposed to help ensure future educational provision remains accessible and sustainable. It is proposed that Vernham Dean Gillum's Church of England (CE) Primary School and Hurstbourne Tarrant CE Primary School be linked with Testbourne Community School, and those individual school catchment areas form part of an enlarged catchment area for Testbourne Community School, and that Burghclere Primary School, Ashford Hill Primary School, Woolton Hill Junior School, Ecchinswell and Sydmonton CE Primary School, Kingsclere CE Primary School and St Martin's East Woodhay CE Primary School be linked with The Hurst School, and those individual school catchment areas form part of an enlarged catchment area for The Hurst School. The Hampshire County Council School Transport Policy provides local authority funded transport assistance to the nearest school with a space when the home to school journey is more than the statutory distance or if the journey is less than the statutory distance, but the route is unsafe. The statutory distance is 3 miles for children aged 8 or over. For each child, who is a resident in the Hampshire County Council Local Authority administrative area, who moves school following a school closure, an individual transport assessment would be required based on their home address and the journey to their new school. Further information in relation to School Transport eligibility can be found here: https://documents.hants.gov.uk/transport-home-to-school/schooltransportpolicy2025.pdf

The Clere School is a community secondary school and staff are employed by Hampshire County Council. Should the proposal proceed, Hampshire County Council would work with the Governing Body, school leaders and recognised trade unions to support staff through the process. Advice and support would be available through Education People Services (EPS) and wider Children's Services teams in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures including travel assistance where criteria are met.
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Geographical Impact: Basingstoke and Deane, Test Valley

Equality Statement

Additional information:

EIA supports a report being taken to a future Executive Lead Member for Children's Services Decision Day.

Overview Statement:

A summary assessment to show that due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty has been paid, which is undertaken when a full EIA is not needed:

EIA reference number: 01246

Date of production of EIA for publication: 08/10/2026