



Northumberland County Council

CABINET

Date: 8 May 2018

Outcomes of Consultation on Education in the West of Northumberland

Report of the Executive Director of Children's Services, Cath McEvoy

Cabinet Member: Councillor Wayne Daley, Children's Services

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1. Purpose of Report

This report explains to Cabinet the outcomes of the informal consultation about the future of education in the west of Northumberland.

The informal consultation was agreed by Cabinet as a result of a number of external factors beyond the control of NCC, these factors include;

- a) The potential closure of Haydon Bridge High School due to the withdrawal of the Bright Tribe Trust as a sponsor.**
- b) The consultation carried out by the Hadrian Learning Trust 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 requirement from the Department for Education 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.**
- 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.**

2. Recommendations for Cabinet

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- a) Agree to keep Haydon Bridge High School open as an 11-18 secondary school, in order to maintain secondary education in Haydon Bridge. Approve the funding of a support plan of £1.54m to support the school for at least 3 years. Note that Haydon Bridge High School will come back under the control of the local authority and will continue as a maintained school for at least three years or until the RSC can broker an appropriate sponsor.**
- b) Note that any future review of age ranges at Haydon Bridge High School may result in a further statutory proposal.**
- c) Note the establishment of a new Local Authority appointed Interim Executive Board (IEB) at Haydon Bridge High School. This board will work with staff, parents and the community to develop a strategic plan that will enable there to be a long-term future for a school in Haydon Bridge. This will involve the development of a new curriculum offer. A plan for any capital investment or refurbishment would come back to cabinet for approval on 10 July 2018.**
- d) Decide in the light of the feedback from consultation set out in this report and any recommendations from the Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee whether to permit the publication of statutory proposals setting out the intention of the County Council to implement the following proposals:**
 - Extend the age range of Bellingham First School from an age 4 to 9 First School to an age 4 to 11 Primary School with effect from 1 September 2019;**
 - Extend the age range of Kielder First School from an age 4 to 9 First School to an age 4 to 11 Primary School with effect from 1 September 2019;**
 - Extend the age range of Otterburn First School from an age 3 to 9 First School to an age 3 to 11 Primary School with effect from 1 September 2019;**
 - Extend the age range of Greenhaugh First School from an age 4 to 9 First School to an age 4 to 11 Primary School with effect from 1 September 2019;**
 - Extend the age range of West Woodburn First School from an age 4 to 9 First School to an age 4 to 11 Primary School with effect from 1 September 2019;**
 - Support the extension of the age range of Wark CE First School from an age 3 to 9 First School to an age 3 to 11 Primary School with effect from 1 September 2019;**
 - Close Bellingham Middle School with effect from 31 August 2019;**

- **Note that from 1 September 2020 and each September thereafter, there would be one intake of students only into Haydon Bridge High School at Year 7. The Planned Admission Number (PAN) into Year 7 from 1 September 2020 would also be reduced to 120 and the school would have a total capacity of 750.**
- e) **Note that should the recommendations be approved, the outcomes of the formal consultation following publication of the Statutory Proposals would be brought back to Cabinet on 10 July 2018 for a final decision to be taken in relation to the proposals set out in recommendation d).**
 - f) **Note in light of the feedback from consultation set out in this report that there are no proposed changes to school organisation in relation to the Hexham Partnership.**
 - g) **However, agree that NCC will establish a resilience programme through encouraging the establishment of a hard federation or federations of schools that will support small rural schools to become financially and educationally viable for the future in both Hexham and Haydon Bridge Partnerships.**
 - h) **The Local Authority will establish a Trust in partnership with other public sector organisations to enable the establishment of a multi-academy trust (MAT) across the whole county to enable small rural schools to build sufficient capacity to remain both financially and educationally viable. This application would be made as a separate process to the Secretary of State and a proposal should be ready to submit for approval by Cabinet by September 2018.**
 - i) **Agree that council officers should advise the RSC office and Hadrian Learning Trust that as a result of this consultation, the council cannot support the change in age range of Hadrian Learning Trust as the proposed change would necessitate the closure of Hexham Middle and the wider adverse impact on the current system in the Hexham Partnership. The proposed change is not supported by the vast majority of schools and the local community.**
 - j) **Note that the buildings of Hadrian Learning Trust require significant capital investment and will continue to educate Northumberland children and young people. Therefore, Cabinet is asked to instruct officers to begin work with the Hadrian Learning Trust to establish a proposal for redevelopment of the existing schools on one of the current sites or on a new site in Hexham. Note a report on this proposal would come back for cabinet approval at the meeting on the 10 July 2018.**
 - k) **Note the indicative capital costs outlined in this report and approve the development of an outline business case and option appraisal report to establish deliverability and a definite budget for proposal outlined in the report.**
 - l) **Note the implications for Home to School Transport set out in this report.**

3. Key Issues

- 3.1** On 19 December 2017, Cabinet approved consultation on educational provision in the Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships. The rationale for the consultation was based on the factors set out in para. 1 of this report (save for the DfE's requirement regarding levels of capacity which arose during the consultation period).
- 3.2** The manner and format in which consultation was carried out is set out in para. 6. Feedback from the consultation is summarised in paras. 7, 8 and 9. In short, consultation was carried out in two phases; Phase 1 was an initial consultation firstly with educational professionals and Chairs of Governors working in and with schools in both partnerships to gather their views on potential solutions, the feedback from phase one of the consultation was used to develop the three models that were consulted upon in Phase 2. The second phase of consultation was a wider consultation that included with parents, staff, pupils, the community and other interested parties. Phase 1 of consultation took place between 15 January and 2 February 2018. Phase 2 took place between 19 February and 9 April 2018.
- 3.3** As with many consultations of this nature, the process has been highly emotive and difficult, particularly where some schools have been potentially identified for closure.
- 3.4** All involved in both phases of informal consultation clearly have the best interests of pupils and families at the heart of their plans. However there was sharp disagreement about how these interests could be best met. It was therefore not possible to gain consensus during the two phases of informal consultation. It is therefore the local authorities responsibility to provide system leadership in terms of school organisation, through the recommendations set out within this report.
- 3.5** The Council has a duty to support schools to improve standards, support continuity of education, ensure sufficiency of school places within Northumberland and smooth transition of pupils between schools. It has also been asked by the RSC to ascertain the viability of Haydon Bridge High School. Therefore, the Council has an obligation to put forward a model for the school for the future upon which the RSC can decide.
- 3.6** Officers have concluded that the establishment of a primary-secondary model across the whole of the Haydon Bridge Partnership, necessitating the closure of Bellingham Middle school and the extension of age ranges of the remaining First schools would be in the best educational interests of the current and future pupils in that area. The introduction of one system of school organisation will 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. The Council however only has the powers to propose the closure of maintained schools and therefore has not control over. The council will however be very keen to work with the new sponsor to develop a solution for the school that fits with the wider organisation of schools in Haydon Bridge.
- 3.7** The Hadrian Learning Trust (HLT), which is made up of QEHS and Hexham Middle School, has indicated that it believes that a reorganisation to an 11-18 structure is necessary for their multi-academy trust to be financially and educationally viable and has informally consulted schools in the Hexham Partnership and more widely. This would mean the closure of Hexham Middle School. Such a change may also result

in the closure of a significant number of Middle schools and First schools in the Hexham and Haydon Bridge area.

- 3.8** All schools in the Hexham Partnership are either good or outstanding and standards are good across all phases. Officers therefore recommend that Cabinet does not support the proposal of HLT to reorganise structure due to the negative consequences it would have on feeder schools.
- 3.9** However if HLT was to persuade a substantial number of feeder schools to join a multi-academy trust and then it was to change its age ranges and/or transition arrangements, officers would recommend that the Council should fully support these proposals. In isolation however, the proposition of HLT would cause too much disruption to the system to schools and families in the Hexham area.
- 3.10** There is no doubt that the academy buildings are in need of significant capital investment, particularly at QEHS, which has already been identified as a national priority for investment and is included in the Priority School Building Programme. Further detail on investment proposals in the school estate are contained in paras 15 and 23.
- 3.11** Therefore, the conclusion of this informal consultation is that it is recommended to Cabinet that a secondary school in Haydon Bridge is necessary to preserve choice for parents and children. Officers of the Council will work with the newly formed IEB, feeder schools, education leaders, staff, pupils and parents and the community to put in place a resourced plan in order to support the school through transition towards becoming a good school for at least 3 years until it becomes educationally and financially viable. The implications for individual schools of these recommendations are set out in para. 5 of this report.

4. Background

- 4.1** The rationale for the Phase 1 and Phase 2 consultation is provided in the background papers within the report of the Interim Director of Children's Services dated 19 December 2017.

5. Implications for individual schools and academies.

HAYDON BRIDGE PARTNERSHIP

The proposal for the Haydon Bridge partnership is for

- Haydon Bridge High School to remain open as an 11-18 LA maintained secondary school, with normal admission taking place into Year 7 only with effect from September 2020 .
- Six first schools to change their age range to become primary schools.
- Five schools would have significant capital investment to facilitate this.
- Small schools will be expected to work with NCC to establish hard federation/s or with multi-academy trusts to ensure education quality and reduce costs.

5.1 Allendale Primary School – No Change. The school will however be expected to work with NCC in the establishment of hard federation/s or with multi-academy trusts to address the predicted budget deficit of the school.

5.2 Newbrough CE VA Primary School – No Change. The school will however be expected to work with NCC and the diocese in the establishment of hard federation/s or with multi-academy trusts.

5.3 Henshaw CE and Greenhead CE Primary Schools – Henshaw CE and Greenhead CE Primary Schools form The West Tyne Federation and are overseen by one Governing Body and one Executive Headteacher. The Governing Body has stated that it recognises that Greenhead CE School's budget is in significant deficit and has held an informal consultation with parents to discuss the possibility of closure of the school; however, feedback from parents has indicated that they would like the school to continue to seek solutions to the budget difficulties. The Newcastle Diocese Education Board has stated that it recognises the difficulties of the Governing Body and would support it should closure be proposed. However, the Council recognises that the school's deficit budget has not resulted from poor management, but from having to address a series of unavoidable staff redundancies within a very short timeframe. Therefore, it is proposed that the Council support the school to implement a 3 year recovery plan; it is noted that any removal of the middle school in Haltwhistle would assist Greenhead in retaining pupils into Years 5 and 6 and therefore assist in its deficit recovery over time. The school will however be expected to work with NCC and the diocese in the expansion/establishment of hard federation/s or with multi-academy trusts.

No change is proposed for Henshaw Primary School.

5.4 Shaftoe Trust Primary Academy – No Change. The school is part of the Wise Multi-Academy Trust. NCC has no powers to intervene or suggest changes however officers will work with the Trust to ensure that any potential developments at the Trust work alongside any developments in the wider partnership.

5.5 Bellingham First School and Bellingham Middle School – Bellingham First School is federated with Bellingham Middle School and both schools are governed by one Governing Body. Each school has its own headteacher, although there is currently an Acting Headteacher in Bellingham Middle School. It is proposed that a statutory

consultation is carried out to close Bellingham Middle school and extend the age range of Bellingham First School to become Bellingham Primary School. This proposal is however contingent upon it joining a federation or multi-academy trust in order to address the predicted budget deficit position and increase capacity to ensure a smooth transition to becoming a primary school.

Bellingham Middle School currently has 109 pupils on roll, while 162 pupils live in its catchment area; therefore 53 pupils choose to attend other schools. The school has a planned admission number of 60 but only 12 pupils have requested the school as their first preference for Year 5 places in September 2018.

Bellingham Middle no. on roll Jan 18		Bellingham Middle predicted no. on roll Sept 18	
Year Group	No of Pupils September 2017	Year Group	No of pupils September 2018
5	36	5	12
6	26	6	36
7	24	7	26
8	23	8	24
Total	109	Predicted Total	98

Standards at the school have fluctuated, with Ofsted judgements being as follows:

2009 - Inadequate

2010 - Satisfactory

2012 - Good

2017 (May) - Requires Improvement

It is proposed that pupils in Year 5 at Bellingham Middle School in August 2019 would transfer to the roll of Bellingham Primary School (as it would be) in September 2019 as the new Year 6. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 on roll at Bellingham Middle School in August 2019 would transfer to the roll of Haydon Bridge High School in September 2019 as part of the new Year 7 and 8 cohort or to another school according to parental preference. Pupils on roll at Bellingham First School in Year 4 in August 2019 would be retained on roll at the school in September 2019 as Year 5 and again as Year 6 in September 2020.

5.6 Kielder First School - The Governing Body of the school wish to extend the age range of the school to become a Primary School and it is proposed that this is part of the statutory proposal. This proposal is however contingent upon it joining a federation or multi-academy trust, in order to address the predicted budget deficit and increase capacity to ensure a smooth transition to becoming a primary school. Pupils on roll at the school in Year 4 in August 2019 would be retained on roll at the school in September 2019 as Year 5 and again as Year 6 in September 2020.

5.7 Otterburn First School - The Governing Body of the school wish to extend the age range of the school to become a Primary School and it is proposed that this is part of the statutory proposal. This proposal is however contingent upon it joining a federation or multi-academy trust, in order to address the predicted budget deficit

position and increase capacity to ensure a smooth transition to becoming a primary school.

Pupils on roll at the school in Year 4 in August 2019 would be retained on roll at the school in September 2019 as Year 5 and again as Year 6 in September 2020.

5.8 Wark CE VA First School - It is proposed that Wark CE VA First School becomes a Primary School and it is proposed that this is part of the statutory proposal. As part of its response to Phase 2 consultation, the Governing Body has submitted a business case to demonstrate how it would be organised to be an effective primary school. This proposal is however contingent upon it joining a federation or multi-academy trust, in order to increase capacity to ensure a smooth transition to becoming a primary school. Pupils on roll at the school in Year 4 in August 2019 would be retained on roll at the school in September 2019 as Year 5 and again as Year 6 in September 2020.

5.9 Haltwhistle First Academy and Haltwhistle Middle Academy – Haltwhistle First Academy and Haltwhistle Middle Academy form the Haltwhistle Community Campus and are currently part of the Bright Tribe Trust. The Bright Tribe Trust has indicated their desire to no longer sponsor the schools and the Regional Schools Commissioner is actively seeking a new sponsor. NCC would welcome the opportunity to work with any new sponsor to ensure the age range and capacity of the schools match the wider system. It appears to the local authority that any new sponsor would have to consider changing to a primary model.

5.10 Whitfield CE VA Primary Academy – No Change. The school is part of the Good Shepherd Multi-Academy Trust. It would remain unchanged. There may be potential for the Trust to expand the numbers of schools it has in its group within the west of Northumberland and the Trust may wish to discuss this with the Newcastle Church of England Diocese.

5.11 Greenhaugh First School – It is proposed that Greenhaugh First School becomes a Primary School and it is proposed that this is part of the statutory proposal. As part of its response to Phase 2 consultation, the Governing Body has submitted a business case to demonstrate how it would be organised to be an effective primary school. This proposal is however contingent upon it joining a federation or multi-academy trust, in order to address the financial challenges of the schools budget and increase capacity to ensure a smooth transition to becoming a primary school. Pupils on roll at the school in Year 4 in August 2019 would be retained on roll at the school in September 2019 as Year 5 and again as Year 6 in September 2020.

5.12 West Woodburn First School - It is proposed that West Woodburn First School becomes a Primary School and it is proposed that this is part of the statutory proposal. While the Governing Body has indicated in its response to Phase 2 consultation that it supports a 3-tier system for schools in the West, it is proposed that the school should be given the same opportunity as other first schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership to become a primary school. This proposal is however contingent upon it joining a federation or multi-academy trust, in order to address the predicted budget deficit and increase capacity to ensure a smooth transition to becoming a primary school.

Pupils on roll at the school in Year 4 in August 2019 would be retained on roll at the school in September 2019 as Year 5 and again as Year 6 in September 2020.

- 5.13 Haydon Bridge High School** - It is proposed that Haydon Bridge High School would remain open as an 11-18 secondary school. However, the school would receive financial support from the Local Authority in order to support the school through its transition to become a good school for at least 3 years and becomes educationally and financially viable.

HEXHAM PARTNERSHIP

Proposed Model

The proposal for the Hexham partnership is for

- All first schools to remain open as first schools.
- All middle schools remain open as middle schools..
- Hadrian Learning Trust (HLT) would have significant capital investment, to address the building condition and suitability issues.
- Small schools will be expected to agree to work with NCC to establish hard federation/s or multi-academy trusts to ensure education quality and reduce costs.

- 5.14 Whittonstall First School** – No change. The school will remain unchanged. The school is already federated with Broomley First School and shares a headteacher and back office costs. This provides an effective model for other schools to consider.

- 5.15 The Sele First School** - No change. The school will remain unchanged however as an outstanding teaching school the school should be encouraged to support the small rural schools in the west through federation or academisation with another school or schools.

- 5.16 Acomb First School** – No change. The school will remain unchanged however this is contingent upon it joining a federation or multi-academy trust to ensure education quality and reduce costs .

- 5.17 Beaufront First School** – No change The school will remain unchanged however this is contingent upon it joining a federation or multi-academy trust to ensure education quality and reduce costs .

- 5.18 Broomhaugh First School** - No change The school will remain unchanged however this is contingent upon it joining a federation or multi-academy trust to ensure education quality and reduce costs.

- 5.19 Whitley Chapel CE VA First School** – No change. The school will remain unchanged however this is contingent upon it joining a federation or multi-academy trust to ensure education quality and reduce costs.

- 5.20 Chollerton CE VA First School** – No change. The school will remain unchanged however this is contingent upon it joining a federation or multi-academy trust to ensure education quality and reduce costs.

- 5.21 Corbridge First School** – No change The school will remain unchanged however this is contingent upon it joining a federation or multi-academy trust to ensure education quality and reduce costs.
- 5.22 Hexham First School** - No change. The school will remain unchanged however this is contingent upon it joining a federation or multi-academy trust to ensure education quality and reduce costs.
- 5.23 Humshaugh CE VA First School** - No change. The school will remain unchanged however this is contingent upon it joining a federation or multi-academy trust to ensure education quality and reduce costs.
- 5.24 Slaley First School** - No change. The school will remain unchanged however this is contingent upon it joining a federation or multi-academy trust to ensure education quality and reduce costs.
- 5.25 St Mary's RC VA First and St Joseph's RC VA Middle Schools** – No change.
- 5.26 Corbridge Middle School** - No change. The school will remain unchanged however this is contingent upon it joining a federation with another school or schools.
- 5.27 Hexham Middle School and Queen Elizabeth High School (Hadrian Learning Trust)** - NCC have responded to the Hadrian Trust consultation process explaining that any changes that the Regional Schools Commissioner authorise need to match the wider system. As a result of this consultation officers are seeking Cabinet approval to inform The Regional Schools Commissioner's (RSC) office that the Council cannot support the change in age range of Hadrian Learning Trust, as this change is not supported by the majority of schools and the local community.

There is however a recognition that there is a need to provide investment in HLT in order to address capacity, suitability and maintenance issues. Officers are therefore seeking cabinet approval to begin work with HLT to establish a proposal for redevelopment of the existing schools on one of the current sites or on a new site in Hexham. Note a report on this proposal would come back for cabinet approval at the meeting on the 10 July 2018. In the meantime the Hadrian Trust would clarify their proposals for age range changes and capacity and this would be built into any initial considerations of the nature of any new build.

6. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

A meeting took place with officers and schools in the Hexham and Haydon Bridge Partnerships in November 2017 when it was announced that Bright Tribe intended to withdraw their proposal to sponsor Haydon Bridge High School; following that meeting 20 schools indicated their support for a wider consultation on the issues arising from this situation. Cabinet at their meeting on 19 December approved informal consultation on education in the west to be carried out in two phases.

6.1 Phase 1

Meetings were arranged for headteachers and Chairs of Governors of schools and academies in the Haydon Bridge Partnership and Hexham Partnership as follows:

- Monday 15 January - Haydon Bridge Partnership
- Thursday 18 January - Hexham Partnership
- Wednesday 24 January - Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships

Also invited to these meetings were representatives from the Regional School Commissioner's Office, the local Roman Catholic and Church of England Dioceses, Bright Tribe Academy Trust, Wise Academies and the Good Shepherd Academy Trust. Local County Councillors for wards in the west of the county were also invited to attend the Phase 1 meetings in an observational capacity.

All 3 meetings in January were extremely well attended by the schools. The purpose and remit of the meetings was to engage schools in considering the issues set out in para.1 of this report (save for the DfE's requirement regarding levels of capacity which arose during the consultation period), in order for them to have the opportunity to put forward possible solutions and proposals that could be taken forward into Phase 2 consultation. Governing Bodies were asked to formally submit their initial ideas for addressing these issues by 2 February, which had been extended from an initial submission date of 26 January at the request of schools. The Governing Body responses from Phase 1 are included in the Background Papers to this report.

6.2 Phase 2

6.2.1 Based on the feedback received from schools in Phase 1 and the issues set out in para.1 of this report, officers drew up 3 potential models of school organisation in the west of Northumberland on which to consult in Phase 2 of the informal consultation. The models are shown in the Phase 2 consultation document at Appendix 1. These models were intended to stimulate debate and discussion and it was made clear at every stage that this was not a process of voting for one of three models, rather it was an opportunity to produce the best solutions.

• **Model A**

- Existing school organisation structures to remain in place in both Haydon Bridge Partnership and Hexham Partnership
- Haydon Bridge High School would close and student transfer to Hexham Middle School and Queen Elizabeth High School (QEHS) as appropriate
- 8 primary and first schools across both partnerships proposed would close.

• **Model B**

- Haydon Bridge High School would close
- First schools in Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships would become primary schools
- Middle Schools in Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships would close
- QEHS would become an 11-18 secondary school
- 8 primary and first schools across both partnerships would close.

- **Model C**

- Haydon Bridge High School would merge with Newbrough Primary School to become an all-through 4-18 school
- First schools in Haydon Bridge Partnership would become primary schools
- Middle Schools in Haydon Bridge Partnership would close
- The existing school organisation structure in Hexham Partnership would remain in place
- 7 first schools in Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships would close.

6.2.2 Phase 2 informal consultation commenced on 19 February and closed on 9 April 2018 in line with guidance. The consultation register sets out details of those groups and individuals consulted, which is provided at **Appendix 3** of this document. A Consultation Document was made widely available on the Council's website, which is attached at **Appendix 1**, and individuals and groups were able to request hard copies on request. The Consultation Document included a response form which could be completed online or sent to the Council via email or in hard copy. Some consultees chose to respond to the consultation via letters.

6.2.3 Parents, staff and pupils in all of the schools that form the Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships were invited to respond. Other key consultees included Local Parish Councils, the Church of England and Roman Catholic dioceses, early-years providers, the local MP, staff union representatives and other local authorities that border Northumberland. Any other parties with an interest in education in the west of the county were also invited to respond.

6.2.4 Two public consultation events were held during Phase 2 consultation; the first in Haydon Bridge High School on 26 February and the second at Hexham Mart on 17 March. All interested parties were able to attend the events to ask questions of council officers and schools in order to provide further information and clarify the key issues; schools and the Dioceses were given the opportunity to have their own stall at both events. The parents group 'STARS' requested and was given a stall at the Hexham Mart. There was a very good turnout at both events, with an estimated 150 people attended the event in Haydon Bridge, and around 450 attended Hexham Mart. The press also attended both events.

6.2.5 Meetings between Council officers and school staff and Council Officers and Governing Bodies were held at all of the schools where the possibility of closure was set out in one or more of the 3 models. 29 meetings took place between 26 February and 28 March at the relevant nine schools during April 2016. The rationale for these meetings was based on the specific questions that would arise from staff and Governing Bodies at these schools and the potential impact upon them. Minutes of the meetings at these schools are available in the background papers of this report, while a summary is provided in para.7. The schools organised separate meetings with their own parent bodies.

6.2.6 The consultation document set out the challenges and issues that had been discussed with the schools in Phase 1 of the informal consultation, together with relevant data and information. The Consultation Response form asked consultees to indicate a 'yes', 'no' or 'don't know' against the various features of the 3 models,

together with a section for explanatory comments. A key feature of the response form was the section requesting alternative proposals that consultees believed could form viable solutions for the future of education in the west.

- 6.2.7** A total of 3023 responses have been received in the variety of formats explained above, many of which also included additional information, such as business plans and alternative proposals.

The 'Guidance for decision makers' published by the Department for Education in April 2016 (p.4) for those deciding upon prescribed alteration and establishment and discontinuation formal proposals states; '*The decision-maker must consider the views of those affected by a proposal or who have an interest in it including cross-LA border interests. The decision-maker should not simply take account of the number of people expressing a particular view. Instead, they should give greatest weight to the responses from those stakeholders likely to be most directly affected by a proposal – especially parents of children at the affected school(s).*' Therefore, although Phase 2 represents the informal stage of consultation, while all responses have been taken into account and reviewed, the analysis of feedback has focussed upon the views of key stakeholders– including current parents, governors, headteachers, teachers and pupils. Both quantitative and qualitative methods have been used in the analysis, and as made clear at all stages this is not a process of voting or a referendum.

- 6.2.8** As stated above, consultees were also asked to put forward alternative solutions that they believe could assist in provided viable and sustainable schools in the west for the next 25 years. Many of these alternative models had key similarities and these have been themed; other models which were clearly not linked to others have been commented upon individually. The analysis of these alternative proposals is set out in para. 8. These were looked at in detail and have been used to formulate the proposal that is being put forward in this report.

- 6.2.9** Should the publication of a statutory proposal relating to the proposals set out in recommendation (i) in part 1 of this report be approved by Cabinet, there would be a further four-week statutory formal consultation period to allow all interested parties to lodge representations beginning on 10 May and closing on 7 June 2018. The outcomes of the formal consultation would be brought to Cabinet for a final decision on whether or not to implement the statutory proposal on 10 July 2018.

The following section of the report summarises the evidence base used to inform the analysis and recommendations:

7. EVIDENCE BASE

CONSULTATION RESPONSES FROM INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES AND EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONALS;

Written responses from Governing Bodies, staff and headteachers of the schools and academies are summarised below (full responses are included in the Background Papers to this report) :

HAYDON BRIDGE PARTNERSHIP

- 7.1 Allendale Primary School** – The Governing Body supported Model B and rejected Models A and C. The Governing Body also suggested that a new build high school in Hexham would be a great benefit to the area, although the closure of Haydon Bridge High School would take away parental choice. While a shame to close small village schools, it is a necessary move to give stability to those schools which remain open. The Governing Body believed that it would have been better to have Hadrian Learning Trust finalised their decision first to assist with stakeholders decisions.

An excerpt from their response states:

“A full breadth of curriculum needs to be offered by any future school and options including vocational courses available to students.

- 7.2 Newbrough CE VA Primary School** – The Governing Body were unable to support any of the options put forward in terms of Models A, B or C. They stated that the wider role that village schools have on the social and economic fabric of rural communities must be taken fully into account by the review, in accordance with DfE guidelines. The Governing Body has specific concerns relating to aspects of Model C in relation to the impact on Newbrough, i.e. primary aged children being lost in a large school, working parents choosing to live in the village because of the wrap-around care at Newbrough and transport concerns with narrow and rural roads. The school is a ‘Good school’ (Ofsted 2015), stable number of pupils on roll with an increasing number in the lower years. The school is financially sound and is predicted to be in future years. The school sits at the heart of 3 villages and community life in the surrounding area. The school is used for community activities. The school has good facilities with recent expensive work having been undertaken. The Governing Body believe that it is nonsensical to plan to have 2 primary schools sitting side by side in Haydon Bridge.

An excerpt from their response states:

“We have no particular allegiance to a 3 tier model of education and, for our school which is already a primary school, it would be better if there was a 2 tier model across the whole area. ...we believe that there are strong educational arguments for a primary / secondary model - not only because the national curriculum is designed this way but also because every time that pupils change school, it has been shown that they lose approximately a term of progress. This is of particular concern in relation to more vulnerable learners.”.

The staff at Newbrough CE Primary School submitted a response highlighting key points about the school - ‘is a good school with increasing numbers, financially viable, has a growing reputation, a high proportion of pupil walk, cycle or scoot to school, is vital to the life of the villages, supplies midday meals to another school and community, has excellent facilities, has a distinctive Christian ethos and there should be a choice of secondary schools.

Overall, there is no particular allegiance to a 3-tier model and there are strong educational arguments for a primary/secondary model.

- 7.3 Henshaw CE and Greenhead CE Primary Schools** – Henshaw CE and Greenhead CE Primary Schools form The West Tyne Federation and are overseen by one Governing Body and one Executive Headteacher. The Governing Body recognises that the significant financial deficit of the school must be addressed, which would include the need for 50 children on roll at the school and is committed to working with parents and the community to find viable solutions to this challenge. The Governing Body also recommends most strongly that the NCC Consultation process does not permit any ‘mixed economy’ of schools in the West Northumberland: moves already taken to implement a coherent network of Primary / Secondary schools must be completed across the West of Northumberland.

An excerpt from their response states:

“The Governing Body proposes that, if NCC judges Greenhead Primary School to be unviable:

** that Greenhead School site closes (providing that the next conditions are met)
* that the current catchments of Greenhead and Henshaw schools are merged and
* that pupils from the new larger catchment be accommodated on the existing Henshaw Primary School site, which has sufficient space for the larger intake in a modern building, and plans currently under way for expansion to deal more appropriately with providing Key Stage 2 teaching and learning.*

On 3 April 2018 a revised letter was sent to parents of the school to give an update of the Governor’s response to NCC consultation.

- 7.4 Shaftoe Trust Primary Academy and Wise Academy Trust** – Shaftoe Trust Primary Academy is part of the Wise Multi-Academy Trust. The Governing Body is open to exploring opportunities which will improve life chances of children from Haydon Bridge and surrounding areas. Shaftoe Trust Academy is willing to engage in further discussions with a view to working together with other partners in finding the most appropriate educational solution for the whole area.

An excerpt from their response states:

“The view of those responsible for governance of Shaftoe Trust Academy is that there exists a clear need for continuing all age provision in the Haydon Bridge area. As such, the Local Governing Body is interested in exploring viable options that provide high quality local educational provision set within the highest quality facilities. This includes ensuring the rich heritage and identity of Shaftoe Trust is preserved.

- 7.5 Bellingham First School and Bellingham Middle School** – Bellingham First School is federated with Bellingham Middle School and both schools are governed by one Governing Body. Each school has its own headteacher, although there is currently an Acting Headteacher in Bellingham Middle School. The Governing Body supports Model A.

Viability of Bellingham First School will be secured now and into the future by the mergers with Greenhaugh First and Wark First Schools. Children travel in to school from the surrounding areas but the distances involved are not excessive at present. Both schools in the partnership have healthy budget forecasts and are likely to

continue to be financially viable. Bellingham community is quite isolated from the rest of Western Northumberland so travel distances to larger centres of population are considerable.

A new primary school on the site would see children stay for the whole of KS1 and KS2 - easier to deliver the national curriculum and preparation for national tests and would eliminate the need for children to cope with two transitions. Model B would mean travelling a very long distance to QEHS to continue into KS3,4 and 5. Children from the Bellingham area could be potentially disadvantaged because travel arrangements would make it very difficult for them to attend after school activities.

An excerpt from their response states:

“Instead of two separate schools, as now, a single all through school 4-13 on the same site with a strong focus on the rural pursuits of the area.e.g. agriculture, forestry. Governors would also like to explore the possibilities of extending the all through school age range to 16 in the future. Financial savings could be made on staffing costs over time. eg. leadership and support staff costs There is already a single governing body for the two schools in place.”

- 7.6 Kielder First School**- The Governing Body responded unanimously with 100% of Governors agreeing to a 2-tier approach (so supporting Model B and not Models A and C). The Governing Body is unanimous in their wish for the school to become a Primary School from September 2019. The Governing Body believe the school would be able to offer the children an outstanding education from ages 2 -11 in the existing nursery and school building. There is the experience in existing staff. They have the physical space and financial viability to undertake this change.

The school requests that the catchment area is redrawn and travel policy altered to enable children to be transported free of charge to Kielder School, from Falstone. This would ensure the school remains financially viable. The route from Falstone to Kielder is direct and traffic free. Kielder First School has ample parking and there is a large car park where a bus could safely drop children for easy access to the school building.

An excerpt from their response states:

“Extending our age range would provide parents with knowledge that their child’s education is secure and the uncertainty of recent years is removed.

The staff stated we are unanimous in our wish for our school to become a Primary School from September 2019. We believe Kielder First School would be able to offer our children an outstanding education from ages 2 to 11 in our existing nursery and school building and the headteacher believes the West of Northumberland should become 2-tier. Children need an extra 2 years at their secondary school in order to make the correct decision about their GCSEs. These have become increasingly difficult and schools need the children from year 7 in order to cover the curriculum and prepare the children.

- 7.7 Otterburn First School** - The Governing Body supports Models A and B based on the closure of Haydon Bridge High School due to the current situation in terms of the

vast drop in pupil numbers, the extensive deficit budget and the capital expenditure needed on the modernisation of the premises. Otterburn's governing body feel that there are a certain number of smaller schools which should close. These schools are in close proximity to other more viable schools. Parents are happier if the travel is reduced for two years by the school becoming a primary school.

An excerpt from their response states:

"It is the view of the governing body that a new school under the two tier system should be put in place with the most obvious and sensible solution being with the Hadrian Learning Trust.It makes sense therefore to make double the size of some small schools by closing the next nearest school. If the closet middle school is also vastly undersubscribed then it also makes sense to close this and move to the two tier system. Otterburn would thrive as a primary school with a growing number on role to enable it to be financially viable. The governing body feels that the current structure of schools in the west is not financially viable nor is it educationally viable."

7.8 Wark CE VA First School - The Governing Body did not agree with any of the proposed models. Wark C of E First School with all the factors highlighted under their option D response (further details in section 10) can enhance the delivery of education in this model. By retaining Wark C of E First School they are ensuring the quality of education for their children within the Wark catchment, supporting their local communities and facilities, retaining a needed pre-school and before/after school provision within their catchment.

We again extend our offer to open up dialogue with the education department to consider the option of Wark C of E First School becoming a primary school, we look forward to hearing from you shortly to progress with this matter.

An excerpt from their response states:

"On behalf of Wark C of E First School Governing Body - We write with reference to your consultation for the organisation of schools in the West of Northumberland and we welcome the opportunity to investigate the future model of education provision within this area. With the excellent education, broad curriculum and proven educational standards that Wark C of E First School offers, we hope to be considered as a strong contender to remain open, enhancing our children's education in any future educational model..... We have a business plan to move to a Primary school that can be enacted when required with the support of Northumberland County Council and Newcastle Diocese."

The Leadership team of Wark C of E First School do not agree with any of the models A, B or C. We pride ourselves on delivering a first class education based on our key principles. "The provision for pupils' personal development and welfare is a key strength of the school." In light of the consultation, we have a number of recommendations:

- Wark C of E First School must remain open at all costs
- Good and Outstanding schools with financial viability should remain open
- A single school structure should be implemented throughout West Northumberland
- In the event of potential transition to a 2-tier system, viable first schools should be

offered the chance to convert to primary

- Every effort must be made to ensure smaller class sizes.

The staff of Wark C of E First School agree with the points put forward by the Leadership team.

7.9 Haltwhistle Lower (First) Academy and Haltwhistle Upper (Middle) Academy –

Haltwhistle First Academy and Haltwhistle Middle Academy form the Haltwhistle Community Campus and are currently part of the Bright Tribe Multi-Academy Trust. There was no formal response from the Bright Tribe Trust, however local leaders of the school submitted a response. Haltwhistle Community Campus response looks at two tier (ages 3-11 and 11-16/18) and three tier (ages 3-9, 9-13 and 13 - 16/18). When the campus put together their proposal they ranked the importance of 9 factors as a whole for West of Northumberland.

Primarily there needs to be a discussion and decision made regarding 2 tier and 3 tier system. The current mixture of 2 and 3 tier creates a lack of clarity for parents and children. The schools believe there are a total of 37 schools in the West of Northumberland. The schools believe this could be reduced to thirteen schools saving 1000 surplus places, addressing the financial challenge and providing parents with choice and a best fit for community and schooling offer.

The schools consider the following structure would address many of the concerns - retain (and reintroduce) a three tier system (consistently across the whole of the West of Northumberland. Detail has been provided in section 10 of this report.

An excerpt from their response states:

“There is an acceptance by all professionals that something has to change, given the surplus places and the financial pressures. We propose a 3 tier system to reflect the challenges and needs of the rural communities and the size of area in which we serve. We believe the re-introduction of the First Schools with a reduced number of establishments addresses surplus places, financial security and an upgrade in facilities, where needed. We believe the establishment of 4 middle schools addresses the governments challenge at KS3 and the ‘Missing / Hidden Years.’”

7.10 Whitfield CE VA Primary Academy – Whitfield CE VA Primary Academy is part of the Good Shepherd Multi-Academy Trust. The Governing Body support a local rural community and feel the closure of Haydon Bridge High School would be a mistake, so only Model C is supported. The Governing Body would like to see Haydon Bridge High School site develop more of a specialist curriculum to provide to children who want to pursue a more vocational career path.

An excerpt from their response states:

“Option C - ...keeps our feeder school open and means it can specialise in providing an alternative education for students that require a more vocational provision.keeping Haydon Bridge site open means there is future capacity in the buildings to provide a SEN unit, which is currently not available in the west, as the recent SEN consultation bed down into practice. It also seems to make sense to convert more schools to primary in line with most other counties in the country.”

7.11 Greenhaugh First School – The Governing Body does not support any of the 3 possible models consulted on. However, the Governing Body has submitted a “Greenhaugh First School Business Plan 2019-22 and Options Appraisal” which forms an integral part of the Governing Body’s response to consultation (including in the Background Papers to this report. document. The Governing Body rejects options A, B, and C but not opposed to change. Faced with ‘closure’ under models A, B and C, the Governing Body has actively been pursuing other options continuing as a First School becoming a Primary and joining a MAT. Greenhaugh School is able to address its education structure appropriately given any outcome of the consultation; 3 tier, 2 tier or MAT. Greenhaugh School is committed to developing partnerships further in the future. The Headteacher is shared with Wark C of E First School and she takes part in the active Bellingham Mini Partnership of First Schools in the area. Expertise is shared where appropriate and this will continue to develop.

An excerpt from their response states:

“No to all models due to Greenhaugh being academically successful, runs surplus budget and forms the heart of the community. Increasing journey-to-school distance by 29% (based on Bellingham and current pupils) is not acceptable”
Please note that we also made a Hub and Spokes Model Proposal during the Phase 1 consultation. Although this advocates a two tier system of education it could be used as a basis for considering 3 tier links with ‘blue sky’ thinking., further detail is provided in section 10.

Remaining as a First School is our preferred option with closer partnership working with other local schools. If the outcome of the consultations converts the West of Northumberland to a two tier system Greenhaugh School will convert to a Primary School. Our children already progress to a variety of different schools (Bellingham, Hexham, and St Joseph’s Middle Schools, and Queen Elizabeth and Haydon Bridge High Schools). We will therefore have no difficulty if Haydon Bridge closes. We will continue to research the opportunities created by joining a MAT, either already existing or a new MAT.

7.12 West Woodburn - The Governing Body do not support any model from A, B or C. The school feels these models do not secure the future of the schools threatened with closure including West Woodburn first School. Governors of West Woodburn First School feel that closing HBHS would be a mistake and that the tabled proposal for the school to become a vocational orientated school with a specialist SEND unit should be given serious consideration as a way forward. The governors of WWFS support the proposal to consider the establishment, in the West of Northumberland of a vocational school in addition to a more traditional high school so giving parents choice for their children’s education.

Some of children at the school have ongoing medical conditions and increased travel times could be detrimental to their wellbeing. Parents would also need to drive further to school to pick children up from “after school” activities and attend parent evenings. Those who cannot drive, but would have walked to a local school, have real problems in rural areas as there is little public transport.

WWFS faces the same pressures as many small schools but being in financial deficit is a new experience for this school. The staff and governors are confident that,

working with NCC, the deficit can be turned around and with the still to be implemented National Funding Formula the school can be financially sound. The staff and governors are working on a restructuring plan alongside possible partnership ventures. The governors of WWFS will work to restore and maintain financial stability at the school.

An excerpt from their response states:

“The governors of WWFS support a fully resourced three tier system of education for the rural areas of the West of Northumberland so ensuring the continued operation of smaller schools such as WWFS, always putting children first. The governors of WWFS, some as parents, do not feel that creating a large school, with perhaps in excess of 2000 students, by merging two high schools is an acceptable solution. The proposal of such an option has been put to education staff, parents and students without any evidence of benefits that such a move might bring. To help maintain the village and surrounding communities infrastructure the governors of WWFS feel that the school should remain open, in the village and is fully resourced and supported by Northumberland County Council as a first school in a three tier education system for the West of Northumberland.”

7.13 Haydon Bridge High School – The school is currently in the process of changing the governance and therefore this proposal will be ratified by the new IEB in the w/b 16th April. This response therefore was from leaders of the school.

Haydon Bridge High School would provide a tailored curriculum guided by future pathways for students, employer requirements and the needs of the local community. The High School acknowledge a reduction in number of schools will reduce surplus places and through economies of scale address some of the financial challenges facing schools. The school would be open to exploring other options including an all through provision up to 18 (so supporting Model C with variation). Depending on different outcomes from the consultation, the potential number of new intake students (year 7 or 9) within catchment for HBHS in future years could be 256 (by 2021/22). One model to increase potential numbers of students would be the closure of middle schools in the catchment and all first schools become primary schools with some merging (a variation of Model B). This model is scalable, it has been designed with minimal numbers of students, enables staffing levels to be optimised and for the school to be economically viable (based on ‘in year costs not historical deficit) but can also be adapted in line with increased student numbers.

The school believes the following structure would address many of the concerns:

- A project based learning curriculum in Years 7 and 8
- Years 9, 10 and 11 KS4 courses with identified pathways
- Post 16 provision to incorporate Apprenticeship and Vocational pathways
- Sharing of staffing across the partnership
- SEN centre based on site

The school would welcome discussions around partnership work including federations in the next phase of the consultation. The apprenticeship programme delivered at HBHS will require a significantly increased partnership programme. The

school already has established links with engineering employers in the area, and further partnership programmes would include other stakeholders. The school proposes to decouple 'The Park' building from the site and this could be made available for development, potentially releasing c£400k which could be partially used to fund some refurbishments. The Lodge would require some adaptation to deliver the ASC programme (potential £150k). Currently there are 4 rooms in the main building that could be mothballed to reduce day to day costs. Currently the building is fit for purpose but will require investment for longer term viability - re roof admin block (£20k), new windows (£120k) and new wifi (£4k)

Full details of the proposed alternative models can be found in section 10.

An excerpt from their response states:

"We believe that for all parties it is essential that an educational provision is present at Haydon Bridge. The proposals identified would require capital investment but would ensure an educational structure that is fit for purpose, meets the needs of employers, the community and most importantly enhances the future opportunities for the students. The changes to the delivery of Haydon Bridge would provide parents and students with an alternative educational choice and would increase student retention. We believe the proposal for Haydon Bridge addresses the surplus places, ensures financial stability without compromising educational outcomes or offer, responds to the community and employer needs and provides an alternative for parental choice."

The headteacher stated there has been an alternative model submitted. The staff of Haydon Bridge High School support the proposed model.

HEXHAM PARTNERSHIP

7.14 Acomb First School – The Governing Body do not support Models A, B and C as we feel this will mean a very large high/secondary school, reduction in parental/pupil choice for children of all abilities and skills, with lengthy travelling times. There is a need for 2 High Schools but not with a mixed economy of 2 and 3 tier with multiple transitions. We do not believe a mixed economy provides the foundations for secure financial and educational planning. Also under Model C whilst we welcome the provision for alternative secondary provision in HBHS we do not support a mixed economy of 2 and 3 tier across the partnership. We are a successful rural village school age 2 to 9 with a Good Ofsted inspection and a budget surplus for this year and next. If Acomb were to close the majority of our families would choose to go to school in Hexham rather than transfer to a school at Beaufront for both practical reasons and perceived school ethos.

We are not in a position to provide an alternative proposal based on the limited information we hold regarding other schools.

An excerpt from their response states:

"We are a successful first school and also have the potential to become a successful village Primary school if a 2 tier system were to be adopted."

7.15 Beaufront First School – The Governing Body do not believe any of the potential models represent a good option for securing sustainable and viable education in the West of Northumberland. There is a serious risk that such dramatic changes, particularly the closure of many small rural schools and, in models A and B, a high school and/or 5 middle schools, will be detrimental to educational outcomes. There is no evidence that any of the potential models offer greater financial viability either collectively or for individual schools. Part of the rationale for the proposed changes is the overall surplus places within the 2 partnerships. Ultimately what matters most is educational attainment and financial viability, rather than whether there are surplus places on the basis of PAN. All models will result in significant travelling issues for many children and our local transport networks. The lack of information in the models has an impact on the ability of respondents to make an informed choice. We appreciate that a solution for the situation that has regrettably developed at Haydon Bridge High School must be found, that finances are an important factor. We support the “Collaborative Hub” proposed by Corbridge Middle School. Merge with Acomb? We do not believe this would be in the best financial or educational interests of either Beaufront or Acomb.

An excerpt from their response states:

“The keys to success are inspirational teaching and learning opportunities together with strong pastoral care and carefully managed transitions.”

7.16 Broomhaugh CE First School –The Governing Body do not support Models A, B or C. Rather than outline the reasons for our responses on a Model by Model basis, we have outlined our reasons.

Our prime concern is that we do not have enough evidence to enable us to understand the potential viability and sustainability of each model and there may be potential issues with capacity in the future under each of the three options. We need more information on: level of financial support, additional support for schools, transportation implications, effectively managed transitions of pupils. Every effort made to ensure the provision of education is continued in Haydon Bridge on the principle of parental choice and not simply subsumed into HMS/QEHS without question. Genuine time and effort invested into sharing and exploring properly any and all alternatives that are put forward in response to the Council’s call for alternatives and clear evidence presented as to why they have or have not been taken forward. We support: Corbridge Middle School (hub model); Church of England (MAT), Haydon Bridge High School (proposals tabled); any proposals that meet the principles we have outlined.

An excerpt from their response states:

“We don’t really believe (and nor do parents as per the survey results and all our conversations) that what’s on the table now really, truly represent ‘unique and innovative’ solutions that reflect the distinctive characteristics and needs of the area served by the partnership.”

7.17 Whitley Chapel CE VA First School –The Governing Body do not support Models A, B and C Because Whitley Chapel First School, designated Good by Ofsted and

economically viable for the foreseeable future, would have to close, along with several other First Schools in the same position, to the drastic detriment of their local communities. We believe a far better option would be for HLT to build a new 9 - 18 school on one campus, thereby saving on site management, staffing costs and facilities, and increase the size of the sixth form. If QEHS could also make the sixth form provision more attractive by providing more inclusive courses then it would be able to increase pupil numbers and budget from the top rather than the bottom and make itself more financially viable. This would enable the other Middle schools in Hexham and Corbridge to remain and retain parental choice across the partnership. Haydon Bridge also most assuredly needs a secondary provision to ensure that pupils do not have to travel too far, and to protect the impact of closing the school on the local community. In effect, we would support Model C, but with the provision that good or Outstanding small rural First Schools would not need to close. If the 3 tier system is retained, there would be no need for this to happen. It is by no means guaranteed that if these schools were closed parents would choose to send their children to the new merged Primaries.

An excerpt from their response states:

“We also believe that to ‘pick off’ the Church schools in particular is extremely prejudiced and seriously limits parental choice.”

7.18 Chollerton CE VA First School – As a Governing Body we do not support any model that will close Chollerton CE First School. Model A, It is our belief that Chollerton C of E First School is an outstanding school; Chollerton’s results are in the top 5% of schools nationally for EYFS, Phonics and Year 2 SATS; building is sound, our grounds are exceptional, we have been able to reduce our financial deficit of 1.4% in 2017/18 and will not be in deficit for 2018/2019 and 2019/2020; pupil numbers are sustainable for the foreseeable future; offer accommodation to a privately run pre-school; an integral part of our community. Model B (as Model A) benefits of the 3 tier system; role that small local first schools play in our relatively sparsely populated but large rural county; Haydon Bridge should retain a High School that accommodates all students as its vision for the future; Queen Elizabeth High School’s emphasis is on the more ‘academic’ subjects; presence of both schools would provide the opportunity for all children to engage and excel. Model C (as A and B) true distance and time our children already travel to attend school has not been taken into account; Parents who live in rural, remote settings will find it difficult to maintain the close links. Model D Each school must be judged on educational standards, its influence on the local community, its vision for the future and both financial and pupil sustainability; parental choice regarding a High School; ensure Haydon Bridge High School is supported and rural first schools are maintained such that we can continue to offer high quality education for all in West Northumberland.

An excerpt from their response states:

“In summary, we are a financially viable, sustainable and outstanding first school that serves the needs of our rural community whilst providing an excellent education for our children. We can see no argument for closure and fear it will reduce the quality of our children’s education.”

7.19 Whittonstall First School – Governing Body of Whittonstall & Broomley First School Federation. In all three models A, B and C Whittonstall First School would close/merge with Broomhaugh CE First School as our response is that this is not an acceptable proposal and is strongly rejected by the governing body on the grounds that: we are financially viable; close to capacity; would not address the problem of surplus places in other Northumberland schools; significant shared costs, staff and resources with Broomley First School - detrimental to this arrangement and have far reaching implications for the viability of Broomley; in the process of forming a MAT with the Tynedale Community Learning Trust; insufficient capacity to accommodate our pupils at Broomhaugh; distances pupils expected to travel real concern; no pre-school education in the proposals. It is not clear how surplus places and capacity are being modelled in each option and we have concerns around the lack of any link with a housing development plan with Northumberland; impact on our rural communities has not been considered in the event of the school closures and DfE guidance in this area does not appear to have been followed.

An excerpt from their response states:

“Under a two tier system: Creation of a primary hub at Broomley for parents that require the two tier system and need to feed to QEHS. Parents would still have the option to transfer to middle school at the end of Y4 or remain at Broomley for Y5/Y6. The site has significant options regarding use of existing space and capital investment required would be minimal. Whittonstall pupils could transfer to Broomley for Y5/Y6 only.”

7.20 Corbridge First School – Governing Body of Corbridge C of E First School: In response to all three models A, B and C we do not believe we can support any of the options as, “a good option for securing sustainable and viable education in the West of Northumberland. Model A - This has some potential although a high school or secondary school provision should be funded in Haydon Bridge. The closure of the small rural schools is of high concern. Creating working partnerships with these schools could be an alternative to forced closure of successful schools. Model B - We cannot see how this structural change has any educational argument in our successful Hexham Partnership. We know we would be a successful Primary School, (with the necessary capital investment) but we would not provide the same educational opportunities which are currently on offer to the pupils in our very successful three tier system. The pupils thrive from our current provision both academically and socially and emotionally, which the Model B could significantly change. Model C - All through schools have not proven to be very successful but we believe providing an education choice in the Haydon Bridge Partnership is vital.

An excerpt from their response states:

“Building on and formalising partnerships is the best way forward. We believe a viable, long term solution which addresses the individual challenges can be implemented over time and as necessary with schools and organisations working together.”

7.21 Hexham First School - The Governing Body of Hexham First School responded that it is impossible to answer the Council's own questions in any meaningful way without a better understanding of why any of the models represents an appropriate solution to the issues set out in the consultation document. We are keen to see the

future of education set up for success. Where there are genuine challenges to be overcome we are committed to working in an open and collaborative way to develop the most appropriate solutions. We also recognise that there is a pressing need to provide direction for what happens at Haydon Bridge High School. However, the right solution, not a quick solution, needs to be found. To make the scale of changes proposed, on a 'once in a generation basis', with such significant financial investment, requires more time and more depth of information. We are fortunate in that Hexham First School remains in all three models suggested. However we are concerned for the communities whose schools are facing closure and we would urge the Council to look carefully at keeping as many schools open as is possible.

An excerpt from their response states:

“Should the three tier system of education remain in place we are confident that we can continue our journey towards becoming an 'outstanding' first school. However, if HLT change their age range we are confident that we could become an outstanding primary school. Hexham First School would need considerable financial investment in order to ensure all of our children are provided with the best possible educational experience. We reiterate both our willingness and desire to work with all stakeholders.”

7.22 Humshaugh CE VA First School - The Governing Body of Humshaugh CE First School do not support models A, B or C. Model A - We do not accept that sufficient consultation has been put into this response, in particular the impact of closing church schools in the Haydon Bridge partnership. If the county retain a three tier system of education then the funds available should be used to manage Haydon Bridge's closure and it's pupils transferred to Hexham QE. If necessary assisting with the costs of building a new school to accommodate the extra pupils and funding revised transport for pupils travel to school. Model B - (As Model A) Further, this model proposes a move to a two tier system of education yet there has been no consultation on this. Finally, there needs to be a realistic community impact assessment carried out to reflect the needs of our rural communities and what will happen if this or model C is adopted. We do not support any model that closes both Wark and Chollerton Schools. Model C - (as A and B) Our own school is ready to expand, and has put forward proposals to become a full primary school but the impact on our sparser and more distant communities proposed by this model is not acceptable.

An excerpt from their response states:

“We would be happy to offer other solutions provided they did not put us into conflict with other church schools and if we knew the methodology to be used. We support the financial and other help being offered to Hexham QE but would like to see Haydon Bridge retained, perhaps offering more vocational courses.”

7.23 Slaley First School - The Governing Body of Slaley First School do not support Models A and C. Model B - As a governing body we are in agreement that Slaley First School is well placed to offer a high quality primary education. However, we feel strongly that provision across the County should not be mixed as this would compromise the future success of this educational system.

Model B: If NCC adopt two tier system bring Northumberland in line with the national picture - allow schools greater accountability at the end of each Key Stage; changes to the NFF based upon a primary/secondary model, offer fairer funding; also aligns with the two tier proposal put forward by HLT and would provide consistency across West of Northumberland; we do feel this model has capacity to cope with future building developments; local provision for young children who should not have to travel long distances; families move into rural communities - send their children to local schools to develop roots within the community and maintaining those communities is a top priority; capital investment is required in schools, Slaley First School could easily be adapted to accommodate the full primary age range. SFS has the space, capital investment cascaded to all levels of education; small schools, a small amount of money can make a big difference and provide excellent value for money; PAN would increase from 10 to 15 – more financially viable; offers greater security and flexibility in the deployment of resources; keen to investigate all possibilities regarding future funding; open to joining a multi-academy trust. We have taken the views of all stakeholders into account. SFS consultation event resulted in parents expressing their support for Model B and Model A. The feeling was that B would be the probable end result and, if this were the case, they felt confident that the school could effectively deliver the full primary curriculum to their children.

An excerpt from their response states:

“A meeting with the Parish Council in Slaley demonstrated confidence in the school to work effectively under any of the three models, but there was a preference for the school to become Primary (model B).”

7.24 The Sele First School - The Governing Body of The Sele First School do not support Models A, B or C. Governors feel that it is not possible to separate NCC consultation from that of the Hadrian Trust; both would impact on the effectiveness of the current model at The Sele First. The DfE has confirmed its intention to introduce a National Funding Formula (NFF) for Schools with effect from April 2020 so that all schools will have funding set according to the same allocation mechanism. The proposal from central government is that schools across England will move to a standardised funding model. The funding formula factor values will be set by the DfE and no longer locally by the LA. This will be subject to agreement in the next Comprehensive Spending Review. Model B - Governors feel that they can only respond for proposals impacting on The Sele and whilst there will be many and varied creative solutions for the two partnerships that is not for them to advocate. Model A - no change for The Sele would not work if Hadrian Learning Trust (HLT) move to 11-18. Model B - would not work for The Sele as reducing PAN to 60 would be highly detrimental to current outstanding provision, not meet needs of community given current numbers, be highly disruptive. Model C - no change for The Sele would not work if HLT moved 11-18.

An excerpt from their response states:

“Governors feel that a one off capital investment from NCC (and this would be essential and non-negotiable) would be the best solution allowing all parents who wished pupils to continue at SELEfirst to do so until end of Y6. This would mean

continuing with a PAN of 84. This final point in turn has implications for our response to proposals within Education in the West of Northumberland.”

7.25 St Mary’s RC VA First and St Joseph’s RC VA Middle Schools - The Governing Body of St Mary’s RC First and St Joseph’s RC Middle Schools support Model A (no to Models B and C) - This preserves St. Joseph’s RC VA Middle School Both schools are Ofsted rated ‘Good’ and St Joseph’s is currently near capacity; confirms the need for a faith based school, at least up to age 13 years; schools of choice for both Catholic and non-Catholic parents; provide a caring ethos; high standard of education which many parents choose before other schools in the area. While we support this model insofar as it safeguards our contribution to the whole education offer in west Northumberland, we have great reservations about the impact it would have for the whole area of the Haydon Bridge Schools’ Partnership and its linked impact on the Hexham Schools’ Partnership. We have detailed our explanation of this in section B. A further practical reason for our support for this option is that it would require no capital spending for our Catholic schools or the many other First and Middle schools which were purpose built for the three tier structure. Capital spending could then be focused on the creation of outstanding facilities across both partnerships which would benefit all of our children in the later stages of their education and preparation for work. Model B (No) - We consider that there must be an alternative provision at all age levels, to promote healthy competition and shared opportunities for improvement and collaboration between a number of schools, and our Catholic schools allow this and will participate in this. Model C (No) - We think a change of age range to cater for pupils from 4 to 16 years at Haydon Bridge High School is neither viable, sustainable nor likely to produce improved outcomes for the children and the communities from which they are drawn.

Our Proposal

A variation of model A which maintains option for faith based education to age 13. [This alternative model is a joint proposal with the RC Dioceses of Hexham and Newcastle and is commented on in para. 10].

An excerpt from their response states:

“We plan to continue providing first class Catholic education in Hexham from 3 years to at least 13 years of age, admitting children from both the Hexham and Haydon Bridge Partnerships whose parents choose our school for its Catholic Christian ethos. We also require that this is part of a viable and successful partnership throughout the entire west of Northumberland.”

The staff of St Mary’s and St Joseph’s Schools responded in agreement with the Governing Body.

7.26 Corbridge Middle School - Majority decision of the Governing Body of Corbridge Middle School do not support Model B and have responded ‘Don’t know’ for Model’s A and C. Model A - We do not feel that enough information has been provided to answer the question. The following points were raised Closure of Haydon Bridge High School - our stakeholders are clear that it is important for there to be two “high/secondary” schools in the west of Northumberland to allow for parental choice

and in the event that QEHS failed either financially or educationally for whatever reason. Financial modelling; impact on communities; offer at least one model that is fully three tier across both partnerships; help with school to school support/collaboration and potentially prevent “leakage” from smaller two tier schools into larger three tier schools. Model B - We do not agree that creating an 11-18 secondary school is the only option or the best way to meet the objectives. In summary we strongly believe that an age range change would have a detrimental impact on our students, families and communities. Impact on the wider partnership. There is no evidence on: how educational experience would be better than now; loss of parental choice for children at age 11 in rural areas with poor public transport; inclusion; managing change; financial sustainability. Model C (As Model A) including Co-location of HMS and QEHS on one site, with a new build; Haydon Bridge High School - potential sponsor, viability; Closure of ten schools- whilst offering fewer closures than option A - efficiency savings; Two tier in Haydon Bridge partnership and three tier for Hexham Partnership could continue the current “leakage” of children from Haydon Bridge to Hexham partnership - continue to place at risk the small primary schools in the Haydon Bridge partnership; surplus places; increased travel time.

An excerpt from their response states:

“An alternative model - Collaboration Hubs

Shouldn't our schools be given the opportunity to work together first to try and solve any educational or financial challenges in our localities by collaborating? Can we create more all-through collaborations from age 3 to 13, 3 to 16 or even 3 to 18?”

7.27 Hexham Priory School - The Governing Body of Hexham Priory School. We do not support any particular Model, as our school is unlikely to be directly affected by these proposals. However, our catchment area covers the partnerships of Haydon Bridge, Hexham, Ponteland and Prudhoe High School pyramids and we would like to make the following points. For over two years our Governing Body has been actively seeking a solution to increase the provision for West Northumberland children with special educational needs but have, up until now, been pushed back by the RSC. We feel that we have a responsibility to find a solution not only for the children who attend our school but for all children in West Northumberland with special education needs. Hexham Priory School will continue to support dual registrations for children with severe learning difficulties, enabling our pupils to attend their local mainstream school as well as Hexham Priory School, whatever the results of this consultation. From an early age, children with severe learning difficulties and complex needs often have to travel a lot further than any of the children affected by this consultation, in order to get to their local specialist school. And, if there aren't any places, their only choice is to travel for over an hour each way to an out-of-county provision. This is not ideal and we need to ensure that local provision is maintained and increased as needed.

An excerpt from their response states:

“From an early age, children with severe learning difficulties and complex needs often have to travel a lot further than any of the children affected by this consultation, in order to get to their local specialist school. And, if there aren't any places, their only

choice is to travel for over an hour each way to an out-of-county provision. This is not ideal and we need to ensure that local provision is maintained and increased as needed."

7.28 Hexham Middle School and Queen Elizabeth High School, Hadrian Learning

Trust - Hadrian Learning Trust ran a parallel but separate consultation process with that of the Council's, 'Building a better future for our children'. Their consultation ended on 29 March 2018, the the Trust stated that time was needed to analyse and carefully consider responses received from all our stakeholders. Until that process had been undertaken, the Trust Board feels it is unable to provide a detailed response to the Council's consultation. While the Trust appreciate that the Council has consulted on a number of potential models for the purposes of discussion, the Trust's current view is that none of these models would be acceptable to Hadrian Learning Trust in the form presented.

An excerpt from their response states:

"Whatever the outcome of this process, we remain committed to working with the Council in delivering the best possible educational outcomes and experience for the children of the West of Northumberland."

8. Responses and evidence collated from other sources

8.1 Response [in full] from the Diocesan Director of Education on behalf of the Newcastle Diocesan Board of Education('NDEB') and the Bishop of Newcastle.

- 1. The NDEB wishes to work in partnership with all stakeholders including the Local Authority wherever possible. The Director of Education attended Scrutiny and Cabinet meetings where the proposal to go out to consultation for the West Tyne was determined, with a view to adopting a partnership approach to any proposals for change. In light of this the NDEB and the Bishop were deeply disappointed with the paper presented which outlined the potential closure of up to five Good or Outstanding Church of England schools in the West Tyne area of Northumberland. The number of church schools proposed as affected came as a surprise and the NDEB and the Bishop would not be able to support the closure of such a significant number of our schools, leaving parents with limited opportunity for the choice of a church school. The NDEB had made clear that they would be supportive of change if necessary to ensure the best outcomes for children and had hoped that the paper would have been more reflective of this stance. In light of this we cannot currently support any of the proposed options but set out further comments below.*
- 2. The NDEB has always welcomed an open dialogue from all stakeholders regarding the future education of children in the West Tyne. The Local Authority has tabled concerns regarding future numbers of children across the partnership and we have seen the most recent request from the ESFA highlighting its own concerns around surplus places and asking the Local Authority to look at the overcapacity in the system. We therefore continue to feel it is important to discuss how we can best educate our children in a way which is both sustainable going forwards into the future and to the highest standards.*

3. *We currently have 6 maintained first schools; 3 maintained primary schools and a Primary Academy which could, in some way be affected by any potential changes that are made in the two partnerships. 9 of these schools are graded as either good or outstanding by Ofsted with one awaiting an inspection (Whitfield). Since the consultation has commenced the Governing Body of Greenhead have requested the support of the Local Authority to consult to close the school. This difficult decision has been made in light of financial pressures facing the school. The Diocese supports the Governing Body providing the LA is able to support the expansion of Henshaw C of E Primary school to include the catchment of Greenhead and provide suitable transport to those who are entitled under the current transport arrangements.*
4. *Ultimately the local authority is the decision maker in determining the future of our maintained schools – church or non-church. In order to close a school a number of factors need to be considered. With a high number of surplus places, it may well be that the partnership as a collective have to accept that some schools may have to close. We would hope that any such decisions are made with absolute openness and transparency.*
5. *The NDEB are keen to have a clear understanding of the outcome of the Hadrian Learning Trust consultation. If a decision was made for Hadrian to educate children from Year 7 our schools would have to consider changing from First to Primary in order to provide an education from the end of Year 4 to Year 6 and avoid the risks of having a mixed school economy of three tier and two tier. Several of our schools have indicated their desire to commence work towards becoming Outstanding providers of Primary Education and we will support individual governing bodies in these decisions when we know more. For the avoidance of doubt we consider that it is possible for both three tier systems and two tier systems to work extremely well educationally (and indeed we have experience of working with both). However, we do not believe it is in the best interests of the children to have a fragmented system including both two tier and three tier options due to the difficulties of various different entry points and managing transitions.*
6. *Primary Education can be more challenging in a rural context with lower numbers of children in each year group and the need for mixed age classes; however, the delivery of an outstanding education is still possible with appropriate support.*
7. *The Diocese is keen to explore the option of the provision of education from 11-16 in Haydon Bridge with a partner organisation. We would need this to be a new Free School which would require a purpose built school building with additional facilities to support the community of Haydon Bridge. [Comment on this model is included at para. 10].*
8. *In the event of a decision to change to a two tier system there will need to be a significant injection of capital into the current school building provision and we would look to the LA to continue to work with all schools in helping to provide school buildings which are not only fit for purpose but to the best possible standard we can reasonably afford to provide.*

9. *Many of our Governing Bodies have already asked for our ongoing support during this period of consultation and the joint education team working for the NDEB will be here to support colleagues throughout this process. This may include consideration of shared leadership options and the delivery of a MAT – albeit mixed or church.*
10. *In light of the response from the Sele in Hexham we would strongly refute the request for a three form entry primary school. There are a number of Outstanding two form entry (and indeed one form entry) teaching primary schools in the North East with a proven track record of success. We also feel that such a PAN for this school would significantly impact on the viability of smaller rural schools which are Good better in the community should their governing bodies wish to change to primary status.*

*Paul Rikeard
Diocesan Director of Education
CofE Diocese of Newcastle*

*Venerable Peter Robinson, Chair of the Newcastle Diocesan Education Board
The Right Reverend Christine Hardman, Bishop of Newcastle*

8.2 The Roman Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle

Response to Model A

Yes - In our view, the three-tier system works well in West Northumberland. This option would keep the middle schools. It would retain both St Mary's First School and St Joseph's Middle School and therefore continue to offer Catholic education to age 13. Our two schools are well supported and do not have a budget issue or an issue with surplus spaces.

Response of Model B

No - This would result in the closure of St Joseph's Middle School and with St Mary's First School becoming a primary school. This would mean that Catholic education would cease at age 11 and the current choice of a post 11 faith-based education would be removed. The theme of choice and the desire to maintain it was communicated strongly by members of the public at the recent consultation event at Hexham Mart.

Response to Model C

No - This option would keep the middle schools but would mean a mix of two tier and three tier education since some first schools would become primary schools. It would retain both St Mary's First School and St Joseph's Middle School and therefore continue Catholic education to age 13. However, this model could have an adverse effect on St Joseph's Middle School since it could mean fewer children attending in Year 5 and Year 6 if they are feeding from a primary school. Parents would also be unlikely to have their children attending a middle school if admission to

the Queen Elizabeth High School was not guaranteed at Year 9. Model C would result in the loss of choice of faith based education to Year 8.

Alternative Suggestion

The Diocese would be supportive of any plan that would at least preserve or potentially extend the offer of Catholic education in West Northumberland. The Diocese is committed to offering Catholic education as a choice to families in West Northumberland. If the two tier or mixed two and three tier proposals are agreed then an option that we would carefully consider would be the possible extending of Catholic provision to age 16. This would allow a choice of a faith based education and also an alternative choice to the one high school should Haydon Bridge close (comment on this alternative proposal is included at para. 10).

8.3 Summary of Response from local MP (Guy Opperman)

Guy Opperman MP responded to the Council's consultation, stating that having met with many of the parents, teachers and governors of the schools he had been impressed by the dedication of the teachers, staff and pupils. He stated that while he accepted that it was legitimate for the County Council to have a consultation, it was vital to listen to their voices and that the Council engage with local communities at local events in Tynedale to explain the consultation and make the case for change. Mr Opperman also accepted that there are important issues to be addressed going forward, such as falling roll numbers in many of the schools and long overdue investment in school buildings by the County Council.

The full response is available in the Background Papers to this report.

8.4 Summaries of Parish Council submissions

8.4.1 Newbrough Parish Council

The Parish Council has objected to any proposal that includes the closure of Newbrough Primary School on the basis that it is an excellent school, has excellent facilities including nursery which will serve the growing community. The Parish Council can see no reason for the closure proposal.

8.4.2 Hexhamshire Parish Council

The Parish Council is concerned at the proposed closure of Whitley Chapel CE First School. The Parish Council believes the school is financially viable, structurally sound and that the proposal is irrational as they feel there would be no financial gain to the Council as the land and buildings belong to the Diocese. Other concerns included young children travelling long distances, adverse effect on local community and no early years provision in the area.

8.4.3 Birtley Parish Council

The Parish Council has objected to the proposed closure of Wark CE First School. They believe it is an excellent school, with above outcomes regarding standards in Ofsted and SIAMS inspections. The school is financially sound, with excellent

facilities and is active in the local community. The Parish Council also believes that losing the school would make Wark less attractive to young families.

8.4.4 Haydon Parish Council

The Parish Council strongly supports the continuation of Haydon Bridge High School. As the largest local employer in the village and part of the infrastructure within the Haydon Bridge Development Trust, the loss of the school would have a devastating impact on the local community. The Parish Council notes the issue with the school deficits, but sees adverse publicity in the press as largely to blame for the reduction in numbers at the school. The loss of the school would also remove choice for parents and pupils with regard to secondary education and believes “there is a place for a relatively small high school in Haydon Bridge concentrating on students’ needs as outlined in the HNHS proposal ‘A vision for the future of our students’”.

8.4.5 Chollerton Parish Council

Chollerton Parish Council does not support the proposed closure of Chollerton CE First School set out in Models A, B and C. The Parish Council believes the closure of the school would impact on the welfare of the local children and community. The Parish Council states the school building is well-maintained and could be extended if necessary. The Parish Council is also concerned with the distance some children may need to travel should the catchment area be subsumed into that of Humshaugh CE First School. The impact on pre-school children is also a particular concern.

8.4.6 Corsenside Parish Council

The Parish Council feels that the 3-tier system is the best model for education in the rural and remote communities of the west of the county. The Parish Council notes the existence of a school in West Woodburn for two hundred years and that it is well supported by the wider community. The Parish Council also supports the continuation of Bellingham Middle School. Other reasons for the Parish Council’s support of the 3-tier system include greater focus on emotional wellbeing and shorter travelling distances. In conclusion, the Parish Council believes that the proposals are based on out of date and inaccurate information and that a model should be developed that ‘allows successful schools to remain at the heart of their local communities under a 3-tier system’....

8.4.7 Simonburn Parish Council

The Parish Council submitted a strong objection against the possible closure of Wark CE First School. The Parish Councils believes it is an excellent school and is financially sound. The School has excellence facilities, including wrap-around care and is essential to maintaining a sustainable and balanced community.

8.4.8 Otterburn Parish Council

The Parish Council believes that the negative press coverage given to Haydon Bridge High School and the withdrawal of Bright Tribe as sponsors of the school means that it will have difficulty in attracting pupils. Therefore, the Parish Councils supports Option B as the most viable possible model for the pupils in the area. The Parish Council have also asked that consideration be given to Otterburn First School becoming part of the Ponteland catchment area due to increasing numbers of pupils heading in that direction, partly due to the shorter travelling time. The Parish Council

also wishes the Council to consider travel distances to school if some schools are to close.

8.4.9 Tarset, Greystead and Falstone Parish Councils - joint response

These 3 parish councils have responded in relation to the possible closure of Greenhaugh First School. The parish councils do not support any of the models on the basis that a proper business case supporting the models has not been produced. The parish councils believe that the loss of Greenhaugh First School would deter young families from coming to the area with a consequential impact on local businesses. The councils believe that in the short term pupils will be adversely impacted by changing schools and by extended journeys to school

8.4.10 Acomb Parish Council

Acomb Parish Council recommends the retention of Acomb First School as 75% of children on roll live in the school's catchment, the school is financially viable, it's recent Ofsted inspection was Good, 40 new houses are to be constructed in Acomb and the community values the educational journey provided by the school and the early years provision at Little Oaks.

8.4.11 Allendale Parish Council

The majority of Councillors on Allendale Parish Council felt that they were unable to respond to the proposals set out in the Council's consultation as it did not have enough information and facts linked to the students in the Parish, and how this would affect them.

8.4.12 Hedley Parish Council

Hedley Parish Council does not support any of the 3 possible models consulted on by Northumberland County Council, specifically because of the impact on Whittonstall First School. The parish council believes that an appropriate solution to some of the issues cited in consultation would be the implementation of The Tynedale Learning Trust (multi-academy trust). The parish also believes that the closure of the local rural schools would be make communities vulnerable due to impact on employment etc. The parish council also alleges that *'the data the County Council is using to justify it's options is significantly erroneous'*

8.4.13 Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council

The Parish Council alleges that the timescales allowed for the Council's consultation indicate that decisions on the proposals have already been made. The Parish council also states that no mention has been made of the Haltwhistle or Prudhoe Partnerships in the consultation. Apart from Haydon Bridge, there are no failing schools in the area, being Good or Outstanding. The parish council also supports Haydon Bridge High School staying open in order to include vocational and apprenticeship opportunities for students in the Tyne Valley. In summary, the parish council believes the majority of parents in the west of Northumberland value and support the continuation of the three-tier model of education.

8.4.14 Warden Parish Council

Warden Parish Council does not support any of the 3 possible model's put forward for consultation. The parish council is particularly against the proposal for Newbrough CE Primary School in Model C, which is a good school, and that the consultation proposals have not been properly thought through. The parish council believes that a detailed business case should have been presented working through all possible costs and options for consultation due to the complexity of the decision. The parish council's greatest concern is that they cannot see the benefit of any of the models to the quality of education in the area. The parish councils believes a clearer vision on outcomes is required due to the potential impact on local communities.

8.4.15 Greenhead Parish Council

Greenhead Parish Council believes that while the proposals may address financial and surplus places issues, they do not take account of the effect on children. Removing a village school will impact on the whole area. The parish councils suggests that there should be a good primary and secondary school in each main town in the west, Haltwhistle, Haydon Bridge and Hexham, with village schools feeding in at age 11 - this would represent minimum disruption for children.

8.4.16 Broomley and Stocksfield

Broomley and Stocksfield Parish area is within the Prudhoe Partnership of schools. The parish council wishes to express sympathy for villages where their schools are facing closure. The parish council is also concerned that the possible closure of Whittonstall would have a detrimental impact on Broomley First School, given the federation in place of the two schools, particularly as the two schools fund one shared headteacher. The parish council believe the closure of Whittonstall could also result in the loss of other staff. The parish council also regrets the fragmentation of the provision of education across the county and believes the issues at the secondary phase of the system in the west should be resolved before reviewing the lower phases. Finally, the parish council believes that the Council's consultation on education has delayed the finalisation of the plan for the Tynedale multi-academy trust.

8.4.17 Shotley Low Quarter Parish Council

This Parish Council serves a County Durham community which borders Northumberland. The Parish Council opposes the proposals set out both in Northumberland County Council's consultation document and the Hadrian Learning Trust consultation document on the basis that the proposals would lead to the closure of Whittonstall First School. The reasons for this opposition include the excellent reputation and academic results of the school, its financial viability due to federation with Broomley First School in 2012, and the impact on the local community as the school is the 3rd largest employer in the parish. The Parish Council supports the formation of the Tynedale Learning Trust, a proposal which would have seen ten schools, mainly in the Prudhoe Partnership together with 2 schools from the Hexham Partnership, form a multi-academy trust. This proposal was not approved in its original format by the RSC.

8.4.18 Haltwhistle Town Council

Haltwhistle Town Council supports the widest possible consultation so that local needs are considered rather than pre-conceived solutions given the unique geography of the South West of Northumberland.

Therefore, the Town Council is supportive of a localised three tier system which holds geographical boundaries with Cumbria and Haydon Bridge. The location of a new secondary school should be in either Haltwhistle or Haydon Bridge.

8.5 Petitions

A number of petitions requesting support for preventing the closure of various schools were submitted during the Phase 2 consultation as follows:

- Chollerton CE VA First School - 1516 signatures
- Greenhaugh First School - 419 signatures
- Greenhead CE VA School - 82 signatures
- “Hands off our schools” (organised through STARS) - 3740 signatures at the end of the consultation period
- Newbrough CE VA School ‘Save Newbrough Primary School - 472 signatures
- Save Whittonstall First School - 2918 signatures
- Wark CE VA First School - 412 signatures
- Whitley Chapel - 1245 signatures

8.6 Other councils

No responses were received from Cumbria County Council, Durham County Council or Newcastle City Council.

8.7 Pupils

Responses from pupils in the following schools were received during the consultation.

- Haydon Bridge High School
- Otterburn First
- Haltwhistle Campus
- Newbrough CE First
- Henshaw CE First
- Greenhead CE First
- Greenhaugh First
- Bellingham Middle
- Kielder First
- Wark CE First
- West Woodburn First
- Acomb First

- Beaufront First
- Broomhaugh First
- Chollerton CE First
- Hexham First
- Humshaugh CE First
- The Sele First
- St Mary's RC First
- Slaley First
- Whittonstall First
- Whitley Chapel CE First
- Corbridge First
- Corbridge Middle
- Hexham Middle
- Queen Elizabeth High School
- St Joseph's RC Middle

Responses from pupils included the following themes:

- Retain Haydon Bridge High School as closure of HBHS would be detrimental to students in the Haydon Bridge catchment
- Consider the length of journeys pupils might have to undertake if local schools close
- We like our school very much
- Our school is good
- Our teachers are good
- Support staying at first school in Years 5 and 6 (Otterburn)
- All children keen to stay at the school for an extra 2 years (Kielder First)
- Keep 3-tier system
- QEHS is large enough already

Full responses from pupils and students are available in the Background Papers to this report.

8.8 Academy Trusts with schools in Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships

The responses of HLT, Wise Academies (as part of the Shaftoe Trust Primary Academy response), The Good Shepherd (as part of Whitfield CE Primary Academy response) and are included in para. 7. No direct response was received from the Bright Tribe Trust although a response was received from school leaders at Haydon Bridge High School and Haltwhistle Community Campus.

8.9 Summaries of responses from other Interest groups

8.9.1 STARS

A number of parents set up the STARS (Save Tynedale's Amazing Rural Schools) protest group. The group ran a stall at the public event at Hexham Mart and also organised a petition which attracted over 3000 signatures and organised demonstration at County Hall in support of retaining all of the small rural schools in the

Cabinet 8 May 2018

two partnerships. The group were also able to attract significant press and television coverage for their cause during Phase 2 consultation. A letter for consideration by Cabinet from STARS is included in the Background Papers of this report; the letter is 'not a response to your [Council's] consultation', but a request by STARS for Councillors to consider the value of small rural schools and to recognise the good education children receive.

8.9.2 National Middle Schools Forum

The National Middle Schools Forum responded to the Council's consultation on education in the West of the county. The NMSF sets out its reasons for supporting the current 3-tier system in Hexham and Haydon Bridge, including good current educational standards particularly Hexham. It hopes that the Council develops a 'Model D' based on a revitalised 3-tier system and that it works together with the Hadrian Learning Trust and other schools to achieve this aim.

8.9.3 Northumberland National Park Authority

The Chief Executive of the Northumberland National Park Authority, Tony Gates, responded to the Council's consultation on behalf of that organisation. The NNPA believes that the closure of Greenhaugh, Greenhead, Wark and West Woodburn, whose catchments serve communities within the national park, could work against the organisation's key objectives in aiming to support sustainable communities within it. Furthermore, the NNPA notes that the age profile of the population living within the National Park is increasing and it is important to be able to retain community facilities within it in order to sustain young adults and families. The NNPA asks Cabinet to give serious consideration to the impact of school closure proposals on these rural communities.

8.9.4 National Education Union

The Regional Official of the National Education Union (ATL section) for Northumberland, Newcastle, North and South Tyneside responded to the Council's Phase 2 consultation. The response states that the Council's possible models would significantly damage the long-term social and economic prosperity of many small communities around the West of Northumberland. The response also cites the period during which Bright Tribe was undertaking due diligence as the reason why many parents choose not to send their children to the school. The union also suggests that the possible closure of small schools is a way for the Council to prop-up the numbers and financial viability of other schools, including the Hadrian Learning Trust. The response reiterates that small schools are a key part of their communities and that closing schools could impact on employment in those rural areas.

8.9.5 Hexham Constituency Labour Party

The Hexham Constituency Labour Party believes that the informal consultation process has been flawed on the basis that the serious and far-reaching issues it seeks to address require more careful consideration and full disclosure of information and therefore the consultation should have been suspended. The party believes the options presented by the County Council's consultation are deeply unpopular and not enough time has been allowed for alternative options to be developed. The consequences of the closure of rural schools would include loss of shops, pubs, post offices and public transport. This will contribute to the decline of rural communities, as well as increased local unemployment.

8.9.6 The Governing Body of Prudhoe Community High School

The Governing Body believes there is an absence of a coherent vision in the consultation document and the evidence provided does not help consultees to answer the questions posed. The Governing Body believes that the 3-tier/2-tier debate has been resurrected as a result of the consultation but the benefits of either system have not been put forward. The performance of QEHS and its feeders schools could be compromised if 2-tier is implemented in the Hexham Partnership. The Governing Body believes its proposed MAT will resolve the issue of 2 transitions in the 3-tier system and will deliver improvement throughout the system. The Governing Body believes that the Council must make a key decision with regard to whether or not it supports the proposal of the HLT to move to a 2-tier structure.

8.10 Individual responses including parents, grandparents and members of the community

3023 responses from groups or individuals were received in relation to the Council's consultation on proposals. 52% of these consultees identified as parents of pupils in the relevant schools and 5% identified as individual staff working in schools in the two partnerships. During the consultation it was made clear that the process was not a referendum, but would involve a detailed analysis of evidence put forward both quantitative and qualitative. The consultation document did offer consultees the opportunity to answer some simple YES/NO questions regarding favoured model as presented below – all models included the presumption that some schools would close and it is clear that the results below indicate that in the vast majority of cases there is a preference for no schools to close.

Overall responses: 3023

	Model A		Model B		Model C	
Yes	235	8%	143	5%	212	7%
No	2271	75%	2334	77%	2144	71%
Don't know	167	5.5%	179	6%	298	10%
Blanks	350	11.5%	367	12%	369	12%

Officers have analysed and collated the main reasons given either in favour or against the 3 models and have also analysed the extended feedback given to the consultation as attachments to the forms.

8.11 Main responses in support of ideas set out in Model A:

- Middle Schools - keeps 'our' school open
- 3 tier works well

Main responses against ideas set out in Model A

- Mainly schools named for closure - keep 'our' school open
- Keep two High Schools open for choice
- Reducing parental choice/options

- Impact on community

8.12 Main responses given in support of ideas set out in Model B:

- Better transition in Primary/Secondary
- 2 tier bringing Northumberland in line with the rest of the Country
- Schools will become more financially viable

Main responses against ideas set out in Model B:

- Don't want 2 tier, prefer 3 tier
- Keep two High Schools open for choice
- Reducing parental choice/options
- Impact on community

8.13 Main responses in support of ideas set out in Model C:

- Keep two High Schools open for choice
- Retains 3 tier (Middle Schools)

Main responses against ideas set out in Model C:

- Creates problems for transport/travel
- 4-16 at Haydon Bridge too big an age range
- Closes rural schools
- Impact on community

9. Summary of feedback received via meetings at individual schools

Separate meetings were also held with the staff body and Governing Body of each of the schools that under any of the proposed models A, B and C were proposed for closure/merger, i.e. 29 meetings. Notes were taken at these meetings and the main points raised are summarised on the frequently asked questions section of the consultation website at:

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Education/Schools/Consultations.aspx#schoolconsultations>

and summarised below. In addition there were informal meetings with headteachers, governors, councillors, diocese, trusts, telephone calls, emails and discussions with other interested parties – all of this information was captured and fed into the main evidence base. Union representatives were also present at the meetings with staff and have been updated at various NCC meetings held in-house.

9.1 Haydon Bridge High School, 26 February 2018

a) Staff meeting:

- 32 staff members were present and discussed the Model D option that had been put forward by their school. There were discussions around 4-16 school, why not 4-18 school?
- The staffed raised that parental choice was being affected due to the perceptions being reported by the press and the appearance of lack of support by the LA.

- Staffing issues were raised and the staffing protocol was discussed.
- b) Governors meeting: The operational IEB was not available to meet.

9.2 Bellingham Middle School, 5 March 2018

a) Staff meeting:

- 22 staff members were present at the meeting and discussed the Haltwhistle model submission at Phase 1 (which was to retain and reintroduce 3 tier as discussed in the alternative model section of this report), which appeared to be supported.
- It was mentioned that a 4-16 school working with others would be a more secure model.
- Staffing issues were raised and the staffing protocol was discussed

b) Governors meeting:

- There were 5 Governors present at the meeting. A Chair of Governors was due to be appointed in the following days of the meeting but the Acting Chair of Governors was present [a Chair of Governors has now been appointed]. The Governors mentioned that they were struggling with the options as there were massive repercussions - we are all in the same position, what are we going to do?
- The Governors discussed that during discussions about a MAT, they did not personally have the expertise amongst them to make this a success
- There were discussions regarding concerns over the distance required to travel for pupils following Models A, B and C.

9.3 West Woodburn First School, 6 March 2018

a) Staff meeting:

- There were 4 members of staff present and agreement that none of the options were favourable for West Woodburn (i.e closure).
- Transport was raised as a concern as mileage given in the consultation document did not reflect actual mileage calculations to the next school (reality is further when registered on a speedometer). Roads are not suitable for the proposed journeys.
- The school has looked at becoming a Primary school with discussions with a structural engineer - cost and feasibility - would this be covered by capital investment?
- Staffing issues were raised and the staffing protocol was discussed.

b) Governors meeting:

- There were 8 Governors present at the meeting with a lot of discussion around data, capacity figures, consultation document etc.
- Transport was raised as an issue due to the size of required bus and road networks would be unsuitable. There was quite a lengthy

discussion about health and safety audit on the transport system and the need of a risk assessment

9.4 Greenhead CE Primary School, 7 March 2018

a) Staff meeting:

- There were 18 members of staff present at the meeting. There were discussions around parents wanting Church of England education ethos. Greenhead and Henshaw could merge on grounds of religious choice.
- There was a reasonable discussion around Bright Tribe and how they were allowed to withdraw their support from Haydon Bridge High School.
- Staffing issues were raised and the staffing protocol was discussed.

b) Governors meeting

- There were 8 Governors present at the meeting where disappointment had been raised that recognition had not been given to Greenhead and Henshaw not being 2 separate schools - it's a hard federation. The Governors spoke in detail about the possibility of a merger across the 2 schools and what would that look like? Discussions took place on the timescale of consultations to close the school - can the Governing Body do this or can it run with NCC consultation? The fear if the consultation is not run alongside NCC consultation then it may fall apart and end up with no children in the school at all. Governors concern is over educational consistency for their pupils. Would the new school retain both catchment areas (as they touch at a point).
- Governors feel it would be for the best to go 2 tier

9.5 Newbrough CE Primary School, 8 March 2018

a) Staff meeting:

- 11 members of staff were present at the meeting with a consensus of 'why move Newbrough to Haydon Bridge when we already have everything here and the road network will not be able to support the increase in traffic and larger vehicles, e.g. buses and currently a lot of pupils walk to school.
- Staff discussed the type of press that Haydon Bridge High had received and this would not help retain parental choice and contribute to future declining numbers. Agreement was that a school is needed in Haydon Bridge. For viability, 2 tier across the partnership is best.
- Staff asked what would happen to their current thriving nursery?

b) Governors meeting:

- Governors discussed that there would be 2 primaries in Haydon Bridge - was this sensible?

- The Governors raised the issue of transport for 4 year olds travelling on buses and on road networks that are not suitable for the vehicles. There would need to be 2 buses (4-11 year olds and then a Secondary age group bus, no mix). There would be safeguarding issues.
- There were many reiterations that the school should not close and should not move its location from the village. Over time (in 7 years) the reputation will grow for Haydon Bridge High School and they will be viable again.
- An option raised at the meeting could be to close Haydon Bridge High School, open a free school in Haydon Bridge and Newbrough Primary remain where it is.

9.6 Wark CE First School, 12 March 2018

a) Staff meeting:

- 9 staff members were present at the meeting with an overall opinion that the school should not close as there were so many plans being put in place to maintain the viability of the school. There is a nursery at the school with wrap around care which is proving popular.
- There are 100% of parents at Wark would recommend the school
- Staffing issues were raised and the staffing protocol was discussed.
- It was referenced without great detail at the meetings that a lot of work was being undertaken to make a proposal to submit as Phase 2 response. Following the meetings this has been a submission of a business plan and impact assessment to become a primary school

b) Governors meeting:

- There were 7 Governors present at the meeting and it was the same feeling as the staff members of why should the school close when it is such a good school. It was mentioned in the meeting that as part of the response there will be the submission of a business plan.
- There was a lot of discussion at the meetings regarding why the same options had not been offered to Church schools - e.g. merge (rather than just close).
- There were discussions about transport and the distance calculated on google maps and those actually on a milometer are different.
- It was very clear that the Governors were looking at options and were using the expertise of strong governance, teaching staff and community
- The preference of the school is to remain as they are but there is not to be a mixed economy, 2 tier or 3 tier.

9.7 Corbridge Middle School, 13 March (staff) and 21 March (Governors) 2018

a) Staff meeting:

- *There were 25 members of staff present*
- *School felt the Corbridge Model was the way forward.*

b) Governors meeting:

- *There were 6 Governors present at the meeting and feedback was requested on the collaborative model. It was confirmed that the model had been issued to all schools for discussion.*
- *Questions were asked about the buildings if Hexham Middle was to close, Queen Elizabeth High School move, Haltwhistle changes, if the Sele goes Primary and Haydon Bridge High School closes*
- *Staffing issues were raised and the staffing protocol was discussed.*
- *The school's own hub model was discussed in great detail.*

9.8 Acomb First School, 15 March 2018

a) Staff meeting:

- *There were 11 members of staff present. They asked about 2 main areas – Redundancy and Welfare. If we closed or merged what would be the redundancy timings, the process for appointment.*
- *School has capacity for primary would there be funding for building work. Nursery on site is brilliant and outstanding.*

b) Governors meeting:

- *There were 8 Governors present. They discussed a budget for building works and transport arrangements.*
- *Discussed transition arrangements for pupils if the school either stayed open or closed, parental choice and Governors roles in a merged school.*

9.9 St Joseph's RCVA Middle School, 19 March 2018

a) Staff meeting:

- *There were 37 members of staff present. They discussed Haydon Bridge High School, buildings and lack of funding for Hexham and Haydon Bridge Schools.*
- *If Hadrian Learning Trust went to 11-18 Year 9 intake.*

b) Governors meeting:

- *There were 5 Governors present who discussed: Year 9 intake into Hadrian Learning Trust; HLT funding for new school from NCC ; Primary age – funding, not enough children in future at merged schools; Effect on Community, facilities etc - no-one will move into villages with no school; Parental choice; Corbridge collaborative hub/ Haltwhistle model.*

- *Funding for redundancy - school budget.*

9.10 Whittonstall First School, 20 March 2018

a) Staff meeting:

- *There were 25 members of staff present. It's very positive here with strength in our Federation, it is successful and could be part of other models, we could share our expertise.*
- *There was discussion regarding Durham children attending and what could happen in the future regarding parental choice.*

b) Governors meeting:

- *There were 8 Governors present. There was discussion regarding out of county children (Durham) with regard to: surplus places, parental choice and rurality.*
- *Whittonstall feed into Broomley needs taking into account and the strength of Federation.*
- *The school's own successful model was discussed in detail.*

9.11 Chollerton First School, 21 March 2018

a) Staff meeting:

- *There were 9 members of staff present. There was discussion about the options and the reasons for them: feedback from first phase – written responses; pupil numbers; a school 6 miles or under from nearest school; schools educationally and financially sustainable for the next 25-30 years*
- *Funding for rural schools was discussed and, the following were raised: NFF – rural schools; money in pot – capital funding; sparsity funding our school will be 3.3% better off; transport in Northumberland*

b) Governors meeting:

- *There were 7 Governors present. There was discussion regarding Haydon Bridge High School (HBHS) and Hadrian Learning Trust (HLT): Bright Tribe pulling out; 2 schools should remain not one; number of children in Haydon Bridge going to Hexham; HLT could become a sink school due to their deficit budget– negative effect on children; HLT deserve new buildings.*
- *There was discussion regarding Hadrian Learning Trust and the following were noted: vocational education needed; SEN – specific learning needs; 9-18 school – only one choice; good results only achievable due to work done here; Y9 feed into HLT – no guarantee*

9.12 Whitley Chapel CE First School, 26 March 2018

a) Staff meeting:

- *There were 3 staff members present. School here is, in good repair it is a Church school and gives parental choice, once a school is closed it cannot be brought back. There was discussion on: distance travelled; sparsity grant; feelings of the Diocese - 2 tier here as part of a MAT; middle schools years 5 and 6 going to HLT Y7; HR and the staffing protocol; redundancy; redeployment; staffing structures; staff reorganisation / funding (if numbers of pupils not retained into Years 5 and 6)*
- *We could go primary, we have the room – parents would choose middle if available – it is taking away choice.*

b) Governors meeting:

- *There were 4 governors and 1 member of staff. As a Governing Body we have already submitted our response. Our school is good we have an Early Years Unit and our building is supported by the Diocese and fundraising. Our building is in good repair.*
- *Recap of staff meeting regarding HR and the staffing protocol; redundancy; redeployment; staffing structures; staff reorganisation / funding (if numbers of pupils not retained into Years 5 and 6)*

9.13 Beaufront First School, 27 March 2018

a) Staff meeting:

- *There were 6 staff present and 2 Governors at the meeting. As part of the meeting the Headteacher read a document that had been produced by the school on the strengths and unique features of BFS.*
- *It was raised by the staff that the convenient location of the school was a big advantage for families who live in the rural community and then for example pass the school to go to work in Newcastle.*
- *It was discussed that it may not be a preference to be a Primary School but it is certainly something that the school feel they could successfully achieve and they have a business case in at the present time with the Early Years team at County Hall.*
- *Staffing issues were raised and the staffing protocol was discussed.*

b) Governors meeting:

- *There were 9 Governors present at the meeting and part of the meeting discussed the Hadrian Learning Trust and that the LA is interested in what our schools think with regard to their consultation.*
- *There was a lot of focus on this being a financial decision and the LA officers reiterated on several occasions that this was certainly not the only focus of the consultation but with changes in the national funding formula and current budget deficits of course this is a factor.*

9.14 Greenhaugh First School, 28 March 2018

a) Staff meeting:

- There were 8 staff members in attendance at the meeting. There were discussions about the alternative proposed model that was submitted for Phase 1. There are currently shared Headteacher, resources and expertise.

b) Governors meeting:

- There were 5 Governors present at the meeting. Again there were further discussions about the proposed alternative model and how the model could be further improved - e.g. annotation to the diagram to explain spokes.
- It was raised that school admission applications start in September so how does this timeline affect applications. The LA Officers responded to state that this is one of the reasons for the timeline to have a decision before applications are made - offers of places will still be made.

10. Alternative Models and general comments received

Around 1733 consultees suggested alternative models via the Consultation Response Form, emails, telephone conversations or during meetings. Alternative models or variations with the same basic principles have been themed where possible, while there were a few alternatives that were unique. The alternative models (summarised where appropriate) are included below, and are included in full in the Background Papers.

10.1 Alternative Model submitted by Greenhaugh First School Governing Body - Hubs and spokes model - supported by a number of parents

- All Middle Schools would close and First Schools change to Primary
- Haydon Bridge High School would close or convert to an 11-17 Senior School or partner with QEHS in a 'super school' campus hub, 11-19 year olds. Years 7-11 could be educated in a new school in Haydon Bridge or Haltwhistle and supported by Hexham 'super school' Hub, and Bellingham, Haltwhistle/ Haydon Bridge and Priory Senior School spokes. Other spokes may be possible.
- All sixth form educated on the same campus site.
- All managed, staffed and funded from the Hub using all new and existing technologies available to develop such a model. Teaching and Learning appropriate to all children. Shared movement of teachers and /or students/ or technology to share learning experiences. Expertise, space and facilities shared where/when appropriate
- Mutual support between schools
- Utilise Learning, video conferencing, and all virtual learning platforms effectively
- Years 12+ Sixth Form 'College' buildings - Vocational and Academic routes supported by employers and Higher Education
- Years 5 & 6 supported to stay in their local First Schools which would become primary schools.

Comment: The above model supports the model proposed for Haydon Bridge High School to remain open, but varies in relation to the age range of the school. However, there has been no support from schools other than those within the HLT in the Hexham Partnership for a change of organisation to a primary/secondary structure; the overwhelming majority of feedback from other consultees linked with the Hexham Partnership has also been in favour of retention of the 3-tier system, while a significant number of consultees linked with the Haydon Bridge Partnership feel that there should be a high school in Haydon Bridge.

The Council supports collaboration between schools and wants to see schools working more closely and share resources through the introduction of hard federations. The effective use of technology to assist with access to learning in rural areas is also an idea to be encouraged.

10.2 Alternative Model submitted by the Governing Body The West Tyne Federation Schools

The Governing Body believe that should Greenhead CE Primary School be proposed for closure, the school's catchment area should be merged with Henshaw CE Primary School, rather than with Haltwhistle First School as proposed in Phase 2 of consultation.

Comment: Greenhead CE Primary School is not proposed to close under the recommendations of this report, rather it is proposed that the Council support the school to come out of deficit at this point.

10.3 Alternative Model submitted by Haltwhistle Community Campus) - Retain (and reintroduce) a three tier system consistently across the whole of the West of Northumberland - supported by around 86 consultees

This alternative model for Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships would include:

- 6 - 10 First Schools
- 4 Middle Schools
- 1 x 3-13 provision incorporate First / Middle in Bellingham
- 2 High Schools

This would reduce the surplus places by just under 1000 places.

SEN should be incorporated in all 3 tiers and not centrally located.

a) Restructure First and Primary to create 6 to 10 First Schools

Review first and primary schools and reduce the number to 6 - 10, ranging from 250 - 370 on roll.

b) Maintain 4 Middle Schools

Retain the middle schools in:

- Corbridge
- Hexham RC
- Hexham

- Haltwhistle

c) Bespoke offer in Bellingham

Bespoke model due to remoteness.

Still in line with 3 tier system - an all phase school in Bellingham that caters for 3-13 year olds on one site and then go into the 14-19 curriculum as other children do in the area.

d) Maintain the offer of two high schools

We propose that QEHS has a new build, but remains a 14-19 provision, as this supports the 3 tier system, identified as suiting the West of Northumberland best. Its size would remain at 1300. We propose that a second 14-19 High School offer (600 students) should be within the area west of Hexham, (also in a new build) to compliment the curriculum offer at QEHS and to ensure that there is a genuine parental choice. This would give the West of Northumberland a high school offer of 1800 places with clear choice and pathways.

Comment: Feedback from schools and the wider community in the Haydon Bridge Partnership has not expressed a desire to return to the 3-tier system therefore this would be an unpopular and retrograde step. While the proposal to develop an all-phase offer in Bellingham is understandable due to the remoteness of the area, that fact in itself would mean that this model would not work as there would simply not be enough students in that area to support an effective and successful 14-19 curriculum. The recommendations set out in para. 1 support the continuation of Haydon Bridge High School, which tallies with this model. The recommendations also propose the offer of new buildings for Hexham Middle School and QEHS.

10.4 Alternative Model submitted by Staff of Haydon Bridge High School (summary - full model included in the background papers) - supported by around 323 consultees.

PROJECT BASED LEARNING IN YEARS 7 & 8 (2019)

- A project based learning model in years 7 & 8 with separate core subject delivery (English, maths & science).

THREE YEAR KEY STAGE 4

- In order to maintain breadth of curriculum offer, a revised curriculum delivery model: in each academic year students could complete two option courses.
- The option courses would be double weighted, in terms of teaching periods, and delivered within one academic year.
- Each student would study GCSE in English, English Literature, mathematics and three separate sciences.
- In the following year the same model would apply with different courses being offered in the two option blocks.
- In the subsequent year two option blocks would again be offered. However, this would also enable some students to either begin their A-level courses, complete enrichment activities or to complete some intervention work.
- By the end of year 11 students could potentially achieve up to 12 GCSE qualifications (or equivalent) thus broadening their potential future options.

POST 16 PROVISION TO INCORPORATE APPRENTICESHIP AND VOCATIONAL PATHWAYS

- The school has already taken steps to address small student numbers post 16. The cross age teaching in subjects in both years 12 and 13 enables a breadth of curriculum and increases financial viability. The 'Academic' qualifications offered would be retained as a result of the other changes within Key Stage 5.
- The student movement towards Apprenticeships is noticeable, with many students choosing this route post 16 and 18. Haydon Bridge would become an apprenticeship trainer for courses in the Business, Engineering, Child Care, Health Care, Agriculture and Sports areas.
- The provision of alternative courses (Hair and Beauty / Construction) would also facilitate increased retention and increase external student applications.

SEN Hub / Additionally Resourced Provision

There is an increasing need for SLCN students to access specialised support and provision within Northumberland. One example of transportation to provision is a student with SLCN who is transported to a provision at a cost of £48000 per year currently, a cost which would be significantly reduced by the establishment of an appropriate provision at HBHS. The considerable costs of these provisions are met by NCC and could be significantly reduced through an all through SEND provision based at HBHS.

Comment: The Council would support the school in identifying suitable pathways for post-16 study for students as part of the IEB recovery plan.

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 proposal for SEN provision set out above will be directed to the relevant officers to progress.

10.5 Alternative Model submitted by Governors of West Woodburn First School

HBHS school to become a vocational orientated school with a specialist SEND unit should be given serious consideration as a way forward as this type of school is a missing piece of the jigsaw for the provision of an all embracing model for education in the West.

Comment: This model is similar to that proposed by Haydon Bridge High School Governors - refer to comment in para. 10.4.

10.6 Alternative Model submitted by the Newcastle Diocese Education Board

The Diocese is keen to explore the option of the provision of education from 11-16 in Haydon Bridge with a partner organisation. We would need this to be a new Free School which would require a purpose built school building with additional facilities to support the community of Haydon Bridge.

Comment: Officers have recommended to Cabinet that Haydon Bridge High School should be supported financially by the Council to become self-sustaining in order to continue to provide choice for children and young people aged 11-18 in the Haydon Bridge area. In the fullness, of time, it is proposed that a suitable sponsor for the school would be identified by the RSC and the Council would assist in the process. The Council would welcome the opportunity to discuss the proposal of the NDEB with them.

10.7 Alternative Model submitted by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle - supported by a small number of consultees

The Diocese would be supportive of any plan that would at least preserve or potentially extend the offer of Catholic education in West Northumberland. The Diocese is committed to offering Catholic education as a choice to families in West Northumberland. If the two tier or mixed two and three tier proposals are agreed then an option that we would carefully consider would be the possible extending of Catholic provision to age 16. This would allow a choice of a faith based education and also an alternative choice to the one high school should Haydon Bridge close.

Comment: The recommendations of officers to Cabinet in this report following the analysis of feedback from consultation do not include a recommendation for a 2-tier or mixed 2-tier/ 3-tier system in Hexham Partnership, while recommending that Haydon Bridge High School should be supported to remain open. In this case, the above alternative model would therefore now appear to be irrelevant, however under regulations, the Governing Body of St Mary's RC First and St Joseph's RC Middle Schools would be able to bring forward it's own proposal for change of age range at the schools should they wish to do so at any point in the future.

10.8 Alternative Model submitted by the Governing Body of Kielder First School

Re-draw the catchment area of Kielder First School [should it become primary] to include Falstone village and surrounding area, thereby securing free home to school transport for pupils residing there to Kielder.

Comment: Under the recommendations set out in para. 1 of this report it is proposed to change the age range of all first schools remaining in the Haydon Bridge Partnership to become primary schools, therefore there are no proposals to alter those schools catchments.

10.9 Alternative Model - Restructure HBHD, QEHS, Prudhoe and Ponteland High School catchment areas; Otterburn catchment feed into Ponteland - supported by a small number of consultees

There was some support for restructure HBHS, QEHS, Prudhoe and Ponteland catchment areas to even out pupil numbers e.g. Prudhoe HS catchment could increase to 1800 and decrease QEHS. Otterburn First School become a primary and catchment to feed into Ponteland HS. Children should be allowed to choose between Hexham, Haydon Bridge and Ponteland.

Comment: The high school catchment areas stated above currently have sufficient pupils living within them to support them. However, parental choice will continue to exist whichever way catchment areas are drawn. The simple answer is to work towards ensuring that all local schools in Northumberland offer a good standard of education to their local communities, whilst offering parents a level of choice within their child's educational pathway. Within the proposals for statutory consultation, it is proposed that Otterburn First School would become a primary school and would feed to Haydon Bridge High School; this would not remove the choice of parents to apply for places in Ponteland schools, but pupils may not be eligible for transport.

10.10 Alternative model submitted by a small number of consultees

Use the £51m available to pay the combined deficits of schools for approx 51 years. HBHS deficit could be further reduced by renting out/selling Park House

Comment: The capital monies outlined during consultation that could be used to support new building and remodelling of school buildings could not be transferred to school revenue budgets. However, as part of the recommendations made within this report it is proposed that Haydon Bridge High School should be supported to address its budget difficulties and to be removed from special measures; this would need to be a bespoke support package from alternative revenue funding stream. Furthermore, as part of this proposal, the HBHS building would be reviewed and opportunities for more effective use of the school buildings explored.

10.11 Alternative model - retain school at Haydon Bridge run by HLT submitted by a small number of consultees

HBHS to join HLT multi-academy trust and be managed by HLT on a satellite site in Haydon Bridge.

Comment: HLT have previously been asked if they would be interested in sponsoring HBHS, but have declined.

10.12 Alternative model - rebuild HBHS and relocate QEHS submitted by a small number of consultees

Rebuild Haydon Bridge High School and move QEHS to Haydon Bridge. HBHS has extensive grounds and good transport links.

Comment: Other than retaining a secondary school in Haydon Bridge, it is not clear how this model would be of benefit to pupils living in the greater Hexham Partnership. The recommendations in this report include a rationalisation and refurbishment of HBHS and a proposal to provide new buildings for Hexham Middle School and QEHS within the greater Hexham Partnership catchment.

10.13 Alternative model - variations on Model B in relation to 2-tier in Haydon Bridge closure of middle schools in Haydon Bridge Partnership and reorganisation of remaining first schools to become primaries

While some consultees supported the reorganisation of the remaining elements of the 3-tier system in Haydon Bridge Partnership to 2-tier as set out in Model B and Model C, this model varied through suggesting that the high school was developed in Haltwhistle on the current Haltwhistle Middle site.

Comment: While this proposal aligns closely with the recommendations set out in this report with regard to the Haydon Bridge Partnership, the issues with this model are that there is an established secondary school already in Haydon Bridge in the ownership of the Council, while Haltwhistle Community Campus is an academy and would require the Governing Body to request the changes to the schools within it, including a request for a significant change of age range.

10.14 Alternative model - change Bellingham Middle to an all-through age 3-13 or 3-16 school and close some rural first schools - supported by a small number of consultees

The rationale put forward for this model is that Bellingham would remain as a centre of education for children up to age 13, and potentially age 16. This would reduce the travel distances for pupils and could offer specifically vocational apprenticeships, which may attract other pupils from other parts of the Tyne Valley. The closure of some of the rural first schools in the area would be of benefit to those children who could attend Bellingham all-through school, while HBHS, QEHS, Haltwhistle MS and the Hexham middles could remain.

Comment: Bellingham Middle School is currently graded Requires Improvement by Ofsted. Its Ofsted history since 2007 shows a very mixed picture of educational provision. Furthermore, with a PAN of 60 currently, there have been only 12 pupils who have selected the school as their first preference for a school place in September 2018. To implement such a model would require the Council to have a great deal of confidence in the ability of the school to provide an improved offer to

pupils than that currently in place. At this point, there is little evidence that this would be a viable and sustainable model of provision for children in the Bellingham area.

10.15 Alternative model - 2-tier alternative - supported by a small number of consultees

Merge all the middle school with QEHS on one site, with separate buildings for younger pupils, but accessible to all staff.

Close Whitley Chapel, Beaufront and Newbrough and send to Slaley, Acomb and Humshaugh respectively.

Have secondary satellites in former middle school buildings with a more vocational offer; therefore no secondary school would have huge numbers.

Close the smaller schools and transport to larger primaries in larger towns and villages. Close all middle schools as recognised that no longer the best way to educate children. Retain nursery provision in smaller towns and villages so very young children don't travel long distances.

Comment: The overwhelming majority of feedback from consultation has demonstrated that there is no appetite for changing the current 3-tier system in the Hexham Partnership. Furthermore, the Hadrian Learning Trust would need to support this proposal and would need to seek the permission of the Regional Schools Commissioner for such a model, and there is no evidence that this would be a viable model.

10.16 Corbridge Middle School Collaborative Pathways Model - supported by around 95 consultees

Corbridge Middle School has developed a collaborative model based on developing clear groupings of schools that support each other and children through the school phases within Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships;

- Age 3-13 hubs based on feeder first schools and middle schools for existing middle i.e. Catholic hub; Corbridge hub; Hexham hub; Haltwhistle hub; Bellingham hub
- Age 3-18 hub consisting of Catholic hub; Corbridge hub; Hexham hub; QEHS
- Age 3-18 hub consisting of primary schools in Haydon Bridge Partnership and Haydon Bridge High School

Comment: This model is essentially a continuation of the 3-tier system in Hexham Partnership and that part of Haydon Bridge which is currently organised as 3-tier. However, the proposed hubs support the recommendations of this report with regard to small first schools working in federation and collaboration with other schools in order to protect viability and sustainability.

10.17 Whittonstall and Broomley Federation Governing Body - Church of England Multi-Academy Trust

Wark CE First and Greenhaugh First Schools to join with other Church of England primaries and feed to QEHS, with Bellingham Middle and Haydon Bridge High School closing. Whittonstall and Broomley Federation could grow or other federations formed. First schools should be given the opportunity to become primaries if 2-tier implemented - Whittonstall and Broomley have space to develop as primaries. Whittonstall and Broomley would like to continue journey to join Tynedale Community Learning Trust.

Comment: This model supports the recommendations of this report with regard to the proposal that small schools should work in federation and collaboration together to support viability and sustainability.

10.18 Extend the age range of The Sele First School

Extend the age range of The Sele First School to become primary with effect from September 2019 so current Year 3 stay for Year 5 and 6 and no transfer to middle school.

Comment: The overwhelming majority of feedback from consultation has been for retention of the 3-tier system in the Hexham Partnership. Much feedback was also received which stated that partnerships should be organised as 2-tier or 3-tier. Therefore, it would not be in the best educational interests of children to change the age range of The Sele alone within the Hexham Partnership.

10.19 Phased change to 2-tier across both partnerships - variation to Model C

Change Haydon Bridge High School to become an age 4-16 school and include a sixth form college as a separate entity. Complete reorganisation of Haydon Bridge Partnership to wholly 2-tier and phase in 2-tier system across Hexham Partnership, to avoid 'giant' one size fits all secondary school. Hexham schools would also need capital investment across the primary and secondary age range.

Comment: This model supports the recommendation in this report that HBHS should remain open, but the proposal that the school could become a 11-16 school and that a separate sixth form college could be established would not be financially viable as there would not be sufficient funding attracted to a stand-alone sixth form. As stated at 10.18, there has been no appetite for change of organisation from the majority of schools and consultees with regard to the feedback relating to the Hexham Partnership.

10.20 3-tier system across both partnerships

Close or merge primary or first schools with less than 200 pupils across both partnerships; refurbish minimal number of middle schools, equidistant from each

other and with good facilities. Refurbish high school in the far west as alternative to Hexham, with opportunities to explore vocational options. Reinstate 3-tier system across both partnerships.

Comment: This proposal supports the recommendations in this report with regard to the preservation of HBHS as an alternative to QEHS. However, the proposal to close all first and primary schools with fewer than 200 pupils would clearly be very unpopular with the majority of consultees who have stated their support for preserving their rural schools; this proposal could also result in significantly longer journeys for young children to school and a significant impact on the home to school transport budget.

10.21 Retain and Reintroduce 3-tier system across the west of Northumberland

Many consultees believed the 3-tier system should be reintroduced across Haydon Bridge Partnership and retained in the Hexham Partnership, including retention of Haydon Bridge High School.

Comment: There has been no feedback from primary schools and Haydon Bridge High School that they would prefer to return to the 3-tier system, but rather there has been support for the whole of the Haydon Bridge Partnership becoming 2-tier.

10.22 3 Alternatives of one consultee

- a) Haydon Bridge Partnership - becomes wholly 2-tier except retain Newbrough Primary, close middles, Greenhaugh CE, Wark CE and West Woodburn Firsts close.

Hexham Partnership - 3-tier system retained, but HLT becomes Hexham Secondary Academy on the Hexham Middle School site; a new high and middle school are created on a new site in Hexham - new builds supported by sale of QEHS site, Hydro and Winter Gardens. Primary schools from Haydon Bridge and middle schools from Hexham can feed into HLT secondary if they wish.

- b) Haydon Bridge Partnership - HBHS closes and primary schools feed to new Hexham Secondary Academy on HBHS site; middles, Greenhaugh CE, Wark CE and West Woodburn Firsts close.

Hexham Partnership - 3-tier system retained and all middle schools feed into new high and middle as set out above.

- c) Haydon Bridge Partnership - as for b) above, but Greenhead CE, Whitfield CE, Henshaw CE Primary schools would also close.

Hexham Partnership - 3-tier system retained and schools feed into new high school as set out in a). Whittonstall, Whitley Chapel CE, Beaufront and Chollerton Firsts close.

Comment: The local authority cannot set up new schools therefore any new school created would be an academy. Any new high and middle school in Hexham may experience the same issues currently cited by HLT; furthermore, HLT would be unlikely to agree to reorganise to secondary only on the Hexham Middle School site as the Council has no power to remove QEHS site from them. The most significant flaw in all models is the creation of additional school places at secondary level where there are already surplus places. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that the Regional School Commissioner would agree to the creation of any new schools in either the Haydon Bridge or Hexham Partnerships.

11. FINANCIAL POSITION

- 11.1.** There are existing examples of schools who are working together to try to address the issues of scale and efficiency, however in the main most schools act as stand-alone entities. NCC believe that there are significant economies of scale and saving in both back-office and main functions that schools have the opportunity to take advantage of if they work together in groups – as hard federations or even as part of multi-academy trusts. For example, shared leadership, shared responsibilities for teaching staff, share facilities and management, and shared service level agreements with the local authority can all bring down costs. In addition sharing governing body expertise and succession planning, recruitment and cover for absent staff will all have positive impacts. Of the 30 schools within the Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships for whom information is published, it can be identified that 21 recorded a deficit for 2016/17 the latest year currently available. Furthermore 9 schools are now recording overall deficit balances. It should also be noted that collectively Hexham Partnership Schools published data, including HLT, is showing a overall positive balance of £579,011, with Haydon Bridge Schools in total showing an overall deficit of £618,274, with Haydon Bridge High School being the largest factor in this. Many of the responses to consultation did recognise the sharing of resources would help support keeping small rural schools financially and educationally viable, in the short to medium term. However, there were few active initiatives to form federations or MATS being promoted by schools themselves.
- 11.2** Therefore maintained schools will be asked to form alliances and discuss becoming federations. These will be facilitated by NCC and the Dioceses will be asked for support. In this way it is hoped to avoid any school closures in the immediate future, however it should be said that there are some very small schools and were numbers to decline even further, this may still need to be kept under review
- 11.3** During Phase 2 consultation, financial information on school budgets was produced for consideration. All of the financial data published during consultation was based on data provided to the Council by schools and was up to date at that point in time.
- 11.4** All of the Northumberland maintained schools are currently going through the process of setting their 2018/19 budget, these are required by 1 May 2018. It is therefore problematic to establish a definitive position at the time of preparing this report in early April.
- 11.5** In September 2017 Schools Forum received a report highlighting the reduction in the levels of balances held by Schools. Across the county, balances had fallen by £2.196
- Cabinet 8 May 2018

million (27%) over the course of the 12 months to 31 March 2017, from £8.102 million to £5.906 million. The relevant school forum reports are contained within the background papers to this report.

- 11.6** Of the 145 maintained schools (excluding academies) in Northumberland, the number of schools with an overall deficit closing balance has increased from 28 to 32 and the size of the overall deficits within these schools has more than doubled in the 12 months to March 2017, increasing by £1.775m (151%) from £1.172m to £2.947m.
- 11.7** This information is supported by the financial information published by the Department for Education in December 2017. Copies of information for the Hexham and Haydon Bridge Partnerships can be found in the background papers, that show an overall reduction in the school balances Haydon Bridge partnership of schools shows a reduction of £573k and Hexham £87k, due to falling numbers on roll.
- 11.8** In relation to the financial year ending 31 March 2018, all schools are not yet in a position to report definitively, either on the year end position, budgets for 2018/19 or forecasts for the subsequent years 2019/20 and 2020/21. Schools have until 1 May to submit budgets to the Council, after being ratified by the Governing body.

However the position, as at the beginning of March indicated that a forecast annual deficit of £728,621 for 2017/18 across both partnerships, of which £574,907 was accounted for by the Haydon Bridge Partnership and £153,714 deficit applicable to the Hexham partnership.

- 11.9** It is possible to look at the respective changes in Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)(schools revenue funding) paid to the schools in the partnership, as this will make up the vast majority of a schools income, potentially supplemented by income generated locally whether by the letting of premises or specific grants or donations sourced by the school. A review of DSG budget shares and pupil numbers over the last 3 years demonstrates the relationship between funding and pupil numbers as shown in the tables for Haydon Bridge and Hexham provided in the background papers.

Pupil numbers from the previous October School Census are used for the subsequent year's DSG calculations, so October 2015 pupil numbers are used for the 2016/17 revenue funding.

Looking at Haydon Bridge it can be seen there has been 10.7% fall in pupil numbers between October 2015 and October 2017, and correspondingly an 11.5% decrease in DSG.

In the case of Hexham, numbers have increased by 2.9% and there has also been a 4.3% increase in DSG.

11.10 Influence of the National Funding Formula

The Department for Education(DfE) has confirmed its intention for the introduction of a National Funding Formula (NFF) with effect from 2020/21. 2018/19 and 2019/20 are transitional years where individual local authorities retain some influence over the respective local formula factors used to distribute funding.

This will provide further revenue funding for schools, but this does not change the fundamental relationship between funding and pupil numbers. Reports to Schools Forum have highlighted the differences in the NFF values compared to those previously used by Northumberland, as part of the budget setting process this year. For example at £2,807 per pupil, the Northumberland Primary Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) value was £60 more than the proposed NFF value of £2747. KS4 NFF values were also lower (£4,386 v £4,580 respectively).

The NFF also used a standard lump sum of £110,000 across all schools whereas Northumberland had previously used higher values for Middle (£140,000) and High Schools (£170,000). Northumberland did however use the standard NFF lump sum values for 2018/19. If the NFF per pupil funding values had been used without any changes, this could have resulted in losses of up to £194 per pupil (KS4). It should be noted that this may in some cases have been mitigated by the increase in the KS3 Pupil (Yrs 7 to 8) value or other factors such as the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) but this serves to demonstrate how the National Funding Formula will not in itself provide a sustainable solution to the funding challenges faced by schools.

12. FEDERATIONS OR MULTI-ACADEMY TRUSTS

12.1 Federation can be a very effective group structure, providing maintained schools with the opportunity to form a group - without incurring legal costs - in order to improve the education of pupils. This enables governors and school leaders to focus on forming relationships between schools first, and then joint leadership, governance and business management. This can be done while still remaining a maintained school, so the process is much more focused on relationship building and producing tangible outcomes for pupils, instead of being dominated by legal changes in charity/company status and land ownership.

12.2 Federations are often formed to fast track school improvement or to improve capacity for small schools. The three main reasons for forming federations, identified by Ofsted in its report [*Leadership of more than one school*](#), were:

- stronger schools supporting weaker schools, often at the suggestion of the local authority
- small schools banding together to increase capacity and protect education provision
- federation across phases to strengthen education provision across the education community

Federations have the following advantages:

1. Better, broader offer for pupils – both curricular & extra-curricular
2. More opportunity to employ specialist staff
3. More CPD for staff
4. Better recruitment, succession planning & retention of staff
5. Moderating and benchmarking: same systems of assessment, data and finances
6. Learning from each other
7. More capacity for innovation
8. Efficiencies – joint services
9. Stronger governance (especially with well federated structures)

These benefits result in improved outcomes for pupils.

- 12.3** Federation also places schools in a much stronger position to subsequently convert to become a successful MAT. MATs and federations are not competing models; a federation can be a useful “stepping stone” to a MAT.
- 12.4** Small schools in the west of the county will be expected to agree to enter in negotiations with NCC to develop hard federations in order to reduce costs and ensure continued educational quality. NCC will drive forward this process by identifying potential school groupings and economies of scale, in the longer term, the federation or federations will become self-sustaining.
- 12.5** Some schools may wish to consider forming a multi-academy trust.

13. THE LOCAL AUTHORITY MULTI ACADEMY TRUST.

- 13.1** The Local Authority intends to establish its own ‘spin-off’ Trust to enable it to establish a multi-academy trust (MAT) across the whole county to enable small rural schools to build sufficient capacity to remain both financially and educationally viable. This application would be made as a separate process to the Secretary of State and a proposal should be ready to submit for approval by Cabinet by September 2018.

14. OVERCAPACITY OF PLACES

- 14.1** The Department for Education’s funding body, the Education and Skills funding agency (ESFA), has indicated that it has a concern about potential over-capacity of school places in Northumberland. The data indicates that there is significant over-capacity in terms of school places in the west of the county. In total, there are 6,942 places available in schools in the Hexham and Haydon Bridge Partnerships, with 4,896 pupils on roll in those schools. This represents 30% surplus places across the combined partnerships. A copy of the letter from DfE to the Council relating to surplus places is included in the Background Papers of this report.
- 14.2** Officers from Education will meet with officials from the ESFA and work together to develop a strategy that can both meet rural community needs and pressures on transport whilst at the same time attempting to rationalise the number of spare places.
- 14.3** If the proposed model for Haydon Bridge Partnership was implemented, it is estimated the surplus places in the partnership would be reduced by 645. It is envisaged that any building solution for HLT would also reduce surplus capacity further.

15. SCHOOL BUILDINGS.

- 15.1** Due to the lack of investment in the past many school buildings in the west of the county are in need of significant capital investment. The council’s data shows that the combined backlog maintenance work in schools in Haydon Bridge and Hexham partnership amounts to approximately £17.85m; this figure does not include work needing to be carried out at faith schools in the partnership, which falls under the responsibility of the relevant dioceses.
- 15.2** There is an urgent need to invest in the school building at Haydon Bridge High school in order to address the backlog maintenance issues and also to rationalise the number of buildings. The school currently operates out of 9 separate blocks, which

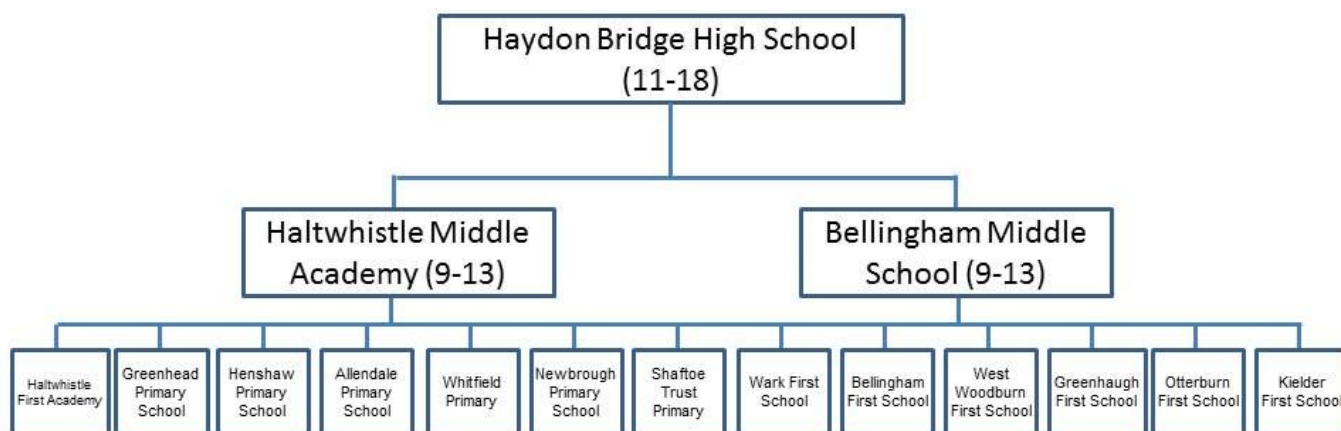
cause operational and cost issues for the school; it is proposed to develop a programme of works to improve the schools environment and reduce the number of buildings on the site, therefore reducing the on going maintenance liability.

- 15.3** In order for the first schools to become primary schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership some schools will require either internal refurbishment or the building of an extension; the estimated capital costs for these works are shown section 23 of this report.
- 15.4** There is no doubt that the academy buildings are in need of significant capital investment, particularly at QEHS, which has already been identified as a national priority for investment and is included in the Priority School Building Programme. Therefore NCC proposes to work with the Hadrian Learning Trust to develop proposals for significant rebuilding of the academy or academies either on their current sites or a new site in Hexham. The capacity of these new facilities would be approximately 1,730 pupils aged 9-18. An outline report would be produced for Cabinet for their meeting of 10 July 2018.

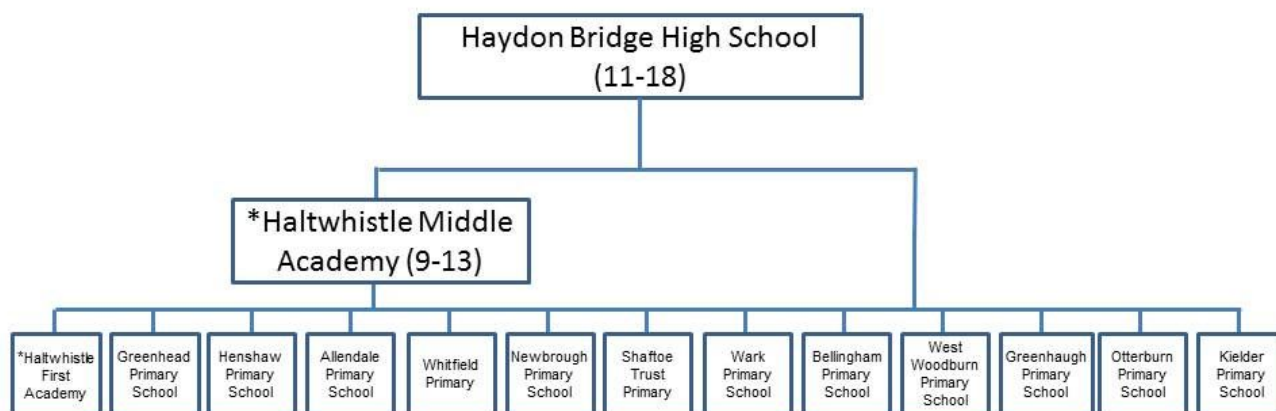
16. PROPOSED MODEL FOR STATUTORY CONSULTATION

Table 1 – Haydon Bridge Partnership

Haydon Bridge Current School Organisation



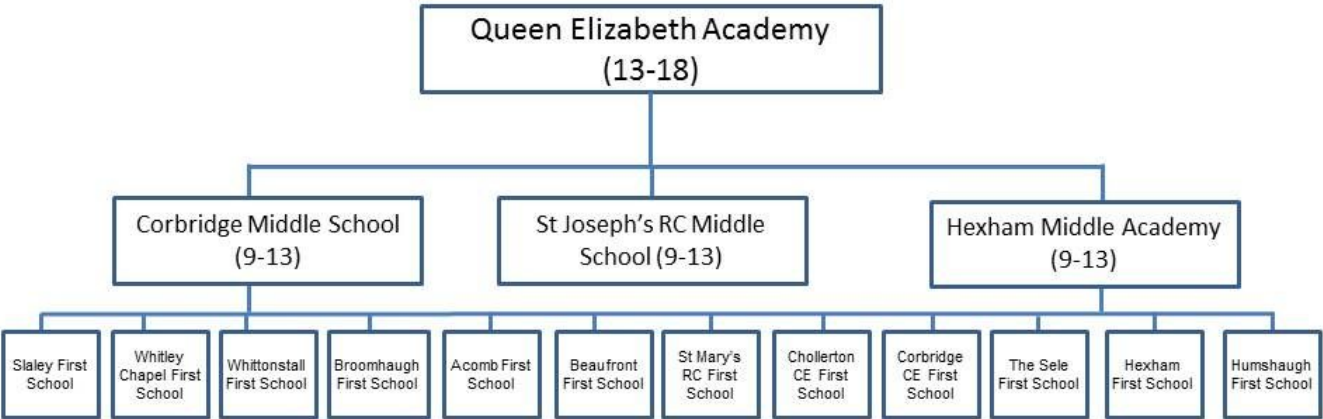
Haydon Bridge Proposed School Organisation



* To be reviewed by Academy Sponsor

Table 2 – Hexham Partnership

Hexham School Organisation No changes proposed



Proposed Model – Haydon Bridge

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	RI	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 First	23 (44)	0.3	10	G	42 Becomes Primary	0.2	6
Bellingham First	47 (75)	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	2.2/4	65/120	I	600 - Y7-Y11	5	120 Yr 7 -11
	64 – 6 th Form				120 – 6 th form		
					720		

Key: G - Good
 RI - Requires Improvement
 O - Outstanding
 I - Inadequate
 NG - No Grade

Hexham Partnership: Proposed

SCHOOL	CURRENT SITUATION – status quo				CURRENT SITUATION – status quo			
	Number on Roll in Sept 2017 (Net Capacity in Sept 2017)	Forms of Entry (FE)	Planned Admission Number (PAN)	Latest Ofsted	Number on Roll in Sept 2017 (Net Capacity in Sept 2017)	Forms of Entry (FE)	Planned Admission Number (PAN)	Latest Ofsted
			2016/17				2016/17	
Acomb First	59 (75)	0.5	15	RI	75	0.5	15	RI
Beaufront First	70 (75)	0.5	15	O	75	0.5	15	O
Whitley Chapel CE First	27 (50)	0.3	10	G	50	0.3	10	G
Slaley First School	40 (50)	0.3	10	G	50	0.3	10	G
Whittonstall First	58 (70)	0.46	14	G	70	0.46	14	G
Broomhaugh CE First	66 (75)	0.5	15	O	75	0.5	15	O
Chollerton CE First	39 (50)	0.3	10	O	50	0.3	10	O
Corbridge CE First	128 (150)	1	30	G	150	1	30	G
The Sele First	395 (420)	2.8	84	O	420	2.8	84	O
Hexham First	70 (150)	1	30	G	150	1	30	G
St Mary's RCVA First	107 (150)	1	30	G	150	1	30	G
Humshaugh CE First School	37 (55)	0.36	11	G	55	0.36	11	G
Corbridge Middle	351 (360)	3	90	G	360	3	90	G
Hexham Academy (Middle)	477 (651)	5	150	G	480	4	120	G
St Joseph's RCVA Middle	326 (336)	2.8	84	G	336	2.8	84	G
QE Academy (High)	907 – Y9-Y11	10.2	306	G	900 – Y9-Y11	10	300	G
	349 – 6 th form				350 – 6 th form			
	1407				1250			

Key: G - Good
 RI - Requires Improvement
 O - Outstanding
 I - Inadequate
 NG - No Grade

17. TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

17.1 The following timeline relates to the implementation of the recommended proposals for statutory consultation set out in para. 1 of this report:

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, West Woodburn, 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.

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.

18. CATCHMENT AREAS

- 18.1** If Cabinet approve statutory consultation on the closure of Bellingham Middle School and agree to such closure at a later date, the catchment area of the school would no longer be required.
- 18.2** 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.

19. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS PROVISION

- 19.1** 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.
- 19.2** Should Cabinet approve the publication of the recommended statutory proposal and then at some later date approve the closure of Bellingham Middle School, pupils with SEN who would otherwise have remained on roll at the school would have a specific transition plan drawn up to assist them with transfer to other schools.

19.3 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.

19.4 A number of alternative models submitted during consultation suggested that increased SEN provision could be provided in mainstream schools. 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.

20. EARLY YEARS PROVISION

20.1 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.

20.2 In relation to early years provision at Bellingham Primary School (as it would be), the current early years provision would be relocated into the main body of the building therefore providing an opportunity to enhance provision.

21. IMPLICATIONS FOR STAFF

21.1 There would be implications for staff in those schools where there are proposals for closure and change of organisation. 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.

21.2 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.

22. TRANSPORT

22.1 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.

22.2 During this consultation, a great deal of feedback has been received from consultees regarding their concern about the negative impact of long travel distances on younger children who live in rural areas. Should Cabinet approve the publication of 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.

22.3 The impact of the recommendations set out in this report with respect to the proposals 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.

23. COSTS OF THE PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDING SCHOOL BUILDINGS

23.1 Building costs set out in Table 3 and 4 are estimates and should be treated as draft, as they are subject to further detailed work should the model be implemented.

Table 3 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	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
Haltwhistle Middle and First Schools	No works required	Nil
Whitfield Primary Academy	No works required	Nil
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

Table 4 Hexham Partnership

School	Description	Costs
Acomb First School	No works required	Nil
Beaufront First School	No works required	Nil
Whitley Chapel First School	No works required	Nil
Chollerton First School	No works required	Nil
Whittonstall First School	No works required	Nil
Corbridge First School	No works required	Nil
Hexham First School	No works required	Nil
Humshaugh First School	No works required	Nil
Slaley First School	No works required	Nil
The Sele First School	No works required	Nil
St Mary's First School	No works required	Nil
St Joseph's Middle School	No works required	Nil
Corbridge Middle School	No works required	Nil
*Hexham Middle School	Work with Hadrian Learning Trust and ESFA to develop a building solution.	TBC following option appraisal and the development of a business case
*Hexham Queen Elizabeth High School		

*Note - Building proposals are subject to development in partnership with the Hadrian Learning Trust and the Education and Skills Funding Agency as part funders of the scheme.

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

Table 4

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

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.

24. SPORT AND RECREATION

- 24.1** 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.

25. 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. 11 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. 23 of this report
Equalities (Impact Assessment Attached) Yes ☐	First iteration of Equality Impact Assessment attached as Appendix 4 of this report. A further iteration would be carried out should statutory consultation be approved.
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

26. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Available at the Council's website at :

<http://committee.northumberland.gov.uk/Meeting.aspx?MeetID=7797>

Interim Director of Children's Services Report, 19 December 2017

Notes of meetings with schools held during consultation

Feedback from Phase 1 and Phase 2 consultation in the form of Response Forms, emails and letters received

Petitions received during consultation

Supporting Financial Information relating to Hexham and Haydon Bridge Partnership schools

Letter from RSC re Haydon Bridge High School viability assessment, 7 November 2017

Letter from DfE re spare capacity in the school estate, 16 March 2018

27. REPORT SIGN OFF

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

28. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

28.1 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, i.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 out that will arise from this consultation.

28.2 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> .

Report Author: Andrew Johnson, Project Director

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Northumberland County Council Consultation Document

Appendix 2 – Hadrian Learning Trust Consultation Document

Appendix 3 - Consultation Register

Appendix 4 – Equalities Impact Assessment

Consultation Document

A Consultation About Education in the West of Northumberland

An opportunity to give us your views



PHASE 2 – 19 FEBRUARY– 9 APRIL 2018

Northumberland
Northumberland County Council

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Index

Page

- 3. Introduction
- 4. Background
- 5. Haydon Bridge High School
- 7. Capacity and surplus places
- 8. Financial Challenges
- 11. The Hadrian Learning Trust
- 11. The National Funding Formula
- 12. School Buildings and Estates
- 13. Some Potential Models – A,B,C
- 22. Potential timelines
- 24. Admission Arrangements
- 24. Special Educational Needs
- 24. Early Years Provision
- 24. Catchment areas
- 25. Costs and funding
- 25. Implications for staff
- 25. Transport
- 25. Sport and Recreation
- 26. What happens next?
- 27. The Consultation Response Form

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this consultation on the future of schools in the west of Northumberland. It is important that before responding you understand the roles, responsibilities and powers of the various organisations involved. Crucially it is important to understand that the Local Authority does not have power over the actions of academies. Academies are controlled centrally by the Secretary of State for Education via the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC). The Dioceses and independent academy trusts have a significant role to play in any consultation process.

The table below summarise roles/responsibility and powers.



Organisation	Role/responsibility	Powers
Local Authority- Northumberland County Council.	Northumberland County Council must ensure that there are sufficient good school places for the parents and children who live in Northumberland. They must ensure sensible place planning. They must hold maintained schools to account for their educational and financial performance (but not academies).	The Local Authority can hold consultations. Elected members of the Council Cabinet are the decision making body and can merge, close, or extend age ranges of maintained schools (but not academies). They cannot establish solely run academy trusts, but can be stakeholders.
Regional Schools Commissioner / Department for Education	The RSC must broker the academy conversion of failing schools. They hold Academy trusts to account for both their financial and education performance.	The RSC has powers to instruct the Local Authority to close (discontinue) schools. The RSC is the decision making body for any changes to Academies including closure or age range extensions.
Academy Trusts (e.g. Hadrian's Trust, Wise Trust, Good Shepherd Trust)	Academy Trusts are accountable for the financial and educational performance of the academy schools within its trust.	Trusts can hold consultation on changes to age range, closure and growth and set up academies (with the permission of the RSC).
Diocese	The Diocese provides support and advice to its schools through consultation. They can hold consultations. They should be consulted and provide a strategic view on behalf of their schools. Hold its schools to account for their educational and financial performance.	The Diocese can provide capital investment for faith schools. They can support or oppose closures or changes. They can establish multi-academy trusts.

BACKGROUND

Although the Council is pleased with the educational standards achieved by many schools and academies in the west of the county, there remains some uncertainty about the long term educational future of many schools in the area. This is due to a variety of external factors beyond the direct control of the authority, which are listed below:

1. EXTERNAL FACTORS:

- The withdrawal of the Bright Tribe Trust as the proposed sponsor of Haydon Bridge High School and the subsequent letter from the Regional Schools Commissioner asking the Local Authority to assess whether the school is viable in the long term.
- The consultation of Hadrian Learning Trust (QEHS) on the potential for it to become an age 11-18 academy and the impact this will have on middle and first schools.
- The need to ensure our school buildings are of top quality and invest in resources to meet the needs of the new curriculum.
- The need to provide excellent provision for the most vulnerable and those with special educational needs.
- The financial difficulties forecast by many of the schools in the west.
- The introduction of the National Funding Formula, based upon assumptions of typical pupil numbers in primary schools and an 11-18 model of secondary education.
- The historical development of over-capacity of school places in the west of the county.

2. OPPORTUNITIES:

- While these factors present considerable challenges to schools, academies and the Local Authority, they also bring opportunities. Northumberland County Council is determined to support the schools and academies in the west to provide the very best education in state of the art facilities. It has indicated that potentially many millions of pounds could be invested - we need your views on how education in the west should look for the next 25 years.
- Northumberland County Council has already sought the views of the educational professionals and Governors working in schools in the first phase of informal consultation. This was in order to gather their views on the development of options for consultation with parents, pupils and the wider community in this second phase of informal consultation.
- This document sets out the issues and opportunities that we feel should be considered by everyone who has an interest in education in the west of Northumberland. It also sets out some proposed options around the organisation of schools. We are now asking for your views on these proposed options and whether you have any alternative proposals of your own.

Haydon Bridge High School

3.2

3. OFSTED INSPECTION

Haydon Bridge High School (HBHS) was inspected by Ofsted in December 2014 and was judged to be inadequate and placed in Special Measures. The Local Authority had intervened earlier in 2014 to raise standards and replaced the governing body with an interim executive board (IEB) however the Ofsted inspection took place before the IEB could have a significant impact.

The law states that schools in Special Measures should become academies, or be considered for closure, therefore the Bright Tribe Academy Trust were identified as a preferred sponsor by the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) and academy orders were served on the school.

However, the conversion process to become part of Bright Tribe Trust was very protracted. Bright Tribe took nearly two years to carry out due diligence.

In November 2017, Bright Tribe announced their withdrawal as a potential sponsor of HBHS on the basis that, in its view, the school was no longer financially or educationally viable. No other academy sponsor has been willing to take on the school due to the financial risks and educational challenges and falling pupil rolls.

The Secretary of State (via the RSC) appointed an Interim Executive Board (IEB) responsible for the governance of the school and removed it from the Local Authority. On the withdrawal of Bright Tribe the Local Authority has applied to the Secretary of State to take back control of the school by appointing its own IEB and this is hoped to take place, subject to approval from the RSC in February 2018.

The RSC has already reached the conclusion that they require the council to carry out a viability assessment, as the possible first step, towards directing the closure of the school.

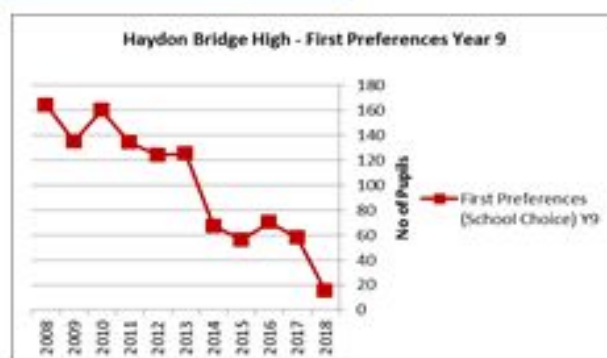
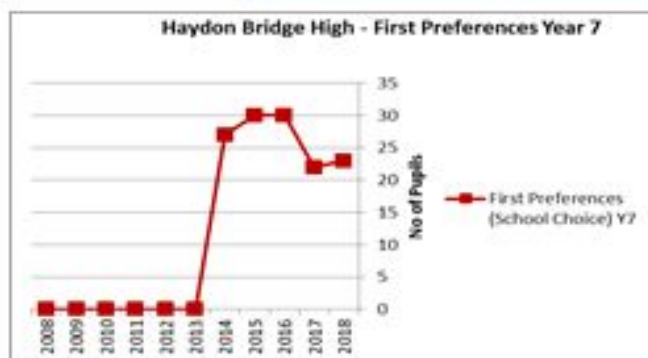
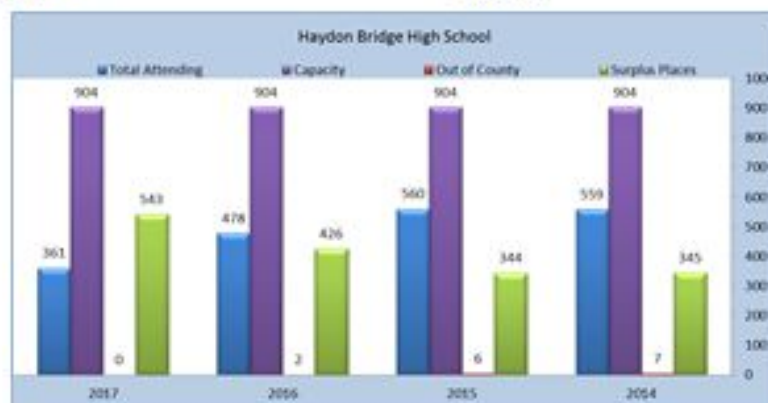
4. CAPACITY AND SURPLUS PLACES

When it was established HBHS had the capacity to educate 904 students within its buildings. Only 361 students (including 6th Form) were on roll at the school in October 2017. The low number of pupils has been in place for many years.

The school struggles to recruit sufficient pupils to fill a single class of 30 in each of years 7 and 9.

So far in 2018, there have only been 23 applications for a place in Year 7 and just 14 for year 9.

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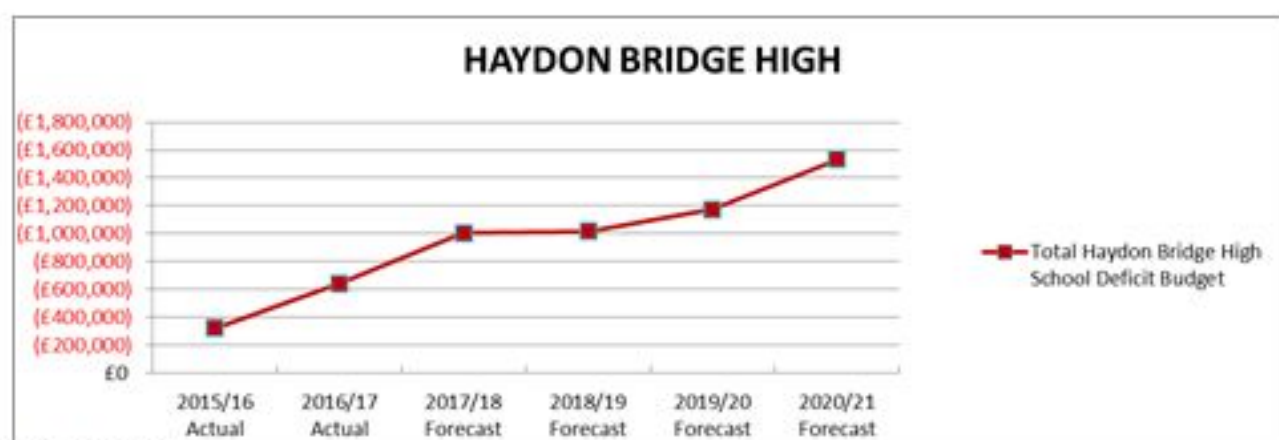


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5. FINANCE AND BUDGETS

As a result of the small numbers of pupils and its required staffing levels, HBHS is currently running with a budget deficit of around £641,000 per annum. If a secondary school/academy is to remain in Haydon Bridge and is required to deliver a full secondary school national curriculum that includes Key Stages 3, 4 and 5, then it will need to employ sufficiently qualified and experienced staff and have appropriate specialist resources. Given current and projected pupil numbers, and the impact this has on the funding, this would mean the school would run at a very significant deficit and would have to be subsidised from Council taxpayers funds.

The Graph below shows the increasing deficit for Haydon Bridge High School.



Brackets indicate deficit

6. CATCHMENT

Many parents in the Haydon Bridge catchment area already choose to send their children to QEHS in Hexham; current data indicates there are 239 students, including sixth form, living in the HBHS catchment but on roll at Queen Elizabeth High School (QEHS). Based on Year 9 to Year 11 students only, this means around 38% of families within the HBHS catchment choose to send their children to QEHS. Parents living in the HBHS catchment area who choose to send their children to QEHS are not eligible for free transport unless QEHS is their nearest school.

7. OPTIONS

Unless a new sponsor is found the RSC may direct the authority to close the school.

If the HBHS site is to remain open with its current age range and structure the council would have to provide capital investment in the region of £1.5m to reduce the number of

empty or unused buildings and address the building condition issues.

The proposals for the school developed from the first phase of consultation are set out later in this document. We would like your views on these, as well as any alternative proposals you may have.

8. ESTABLISHING A MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Unless a new sponsor is found the RSC may direct the authority to close the school. The Council is engaged in negotiations with a range of partners to attempt to establish a multi-academy trust. During part one of this consultation no schools have approached the council to express an interest in having a conversation about this proposal; therefore it looks unlikely that this will be part of a solution for the west.

Capacity and Surplus Places

8. The 'net capacity' of a school relates to the size of the building. This is a calculation derived from the number of planned work spaces within the school when it was built. A maximum and minimum number of places are calculated and a net capacity somewhere between this range is allocated. In the past when rolls of schools were larger, the net capacity would have been a close match to the Planned Admission Number (PAN). However, planned admission numbers are altered and based on the number of children historically within a school's catchment area. They are used to assist schools in staffing appropriately and over the years, as populations have fallen so too have PANs.

Therefore, it is important to understand that a Planned Admission Number and capacity are not the same thing. Surplus places are calculated by local and central Government using capacity figures. There can often be a significant difference between the total number of pupils a school is able to have on roll based on its PAN and the actual size of the school buildings (capacity). Schools may have changed the use of buildings and classrooms over the years to reflect a drop in numbers. For example areas may have become storage rooms, offices, staff rooms or other facilities.

In the west of the county, there is significant oversupply in terms of school places when compared to capacity. In total, there are 6,942 theoretical places available in schools in the Hexham and Haydon Bridge Partnerships, with 4,896 pupils on roll in those schools. This represents 30% surplus places across the combined partnerships.

While the charts opposite provide the overall picture at partnership level, there is considerable variation between individual schools within this data and it is important we look at PAN and Capacity very carefully. The local authority is held to account by government to ensure capacity matches demand.

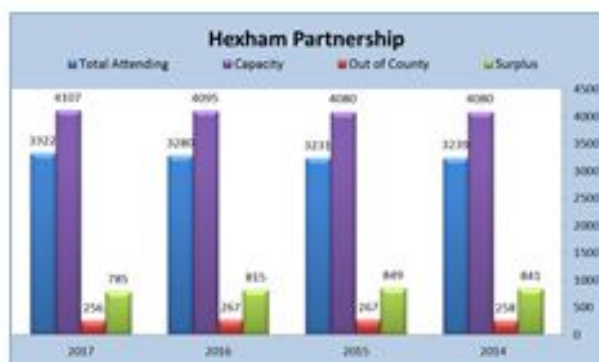
The average size of a primary school in England is 210 pupils and many national planning, capacity and financial assumptions are based on this figure. In the light of the level of surplus places and small schools across both partnerships, the financial positions of all schools are affected. Put simply if two small unviable schools merge they create one larger viable school, or one unviable school may need to merge with a viable one to provide economy of scale.

The local authority is responsible for providing places for residents of the county, not for residents of Durham, Newcastle or Cumbria.

Haydon Bridge Partnership (All Schools)



Hexham Partnership (All Schools)



Financial Challenges

9. HAYDON BRIDGE PARTNERSHIP

In the Haydon Bridge partnership of schools there are 12 maintained schools (excluding academies), of which 5 have a predicted deficit budget for 2017/18, 6 are predicting a deficit in 2018/19 and 7 are predicting a deficit by 2019/20 with an estimated deficit for the partnership (not including academies) as a whole of - £1,454,082 by 2020. *Note: It is not unusual for a school to predict a deficit in three years' time, they then have to make cost savings usually in terms of staffing reductions to ensure that the deficit is recovered. The council holds no financial information for Haltwhistle Upper and Lower academies; however the council is aware that there is significant spare capacity in terms of pupil numbers.*

⚙ HAYDON BRIDGE PARTNERSHIP - SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES DATA

School	Distance to Nearest School (miles)	Predicted financial deficit by 2017/18 (Y or No)*	Predicted financial deficit by 2018/19 (Y or No)*	Predicted financial deficit by 2019/20 (Y or No)*
Haydon Bridge High	6	Y	Y	Y
Haltwhistle Upper	16	ACADEMY	ACADEMY	ACADEMY
Bellingham Middle	16	N	N	N
Bellingham First	5.6	N	N	N
Kielder First	13.8	N	N	Y
Otterburn First	5.8	N	Y	Y
West Woodburn First	5.8	Y	Y	Y
Greenhaugh First	5	N	N	Y
Wark First	4.8	N	N	N
Greenhead Primary	3.4	Y	Y	Y
Haltwhistle Lower	4	ACADEMY	ACADEMY	ACADEMY
Shaftoe Trust Primary	3.8	ACADEMY	ACADEMY	ACADEMY
Henshaw Primary	4	Y	Y	Y
Whitfield Primary	5.3	ACADEMY	ACADEMY	ACADEMY
Allendale Primary	5.3	Y	Y	Y
Newbrough Primary	3.8	N	N	N

*The information is based on the latest indicative budgets as agreed with the individual schools and updated to ensure the accurate October 2017 census data is reflected. They do not take into account the changes to the budget formula for 2018/19

10. HEXHAM PARTNERSHIP

In the Hexham partnership of schools there are 14 maintained mainstream schools (excluding academies), of which 2 have a predicted deficit at the end of 2017/18, 4 are predicting a deficit by 2018/19 and 5 are predicting a deficit by 2020, with an estimated surplus for the partnership (not including academies) as a whole of £175,216. There are also 2 academies in the partnership for which the Local Authority do not hold budget information. The council understands the QEHS has a budget deficit of £94,287 for 2015/16, the previous year the school had a budget deficit of £113,204, which again may be attributed to a result of spare capacity and costly buildings. Note: *It is not unusual for a school to predict a deficit in three years time, they then have to make cost savings usually in terms of staffing reductions to ensure that the deficit is recovered.*

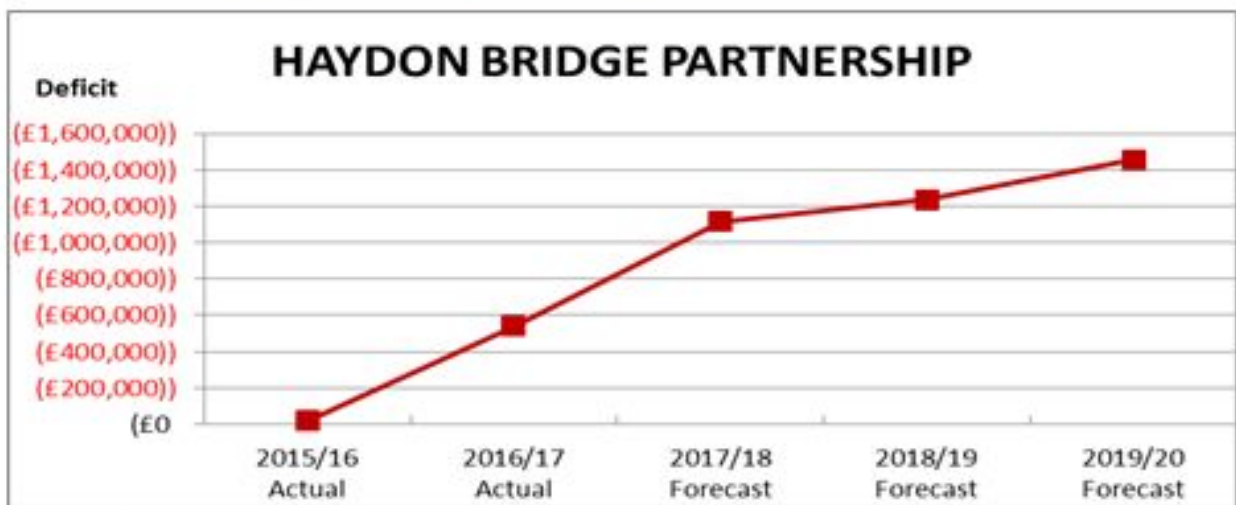
HEXHAM PARTNERSHIP - SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES DATA

School	Distance to Nearest School (miles)	Predicted financial deficit by 2017/18 (Y or No)*	Predicted financial deficit by 2018/19 (Y or No)*	Predicted financial deficit by 2019/20 (Y or No)*
Queen Elizabeth High	6	ACADEMY	ACADEMY	ACADEMY
Hexham Middle	1.2	ACADEMY	ACADEMY	ACADEMY
St Joseph's RC Middle	1.2	N	N	N
Corbridge Middle	4	N	N	N
Whittonstall First	5.7	N	N	N
The Sele First	1	N	N	N
Slaley First	3.5	N	N	N
Hexham First	1	Y	Y	N
Acomb First	1.9	N	Y	Y
Beaufront First	1.9	N	Y	Y
St Mary's RC First	1	N	N	Y
Corbridge CE First	2.8	N	N	N
Chollerton First	3.6	Y	Y	Y
Whitley Chapel First	4	N	N	N
Humshaugh First	3.5	N	N	N
Broomhaugh First	4.6	N	N	Y

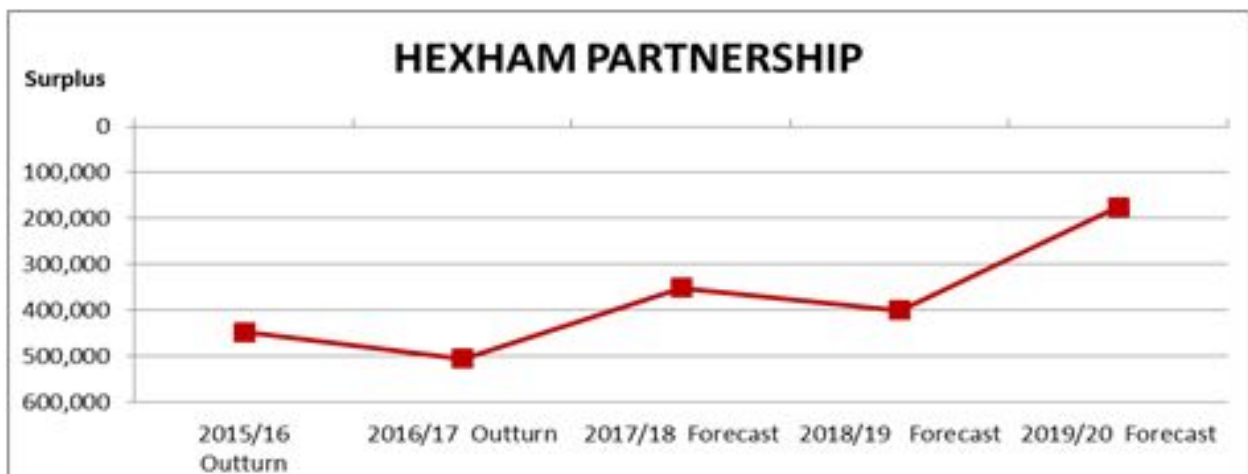
*The information is based on the latest indicative budgets as agreed with the individual schools and updated to ensure the accurate October 2017 census data is reflected. They do not take into account the changes to the budget formula for 2018/19



Haydon Bridge Partnership Total Predicted Budget Deficit



Hexham Partnership Total Predicted Budget





11. HADRIAN LEARNING TRUST

The Hadrian Trust consists of Queen Elizabeth High School and Hexham Middle School. It is an autonomous organisation and is not within the control of the local authority. It reports directly to the Secretary of State for Education. The Trust is holding a consultation because it believes that a reorganisation to an 11-18 structure is necessary for it to be financially and educationally viable.

The council has asked the Trust to provide open access to information about the reasons for its desire to become 11-18 – both educationally and financially. This will be published within the Trust's consultation documents, those are separate to this document.

At a meeting on 16 January 2018, the Trust Board decided that it remains of the view that a primary/secondary arrangement would be in the best interests of the children who progress through the school system to be educated at Queen Elizabeth High School. As such, the trust stated it would be appropriate in due course to proceed to a formal consultation. They stated they will discuss with the Regional Schools Commissioner and Northumberland County Council how that might best work in conjunction with the Education in the West consultation.

12. NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA

The new National Funding Formula (NFF) will begin to be implemented from April 2020. The proposal from central government is that the schools across England will move to a

standardised funding model. The so called 'hard formula' in which the funding formula factor values will be set by the Department of Education (DfE) and no longer locally by the Local Authority. This will be subject to agreement in the next Comprehensive Spending Review.

Whatever the national formula, it is estimated that 72% of a school's budget is simply related to the numbers of pupils it has. A school with 210 pupils gets approximately twice the funding of a school with 105. But the school with 105 still has to meet national curriculum requirements. The national formula is based upon a primary/secondary model because of the 150 local authorities only about 6 have significant numbers of middle schools.

The Government funding does have a sparsity factor but this does not effect the vast majority of schools in the west because of their close proximity to each other. The Government is clear it does not want to subsidise over capacity in schools.

The council would like your views on whether you believe that the current structure and number of schools can be sustained. The Local Authority believe this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build a school system that delivers the very best education in the long term. With careful consideration for children in the transition period, with the right investment across our schools and with careful planning informed by research, we can create a sustainable system and high quality system.

School Buildings and Estates.

13. Due to lack of investment in the past many school buildings in the west of the county are in need of significant capital investment, particularly at QEHS, which has already been identified as a national priority for investment and is included in the Priority School Building Programme. The council's data shows that the combined backlog of maintenance work in schools in the Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships amounts to approximately £17.85 million; this figure does not include work needing to be carried out at the faith schools in the partnerships, which fall under the responsibility of the relevant dioceses. Much of this relates to work required at Haydon Bridge High School. With an annual central government allocation of only around £3 million it would take 6 years to carry out this backlog work, and then only if all centrally allocated money for the whole county of Northumberland was spent on schools in the west.

The consultation may provide an opportunity not only to address the issues in the Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships, but also an opportunity to invest in state of the art school resources. This would require a separate capital investment programme into schools from the council core budget, potentially linked with a programme of rationalisation of school buildings. Such money cannot simply be spent on subsidising existing schools running costs because it relies upon a rationalisation and investment process.

Amongst other things the Council would like your views on how any capital monies should be invested in schools in the west of Northumberland and whether it should be made available.



Some potential models

Please bear in mind that the models outlined below are only presented to aid the consultation process –a combination of models or alternative models are also sought.

14. Potential Model A

In this model, Haydon Bridge High School (HBHS) could potentially merge with QEHS and its current building would close with all pupils transferring to either Hexham Middle School or QEHS. Hexham Middle School and QEHS might relocate or expand their school buildings, either on one of the existing schools' current sites or to another new site.

Other middle schools in both partnerships would operate as they do currently on their existing sites, with their existing capacity.

However eight first and primary schools across both partnerships could amalgamate and as a result schools would close. This model is broadly based upon the concept that first schools should have a capacity of at least 75 pupils and any potential building closure should generate a maximum additional travel distance for pupils of 6 miles or less. These assumptions are of course subject to consultation and we would welcome your views, a model for first and primary schools under this model might include:

- Greenhead CofE Primary School's catchment area would become that of Haltwhistle Lower school (academy) and Greenhead would close. This would mean a maximum additional travel distance of 3 miles. There are currently 38 children attending the school; 20 of these live outside of the schools catchment area. This proposed change would require the academy to carry out its own consultation to change its age range and PAN. If the academy was unwilling to carry out such a consultation then any proposal would not go forward. Haltwhistle Lower school is currently part of the Bright Tribe Trust but the RSC have indicated that they will be re-sponsoring the school in the near future
- Greenhaugh First School's catchment area would merge and become part of Bellingham First School. Greenhaugh School would close, this would mean a maximum additional travel distance of 4.5 miles. There are currently 28 children attending the school; 4 of these live outside of the schools catchment area.
- West Woodburn First School's catchment area would become Otterburn First School, and West Woodburn would close. This would mean a maximum additional travel distance of 4.7 miles. There are currently 23 children attending the school; 6 of these live outside of the schools catchment area
- Wark CofE First School's catchment area would merge and become Bellingham First School, and Wark would close a maximum additional travel distance of 5.8 miles. There are currently 31 children attending the school; 4 of these live outside of the schools catchment area
- Beaufront/Acomb First School would merge/close (or vice versa) a maximum additional travel distance of 1.9 miles, There would be a maximum additional travel distance of 1.9 miles. One of schools would close. There are currently 70 children attending Beaufront First School; 66 of these live outside of the schools catchment area. There are currently 59 children attending Acomb First School; 14 of these children live outside of the schools catchment area.
- Whitley Chapel CofE First School's catchment area would merge with Slaty First School, and Whitley Chapel would close. This would mean a maximum additional travel distance of 4 miles. There are currently 27 children attending the school; 11 of these live outside of the schools catchment area
- Whittonstall First School's catchment area would merge and become Broomhaugh First School, Whittonstall would close. This would mean a maximum additional travel time of 5.7 miles. There are currently 58 children attending the school; 41 of these live outside of the schools catchment area
- Chollerton CofE First School's catchment area would become Humshaugh CofE First School and Chollerton would close, a maximum additional travel distance of 3.6 miles. There are currently 39 children attending the school; 6 of these live outside of the schools catchment area

Model A - Haydon Bridge Partnership

SCHOOL	CURRENT SITUATION				POSSIBLE MODEL			
	Number on Roll in Sept 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)	Distance in miles to nearest school
Greenhead CE Primary	38 (56)	0.3	8	G	Merge/Close (catchment moves to Haltwhistle Lower, approx 3m away; CE choice, Henshaw, approx. 7.5m)			3.4
Greenhaugh First	28 (40)	0.3	8	G	Merge/Close (catchment to Bellingham approx. 5m away or split with Kielder, approx. 15m)			5
Haltwhistle Lower School	193 (253)	1.3	40	RI	225	1.5	45	4
Haydon Bridge Shaftoe Trust Primary*	130 (157)	0.7	30	NG	No change			3.8
Kielder First	9 (75)	0.3	8	O	No change			13.8
Allendale Primary*	109 (168)	0.8	24	G	No change			5.3
Henshaw CE Primary*	55 (105)	0.5	15	G	No change			4
Whitfield CE Primary*	27 (56)	0.3	8	NG	No change			5.3
Newbrough CE Primary*	54 (105)	0.5	15	G	No change			3.8
Otterburn CE First	34 (75)	0.5	15	G	No Change			4.7
West Woodburn First	23 (44)	0.3	10	G	Merge/Close (catchment to Otterburn, approx. 4.7m)			4.7
Bellingham First	47 (105)	0.5	15	G	80 First	0.6	20	5.6
Wark CE First	31 (75)	0.5	15	G	Merge/Close (catchment to Bellingham, approx. 5.8m)			4.8
Bellingham Middle	109 (240)	2	60	RI	No change			16
Haltwhistle Upper	141 (300)	2.5	75	NG	No change			16
Haydon Bridge High School	297 Y7-Y11 64 – 6 th Fm	2.2/4	65/120	SM	Close			6

*Pupils in primary schools feed to Hexham Middle School in for Year 7.

** O=outstanding, G= Good, RI = requires improvement, SM = special measures, NG = no grade due to conversion to academy

Model A - Hexham Partnership -

SCHOOL	CURRENT SITUATION – status quo				POSSIBLE MODEL			
	Number on Roll in Sept 2017 (Net Capacity in Sept 2017)	Forms of Entry (FE)	Planned Admission Number (PAN) 2016/17	Latest Ofsted**	Capacity	Forms of Entry (FE)	Planned Admission Number (PAN)	Distance in miles to nearest school
Acomb First	59 (75)	0.5	15	G	No change			1.9
Beaufront First	70 (75)	0.5	15	O	Merge/Close (catchment to Acomb or vice versa)			1.9
Whitley Chapel CE First	27 (50)	0.3	10	G	Merge/Close (catchment to Slaley)			4
Slaley First School	40 (50)	0.3	10	G	No change			3.5
Whittonstall First	58 (55)	0.46	14	G	Merge/Close (catchment to Broomhaugh)			5.7
Broomhaugh CE First	66 (75)	0.5	15	O	No change			4.6
Chollerton CE First	39 (50)	0.3	10	O	Merge/Close (catchment to Humshaugh)			3.6
Corbridge CE First	128 (150)	1	30	G	No change			2.8
The Sele First	395 (420)	2.8	84	O	No change			1
Hexham First	113 (150)	1	30	G	No change			1
St Mary's RCVA First	107 (150)	1	30	G	No change			1
Humshaugh CE First School	37 (55)	0.36	11	G	No change			3.5
Corbridge Middle	351 (360)	3	90	G	No change			4
Hexham Academy (Middle)	477 (651)	5	150	G	May relocate to new shared building on new site with QEHS			1.2
					300 (Yr5-Y6)	5FE in Y5 & Y6	150 (Y5 & Y6)	
					720 (Y7-Y8)*	7FE in Y5 & Y6*	Further 120 join in Year 7*	
St Joseph's RCVA Middle	326 (336)	2.8	84	G	No change			1.2
QE Academy (High)	907 – Y9-Y11 349 – 6- form (1407)	10.2	306	G	No change May relocate to new shared building on new site with Hexham Middle School			6
					1550 (inc 6- form)	11.6	350	

*Pupils from Haydon Bridge primaries transfer to Hexham Middle

** O=outstanding, G= Good, RI = requires improvement, SM = special measures, NG = no grade due to conversion to academy

15. Potential Model B

In this model Haydon Bridge High School (HBHS) could potentially merge with QEHS and Haydon Bridge would close in September 2019. All students would be offered places at QEHS, which would change its age range to become an 11-18 school. Potentially five middle schools across the two partnerships would close in August 2020, Bellingham Middle School, Corbridge Middle School, Haltwhistle Middle School (Academy), Hexham Academy (Middle) and St Joseph's RCVA Middle. Children would be educated in Years 5 and 6 in new primary schools and in Years 7 and 8 at QEHS. A brand new QEHS building would be built in Hexham with a target opening date of September 2022.

Eight first schools would merge and close based upon a model of class size on entry and distance from their neighbouring school. First schools with less than half a form of entry (15 children) would close or merge with neighbouring schools to become Primary schools. There are exceptions to this situation based upon travel distance, for instance Kielder First School, which would remain open and become a primary school due to the distance from the nearest neighbouring school. The proposal for first and primary schools under this model is as follows:

- Greenhead CofE Primary School would merge/close and its catchment area would become Haltwhistle Lower school (academy), which would convert to become a Primary school. This would mean a maximum additional travel distance of 3 miles. There are currently 38 children attending the school; 20 of these live outside of the school's catchment area. This proposed change would require the academy to carry out its own consultation to change its age range and PAN. If the academy didn't wish to do this, the proposal would not go ahead.
- Greenhaugh First School would merge/close, and its catchment area would become part of a newly established Bellingham Primary school, a maximum additional travel distance of 4.5 miles. There are currently 28 children attending the school; 4 children live outside of the schools catchment area.
- West Woodburn First School would merge/close, and its catchment area would become part of the

new Otterburn Primary School's catchment, a maximum additional travel distance of 4.7 miles. There are currently 23 children attending the school; 6 of these children live outside of the schools catchment area.

- Wark CofE First School would merge/close, and its catchment area would become part of the new Bellingham Primary School, a maximum additional travel distance of 5.8 miles. There are currently 31 children attending the school; 4 of these children live outside of the schools catchment area.
- Beaufront/Acomb First School would merge/close, and catchment areas would combine. There would be a maximum additional travel distance of 1.9 miles. One of schools would close. There are currently 70 children attending Beaufront First School; 66 of these live outside of the schools catchment area. There are currently 59 children attending Acomb First School; 14 of these children live outside of the schools catchment area.
- Whitley Chapel CofE First School would merge/close, and its catchment area would become the new Slatley Primary School, a maximum additional travel distance of 4 miles. There are currently 27 children attending the school; 11 of these children live outside of the schools catchment area.
- Whittonstall First School would merge/close, and its catchment area would become part of the new Broomhaugh Primary School, a maximum additional travel time of 5.7 miles. There are currently 58 children attending the school; 41 of these children live outside of the schools catchment area.
- Chollerton CofE First School would merge/close, and its catchment area would become the new Humshaugh C of E Primary School, a maximum additional travel distance of 3.6 miles. There are currently 39 children attending the school; 6 of these children live outside of the schools catchment area.

The following tables for Model B provides further detail

Model B – Haydon Bridge



SCHOOL	CURRENT SITUATION				POSSIBLE MODEL			
	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)	Distance in miles to nearest school
Greenhead CE Primary	38 (56)	0.3	8	G	Merge/Close (catchment moves to Haltwhistle Lower, approx. 3m away; CE choice, Henshaw, approx. 7.5m)			3.4
Greenhaugh First	28 (40)	0.3	8	G	Merge/Close (catchment to Bellingham approx. 4.5m away or split with Kielder, approx. 15m)			5
Haltwhistle Academy Lower Campus	193 (253)	1.3	40	RI	315 Becomes Primary	1.5	45	4
Haydon Bridge Shaftoe Trust Primary	130 (157)	0.7	30	I	210	1	30	3.8
Kielder First	9 (75)	0.3	8	O	56 Becomes Primary	0.3	8	13.8
Allendale Primary	109 (168)	0.8	24	G	168	0.8	24	5.3
Henshaw CE Primary	55 (105)	0.5	15	G	105	0.5	15	4
Whitfield CE Primary	27 (56)	0.3	8	I	56	0.3	8	5.3
Newbrough CE Primary	54 (105)	0.5	15	G	105	0.5	15	3.8
Otterburn CE First	34 (75)	0.5	15	G	105 Becomes Primary	0.5	15	4.7
West Woodburn First	23 (44)	0.3	10	G	Merge/Close (catchment to Otterburn, approx. 4.7m)			4.7
Bellingham First	47 (105)	0.5	15	G	105	0.5	15	5.6
Wark CE First	31 (75)	0.5	15	G	Merge/Close (catchment to Bellingham, approx. 5.8m)			4.8
Bellingham Middle	109 (240)	2	60	RI	Close			16.1
Haltwhistle Upper	141 (300)	2.5	75	I	Close			16
Haydon Bridge High School	297 Y7-Y11 64 – 6+ Form	2.2/4	65/120	I	Merge/Close (catchment to QE Academy)			6

Model B – Hexham Partnership

SCHOOL	CURRENT SITUATION				POSSIBLE MODEL			
	Number on Roll in Sept 2017 (Net Capacity in Sept 2017)	Forms of Entry (FE)	Planned Admission Number (PAN) 2016/17	Latest Ofsted	Capacity	Forms of Entry (FE)	Planned Admission Number (PAN)	Distance in miles to current nearest school
Acomb First	59 (75)	0.5	15	G	Merge/Close (catchment to Beaufront or vice versa)			1.9
Beaufront First	70 (75)	0.5	15	O	105 Becomes Primary	0.5	15	1.9
Whitley Chapel CE First	27 (50)	0.3	10	G	Merge/Close (catchment to Slaley)			4
Slaley First School	40 (50)	0.3	10	G	105 Becomes Primary	0.5	15	3.5
Whittonstall First	58 (70)	0.46	14	G	Merge/Close (catchment to Broomhaugh)			5.7
Broomhaugh CE First	66 (75)	0.5	15	O	105 Becomes Primary	0.5	15	4.6
Chollerton CE First	39 (50)	0.3	10	O	Merge/Close (catchment to Humshaugh)			3.6
Corbridge CE First	128 (150)	1	30	G	210 Becomes Primary	1	30	2.8
The Sele First	395 (420)	2.8	84	O	420 Becomes Primary	2	60	1
Hexham First	113 (150)	1	30	G	210 Becomes Primary	1	30	1
St Mary's RCVA First	107 (150)	1	30	G	210 Becomes Primary	1	30	1
Humshaugh CE First School	37 (55)	0.36	11	G	105 Becomes Primary	0.5	15	3.5
Corbridge Middle	351 (360)	3	90	G	Close			4
Hexham Academy (Middle)	477 (651)	5	150	G	Close			1.2
St Joseph's RCVA Middle	326 (336)	2.8	84	G	Close			1.2
QE Academy (High)	907 – Y9-Y11 349 – 6- form (1407)	10.2	306	G	2250 (inc 6-form)	11.6	350	6

16. Potential Model C

Model C is a potential proposal to create an all through 4-16 years school in Haydon Bridge, involving a change of the age range of the school. It would be proposed that HBHS would receive funding for significant new buildings on the site of the existing high school.

In addition an all through 9-18 campus would be established through the co-location of QEHS and Hexham Middle School. It would be proposed that the two schools would relocate to new buildings on the site of the existing schools or a new site. The middle schools in Hexham would remain unchanged, as would the first schools. Those listed below would close/merge. Some first schools would become primary schools.

- Bellingham and Haltwhistle Middle Schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership would close, pupils would be educated at the new 4-16 school in Haydon Bridge. There are currently 108 children attending Bellingham Middle School; 2 of these live outside of the schools catchment area. There are currently 142 children attending Haltwhistle Upper School; 25 of these live outside of the schools catchment area.
- Greenhaugh First School would merge/close, and its catchment area would become part of the new Bellingham Primary School, a maximum additional travel distance of 4.5 miles. There are currently 28 children attending the school; 4 of these live outside of the schools catchment area.
- Newbrough C of E Primary would merge/close and its catchment area would move to a new 4-16 school in Haydon Bridge, with a maximum travel distance is 3.8 miles. There are currently 54 children attending the school; 12 of these live outside of the schools catchment area.
- West Woodburn First School would merge/close, and its catchment area would become part of the new Otterburn Primary School, a maximum additional travel distance of 5.8 miles. There are currently 23 children attending the school; 6 of these children live outside of the schools catchment area.
- Wark CofE First School would merge/close, and its catchment area would become part of the new Bellingham Primary School, a maximum additional travel distance of 5.8 miles. There are currently 31 children attending the school; 4 of these children live outside of the schools catchment area.

- Beaufront/Acomb First School would merge/close, and its catchment area would combine. There would be a maximum additional travel distance of 1.9 miles. One of schools would close. There are currently 70 children attending Beaufront First School; 66 of these live outside of the schools catchment area. There are currently 59 children attending Acomb First School; 14 of these children live outside of the schools catchment area.
- Whitley Chapel CofE First School would merge/close, and its catchment area would become Slaley First School, a maximum additional travel distance of 4 miles. There are currently 27 children attending the school; 11 of these children live outside of the schools catchment area.
- Whittonstall First School would merge/close, and its catchment area would become Broomhaugh First School, a maximum additional travel time of 5.7 miles. There are currently 58 children attending the school; 41 of these children live outside of the schools catchment area.
- Chollerton CofE First School would merge/close, and its catchment area would become Humshaugh CofE Primary School, a maximum additional travel distance of 3.6 miles. There are currently 39 children attending the school; 6 of these children live outside of the schools catchment area.

The following tables for Model C below provide further detail

Model C – Haydon Bridge

SCHOOL	CURRENT SITUATION				Model for consultation			
	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)	Distance in miles to nearest school
Greenhead CE Primary	38 (56)	0.3	8	G	56	0.3	8	3.4
Greenhaugh First	28 (40)	0.3	8	G	Merge/Close (catchment to Bellingham approx. 4.5m away or split with Kielder, approx. 15m)			5
Haltwhistle Academy First School	193 (253)	1.3	40	RI	210 Becomes Primary	1	30	4
Haydon Bridge Shaftoe Trust Primary	130 (157)	0.7	30	I	210	1	30	3.8
Kielder First	9 (75)	0.3	8	O	56 Becomes Primary	0.3	8	13.8
Allendale Primary	109 (168)	0.8	24	G	168	0.8	24	5.3
Henshaw CE Primary	55 (105)	0.5	15	G	105	0.5	15	4
Whitfield CE Primary	27 (56)	0.3	8	I	56	0.3	8	5.3
Newbrough CE Primary	54 (105)	0.5	15	G	Merge/Close – (catchment moves to Haydon Bridge all through)			3.8
Otterburn CE First	34 (75)	0.5	15	G	105 Becomes Primary	0.5	15	5.8
West Woodburn First	23 (44)	0.3	10	G	Merge/Close (catchment to Otterburn Primary)			5.8
Bellingham First	47 (105)	0.5	15	G	210 Becomes primary	1	30	5.6
Wark CE First	31 (75)	0.5	15	G	Merge/Close (catchment to Bellingham)			4.8
Bellingham Middle	109 (240)	2	60	RI	Close			16.1
Haltwhistle Upper	141 (300)	2.5	75	I	Close			16
Haydon Bridge High School	297 Y7-Y11 64 – 6- Form	2.2/4	65/120	I	Becomes all-through 4-16 school by lowering age range with transfer into Year 7 from feeder primaries; new building on same site			
					105 (R-Y6)	0.5FE in primary	15 (primary)	6
					750 (Y7-Y11)	5FE in secondary	Further 120 join in Year 7 (total 150)	

Model C – Hexham Partnership

SCHOOL	CURRENT SITUATION				Model for consultation			
	Number on Roll in Sept 2017 (Net Capacity in Sept 2017)	Forms of Entry (FE)	Planned Admission Number (PAN) 2016/17	Latest Ofsted	Capacity	Forms of Entry (FE)	Planned Admission Number (PAN)	Distance in miles to nearest school
Acomb First	59 (75)	0.5	15	G	75	0.5	15	1.9
Beaufront First	70 (75)	0.5	15	O	Merge/Close (catchment to Acomb or vice versa)			1.9
Whitley Chapel CE First	27 (50)	0.3	10	G	Merge/Close (catchment to Slaley)			4
Slaley First School	40 (50)	0.3	10	G	75	0.5	15	3.5
Whittonstall First	58 (70)	0.46	14	G	Merge/Close (catchment to Broomhaugh)			5.7
Broomhaugh CE First	66 (75)	0.5	15	O	75	0.5	15	4.6
Chollerton CE First	39 (50)	0.3	10	O	Merge/Close (catchment to Humshaugh)			3.6
Corbridge CE First	128 (150)	1	30	G	No change			2.8
The Sele First	395 (420)	2.8	84	O	No change			1
Hexham First	113 (150)	1	30	G	150	1	30	1
St Mary's RCVA First	107 (150)	1	30	G	No change			1
Humshaugh CE First School	37 (55)	0.36	11	G	75	0.5	15	3.5
Corbridge Middle	351 (360)	3	90	G	No change			4
Hexham Academy (Middle)	477 (651)	5	150	G	Becomes age 9 to 13 phase in 9-18 school in new shared building on new site in Hexham			1.2
					600 (total inc first feeders)	5 (total inc. first feeders)	150	
St Joseph's RCVA Middle	326 (336)	2.8	84	G	No change			1.2
QE Academy (High)	907 – Y9-Y11 349 – 6- form (1407)	10.2	306	G	Becomes age 13 to 18 phase in 9-18 school in new shared building on new site in Hexham			6
					918 (Y9-Y11) 400 - 6th form	10.2	306 (156 from feeder Middle Schools)	

POTENTIAL TIMELINES

17. POTENTIAL TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF MODEL A

31 August 2019

- Haydon Bridge High School (HBHS) would merge/close.
- First and primary schools in the Hexham and Haydon Bridge Partnerships approved for closure would merge/close and pupils would transfer to their new catchment schools or other school according to parental preference for 1 September 2019;

1 September 2019

- First schools remaining open in the Haydon Bridge Partnership would extend their age ranges to become primary schools and retain pupils on roll in Year 4 on 31 August 2019 as they become Year 5.
- Students on roll in Year 6 in the feeder primary schools in Haydon Bridge on 31 August 2019 would join the roll of Year 7 at Hexham Middle School, or another school according to parental preference and every September thereafter;
- Students in Year 7 at HBHS on 31 August 2019 would transfer to the roll of Hexham Middle School as Year 8 and relocate to the middle school site in Hexham or another school according to parental preference.
- Students in Year 8 in Haltwhistle Upper Academy, Bellingham, St Joseph's RCVA and Corbridge Middle Schools on 31 August 2019 would transfer to the roll of Queen Elizabeth High School (QEHS) as the new Year 9 or another school according to parental preference as usual.
- Students on roll in Years 9 to 12 on 31 August 2019 at HBHS would transfer to the roll of (QEHS) or to another school according to parental preference. Temporary accommodation could be required until construction of the new shared building was completed.

1 September 2022

- All students on roll at QEHS relocate to the academy's new buildings on a new site in Hexham.

18. POTENTIAL TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF MODEL B

31 August 2019

- Haydon Bridge High School (HBHS) would merge/close. Pupils would transfer to Queen Elizabeth High School.
- First and primary schools in the Hexham and Haydon Bridge Partnerships approved for merge/closure would close and pupils would transfer to their new catchment schools or other school according to parental preference for 1 September 2019 ;

1 September 2019

- First schools remaining open in the Haydon Bridge Partnership would extend their age ranges to become primary schools and retain pupils on roll in Year 4 on 31 August 2019 as they become Year 5.
- Students on roll in Year 6 in the feeder primary schools in Haydon Bridge on 31 August 2019 would join the roll of Year 7 at Hexham Middle School, or another school according to parental preference;
- Students in Year 7 at HBHS on 31 August 2019 would transfer to the roll of Hexham Middle School as Year 8 and relocate to the middle school site in Hexham or another school according to parental preference.
- Students in Year 8 in Haltwhistle Upper Academy, Bellingham, St Joseph's RCVA and Corbridge Middle Schools on 31 August 2019 would transfer to the roll of Queen Elizabeth High School (QEHS) as the new Year 9 or another school according to parental preference.

- Students on roll in Years 9 to 12 on 31 August 2019 at HBHS would transfer to the roll of (QEHS) or to another school according to parental preference.
- First schools in the Hexham and Haydon Bridge Partnerships approved to extend their age ranges would retain Year 4 as they move into Year 5 and become primary school.
- Middle Schools in the Hexham and Haydon Bridge Partnerships would not receive Year 5 and would operate with Years 6, 7 and 8 only.

31 August 2020

- All middle schools/academies in Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships close.

1 September 2020

- All pupils on roll in Years 6 and 7 at middle schools and academies in Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships on 31 August 2020 transfer to the roll of QEHS in September 2020 as the new Years 7 and 8, but would be educated on the Hexham Middle School site;
- QEHS extends its age range to become an age 11 to 18 academy in its existing buildings and the Hexham Middle School building;
- QEHS would receive a Year 9 intake from closing middle schools;
- All primary schools in the Hexham and Haydon Bridge Partnerships retain Year 5 as they move into year 6;
- Pupils in Year 6 in primary schools in Haydon Bridge Partnership on 31 August 2020 transfer to Year 7 at QEHS.

1 September 2021

- Students in Year 6 in the primary schools in Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships in August 2021 would transfer to QEHS in September 2021 as the new Year 7.

1 September 2022

- All students on roll at QEHS relocate to the academy's new buildings on a new site in Hexham.

19. PROPOSED TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF MODEL C

31 August 2019

- First and primary schools in the Hexham and Haydon Bridge Partnerships approved for merge/closure would close and pupils would transfer to their new catchment schools or other school according to parental preference for 1 September 2019;

1 September 2019

- First schools remaining open in the Haydon Bridge Partnership would extend their age ranges to become primary schools and retain pupils on roll in Year 4 on 31 August 2019 as they become Year 5.
- Haydon Bridge High School (HBHS) extends its age range downwards to include the catchment area of Newbrough Primary as its primary phase, initially operating from the existing building;
- Pupils on roll in Year 6 in the feeder primary schools in Haydon Bridge on 31 August 2019 continue to join the roll of Year 7 at Haydon Bridge High School, or another school according to parental preference;
- Hexham Middle School amalgamates with QEHS to become an age 9-18 school within their existing buildings;
- Pupils on roll in Hexham, Corbridge, and St Joseph's Middle Schools in Year 8 on 31 August 2019 transfer into Year 9 of the amalgamated QEHS in Hexham.
- Pupils in Year 11 at HBHS in August 2019 would transfer to the 6th form at QEHS or to another provision or training course according to preference.

31 August 2020

- Middle Schools in Haydon Bridge Partnership close.
- Pupils on roll in Corbridge and St Joseph's Middle Schools in Year 8 on 31 August 2020 transfer into Year 9 of the amalgamated QEHS in Hexham and every September thereafter.
- 6th Form at Haydon Bridge High closes.

1 September 2020

- Pupils on roll in Years 6, 7 and 8 on 31 August 2020 in Bellingham Middle School and Haltwhistle Upper Campus transfer as into Years 7, 8 and 9 to 4-16 Haydon Bridge High School.
- The first schools that became primary schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership in 2019 retain pupils on roll in Year 5 on 31 August 2020 as they become Year 6.

1 September 2022

- The age 9-18 QEHS moves to a new building.

20. Admissions Arrangements

Should Model A or Model B be implemented, students who would otherwise have been on roll at HBHS in September 2019 would be offered a place in the appropriate year group at either Hexham Middle School or QEHS from that date. In addition, under Models A, B and C pupils who would otherwise have been on roll in the first or primary schools proposed for closure in September 2019 would be offered a place in the proposed new catchment school from that date.

Further under Model B, in the first year of operation the new primary schools (as the first schools would become) would operate up to Year 5 from September 2019 and then up to Year 6 in the second year of operation from September 2020. The middle school would operate with Years 6, 7 and 8 only from September 2019 and all students who would otherwise have been on roll at the middle schools in September 2020 would be offered places at QEHS. The timeline for Model B set out earlier in this document provides further details.

Should Model C be implemented, HBHS would lower its age range to 4, but would accept pupils moving from the primary schools into Year 7 in September 2019 as usual. Pupils who would otherwise have been on the roll of Newbrough Primary School in September 2019, including those pupils due to join Reception at that point, would transfer to the roll of the all-age HBHS but would continue to be educated at the Newbrough site until the new building in Haydon Bridge was completed.

21. Special Educational Needs Provision

There is no specialist additional resourced SEN provision currently within any of the mainstream schools or academies in the Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnership. The special school in the west, Hexham Priory has been included in this consultation. Consultation on SEND provision within Northumberland has recently taken place, including the west of the County, any further views on SEND in relation to provision or capacity would be welcome.

22. Early Years Provision

The models set out in this document could have an impact on local early-years provision, and consultees are invited to put forward their views. This includes specific views in relation to the free entitlement to childcare for working parents which increased to 30 hours per week in September 2017 (pilot 2016). There may be options to use existing or vacated school buildings as early years provision.

23. Catchment Areas

As all of the models for consultation involve school merger/closures, there would be a need to incorporate some school catchment areas with others if any of them were to be implemented. For example, where first or primary schools are approved for closure, their catchment areas would be incorporated into that of the school proposed to become the new catchment school for that area. In some cases, the catchment areas of some first or primary schools may need to be adjusted to reflect adjusted Planned Admission Numbers (PAN).

It is very important to note that changes to catchment areas would not preclude parents from exercising their parental preference to apply for a place for their child at any school should they wish to do so.

24. Indicative costs and funding

If any of the models set out in this document were implemented, there would be a need to carry out extensive building works, including the provision of new buildings in some cases. An initial assessment shows that in relation to Models A and B, the costs of this work would be in excess of £50m, while the works required in Model C would cost in excess of £60m. Detailed buildings costs in relation to the models would be worked up and provided as part of the consultation process and presented to the Council for approval.

25. Implications for Staff

The implementation of any of the models proposed in this document would have implications for staff in schools across both Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships. Should any of these models be taken forward into formal consultation, detailed discussions with the Governing Bodies and with the Trades Unions would be undertaken about how any adverse implications of the proposals for staff could be minimised. The local authority will be holding meetings with staff and trades unions in each of the potentially affected schools, during this informal consultation phase.

26. Transport

Transport for individual pupils is always arranged in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy. Under Model A, B and C, some pupils who would otherwise have been on roll at the first and primary schools potentially proposed for closure in September 2019 would potentially have longer journeys to their new catchment school. Under Models A and B, students who would otherwise have been on roll at HBHS would travel to QEHS; however, a significant number of students who live in the HBHS catchment area already do so, they would become eligible for free transport subject to the Council's policy.

Should Model B be approved for implementation, pupils in first schools becoming primary schools would have shorter journeys to school in Years 5 and 6 as they would be educated for an additional two years in their local communities. Under Model B, journeys to school for some pupils in Years 7 and 8 may be a little longer.

27. Sport and Recreation

Any potential impact on Sport and Recreation would be discussed as part of the consultation process and reported back to the Council's Cabinet.

How will your views be gathered?

28. The Council would like to hear your views on the models of school organisation set out in this document and whether you have any alternative proposals. A response form is attached for your use at the back of this document. The form can be completed online at

www.northumberland.gov.uk/education/schools/consultations.aspx

If you prefer to send hard copies, the address is provided at the end of the form on this document.

This phase of consultation is open until midnight on 9 APRIL 2018.

In addition to completing the response form, you may wish to attend one of the many consultation events held at your local school or speak to the headteacher or governors personally. The Local Authority has recommended that each school runs its own consultation event to gauge the views of parents, pupils and staff. In addition public consultation events will be held in Haydon Bridge and Hexham:

- MONDAY 26 FEBRUARY, 4.30 P.M. TO 8.30 P.M., HAYDON BRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL
- SATURDAY 17 MARCH, 10.00 A.M. TO 3.00 P.M., HEXHAM AUCTION MART

Meetings for Governors and staff in schools proposed for closure in any of the models will also be held with the local Authority at those schools during the consultation period. Governors of all schools will be encouraged to hold their own meetings at their individual schools. These meetings are for parents of children attending the schools so that they can gain an understanding of their schools individual position on the consultation. Dates of these meetings will be made available by the schools themselves. In total there will be close to 100 meetings held over the course of the consultation period.

What happens to the feedback from this consultation and what are the next steps?

29. Following the analysis of all of the feedback received from consultees, officers will prepare a report on the outcomes of consultation with recommendations for the Council's Cabinet to be considered in early May.

The analysis of feedback will not be based on the number of responses for or against any particular model, although strength of feeling will be important, recommendations by officers will be based on the educational merit, sustainability and viability of the proposals set out here and those put forward during consultation. A further statutory consultation may then take place about any preferred option and this allow further feedback to be gathered and considered before any decisions are made.

The outcome of this consultation will be reported back to the Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3 May 2018 and to the Council's Cabinet on 8 May 2018. Council's Cabinet will decide whether or not to move to the publication of a statutory proposal, which is the formal consultation period. You will have the opportunity to respond during a four week period after which the Council's Cabinet would make a formal decision on whether or not to implement any proposals on 10 July 2018.

Please now complete the Consultation Response Form.

CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM
VIEWS ON PROPOSED OPTIONS FOR SCHOOLS IN HAYDON BRIDGE AND HEXHAM
PARTNERSHIPS

PART 1- ABOUT YOU

Your name: _____

Are you responding mainly as a:

Parent/carer: ☐ Governor: ☐

Staff Member: ☐ Pupil/ Student: ☐

If you ticked any of the above, with which school or schools are you associated?

Resident: ☐ Town or village in which you live: _____

Parish Councillor: ☐ Parish/town council: _____

Other: ☐ Please clarify: _____

PART 2 – YOUR VIEWS ON MODEL A

- 1) Having read the consultation document thoroughly, I believe that Model A represents a good option for securing sustainable and viable education in the west of Northumberland. This model includes the closure or merger of several schools.

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐

a) Your reasons for ticking the above (please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

- b) In your opinion, if it is a viable option but there are changes to Model A that would improve it please outline them below, please use additional sheets as necessary?

PART 3 – YOUR VIEWS ON MODEL B

- 3) Having read the consultation document thoroughly, I believe that Model B represents a good option for securing sustainable and viable education in the west of Northumberland. This model includes the closure or merger of several schools.

Yes

☐

No

☐

Don't know

☐

- a) Your reasons for ticking the above (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary).

b) In your opinion, if it is a viable option but there are changes to Model B that would improve it, please outline them below, use additional sheets as necessary?

PART 4 – YOUR VIEWS ON MODEL C

- 3) Having read the consultation document thoroughly, I believe that Model C represents a good option for securing sustainable and viable education in the west of Northumberland. This model includes the closure or merger of several schools.

Yes

☐

No

☐

Don't know

☐

a) Your reasons for ticking the above (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary).

b) In your opinion, if it is a viable option but there are changes to Model C that would improve it, please outline them below, use additional sheets as necessary?

PART 5 – YOUR ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS

5) If you have an alternative suggestions or would like to combine elements of models A,B,C , please set it out your views below (please continue on a separate sheet if necessary).

THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THIS CONSULTATION

Please return your Response Form to:

FAO Lorraine Fife, Children's Services, FREEPOST MP135, County Hall, MORPETH, NE61 1BR

Or send your response electronically to:

email educationconsultations@northumberland.gov.uk

Please note if you contact officers of the council directly then your responses will be referred to the consultation inbox to ensure your views are taken into account. It is likely that there will be several hundred responses and possibly thousands of responses to this consultation and therefore it will be impossible for officers to individually acknowledge receipt of replies or comments.



Hadrian Learning Trust

Building a better future for our children



Consultation on Proposals for Significant Changes at
Hexham Middle School and Queen Elizabeth High School

2 March – 29 March 2018

The future is always built on the past.

**For schools in the West of Northumberland,
our history is a long one.**

It reaches back over 400 years: from Elizabethan foundations; through Victorian Elementary schools; to a system post-1944 with Primaries, Secondary Moderns, Grammar school, and one of the country's very few Technical schools.

The 1970s saw the Primary-Secondary model replaced by First, Middle and High schools, accommodating the move to a comprehensive system without re-building the schools' estate.

The what and the how of curriculum, teaching and learning have also continued to evolve over the years.

We are proud of our history and want to build on it.

This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create a school system that delivers the very best education for all our children and the whole community for years to come.

We believe that a Primary-Secondary system is in the best interests of children who will eventually progress to Queen Elizabeth High School.

With careful consideration for children in the transition period; with the right investment across our schools; with the right planning informed by research and the experience of staff; we can create a sustainable system, with access to state-of-the-art, specialist facilities and with the scale to invest properly in children's academic and personal development.

Our vision for the future is:

- to support Primary schools, including small rural schools, to give every child the best start;
- then, in Secondary 'schools within a school', provide the "stepping stone" and pastoral support that are so valued in Middle schools;
- to maintain the high standards and broader opportunities that make QEHS the school of choice;
- and, by the time they leave school, ensure that every child can fulfil their potential.

Achieving this will be challenging; but by working in partnership, by building on what is already a very strong track record, we are confident that we can combine the best of the past with an exciting future.

Our consultation

We are not consulting on ANY of the options set out in Northumberland County Council's consultation. Instead, we are looking to answer two fundamental questions:

1. Should we change the age range of Hexham Middle School and Queen Elizabeth High School to form an 11-18 Secondary school from September 2021?
2. If a decision is taken by the Council/Department for Education to close Haydon Bridge High School, should we expand to welcome those children from September 2019?

Please read our full Consultation Document before helping us answer these questions. You can get a copy on www.gehs.net or from either HMS or QEHS school reception.

What would this mean for your child?

We understand that this will be the first question that many parents will ask. The answer partly depends on the age of your child. For full details, please see the Consultation Document on the QEHS and HMS web sites.

Our proposals are different to the options put forward by Northumberland County Council and would make change much more manageable.

Our aim in proposing these changes is to improve the educational journey for all children.

What would this mean for other schools?

Hadrian Learning Trust can only make decisions on behalf of HMS and QEHS but we know our proposals would have implications for other schools. Put simply, in order for QEHS to become a Secondary, it would have to be agreed that other schools become Primaries.

In the many other areas that have re-organised, change has taken a variety of forms:

- First schools added Year 5 and Year 6 to become Primaries;
- First and Middle schools merged to become Primaries;
- Middle schools became Primaries;
- Middle schools closed;
- Middle schools changed to become 9-16 or 11-16.

In our view, change need not necessarily mean that many rural schools must close.

Consultation Register - NCC
Proposals for Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships
Consultation February – April 2018

Consultees
Schools in Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships directly affected by proposals: Governors, staff, parents, pupils • Bellingham First School • Greenhaugh First School • Kielder Community First School • Otterburn First School • Wark C of E First School • West Woodburn First School • Haltwhistle Community Campus Lower Academy • Haydon Bridge High School • Bellingham Middle School • Haltwhistle Community Campus Upper Academy • Allendale Primary School • Greenhead C of E Aided Primary School • Haydon Bridge Shaftoe Trust Primary School • Henshaw C of E Aided Primary School • Newbrough C of E Primary School • Whitfield C of E Voluntary Aided Primary School • Hexham Middle School • Queen Elizabeth High School • Acomb First School • Beaufront First School • Broomhaugh C of E First School • Chollerton C of E First School • Corbridge C of E Aided First School • Hexham First School • Humshaugh C of E First School • Slaley First School • St Mary's RC VA First School • The Sele First School • Whitley Chapel C of E First School • Whittonstall First School • Corbridge Middle School • St Joseph's RC VA Middle School • Hexham Middle School (Hadrian Learning Trust) • Queen Elizabeth High School (Hadrian Learning Trust) Other Northumberland Schools in local area possibly affected - Heads and Chairs of Governors • Hexham Priory • Schools in Prudhoe Partnership • Schools in Morpeth Partnership • Schools in Ponteland Partnership • Mowden Hall

Representatives of multi-academy trusts:

Michael Mill – Good Shepherd

Zoe Carr – Wise Academy

Judith Greene – Bright Tribe

Schools in Neighbouring LEAs possibly affected – Head and Chairs only

Cumbria – William Howard Nenthead Primary, Alston Primary, Samuel Kings School

Durham – Ebchester CE Primary, Chopwell Primary, Shotley Bridge Primary, Bishop Ian Ramsey CE Primary, Benfieldside Primary, St Mary's RCVA Primary in Blackhill, Consett Academy, High Spen

Primary, Villa Real School, St Patrick's RC VA Primary in Consett, Delta Independent School, Consett Junior School, Consett Infant School, St Pius X Roman Catholic VA Primary, Derwentside College

Gateshead - St Thomas More Catholic School Blaydon, Emmaville PS, St Agnes' Catholic PS, Greenside PS, Ryton Junior School, Thorp Academy, Chopwell PS, High Spen PS, Crookhill Community PS, St

Joseph's RCVA PS in Highfield, Highfield Community PS, St Mary and St Thomas Aquinas Catholic PS,, Winlaton West Lane Community PS,, Rowlands Gill Community PS,

Newcastle - Dinnington FS, Walbottle Village PS, St Cuthbert's RC PS, Talbot House, Throckley PS, Newburn PS, Walbottle Campus, Newburn Manor PS

Directors of Education/Children's Services in
Neighbouring LAs

Cumbria

Durham

Newcastle

CE Diocese

RC Diocese

Early Years Care, Education Providers in Children's Centres, Child minders and parents of children in Haydon Bridge and Hexham partnership areas:

Local MP

Appropriate Parish Councils:

Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council

Shotley Low Quarter Parish Council

Acomb Parish Council

Corbridge Parish Council

Slaley Parish Council

Bywell Parish Council

Humshaugh Parish Council

Healey Parish Council

Hexham Town Council

Chollerton Parish Council

Whittington Parish Council

Sandhoe Parish Council

Wall Parish Council

Blanchland Parish Council

Hexhamshire and District Council

Henshaw Parish Council
Thirlwall Parish Council
Bellingham Parish Council
Hartleyburn Parish Council
Knarsdale with Kirkhaugh Parish Council
Melkridge Parish Council
Birtley Parish Council
Warden Parish Council
Haydon Parish Council
Simonburn Parish Council
Bardon Mill Parish Council
Kielder Parish Council
Coanwood Parish Council
Plenmeller with Whitfield Parish Council
Featherstone Parish Council
Haltwhistle Town Council
Rochester and Byrness Parish Council
West Allen Parish Council
Corsenside Parish Council
Newbrough Parish Council
Otterburn Parish Council
Tarsset with Greystead Parish Council
Allendale Parish Council
Greenhead Parish Council
Falstone Parish Council
Elsdon Parish Council
Wark Parish Council

Unions

DfE School place planning officer

Libraries – Hexham and Haydon Bridge

North Pennine Learning Partnership (NPLP)

Equality Impact Assessment

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:

The Council has carried out pre-publication consultation in relation to proposals for schools in the Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships (west Northumberland) between 19 February and 9 April 2018. This EIA has been completed following this informal consultation. Should Cabinet approve the publication of a statutory proposal, this EIA would be updated in the light of such formal consultation.

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

Informal Consultation - Proposals under consultation 19 February – 9 April 2018

The Council consulted on 3 broad options for schools in the west of the county as follows:

Model A

- Existing school organisation structures to remain in place in both Haydon Bridge Partnership and Hexham Partnership
- Haydon Bridge High School would close and student transfer to Hexham Middle School and Queen Elizabeth High School (QEHS) as appropriate
- 8 primary and first schools across both partnerships proposed would close

Model B

- Haydon Bridge High School would close

- First schools in Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships would become primary schools
- Middle Schools in Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships would close
- QEHS would become an 11-18 secondary school
- 8 primary and first schools across both partnerships would close.

Model C

- Haydon Bridge High School would merge with Newbrough Primary School to become an all-through 4-18 school
- First schools in Haydon Bridge Partnership would become primary schools
- Middle Schools in Haydon Bridge Partnership would close
- The existing school organisation structure in Hexham Partnership would remain in place
- 7 first schools in Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships would close.

Consultees were also asked for alternative proposals that would resolve the issues raised during consultation.

All interested parties were consulted by the Council in line with guidance, including parents, staff, pupils and Governors of the schools named above, other schools that would be impacted, parish councils, early years providers, unions, relevant MP and others.

The Council's Cabinet approved informal consultation to take place in two phases at their meeting on 19 December 2017 and delegated the timing and method of any second stage of informal consultation to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Deputy Leader/Member for Children's Services. The outcomes of the two phases of informal consultation will be considered by Cabinet on 8 May 2018.

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 West Woodburn, 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.

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 or 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, in the medium to long term, there is no reason to believe that the proposals would affect disabled children, staff or parents more positively or negatively than their peers. In particular, 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.

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 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 informal 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, West Woodburn, 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 proposed 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 proposed 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 proposed 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 proposed 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 proposed 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 consultation to suggest that any group would be disproportionately disadvantaged through the implementation of the proposed 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 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.

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.

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 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 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 consultation to suggest that 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 or 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:

	The equality analysis has not identified any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken.
X	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 informal consultation period. Should the proposals be approved and the process move to the publication of statutory proposals, the EIA would be further updated at the end of the statutory period. Appropriate action would be identified in the light of the consultation 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.