

Consultation on the Proposal to Close Camerton Church School, Camerton, BA2 0PS

Why is it proposed to close the school?

Pupil numbers at Camerton Church School have been falling for several years and for September 2017 only seven pupils in total are expected to be on roll. Despite the efforts of the Governing Body of the Church Valley Schools Federation over the years to increase pupil numbers through publicity, open days, providing a pre-school nursery on site and becoming part of a federation and working closely with other small schools, pupil numbers have gradually reduced.

At this size, the Governing Body believes it would be extremely difficult to provide a rounded education that meets the academic, social and emotional needs of the pupils at the school. As schools are funded on a per pupil basis, with such small numbers year on year, the budget to operate the school continues to diminish. This makes it very difficult to provide a rich and engaging curriculum and opportunities for pupils to achieve high standards in their learning and to develop social friendship groups.

The Governing Body has therefore concluded that the school is no longer viable either educationally or financially and has taken the difficult decision to propose closing the school. They have asked Bath and North East Somerset Council to commence the statutory process that must be followed when it is proposed to close a school, the first stage of which is a period of public consultation. Details of this process can be found at www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools

What happens to the pupils currently on roll at Camerton?

Whilst the statutory process is being carried out, the Governing Body has put in place interim arrangements for the seven pupils on roll at the school to be educated elsewhere within the Federation at Shoscombe C of E Primary, in order to provide the best possible outcomes for them academically, socially and emotionally. The Governing Body will provide transport for these seven pupils to and from the Shoscombe site.

If it was decided to close the school, the seven pupils on roll at Camerton currently being educated at Shoscombe would be able to remain at Shoscombe and formally transfer onto the roll of Shoscombe should they wish to. From 1 September 2018 responsibility for home to school transport for these seven pupils attending Shoscombe would transfer to the Local Authority and this would continue to be provided for the remainder of their education at Shoscombe.

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Alternatively they would be free to apply to another school. Admission to another school would be subject to available places. If the school is full and parents are refused a place there will be a right of appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel. If the school has room but the number of applications exceeds the spaces available, the school admission criteria will be used to determine the allocation of places.

Where would future pupils attend school if Camerton closes?

A feasibility study is being carried out to add more places to Peasedown St John Primary School. Together with spare places projected to be available in other existing surrounding local schools, there are projected to be sufficient places available to accommodate future pupils in the area.

Will children qualify for home to school transport?

The Local Authority will provide transport between home and school in line with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy. Transport would be provided where the school attended is the nearest appropriate one as designated by the Local Authority, and where the distance as measured by the nearest available walking route is two miles or more for pupils aged five to seven years and three miles or more for pupils aged eight years and over. Transport can also be provided if the nearest available route is exceptionally hazardous or parents qualify under the low income family policy.

What happens to the members of staff at Camerton?

Members of staff have already been consulted on the proposal to close Camerton, the interim arrangements and the impact of this on individual staff members and their employment rights and options. If it was decided to close the school, then any further formal consultation would take place as necessary.

How you can comment on this proposal

This consultation will run for seven weeks from 18 September to 5 November 2017.

A public consultation meeting will be held at Camerton Church School, Camerton, BA2 0PS on Thursday 12 October at 7pm. Officers of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and representatives of the school and Governing Body will be available at the meeting to provide information and answer questions.

A written record will be made of all comments expressed at the consultation meeting.

If you would like to comment on, object to or support this proposal, you can do so by completing the online consultation form on the Bath and North East Somerset Council website at www.bathnes.gov.uk/camertonconsultation

Or by writing to:

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Bath and North East Somerset Council,
Schools Capital & Organisation Team,
People and Communities Department,
Lewis House,
Manvers Street,
Bath,
BA1 1JG

In order to ensure that every consultation response counts, please could you give **your full name, your postcode** and **your relationship to the school** e.g. parent/carer, member of staff etc. In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 your personal details will not be used for any other purpose, will not be made public or shared with any other organisation.

The deadline for consultation responses to be received by Bath and North East Somerset Council is **midnight on Sunday 5 November 2017.**

What happens next?

At the public Cabinet meeting on 6 December 2017 the Council Cabinet will consider all consultation responses received during the consultation period and decide whether to publish a statutory notice proposing the closure of Camerton Church School.

If the Cabinet decides to go ahead, the statutory notice and complete proposal would be published on the Council's website and the notice would be published in a local newspaper serving the area, posted at the entrances to the school and at another conspicuous place on the school site, at the beginning of February 2018. There will then be a further representation period of four weeks, during which interested parties will have a final opportunity to comment on the proposal.

At the public Cabinet meeting on 11 April 2018 the Council Cabinet will consider all representation responses received during the representation period and decide whether to go ahead with the proposal. If the decision was made to go ahead with the closure, the implementation date would be 31 August 2018.