

St Teresa's Roman Catholic (RC) Primary School Closure Proposal Consultation Response

1. Background

- 1.1 A period of consultation took place from 19 May to 29 June 2026 on Trafford Council's proposal to close St Teresa's Roman Catholic (RC) Primary School in Stretford on 31 August 2027.
- 1.2 The consultation was promoted to key stakeholders including:
 - Parents
 - Staff
 - Governors
 - Local residents
 - Other schools in Trafford
 - Diocese of Salford
 - Other Dioceses in Trafford
 - Neighbouring local authorities
 - Department for Education
- 1.3 An online portal was used as the key mechanism to gather responses. Stakeholder briefing sessions were delivered in person to governors and staff on 15 June 2026 and to parents on 16 June 2026. This approach made sure all parties were able to engage with the consultation and share their views.
- 1.4 We received a total of 379 responses through the consultation hub, plus additional evidence.
- 1.5 A parent group presented an online petition against closure containing 1,103 names. Of these 274 were identified as Trafford residents, 392 from the rest of Greater Manchester and a further 437 from other areas of the UK and other countries. A paper petition was also submitted which included a further 526 names.
- 1.6 The consultation generated a significant level of engagement from a wide range of stakeholders, including current parents and carers, staff, governors, former pupils, local residents, members of the wider Catholic community and other interested parties. The responses demonstrate a strength of feeling regarding the proposal and the potential impact. Many submissions included detailed personal accounts and experiences, reflecting the importance of St Teresa's RC Primary School to those connected with it.
- 1.7 All comments and questions have been collated, and this report responds to the key themes arising from the consultation:

- Rationale for closure: pupil numbers and financial position
- Support provided
- Alternative options to closure
- Online information
- Catholic education and parental choice
- Impact on children's wellbeing and educational progress
- Alternative placements and travel impact
- Impact on staff
- Community value
- School place planning policy and investment
- Timing of consultation
- Pupil forecasts and impact of housing developments
- School site

2. Rationale for Closure: Pupil Numbers and Financial Position

- 2.1 This section addresses questions about the reasons for the proposal, the financial position of the school over time and the pupil numbers.
- 2.2 Many respondents suggested that recent leadership changes at the school had resulted in improved educational performance and further time should be given to demonstrate impact on admissions and therefore long-term sustainability.
- 2.3 For clarity, this proposal is not linked to the school's educational performance. St Teresa's RC Primary School is rated Good by Ofsted. The proposal is driven by the ongoing reduction in pupil numbers and the school's financial viability.

Pupil Numbers

- 2.4 There has been a significant decrease in the birth rate. This is a national trend, and as a result, the impact of falling school rolls is being experienced across the country.
- 2.5 In the last 3 years, Trafford has seen a decrease of 3.1% of primary pupils which is greater than the national decrease of 2.2%. The Stretford area is significantly impacted with a decrease of 9%. However, St Teresa's has seen a decrease of 34% which has contributed to a significant budget deficit.
- 2.6 In recent years, St Teresa's has been consistently undersubscribed with an occupancy level of 55% in summer 2026. As school funding is mainly decided by the number of children at the school, when there are fewer children at a school, there is less funding available.

- 2.7 On the information currently available, decreasing pupil numbers are driving the financial challenges being experienced by St Teresa's and based on data, it is anticipated that numbers are expected to reduce further in the next three years.

Financial Position

- 2.8 St Teresa's Roman Catholic (RC) Primary School is a maintained school which means the school is funded by central government through Trafford local education authority. Across England, all local authorities must follow statutory guidance which lays out the reasons that a maintained school might be closed; one reason is where a school is considered no longer financially viable.
- 2.9 The Board of Governors is responsible for managing their school's delegated budget in line with financial procedures to ensure the best possible education for their pupils. In the exceptional circumstance that a Board of Governors becomes aware they will be unable to set a balanced budget, they are required to contact the Director of Education at Trafford Council as a matter of urgency so that a joint meeting can be convened to consider the actions required to resolve the financial difficulties.
- 2.10 In July 2024, The Board of St Teresa's submitted a licensed deficit application to the Council when their deficit position significantly increased.
- 2.11 This is the closing budget position for St Teresa's in each of the previous five years:

Year	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Surplus/Deficit	+£33,766	-£1,823	-£71,374	-£158,946	-£195,540

- 2.12 The forecast position from the latest budget plan submitted by the school in May 2026 indicates the deficit is set to continue to increase:

Year	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Surplus/Deficit	-£380,792	-£588,904	-£800,558	-£1,077,665

- 2.13 DfE statutory guidance states that local authorities can license a budget deficit position for a maximum of 3 years. This is the link to the guidance: [Schemes for financing local authority maintained schools 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK](#)
- 2.14 However, our local Trafford scheme states we can agree, in exceptional circumstances, a deficit for up to 5 years, providing there is a financial plan to bring it back into balance. This is the link to the Trafford scheme: [Scheme for financing schools | Schools finance | Trafford Council](#)

- 2.15 The school is now in its fourth consecutive year of significant budget deficit. The latest information indicates the deficit will continue to increase and a credible recovery plan has not been identified to date.

3. Support Provided

- 3.1 A number of respondents questioned whether sufficient support had been provided to St Teresa's RC Primary School prior to the proposal to close the school. Comments focused on the level of support received from Trafford Council, the Diocese of Salford and other partners in relation to falling pupil numbers, financial recovery and long-term sustainability.
- 3.2 St Teresa's received support from a DfE School Resource Management Adviser (SMRA) in autumn 2023. This focused on financial planning, financial health and financial governance.
- 3.3 The SRMA programme provides free, independent and tailored advice and support from experts in this field. SRMAs are independent advisers who have significant experience of school or academy trust business management and have undergone a challenging accreditation process.
- 3.4 Termly budget meetings have taken place since 2024, chaired by the Director of Education for Trafford Council and attended by officers from finance, HR and school improvement. School attendees have included the Headteacher and representative from the Governing Board.
- 3.5 The school has implemented a wide range of measures to reduce costs including reduction in management, teaching staff, lunchtime staff and review of service level agreements.
- 3.6 Some respondents commented about energy reduction measures to help save costs. The DfE provided additional capital funding to every school to support energy efficiency. St Teresa's invested £14k in solar panels in August 2024. Their annual energy spend is £23k.
- 3.7 Due to decreasing pupil numbers the school has merged classes to reduce staff costs. They consulted to permanently reduce their published admission number from 30 to 15 from September 2027.
- 3.8 Some consultees suggested that actions already taken by the current leadership team to reduce costs should be given further time to demonstrate impact on admissions and long-term sustainability.

- 3.9 Despite the range of support and measures implemented, based on the information currently available, a financial plan that would return the school to a sustainable budget position has not yet been identified. The evidence suggests that there is no financial plan which would allow the school to return to a sustainable budget position.
- 3.10 Several respondents suggested that additional marketing or promotion may have helped to increase pupil numbers. Whilst the Council supports parents through the coordinated admissions process, St Teresa's RC Primary School is a voluntary aided school which is its own admission authority. In voluntary aided schools, the Governing Board has responsibility for admissions arrangements and for determining how the school is marketed and promoted to prospective families. In addition, the Diocese may also provide support in relation to the promotion of Catholic education.

4. Alternative Options to Closure

- 4.1 Some consultees asked questions about the alternatives to closure, such as academisation, amalgamation and federation, and whether these had been fully explored.

Academisation

- 4.2 There were plans for St Teresa's RC Primary School to become an academy and join the Emmaus Trust, as part of the Diocese of Salford's strategic plan.
- 4.3 When an academy trust agrees to take responsibility for a school, it also takes on responsibility for the school's finances. Due diligence is a detailed checking process that takes place before a school joins an academy trust. The process is to make sure that all stakeholders understand the relevant information including the school's costs, risks, benefits, assets and liabilities, so they can make fully informed decisions about transferring a school into an academy trust. The Diocese of Salford wrote to St Teresa's Governing Board on 25 June 2025 regarding this process. It highlighted several issues it had identified including the significant budget deficit, the impact of the declining school roll and how best to organise the curriculum.
- 4.4 Due to the significant risk, the Emmaus Trust paused the academisation process. In its communication to the Governing Board of St Teresa's, it noted Diocesan trustees required further assurances from the Governing Board including a sustainable recovery plan which drastically lowers the in-year deficit and presents positive balances going forward.
- 4.5 At the time of consideration, the Governing Board was unable to provide the assurances requested by the Emmaus Trust. Based on the information available, a

sufficiently robust recovery plan had not been identified and, as a result, academisation was not considered a viable option at that stage.

- 4.6 Trafford Council acknowledge some parents feel communication between the Emmaus Trust and the school community in relation to this matter could have been better and this has been fed back to the Trust.

Amalgamation or Federation

- 4.7 St Teresa's is a voluntary aided Catholic primary school within the Diocese of Salford. Where falling pupil numbers impact a school's long-term sustainability, the Diocese can consider options such as federation or amalgamation.
- 4.8 Amalgamation is where two schools formally combine to become a single school, under one headteacher, one Governing Board and one budget. It can be achieved by closing one school and automatically moving all the pupils onto the roll of the other school. Alternatively two schools can be closed and one new replacement school opened.
- 4.9 Federation is where two or more schools remain separate schools but share governance through a single Governing Board. Schools may also share leadership, staff, resources and services. This can make some modest cost reductions while retaining the individual identities of each school.
- 4.10 The Diocese of Salford considered amalgamation and federation options and, taking account of the circumstances at this time, these options were not considered likely to address the financial challenges identified or the underlying issue of falling pupil numbers and significant surplus places.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Provision

- 4.11 Some consultees suggested that the school could open a specialist unit or resourced provision as an alternative to closing the school.
- 4.12 At this time, Trafford Council is not currently seeking to commission additional specialist places in mainstream primary schools in the north locality.
- 4.13 The additional funding for provision of specialist places, such as a small specialist class, only covers the cost of delivering the support. This means it would not improve the school budget position.

5. Online Information

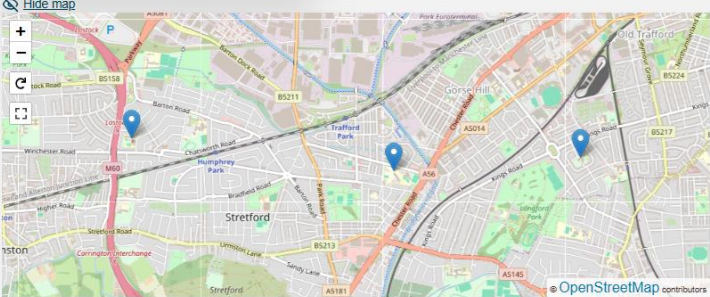
Trafford Council website

- 5.1 Several responses noted that falling pupil numbers may have been impacted by the fact faith schools were not included in the catchment area finder on the Trafford Council website.
- 5.2 All schools are included in the 'Find your local school' tool on the Council website:

Find your local school

Find your local school in Trafford in our school directory. You can narrow down your search using the filters.

[View Trafford's primary school catchment areas](#)



1 - 3 of 3 results matching

- St Ann's RC Primary School
- St Hugh of Lincoln RC Primary School
- St Teresa's RC Primary School

Filters

Search

Search

Search

Age range

☒ Primary

Area

☐ Altrincham

☐ Davyhulme

☐ Flixton

☐ Old Trafford

☐ Partington

☐ Sale

☒ Stretford

☐ Timperley

- 5.3 The catchment area finder is a different tool. The majority of faith schools in Trafford are voluntary aided schools which means they are their own admission authority responsible for setting their admission arrangements. Some of these schools have catchment areas and some do not. Faith schools are covered separately to non-faith schools on the Trafford Council website:

Find your catchment area

This finder is only for non-faith schools. You can find information about catchment areas for faith schools later on this page.

House number or name *

Postcode *

Search

Faith schools

Faith schools may also have a catchment area, usually based on the local parish. Each school has its own admissions criteria, so you should check its individual admissions policy.

You can get details of these catchment areas directly from the schools themselves, or search for your local faith schools using our [postcode lookup](#).

5.4 This is how information is presented on the faith school postcode look up page:

Postcode lookup (faith-based schools)

You can find your nearest faith-based school by searching for your postcode in the table.

Postcode	School(s)
WA14 and WA15 (Altrincham, Timperley and Hale)	• Bowdon Church School • Altrincham CE (Aided) Primary School • St Hugh's Catholic Primary School • St Vincent's Catholic Primary School
M16 (Old Trafford)	• St Teresa's RC Primary School • St Alphonsus RC Primary School • St Hilda's CE Primary School
M32 (Stretford)	• St Ann's RC Primary School • St Matthew's CE Primary School • St Hugh of Lincoln RC Primary School

DfE Get Information About Schools (GIAS) website

- 5.5 Another point raised during the consultation was that the national Get Information About Schools website showed a closure date for St Teresa's of 31 October 2027.
- 5.6 When a school becomes an academy, the administrative process behind this is that the original school closes and the new academy school opens with a new school number. When an academy order is in place because a school is expected to academise, a future closure date will appear on the school listing on the GIAS website.
- 5.7 The GIAS system is administered by the Department for Education (DfE). Trafford Council contacted DfE in relation to the concerns raised about the closure date

showing on the listing. The DfE responded to say the listing was changed on 17 April 2026 to show a closure date of 31 October 2027, but this was an administrative error linked to the paused academisation process. The DfE removed the incorrect closure date on 18 June 2026.

5.8 Further support is provided to families looking for a school through the main page on 'School admissions: Choosing schools - GOV.UK'. It makes these suggestions for finding out more about schools:

- visiting the school - most schools have open days
- reading the school's most recent Ofsted reports
- checking school performance tables
- talking to other parents about what they think of the school

Parents have access to a range of information sources to find out about schools and to make their school choices. As the deadline for applications for reception places was 15th January 2026, the incorrect closure date that was visible on the DfE website between 17th April 2026 and 18th June 2026 should not have influenced parents applying for reception places.

6. Catholic Education and Parental Choice

- 6.1 Many respondents emphasised that they had specifically chosen St Teresa's because it provides a Catholic education within a small, community-focused environment. Some also considered that closure would significantly reduce parental choice by removing a local Catholic primary school and limiting options for families seeking a small Catholic educational setting.
- 6.2 Local authorities have a legal duty to secure sufficient school places in their area for every child of compulsory school age. Trafford Council work in partnership with the Department for Education, schools, academy trusts and dioceses to balance supply and demand, giving consideration to the quality, diversity and accessibility of local provision.
- 6.3 Trafford Council is proud to have a diverse range of schools to support parental choice. In addition to St Teresa's RC Primary School, the Stretford planning area has 3 other Catholic primary schools, 2 Church of England primary schools and 8 community schools and academies with no religious denomination. There are also two Catholic primary schools within 2 miles of St Teresa's which are in Manchester local authority. These are St John's RC Primary School, which is in the same parish as St Teresa's, and Our Lady's RC Primary School.
- 6.4 In each of the last 3 rounds of admission to reception, at least 95% of Trafford resident applicants were allocated their first preference school, which is better

than the national measure of 92%. This data indicates parental choice for primary schools in Trafford is strong.

- 6.5 Across England, it is the responsibility of Dioceses to monitor demand for Catholic education places and assess whether there are enough Catholic places across the area. Based on the information we have from our joint work with the Dioceses, we are aware that the number of baptised Catholic pupils in Trafford schools has decreased.
- 6.6 The Diocese of Salford census carried out in October 2025 indicated that 47% of school age children on roll across the 4 Catholic primary schools in the Stretford planning area are baptised Catholics.

School Age Pupils October 2025				
Diocese of Salford Catholic School	Catholic	Non-Catholic	Total	% Catholic
St Ann's RC Primary School	192	195	387	50%
St Alphonsus RC Primary School	28	139	167	17%
St Hugh of Lincoln RC Primary School	178	116	294	61%
St Teresa's RC Primary School	60	57	117	51%
Total	458	507	965	47%

- 6.7 Each of these schools is an own admission authority school and as such they are responsible for determining their own admission arrangements. This means that Trafford Council plays no part in the deciding the admission criteria to be applied or the number of places that can be offered.
- 6.8 From the information available, it is known that Baptised Catholic children are prioritised within admission criteria at the Diocese of Salford Catholic primary schools. There are 458 baptised Catholics on roll across the 4 schools which provide 1,155 places in total, and this information indicates there are sufficient places for baptised Catholic children. In addition, a further 507 non-Catholic pupils achieved places in these schools because the schools were not oversubscribed from baptised Catholics.

7. Impact on Children's Wellbeing and Educational Progress

- 7.1 The most frequently raised concern related to the potential impact of closure on pupils' emotional wellbeing, sense of security and educational progress. Respondents emphasised the importance of the strong relationships, friendships and supportive environment that currently exist within the school. Many felt that a closure would create uncertainty and anxiety for children and disrupt established support networks. Respondents felt moving schools could temporarily

disrupt academic progress as pupils adapt to new environments, teaching approaches and peer groups.

- 7.2 If the proposal were to proceed, Trafford Council would seek to support the wellbeing of children and to minimise, as far as possible, the impact of any transition. Should the proposal proceed, the Council would work closely with the school, the Diocese, parents and receiving schools to implement a comprehensive transition and support programme. This would include enhanced pastoral support, individual transition planning, opportunities for pupils to visit receiving schools, detailed transfer of educational records and targeted support for all pupils.
- 7.3 If the proposed closure were to go ahead, the transition support group would be able to support families over the academic year 2026/27. The transition support group includes a range of officers including:
- Alison Gurney, Principal Educational Psychologist
 - Waseem Chaudhry, School Admissions Manager
 - Kelly Nadin, Education, Health and Care Co-ordinator who is specifically supporting the Trafford pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan.
 - Special Educational Needs Advisory Service (SENAS) representatives identified on the basis of the specific needs of the pupils that need support.
- 7.4 It is intended that this group would be able to help families explore alternative school options and to support children through transitions. Local authority officers would work closely with school staff including the school SENCO to ensure the transition is managed in a caring and considered way. They would be able to make sure that information on children's needs and on strategies and interventions to support learning is shared. In the autumn term, Trafford's Educational Psychology Service will be sharing advice with school staff around messaging and support for children's wellbeing.
- 7.5 Trafford Council acknowledges that some families are particularly concerned about the impact on pupils who would experience a primary school transition shortly before transferring to secondary education. Should the proposal proceed, the Council is committed to support the wellbeing of these children and minimise the impact of any transition through the use of the existing information sharing system '6Into7' and through individual transition planning.
- 7.6 If the proposal were to proceed, the transition support group would work with families to understand individual circumstances, including sibling arrangements, when advising on alternative school places.
- 7.7 Trafford Council is committed to supporting the wellbeing of all children and to minimise, as far as possible, the impact of any transition. We appreciate the

circumstances are unique for families leaving St Teresa's, but it is recognised that Trafford schools have well-established processes in place to support transition and children's wellbeing. Data indicates that Trafford schools successfully support over a thousand pupils each year who change schools midway through their primary education for different reasons.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

- 7.8 Particular concerns were raised regarding the effect on vulnerable pupils and those with additional needs.
- 7.9 At the time the proposal was made, there were 4 children on roll who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and a further 14 children in receipt of SEND support.
- 7.10 We understand a change of setting for pupils with SEND, or for those with other additional needs, can often be more challenging and require additional support to ensure a successful transition. If the proposal proceeds, all pupils with EHCPs would have an annual review to inform the decision about future provision.
- 7.11 Based on the information available, it is considered that the needs of pupils with SEND, currently on roll at St Teresa's, could be met within another mainstream setting, subject to individual assessment and review. Any updated information about a child's needs would be captured through the annual review. The transition arrangements would be managed by the SEND team of each child's home local authority, in partnership with families.
- 7.12 If the proposal were to proceed, pupils who are currently undergoing statutory assessment would see no disruption to that process and evidence collected for pupils in advance of a formal request for statutory assessment would be made available to the receiving school.
- 7.13 If established to support pupil transition, the transition support group would include SEND professionals to make sure the right level of support is wrapped around this group of children and transition is as smooth as possible. Trafford Council would seek to support the wellbeing of pupils and minimise the impact of any transition.

8. Alternative Placements and Travel Impact

- 8.1 A number of respondents expressed concern about the availability of suitable alternative school places and the potential for increased travel distances and transport costs should the proposal proceed. Some respondents referred to

increased risk of accidents. Consultees expressed concerns about the safety and practicality of journeys to alternative Catholic schools, referring to walking distances, busy roads, crossing points, traffic congestion, collision data and the suitability of routes for younger children.

- 8.2 We acknowledge the concerns raised. As part of the proposal, we have considered the availability and accessibility of alternative school places across Trafford. While some families may face longer journeys to particular schools, a range of alternative schools are available within reasonable travelling distance of the school, including schools that may be closer to individual home addresses than St Teresa's is.
- 8.3 Based on the evidence available, pupil monitoring indicates that there were 109 pupils on roll at St Teresa's in July 2026. 21 of these pupils left in July to transfer to secondary school and further 45 pupils applied for and secured alternative school places to start in September 2026. The remaining 43 pupils, plus 2 reception pupils, are expected to be on the St Teresa's school roll when school reopens in September 2026, a total of 45 school age pupils.
- 8.4 An assessment of alternative school places was carried out when the proposal was first made in May 2026, and it was updated again in July 2026 to consider places which had been allocated for September 2026. The following table shows the total vacancies available in each year group, split across Catholic and non-Catholic places. It also shows how many pupils on St Teresa's roll would require an alternative school place should the proposal proceed.

Trafford Schools (<2 miles St Teresa's)	School Year 2026/27							
Vacant Places	YR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Non catholic	87	66	46	66	14	20	32	331
Catholic places	35	15	15	11	9	10	10	105
Total Vacant Places	115	86	60	41	40	24	42	436
St Teresa's Potential Pupils to Transition	2	9	6	7	10	5	0	45

Year 6 pupils are not included as they would be able to complete their primary education at St Teresa's prior to the proposed closure date of 31 August 2027.

- 8.5 The school place position changes as pupils move in and out of Trafford and so the transition support group would be carrying out regular monitoring of vacant places during the next school year. This monitoring would also include vacant places in Manchester schools, including the two Catholic schools which are close to the Trafford border.
- 8.6 Based on the current distribution of available places, it is not anticipated that families would be required to travel significantly greater distances to access an

alternative school place. Many families would continue to have access to a school place within walking distance of their home.

- 8.7 From an analysis of the pupils who applied to Trafford and secured a new school place from September 2026, the information indicates 40% of them are closer to home. Of the 60% which are further away from home, the average additional distance travelled is less than half a mile. Only 2 of these pupils will travel more than the statutory walking distance of 2 miles to get to their new school place. However, both these pupils were travelling over 2 miles to get to their original school place at St Teresa's so this is no change for them, and the distance is linked to parental choice.
- 8.8 The transition support group would be able to work with families to support them through the process of securing suitable alternative school places and would provide advice regarding school travel assistance entitlement where this is applicable.

9. Impact on Staff

- 9.1 A number of respondents expressed concern about the impact of the proposal on staff and the loss of an experienced workforce. There were questions about how, if the proposal were to proceed, redundancies would be managed and whether staff would receive support.
- 9.2 We acknowledge that if the school closes there would be a significant impact on staff and we recognise that this may be an unsettling time for colleagues. Individual information about how to access support through the school's employee assistance programme and relevant trade unions has been shared with staff.
- 9.3 If the decision is to proceed with the closure, this would then lead to a separate staff consultation. In a voluntary aided school, the Governing Board is the employer of the staff. Both Trafford Council and the Diocese of Salford would support the process, and the trade unions would be involved. This is the point where Trafford Council would be able to answer questions about what is next for staff.

10. Community Value

- 10.1 Many respondents described St Teresa's RC Primary School as an important community asset and highlighted its long history of serving local families. Consultees referred to the school's strong links with the parish and the sense of

belonging that has developed through generations of pupils and families attending the school.

- 10.2 The Council recognises and values the significant contribution that St Teresa's RC Primary School has made to the local community and acknowledges the strength of feeling expressed during the consultation. The importance of the school to current and former pupils, families, staff, governors, parishioners and local residents has been clearly reflected in the consultation responses.
- 10.3 However, when considering proposals of this nature, the Council must also take account of its statutory responsibility to ensure that there are sufficient and sustainable school places across Trafford and to consider the long-term viability of individual schools. The Council's assessment indicates that there is significant surplus primary school capacity within the local area, including within local Catholic schools, and that pupil numbers at St Teresa's have declined substantially in recent years. While the community value of the school is an important consideration, it must be balanced against the demographic and financial factors that have led to the proposal being made.
- 10.4 We also acknowledge the petitions submitted during the consultation and have considered this alongside the consultation responses, noting some consultees completed both the petition and the consultation.
- 10.5 The views expressed regarding the school's importance to the local community have been carefully considered as part of the consultation process and will form part of the information available to decision-makers when determining the proposal.

11. School Place Planning Policy and Investment

- 11.1 Several consultees questioned whether Trafford's previous decisions to expand capacity at neighbouring schools had contributed to falling rolls at St Teresa's. Respondents questioned whether pupil numbers could be distributed more evenly across local schools.
- 11.2 Trafford Council regularly reviews pupil numbers across the borough and has a statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient school places available where families wish to access them. Decisions regarding the expansion of schools have historically been taken in response to forecast demand at the time, including periods when primary pupil numbers were significantly increasing.
- 11.3 The most recent primary school expansion in the north locality was Gorse Hill Primary School which was completed 6 years ago in 2019, increasing its admission

number from 50 to 60. Before that, it was Kings Road Primary School which was completed 12 years ago in 2014, increasing its admission number from 60 to 90.

- 11.4 The current challenge facing Trafford is markedly different, with falling birth rates resulting in a significant surplus of primary school places across a number of planning areas. We must therefore respond to current and projected demand patterns and maintain a sustainable network of schools.
- 11.5 Trafford Council is now working with schools and local partners to reduce the capacity in primary schools. For example, Gorse Hill Primary School is reducing its PAN from 60 to 45 from 2027. Old Trafford Academy is reducing from 60 to 30 from 2027. We will be working with partners to identify further potential reductions in capacity during the autumn term 2026.
- 11.6 Some respondents asked why some schools in the north locality had attracted investment, such as St John Vianney School, St Ann's RC Primary School and Barton Clough Primary School, whilst St Teresa's had been excluded.
- 11.7 These three schools had projects funded by DfE School Rebuilding Programme (SRP) which carries out major rebuilding and refurbishment projects at school buildings across England. Responsible bodies can nominate schools for consideration subject to strict criteria, with buildings prioritised according to their condition.
- 11.8 St John Vianney is a non-maintained special school for pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and so does not cater for the same cohort of pupils as St Teresa's.
- 11.9 St Ann's RC Primary School and Barton Clough Primary School are both mainstream schools in the north locality. The School Rebuild projects at these schools replaced the existing provision, rather than creating additional places in the area.

12. Timing of Consultation

- 12.1 A number of respondents expressed concern regarding the timing of the consultation, particularly that it commenced close to the end of the academic year. Some felt this created uncertainty for pupils, families and staff over the summer period and contributed to families seeking alternative school places before any final decision has been made. Some respondents questioned why the proposal had not been brought forward earlier or whether additional warning could have been provided.

- 12.2 Trafford Council has been working with the school over a number of years through regular budget monitoring arrangements. The proposal was brought forward after all available information, including reception offers for September 2026, indicated that pupil numbers continued to decline and that no viable financial recovery plan had been identified. We also wanted to make sure that should the proposal go ahead, there was as much notice as possible ahead of the proposed closure date of 31 August 2027.
- 12.3 Our information explained that at the consultation stage, this is a proposal and that no decision has yet been made. We shared information with families that if the proposed closure does go ahead in August 2027, a transition support group would be established to make sure children have a well-supported transition to their new school placement.
- 12.4 Several consultees suggested that publication of the proposal had itself accelerated pupil withdrawals. It is the case that some families have chosen to move to a new school placement ahead of the final decision and well ahead of the proposed closure date. Any family is entitled to apply for a new school place at any time during their child's education.
- 12.5 Some consultees felt communication regarding the proposal and the events leading up to it could have been clearer.
- 12.6 We acknowledge that some consultees felt communication could have been clearer, particularly in relation to the budget position and the circumstances leading to the proposal. We have sought to provide information throughout the consultation period through published documents, stakeholder meetings and responses to enquiries. Feedback regarding communication has been noted and will inform future engagement processes.

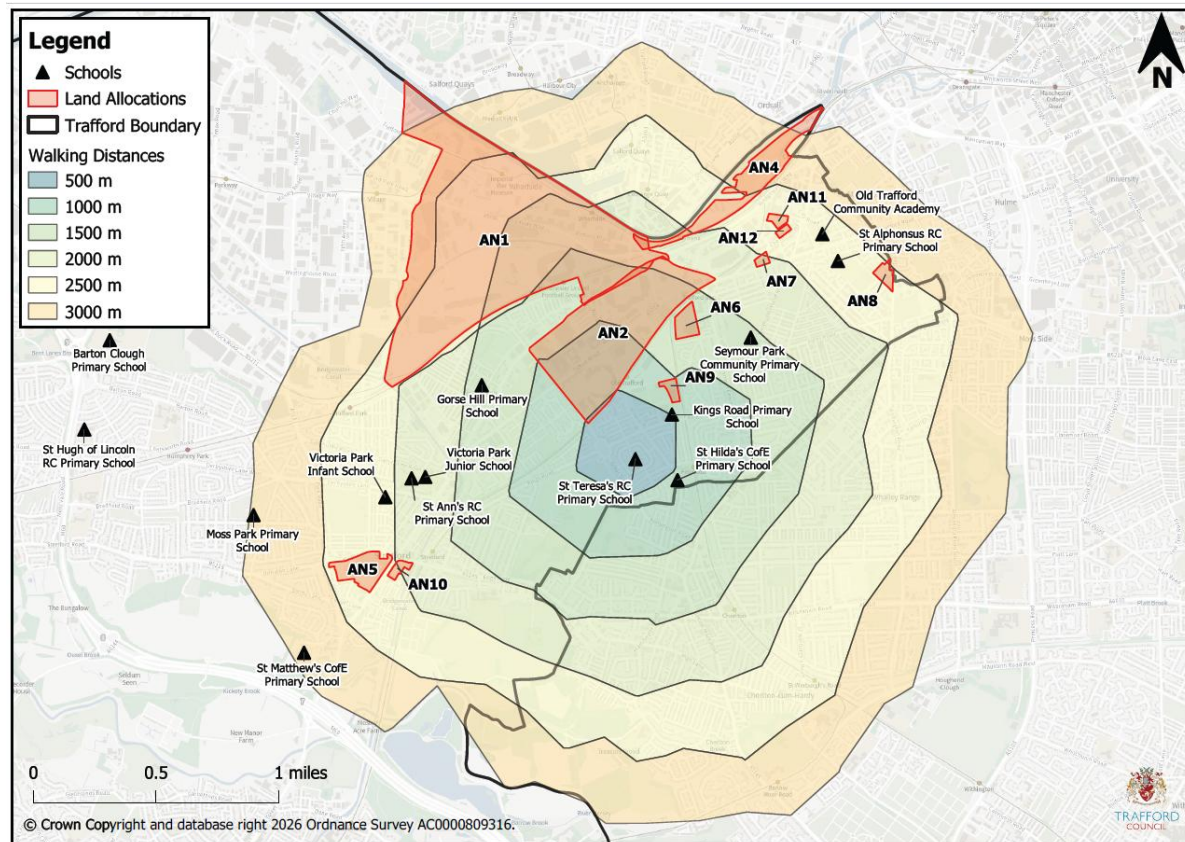
13. Pupil Forecasts and Impact of Housing Developments

- 13.1 A substantial number of respondents expressed concern that the proposal places insufficient weight on planned housing and regeneration developments within Stretford, Firwood and the wider north locality of Trafford. Respondents frequently referred to major developments including the Civic Quarter, Stretford Mall regeneration, Lumina Village and other residential schemes which are expected to deliver significant numbers of new homes over the coming years. Many respondents questioned whether future population growth and associated demand for primary school places had been fully accounted for. A number of responses sought further information regarding the forecasting methodology used and assumptions regarding housing growth.

- 13.2 Trafford Strategic Planning, Development Management and Education departments work together to make sure the impact of new housing development is accounted for within school place planning. Housing land supply information is shared amongst the services to establish where new homes are going to be delivered, in what numbers and in which years going forward.
- 13.3 The Department for Education (DfE) requires each local authority to submit an annual statutory return known as the school capacity survey (SCAP) which includes primary pupil number forecasts for the next 5 academic years. Trafford's forecasting methodology complies with statutory guidance and is monitored and ratified by DfE. It utilises data on GP registrations for pre-school age children, school census, admissions information, average migration rates, previous demand patterns and housing developments.
- 13.4 The SCAP forecasts include pupils from new housing developments which have already achieved planning permission. Alongside the SCAP pupil forecasts, the number of pupils expected from developments further into the future is also calculated to give a strategic view.
- 13.5 When considering the impact of future demand in the context of St Teresa's RC Primary School, we have included all new housing developments across the north locality in the Trafford Local Plan, except for Trafford Waters which is considered beyond the statutory walking distance of 2 miles and therefore too far away. These are the developments and the number of dwellings they are expected to deliver within the plan period to 2039:

Allocation	Dwellings	Included
AN1: Wharfside	8,400	Yes
AN2: Civic Quarter	4,000	Yes
AN3: Trafford Waters		No – Too Far Away
AN4: Pomona	2,050	Yes
AN5: Former Stretford Mall Site	750	Yes
AN6: Land West of Skerton Road (Elsinore Road)	540	Yes
AN7: 499 Chester Road, Old Trafford	285	Yes
AN8: 88-118 Chorlton Road, Old Trafford	188	Yes
AN9: Land on Brixham Road, Old Trafford	145	Yes
AN10: Lacy Street, Stretford	52	Yes
AN11: Empress Mill and Adjacent Land	146	Yes
AN12 Former Trafford Press, Veno Building and Adjacent Land	180	Yes

13.6 This map shows all these developments, their proximity to St Teresa's RC Primary School in walking distance bands, and all other primary schools in the area:



13.7 The policy for calculating pupil yields is described in detail in the Trafford Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The yield rates in the Department for Education pupil yield dashboard are used to estimate the number of pupils from new housing developments. Two pupil yield methods are used to calculate a pupil yield range:

Method 1

- High-level approach uses the 'all' primary yield rate of 0.1635.

Method 2

- Assumes 17.5% of dwellings are 1-bed and therefore discounted, based on the latest Housing Needs Assessment for Trafford.
- Of the remaining dwellings, for developments in the north locality, 70% are assumed to be 2+ bed flats and 30% are 2+ bed houses.
- The primary yield for 2+ bed flats is 0.0677 and for 2+ bed houses is 0.4143.

- 13.8 Pupil numbers have significantly decreased in the north locality which means there is a current surplus of 7 forms of entry, and the latest forecasts indicate this will remain broadly constant for the next 3 years.
- 13.9 There is no indication that the current trends will change. National pupil projections produced by the Office for National Statistics forecast the primary population will shrink by a further 10.7% by 2031 which could potentially further increase the Trafford surplus position.
- 13.10 Using the established pupil yield methodology, it is estimated the total impact of all housing development in the north locality up to 2039 will be additional pupils equating to around 11.5 forms of entry in primary schools.
- 13.11 After allowing for parental preference and pupils moving, it is estimated the new demand from housing developments in the north locality up to around 2035 can be met by the current surplus.
- 13.12 Some respondents argued that closure would permanently remove educational capacity that may be needed in the future and raised concerns regarding the potential cost of replacing school places further in the future.
- 13.13 The school places position is regularly reviewed and updated. Additional infrastructure requirements are funded by developer contributions to mitigate the impact of development. If it is the case that additional primary school places are required beyond 2035, the hierarchy to achieve this, as described in our policy, is as follows:
- Recommission existing capacity in schools
 - Expand existing schools to protect financial viability
 - Create new school only if all other options have been exhausted
- 13.14 The Department for Education sufficiency framework indicates it is for local authorities and local partners to balance the supply and demand of school places, to respond and react to changing demographics locally. The number of places available should be increased in response to need and reduced/repurposed where they are no longer required.

14. School Site

- 14.1 Several respondents requested information about the future of the school site should the closure go ahead.

14.2 The buildings and land occupied by St Teresa's RC Primary School are owned by the Diocese of Salford. There is currently a covenant on the land which restricts its use to education or church use.

14.3 The current proposal relates only to the future operation of the school and not to any future use of the land or buildings. Should the decision be taken that the school will close, consideration will then be given to future options for the site. The Diocese of Salford is the landowner and so they are responsible for any future decision about the site and it would be subject to the relevant statutory processes.

15. Statutory Process

15.1 This table outlines the statutory process that will be followed if the proposal proceeds. This report is the response to the consultation stage. The next stage would publication of a statutory notice.

Stage		Timeframe
1	Consultation	19 May to 29 June 2026 (6 weeks in total, 4 weeks in term time and 2 weeks holidays)
2	Publication of Statutory Notice	Publish 7 September 2026 for 4-week period
3	Period of Representation	Ends 4 weeks after publication date on 5 October 2026
4	Decision (must be within 2 months of end of representation period)	19 October 2026 Trafford Council Executive Meeting

15.2 Trafford Council Executive is responsible for all key decisions. It consists of the Leader of the Council and 9 other Executive Councillors. After they make the final decision, there is a period of call-in which lasts 5 working days. A call-in is a way for Councillors on a Scrutiny Committee to ask for an Executive decision to be looked at again before it is put into effect. It is an important check and balance in the Council's decision-making process but can only be used in specific exceptional circumstances. After the period of call-in, the decision can be implemented.