Northumberland
County Council

CABINET
Date: 10 July 2018

Outcomes of Statutory Consultation on Proposals for Education in the West of Northumberland

Report of the Executive Director of Children's Services - Cath McEvoy
Cabinet Member for Children's Services: Councillor Wayne Daley
Report prepared by Andy Johnson Project Director

Purpose of Report

This report provides an analysis of the representations received during the four week statutory consultation period that began on 10 May 2018 and closed on 7 June 2018 from interested parties relating to the proposals to close Bellingham Middle School and Sports College with effect from 31 August 2019 and to extend the age ranges of Kielder, Bellingham, Otterburn, Greenhaugh and West Woodburn First Schools with effect from 1 September 2019. The report requests Cabinet to consider the outcomes of the consultation and approve the implementation of the statutory proposals, with a modification to the proposal for West Woodburn First School, the reasons for which are set out in the report. In addition Cabinet are requested to consider and approve the non-statutory proposal to extend the age range of Wark Church of England First School with effect from 1 September 2019 as it is linked to the other proposals.

Cabinet is also asked to consider the outline business case for the provision of enhanced buildings for the Hadrian Learning Trust in Hexham, which was requested by the Trust at their meeting of 8 May 2018, and approve the allocation of funding for the project from the Medium Term Plan.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1) Consider the responses to the statutory proposal and approve the closure of Bellingham Middle School and Sports College with effect from 31 August 2019;

2) Consider the responses to the statutory proposal and approve the extension of the age ranges of Bellingham, Kielder, Greenhaugh and Otterburn First Schools with effect from 1 September 2019;

3) Consider and approve the linked non-statutory proposal to extend the age range of Wark Church of England First School with effect from 1 September 2019, which was referenced within the Statutory Proposal;

4) Consider the issues facing West Woodburn First School that have arisen since the publication of the Statutory Proposal with respect to pupil numbers, staffing and finance set out in this report at para. 13 which call into question the educational and financial viability of the school becoming a primary school in September 2019, and as a consequence, agree to modify the statutory proposal by not at this stage approving the change of age range to the school and agreeing that further exploration be undertaken with the governing body during the Autumn Term 2018 to investigate and identify what arrangements could be put in place at the school to strengthen capacity and reduce costs.

5) Note the implications of the proposals on pupils, parents, staff and the local community as set out in the Statutory Proposal and included with the Background Papers to this report;provide capacity and reduce staffing costs.

6) Note that the above proposals are linked and therefore must be decided together in order to ensure that the impact of the proposals on the wider area is considered;

7) Note the implications for Home to School Transport of the statutory proposals as set out in this report;

8) Note **When deciding, take into account** the Department for Education's (DfE) 'Guidance for decision-makers: Statutory guidance for decision-makers deciding prescribed alteration and establishment and discontinuance proposals, April 2016' and the 'Opening and closing maintained schools; Statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers April 2016' attached to this report at Appendix 3 respectively, decide how to proceed with the proposal summarised in the Key Issues of this report in the light of the four options available:

- reject the proposal;
- approve the proposal without modification;
- approve the proposal with such modifications as Cabinet think desirable after consultation with the Governing Body
- approve the proposal (with or without modification) subject to certain conditions being met.

9) Approve the implementation of the preferred building options set out in para. 30 of this report; including the capital expenditure of £5.1m.

10) Note all of the above are conditional upon the granting of planning permission by 31 August 2019 in relation to the building works at Otterburn and Greenhaugh First Schools;

11) Note that a desk-top analysis has identified that the indicative construction costs for the provision of new buildings for the Hadrian Learning Trust would be in the region of £36-40m;

12) In the light of Recommendation 11 and the information provided in this report, authorise officers to develop a detailed business case in order to establish a preferred site and develop a robust project budget to provide new buildings for the Hadrian Learning Trust in Hexham and allocate £250k from the Medium Term Plan to carry out the necessary survey's, ground investigation and feasibility works, in order to provide cost surety, prior to procurement.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-2021, "We want you to achieve and realise your potential".

Key Issues

1. The rationale for the proposals set out in the recommendations above was outlined in the Interim Director of Children's Services Report of 19 December 2017 and the Executive Director of Children's Services Report of 8 May 2018, which are included in the Background Papers. Cabinet approved the publication of the statutory proposal on 8 May 2018, and it was published on 10 May, opening a four week statutory consultation period to 7 June 2018 in accordance with the The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013 and The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013.

2. A pre-publication consultation period on the proposals took place in two phases between 15 January and 2 February 2018 and then 19 February and 9 April 2018. The details and outcomes of these consultations are summarised in this report. On 8 May 2018, Cabinet approved the publication of the Statutory Proposals.

3. 73 representations submitted in response to the Statutory Proposals were received by the end of the statutory period from the following groupings:

   6 from School Governing Bodies named on the Statutory Proposal
   46 from parents/carers of 109 Bellingham Middle School children
   2 from Parish Councils
   1 from Newcastle Diocesan Education Board
   2 from other schools

16 from other interested parties

These representations were taken into account by officers when forming the recommendations set out in this report and are included in full in the Background Papers to this report. The main themes arising from the representations are responded to in the commentary in para. 17.

4. A further 9 letters and emails (including a letter from Haltwhistle Town Council) were received in relation to Haltwhistle Middle School, which together with Haltwhistle First School forms the Haltwhistle Community Campus (Academy Trust).

5. In making their decision, the Cabinet are reminded that a decision on these matters must be made no later than 4 September 2018, otherwise the papers must be passed to the Schools Adjudicator to make a decision. The Cabinet should note that, whether or not the proposals are approved, each of the following bodies has the right to appeal against the decision of the Cabinet to the Adjudicator, should they disagree with the decision:

- the Diocesan Board of Education for the CE Diocese of Newcastle
- the Bishop of the RC Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
- the Governing Body of Wark Church of England First School

in which case the Schools Adjudicator would then make a decision in relation to all the proposals in this report.

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Outcomes of statutory consultation on proposals for education in the west of Northumberland

Background Information

6. On 19 December 2017, Cabinet approved informal consultation on educational provision in the Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships. The full rationale for the consultation was based on the factors set out in in the background papers within the report of the Interim Director of Children's Services dated 19 December 2017, but in summary the reasons were:

   a) The potential closure of Haydon Bridge High School due to the withdrawal of the Bright Tribe Trust as a sponsor and a letter received from the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) asking NCC to respond to the potential discontinuance of the school.

   b) The consultation carried out by the Hadrian Learning Trust to seek authorisation from the Regional Schools Commissioner to change its age range to 11-18.

   c) The financial difficulties predicted by several schools in the west if they are to maintain an appropriate curriculum offer. NCC is committed to maintaining small rural schools but must consider the financial implications of such a commitment.

   d) The statutory requirement that NCC ensures that there is an appropriate level of capacity for school places and that NCC take action where there is over-capacity to reduce school places. There is significant over-capacity in the west of the county.

   e) The physical state of many school and academy buildings is poor and significant investment is required to maintain and improve the school estate.

   f) Due to the rural nature of the area transport arrangements are complicated and transport costs are high.

7. The informal consultation was undertaken in two phases, the first between 15 January and 2 February 2018, it included leaders of the schools and educational professionals from interested bodies, as a result a set of theoretical models were devised. The second phase was between 19 February and 9 April 2018 and included the whole community. The outcomes, data analysis and responses to the informal consultation are set out in the Executive Director's Report of 8 May to Cabinet, included in the Background Papers to this report. It was made clear during the informal consultation that the outcomes would result in analysis and recommendations to Cabinet that might result in significant changes to schools, including potential closures and restructure but that no preemptive decision had been determined.

8. In relation to the Haydon Bridge Partnership, at their meeting on 8 May, Cabinet approved the publication of a statutory proposal in relation to some schools in the partnership setting out the proposals outlined above. Cabinet also approved a package of funding support of circa £1.54m for Haydon Bridge High School to be invested in supporting the school to survive financially over a period of 3 years. This was in addition to the deficit already accrued at the school of £600k. In addition, a capital funding package of circa £3m was agreed to reconfigure its buildings and to

improve efficiency, improve the curriculum offer and quality of education. It was agreed there would be a reduction of the school's Planned Admission Number (PAN) from 185 to 120 with effect from 1 September 2020. This reduction subject to the approval of the statutory proposal outlined in this report. As any proposed reduction to a school's PAN must be approved by the Schools Adjudicator, should Cabinet agree to implement the above statutory proposals a request would need to be submitted to the former with respect to the proposed reduction in the PAN of Haydon Bridge High School.

9. With regard to schools in the Hexham Partnership, Cabinet decided to make no changes to the current structure of schools. However, Cabinet approved the recommendation that Council Officers should develop a resilience programme in both Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships with a view to establishing hard federations or multi-academy trusts to support the schools to have the capacity to become financially and educationally viable in the long term.

10. Finally, Cabinet decided it would respond to the Hadrian Learning Trust consultation by stating they could not support their proposal to close Hexham Middle School and extend the age range of Queen Elizabeth High School due to the impact this would have on other schools in the Hexham Partnership. This decision was based upon the lack of support from other educational professionals in schools and the widespread objections raised by the community. However, Cabinet did approve Council officers to work with the Hadrian Learning Trust to establish a proposal for redevelopment of the existing Trust school buildings and the requested Business Case is included in the Background Papers to this report.

The Statutory Proposal Stage

11. A Statutory Proposal drafted in accordance with The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013 and The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 was approved for publication for the proposed closure of Bellingham Middle School and Sports College, the proposed extension of the age ranges of Kielder, Greenhaugh, Otterburn and West Woodburn (with reference to the non-statutory proposal to extend the age range of Wark Church of England First School) and the proposed extension to the buildings of Greenhaugh and Otterburn First Schools was published on the Council's website on 10 May 2018.

12. The publication of the Statutory Proposal opened a four week statutory period during which time interested parties were invited to submit written representations either in support of, objecting to or commenting on the proposals by midnight on 7 June 2018.

13. Since the publication of the Statutory Proposal a number of issues in relation to pupil numbers, staffing and finance have emerged in relation to West Woodburn First School. In relation to staffing issues, there have been a number of staff who have left the school, meaning there are just 2 part time teachers in post for September 2018. Although temporary arrangements have been put in place, it is believed that until there is more certainty regarding the Leadership and staffing of the school, a decision to change the age range of the school should not be taken at this time.

The number of pupils on roll at the school has fallen from 23 to 16 for September 2018 and there are no children who are commencing their education in Reception and Year 1. Therefore, the revised estimated number of children in the school in September 2019 is 19 and for September 2020 the forecast is 22, although these numbers are obviously subject to parental preference. While fewer numbers in itself is not always an issue, in the case of West Woodburn this is compounded by the situation with the school's 3 year budget forecast which is under significant pressure.

Lastly, the Governing Body's response to the Statutory Proposal indicated that their preferred option was to remain as a first school, therefore it would appear that they are not wholly in support of the statutory proposal for West Woodburn to become a primary school.

As a result of the above issues, it is considered that the school would not be able to become an effective and financially viable primary school in September 2019. Cabinet are therefore asked to modify the Statutory Proposal with respect to West Woodburn First School only and not agree to the proposal that the school should change its age range with effect from 1 September 2019. It is proposed that the school should remain as a first school and that officers undertake further exploratory work during the Autumn Term 2018 to investigate and identify what arrangements could be put in place at the school to provide additional capacity and reduce costs.

Representations submitted in response to the Statutory Proposals and commentary

14. Following the publication of the Statutory Proposal as set out in para. 11, the Executive Director of Children's Services received 73 representations in relation to the Statutory Proposal from the following interested parties;

- 46 identified themselves as parents of children on roll at or linked to Bellingham Middle School;
- All Governing Bodies whose schools are proposed for change within the Statutory Proposal
- 1 response from the Governing Body of a school in Hexham Partnership
- 1 response from an academy in the Haydon Bridge Partnership (although not the Governing Body)
- 2 Parish councils
- Response from the Newcastle Diocesan Board of Education
- 16 from other interested parties responded

15. Summary of Responses from Parents

When considering the process of consultation it is important that Cabinet note that the guidance for DfE's decision makers guidance, in particular it states that:- "The decision–maker should not simply take account of the numbers of people expressing a particular view. Instead they should give the greatest weight to responses from those stakeholders likely to be most directly affected by a proposal especially parents of children at the affected schools.' *(page 4, para. 4).* Note all individual responses have been retained and can be read by Cabinet if required.

Summary of parental responses given in support of the statutory proposal

- The success of Haydon Bridge High School will hinge on how and where NCC invest in the coming years. There is great demand for more vocational options in post-16 education. Offer these and NCC will be giving parents and students choice, and offering a competitive and viable alternative to QEHS
- There was a specific response of 'Insofar as it affects my three children who all attend Haydon Bridge High School, I have no objection to the proposal'.
- Other respondents stated strong family reasons (children attend the school) for wanting the secondary school both to survive and to become viable and therefore felt the proposal was appropriate.

Summary of parental responses not in support of the statutory proposal

- The 3 tier system of education (First, Middle, High) is a superior model of education to the two tier system (Primary, Secondary) and should be retained in the partnership for educational reasons.
- Many responses received expressing concerns over the distance of travel required for some pupils being in excessive.
- In respect of travelling there were also concerns over road conditions and winter weather conditions for travelling such expected distances.
- Respondents also had concerns over the effect of school closures on their rural communities as schools are seen as the hub of community life and concerns were raised that families would not want to remain living in the communities if the middle school was to close. It was also stated that there could be a long term impact on communities, resulting in local services being lost and a decline in the local economic prosperity .
- Middle Schools can offer specialist suites e.g. science laboratories, art rooms and the closure would result in a loss of this facility
- As an alternative it was suggested that NCC should invest money that would go in to Primary Schools in to Middle School instead and maintain its viability
- Lack of parental choice was highlighted, parents would no longer have a choice of three-tier education and pupils/parents should be given the same opportunity as their peers in Hexham.
- It was suggested that the catchment areas should be reviewed - Otterburn is closer to Morpeth, Ponteland and Hexham than Haydon Bridge and therefore transport should be offered appropriately
- It was suggested that a newly built all-through school should be built in Haltwhistle
- It was suggested that due to parental choice parents would withdraw their children and instead send them to schools in the Hexham Partnership
- It was suggested that an allocation of £40m was necessary to correct the situation and maintain a 3-tier structure.

16. Summary of Responses from Governing bodies of schools named in the Statutory Proposal

Bellingham Partnership of Schools (Federation) Governing Body - Summary

The Governing Body of the Bellingham Partnership of Schools noted the extension of the geographical area covered by the catchment areas of Bellingham Middle School

and Sports College and Bellingham First School (400 sq.m), stating that this required special consideration. The Governing Body believes that the local enrichment activities experienced by pupils in both Bellingham Middle School and Sports College and Bellingham First School are of great benefit, including Forest School in partnership with Kielder First School for first school pupils, and in middle school activities such as debating, first aid, textiles and spanish. Middle School pupils also benefit from STEM subjects.

The Governing Body provided examples of children who have to travel long distances already to school, and is concerned about the impact of additional travelling on children in the North Tynedale and Redesdale areas. The Governing Body believed that not all six first schools proposed to become primaries will succeed as small primaries and believes that retaining 4-13 education in Bellingham would enable the federation to assist the other 5 schools in the locality e.g. through shared facilities (see para. 30) .

Otterburn First School Governing Body

The Governing Body of Otterburn First School stated that they unanimously believe that a change primary status is the best way forward for the school and its pupils. They are supportive of this proposal, from September 2018 as they believe it will reduce the number of school changes for children, subject to capital funding being available for reorganisation at this date.

Kielder First School Governing Body

Kielder First School Governing Body stated that they support the proposal to change the school to become an age 4 to 11 primary school and the closure of Bellingham Middle School. However, as it is proposed that Greenhaugh First School should become a primary, the Governing Body believes that it would need to receive additional funding in order to support the additional staff that would be required for Year 5 and 6 teaching and to continue the excellent benefits of the weekly visits to Bellingham.

The Governing Body also proposes that the school should change status to become a primary school in September 2018 in order to provide stability for current year 4 pupils as the building does not require works to accommodate the change.

Finally, the Governing Body is unhappy that Haydon Bridge High School is the sole secondary provision for parents and children in the Haydon Bridge Partnership and feel that their choice would be limited by the Home to School Transport Policy. The Governing Body is also concerned that there would be sufficient time to put in place appropriate SEN adaptations for children moving from the school to HBHS in Year 7 in September 2019.

Greenhaugh First School Governing Body

The Governing Body of Greenhaugh First School state they welcome the opportunity to become an excellent primary school, although their first option would have been to remain as a first school. However, the Governing Body supports the proposal with

other first schools proposed to change age range in partnership to bring implementation forward to September 2018 for the following reasons:

- continuation of high quality Upper Key Stage 2 provision
- continuity of education, especially for children with SEND
- additional children could be educated initially at no extra cost
- there would be no need for children going into Year 5 in September 2018 at Bellingham Middle School to 'move' in September 2019.

Wark Church of England First School Governing Body

The Governing Body of Wark Church of England First School state they welcome the proposal to maintain the school for the current and future education of children in the community. The Governing Body supports the proposal with other first schools to change age range in the partnership to bring implementation forward to September 2018 for the following reasons:

- continuation of high quality Upper Key Stage 2 provision
- continuity of education, especially for children with SEND
- additional children could be educated initially at no extra cost
- there would be no need for children going into Year 5 in September 2018 at Bellingham Middle School to 'move' in September 2019.

West Woodburn First School Governing Body

The Governing Body have stated that although its preferred option was to remain as a first school within the 3-tier system, it agrees to explore the potential for federation as a primary school in order to maintain a school in West Woodburn, with its preferred partner being Otterburn First School.

The Governing Body suggests that should the Council implement the Statutory Proposal, it should write off the debt of the first schools proposed to become primary where relevant and that the costs of conversion should be negotiable with NCC. Some Governors are also concerned about the closure of Bellingham Middle School.

Finally, the Governing Body supports the joint proposal of the other first schools to implement the change of age range from September 2018, although has concerns about the practicalities around the short timescale.

Since the publication of the statutory proposal, issues relating to pupil numbers, staffing and finance have emerged in relation to West Woodburn First School which potentially challenges the educational and financial viability of the school becoming a primary school in September 2019. These issues and a consequential proposed modification to the statutory proposal are set out at para. 13.

Joint Representation from the Governing Bodies of Greenhaugh, Otterburn, West Woodburn and Wark Church of England First Schools

In addition to their individual Governing Body responses to the Statutory Proposal, the Governing Bodies of Greenhaugh, Otterburn, West Woodburn and Wark Church

of England First Schools submitted a joint response setting out a proposal to amend the implementation of the proposed change of age ranges of their schools from September 2019 to September 2018 for the following reasons:

- The earlier implementation would have no additional cost;
- The schools are able to deliver the Year 5 curriculum now and could extend deliver to Year 6 by September 2019;
- The schools wish to ensure continuity of education building on Year 3 and 4 to ensure excellent outcomes by the end of Key Stage 2;
- The schools wish to enable seamless support for children with SEND to end of KS2 to maximise their progress;
- The Governing Bodies wish to minimise potential disruption and uncertainty for the children currently in Year 4 in their schools.

The Governing Bodies wish to work with the Council to develop their current educational offer and provide clarity for children in Year 4 who could face 3 moves in 3 years; this proposal would offer stability and continuity of high quality education.

Haltwhistle Middle School staff and Headteacher, Haltwhistle Middle School

A response from Haltwhistle Middle School and a separately submitted response from signed by the Headteacher of Haltwhistle Middle School were submitted in response to the statutory consultation, but were otherwise identical. No response was received from the Bright Tribe Trust which currently is the Trust that has responsibility for the Haltwhistle Middle and First Schools. The main points in these submissions were as follows:

- The opportunity to maintain Haydon Bridge High School was supported in order to provide choice, inclusion and genuine pathways for young people in the west of the county;
- It was questioned why the Council was proposing to fund new buildings for the Hadrian Learning Trust (HLT), an academy, and not for Haydon Bridge High School, a local authority maintained school;
- If the Council approves the funding of new buildings for HLT, the capacity of the school should be reduced to 1,200 or possibly 1000;
- An opportunity has been missed to make both Haydon Bridge Partnership and Hexham Partnership either both 2-tier or 3-tier, as mixed systems will pitch schools against each other;
- The proposals set out in the Statutory Proposal do not address the reasons why consultation was originally undertaken during the informal stage e.g. system to last for 25 years, surplus places, financial challenge, sustainable small schools etc.
- While the support of Haydon Bridge High School is welcomed, would first schools changing to primary schools and other primary schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership also be supported during reorganisation?
- Transport costs would be increased due to Year 7 and 8 pupils proposed to travel to HBHS rather than to Bellingham Middle School and Haltwhistle Middle School;
- A missed opportunity for SEND provision;

- The report of the Director of Children's Services 8 May 2018 suggests that the incoming sponsor of the Haltwhistle Community Campus should consider changing the structure of the academies to become primary, but as this is not on the Statutory Proposal then the responses received may be misleading.
- An alternative proposal submitted during the informal consultation period was submitted.

Corbridge Middle School Governing Body

The Governing Body of Corbridge Middle School supports the Council's proposal to support Haydon Bridge High School and also formally extends an offer to the Headteacher and Interim Governing Body of school to school support, especially in Years 7 and 8 educational provision.

The Governing Body do have concerns that the proposal to make the Haydon Bridge Partnership wholly 2-tier could result in migration of pupils into the Hexham Partnership. Corbridge Governing Body are also concerned about the implications for school transport for Years 7 and 8, particularly for children who attend Haltwhistle Middle School in those year groups.

The Governing Body is passionate about the 3-tier system, and hopes the views of communities and schools affected are listened to. The Governing Body also hopes the proposals to improve the condition of the buildings at HBHS and Bellingham are reviewed as they are not fit for purpose.

The Newcastle Diocesan Education Board

The NDEB wishes to work in partnership with all stakeholders involved in schools in the west of the county, including the Council wherever possible. The NDEB is saddened by the proposed closure of Bellingham Middle School and recognises the impact this will have, but is keen to support the age range change of the named first schools in the Statutory Proposal and the change in age range of Wark Church of England First School, subject to adequate finances being made available. The NDEB feels it is important to continue to discuss how to educate children in the West of Northumberland sustainably and to the highest standards. While NDEB understands the delivery of outstanding primary education in a rural context can be challenging, it believes it is possible.

Bellingham Parish Council

Bellingham Parish Council objects to the closure of Bellingham Middle School on the following grounds:

- The children and staff of Bellingham Middle School should not suffer because of HBHS situation;
- the 3-tier model is best for rural and remove communities;
- the catchment area of the Haydon Bridge Partnership is more rural than Hexham and therefore some children travel may have to travel up to 3 hours to and from school at age 11
- There would be an economic impact on rural communities and young families will not move in to the village.

Corsenside Parish Council

Corsenside Parish Council have noted that they were not directly contacted to notify them of the statutory consultation.

The Parish Councils believes the closure of Bellingham Middle School would be disastrous for children and families in the North Tynedale and Redesdale areas and it is unfair to treat them differently to Hexham. The Parish Council are also concerned with the time and distance children would have to travel to school.

17. Officers Commentary on responses:

The proposal to close Bellingham Middle School is proposed to establish an effective system of education and clear educational pathways across the Haydon Bridge Partnership in order to support schools to improve and becomes sustainable, while retaining choice for parents in the west of the county, as expressed by many consultees during the informal consultation phase. The proposals set out in the Statutory Proposal together with the intended resilience programme are proposed to retain sustainable primary education and build on good working practice in all of the local communities of North Tynedale and Redesdale. The statutory proposals have been brought forward as a solution to address the educational performance, financial and sustainability issues facing the Haydon Bridge Partnership, particularly with regard to the poor educational performance of schools in the secondary phase. Responses from consultees from Haydon Bridge Partnership and from Hexham Partnership were not all the same, with many consultees in the Haydon Bridge area keen to see one system of education across all schools.

17.1 **Quality of Education:** In its Ofsted inspection of June 2017, Bellingham Middle School was judged to require improvement in the effectiveness of leadership and management; the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; the personal development, behaviour and welfare; and the outcomes for pupils.

Kielder First School is currently judged by Ofsted to be Outstanding in all of these areas, while Greenhaugh, Otterburn, Bellingham and Wark Church of England First Schools are judged to be good. Through implementation of the proposed resilience programme (see para. 18), it is believed that the five first schools proposed to become primaries would be able to build upon the good working practices and shared resources already in place by providing appropriate teaching, learning and development arrangements for primary aged children up to age 11 that will increase the sustainability of their schools and improve the outcomes of the children in the North Tynedale and Redesdale area.

17.2 **Travel**: Travel distances for all children and young people attending schools in Northumberland are always a key concern of the local authority, and there are many examples of children who live in other remote areas of the county who travel long distances to school. However, as a result of the implementation of these modified proposals, the primary age children living in the catchment areas of Kielder, Greenhaugh, Otterburn, and Wark Church of England First Schools would have shorter journeys to school for an additional 2 years and would not have to travel on a bus to Bellingham at age 9 and 10. In any event, on an annual basis officers in the

Home to School Transport Team review transport routes for individual children and young people to ensure that they are appropriate in terms of distances travelled as well as cost effective. However, should Cabinet approve the implementation of the Statutory Proposal, officers would be tasked with ensuring that the impact of travel on pupils who would travel from North Tynedale and Redesdale from Years 7 and 8 onwards is assessed to ensure that the shortest safe routes to Haydon Bridge High School are commissioned with transport providers. The Home to School Transport policy supports pupils to attend their nearest school from place of residence where they meet the criteria for transport. Further information on Transport is provided at para. 29.

While there would there would be an increase in the Home to School Transport Budget as a result of transporting pupils in Years 7 and 8 to Haydon Bridge High School who would otherwise have attended Bellingham Middle School, there would also be a saving to the transport budget by not having to transport children in Years 5 and 6 to middle school. For transport purposes, the catchment school for children living in Haltwhistle is already Haydon Bridge High School, however, children who live in Haltwhistle, currently attend Haltwhistle Middle School and who receive free transport do so on the grounds of nearest school providing education in the appropriate year group.

17.3 **Transition:** Should the proposals be approved for implementation, it would be assumed that the first schools proposed to remain open would retain their 2018/19 cohort into Year 5 in September 2019 and would receive the funding associated with those pupils in their 2019/20 budget allocation accordingly, whether or not those children were in fact retained in actuality. The year 5 pupils in August 2019 on the roll of Bellingham Middle School would transfer to the roll of Bellingham Primary School as year 6, these pupils would therefore not be sent back to their previous first schools. Should the proposal to implement the statutory proposal be approved, the Council would expect that staff in Bellingham Middle School and Bellingham First School would put working arrangements in place in the year leading to reorganisation to ensure there is a seamless transition for the benefit of the pupils on roll at both schools. All schools in the partnership would be expected to work together to ensure the smooth transition for all pupils.

17.4 All parents are able to express a preference for any school when applying for a place for their child and if there is a place available, they will be offered it - this is a national policy and would not be affected by the proposals set out in the Statutory Proposal. The Council's Home to School Transport Policy also offers parents choice, as where a child meets the criteria for transport, it is available to the catchment school, nearest school or nearest faith school where any of these preferences are expressed. Parents who express a preference for a school that does not fall into these categories would be responsible for meeting the transport costs for their child.

17.5 **Special Educational Needs:** The needs of all children with SEND are reviewed specifically in the year before their transition to the next school phase to ensure that any adaptations required are in place ready for such transition. The Council is still separately assessing its SEND provision across the Council and proposals for additional SEND provision will be brought forward for consultation in the Autumn Term.

17.6 **The Schedule:** Officers believe it would not be in the best interests of children and staff in all of the schools names in the Statutory Proposal to bring forward the proposed implementation date of the first schools to become primaries for the following reasons:

The change of a first school to become a primary school is not simply a matter of bolting on additional year groups. The senior leadership team and Governing Bodies of the first schools require time to consider how they wish to organise their schools as primary across the Early Years, KS1 and whole KS2 elements of the National Curriculum and decide on new staffing structures, potential for new posts and how the physical configuration of the school can best meet the needs of their pupils. Officers do not believe there would be enough time to undertake this work effectively between 10 July and 1 September, should a decision be made to approve the proposals, given that the Summer Term ends on 20 July.

Officers agree with the objectives of the Governing Bodies set out above in relation to their ability to deliver upper KS2 curriculum, seamless support etc., but believes this would be more effectively achieved with the change of age range from 1 September 2019. While Officers recognise the concerns schools have regarding current Year 4 pupils in their schools moving to Bellingham Middle School this September 2018 as Year 5, with the possibility of them becoming Year 6 at Bellingham Primary School (as it would be), it should be noted that the first and middle school currently share the same building and there would be many opportunities for joint working between the schools during the 2018/19 academic year to ensure that the transition for the children who would become Year 6 in September 2019 was virtually seamless. Although Bellingham Middle School would receive the funding for the pupils expected to join the school this September, there would clearly be an additional negative impact on staff at the middle school and the cohort of new Year 5 pupils who did join the school in September. Therefore, it is not recommended to Cabinet that the implementation date of the proposal to change the age range of Kielder, Greenhaugh, Otterburn, and Wark Church of England First Schools as set out in the Statutory Proposal should be changed to 1 September 2018 (refer to para. 13 with regard to the proposal for West Woodburn First School).

17.7 **Hadrian Trust:** At its meeting on 8 May, Cabinet were informed of the poor state of the buildings of the schools in the Hadrian Learning Trust and approved the drafting of a Business Case for consideration at their meeting on 10 April, therefore no decision has yet been made with regard to this proposal. Cabinet were also informed at their meeting of 8 May that the most appropriate building proposal for HBHS would be internal reconfiguration at a cost of £2.5 to £3m.

17.8 **Capacity:** Schools compete now for pupils within Northumberland and with neighbouring local authorities; this is not dependent on the organisation of schools, as some pupils attend schools from outside of the county to attend schools in the 3-tier system, and likewise a number of Northumberland pupils attend schools outside of the county to attend schools in the 2-tier system. The proposals set out in the Statutory Proposal are intended to establish continuity across the Haydon Bridge Partnership and if implemented would remove around 260 surplus places. The

proposed resilience programme would support small schools in both the Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships.

17.9 **Haltwhistle Academy:** The Council has no powers to propose changes to the structure of academies. The alternative proposal put forward was addressed in the Report of 8 May following informal consultation. The statutory consultation requires only comment on the preferred option set out in the Statutory Proposal, although the Cabinet have the authority to make modifications to the Statutory Proposals should they approve its implementation. As noted in para.4, 9 letters and emails were received in relation to Haltwhistle Middle School only (including from Haltwhistle Town Council), which together with Haltwhistle First School forms the Haltwhistle Community Campus (Academy Trust). Local authorities do not have the power to propose prescribed alterations or closure of academies in their area and therefore no proposals for schools in Haltwhistle were included in the Statutory Proposal.

However, Cabinet should note that on 20 June 2018, the WISE Academies announced that the Department for Education has approved Haltwhistle Lower School and Haltwhistle Upper School to become part of their multi-academy trust in September 2018, subject to the completion of due diligence and all legal processes being completed. The Council therefore looks forward to having discussions with WISE Academies in the near future on how a solution for Haltwhistle Academy can be developed that fits with the wider organisation of schools in Haydon Bridge.

Resilience Programme

18. In the Report of the Executive Director of Education, 8 May 2018, it was recommended that Council officers should develop a resilience programme in relation to the small schools in the west of the county, including schools in the Hexham and Haydon Bridge Partnerships. Meetings have been held with individual headteachers across both partnerships to outline the general principles of the resilience programme and the presentation outlining this is attached as Appendix 4 to this report. After the decision made on the statutory proposal if will be possible for the detailed implications of the resilience programme to be agreed with each school or academy.

Support for new buildings for schools in the Hadrian Learning Trust

19. At its meeting on 8 May 2018, Cabinet instructed officers to develop a high level Business Case setting out options and indicative costings to replace the buildings of both Hexham Middle School and Queen Elizabeth High School, which form the Hadrian Learning Trust. Since this time a project team has been established which includes representatives from NCC, Hadrian Learning Trust, and technical advisers. Further meetings have been held with elected members and the Hadrian Learning Trust Board to seek their views on the proposed scope and site options.

Several potential site options are being developed, some but not all of which are in the ownership of the local authority. In order to establish a preferred option officers will be carrying out negotiations on the purchase of land in the area. Until these negotiations are complete it will not be possible to establish a preference.

During the recent consultations on age range change, support for bringing together Hexham Middle School and Queen Elizabeth High School on one site was expressed. Bringing the two schools together on one site would potentially create educational and operational benefits, as well as delivering good value for money. In light of this feedback, the proposed scope of the project will include single site options.

Officers are recommending that £250k is allocated from the Medium Term Plan to develop the options further in order to establish a preferred site. Site investigations and surveys would then be carried out in order to provide cost certainty and deliverability of the project in order to inform a Business Case. The works would be programmed to be completed by mid-November and the Business Case would be brought to Cabinet for consideration thereafter. If the Business Case is approved by Cabinet, the procurement process would follow on with a view to school buildings being complete for September 2021.

Conclusions and recommendations

20. As with previous partnership-wide consultations on reorganisation in Northumberland, the consultation process on education in the West of Northumberland has been a long and emotive process, beginning in January 2018.

    In the light of feedback from interested parties and recommendations from officers, at their meeting on 8 May 2018 Cabinet agreed that schools in the Hexham Partnership should remain organised within the 3-tier system, subject to schools participating in the proposed Resilience Programme to support the sustainability of small, rural schools in the partnership. However, at this meeting Cabinet approved the publication of the Statutory Proposal proposing the closure of Bellingham Middle School and the increase in the age ranges of the remaining first schools in the partnership in order to provide a coherent and clear pathway of education for children, young people and their families in the Haydon Bridge greater catchment. Therefore, the Council remains focussed on supporting educational arrangements that are in the best educational interests of all children with regard to teaching and learning, rather than structures. It is in the light of this objective that it is recommended to Cabinet that it would not be in the best educational interests of children on roll in West Woodburn First School and the school staff to agree the change in age range of the school from 1 September 2019 (refer to para. 13).

    The proposed Resilience Programme in the west is also proposed for schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership in order to support Headteachers and Governing Bodies in meeting the challenges of providing education both within a rural setting and in the light of the rigorous standards expected in the Ofsted inspection framework.

    The benefits of the proposals in the Statutory Proposal, as modified, recommended to be approved by Cabinet would be:

    1) £5.1m invested in schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership.This investment would support the creation of a 0-11 provision in Bellingham that would also give the opportunity to have enhanced facilities provide art/technology and community spaces that could be used by all schools to deliver an enhanced

primary curriculum. Haydon Bridge would also see significant investment in order rationalise the buildings, safeguard the site and upgrade the interior of the remaining buildings.more detail on the investment proposals are contained in section 30 of the report.

2) One system of education across the maintained schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership. This supports the views of many respondents to consultation, including educational professionals, who believe that a mixed economy causes confusion and threatens the viability of small rural schools.
3) Parents and students would retain a choice of secondary education; parental choice to move children between schools is not affected.
4) The Governing Bodies of the five first schools now proposed to change their age range have indicated they would support the change to a primary structure.
5) The good and outstanding schools in the North Tynedale and Redesdale area would be supported to work together and across the partnership and beyond to increase sustainability through building on and sharing current good practice.
6) Primary age children living in the catchment areas of Kielder, Greenhaugh, Otterburn and Wark c of E First Schools would remain in their good or outstanding village primary schools for two additional years, therefore would not have to travel to Bellingham at age 9 and 10.

The proposed model of organisation for schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership is included in this report at Appendix 2.

Educational Standards in Haydon Bridge Partnership

21. Table of school reports and grades

Ofsted inspection judgements of overall effectiveness for First and Primary schools are generally high in Haydon Bridge. Kielder First is judged to be outstanding. Allendale Primary, Bellingham First, Greenhaugh First, Greenhead Primary, Henshaw Primary, Newbrough Primary, Otterburn First, West Woodburn First and Walk First are all judged to be good. Whitfield Primary, Shaftoe Trust Primary and Haltwhistle Lower School Academy have no current grade due to their academy status.

Most children who start Year 1 at one of the Haydon Bridge First and Primary Schools have at least average or above average levels of development, this varies between schools, but is around 85%. This would lead one to believe that very high attainment should be reflected throughout their school career. This is generally the case across Key Stage 1 at the schools, for example higher than expected proportions of children reach the expected standards in the Year 1 phonics check. This good picture of attainment is maintained at the end of Key Stage 1 where generally pupils' performance in Reading, Writing and Mathematics is better than the national average.

Above national average outcomes are maintained at Allendale Primary and Shaftoe Trust Primary at the end of Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and maths combined. Year 6 cohorts have, so far, been very small at the other primary schools and as a

result overall conclusions on outcomes here are difficult to make based only on limited attainment data. At the middle schools, Key Stage 2 outcomes are not as strong. Overall attainment in reading, writing and maths combined are below the national average. Progress from Key Stage 1 is also low, however part of the responsibility for this is shared with Years 3 and 4 at the feeder first schools.

In 2017 Haydon Bridge High School pupils achieved a Progress 8 score of -0.21, deemed "average" by the Department for Education. The same pupils achieved 23% Level 5 in maths and English, 16.6% below the national average. At 'A' level, attainment measured by the average points score shows students' attainment is below the national average, however the pupils achieved a progress score of 0.15. Haydon Bridge High School has had a poor inspection record over recent years and is currently judged to be an Inadequate school by Ofsted.

Rural Schools and the presumption against closure

22. While middle schools in Northumberland are 'deemed' secondary, Bellingham Middle School and Sports College is described on the Government's 'Get Information About Schools' website as being located in a rural village in a sparse setting. As such, Cabinet will need to give consideration to the impact of the closure of the school within this context in the light of the information set out in this report.

    Kielder, Greenhaugh, Otterburn, Bellingham and Wark Church of England First Schools are all listed on The Designation of Rural Primary Schools (England) Order 2017, but as these schools are proposed to continue, the presumption against closure is not relevant in relation to the proposals for these schools.

Provision for pupils, transition arrangements and timeline

23. Bellingham Middle School and Sports College is an age 9-13 middle deemed secondary school and provides education to both boys and girls with an annual intake (Planned Admission Number) of 60. At the time of the publication of the statutory proposal on 10 May 2018, there were 108 pupils on roll at Bellingham Middle School and Sports College and 12 applications had been made for a place in Year 5 for September 2018. In June 2018, 21 allocations for places in Year 5 for September 2018 have been made from a possible 39 children living in the school's catchment area. Should Cabinet approve the proposal to close the school, the pupils on roll who would otherwise have attended the school would be displaced in September 2019. Provision for these pupils would be as set out in the following timeline, which relates to the implementation of the statutory proposal:

    Bellingham Middle School

    31 August 2019
    - Bellingham Middle School would close.

    1 September 2019

    - Pupils in Year 8 in Bellingham Middle School in August 2019 would transfer as Year 9 as usual to a local high school according to parental preference.

- Pupils in Year 6 and 7 in the middle school in August 2019 would transfer to join the Year 7 and 8 cohort at Haydon Bridge High School or to another school providing education in those year groups according to parental preference.
- Pupils in Year 5 in the middle school in August 2019 would join the roll of Bellingham Primary School (as it would be) as the new Year 6 in that school or to another school providing education in those year groups according to parental preference.

Note: Should the new sponsor of Haltwhistle Community Campus submit a request to the RSC for the closure of Haltwhistle Middle School, the timeline for closure and the transition arrangements for pupils would be the same as those for Bellingham Middle school set out above.

Wark CE VA, Greenhaugh, Bellingham, Kielder and Otterburn First Schools

1 September 2019

- Pupils in Year 4 in the all of the above first schools on 31 August 2019 would be retained by their new primary schools as the new Year 5.

1 September 2020

- Pupils in Year 5 in these primary schools on 31 August 2020 would be retained as the new Year 6.

1 September 2021

- Pupils in Year 6 in the these primary schools on 31 August 2021 would transfer as the new Year 7 to Haydon Bridge High School and would join other Year 7 pupils moving from the existing primary schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership, or to another school providing education in those year groups according to parental preference.

Note: Should the new sponsor of Haltwhistle Community Campus submit a request to the RSC for the extension of the age range of Haltwhistle First School from an age 3 to 9 academy to an age 3 to 11 academy, the timeline and transition arrangements for pupils would be the same as those for the first schools set out above.

Haydon Bridge High School

1 September 2019

- Students on roll in Year 6 in existing primary schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership on 31 August 2019 would transfer into Year 7 at Haydon Bridge High School as usual.
- Students on roll in Years 6 and 7 at Bellingham Middle School on 31 August 2019 would transfer to Haydon Bridge High School and join the Year 7 and 8 cohorts or to another school providing education in those year groups according to parental preference.

1 September 2020

- Students on roll in Year 6 in Bellingham Primary on 31 August 2020 would transfer to Haydon Bridge High School as part of the Year 7 cohort.
- Haydon Bridge High School would reduce the number of intakes into the school to one only at Year 7 and for each subsequent year. The Planned Admission Number into the school would be reduced to 120. Requests for admission into year groups other than Year 7 at the school would be treated as in-year admissions.

1 September 2021

- Pupils in Year 6 in the new primary schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership on 31 August 2021 would transfer as the new Year 7 to Haydon Bridge High School and would join other Year 7 pupils moving from the existing primary schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership.

Catchment Areas

24. If Cabinet approve the implementation of the statutory proposal on the closure of Bellingham Middle School, the catchment area of the school would not be required from September 2019.

    It is not proposed to change the catchment areas of Wark CE VA, Greenhaugh, West Woodburn, Bellingham, Kielder and Otterburn First Schools or Haydon Bridge High School as a result of the recommendations set out in para. 1 of this report, therefore they would remain as they are currently.

Special Educational Provision

25. Current SEN provision at the first schools proposed to become primary in the Haydon Bridge Partnership would not be affected by the implementation of the proposed recommendations.

    Should Cabinet approve the implementation the statutory proposal, pupils with SEN who would otherwise have remained on roll at Bellingham Middle School would have a specific transition plan drawn up to assist them with transfer to other schools.

    Some pupils with SEN currently on roll in the first schools proposed to become primary schools could benefit by staying longer in those schools and having only one transfer of school at age 11.

    As part of the separate Northumberland SEND Strategy which was approved on 10 April 2018 and as part of a separate programme, officers will be undertaking consultation across the county with a view to developing proposals for Additional Resource Provision hubs (ARPs) within mainstream schools. Therefore the SEN alternative proposals arising from this consultation will be directed to the relevant officers to progress.

Early Years Provision

26. There would be no change to the current arrangements for early years provision in most of the first schools proposed to become primaries as part of the recommendations within this report.

    In relation to early years provision at Bellingham Primary School (as it would be), the North Tynies Children's Centre would be relocated into the main body of the building therefore providing age 0 to age 11 provision in one building in Bellingham village.

Implications for staff

27. If a decision to approve the closure of Bellingham Middle School and Sports College is made, staff employed at the school would be deemed to be 'at risk' of redundancy. Bellingham First School and Bellingham Middle School are federated under one Governing Body, therefore should the middle school close there would be an element of protection for the middle school staff to be redeployed in the primary school. In any event, Council officers would work with staff in order to identify redeployment opportunities elsewhere in the County and to avoid redundancies where possible. Any costs associated with ongoing salary protections of redeployed staff would need to be met from within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) from the revenue savings that would be made as a result of the proposed closure. Any costs associated with any possible redundancies could also be met from the savings within the DSG. Initial discussions with the Governing Bodies of all schools impacted and with the Trades Unions would be undertaken about how any adverse implications of the proposals for staff could be minimised.

    There would also be implications for staff in the continuing first schools, as Headteachers and Governing Bodies would need to consider the organisational structures of their schools as primaries, including any requirements for additional staff, prior to reorganisation in September 2019.

Impact on Community and Denominational Provision

28. There would be no impact on denominational provision as a result of the implementation of these proposals as no schools with a faith designation are proposed to close. Furthermore, while there would no longer be secondary education in Bellingham in Year 7 and 8, primary education would be extended to age 11 in all of the existing communities in North Tynedale and Redesdale.

    Furthermore, as Bellingham Middle School and Sports College and Bellingham First School share the same building in the village, the community and other users would continue to be able to access the facilities for any existing community activities (see para. 30) .

Transport

29. Transport for pupils affected by the proposed reorganisation, should it be approved, would be arranged in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy. Under the proposals, transport for eligible pupils would be provided to their

catchment or nearest schools or nearest appropriate church school in line with the transport policy. Therefore, from September 2019, catchment school for pupils from Year 7 onwards residing in the Haydon Bridge catchment area will be Haydon Bridge High School and those eligible under the policy would receive transport to the school.

Feedback has been received in response to the statutory proposal regarding concern about the negative impact of long travel distances on younger children who live in rural areas. Should Cabinet approve the implementation the statutory proposal to change the remaining first schools in the Haydon Bridge to primary schools, some younger children would be able to remain in their local communities for an additional two years. Furthermore, a review by transport officers would be undertaken on the impact of the implementation of the statutory proposal on children in the impacted schools, particularly with regard to pupils in Years 7 and 8 who would travel to Haydon Bridge High School should Bellingham Middle School close.

The impact of the recommendations set out in this report with respect to the statutory proposal for schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership on the Council's Home to School Transport has been assessed and it is envisaged that there would be no additional strain on the school transport budget should the recommendations of this report be implemented.

Costs of the proposed recommendations including school buildings

30. As stated earlier, it is proposed that North Tynies Children's Centre would move into the main school buildings in Bellingham, thereby creating an 0-11 educational offer from one building in the village. It is also proposed that that a technology and art provision be creating in the Bellingham school building that would be open to the whole Haydon Bridge Partnership of schools and the local community. It is further proposed that Bellingham Primary School (as it would become) would retain the current first school hall for its own use, while the current hall used by Bellingham Middle School would be open to use by the community and the wider partnership, thereby enhancing the facilities available to all stakeholders in the area.

Building costs set out in Table 1 below are estimates and should be treated as draft, as they are subject to further detailed work should the model be implemented.

Table 1 Haydon Bridge Partnership

School	Description	Costs
Allendale Primary	No works required	Nil
Newbrough CE Primary	No works required	Nil
Henshaw CE Primary	No works required	Nil
Shaftoe Trust Primary Academy	No works required	Nil
Greenhead CE Primary	No works required	Nil
Bellingham Primary (as it would be)	internal refurbishment to include relocation of the children's centre provision into the main building, to give a 0-11 provision in	£1.3m

	one building together with some demolition.	
Kielder Primary (as it would be)	No works required	Nil
Otterburn Primary (as it would be)	A classroom extension to include toilet and cloakroom provision	£360k
Wark C of E Primary (as it would be)	Minor internal refurbishment	£10k
Haltwhistle Middle and First Schools	No works required	Nil
Whitfield Primary Academy	No works required	Nil
Greenhaugh Primary (as it would be)	A classroom extension to include toilet and cloakroom provision	£366k
West Woodburn First	No works required	Nil
Haydon Bridge High School	Rationalise all teaching accommodation, which will include demolition of some blocks. Refurbishment of remaining teaching blocks together with roof and window replacements	Estimated £3.1m

The total estimated cost of funding the capital work associated with the proposed model for Haydon Bridge is around £5.1m**.**

Table 2

Funding Source	**Contribution**
Council's Medium Term Plan	£3.1m
School's Capital Investment Programme	£2.m
LCVAP (church capital grant) (90% of RC and C of E Aided costs.) NOTE: Further discussions to take place with the Church of England Diocese regarding this process	£0.009m

To support the investment identified above, there is a potential for the release of the vacant school sites as a result of the consultation; this has a potential to gain relatively modest capital receipts that would contribute towards the investment in the school estate.

Hadrian Learning Trust

As set out in the Report to Cabinet of the Executive Director of Children's Services of 8 May, given the current poor condition of the buildings of the Hadrian Learning Trust, it is believed that it would be in the best educational interests of the current and future children and young people resident in Northumberland who attend Hexham Middle and Queen Elizabeth High Schools to re-provide buildings for the

Trust. A desk-top analysis has identified that the indicative construction costs for the provision of new buildings for HLT would be in the region of £36-40m.

Cabinet are recommended to authorise officers to develop a detailed business case in order to develop a robust project budget to provide new buildings for the Hadrian Learning Trust in Hexham and allocate £250k from the Medium Term Plan to carry out the necessary survey's, ground investigation and feasibility works, in order to provide cost surety, prior to procurement.

Sport and Recreation

30. There would be no negative impact on the current sport and recreation facilities in the first schools proposed to become primaries under the recommendations set out in this report. As noted in para. 28 and 30, any current community activities that take place at Bellingham Middle School and Sports College would continue to be offered as Bellingham First School would continue to occupy the building.

IMPLICATIONS ARISING OUT OF THE REPORT

Policy:	The consultation has been consistent with the Council's policy to review changes to schools in accordance with local wishes and needs.
Finance and value for money	Refer to para. 30 of this report
Legal	N/A
Procurement	N/A
Human Resources:	There would be a need to support staff displaced. This report has been considered by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and the Chief Legal Officer. Should any relevant proposal to close a school be approved by Cabinet at a later date.
Property	Refer to para. 30 of this report
Equalities (Impact Assessment Attached) Yes	Second iteration of Equality Impact Assessment attached as Appendix 5 of this report. A further iteration would be carried out should Cabinet approve implementation of the statutory proposal.
Risk Assessment	A full risk assessment would be carried out on the project should the formal statutory (second) stage of consultation be approved.
Crime & Disorder	This report has considered Section 17 (CDA) and the duty it imposes and there are no implications arising from it.
Customer Considerations:	The proposals set out in this report are based upon a desire to act in the best educational interests of current and future children and young people in the west of Northumberland

Carbon Reduction	It is not envisaged that this proposal would have a significant positive or negative impact on carbon reduction.
Consultation	This report has been considered by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and the Chief Legal Officer.
Wards	Hexham West; Stocksfield and Broomhaugh; Corbridge; Humshaugh; Hexham East; South Tynedale; Haltwhistle; Bywell; Bellingham; Hexham Central and Acomb; Haydon and Hadrian

Background Papers

The Report of the Interim DCS/Director of Education and Skills – 19 December 2018

The Report of the Director of Children's Services – 8 May 2018

Representations received during the statutory consultation

Report Sign Off

Finance Officer	SD
Monitoring Officer/Legal	LH
Human Resources	KA
Procurement	TP
I.T.	NA
Executive Director	CM
Portfolio Holder	WD

Data Protection Implications

In carrying out the Phase 1 and Phase 2 consultation set out in this report, the Council has acted in compliance with Data Protection Act 1998 via the Council's Data Protection Policy

Specifically,

- Data gathered during this consultation process has been dealt with fairly - e.g. the responses from members of the public have been anonymised, whilst those responding within a public role have been identified e.g. Chairs of Governors, Dioceses and so on.
- The data and information gathered during Phase 1 and Phase 2 consultation has been used to assist in informing the recommendations set out in this report and will not be used for any other purpose, it.e. it will not be shared with another service area or any third party.
- The data and information gathered has been limited to that which would assist in informing the recommendations set outs that will arise from this consultation.

The Council has set out how it deals with with information received as part of consultation in the Council's Privacy Notice, at

http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/About/Contact/Information.aspx#privacynotices .

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Statutory Proposal for Bellingham Middle School and Sports College, Kielder, Greenhaugh, Bellingham, West Woodburn and Otterburn First Schools, referencing Wark Church of England First School

Appendix 2 Proposed Model of Reorganisation for the schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership

Appendix 3a **DfE, Making 'prescribed alterations' to maintained schools; statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers April 2016**

Appendix 3b **DfE, Opening and Closing maintained schools, statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers**

Appendix 3c **DfE, Guidance for Decision-makers deciding prescribed alteration and establishment and discontinuance proposals April 2016**

Appendix 4 **Presentation - Resilience Programme**

Appendix 5 Equalities Impact Assessment - updated June 2018

Appendix 1

Statutory Proposal for some Schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

NOTIFICATION OF PROPOSALS FOR THE REORGANISATION OF SOME MAINTAINED SCHOOLS IN THE HAYDON BRIDGE PARTNERSHIP

The following proposal falls into three categories.

CLOSURE

Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 15(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, that it is the intention of Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF to discontinue (close) the following school;

- **Bellingham Middle School and Sports College,** Redesmouth Road, Bellingham, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 2EN with effect from 31 August 2019.

Bellingham Middle School and Sports College is a local authority maintained community school.

In order to facilitate the above proposal, notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, that Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF intends to make the following prescribed alterations to the schools below:

CHANGE OF AGE RANGE

a) **Bellingham First School**, Redesmouth Road, Bellingham, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 2EL by changing the age range of the school.
- The current age range of Bellingham First School is 4 years to 9 years. The proposed age range for the school is 4 years to 11 years to take effect from 1 September 2019.

b) **Kielder Community First School,** Kielder, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 1HQ by changing the age range of the school.
- The current age range of Kielder Community First School is 4 years to 9 years. The proposed age range for the school is 4 years to 11 years to take effect from 1 September 2019.

c) **Greenhaugh First School**, Greenhaugh, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 1LX by changing the age range of the school.
- The current age range of Greenhaugh First School is 4 years to 9 years. The proposed age range for the school is 4 years to 11 years to take effect from 1 September 2019.

d) **Otterburn First School**, Otterburn, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE19 1JF by changing the age range of the school.
- The current age range of Otterburn First School is 3 years to 9 years. The proposed age range for the school is 3 years to 11 years to take effect from 1 September 2019.

e) **West Woodburn First School**, West Woodburn, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 2RX by changing the age range of the school.

- The current age range of West Woodburn First School is 4 years to 9 years. The proposed age range for the school is 4 years to 11 years to take effect from 1 September 2019.

For the purposes of providing further information, should Northumberland County Council decide to implement the above proposals, this decision would be made in conjunction with a decision by the Council to change the current age range of Wark Church of England First School**,** Wark, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 3LS from age 3 to 9 school to an age 3 to 11 school with effect from 1 September 2019, which is not required to be part of this statutory proposal

ENLARGEMENT OF PREMISES

In order to facilitate the above proposals, notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, that Northumberland County Council County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF, intends to make the following prescribed alterations to the schools below:

f) **Otterburn First School**, Otterburn, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE19 1JF by permanent enlargement of the premises with effect from 1 September 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter.

- The number of pupils on roll at the school in May 2018 was 32. The current published capacity of the school is 75 but includes accommodation allocated to the current nursery provision. The proposed capacity of the school is to be 70 for pupils aged 4 to 11. The current maximum number of pupils admitted at age 4 is 15. The maximum number of pupils to be admitted to the school at age 4 from 1 September 2019 and subsequent years would be 10. Nursery admission numbers would remain unchanged.

g) **Greenhaugh First School**, Greenhaugh, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 1LX by permanent enlargement of the premises with effect from 1 September 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter.

- The number of pupils on roll at the school in May 2018 is 27. The current published capacity of the school is 40. The proposed capacity of the school is to be 56. The current maximum number of pupils admitted at age 4 is 8. The maximum number of pupils to be admitted to the school at age 4 from 1 September 2019 and subsequent years would be 8.

In the interests of providing further information, Bellingham Middle School and Sports College and Bellingham First School occupy parts of the same building and it is proposed that Bellingham First School would also occupy that area of the building in which the middle school is currently accommodated. It is also proposed that the children's centre currently located on the Bellingham schools' site would relocate within the main school building with effect from 1 September 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter. Furthermore, in the interests of providing further information, it is proposed that there would be changes to the capacity and planned admission number as appropriate of the following schools:

- **Bellingham First School**, Redesmouth Road, Bellingham, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 2EL. The number of pupils on roll at the school in May 2018 was 49. The current published capacity of the school is 75. The proposed capacity of the school is to be 105. The current maximum number of pupils admitted at age 4 is 15. The

maximum number of pupils to be admitted to the school at age 4 from 1 September 2019 and subsequent years would be 15.

- **Kielder Community First School,** Kielder, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 1HQ. The number of pupils on roll at the school in May 2018 was 11. The current published capacity of the school is 75. The proposed capacity of the school is to be 50. The current maximum number of pupils admitted at age 4 is 8. The maximum number of pupils to be admitted to the school at age 4 from 1 September 2019 and subsequent years would be 8.
- **Wark Church of England First School,** Wark, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 3LS. The number of pupils on roll at the school in May 2018 was 32. The current published capacity of the school is 75. The proposed capacity of the school is to be 70. The current maximum number of pupils admitted at age 4 is 15. The maximum number of pupils to be admitted to the school at age 4 from 1 September 2019 and subsequent years would be 10.
- **West Woodburn First School,** West Woodburn, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 2RX. The number of pupils on roll at the school in May 2018 was 23. The current published capacity of the school is 44. The proposed capacity of the school is to be 42. The current maximum number of pupils admitted at age 4 is 10. The maximum number of pupils to be admitted to the school at age 4 from 1 September 2019 and subsequent years would be 6.

Bellingham, Kielder, Otterburn, Greenhaugh and West Woodburn First Schools are local authority maintained community schools. Wark Church of England First School is a local authority maintained voluntary school.

In the interests of providing further information, as set out above it is proposed to reduce the Planned Admissions Numbers (PAN) of Otterburn, West Woodburn First School and Wark Church of England First Schools with effect from 1 September 2019. It is also proposed to increase the PAN of Haydon Bridge High School from 65 to 120 into Year 7 and Year 8, and to reduce the PAN from 120 to 65 into Year 9 with effect from 1 September 2019. There would be one intake of 120 into Year 7 only at Haydon Bridge High School with effect from 1 September 2020 onwards. Should this statutory proposal be approved by the Council at a later date, proposals to reduce the published PANs of the above schools would be referred for approval to the Schools Adjudicator in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2014.

Copies of the full Statutory Proposal may be obtained from:

The School Organisation and Resources Team
Education and Skills
Wellbeing and Community Health Services
Northumberland County Council
County Hall
Morpeth
Northumberland
NE61 2EF

or from the Council's website at www.northumberland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations

All schools named above form part of the Haydon Bridge Partnership of schools.

Implementation.

- Bellingham Middle School and Sports College is proposed to close with effect from 31 August 2019.
- Kielder, Otterburn, Greenhaugh and West Woodburn First Schools and Wark Church of England First School are proposed to extend their age ranges and to reorganise to become primary schools with effect from 1 September 2019 in a phased way. The schools would retain Year 5 in September 2019 and would then retain Year 6 in September 2020. Bellingham First School is proposed to extend its age range and to reorganise to become a primary school with effect from 1 September 2019, at which point it would retain Year 5 and would receive the Year 6 cohort (subject to parental preference) transferring from Bellingham Middle School following its closure on 31 August 2019.

Objectives and reason for closure

The objectives of this proposal are to:

- **Discontinue (close)** Bellingham Middle School and Sports College, Redesmouth Road, Bellingham, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 2EN with effect from 31 August 2019.
- **Extend the age ranges of**:-
    - Bellingham First School, Redesmouth Road, Bellingham, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 2EL by changing the age range of the school. The current age range of Bellingham First School is 4 years to 9 years. The proposed age range for the school is 4 years to 11 years to take effect from 1 September 2019.
    - Kielder Community First School, Kielder, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 1HQ by changing the age range of the school. The current age range of Kielder Community First School is 4 years to 9 years. The proposed age range for the school is 4 years to 11 years to take effect from 1 September 2019.
    - Greenhaugh First School, Greenhaugh, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 1LX by changing the age range of the school. The current age range of Greenhaugh First School is 4 years to 9 years. The proposed age range for the school is 4 years to 11 years to take effect from 1 September 2019.
    - Otterburn First School, Otterburn, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE19 1JF by changing the age range of the school. The current age range of Otterburn First School is 3 years to 9 years. The proposed age range for the school is 3 years to 11 years to take effect from 1 September 2019.
    - West Woodburn First School, West Woodburn, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 2RX by changing the age range of the school. The current age range of West Woodburn First School is 4 years to 9 years. The proposed age range for the school is 4 years to 11 years to take effect from 1 September 2019.

Reasons for proposal:

In January 2018 and between 19 February and 9 April 2019, two phases of informal consultation were carried out by Northumberland County Council on ideas for the organisation of schools in Haydon Bridge and Hexham School Partnerships in the west of the county. These consultations were promulgated by a number of external factors, including:

a) The potential closure of Haydon Bridge High School due to the withdrawal of the Bright Tribe Trust as a sponsor.

b) A consultation carried out by the Hadrian Learning Trust in Hexham Partnership to seek authorisation from the Regional Schools Commissioner to change its age range.

c) The financial difficulties predicted by several schools if they are to maintain an appropriate curriculum offer.

d) The poor physical state of many school and academy buildings and need for significant investment in the school estate.

e) Home to school transport arrangements in light of the rural nature of the west of the county.

Having considered feedback from consultation and the educational case for change in relation to the Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships, the Council's Cabinet has approved publication of this statutory proposal to close Bellingham Middle School and Sports College to take effect from 31 August 2019 and to extend the age ranges of Bellingham, Kielder, Otterburn, Greenhaugh and West Woodburn First Schools to take effect from 1 September 2019. The Council is not required to publish a statutory proposal in relation to Wark Church of England First School and any decision in this regard would be made in conjunction with the outcomes of the proposals set out in this statutory proposal. The publication of the statutory proposals has been approved on the basis that the establishment of a primary-secondary model across the whole of the Haydon Bridge Partnership would be in the best educational interests of the current and future pupils in that area. The introduction of one system of school organisation across the Haydon Bridge Partnership would necessitate the closure of Bellingham Middle School and Sports College, but would enable primary schools to have larger cohorts of pupils in Years 5 and 6 and enable Haydon Bridge High School to have larger cohorts in Years 7 and 8. No proposals for statutory organisational changes to local authority maintained schools in the Hexham Partnership have been proposed as a result of informal consultation.

Effect on other schools, academies and educational institutions in the area
Haltwhistle Community Campus is an academy trust within the Haydon Bridge Partnership, which includes Haltwhistle First School and Haltwhistle Middle School; should the Council approve the proposals set out in the statutory proposal at a later date, the Council would work with the new sponsor of Haltwhistle Community Campus to develop a solution that would fit with the wider organisation of schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership. Should the new sponsor of Haltwhistle Community Campus submit a request to the Regional Schools Commissioner for the closure of Haltwhistle Middle School, the timeline for closure and the transition arrangements for pupils would be the same as those for Bellingham Middle school and Sports College set out in the 'Displaced pupils and timeline for implementation' section of this proposal. Similarly, should the new sponsor of Haltwhistle Community Campus submit a request to the RSC for the extension of the age range of Haltwhistle First School from an age 3 to 9 academy to an age 3 to 11 academy, the timeline and transition arrangements for pupils would be the same as those for the first schools set out in the 'Displaced pupils and timeline for implementation' section of this proposal.

Project Costs and Proposed Stages for Implementation

Should this Statutory Proposal be approved for implementation, there would be a need to carry out building works to facilitate the changes. Building costs set out in Table 1 below are estimates and should be treated as draft as they are subject to further detailed work and a tender process.

Table 1

School	Description	Costs
Bellingham Primary	internal refurbishment to include relocation of the children's centre provision into the main building, to give a 0-11 provision in one building	£912k
Kielder Primary	No works required	Nil
Otterburn Primary	A classroom extension to include toilet and cloakroom provision	£335k
Wark C of E Primary	Minor internal refurbishment	£10k
Greenhaugh Primary	A classroom extension to include toilet and cloakroom provision	£366k
West Woodburn Primary	No works required	Nil
*Haydon Bridge High School	Rationalise all teaching accommodation, which will include demolition of some blocks. Refurbishment of remaining teaching blocks together with roof and window replacements	Estimated £2.5m - £3m

*Proposed capital spend at Haydon Bridge High School given in the interests of providing further information linked to the statutory proposal.

The total estimated cost of funding the capital work associated with the proposed model for Haydon Bridge is around **£4.6m.**

Funding Source	Contribution
Council's Medium Term Plan	£2.59m
School's Capital Investment Programme	£2.m
LCVAP (church capital grant) (90% of RC and C of E Aided costs.) NOTE: Further discussions to take place with the Church of England Diocese regarding this process	£0.009m

Pupil Numbers and Admissions

Bellingham Middle School and Sports College

There are currently 108 pupils on roll at Bellingham Middle School and Sports College.
The age range of the school is 9-13 and provides education to both boys and girls.
There are currently 3 pupils with an Educational Health Care Plan enrolled at the school.

Bellingham First School,

There are currently 49 pupils on roll at Bellingham First School.
The current age range of Bellingham First School is 4 years to 9 years and provides education to both boys and girls.
There are currently 2 pupils with an Educational Health Care Plan enrolled at the school.

Kielder Community First School

There are currently 11 pupils on roll at Kielder Community First School.
The current age range of Kielder Community First School is 4 years to 9 years and provides education to both boys and girls.
There is currently one child with an Educational Health Care Plan enrolled at the school.

Greenhaugh First School

There are currently 27 pupils on roll at Greenhaugh First School.
The current age range of Greenhaugh First School is 4 years to 9 years and provides education to both boys and girls.
There are currently no children with an Educational Health Care Plan enrolled at the school.

Otterburn First School

There are currently 32 pupils on roll at Otterburn First School.
The current age range of Otterburn First School is 3 years to 9 years.
There are currently no children with an Educational Health Care Plan enrolled at the school.

West Woodburn First School

There are currently 24 pupils on roll at West Woodburn First School.
The current age range of West Woodburn First School is 4 years to 9 years and provides education to both boys and girls.
There are currently no children with an Educational Health Care Plan enrolled at the school.

Wark Church of England First School

In the interests of providing further information, the following pupil information is provided in relation to Wark Church of England First School:
There are currently 32 pupils on roll at the school.
The current age range is 3 to 9 years and provides education to both boys and girls.
There is currently one child with an Educational Health Care Plan enrolled at the school.

Displaced Pupils and timeline for implementation

In accordance with section 15(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, Northumberland County Council intends to discontinue (close) the following school with effect from 31 August 2019:

- Bellingham Middle School and Sports College, Redesmouth Road, Bellingham, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 2EN. In May 2018, there were 108 pupils enrolled at Bellingham Middle School, a local authority maintained community school. It is expected that a similar number of pupils would be on roll in September 2019, who would be displaced should the school close.

To facilitate this, it is proposed that the following model be implemented in accordance with the following arrangements and timeline subject to finalisation of the associated buildings programme:

First schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership that would become primary schools (Greenhaugh, West Woodburn, Bellingham, Kielder, Otterburn First Schools and Wark Church of England First School)

1 September 2019

- Pupils in Year 4 in the all of the above first schools on 31 August 2019 would be retained by their new primary schools as the new Year 5.

1 September 2020

- Pupils in Year 5 in these primary schools on 31 August 2020 would be retained as the new Year 6.

1 September 2021

- Pupils in Year 6 in the these primary schools on 31 August 2021 would transfer as the new Year 7 to Haydon Bridge High School and would join other Year 7 pupils moving from the existing primary schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership, or to another school providing education in those year groups according to parental preference.

Haydon Bridge High School

1 September 2019

- Students on roll in Year 6 in existing primary schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership on 31 August 2019 would transfer into Year 7 at Haydon Bridge High School as usual.
- Students on roll in Years 6 and 7 at Bellingham Middle School and Sports College on 31 August 2019 would transfer to Haydon Bridge High School and join the Year 7 and 8 cohorts or to another school providing education in those year groups according to parental preference.

1 September 2020

- Students on roll in Year 6 in Bellingham Primary on 31 August 2020 would transfer to Haydon Bridge High School as part of the Year 7 cohort.
- Haydon Bridge High School would reduce the number of intakes into the school to one only at Year 7 and for each subsequent year. The Planned Admission Number into the school would be reduced to 120. Requests for admission into year groups other than Year 7 at the school would be treated as in-year admissions.

1 September 2021

- Pupils in Year 6 in the new primary schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership on 31 August 2021 would transfer as the new Year 7 to Haydon Bridge High School and would join other Year 7 pupils moving from the existing primary schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership.

However, parents would be able to apply for a place at any other appropriate school according to parental preference, subject to a place being available.

Impact on the Community
There would be an impact on the community as a result of this proposal as educational provision in Years 7 and 8 would be removed from Bellingham village. However, educational places in Years 7 and 8 for pupils in these years groups would be provided at Haydon Bridge High School from September 2019. However, the villages of Kielder, Greenhaugh, West Woodburn, Otterburn and Wark would retain their primary age children for an additional two years in Years 5 and 6.

As it is proposed that Bellingham First School would continue within building it currently shares with the middle school, there would be no loss of provision to the village in relation to buildings. Furthermore, it is proposed that the early years provider on the site of the Bellingham schools would be able to relocate within the main building, thereby providing an opportunity to enhance provision.

Balance of denominational provision
There would be no impact on the balance of denominational provision within the Haydon Bridge Partnership as Bellingham Middle School and Sports College does not have a religious character.

Rural Primary Schools
Bellingham Middle School and Sports College is a middle school, deemed secondary therefore in the opinion of Northumberland County Council does not fall within the categorisation of a rural primary school as set out in Section 15 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Furthermore, the school is not listed on the DfE's List of Designated Rural Primary Schools 2017.
Bellingham, Otterburn, Kielder, Greenhaugh, West Woodburn First Schools and Wark Church of England First School are listed on the DfE's List of Designated Rural Primary Schools 2017. However, as the proposal is for these schools to extend their age range, this policy area would not be impacted.

Maintained nursery schools
The nursery provision currently provided at the first schools proposed to extend their age ranges as a result of this statutory proposal would not be affected by its implementation.

Provision for 16-19 year olds
N/A - There is no provision for students aged 16 to 19 in Bellingham Middle School.

Special educational provision
Provision for pupils with SEN is already provided at the schools that are the subject of this Statutory Proposal.

- There are currently 3 pupils with an Educational Health Care Plan on roll at Bellingham Middle School and Sports College. Should this statutory proposal be approved for implementation, the families of pupils with an EHCP on roll at Bellingham Middle School who would be displaced by its closure would be consulted about any specific potential impacts on their child and it would be ensured that appropriate individual arrangements were made where this is necessary to avoid potential adverse impacts, including any reasonable adjustments.
- There are currently 2 pupils with an Educational Health Care Plan enrolled at Bellingham First School.
- There is currently one child with an Educational Health Care Plan enrolled at Kielder Community First School.
- There are currently no children with an Educational Health Care Plan enrolled at Greenhaugh First School.
- There are currently no children with an Educational Health Care Plan enrolled at Otterburn First School.
- There are currently no children with an Educational Health Care Plan enrolled at West Woodburn First School.
- There is currently one child with an Educational Health Care Plan enrolled at Wark Church of England First School.

Continuity for current and future pupils with SEN at the above first schools would be achieved as a result of the implementation of this proposal, as pupils would stay longer in their primary schools and would transfer to the next school phase only once at the end of Year 6, and would stay longer at Haydon Bridge High School.

Travel

- Transport for all pupils affected by the proposed reorganisation should it be approved would be arranged in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy.
- Pupils transferring from Year 4 to Year 5 in September 2019 would remain in their first schools as the schools reorganise to primary status. It is envisaged that many pupils in Years 5 and 6 in the new primary schools would have shorter journeys to schools as they would be educated for an additional two years in the primary schools within their local communities.
- The journeys of pupils in Bellingham Middle School and Sports College transferring from Year 5 to Year 6 at Bellingham Primary School (as it would be) would not be impacted as they would remain in their current location.
- Some pupils transferring from Years 6 and 7 into Years 7 and 8 at Haydon Bridge High School in September 2019 and in Years 7 and 8 thereafter would have an extended journey length dependent on where they reside. Pupils residing more than 3 miles from Haydon Bridge High School, or where there is no safe walking route to that school, or who are from low income backgrounds may be eligible to free Home to School Transport.
- The longest journey currently undertaken by a secondary age pupil living in the Haydon Bridge Partnership greater catchment to and from Haydon Bridge High School is 80 minutes each way, while the Department for Education's School Travel and Transport guidance suggests that students of secondary age (11 upwards), should travel no more than 75 minutes each way to and from school. Therefore, it is envisaged that as a result of the implementation of this proposal, most secondary age students who live in the

Haydon Bridge Partnership greater catchment and who would travel to and from Haydon Bridge High School would have journeys within the 75 minutes suggested in the DfE guidance.

- In any event, transport for displaced pupils would be arranged in line with the County Council's Home to School Transport Policy.

There would be no anticipated significant increase in car use as a result of these proposals.

Consultation

All of the applicable statutory requirements to consult on this proposal in accordance with Section (15(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 were complied with during the two-phased informal (pre-publication) consultation period that took place during the following dates:

- 15 January to 2 February 2018
- 19 February to 9 April 2018

Consultees recommended in the relevant statutory guidance were consulted via a Consultation Document that was made widely available on the Council's website. Consultees included parents, staff, pupils, Governors of the impacted schools in the Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships, local parish councils, the Church of England and Roman Catholic dioceses, early-years providers, the local MP, staff representatives (unions), neighbouring local authorities and relevant neighbouring schools in other Northumberland Partnerships or local authorities. Two public consultation events were also held in Haydon Bridge (26 February 2018) and Hexham (17 March 2018) which were very well attended. Individual meetings with staff and the Governing Bodies of schools that were proposed for closure were undertaken in both partnerships during Phase 2 of the informal consultation period.

The meetings organised during the two consultation events allowed consultees attending to the opportunity to make known their views on the proposals and to suggest alternatives, which were noted and considered within the analysis of feedback. During the two consultation exercises, it was made clear that the outcome of the process would not be determined by the equivalent to a simple referendum but would involve a detailed analysis of evidence put forward. A total of 3,023 responses were received from consultees during the informal consultation process, including additional information such as business plans and alternative proposals
Details of the persons and parties consulted, the notes of the Governing Body and staff consultation meetings, and all views and responses received are summarised in the Executive Director of Children's Services Report to Cabinet 8 May 2018, which is available on the Council's website at http://committee.northumberland.gov.uk/Meeting.aspx?MeetID=7797.

Submission of Objections and Comments on Proposals

Within four weeks after the date of publication of the above proposals **(i.e. by midnight on Thursday 7 June 2018)**, any person may object to or make comments on the proposals by sending their written representations to: **The Executive Director of Children's Services, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF, or by email to educationconsultation@northumberland.gov.uk**

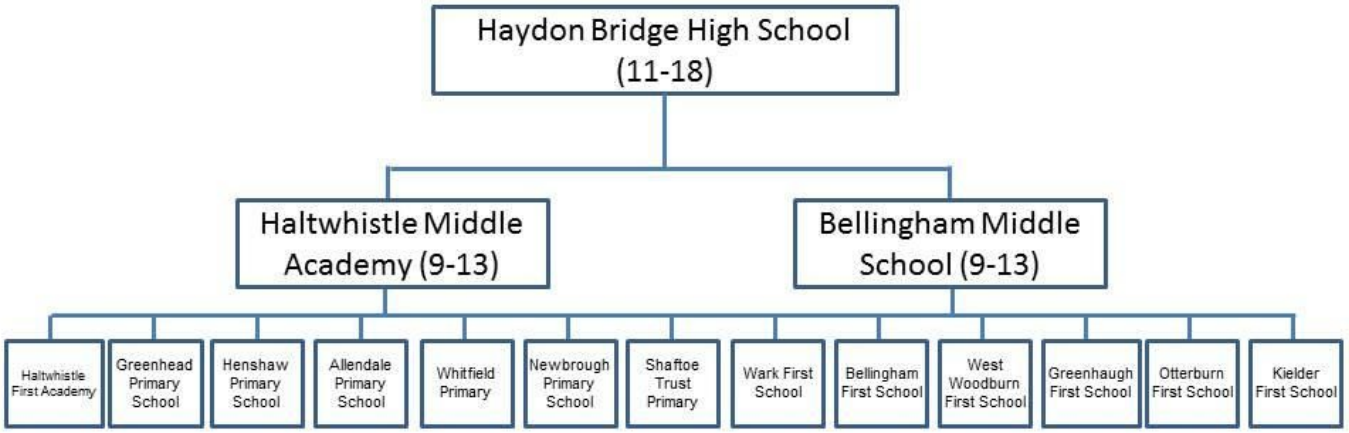
Signature Publication Date: 10 May 2018

Cath McEvoy
Executive Director of Children's Services
Northumberland County Council

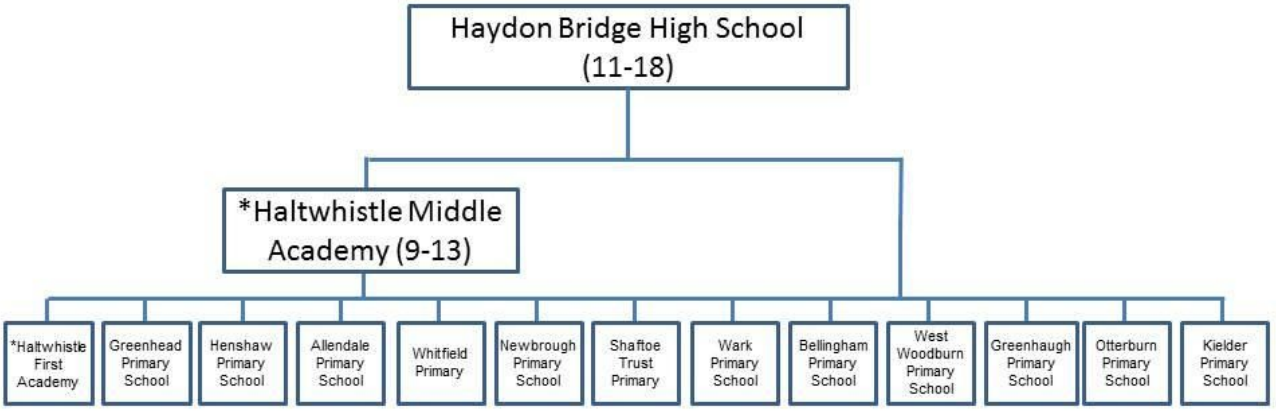
Appendix 2

Proposed Model of Reorganisation of schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership

Haydon Bridge Current School Organisation



Haydon Bridge Proposed School Organisation



SCHOOL	CURRENT SITUATION – status quo				PROPOSED PRIMARY/SECONDARY MODEL – AMALGAMATION		
	Number on Roll in Oct 2017 (Net Capacity in Sept 2017)	Forms of Entry (FE)	Planned Admission Number (PAN) 2017/18	Latest Ofsted	Capacity	Forms of Entry (FE)	Planned Admission Number (PAN)
Greenhead CE Primary	38 (56)	0.3	8	G	56	0.3	8
Greenhaugh First	28 (40)	0.3	8	G	56 Becomes Primary	0.3	8
Haltwhistle Lower School	193 (253)	1.3	40	NG	New Academy Sponsor Decision		
Haydon Bridge Shaftoe Trust Primary	130 (157)	0.7	22	NG	210	1	30
Kielder First	9 (75)	0.3	8	O	56 Becomes Primary	0.3	8
Allendale Primary	109 (168)	0.8	24	G	168	0.8	24
Henshaw CE Primary	55 (105)	0.5	15	G	105	0.5	15
Whitfield CE Primary	27 (56)	0.3	8	NG	56	0.3	8
Newbrough CE Primary	54 (105)	0.5	15	G	105	0.5	15
Otterburn First	34(75)	0.5	15	G	70 Becomes Primary	0.3	10
West Woodburn	23(44)	0.3	10	G	44 Remains First	0.3	10
Bellingham First	47 (102)	0.5	15	G	105 Becomes Primary	0.5	15
Wark CE First	31 (75)	0.5	15	G	70 Becomes Primary	0.3	10
Bellingham Middle	109 (240)	2	60	RI	Close		
Haltwhistle Upper	141 (300)	2.5	75	NG	New Academy Sponsor Decision		
Haydon Bridge High School	297 (904) Y7-Y13 64 – 6-Form	2.2/4	65/120		600-Y7-Y11 120 – 6th For 720	5	120 Yr7-11

Appendix 5

Equality Impact Assessment (update June 2018)

To be completed for all key changes, decisions and proposals. Cite specific data and consultation evidence wherever possible. Further guidance is available at: http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3281

Duties which need to be considered:

- 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

PART 1 – Overview of the change, decision or proposal

1) Title of the change, decision or proposal:

Following the pre-consultation period set out in Government guidance, the Council's Cabinet approved the publication of a Statutory Proposal in relation to some Schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership on 10 May 2018.

2) Brief description of the change, decision or proposal:

The proposals set out in the Statutory Proposal were as follows:

- Close Bellingham Middle School and Sports College with effect from 31 August 2019.
- Extend the age ranges of the following schools from age 3 or 4 to age 9 first schools with effect from 1 September 2019
    - Kielder First School
    - Bellingham First School
    - Otterburn First School
    - Greenhaugh First School
    - West Woodburn First School
- The Statutory Proposal also noted the Council's intention to extend the age range of Wark Church of England First School with effect from 1 September 2019, as this proposal was not required to undertake a statutory process.
- This EIA has been updated following statutory consultation. Should Cabinet approve the implementation of the statutory proposal, this EIA would be updated in the light of such formal consultation.

3) Name(s) and role(s) of officer(s) completing/reviewing the assessment:

Lorraine Fife, School Organisation Manager

4) Overall, what are the outcomes of the change, decision or proposal expected to be? (E.g. will it reduce/terminate a low-priority service, maintain service outcomes at reduced cost, or change the balance of funding responsibility for a service which will remain the same?)

It is proposed that all local authority schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership that are not already organised on the basis of the primary/secondary structure would reorganise with effect from 1 September 2019. This would include the proposed closure of Bellingham Middle School on 31 August 2019 and the change of age range of Wark CE, Greenhaugh, Kielder, Bellingham, and Otterburn First Schools from provision of education to pupils aged either 3-9 or 4-9 respectively to provision of education to pupils aged either 3-11 or 4-11 respectively. Cabinet have been asked to modify the implementation of the statutory proposal to not approve the change of age range of West Woodburn First School with effect from 1 September 2019.

It is proposed that the implementation of this proposal would lead to improved outcomes for pupils in the Haydon Bridge Partnership from nursery to age 18, clarify educational pathways for children, young people and their families and support the resilience of small, rural primary schools in the west of the county.

If you judge that this proposal is **not** relevant to some protected characteristics, tick these below (and explain underneath how you have reached this judgement).

Disability Sex Age Race Religion Sexual orientation

People who have changed gender Women who are pregnant or have babies

Employees who are married/in civil partnerships

The characteristics checked above are not relevant because:

In the medium to long-term, there is no reason to believe that the proposed statutory proposal would affect more positively or negatively than their peers any group of children, parents or staff defined by their gender, religion, race or gender-reassignment status. Should the Council decide to implement the proposed statutory proposal at a future date, during the immediate process of transition, we will invite families to let us know if they are concerned about the impact that the change may have on the support networks for any individual children who may be at particular risk of harassment of discrimination. Reasonable adjustments would be made to support individual disabled pupils who move to an alternative school or are affected by reorganisation.

In the event of the implementation of the proposed statutory proposal, existing HR policies covering organisational change and redundancy would apply to staff employed at any of the maintained schools affected. These are designed to ensure that the equalities duties of the Council and the schools are fully met. Reasonable

adjustments would be made for disabled members of staff. The Council operates a guaranteed interview scheme for disabled members of staff.

PART 2 – Relevance to different Protected Characteristics

Answer these questions both in relation to people who use services and employees

Disability

***Note**: "disabled people" includes people with physical, learning and sensory disabilities, people with a long-term illness, and people with mental health problems. You should consider potential impacts on all of these groups.*

5) What do you know about usage of the services affected by this change, decision or proposal by disabled people, about disabled people's experiences of it, and about any current barriers to access?

There are currently 3 pupils with a statement of SEN at Bellingham Middle School, There is currently no evidence to suggest that any of these pupils or any member of the community with a disability would be disproportionately impacted positively or negatively should the approval be given to implement the proposed statutory proposal.

Any pupil, parent or member of staff in the schools impacted directly by the implementation of the proposed statutory proposal who has a disability would not be affected by these proposals as any reasonable adjustments or arrangements already in place to support a parent, pupil or staff member would be re-provided at a new school and appropriate reasonable adjustments will be made

6) Could disabled people be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

Should the model be approved for implementation, the pupils with SEN in Bellingham Middle School who would transfer to Haydon Bridge High School would be likely to have longer journeys to school. However, the support identified through the special educational needs system would continue to be provided to all pupils who need it. During the immediate process of transition, we would consult the families about any specific potential impacts on individuals; for instance we would ensure that appropriate individual arrangements are made where this is necessary to avoid potential adverse impacts.

In the medium to long term, it is believed that those pupils who have SEN on roll in the proposed primary schools would benefit from staying longer in their local communities up to the age of 11 and by having only one transition point between school phases rather than two.

7) Could the change, decision or proposal affect the ability of disabled people to participate in public life? (e.g. by affecting their ability to go to meetings, take up public appointments etc.)

The implementation of the proposed statutory proposal would not affect any current arrangements for disabled people to participate in public life as access to the school buildings would remain the same as currently. Haydon Bridge High School would meet all of the statutory requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

8) Could the change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards disabled people? (e.g. by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)

There is no evidence to suggest that the implementation of the proposed statutory proposal would affect public attitudes either positively or negatively towards disabled people.

9) Could the change, decision or proposal make it more or less likely that disabled people will be at risk of harassment or victimisation?

No evidence has arisen through statutory consultation to suggest that the implementation of the proposed statutory proposal would increase or decrease any risk of harassment or victimisation above that which may already exist to any pupil, member of staff or member of the community with a disability. Should the statutory proposal be implemented, in line with current special educational needs systems families would be consulted about any potential issues for individual children arising from the disruption of support networks during the process of transition. Disabled children, parents and staff would be given the opportunity to discuss any support or particular issues throughout the process

10) If there are risks that disabled people could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal, are there reasonable steps or adjustments that could be taken to reduce these risks?

During the statutory consultation process, there have been no risks that identify that any current pupils or members of staff with a disability in any of the schools that would be involved in change could be disproportionately disadvantaged through the implementation of the proposed statutory proposal. In any event, should the proposed statutory proposal be approved for implementation and any disproportionate disadvantages identified during the planning, implementation and ongoing monitoring phases, these would be reviewed and solutions to remove such disadvantages would be sought.

11) Are there opportunities to create *positive* impacts for disabled people linked to this change, decision or proposal?

There may be opportunities to improve provision for students with a disability as a result of the implementation of the proposed statutory proposal and these would be explored during the implementation period should it be approved. Furthermore, children with SEN or a disability would be able to attend their local primary school for an additional two years and would have only one school transition at age 11.

Age

12) What do you know about usage of the services affected by this change, decision or proposal by people of different age groups, about their experiences of it, and about any current barriers to access?

Bellingham Middle School provides education to pupils between the age of 9 and 13, Wark CE, Greenhaugh, Kielder, Bellingham and Otterburn First Schools currently provide education to pupils aged either 3-9 or 4-9 respectively.

Staff at the above schools are employed equitably in accordance with the relevant school and council's employment policies.

Should the statutory proposal be approved for implementation, the County Council would seek suitable alternative employment for staff in Bellingham Middle School as it would be proposed for closure and they would be at risk of redundancy. This would be carried out in accordance with the schools' and council's redeployment policies on an equitable basis, regardless of age.

In relation to the first schools proposed to change age range up to age 11 years, this would happen in a phased way over a two year period. However, parents would still be able to express a preference to transfer their child to another local middle school at the end of Year 4. No staff at the first schools proposed to change age range would be at risk of redundancy should the proposed statutory proposal be approved for implementation.

13) Could people of different age groups be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

See para. 12. Above.

14) Could the change, decision or proposal affect the ability of people of different age groups to participate in public life? (e.g. by affecting their ability to go to meetings, take up public appointments etc.)

There is no evidence to suggest that the implementation of the statutory proposal would have any effect on the ability of different age groups to participate in public life.

15) Could the change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards people of different age groups? (e.g. by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)

In relation to the implementation of the statutory proposal, no actual evidence has been presented during consultation to suggest that public attitudes to pupils at the schools impacted by the proposal would be affected should the relevant changes be implemented. However, in relation to the statutory proposal, there is a possibility that local residents who live in close proximity to any of the first schools to change age range may perceive that parking outside of the schools at start and finish times has increased due to additional year groups at those schools/sites. Should this issue be raised by local residents, action would be taken to investigate the impact of any increase in traffic and where necessary ameliorating measures put in place.

16) Could the change, decision or proposal make it more or less likely that people of different age groups will be at risk of harassment or victimisation?

No evidence has arisen to suggest that the implementation of the statutory proposal would increase or reduce the risk of harassment or victimisation of people of other pupils within the schools. However, some parents have expressed concern that younger pupils travelling to school or within the school would be at increased risk of harassment or bullying from older pupils.

While the concerns of parents are recognised, all schools have anti-bullying policies and arrangements in place to as far as possible remove the risk of bullying of pupils by fellow pupils. Should the proposed statutory be approved for implementation, schools would review their current anti-bullying and pupil safety policies to assess whether additional measures were required to be put in place.

17) If there are risks that people of different age groups could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal, are there reasonable steps or adjustments that could be taken to reduce these risks?

There has been no evidence arising from formal consultation to suggest that any group would be disproportionately disadvantaged through the implementation of the statutory proposal. However, if such evidence is identified, this would be reviewed and solutions to remove such disadvantages would be sought.

18) Are there opportunities to create *positive* impacts for people of different age groups linked to this change, decision or proposal?

Refer to paras. 4 and para 12.

Pregnancy and Maternity

Note: the law covers pregnant women or those who have given birth within the last 26 weeks, and those who are breast feeding.

19) What do you know about usage of the services affected by this change, decision or proposal by pregnant women and those who have children under 26 weeks, about their experiences of it, and about any current barriers to access?

There is no evidence to suggest that the implementation of the statutory proposal would create any barriers to pupils accessing any of the schools impacted by the proposals who have a parent who may be pregnant or who has other children under 26 weeks old as pupils up to age 9 who attend schools more than 2 miles from their home or where there is not a safe walking route are entitled to home to school transport under the Council's policy. In relation to pupils aged over 9, the policy allows that pupils who live more than 3 miles away from their home or where there is no safe walking route are entitled to free home to school transport. There would be no impact on local Sure Start centres or early years provision as a result of the implementation of the statutory proposal.

In some cases, some mothers who are pregnant, breastfeeding or who have a child under 26 weeks old who have older school age children may find it easier to manage journeys to school, as primary age children would be able to be educated in their local school up to the age of 11 in the North Tynedale and Redesdale area.

20) Could pregnant women and those with children under 26 weeks be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

No evidence has arisen at this stage to suggest that pregnant women and those with children under 26 weeks could be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the statutory proposals for the reasons set out above. Although para. 19 identifies a possible advantage to some people within this protected characteristic, this is not believed to be a 'disproportionate' advantage.

21) Could the change, decision or proposal affect the ability of pregnant women or those with children under 26 weeks participate in public life? (e.g. by affecting their ability to go to meetings, take up public appointments etc.)

There is no evidence to suggest that the implementation of the statutory proposal would affect the ability of this protected group to participate in public life under the proposals.

22) Could the change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards pregnant women or those with children under 26 weeks? (e.g. by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)

There is no evidence to suggest that the implementation of the statutory proposal would have any effect on public attitudes to this protected group under the proposals.

23) Could the change, decision or proposal make it more or less likely that pregnant women or those with children under 26 weeks will be at risk of harassment or victimisation?

No evidence has arisen during statutory consultation to suggest that the implementation of the statutory proposal would make it more or less likely that this protected group would be at risk of harassment or victimisation under the proposals.

24) If there are risks that pregnant women or those with children under 26 weeks could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal, are there reasonable steps or adjustments that could be taken to reduce these risks?

No evidence has been identified during the consultation period that would suggest that the protected group could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the implementation of the statutory proposal for the reasons set out above.

However, if a decision is made to take the next steps towards implementation of the statutory proposal, and any disproportionate disadvantages are identified during the subsequent phases of consultation and implementation, these would be reviewed and solutions to remove such disadvantages would be sought.

25) Are there opportunities to create *positive* impacts for pregnant women or those with children under 26 weeks linked to this change, decision or proposal?

See para. 21.

Sexual Orientation

Note: The Act protects bisexual, gay, heterosexual and lesbian people.

26) What do you know about usage of the services affected by this change, decision or proposal by people with different sexual orientations, about their experiences of it, and about any current barriers to access?

There is currently no evidence to suggest that any member of the community who identifies as LGBT would be disproportionately impacted positively or negatively should the approval be given to implement the statutory proposal.

However, should any pupil who identifies with this group be identified as requiring support, the authority will encourage schools to use the Stonewall Education champion's resources and to increase awareness of any potential issues such as increased risk of bullying.

Should a member of staff identifying as LGBT in the community schools impacted directly by the implementation of the statutory proposal feel that their support networks have been disrupted, staff will be made aware of the support available through the Council's LGBT staff group and managers will be made aware of the guide to supporting LGBT staff on the Council Equality and Diversity webpage. HR policies aim to promote equality and inclusion.

27) Could people with different sexual orientations be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

There is currently no evidence from consultation to suggest that different sexual orientations would be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the implementation of the statutory proposal. However, ameliorating actions stated in para. 27 would be implemented in the event that issues were identified.

28) Could the change, decision or proposal affect the ability of people with different sexual orientations to participate in public life? (e.g. by affecting their ability to go to meetings, take up public appointments etc.)

There is currently no evidence from consultation to suggest that the ability of people with different sexual orientations to participate in public life would be affected by the implementation of the statutory proposal. However, ameliorating actions stated in para. 27 would be implemented in the event that issues were identified.

29) Could the change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards people with different sexual orientations? (e.g. by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)

To date, there has been no evidence to suggest that public attitudes to people with different sexual orientations. However, ameliorating actions stated in para. 27 would be implemented in the event that issues were identified.

30) Could the change, decision or proposal make it more or less likely that people with different sexual orientations will be at risk of harassment or victimisation?

Should the statutory proposal be implemented, the risk of harassment of victimisation of people with different sexual orientations would be monitored. Should evidence be

identified that risk of harassment had increased, the relevant actions stated in para. 27 would be implemented.

31) If there are risks that people with different sexual orientations could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal, are there reasonable steps or adjustments that could be taken to reduce these risks?

No evidence has so far been identified to suggest that people with different sexual orientations could be disproportionately disadvantaged through the implementation of the statutory proposal . However, ameliorating actions stated in para. 27 would be implemented in the event that issues were identified.

32) Are there opportunities to create *positive* impacts for people with different sexual orientations linked to this change, decision or proposal?

While none have been so far identified, any opportunities to create positive impacts for people with different sexual orientations would be implemented, possibly through the implementation of the actions set out in para. 27.

Human Rights

33) Could the change, decision or proposal impact on human rights? (e.g. the right to respect for private and family life, the right to a fair hearing and the right to education)

While there is no specific evidence to suggest that the implementation of the statutory proposal would impact positively on human rights, the proponents of these proposals have reasons to believe that pupil's achievement can be enhanced through the implementation of the changes proposed and therefore this would improve the life chances of the pupils within those schools that would undergo reorganisation.

PART 3 - Course of Action

Based on a consideration of all the potential impacts, indicate one of the following as an overall summary of the outcome of this assessment:

X	The equality analysis has not identified any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken.
	The equality analysis has identified risks or opportunities to promote better equality; the change, decision or proposal will be adjusted to avoid risks and ensure that opportunities are taken.

	The equality analysis has identified risks to equality which will not be eliminated, and/or opportunities to promote better equality which will not be taken. Acceptance of these is reasonable and proportionate, given the objectives of the change, decision or proposal, and its overall financial and policy context.
	The equality analysis shows that the change, decision or proposal would lead to actual or potential unlawful discrimination, or would conflict with the Council's positive duties to an extent which is disproportionate to its objectives. It should not be adopted in its current form.

34) Explain how you have reached the judgement ticked above, and summarise any steps which will be taken to reduce negative or enhance positive impacts on equality.

From the initial analysis of the possible negative or positive impacts of the statutory proposal recommended for statutory consultation on groups with protected characteristics, there is no evidence to suggest that any of these groups would be disproportionately disadvantaged or advantaged by the proposal. Should a decision be made by the Council's Cabinet to take the next steps in the statutory process in relation to these proposals, any evidence arising from the statutory consultation or implementation phases that suggests that there could be possible negative impacts, those risks would be analysed to establish whether or not there were certain risks to any or all of those groups. Steps to reduce negative impacts or enhance positive impacts would then be defined.

PART 4 - Ongoing Monitoring

35) What are your plans to monitor the actual impact of the implementation of the change, decision or proposal on equality of opportunity? (include action points and timescales)

This EIA has assessed in the light of feedback from the 4-week statutory consultation period. Should the statutory proposal be approved for implementation, the EIA would be further updated in the period prior to implementation to ensure all opportunities to reduce or remove risks to any protected groups are taken. Appropriate action would be identified in the light of feedback and where necessary, an action plan with timescales developed.

PART 5 - Authorisation

Name of Head of Service and Date Approved

Once completed, send your full EIA to: Irene.Fisher@northumberland.gov.uk. A summary will then be generated corporately and published to the Council's website.