Phase 2 Education in the West - CONSULTATION MEETING

Notes of Staff Meeting - Bellingham Middle School

5th March 2018 – 3:30 pm

Present: Andy Johnson – Project Director
Sue Aviston – Head of School Organisation and Resources
Lorraine Fife - School Organisation Manager
Wendy Stewart – NCC HR Adviser
Debbie Judd - HR Adviser, Educo
Jacqui Pearson – Note taker

Also Present: Richard Woolhouse – NEU
Stephen Payne - VOICE Union

22 Staff members of Bellingham Middle School

Sue Aviston asked members of the LA to introduce themselves.

Andy went through the presentation, he explained that for Phase 1 there were 3 meetings which took place at Hexham Mart, 1 for Hexham, 1 for Haydon Bridge and a combined meeting for all Heads and Chairs of Governors. Following the meetings the feedback from Headteachers and Chairs of Governors was used to develop the proposed models. He explained that this is not a referendum and that there may be a Model D, which may consist of bits of Model A, B and C or something completely different.

Andy explained that Hadrian Learning Trust (HLT) consultation is running alongside the LA consultation but is separate and will end before the County Council consultation.

Andy explained the consultation process and explained what would happen next and the timeline.

Following the presentation there was a question/answer session:

Q: £50m capital investment, is this for the West or all of Northumberland?
A: £45m is in the Council's medium term financial plan for the whole of Northumberland. There is a priority of funding for the West of Northumberland.
Depending on the model, this could go to £60m spent on the West of the county.

Q: Haltwhistle staff and Governors submitted a 4-13 alternative model. If the model is not part of the consultation now, what is the likelihood of it becoming Model D in this phase?

A: Scrutiny committee will look at at the report and they could be working with Officers to get bits out of each model to see how it will work - curriculum and finance. The detail will look at the current financial position and be reassured that this will work long term, looking at predicting pupil numbers and having Ofsted agreement.
An element of this has been included in Model A as the school is not closing.

Q: We are a foundation school and Governors are the employing body. We are treated as a Voluntary Controlled school, so do Governors have the say with a hard federation regarding structure, entity for remaining?

A: Any staffing structure would have posts ring fenced to the federation first. Some posts may be slotted in if criteria is met - there will be an internal advert across First and Middle School staff:

3 stages in the staffing protocol:

- Slot in
- Expressions of interest for non exact matches
- Agreement reached within wider partnership for staff

There was a discussion about the slotting in process taking in to account performance management (1 individual good vs 1 individual not so good) - no staff in this situation would only be at risk due to capability.

There was discussion about what would be deemed to be a more secure model for the school.

There was some discussion over Hadrian Learning Trust.

There was discussion about the legal standing of one school having its URN removed if it should close.

There was some discussion about how the proposed models were decided.

There was a lot of discussion about HR issues. These questions have been included as part of the FAQ document.

There were examples given about other consultations that have been completed / currently being implemented and some schools are closing due to viability outside of a consultation, at the request of their Governing Bodies.