



Northumberland

County Council

CABINET

2 DECEMBER 2019

OUTCOMES OF THE STATUTORY PROPOSAL ON THE EXTENSION OF THE AGE RANGE OF WEST WOODBURN FIRST SCHOOL

Report of the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services - Cath McEvoy-Carr

Cabinet Member: Councillor Wayne Daley

Report prepared by Sue Aviston, Head of School Organisation and Resources

Purpose of report

This report sets out the outcomes of the formal statutory proposal to extend the age range of West Woodburn First School to become a primary school with effect from 1 September 2020, which has come about as a result of a request of the Governing Body of the River Rede Federation. Cabinet is asked to consider whether or not to approve the implementation of this proposal.

Recommendations

it is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1) Consider the responses to the statutory proposal for West Woodburn First School published on 5 September 2019 and take account of these in making the final decision on the proposal.
- 2) Note the implications of the proposal on pupils, parents, staff and the local community as set out in the Statutory Proposal and included with the Background Papers to this report.
- 3) Note the current number of pupils on roll at the school as at September 2019 and the predicted number in future years.
- 4) Note the implications for Home to School Transport (where relevant) of the statutory proposals as set out in this report.

- 5) Note the Department for Education's (DfE) school organisation guidance 'Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools; statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers, October 2018' (noted at para. 7 and attached to this report at Appendix 3) and that it advises that in making its final decision, Cabinet is able to:
- reject the proposal (see Recommendation 6);
 - approve the proposal without modification;
 - approve the proposal with modifications, having consulted the Governing Body; or
 - approve the proposal, with or without modification - subject to certain conditions (such as the granting of planning permission) being met.
- 6) In the light of the guidance in recommendation 5 above and the inconclusive outcomes of the statutory consultation highlighted at para. 5, Cabinet is recommended to:
- a) Reject the proposal to extend the age range of West Woodburn First School from an age 4-9 first school to an age 4-11 primary school with effect from 1 September 2020;
 - b) approve that a four-week informal consultation with stakeholders takes place on alternative options for West Woodburn First School, including whether the school should close.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report supports the Council's priority 'We want you to achieve and realise your potential' included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2018-2021.

Key issues

1. Cabinet approved the undertaking of a statutory consultation on a proposal to extend the age range of West Woodburn First School at their meeting on 9 July 2019. The proposal was brought forward by the Governing Body of The River Rede Foundation in recognition that the concerns in relation to teaching capacity and financial issues at the school that had led to Cabinet not approving the extension of the age range of West Woodburn in July 2018 had been addressed through the formation of The River Rede Federation with Otterburn Primary School and the additional leadership capacity that had brought. The proposal to extend the age range of West Woodburn would clarify educational pathways for pupils on roll in West Woodburn First School and would bring the school into line with the now prevalent primary/secondary organisation in the Haydon Bridge Partnership.
2. Statutory consultation on the proposal to extend the age range of West Woodburn from September 2020 began on 5 September 2019 for four weeks until 3 October 2019, as required under legislation. The full statutory proposal is provided at Appendix 1.

3. At the last school census in May 2019, there were eight (8) children on roll at the school as reported in the Report of the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children’s Services, 9 July 2019 when the request to undertake statutory consultation was made. Three of those pupils were in Year 4 and left the school at the end of the summer term to join other schools for Year 5 for September 2019 in line with current organisation. With the addition of another child joining the school in Reception at the beginning of the new Autumn Term, it was expected that there would be 6 pupils on roll at the school in September 2019. However, parents of three of the children in Year 2 removed their children from the school at the end of the summer term and placed them into Year 3 other local schools in September. A number of those parents have expressed their reasons for doing so in the representations received as part of this consultation. There are, therefore, currently only three (3) pupils on roll at West Woodburn First School and this is significant in relation to the ongoing viability and sustainability of the school.
4. Taking into account the number of children currently on roll at West Woodburn, the school is estimated to have a surplus budget at year end for the next four years as follows:

2019/20	2020/2021	2021/22	2022/23
£51,621	£44,759	£40,321	£52,554
Actual No. on roll = 3	Projected No. on roll = 5	Projected No. on roll = 10	Projected No. on roll = 14

The above projections assume that the children already on roll at the school will remain on roll, and that all the pre-school children assumed to be living in the West Woodburn catchment area based on GP/birth data will join the school (2 children into Reception in September 2020 and 5 children into Reception in September 2021) and the school becomes a primary school. However, this is an optimistic assumption in the light of the feedback received from the parents of former pupils at West Woodburn.

Representations

5. 17 representations were submitted to the consultation for consideration by Cabinet as follows:
 - a. a representation from the Governing Body of The River Rede Federation
 - b. 2 representations from parents of the 3 children on roll at West Woodburn First School
 - c. 1 representation from a member of the staff at West Woodburn First School/local resident
 - d. 4 representations from members of the community/interested parties
 - e. 9 representations from former parents of pupils in West Woodburn First School (including a one joint representation from 11 parents, some of whom also submitted individual representations)

Of the above representations received, 5 were in support of the proposal to extend the age range of West Woodburn First School to become a primary, and 12 representations object to the proposal.

SUMMARIES and COMMENTARY OF THE 5 REPRESENTATIONS IN SUPPORT OF THE PROPOSAL

Summary of Representation A - Governing Body of The River Rede Federation

- Governing Body is delighted with the success of The River Rede Federation
- Numbers are small, but strongly believe this recommendation is the best way forward for the children of West Woodburn
- Drop in numbers has been a reaction to shared education within the federation; parents have chosen to move to alternative provision to force the closure of the school so that transport provision will have to be provided by the Local Authority
- West Woodburn children would benefit from continuing in Year 5 and 6 with the Federation as well known to staff and ensures continuity throughout KS2.
- West Woodburn financial position is now positive through shared staff, resources, SLAs and subject specialists
- Ask that the proposal is accepted to bring West Woodburn into line with the other primary schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership.

Summary of representations from parents of current pupils on roll at West Woodburn First School (Representations B and C)

- Children are happy coming to school [at West Woodburn/Otterburn]
- Fully support the school in becoming a primary school as part of the 2-tier system [in the area]

Summary of Representation D - member of staff/local resident

- Fully support proposal to change West Woodburn to primary
- Will bring the school into line with two-tier system in other primaries and will secure the future of the school
- The school plays an important role in the local community and to offer education for longer is positive for this rural parish

Summary of Representation E - member of local community/interested party

- Local resident in West Woodburn fully in support of the school changing to a primary school.
- The school is an essential asset of the village
- It is a positive move to provide education in the village for longer.

Commentary

The arrangements put in place by the Governing Body of the River Rede Federation between Otterburn and West Woodburn appear to be working well and are well-received by the parents of the pupils on roll at the school. However, with only 3 children currently on roll at West Woodburn, the viability and sustainability of the arrangements going forward is predicated on more children joining the school in future years and therefore this must be considered in the light of the comments of parents of former pupils at the school as set out below.

SUMMARIES OF THE 12 REPRESENTATIONS **AGAINST** THE PROPOSAL

Summary of Representations from parents of former West Woodburn Pupils against the proposal (Representations F-N)

The representations objecting to the proposal submitted by parents of former pupils of West Woodburn First School had common themes as follows:

- During Education in the West consultation, parents were told that West Woodburn First School would not be able to become a primary school due to small pupil numbers, cost of conversion etc when there were 20+ children on roll
- With only 3 pupils on roll currently, how is the school now viable as a primary? It is not sensible.
- There have been issues with teaching staff presence (not quality) and education performance at West Woodburn has declined
- Most of the parents with pupils on roll at the school have now removed them to Bellingham Primary School as a result of issues
- The Federation with Otterburn was not wanted by parents, there were no West Woodburn Parent Governors on the Governing Body when the decision was made
- The continuance of West Woodburn means that children living in its catchment are not eligible for transport to other preferred schools as it is also the closest school for most catchment pupils. Some parents are considering moving in order to become eligible to transport to their preferred school.
- Current West Woodburn pupils are transported to Otterburn several days a week as curriculum cannot be delivered on site
- Poor pupil experience at West Woodburn educationally.

Commentary

While the draft models for organisation put forward during the Education in the West consultation did propose merger or closure for West Woodburn, feedback during that consultation indicated that the preference was for the school to remain open and it was included in the original statutory proposals to make all the remaining first schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership primary with effect from September 2019.

However, there has been a significant fall in the roll of West Woodburn since the Education in the West consultation. The comments of the parents of the former pupils

at West Woodburn are particularly important in that they provide an indicator of the potential viability of the school going forward.

The Council's Home to School Transport Policy has to be applied fairly and equitably across the county. However, where the local school is not popular within its own community, the application of the policy can seem unfair to parents. Should Cabinet approve informal consultation as recommended, transport will be a significant factor in forming any statutory proposal.

Summary of Representations from members of local community/interested parties against the proposal which had common themes (Representations O-P)

2 representations objecting to the proposal submitted by members of the local community/interested parties had similar themes:

- Given fall in pupil numbers to 3 at West Woodburn, how will the school not be in deficit and therefore how has it been able to federate re DfE requirements?
- Pupil numbers West Woodburn has fallen since federation.
- LA has a robust approach to application of the Home to School Transport Policy which conflicts with desire to reduce transport to school in private vehicles
- Would cost less to support transport costs to other schools than to keep school running
- West Woodburn budget would increase due to transport costs to Otterburn and additional staff - how will the school be financially stable with only 3 pupils?
- No guarantee that all predicted future pupils of West Woodburn will attend; therefore potential increasing surplus places
- West Woodburn building not used for any other purpose than as a school and it is close to two other schools
- Proposal should be rejected and consideration given to role of Officers in waste of public money/ Council's accountability for public purse
- Consultation should be on whether it should remain open, not become a primary.

Summary

The above comments are valid for consideration by Cabinet in making its decision in relation to whether or not West Woodburn First School should extend its age range or whether further consultation on alternative options for the school should be undertaken.

Summary of Representation from a member of the local community/interested party against the proposal (Representation Q)

- Objects to the proposal
- Proposal should be revoked as the Council has failed to comply with statutory regulations for the revocation of the proposal to re-organise the Bellingham Middle School catchment area.

- West Woodburn should remain open as a first school as Bellingham Middle School remains open and can take children from Year 5 to 8
- No rationale for expanding a first school that has 5 or fewer pupils in total
- Various comments and information submitted against the implementation of the Council's decision made in July 2018 to change the age range of Wark CE, Kielder, Greenhaugh, Otterburn and Bellingham First Schools to become primaries in September 2019.

Commentary

The member of the public who has submitted the above representation has included matters outwith the remit of the statutory proposal to extend the age range of West Woodburn First School, in particular by alleging that the Council has not complied with statutory legislation in relation to the implementation of the decision to extend the age ranges of Wark CE, Otterburn, Kielder, Greenhaugh and Bellingham Primary School (previously first schools), the Council has 'failed to comply with statutory regulations'. This member of the public has submitted this allegation to the Council via other avenues i.e. the corporate complaints process and Freedom of Information. The Council has written separately to the relevant member of the public on this matter.

All 17 representations are provided in full statutory proposals at Appendix 2 for consideration by Cabinet.

Conclusion and next steps

6. This consultation has followed on from the Education in the West consultation (when the decision was made to change the remaining primaries in the North Tyne and Redesdale area of the Haydon Bridge Partnership to primaries, except West Woodburn, and to close Bellingham Middle School), and the decision of the Governing Bodies of Otterburn and West Woodburn First Schools to form The River Rede Federation in March this year. The schools, parents and pupils in this area of the partnership are still adjusting to the new primary/secondary organisation of schools, and the decision of the Schools Adjudicator to overturn the decision to close Bellingham Middle School has not assisted in the desire to establish a clear, educational pathway in this part of the partnership. Since the decision by Cabinet to approve consultation on the extension of the age range of West Woodburn was made in July 2019, more parents have removed their children from the school and only 3 children now remain on its roll.
7. The outcomes of this consultation have been inconclusive. While feedback from the Governing Body of West Woodburn and the parents of children on roll at the school has been positive, this has to be tempered with the fact that there are now only 3 children on roll at the school and that a larger number of children living in the West Woodburn catchment of first school age attend other local schools. The views expressed in greater numbers by the parents of the former pupils who until recently attend West Woodburn provide the reasons why this is the case (see para. 5). These parents and the majority of the members of the local community who responded to the consultation believe that West Woodburn is no longer viable and does not provide an adequate educational experience for pupils. Officers believe it is therefore appropriate

to undertake a further period of informal consultation with stakeholders on alternative options for West Woodburn, including an option to close the school.

8. In formulating its decision, Cabinet is advised to be mindful of the guidance to decision-makers set out in the DfE's 'Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools from p. 29 (attached to this report at Appendix 3), noting in particular:

“Decision-makers will need to be satisfied that the appropriate fair and open local consultation and/or representation period has been carried out and that the proposal has given full consideration to all the responses received. Decision-makers should not simply take account of the numbers of people expressing a particular view. Instead, they should give the greatest weight to responses from those stakeholders likely to be affected by a proposal - especially parents of children at the affected school.”

9. With regard to the final decision, Cabinet are able to:
- reject the proposal;
 - approve the proposal without modification;
 - approve the proposal without modifications, having consulted the LA and/or GB (as appropriate); or
 - approve the proposal, with or without modification - subject to certain conditions (such as the granting of planning permission) being met.
10. If Cabinet approves the recommendation to reject the proposal to extend the age range of West Woodburn First School and to move to informal consultation on a proposal to close the school with effect from August 2020, a four week informal consultation period (not including school holidays) from 4 December 2019 until 15 January would be undertaken. Consultation periods are not mandatory and a shorter informal consultation period is suggested in this case in view of the number of consultations on education provision already imposed upon the local community of West Woodburn in the last 22 months. The results of that consultation would be brought back to Cabinet for a decision on whether or not to move to statutory consultation on the closure of the school.
11. If Cabinet is not able to make a decision in relation to the proposal to extend the age range of West Woodburn within two months of the end of the representation period i.e. by 3 December 2019, the proposal and all representations received during the representation period must be forwarded to the Schools Adjudicator within one week of the end of the two month period for determination.

Background

12. West Woodburn First School is a small, rural school within the Haydon Bridge Partnership.
13. The rationale for the proposed extension of the age range of West Woodburn First School is set out in the Report of the Executive Director of Adult and Children's Service to Cabinet of 9 July 2019, available in the Background Papers to this report. In summary, in July 2018 Cabinet did not approve a statutory proposal to extend the

age range of the school as information had arisen during the statutory period concerning the viability of the school as a primary school due to falling pupil numbers and pressure on the school budget. However, following local consultation the Governing Bodies of Otterburn First School and West Woodburn First School agreed to federate to become The River Rede Federation in March 2019. This was on the basis that the federation would bring better financial monitoring and control at West Woodburn and pupils would benefit from increased teaching and learning capacity.

14. Based on pupil numbers on roll at West Woodburn in July 2019, it was predicted that there would be six children on roll at the school for September 2019, include a new pupil in Reception. However, the parents of three children decided to move them to the roll of Bellingham First School for the beginning of the new school year. The number of children living in the catchment area that could join the school in future years is as follows:

Potential Reception 2020	Potential Reception 2021	Potential Reception 2022
2	5	4
Max total roll = 5	Max total roll = 10	Max total roll = 14

15. In September 2019, the remaining maintained first schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership (except West Woodburn) became primaries; while in Haltwhistle the middle academy closed in August and the first academy extended its age range to become Haltwhistle Primary Academy as part of the Wise Academies Trust.
16. The Headteacher of the federation of Otterburn Primary and West Woodburn First Schools has established the following educational timetable to ensure that children on roll at West Woodburn receive the same broad and balanced curriculum as their peers and in order to socialise with Otterburn pupils:

Monday - West Woodburn pupils arrive at Otterburn Primary School at 9.00a.m. until 2:45pm; lessons include forest schools, PE and Science.

Tuesday - West Woodburn pupils arrive at Otterburn for lunch at 12.00 and leave at 2:45pm - lesson topic is Personal Health, Social, Citizenship and Education.

Wednesday - West Woodburn pupils arrive for lunch at 12:00 and leave at 2:45pm - lessons are given in Music and languages

Thursday - West Woodburn pupils at West Woodburn site all day

Friday - West Woodburn pupils at West Woodburn site all day

17. The extension of the age range of West Woodburn First School to become a primary school would bring it into line with its federation partner school, Otterburn Primary School, and all other primary schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership and in accordance with the prevalent primary/secondary structure. Parents would retain the

right to express a preference for their preferred school in any event. However, Cabinet should note Recommendation 6 of this report.

Timeline for implementation of the statutory proposal to extend the age range of West Woodburn

18. Informal and formal consultation on reorganisation was undertaken in the Haydon Bridge Partnership in 2018 and parents of pupils in West Woodburn have subsequently been consulted on the federation proposals between Otterburn and West Woodburn. If Cabinet were to approve the statutory proposal to extend the age range of West Woodburn, the proposed timeline would be as follows:

November 2019

- parents wishing to apply for a place for their child in Reception at West Woodburn for September 2020 will be able to apply as usual but will be aware that the school would become a primary school from that date.

September 2020

- Any children on roll in Year 4 at West Woodburn First School in August 2020 would remain at the school as Year 5, or would transfer to another school subject to parental preference;

September 2021

- Any children on roll in Year 5 at West Woodburn Primary School in August 2021 would remain at the school as Year 6, or would transfer to another school subject to parental preference;

September 2022

- Any children on roll in Year 6 at West Woodburn Primary School in August 2022 would transfer to Haydon Bridge High School as Year 7, or would transfer to another school subject to parental preference;

Standards

19. The levels at which children in first schools are working in relation to reading, writing and maths are judged through KS1 assessments at the end of Year 2. The DfE do not publish the results of individual schools, as the main purpose of KS1 assessments is as a tool for teachers to identify children's needs before they move onto the KS2 curriculum in Year 3.

Furthermore, any judgement of a school's KS1 outcomes must be taken in context i.e. schools with very small cohorts are impacted more significantly either positively or negatively when individual children perform better or worse than expected in the assessments. The number of children undertaking KS1 assessments in 2019 at

West Woodburn was 5 and therefore statistically invalid in relation to drawing assumptions from performance data.

However, a number of the representations submitted by parents of former pupils at West Woodburn have expressed concerns over the educational experience and the educational performance of their children at the school (refer to representations H, K, L, M, N). Cabinet are asked to consider the issues raised by these parents in their deliberations.

Catchment area

20. Should Cabinet approve the proposal for implementation, the catchment area of West Woodburn would remain the same and it would become the catchment school for all children living within its catchment area from Reception up to Year 5 in 2020/21 and up to Year 6 from 2021/22 and subsequent years.

Implications for Staff

21. As West Woodburn now forms part of The River Rede Federation with Otterburn First School, the two schools have a shared leadership team overseen by the Executive Headteacher and a shared Governing Body. This has resulted in cost efficiencies for the school.

Transport

22. The issues raised by consultees during this consultation with regard to Home to School Transport are outlined at para. 5.

In any event, Home to School Transport would be arranged in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy.

Impact on the Community and Denominational Provision

23. Should Cabinet decide to approve the statutory proposal, children would remain in the village for an additional two years. As a community school, there is no envisaged impact on local denominational provision.

Special Educational Needs

24. None of the pupils currently on roll at West Woodburn have been identified with a Special Educational Need and there is no specialist SEN provision currently within the school, in keeping with most other first and primary schools.

Early Years Provision

25. West Woodburn does not currently have nursery provision, but its federation partner school, Otterburn Primary, does have nursery provision for 3 and 4 year olds.

Land and Buildings

26. The buildings of West Woodburn First School are in the ownership of the Council. The playing field is held on long term leasehold with a private owner. There would be no required building work at West Woodburn First School to enable it to become a primary school given the current capacity in the school building.

Sport and Recreation

27. There would be no impact on the current sport and recreation facilities at the school should Cabinet decide to approve the implementation of the statutory proposal.

Community Cohesion

28. It is not envisaged that the proposal to extend the age range of West Woodburn First School would have any impact either positively or negatively on community cohesion.

Implications

Policy	The consultations outlined in this report have been consistent with the Council's policy to review changes to schools in accordance with local wishes and needs
Finance and value for money	As there would be no building work required at West Woodburn to enable it to become a primary school, there are no implications for capital resources. Details of the school's budget situation are provided at para. 4
Legal	The statutory representation period noted was undertaken in compliance with School Organisation legislation.
Procurement	No implications
Human Resources	No implications
Property	Refer to 'Finance and value for money' above
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	An EIA is attached at Appendix 4
Risk Assessment	A full risk assessment has been carried out on this project.
Crime & Disorder	This report has considered Section 17 (CDA) and the duty it imposes and there are no implications arising from it.
Customer Consideration	The proposal for West Woodburn First School set out in this report is based upon the desire of the federated Governing Body

	ies to extend the age range of the school to become a primary school with effect from 1 September 2020 in line with all other primary schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership. The Council also has a duty to ensure that sufficient school places are available to all children of statutory school age resident in Northumberland.
Carbon reduction	It is not envisaged that these proposals would have a significant positive or negative impact on carbon reduction
Health and Wellbeing	No implications
Wards	Bellingham

Background papers

Update of School Organisation Plan and other school organisation matters, 9 July 2019

Report sign off

Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	LH
Service Director Finance & Interim S151 Officer	Alison Elsdon
Relevant Executive Director	CMcC
Chief Executive	DL
Portfolio Holder(s)	WD

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Statutory Proposal for West Woodburn First School

Appendix 2 - Representations submitted during the statutory consultation period

Appendix 3 - DfE's 'Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools - statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers October 2018

Appendix 4 - Equalities Impact Assessment



Northumberland County Council

STATUTORY PROPOSAL FOR WEST WOODBURN FIRST SCHOOL

In accordance with Section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF intends to make prescribed alterations to the following school:

CHANGE OF AGE RANGE

West Woodburn First School, West Woodburn, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 2RX by changing the age range of the school;

- The current age range of West Woodburn First School is 4 years to 9 years. The proposed age range for the school is 4 years to 11 years to take effect from 1 September 2020.

West Woodburn First School is a local authority maintained community school and forms part of the Haydon Bridge Partnership of schools. The school is also federated with Otterburn First School as part of The River Rede Federation, formed in 2019.

Contact Details

Copies of this proposal may be obtained from :
 School Organisation and Resources Team
 Northumberland County Council
 County Hall
 Morpeth
 Northumberland
 NE61 2EF

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

In the interests of providing further information, it is proposed that there would be changes to the capacity and planned admission number of West Woodburn First school as follows:

- **West Woodburn First School**, West Woodburn, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 2RX. The number of pupils on roll at the school at the May 2019 census was 8. The current published capacity of the school is 44. The proposed capacity of the school is to be 42. The current maximum number of pupils admitted at age 4 is 10. The maximum number of pupils to be admitted to the school at age 4 from 1 September 2020 and subsequent years would be 6.

Copies of the full Statutory Proposal may be obtained from:

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

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

Implementation

West Woodburn First School is proposed to extend its age range and to reorganise to become a primary school with effect from 1 September 2020 in a phased way. The school would retain Year 5 in September 2020 and would then retain Year 6 in September 2021.

Objectives

The objectives of this proposal are to:

- **Extend the age range of:-**
 - West Woodburn First School, West Woodburn, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 2RX by changing the age range of the school. The current age range of West Woodburn First School is 4 years to 9 years. The proposed age range for the school is 4 years to 11 years to take effect from 1 September 2020.

Reasons for proposal:

West Woodburn First School is a small, rural community first school located in the heart of West Woodburn village on the edge of the Northumberland National Park. Between January and April 2018, two extensive phases of informal consultation were carried out by Northumberland County Council on ideas for the organisation of schools in Haydon Bridge and Hexham School Partnerships in the west of the county. While a statutory proposal to extend the age ranges of the remaining first schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership, including West Woodburn First School had been published in July 2018, the Council's Cabinet did not approve the extension of the age range of West Woodburn First School to take place in September 2019 so that officers could carry out further work on issues relating to staffing and finance at the school.

Since Autumn 2018, the headteacher at Otterburn First School has provided oversight and leadership capacity at West Woodburn First School. Furthermore, in March 2019, the Governing Bodies of West Woodburn and Otterburn First Schools agreed to the formation of The River Rede Federation following consultation. This means there is now one Governing Body and one Executive Headteacher with responsibility for the governance and leadership of the two federated schools. The federation in place is now providing improved financial stability and enhanced educational provision. Further leadership capacity in the federation will be created by the appointment of a Deputy Headteacher to support the Executive Headteacher; this post will work across both schools to ensure consistent leadership capacity and a focus on improving educational standards in the school.

The proposal to reduce the PAN at the school to 6 from September 2020 reflects the intake of the catchment area. Should this Statutory Proposal be approved for implementation, the School's Adjudicator would need to make the decision as to whether or not to approve the reduction in the PAN from September 2020. In any event, in Autumn 2019 the Council will consult on the reduction of the PAN to 6 with effect from September 2021.

On 1 September 2019, Wark CE, Otterburn, Greehaugh, Bellingham and Kielder First Schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership became primary schools; they will retain Year 4 pupils into Year 5 in September 2019, and then Year 5 pupils into Year 6 in September 2020. Furthermore, Haltwhistle Middle Academy closed on 31 August 2019 and Haltwhistle Primary School now provides education from nursery to Year 6 from 1 September 2019. West Woodburn First School and Bellingham Middle School (which remains open as a result of the decision of the School's Adjudicator to overturn the Council's decision to close the school with effect from August 2019) currently remain organised within the 3-tier system within the partnership. The Federated Governing Body of Otterburn and West Woodburn now feels that, having placed West Woodburn in a more financially stable and educationally viable position, it would be better for the school to be organised as a primary school in order to work more effectively with its federation partner Otterburn Primary School and to benefit from the prevalent primary/secondary educational pathway established across the Haydon Bridge partnership from September 2019 onwards. Pupils leaving their primary schools and primary academies in the Haydon Bridge Partnership at the end of Year 6 will feed to Haydon Bridge High School. However, parents would retain the right to express a preference for their preferred school in any event.

Effect on other schools, academies and educational institutions in the area

The extension of the age range of West Woodburn First School to become a primary school would bring it into line with its federation partner school, Otterburn Primary School, and all other primary schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership and in accordance with the prevalent primary/secondary structure. Parents would retain the right to express a preference for their preferred school in any event.

Project Costs and Proposed Stages for Implementation

There is no required building work at West Woodburn First School to enable it to become a primary school given the current capacity in the school building.

Pupil Numbers and Admissions

There were 8 pupils on roll at West Woodburn First School in the May 2019 census. The current age range of West Woodburn First School is 4 years to 9 years and provides education to both boys and girls. There are currently no children with an Educational Health Care Plan enrolled at the school.

Timeline for Implementation**November 2019**

- parents wishing to apply for a place for their child in Reception at West Woodburn for September 2020 will be able to apply as usual but will be aware that the school will become a primary school from that date.

September 2020

- Children on roll in Year 4 at West Woodburn First School in August 2020 would remain at the school as Year 5, or would transfer to another school subject to parental preference;

September 2021

- Children on roll in Year 5 at West Woodburn Primary School in August 2021 would remain at the school as Year 6, or would transfer to another school subject to parental preference;

September 2022

- Children on roll in Year 6 at West Woodburn Primary School in August 2022 would transfer to Haydon Bridge High School as Year 7, or would transfer to another school subject to parental preference;

Impact on the Community

There would be a positive impact on the community of West Woodburn village as children would remain in the village for an additional two years.

Balance of denominational provision

There would be no impact on the balance of denominational provision as West Woodburn First School does not have a faith designation.

Rural Primary Schools

West Woodburn First School is listed on the DfE's List of Designated Rural Primary Schools 2018. However, as the proposal is for this school to extend its age range, this policy area would not be impacted.

Maintained nursery schools

West Woodburn First School does not currently have nursery provision.

Provision for 16-19 year olds

N/A

Special educational provision

In common with most first and primary schools, there is no specialist provision for pupils with SEND currently at West Woodburn First School. However, current SEND provision at the school would not be impacted by this proposal.

There are currently no pupils with a statement of Special Educational Needs/Education Healthcare Plan on roll at West Woodburn School.

Travel

- Transport for pupils resident in Northumberland is arranged in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy and designated catchment areas.
- Pupils transferring from Year 4 to Year 5 at West Woodburn in September 2020 would remain in the school as it reorganises to primary status. It is envisaged that pupils in Years 5 and 6 at the school would have shorter journeys to school as they would be educated for an additional two years in their local community. Furthermore, most children living in the village of West Woodburn would be in walking distance of West Woodburn First School.
- There would be no anticipated significant increase in car use as a result of these proposals.

Consultation

From January to April 2018, two extensive phases of informal consultation were carried out by Northumberland County Council in line with regulations on proposals for the organisation of schools in Haydon Bridge (and Hexham) School Partnership, including proposals for West Woodburn First School to become a primary school. The outcomes of those consultations are set out in the Report of the Director of Children's Services – 8 May 2018. The outcomes of the original statutory proposal setting out the proposal for West Woodburn to become a primary school is set out in the Report of the Executive Director of Children's Services, 10 July 2018; both reports are available on the Council's website at

<http://committee.northumberland.gov.uk/Meetings.aspx>

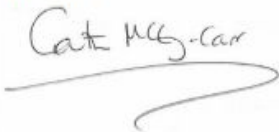
The Governing Bodies of West Woodburn and Otterburn First Schools also carried out consultation on their federation proposals in early 2019.

Submission of Objections and Comments on Proposals

Within four weeks after the date of publication of the above proposals (**i.e. by midnight on Thursday, 3 October 2019**), any person may object to or make comments on the proposal to extend the age range of West Woodburn First School by sending their written representations to: the **Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF**, or by email to educationconsultation@northumberland.gov.uk.

Signature

Publication Date: 5 September 2019



Cath McEvoy-Carr
Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services
Northumberland County Council

**REPRESENTATIONS SUBMITTED DURING THE STATUTORY CONSULTATION
PERIOD**

**Representations IN SUPPORT of the proposal to extend the age range of West
Woodburn First School**

Representation A from the Governing Body of The River Rede Federation

30th September 2019

Dear Cabinet

I am writing on behalf of the governing body of The River Rede Federation in response to the statutory proposal to change the age range at West Woodburn First School.

The governing body are delighted with the success of The Federation and the partnership which has been formed. Although the numbers at West Woodburn are small we strongly feel that this recommendation is the best way forward for the children of West Woodburn. We feel that the drop in numbers has been as a result of reaction to children receiving shared education within the Federation. Parents have chosen to move to alternative provision to try to force the closure of the school so that transport provision will have to be provided by the local authority. Parents that are supporting the school are enthusiastic about the opportunities that the Federation has provided both during the school day and extended hours.

West Woodburn children would benefit from continuing their education in Year 5 and Year 6 within the Federation as they are well known by all Federation staff, it ensures that there is continuity throughout Key Stage 2 thus providing a better quality education for all. Due the formation of the Federation the financial position for West Woodburn is now positive as a result of shared staff, resources, service level agreements and the provision of specialist subject teachers.

We would therefore ask that this proposal is accepted and that the age range at West Woodburn be in line with the other primary schools in the Hayden Bridge Partnership.

Yours faithfully,

Margaret Tait
On behalf of the Governing Body
The River Rede Federation

Representation B - parent of child on roll at West Woodburn First School

Dear Lorraine

As a parent of children who attend West Woodburn First School, I am writing in response to the statutory proposal to change the age range. I would like to express my support in the school becoming a primary school. My children are happy coming to school and I fully support the change in age range for my children to attend their village school for longer.

Representation C - parent of child on roll at West Woodburn First School

Dear Lorraine

As a parent of children who attend West Woodburn First School, I am writing in response to the statutory proposal to change the age range. I would like to express my support in the school becoming a primary school. My children are happy coming to school and I fully support the change in age range for my children to attend their village school for longer.

Representation D - from a member of staff of West Woodburn First School/member of the community

Dear Lorraine

I am writing in response to the proposal to change the age range at West Woodburn First School. I am a local resident to the school and also a member of staff at West Woodburn First School. I am in full support for the school to change to primary school. I feel it will bring the school in line with the two tier system that has been introduced into other primary schools in the area and will secure the future of the school. The school plays an important role within the local community and to be able to offer education for longer locally is a positive for our rural parish.

Kind Regards

Representation E - member of the local community/interested party

Dear Lorraine

I am writing in response to the proposal to change the age range at West Woodburn First School. I am a local resident in West Woodburn and I am in full support of the school changing to a primary school. I feel the school is an essential asset of the village and for it to provide education to the children of the village for

longer is a positive move.

Kind Regards

Representations AGAINST of the proposal to extend the age range of West Woodburn First School

Representation F from a parent of a former pupil of West Woodburn

I would like to object to the proposal of West woodburn school becoming a primary.

My reasons for this are due to the lack of student numbers I believe there are only going to be 3 children in the school.

I am a former parent of west woodburn school and moved my child due to the uncertainty of the schools future. During previous meetings at the school prior to me removing my child they informed me the school could not become a primary due to the lack of children I believe there was about 21 children at the time.

I would like to know how this is now a viable option as I feel my daughter will not get the education she deserves if she is shipped between 2 schools (my child is due to start year 5 in September 2020).

Thank you

Representation G from a Parent of a former pupil of West Woodburn

To Whom It May Concern,

My daughter X attended West Woodburn First School from September 2017 until September 2019.

For the first year she was very happy there, it is a small school and I think at that time they had just over 20 pupils. Despite the head teacher being on long term sick leave the acting head teacher Mrs Y was doing a marvelous job in her absence.

When the initial process of turning the three tier system into a two tier system began, it was made very clear that West Woodburn was unlikely to be part of this new two tier system. The site is very small and would of needed a lot of adapting in order to adhere to the 'Primary' status. In addition to this, the small pupil numbers and the continuing drop in pupils numbers in the next few years meant it was not viable.

As the outcome looked to be very negative this prompted many parents to move their children from West Woodburn into a more stable environment at Bellingham First School, sadly Mrs Y also left which was another blow for the children and parents.

I attended several meetings regarding the process, as time passed and Mrs Henderson (head teacher at Otterburn) became acting Head at West Woodburn there didn't appear to

be any further information as to what would happen. A federation between governors at West Woodburn and Otterburn was discussed which seemed a good prospect. However, parents who had children of Reception age wanted answers, if there were just 2 Reception students and the rest of the children were much older, how would the younger ones be catered for - no answer was given. This prompted those parents to take their children elsewhere, again, to a more stable environment.

Going into September 2018 there were only 8 students, 5 in Year 2 and 3 in Year 4. I kept my daughter in, thinking that she would benefit from a better one-to-one type of learning experience. Whilst her teacher, Mrs Z was fantastic, we only realised, toward the end of the summer term, that she wasn't always there - she was spending half of her time at Otterburn school. The children would also travel up to Otterburn one day a week to do some of their classes there - this was all very unsettling for the children.

I finally decided, a week before the end of Summer term, that X would go to Bellingham Primary from September 2019.

The fact that 2 years on, a year after the decision was made for all of the other First School's to become Primary, there is to be a proposal to turn West Woodburn into a Primary school is preposterous.

West Woodburn currently has 3 children attending, 2 in Year 3 and 1 Reception student, 4 afternoons a week those children are transported up to Otterburn Primary for their studies, it is barely functioning as a school so what would turning it into a Primary achieve? In my opinion this is an blatant attempt by the council to:

A) Avoid supplying those children from the West Woodburn/Ridsdale area transport to Bellingham Primary School - we have all applied and been declined.

B) Make every effort to stop children, going into Years 5 and above, from attending Bellingham Middle School.

There are very, very few parents in our local area who wanted the two tier system when it was first discussed, however, it went ahead regardless, causing worry and stress for us and our children.

If I was to keep my daughter in the two tier system, when she reaches the age of 11 she will have to travel for over 45mins, each way, to get to Haydon Bridge High School, on a bus full of children older than her - this is absolutely not what I want. I do want my daughter to attend her local school, Bellingham Middle and will be doing everything in my power to make sure that it remains open.

Your sincerely,

Representation H and Representation I (identical submissions) - Parents of former West Woodburn pupil

To whom it may concern

I wish to comment on the proposal of extending the age range at west woodburn first school and OBJECT in the strongest possible terms.

My reasons being:

1. During the consultation to reorganise schools last year, West Woodburn was set for closure in all 3 of county councils proposals, the reasons were: low pupils numbers, predicted intake for reception children over the next 3 years were low, the large predicted deficit in the schools budget for forthcoming years. During this period governors, staff & parents were repeatedly told that the school was not and would not be viable as a primary school due to the factors listed above and the cost of altering the old building to meet the requirements of a primary school. West Woodburn survived the reorganisation but remained a first school.

How is it, with 3 children on roll, now viable as a primary when it was NOT deemed viable with 26 pupils on roll last year?

2: After the consultation we then had another consultation to federate West Woodburn with Otterburn First school. Mrs Henderson was at this point joint head of both schools. There were many meetings with Mrs Henderson, governors and parents. At every meeting none of our questions could be answered with regards to what the federation would mean or 'look like'. Every parent who had a child in West Woodburn school at the time OBJECTED to the federation. Parents from Otterburn First School also objected to the federation but it still went ahead!

It should be noted that during the consultation to federate West Woodburn First had NO staff or parent governors! Children were then required to travel to Otterburn once a week to receive some of their education there. This had previously been 'tried & tested'. West Woodburn pupils used to travel to Bellingham first once a week. It proved to have a detrimental effect on the children's education and the children's mental health declined significantly. Parents voted with their feet and With such a lack of support from management of both schools West Woodburn lost over 60% of its pupils! Parents were quite simply sick of their children being used as guinea pigs.

3. Since the federation the quality of education has declined considerably. This can be measured by the children 's progress (or lack of) and year 2 sats results. My child's academic progress has declined so much that we removed her before her understanding got so low she would need support to access the curriculum. It should be noted that in December 2018 she was either working securely, secure or exceeding her age related expectations. In July 2019 she was not even working towards her age related expectations in any subject!

4. From September 2019 West Woodburn pupils are required to travel to Otterburn at 11:15 four mornings a week to receive education up there. The school cannot offer the whole of the curriculum onsite. It is beyond belief that a school with 3 pupils, that cannot offer the

whole of the curriculum on site, that sits empty EVERY single day from 11:15 am, is even being considered to become a primary school!

I was on the governing body at the time of the schools reorganisation, as were other parents, we were repeatedly told by David Street the school would never, ever be viable as a primary school! I am disgusted that, as a parent of a child in the schools catchment area, we have had no correspondence with regards to the consultation to extend the age range at the school. The community have no idea about it. I found out via the Hexham Courant's Facebook page!

It is therefore my view that this school is not only unsuitable to become a primary school but totally unviable as a school. There are no children going to enter the school in reception in the next 2 years as parents with children coming of reception age have expressed they will be sending their children else where.

I object in the strongest possible terms to this school becoming a primary school!

Yours sincerely

Representation J - Parent of former West Woodburn Pupils

To whom it may concern.

I am objecting to West Woodburn First School becoming a Primary school. When my children attended West Woodburn there were 23 pupils attending the school. The parents were told that the school was not viable to become a Primary school because it would cost over £100,000 for the work to be carried out to bring it up to a standard to become a Primary and due to this uncertain future of the school, that is when parents started to move their children from the school. Now with 3 children attending it can now become a primary ??? I really think that the children are not been put first in this decision. How one teacher teach 3 children at the same time but all of different year groups? Is it really what's best for the children left?

Kind regards

Representation K - Parents of former West Woodburn Pupils

We would like to object to West Woodburn becoming a primary school.

We can honestly say that having sent 2 children there we have had a seriously bad experience with one of those children.

Our sons first day in year one was not a day he would like to repeat. His memory is sitting alone in assembly, he was asked by the head teacher if he was ok sitting alone to which he answered no, the head teacher left him sitting alone.

I have taken up my grievance with the head teacher as well as the governors to which I was very dissatisfied with the response.

Therefore given the above incident and due to the lack of either an explanation or apology to myself or my son we made the decision to move our children. If the school was to become a primary how would situations like this be dealt with in the future. We are yet to receive a satisfactory response from the governors, we wrote to them twice or the headteacher.

Another concern we had was how was our child, as a singleton doing the play based learning curriculum, given he was the only child in year one or reception, being taught? Parents and members of the public were told during a meeting held at West Woodburn First School in summer 2018 that West Woodburn could never be a primary school due to the size or lack of several facilities on site, toilets, changing rooms, hall and lack of classrooms. It was made very clear to everyone at that meeting that primary was not an option for West Woodburn school.

This suggest that if West Woodburn was to change to a primary school, given the information we were told, transport to our children will therefore be honoured? The people who came to this meeting should all be in the visitors book should you wish to find out numbers? You would also benefit from reading the minutes of that meeting. All this information should have been given to the public for them to make an informed choice regarding this schools future. NCC have been extremely elaborate with the truth regarding pupil numbers. How many parents would choose to send their children here? This information has not been sought after.

We believe that if NCC hadn't threatened to close West Woodburn first school in 2018 then there would not have been such poor admission figures. Financially how is this even an option? To keep a school open to be used once a week then to be transporting children to Otterburn 4 times a week? And food being sent between sites depending where the children are.

Are the children really at the primary focus here?

Who has looked into the educational achievements or standards of those children who left between January 2019 and September 2019. I know our son has had to learn to write correctly after being taught with year 2 child for 1 term he thought he should be writing joined up. Completely inappropriate for a 5 year old. How does the headteacher propose these scenarios don't keen happening with such small numbers?

We have no idea how the federation went ahead with no parent governors from West Woodburn First school and two of the parent governors from Otterburn First school left partly due to objecting to the federation. This is a matter that should be explained to the families who live in the catchment area of the schools, as parents we were told the federation would not go ahead if governors objected.

A final note, for those of us at the meeting in summer 2018 where we were told Primary could never be an option we will have to be honoured transport from year 5 due to there never being another option given to us at that point. At a meeting with my manager she agreed due to the huge amount of stress we were under trying to get our children temporarily work different hours until my eldest goes to the middle school this takes us to September 2020. Yes I know this was our choice to move our children but we followed the correct produces to complain and were left completely unsatisfied.

Regards

Representation L - Parent of Former West Woodburn First School Pupil

Dear Sir/Madam

As a parent of a child within the West Woodburn First School catchment I strongly object to the proposal to convert from a First School to a Primary School.

My son no longer attends West Woodburn First school due to the falling pupil numbers resulting in lack of social interaction with peers of his own age and gender. If he had of

remained there, he would have been the only boy in the whole school, which as of the beginning of the new school year in September 2019 is a grand total of 3 pupils not 8 as mentioned in the proposal. Since May 2019 3 pupils have moved onto middle school and a further 2 have chosen to move their children the Bellingham Primary school.

I and many other parents in the Woodburn attachment fail to see how this school can be appropriately managed and the children educated to the standard they are entitled to with only 3 children in attendance, let alone convert to a Primary and extend the age range to 11-year-old. There are more children from this school's catchment educated at other schools, mainly Bellingham Primary School than there are in attendance at Woodburn. I'm well aware that Woodburn school holds a 'Good' ofsted report, however this was achieved by a totally different team of teachers and Head and I would love to see their report now. There is failings on numerous levels.

I have always been in favour of the small local school but West Woodburn is just too small now. How can the children compete in team sports? How are they expected to interact with other children of their own age and gender? Baring in mind we live in a very very remote area of Northumberland where access to out of school's clubs requires parents to drive over 30mins to enable their children social interactions out of school. School is their main social education out of the family, and for them to be expected to go from a Primary school of 3 children to a high school of hundreds is unacceptable.

When it was initially proposed to Federate West Woodburn with Otterburn School I sat in a meeting where no parents from Woodburn supported the federation, resulting in a number of Governors from both schools resigning and most parents removing their children from the school. However, Tina Henderson carried on regardless. Tina Henderson also ensured parents at this meeting that federating the schools would only require the pupils of West Woodburn to attend Otterburn school for one day a week only. They now attend Otterburn 4 days a week, 20minutes extra travelling at each end of the day out of their normal school day. That is 160minutes a week learning they are losing. Most of the children in the Woodburn catchment already require a 20minute bus journey both to and from school on top of this. Of the 3 remaining children at Woodburn they all live within walking distance of the school and don't already have to travel to get there.

If the children need to attend Otterburn school 4 days a week why do they just not attend Otterburn or another school permanently and reduce travelling times?

How is it viable to maintain West Woodburn school for 3 children who are only there one day a week until the end of year 6??

We were told when the initial consultation period started for the shake up of the North Tyne schools that Woodburn could not become a Primary as it was too small, not viable and would require extensive building works costing over £110K to allow for adequate changing and toilet facilities and an extension to the PE hall for the extra age group legal requirements. How is this achievable now? Probably because all their lessons are at Otterburn so why do they not just go to Otterburn altogether?

Extending the age range is denying our children the education that they deserve, basically we are being told that if we wish our children to be educated at Bellingham or elsewhere, where we feel they will get the education they are entitled too, not spending there day travelling around Northumberland to another school we have to pay to transport them

ourselves. All children are entitled to a good education but only if you can afford to send them to a decent school in Northumberland it would seem. I now have to pay for my son to be transported on his brother bus to enable him the education he deserves.

People are starting to look for somewhere else to live out of Woodburn and Ridsdale because they cannot afford to transport their children to a good school. The village will be left with holiday homes and an aged population. I would certainly not buy a house in this area with the current state of West Woodburn school and the school transport inequalities. The council are denying these children transport to a good education.

Finally, I would also like to highlight the disgust that as a parent of a child in the West Woodburn catchment I have not formally been notified of this consultation or proposal. It directly effects my son's education yet I first heard about the proposal in the Hexham Courant and was only told about the consultation period by word of mouth.

Northumberland County Council have already disadvantaged the children of the North Tyne with converting to a 2 tier system, we are being discriminated against, our friends in the Hexham partnership have been listened to, I think we deserve to be listen to as well.

Yours Faithfully

Representation M - Group of 11 parents of former pupils of West Woodburn First Schools

RECEIVED
We write to you concerning the treatment and in specific the provision of transport for a group of pupils who have previously attended West Woodburn First School.

We have noted the somewhat self-congratulatory press coverage relating to the consultation and subsequent reorganisation of schools here in the West of the county. The county have spoken of their achievements in managing the retention of small schools and the transition from First to Primary schools whilst suffering significant financial hardships.

We would ask that you also recognise those pupils, or groups of pupils and families that may have suffered or been caused hardship. This particularly applies to West Woodburn First School.

For the last few years the school has been left to muddle through with the long term absence of an Executive Head teacher who provided much required help and support to the pupils and families. The caretaker arrangements left the school extremely vulnerable in terms of a political voice during the prolonged consultation period, through no fault of her own or the school by the end of the consultation the school was left without senior staff, without a Head, or Executive Head or a full governing body, in particular it was devoid of parental involvement.

Given the situation and the imposition of an Acting Head, who was naturally working in her own school and covering, when possible the day to day running of West Woodburn there was little or no direct of face to face consultation with families /carers.

The simple fact was that the families/carers voted with their feet. For the most it was a choice to give some stability to the pupils. It was better to go to a school that would be a stable base for the provision of primary education. These are after all vital years for these young people. That change and uncertainty provide stress and strain for all concerned.

The parents who have already moved our children have noticed an improvement with several areas of education, Northumberland County seem to say the education was not effected at West Woodburn. Could you explain to us how this is measured? The improvement in the children's education has been noticed by all parents who have moved. Perhaps this need to be looked into by Northumberland County, SATS results or reports should surely give you some more information or even speaking to the teachers at Bellingham First School.

Despite the authority stressing time and time again appropriate transport provision would be made for us this has not been the case.

The present situation sees West Woodburn School remaining open as a Federated School with a roll of less than 5 pupils in September. Whilst it is open the LEA state that it remains the local school for our children. The closure would see pupils dispersed between two like schools: Otterburn and Bellingham. Bellingham is the nearer school; travelling from West Woodburn it is two miles nearer than Otterburn. For all of us Bellingham is nearer than

Otterburn – this was an important factor in opting to send our children to their nearest school. To make that decision ahead of the governors declaring a federation (that was not wanted by our group) or closure, as the LEA should have advised the governors, gave our pupils a clear opportunity to lessen the disruption of either a federated school, where transport between the schools would be costly in terms of time and money, or where there would be no parental voice- West Woodburn has no parent governors. The parent Governors from Otterburn who were there when the schools were looking into federation have now also left.

At present the pupils are transported to Bellingham by family or friends which whilst an understandable option of parental choice is not consistent with a local authority that supports the green approach, which seeks to reduce the number of pupils that are independently taken by car to school.

The additional stress and strain on the families and friends is also a matter of concern particularly given the rural nature of the roads.

We therefore ask you, and as a matter of urgency, to review the decisions that mean our children are not provided with home to school transport.

We are prepared to pursue this matter both collectively and individually. Naturally the individual appeals/ complaint will be difficult and time consuming for all. We understand that we can collectively and individually make appeals, refer to the Local Government Ombudsman and a range of other bodies.

We believe we can collectively and or individually make a case through media routes and we will have no hesitation in highlighting such things as clear breaches in the current transport home to school policy application where some pupils are transported to schools that are clearly not their local school

We are aware of some families who in effect are being held to ransom unable to access the education they feel is correct for their children, but unable to transport them to the school.

Clearly this matter is of real importance and needs to be addressed promptly, hence we ask for a full and proper response to each of us with a ten day period to enable us to pursue any and all other routes prior to the beginning of the new school year.

Representation N - Parent of Former West Woodburn First School Pupil

I am sending this email to express my objection to West Woodburn first school becoming a primary school. I have moved my daughter from this school at the start of September and placed her in Bellingham Primary School, for numerous reasons. We have supported the school up until then and following many conversations over the summer holidays we made the decision to move her as we needed to think of our daughters education over the needs of supporting our village school.

Over the last year we as parents of children at West Woodburn have been told that our school was closing, to then be told that the school would never be a primary school due to the size etc. If this had been an option a year ago there would still be a lot of children there and also including new starters. I personally feel that we have been misinformed, lied too and kept in the dark over certain things and I think to find out via Facebook that West Woodburn could be a primary was an absolutely disgrace.

Over the last year we have lost some good teachers and I do feel that my daughters education has suffered and what a difference we have seen in her as a person but also her education since making the move to another school. I strongly believe that because of how things have been portrayed to us over the last year and that parents of children starting school for the last 2 intakes have felt that their best option was another school, the future of west Woodburn school is over and making it in to a primary school is pointless as no parents will move their children back to West Woodburn when we have all witnessed an improvement in not only the education side of things but they are all happy and are enjoying school.

We should have been having this discussion 12-18 months ago, it's too late for this to be happening now.

Representation O from member of the local community/interested party

Dear Sirs,

Please find below a response to the proposed changes to the capacity and planned admission number at West Woodburn First School.

The Cabinet of Northumberland County Council agreed to publish a statutory proposal relating to the extension of the age range at West Woodburn First School at their meeting in July 2019.

The proposal is stated to come from the federated governing body of Otterburn and West Woodburn Schools. It was supported, at Cabinet, by a report from officers of NCC and whilst this report was not initially attached to the statutory proposal a document headed Implementation has since been added to the statutory proposal. This would seem typical of the manner that information relating to the provision of education in the West of the County has to be found. That the original report was not included in the consultation notice but had to be requested.

I do wish to comment on the proposal and object in the strongest possible terms and will use the above mentioned report and document headed Implementation as a framework for my response.

The presentation to Cabinet fell under a general heading of the School Organisation Plan update and contained data and information relevant to school places in the county but perhaps not surprisingly, given the Officers approach to it, there is no mention of the ongoing situation at Bellingham Middle School which is highly relevant to the pupils and families of pupils in the area.

The report to Cabinet references the informal consultation in Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships in 2018. It should be noted that these were two very different consultations; one referred to the two and three tier provision and the second sought to ensure provision for small numbered rural schools covering a wide geographical area.

Background

To give context and expand on the consultation at West Woodburn School the conclusions were :- should the school close then pupils could transfer to either Bellingham or Otterburn as both schools were geographically accessible (within national transport guidelines) and both schools had physical capacity.

Should the school remain open it would not be suitable for transition to a primary school as:- it was unsuitable for the sort of building work that may be required to create a greater number of teaching areas. It is currently a two room teaching facility.

pupil number projections were of concern, the 20 plus pupils included no pre school pupils, no reception pupils and only a single Year 1 pupil.

The budget both at that time and projected showed a deficit

In addition the Governing Body had fallen to three people, included no representation from the school nor any parent governor.

A key factor had been the long term absence of the Headteacher, who could have offered support, information and guidance for the parents, staff and individual governors whilst also being able to give the LEA information to assist them in their work with the Governing Body especially during the consultation.

In September 2018 the Headteacher from Otterburn School took on the additional role as Acting Headteacher at West Woodburn. It was felt by many around the playground and school gate that there was a clear agenda that Otterburn School would take over West Woodburn School.

Federation

The first step was the announcement that there would be a proposed federation.

The Governors at West Woodburn stated that they would wish to “ensure the very best education for children in their communities’ and “provide long term stability and sustainability”. They go on to say that federating would require the Governing Bodies (West Woodburn and Otterburn) to “ensure due diligence and financial probity : honest and effective financial management”.

The letter to parents stated that federated schools keep their own DCFS number, delegated budget, standards fund allocations, admissions arrangements and legal character and are inspected separately by Ofsted.

Other information from the DCFS states that parental involvement is crucial. It is worth noting that West Woodburn had no parent governors at the time of the governor meeting to discuss federation and that the then Otterburn parent governors also chose not to be involved.

It is further worth noting that the DCFS state that a school cannot federate to avoid a deficit budget. Having dropped from 20plus at the end of the 2018/19 school year to a roll of 3 pupils (September 2019) it would be difficult to see how the school would not be in deficit and some may suggest the Cabinet should be seeking more detail regarding the scrutiny of this aspect of the federation by the LEA officers.

Although contacted directly by a number of people, who either complained or expressed their concerns, the same LEA Officers who attended the November 2018 joint governing body meeting then oversaw the beginning of a formal consultation for the schools to federate.

The federation went ahead the following term and the direct and immediate consequence was, as the officers had been advised, the role at West Woodburn fell.

A loss of over 60% of the school population. Families who felt they were unable to be represented and who were not listened to by the LEA officers took the very large step of removing their children. Families felt let down by a county council that had given all sorts of assurances during and after both the LEA and the federation consultations.

These young children have a single opportunity at their education. For some it was the failure of the LEA to give assurance about curriculum provision, for others it was stability -to seek a longer term provision (given first school pupils would need to change schools after Year 4 and again after Year 6).

Transport

Such a decision was not easily made and is compounded in such a rural area where home to school transport may often be essential, given either the lack of other transport or the unavailability of family vehicle.

There has been coverage in the local press regarding this matter, some quoting Cllr Dayley who is reported to have said "We know transport is a concern for parents of affected Bellingham pupils and will be working closely on a one to one basis with them, to develop a robust travel plan for each and every pupil". To date according to applications made for transport and despite being called to account by public groups the LEA have adopted a very robust approach to home to school transport around Bellingham School, be it First, Primary or Middle; it is declined.

Such a policy would also seem to conflict with the desire of the Council to reduce the miles children travel by private transport to school.

Finance

The document headed Implementation and Paragraph 12 of the report seems to be carefully written and seems to make some contradictory statements. The first is that

extending the school to provide for Years 5 and 6 would improve financial stability. The report suggests there would be better financial monitoring and control at the school (West Woodburn). The pupil numbers would suggest differently. With additional costs to each of the school budgets of transport (both time and curriculum access time) between the two sites (The Headteacher assured parents in writing that pupils of the federated school could attend both site and travel between sites)

The creation of a Deputy Head to work across both schools are both factors that would see the West Woodburn School budget increase. It may be true to say that the deficit, given the 3 pupil roll will now increase and will stabilise in even greater deficit.

It seems unbelievable that given the numbers set out these did not cause concern for the Cabinet.

Roll

When the LEA consulted with West Woodburn regarding the future provision there was a role in excess of 20. After becoming federated with Otterburn the number fell to 6. This month (September 2019) there are 3 pupils on roll.

The document headed Implementation offers no projected possible rolls however in the report to Cabinet the numbers set out a possible 11 pupils (2 in 2020, 5 in 2121, 4 in 2022) so with the current state of provision and reputation of West Woodburn/Otterburn Schools there can be no assurance that all will attend and at best there would be a maximum roll of 14 pupils by 2023 against a PAN of 42. Surely this is just planning for surplus places.

Observation

That the LEA officers, being aware of the situation and in setting out the numbers, would seem to condone or support the proposal despite being well aware of high cost of a school day, term time only, building. A building that has no other use within the small community of West Woodburn. A building that is within 7 miles of two other schools, where the school rolls are able to accommodate the current and potential future population as set out in the report.

Perhaps of more concern is the failure of the schools leadership and management to engage with the families and carers involved in this supposed request from the joint governing body which includes no parents, from either school, but is advised and guided by LEA officers who have also failed to engage with parents.

It is worth noting that the closure of West Woodburn First at this time would enable the LEA to have all primary schools, except Bellingham Middle, which seems to remain in a state of uncertainty, given the School Adjudicators' intervention and the failure of the LEA to respond through the amended School Organisation Plan, feeding into Haydon Bridge High School.

Conclusion

In summary this proposal must be rejected and consideration be given to the role Officers of the LEA have played in the public waste of money especially when funds are so sparse. There is also the damage done to parents/carers, honest governors and Members, all of whom have spent time and effort on this seriously misguided proposal which reflects so

badly on Northumberland and those people that would genuinely wish to ensure good quality education provision for all Northumberland pupils.

Representation P - Member of the local community/Interested Party

I object.

8 pupils in this report, it should be made very clear that there are now only 3. Surely the most simplest way to look at this is.....it will be costing more to 'run' the school that then to offer transport to another school.

Really a robust report would be giving a breakdown of the figure, such has;
How many children live in the current catchment area are of First School age (4 to 9) and currently attending (as people that don't go currently won't suddenly bring their children) and how many children live in the current catchment area are of primary school age (4 to 11).
Sounds like NCC really need to think about a County Councils accountability for the 'pupils purse'!! Having been Ofsteded in the past I'm shocked this spending is deemed as acceptable. This shouldn't even being being consulted on, the question should be if it's viable to remain open at tall? Not to mention the most effective way to educate / reach the children living in these rural communities.

The accounting / finances of education including transportation options for education should be scrutinised closely. In the report it mentions there's a lot of speculation about 'improved financial stability'what does this really look like!?

Watching from the sidelines for a long time now this is public money that is being used and not effectively in my view.

Common sense would tell you that the management / structure / maintenance of a school would cost more than transport to other locally well attended schools.

How do they define 'interesting parties'? I think everyone what pays taxes should be questioning how their money is effectively used.

Really disappointing and 'wooly' report in my view. I hope the true facts are gone through with the workers and councillors.

Please ensure I receive a response acknowledging my objections.

Regards

Representation Q- Member of the local community/Interested Party

OBJECTION TO CHANGE OF AGE RANGE AT WEST WOODBURN FIRST SCHOOL and REQUEST FOR IMMEDIATE REVOCATION OF THE STATUTORY PROPOSAL

First and foremost it needs to be appreciated by the Council, that West Woodburn First School, a very small remote rural school, has only been placed in this position, because of the Council's failure the comply with statutory regulations for the revocation of the proposals to re-organise the Bellingham Middle School catchment area.

Had that revocation been honoured, then the BMS catchment would have remained 3 Tier and there would have been no changes from First to Primary school, unless they were instigated by First school governors.

As Bellingham Middle School remains open, West Woodburn can remain a First school within the 3 Tier system and children can progress to enjoy local education at Bellingham Middle School for years 5 to 8 before having to travel much farther afield for their education for year 9 onwards. 3 Tier is the preference of the majority of parents, regardless of the Council's irrational fixation on 2 Tier as their preferred system for the Bellingham MS catchment.

Furthermore, there is no rationale in a statutory proposal to expand any First school to become a Primary school when the school has only 5 or fewer pupils in total, and none of those pupils are in year 4, so that there are unlikely to be pupils to move up to year 5 in September 2020. The Council's expectation that West Woodburn will be able to adequately deliver the full Primary curriculum in these circumstances is unrealistic, even if it is federated with Otterburn Primary?

I am therefore objecting to the statutory proposals on a number of grounds, including the Council's non-compliance with statutory regulations subsequent to the Adjudicator's decision. **This is a serious concern as statutory guidance sets out what schools and local authorities must do to comply with the law and NCC has ignored this.** I am attaching a pdf file "Does Every Child Matter to NCC" which contains much of the background that is also of relevance to these inappropriate proposals.

I would like to think that the Council would start to provide more services for the wards that are known to be in the top 10% of the most deprived areas in England, such as Bellingham ward which includes West Woodburn - and that it would not be working to remove more services, by facilitating closure of Bellingham Middle School, which is what seems to be the case; or over extending West Woodburn to the point that it becomes unviable.

The loss of our Middle school would deprive children from all the Bellingham Middle School catchment schools of continuity of local education for years 5 to 8, and remove all secondary education from an area of 400 square miles, leaving 6 isolated small primary schools. The area would be more deprived than ever. The loss of West Woodburn First school would be enormously damaging to the village.

Coincidentally Haltwhistle and Haydon Bridge wards are included in the above 10% too, and it is noticeable that the Council's main focus for ambition and investment in education is not in these wards, but in the more prosperous Hexham wards. The deprived areas remain deprived, with Haltwhistle recently deprived of a vital service, its Middle school – are these wards so far from Morpeth that they are out of sight out of mind.

I urge you not only to revoke the current statutory consultations, but to also start supporting these deprived areas with investment on a par with that in Hexham, so that they have the opportunity to compete on a more even playing field.

I trust that the background provided here and the pdf file will be seriously considered by the FACS OS Committee, and that some faith will then be restored in this Council.

CC: Guy Opperman MP, RSC North, Ministers, NAO, OSA , others

The grounds for revocation of this proposal:

i) Implementation of this proposal will compound the Council's noncompliance with the statutory guidance and regulations that required revocation of the proposals to re-organise the Bellingham catchment schools.

- ii) there are no sound reasons for expanding West Woodburn to become a Primary school at this point in time.
- iii) the school sits comfortably within the 3 Tier Bellingham Middle School catchment and facilitates local education for West Woodburn children at the Middle school in Bellingham for years 5 to 8.
- iv) as a Primary school, West Woodburn, like Greenhead Primary School in 2013, would be competing with the local Middle school for pupils in years 5 and 6. Greenhead has more pupils than West Woodburn.
- v) the revelation that the decision has already been made
- vi) that Northumberland County Council is exercising its powers inappropriately and discriminating against families and residents in the Bellingham ward.
- vii) The Council's duty to be fair to communities that are acknowledged to be deprived
 - i) Implementation of this proposal will compound the Council's noncompliance with the statutory guidance and regulations that required revocation of the proposals to re-organise the Bellingham catchment schools.

Subsequent to the School Adjudicator's rejection of the Council's decision to close Bellingham Middle School, the statutory proposals should have been revoked.

NCC's own [School Closure Process](#) makes this clear.

DfE statutory guidance is also referenced on Page 27 of the Cabinet Report of 10 July 2018

[Appendix 3a\) link](#) – Revocation can be found on Pages 30/31

[Appendix 3b\) link](#) – Revocation can be found on Pages 16/17

In essence the statutory guidance advises :

If the proposer cannot implement an approved proposal because circumstances have changed so that implementation would be inappropriate or unreasonably difficult the proposer must publish a revocation proposal to be relieved of the duty to implement.

In the Cabinet Report of 10 July 2018 the case was made against a mixed economy of schools, applicable only to the Haltwhistle area at that time. The report highlighted that education professionals believed that a mixed economy of schools "causes confusion and threatens the viability of small rural schools".

All the schools in the Bellingham catchment are small rural schools.

According to the Cabinet Report 8 May 2018, removal of Haltwhistle Middle School would help Greenhead Primary School retain pupils in years 5 and 6 and reduce its financial deficit (then almost £200K) over time.

Acknowledging the belief of educational professionals, NCC acted to remove the mixed economy from the Haltwhistle area to improve the viability of Greenhead.

When the Adjudicator ruled that Bellingham Middle School would remain open, the 3 Tier system should have been preserved by the revocation of the statutory proposals.

Favouring the elimination of the mixed economy from the Haltwhistle area it would seem hypocritical for NCC to advocate the introduction of an undesirable mixed economy into the Bellingham area, even without the presence of statutory regulations requiring revocation of the statutory proposals.

Regardless of statutory regulations, NCC pressed ahead with the hypocritical introduction of a mixed economy into the Bellingham catchment, that being without further consultation with local families, and despite this action being blatantly inappropriate.

The current West Woodburn statutory proposals are inappropriate in circumstances where NCC has failed to comply with the statutory regulations related to reorganisation of the area which includes West Woodburn.

ii) there are no sound reasons for expanding West Woodburn to become a Primary school at this point in time. The historical data indicates that the school has never had more than 25 pupils,

Figures from DFE Get Information About Schools (GIAS)					
Period	West Woodburn First	Total income	Total expenditure	In-year balance	Revenue reserve
2017 - 2018	24	£225,874.6	£241,135.3	-£15,260.7	-£3,427.3
2016 - 2017	20	£217,108.4	£210,396.2	£6,712.3	£5,122.0
2015 - 2016	25	£213,839.0	£218,245.8	-£4,406.8	£5,122.0
2014 - 2015	20	£188,102.9	£187,963.8	£139.1	£9,528.4
2013 - 2014	20	£181,158.6	£191,653.7	-£10,495.1	£9,389.0

Yet like the majority of other schools in the Bellingham catchment it has remained viable – until 2017-18, when it went into deficit for the first time – but not by a huge amount.

HAYDON BRIDGE PARTNERSHIP – 10 YEAR FINANCIAL PICTURE

Two distinct areas 20 to 30 miles apart - North Tyne area to the North East; Haydon Bridge-Haltwhistle area to the South West.

North Tyne area - 5 years BEFORE and 5 years AFTER schools in the Haydon Bridge-Haltwhistle area expanded in September 2013

During this period, the North Tyne schools have in the main (91%) returned a balanced budget year on year, regardless of funding changes.

The schools in the 3 Tier North Tyne area have demonstrated financial stability.

Haydon Bridge Partnership - Financial Picture over 10 years - 5 years BEFORE and 5 years AFTER expansion in September 2013	Total revenue balance ¹	Total revenue balance ¹	Total revenue balance ¹	Total revenue balance ¹	Total revenue balance ²	Total revenue balance ³	Total revenue balance ⁴	Total revenue balance ⁵	Total revenue balance ⁶	Total revenue balance ⁷
North Tyne area - 3 Tier - no change	2008-09 ⁷	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Bellingham Community Middle School	£65,699	£108,339	£110,418	£96,493	£121,809	£59,723	£80,507	£32,308	£96,467	£91,638
Bellingham First School	£51,925	£25,375	£27,136	£10,117	£20,887	£38,908	£71,626	£87,641	£35,325	£43,611
Kielder Community First School	£14,459	£15,851	£22,907	£11,172	£8,534	£12,455	£39,599	£25,568	£29,588	£49,979
Otterburn First School	£15,328	£13,896	£16,208	£30,037	£20,760	£27,768	£12,289	£31,276	£47,014	£46,023
West Woodburn First School	£23,879	£22,321	£15,778	£15,827	£19,884	£9,389	£9,528	£5,122	£11,834	-£3,427
Greenhaugh First School	£24,650	£21,283	£21,770	£31,209	£36,853	£24,712	£22,713	£43,962	£22,063	£30,447
Wark Church of England First School	£15,989	£23,208	-£11,916	-£9,986	£6,094	£4,682	£2,548	£11,775	-£5,379	£12,901

The schools in the North Tyne area have also been able to demonstrate educational stability.

The 3 Tier system is established and successful in the North Tyne.

Clearly there must have been a number of issues that led to the decline in numbers in 2018-19, including the rumoured closure of the school, as well as the intended closure of Bellingham Middle School. It is noted that all 3 parent governors left at the beginning of April 2019: the West Woodburn GIAS website indicates that the school had 14 pupils in July 2019; the May 2019 census indicating 8 pupils on the roll.

Uncertainty is detrimental to all schools, and especially small ones. Living locally, I understand that the pupil numbers have sadly dwindled to somewhere between 3 and 5 in September 2019, with some parents moving their children to Bellingham First School (now Primary) in order for them to transition to the Middle school for year 5. I have fond memories of doing some supply teaching at the School and want to see it prosper again, but the Council's intention for it to change to become a primary school from September 2020 is a hindrance when the school needs time to review its priorities and recover.

iii) the school sits comfortably within the 3 Tier Bellingham Middle School catchment and facilitates local education for West Woodburn children at the Middle school in Bellingham for years 5 to 8.

If the school remains part of the 3 Tier system, then it will begin to grow again as parents feel confident that their children will transition to Bellingham Middle School and enjoy continuity of local education for years 5 to 8. This is what parents want, but the Council's intention for their children is that they will be transported from a Primary school all the way to Haydon Bridge High School for years 7 and 8.

NON-COMPLIANCE with statutory regulations has resulted in the uncertainty and confusion caused by the Council's stated intention to introduce the mixed economy by creating Primary schools, shortly after the Adjudicator announced his decision that Bellingham Middle School should remain open. It continues to be both upsetting and damaging to the remote rural communities in Bellingham Middle School's catchment, especially in view of the Council's changed school transport arrangements for Bellingham Middle School.

Consideration should also be given to whether the 5 small primary schools created from 1 September 2019 are likely to revert to First schools, as the small pupil numbers in year 5 and 6 may yet prove problematic.

iv) as a Primary school, West Woodburn, like Greenhead Primary School in 2013, would be competing with the local Middle school for pupils in years 5 and 6. Greenhead has more pupils than West Woodburn.

Greenhead volunteered to become a Primary school from September 2013, aspiring to improve educational outcomes at the end of year 6 and become more financially viable. In 2018, it had still not recorded any pupils reaching the expected Standards at the end of Year 6, and its deficit balance at end 2017/18 was approaching £200K. Its own governors were proposing closure in early 2018, but NCC came to the rescue and its Governing Body, the West Tyne Federation of C of E schools, then recommended most strongly that 2 Tier should be implemented across both the Hexham and Haydon Bridge Partnerships.

It was unclear why a Federation of schools that had not improved their financial viability or educational outcomes at the end of year 6, by becoming Primary schools in 2013, would at Phase 2 of the 2018 consultations, be promoting the rationalisation upon 2 Tier across the two Hexham and Haydon Bridge Partnerships.

In 2013, the West Tyne Federation comprised Herdley Bank, Henshaw and Greenhead C of E First schools and all had substantial deficit balances. By 2018, Herdley Bank had become unviable and had closed and both Henshaw and Greenhead had increased their deficit balances.

Neither Herdley Bank or Henshaw had recorded pupils achieving the expected standard at end Year 6.

All 3 schools were small rural schools whose viability was threatened by the West Tyne Federation's own desire in 2013 to introduce 2 Tier alongside Haltwhistle Middle School, which thus created the undesirable mixed economy.

Regardless of the lack of success and viability that this brought to its schools, the West Tyne Federation in its response to Phase 2, inexplicably recommended 2 Tier for all other areas.

The Council did however assist Greenhead by negotiating the removal of Haltwhistle Middle School, thus eliminating the mixed economy.

A Freedom of Information Request confirmed that the Council has a commercial interest in Greenhead, but that it is not in the public interest to divulge this.

v) the revelation that the decision has already been made

The current statutory proposals are indicating:

September 2020: Children on the role in year 4 will remain at the school as a Year 5 pupil – there are no children in year 4

September 2021: Children on the role in year 5 will remain at the school as a Year 6 pupil – it is unlikely that there will be any children in 6, as there were none in year 5.

September 2022: Children on the role in year 6 would transition to Haydon Bridge High School as Year 7, or would transfer to another school subject to parental preference – there are unlikely to be children in year 6.

Impact upon the Community

There would be a positive impact upon the community of West Woodburn village as children would remain in the village for an additional two years.

The Non-existent children currently in year 4 will remain in the village for an additional two years?

It is incredible that the paid officers who compiled the West Woodburn statutory proposals cannot see the futility of what is being proposed, which is why residents of the Bellingham ward now question whether there is any point at all in responding to NCC consultations.

The following statement on Page 3 of the West Woodburn statutory proposals appears to confirm this – November 2019 “....but will be aware that the school (West Woodburn) **will become a primary school from that date** (September 2020)”.

So it seems West Woodburn “will become a primary school” from September 2020.

The decision has already been made, regardless of local opinion – just as in the consultations of 2018, the views of those most affected are once again to be ignored.

vi) Northumberland County Council is exercising its powers inappropriately and discriminating against families and residents in the Bellingham ward.

In 2013 schools in the Haydon Bridge and Haltwhistle areas were permitted to define their own education systems.

However, the 2 Tier system so favoured by NCC for the Bellingham catchment in 2018 statutory proposals, proved unsuccessful in both Haydon Bridge and Haltwhistle

The cost of introducing a 2/3 Tier Mixed Economy in small rural schools				
Haydon Bridge/Haltwhistle area	BEFORE - 2013		5 Years LATER - 2018	
	Ofsted rating 2012-13	Financial Position at end 2012-13	Actual Financial Position at end 2017-18	Ofsted rating 2017-18
Schools that expanded in September 2013, together with the two Haltwhistle converter academies from September 2013				
Haydon Bridge High/Secondary School	2	£285,480	-£1,030,073	4
Allendale Primary School	1	£17,409	-£34,158	2
Haydon Bridge Shaftoe Trust V C Primary School	2	£41,843	-£91,021	sponsored
Whitfield C of E Aided Primary School	2	-£3,285	-£102,791	sponsored
Greenhead C of E Primary School	2	-£59,855	-£197,106	2
Hexham C of E Primary School	2	-£28,356	-£51,612	2
Herdley Bank C of E Primary School	1	-£51,368	CLOSED	CLOSED
Haltwhistle Lower/First School (MAT)	2	£20,017	sponsored	sponsored
Haltwhistle Upper/Middle School (MAT)	2	£13,461	sponsored	sponsored
Newbrough C of E Primary School from Sep 2014	2	-£37,766	£14,993	2
Total Deficit Balance of 6 Primary schools		-£121,378	-£461,695	

Stability of established 3 Tier in rural areas with smaller than average schools				
NO EXPANSION - NO CHANGE	BEFORE - 2013		5 Years LATER - 2018	
	Ofsted rating 2012-13	Financial Position at end 2012-13	Financial Position at end 2017-18	Ofsted rating 2017-18
North Tyme area - 3 Tier				
Bellingham Community Middle School	2	£121,809	£91,638	3
Bellingham First School	3	£20,887	£43,611	2
Greenhaugh First School	2	£36,853	£30,447	2
Kielder Community First School	3	£8,534	£49,979	1
West Woodburn First School	2	£19,884	-£3,427	2
Otterburn First School	2	£20,760	£46,023	2
Wark Church of England First School	2	£6,094	£12,901	2
Total Deficit Balance of 6 First schools		£6,094	-£3,427	
Bellingham Middle School has no recorded deficits in any previous years				
	Ofsted Grades	1	2	3

Compare the combined balances of the 6 Primary schools vs the 6 First schools.

Note the decline in Ofsted ratings and increase in sponsored academies

Regardless of this worrying picture, First schools in the Bellingham MS catchment were informed by NCC at Phase 2 of the 2018 consultations, that they needed to become Primary schools to be viable for the future.

In 2018, the schools in the Hexham and Corbridge areas were permitted to retain 3 Tier – their choice.

In 2018, the schools in the Bellingham MS catchment were not permitted to retain 3 Tier - their choice, but were instead subjected to the Council’s choice for the area – re-organisation to the worrying 2 Tier system

The Council’s plans to close Bellingham Middle School were derailed by the Adjudicator’s decision, but the intent to facilitate the closure by creating primary schools is still evident, regardless of the views of the local people and nomatter the cost to the local communities.

Clearly creating another Primary school in the Bellingham catchment has the potential to divert more pupils from Bellingham Middle School.

The annual loss of pupils to primary schools will inevitably impact upon the Middle school’s viability which is clearly NCC’s intention.

This is compounded by the unfair removal of transport to the Middle school even in years 7 and 8.

NCC’s Non-compliance with statutory regulations is being used to damage the small rural schools in the mixed economy created by NCC.

vii) The Council’s duty to be fair to communities that are acknowledged to be deprived

Consistent with our operating principles to listen and consider your views - and to take more decisions at a local level, central to measuring our success will be how you feel we are performing and responding to the challenges and opportunities the county and the Council face.

The above is taken from the final page of Northumberland’s Corporate Plan 2018-21 – under the heading “We want to make a difference” (Success Measures). Reading it would give anyone the impression that Northumberland County Council listens and considers local views and permits more decisions to be taken

at local level – by the people directly affected by those decisions, this is just not so for residents in the Bellingham ward.

Bellingham ward includes schools in Bellingham, Kielder, Greenhaugh, Wark and West Woodburn. In the 2018 Phase 2 consultations and subsequent statutory consultations proposing re-organisation of the Bellingham Middle School catchment (which also includes Otterburn), to the 2 Tier model, local people made it very clear to the Council that they wished to retain 3 Tier education in their local area and for the Middle school to remain open.

In September 2019, parents demonstrated their preference of 3 Tier and 20 pupils were admitted to Bellingham Middle School. None of the primary schools retained all their year 4 pupils, and the number of year 5 pupils remaining in the 5 primary schools are 0, 1, 1, 1 and 3. Delivering the full primary curriculum to such small isolated numbers is an unenviable task which is likely to prove costly for these 4 schools.

Parental preference is clear, but it is being compromised by the Council changing the longstanding school transport arrangements to/from Bellingham Middle School from September 2020.

Not only has the Council stated its preferences for the education of children in the Bellingham catchment, it is also using a change in school transport policy to enforce this so that parents will often have no choice but to submit to the Council's preferences for their children.

On 10 July 2018, upon the recommendation of the FACS Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet overruled the wishes of local people in the Bellingham ward and took the damaging and irrational decision to close Bellingham Middle School and introduce 2 Tier into this remote rural area.

Local people in wards neighbouring Bellingham - in Hexham and Corbridge had their wishes respected and the Council even conceded that the disruption would be too much for them. Not only that, these wards would see a huge capital investment in the two Hadrian Learning Trust academies in Hexham – promoted by NCC as “Ambition for education in the West”. This at a time when local services in Bellingham catchment were to be reduced by the loss of its Middle school and jobs.

Thankfully for the Bellingham ward, there was a Schools Adjudicator, an independent investigator, who was able to uphold the appeal and reject the Council's decision to close the School. He was able to identify the lack of any rationale for the closure, apart from the disturbing use of displaced year 7 and 8 pupils from Bellingham to top up the pupil numbers/funding at Haydon Bridge High School.

Minority groups, such as the isolated rural communities in the Bellingham Middle School catchment do not feel heard especially when it comes to the issue of the education of their children. They cannot comprehend why the Council is discriminating in this way against those who reside in this remote rural area, by taking decisions which also increase school transport costs and carbon emissions, and are damaging to the health and wellbeing of their children, and to the environment.

The following statement was made by Councillor Peter Jackson, Leader NCC, 24 May 2018 and has a hollow ring to it in the Bellingham Middle School catchment: [“Our towns, villages and rural communities are the lifeblood of our county”](#)

It is inappropriate for the Council to enforce its educational preferences and it is also discriminatory when all the other areas chose the education system they wanted for their children and when there is no issue with school transport to the local Middle school for children in the neighbouring Hexham and Corbridge wards.

It was at the FACS OS Committee on 5 July 2018, that the decision was taken to close Bellingham Middle School. A case had been built upon misconceptions which are recorded in the Minutes of that meeting, yet no paid officers or councillors present corrected those misconceptions. There had been no scrutiny.

At that same meeting on 5 July 2018, it was noted that Northumberland County Council was one of the most deprived local authorities in England with 13.2% of the population living in one of the top 10% most deprived wards.

Referenced alongside the Outcomes of the statutory consultations for the closure of BMS etc. on 5 July 2018, is Northumberland's own report on [Supporting Families in Poverty](#) which contains the following extract: **Under Current Activity and priorities**

- 7.13 Creating opportunities for families to feel heard: Being involved must start in their communities, feeling connected and valued encourages deeper involvement with education, learning and opportunities. Communities advocate for the needs they accurately identify and in time connect with other organisations, opportunities big and small.

Families in the BMS catchment responded to the 2018 consultations, but do not feel heard or valued by NCC, especially when it comes to the issue of the education of their children

– The voices of their neighbours in the less deprived areas of Hexham and Corbridge were heard, and considered to the extent that they kept 3 Tier education for their local areas. They were also awarded a massive capital investment in two Hexham academies, promoted by NCC as “Ambition for Education in the West”. No such ambition is evident from NCC for the Bellingham, South Tynedale and Haydon Bridge areas.

The following extract is also relevant:

4.4 Rural Poverty

- Northumberland is 96% rural and around half of our population live in rural postcodes.
- IMD poverty measures are weighted to understand urban populations and do not well account for rural impacts such as access to services, fuel poverty, transport and housing which can be limited, premium or inefficient. IMD mapping weights heavily to South East of the County but documenting the Northumberland context is vital.
- Opportunities for individuals, communities and all sectors can be lessened due to smaller numbers and rurality.
- Rural communities are at higher risk of digital isolation.
- Rural poverty can be masked: less likely to claim benefits and entitlements, seasonal work is more challenging to track, low wages are typical.

As is 7.6 Fuel Poverty in Northumberland is higher than the national average –

“Fuel poverty in Northumberland **ranges from 2.8% in Cramlington to 30.3 % of residents in Bellingham**”.

Bellingham ward includes West Woodburn, Kielder, Wark, Greenhaugh (not Otterburn)

The top 10% of most deprived wards are not named in the Council's report “Supporting families in poverty”, but can be found in Northumberland Vital Issues 2017 publication -

<https://www.communityfoundation.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Vital-Issues-Northumberland-2017-FINAL.pdf> - See final pages for Glossary of terms, references and contact details

Section 1.3 Index of Multiple Deprivation indicates that the seven domains of deprivation include education, health, living environment, barriers to housing and services, income, employment and crime.

Note that the Living Environment Deprivation Index Indoor measure indicates that **Bellingham electoral ward is one of the 6 wards** (along with South Tynedale ie. Haltwhistle, and Haydon and Hadrian ie. Haydon Bridge) **where there is a significant deprivation problem, these wards falling within the 10% most deprived in England.**

The proximity of services and amenities are regarded as main issues for those living in rural communities in Northumberland, such as Bellingham.

Simply reviewing all the Middle schools proposed for closure at Phase 2 highlights that two Middle schools have much higher proportions of FSM pupils – Bellingham and Haltwhistle.

These same pupils **also have to travel the greatest distances to their High schools** at the end of year 8 – the distances themselves being very significant.

School Partnerships in West Northumberland 2018 consultations - Hexham Partnership, Haydon Bridge Partnership						
2018-19 School Year						
Secondary Schools	2018-19 School Year Number on roll July 2019	Eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)	Number of pupils eligible for (FSM)	Catchment High School	Distance from Middle school to High school	Nearest High School
Hexham Middle School	455	8.6%	39	QEHS Hexham	1.3 miles	QEHS
St Joseph's RC VA Middle School	336	6.3%	21	QEHS Hexham	0.2 miles	QEHS
Corbridge Middle School	349	3.4%	12	QEHS Hexham	4.8 miles	QEHS
Bellingham Middle School	95	13.7%	13	Haydon Bridge HS	23.2 miles	QEHS 16.5 miles
Haltwhistle Middle School	144	16.0%	23	Haydon Bridge HS	9.7 miles	Haydon Bridge HS

The above table indicates the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals in each of the Middle schools included in the 2018 consultations – data recorded on the DfE’s GIAS webpages

So in addition to recommending the closure of a rural Middle school in Bellingham and the creation of small isolated rural primary schools, **the FACS Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s recommendations to Cabinet would also effectively increase disadvantage in the Bellingham ward, one of the 6 wards within the top 10% of most deprived in England,** whilst at the same the Council was claiming to be supportive of families in poverty.

Removing a vital local school from an area that is already seriously deprived, without giving any considered thought for those affected, indicates the Council’s utter disregard for the welfare of the residents of the Bellingham ward, which was evident from the fact that the views local people expressed during the 2018 consultations were totally ignored.

Whilst the Adjudicator overturned that decision to close BMS, this did not lead to revocation of the proposals as per statutory guidance. The question is why?

The Council is effectively implying that families in deprived areas must accept what the Council believes is best for their children, and that **the Council knows best.**

This is blatantly wrong. The Council should have complied with statutory guidance and regulations and if it had, no primary schools would have been created, there would have been no issues with free school transport to Bellingham Middle School, Haydon Bridge High School would still have an intake in year 9 and the Council would not be going through a nonsensical exercise to extend the age range at West Woodburn.

At the Cabinet meeting on 10 July 2018, when Councillor Daley was summing up and congratulating everyone on a job well done, he stated that they had been “planning this for 9 months”.

If that was the case why was there no informal consultation specifically with regard to re-organisation of the schools in the Bellingham catchment to 2 Tier. That would have given local people the opportunity to meet the Council and express their views. **That did not happen even at statutory consultation stage.**

The only people to come out to Bellingham and meet the local people were the Schools Adjudicator and the late Councillor Pidcock, who was sympathetic to the opposition to the re-organisation, having witnessed that 2 Tier had not been a success subsequent to the decision taken by the FAC OS Committee to which he belonged in June 2013, and which recommended closure of Allendale Middle School and the creation of primary schools. That in itself speaks volumes - so what exactly are the Council's motives for steering the Bellingham MS catchment stealthily towards 2 Tier.

If the Council is able to effect closure of Bellingham Middle School, through the creation of primary schools and non-compliance with statutory regulations, it will be depriving an already seriously deprived area of even more services.

The expansion of West Woodburn to primary will contribute to that deprivation and compound the Council's non-compliance with statutory regulations.

END OF OBJECTION - [link to pdf file](#)



Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools

Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers

October 2018

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1: Summary

About this guidance

This is statutory guidance from the Department for Education. This means that recipients must have regard to it when making 'prescribed alterations' to maintained schools.

The purpose of this guidance is to ensure that good quality school places can be provided quickly where they are needed; that local authorities (LAs) and governing bodies (GBs) do not take decisions that will have a negative impact on other schools in the area; and that changes can be implemented quickly and effectively where there is a strong case for doing so. In line with these aims it is expected that, where possible, additional new places will only be provided at schools that have an overall Ofsted rating of 'good' or 'outstanding'. Schools which do not fall within the above categories should only be expanded where there are no other viable options.

A GB, LA or the [Schools Adjudicator](#) must have regard to this guidance when exercising functions under [The School Organisation \(Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools\) \(England\) Regulations 2013](#) ('the Prescribed Alterations Regulations'). It should be read in conjunction with Parts 2 and 3 and Schedule 3 of the [Education and Inspections Act \(EIA\) 2006](#) and the Prescribed Alterations Regulations. It also relates to the [Establishment and Discontinuance Regulations](#) and [The School Organisation \(Removal of Foundation, Reduction in the Number of Foundation Governors and Ability of Foundation to Pay Debts\) \(England\) Regulations \(2007\)](#) ('the 'Removal Regulations').

It is the responsibility of LAs and GBs to ensure that they act in accordance with the relevant legislation when making changes to a maintained school and they are advised to seek independent legal advice where appropriate.

Review date

This guidance will be reviewed in October 2019.

Who is this guidance for?

Those proposing to make changes and making decisions on changes to maintained schools (e.g. GBs, LAs and the Schools Adjudicator), and for information purposes for those affected by a proposal (trustees of the school, diocese or relevant diocesan board, any other relevant faith body, parents etc.).

This guidance is relevant to all categories of maintained schools (as defined in section 20 of the [School Standards and Framework Act \(SSFA\) 1998](#)), unless explicitly stated. It is not relevant to [Pupil Referral Units](#). Separate advice [on making significant changes to an academy](#) and [opening and closing a maintained school](#) is available.

Please refer to the '[Further Information](#)' section for the full website address should you be unable to access documents via the hyperlinks provided.

Terminology

Definitions of common terms used in this guidance:

Schools with a religious character - All schools designated as having a religious character in accordance with the [SSFA](#).

Foundation Trust - For the purpose of this guidance the term 'foundation trust' refers to a foundation complying with the requirements set out in section 23A of the SSFA.

Parent(s) - The Education Act 1996 defines 'parent' as including someone who has care of, or legal responsibility for, the child. Therefore, a parent can include, for example, a grandparent, other family member or foster carer if they have care of or responsibility for the child.

Main points

- All proposals for prescribed alterations must follow the processes set out in this guidance.
- Where a LA proposes to expand a school that is eligible for intervention as set out in Section 59 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#), they should copy the proposal to the relevant [Regional Schools Commissioner \(RSC\)](#) at the point of publication.
- To enable the department to monitor potentially contentious proposals, the proposer should copy any proposal, which falls within the definitions set out in [part 3](#), to the School Organisation mailbox as soon as it is published schoolorganisation.notifications@education.gov.uk.
- LAs and GBs proposing to make a significant change to a school which has been designated as having a religious character should engage the trustees of the school, and in the case of Church schools the diocese or relevant

diocesan board, or any other relevant faith body, where appropriate at the earliest opportunity.

- Where a LA is the decision maker, it must make a decision within a period of two months of the end of the representation period. Where a decision is not made within this time frame, the LA must refer the proposal to the Schools Adjudicator for a decision.
- It is not possible for any school to gain, lose or change religious character through a change of category. Information on the process to be followed is available in the [opening and closing maintained schools guidance](#).
- Once a decision has been made the proposer (GB or LA) must make the necessary changes to the school's record in the department's system [Get Information About Schools](#) (GIAS) by the date the change is implemented.
- Where a school wishes to change their name, the GB will need to amend the Instrument of Government in line with regulation 30 of [The School Governance \(Constitution\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#). Once that is done, either the school or the LA will need to update the school record in the department's GIAS system.

2: Prescribed alteration changes

Enlargement of premises (expansion)

Under section 14 of the [Education Act 1996](#), LAs have a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient schools for primary and secondary education in their areas. The department expects LAs to manage the school estate efficiently and to reduce or find alternative uses for surplus capacity (for example, increasing the provision of early education and childcare) to avoid detriment to schools' educational offer or financial position. LAs are encouraged to consider the use of modular construction solutions for any physical building expansion and to consider all options for the reutilisation of space including via remodelling, amalgamations, or closure where this would be the best course of action.

Where additional places are needed, including where there is a local demand for a particular category of places (for example in schools designated as having a religious character), the LA can propose an enlargement of the capacity¹ of premises.

The statutory process should be followed to enlarge premises as set out in the [Prescribed Alterations Regulations](#) (see [part 5](#)) if:

- the proposed enlargement is permanent (longer than three years) and **would increase the capacity of the school by:**
 - more than 30 pupils; and
 - 25% or 200 pupils (whichever is the lesser).
- the proposal involves making permanent any temporary enlargement (which was intended to be in place for no more than three years) that meets the above threshold.

GBs of all categories of mainstream schools and LAs can propose small scale expansions that do not meet the thresholds above without the need to follow the formal statutory process in [part 4](#). In many cases this can be achieved solely by increasing the school's published admissions number² (PAN); please see the [School Admissions Code](#). The thresholds do not, however, apply to special schools. Details of how special schools can increase their intake³ are covered below.

¹ Net capacity as calculated using the [DfE Guidance Assessing the Net Capacity of Schools \(2002\)](#).

² All admission authorities must set a published admission number (PAN) for each 'relevant age group' when they determine their admission arrangements. So, if a school has an admissions number of 120 pupils for Year 7, that is its PAN.

³ The number of pupils admitted into the school at a particular time

Examples of when mainstream schools would/would not need to publish 'enlargement' proposals

A secondary school with a capacity of 750 (5 form of entry - 30 pupils per class, 5 year groups) could enlarge its premises to add 1 form of entry (30 extra pupils x 5 year groups = increase of 150 pupils) bringing the capacity to 900 pupils, **without** having to publish statutory proposals. Although the increase would be by 'more than 30' pupils, it is less than '200', and also less than '25%' of the current capacity (i.e. by less than 187).

A small primary school with a capacity of 50 could enlarge its premises to increase its capacity by up to 29 pupils **without** having to publish statutory proposals, because although it would be more than '25%', it is less than 30.

A school of any size enlarging its premises to enable it to add 300 places **would** need to follow the statutory process as the increase would be **both** 'more than 30' and '200' (it may or may not be more than '25%' but that is irrelevant if the 200 threshold would be met).

A primary school with a capacity of 210 enlarging its premises to enable it to add 105 places (1.5 forms of entry $45 \times 7 = 315$), **would** need to follow the statutory process as the increase would be 'more than 30' and **more than** '25%' (it would be less than 200 but this is irrelevant as the 25% threshold would be met).

The quality of new places created through expansion

We expect LAs to consider a range of performance indicators and financial data, before deciding whether a school should be expanded. Where schools are underperforming, we would not expect them to expand, unless there is a strong case that this would help to raise standards. We expect LAs to create new places in schools that have an overall Ofsted rating of 'good' or 'outstanding'. If, however, there are no other feasible ways to create new places in the area, the LA should notify their Pupil Places Planning adviser⁴. In cases where there is a proposal to expand a school that is rated inadequate, the LA should also send a copy of the proposal to the [relevant RSC](#) so that they can ensure appropriate intervention strategies are in place.

The table below sets out who can propose an enlargement of premises and what process must be followed:

⁴ Advisers.PPP@education.gov.uk

Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
LA for community	Enlargement of premises that meets the threshold	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese
LA for voluntary or foundation	Enlargement of premises that meets the threshold	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees
LA for voluntary and foundation	Enlargement of premises (below the threshold)	Non statutory process	LA	N/A
GB of all categories mainstream	Enlargement of premises (below the threshold)	Non statutory process	GB	N/A

Expansion onto an additional site (or 'satellite sites')

Where proposers seek to expand onto an additional site they will need to ensure that the new provision is genuinely a change to an existing school and not in reality the establishment of a new school. Where a LA decides that a new school is needed to meet basic need, they should refer to the [guidance for opening new schools](#).

Decisions about whether a proposal represents a genuine expansion will need to be taken on a case-by-case basis, but proposers and decision makers will need to consider this non-exhaustive list of factors which are intended to expose the extent to which the new site is integrated with the existing site, and the extent to which it will serve the same community as the existing site:

The reasons for the expansion

- What is the rationale for this approach and this particular site?

Admission and curriculum arrangements

- How will the new site be used (e.g. which age groups/pupils will it serve)?
- What will the admission arrangements be?
- Will there be movement of pupils between sites?

Governance and administration

- How will whole school activities be managed?
- Will staff be employed on contracts to work on both sites? How frequently will they do so?
- What governance, leadership and management arrangements will be put in place to oversee the new site (e.g. will the new site be governed by the same GB and the same school leadership team)?

Physical characteristics of the school

- How will facilities across the two sites be used (e.g. sharing of the facilities and resources available at the two sites, such as playing fields)?
- Is the new site in an area that is easily accessible to the community that the current school serves?

The purpose of considering these factors is to determine the level of integration between the two sites; the more integration, the more likely the change will be considered as an expansion.

LAs should copy any proposal to expand a school onto a satellite site to schoolorganisation.notifications@education.gov.uk for monitoring purposes.

Expansion of existing grammar schools

Legislation prohibits the establishment of new grammar schools⁵. Expansion of any existing grammar school onto a satellite site can only happen if the new site is genuinely part of the existing school. Decision-makers must consider the factors listed above when deciding if an expansion is a legitimate enlargement of an existing school.

Changes to the published admissions number (PAN) where an enlargement of premises has not taken place

Admission authorities⁶ must set a PAN for each 'relevant age group' when determining their admission arrangements. If an admission authority of a mainstream school wishes to increase or decrease PAN, without increasing the overall physical

⁵ Except where a grammar school is replacing one of more existing grammar schools

⁶ The LA in the case of community and voluntary controlled (VC) schools or the GB in the case of voluntary aided (VA) and foundation schools

capacity of the buildings, this would be classed as an admissions change, not a prescribed alteration. The statutory process described in this guidance would not need to be followed (please see the [School Admissions Code](#) for further details of the processes admission authorities must follow).

Change in number of pupils in a special school

The School Admissions Code does not apply to special schools. GBs of all categories of special school, and LAs for community special schools, may seek to increase the number of places by following the statutory process in [part 5](#), if the increase is by:

- 10%; or
- 20 pupils (or 5 pupils if the school is a boarding-only school),

(whichever is the smaller number).

The exception to this is where a special school is established in a hospital.

GBs of all categories of special school, and LAs for community special schools, may seek to decrease the number of pupils, by following the statutory process in [part 5](#).

The table below sets out who can propose a change in the number of pupils in a special school and what process must be followed:

Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
GB foundation special	Increase by 10% or 20 pupils (5 for boarding special) or decrease numbers	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees
GB community special	Increase by 10% or 20 pupils (5 for boarding special) or decrease numbers	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese
LA for community special and foundation special	Increase by 10% or 20 pupils (5 for boarding special)	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese

Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
LA for foundation special	Increase by 10% or 20 pupils (5 for boarding special)	Statutory process	LA	GB/Trustees
LA for community special	Decrease of numbers	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese

Change of age range

For changes that are expected to be in place for more than 2 years (as these are considered permanent increases):

LAs can propose:

- a change of age range of up to 2 years (except for adding or removing a sixth form) for voluntary and foundation schools by following the non-statutory process, see [part 4](#).
- a change of age range of 1 year or more for community schools (including the adding or removal of sixth form or nursery provision) and community special schools or alter the upper age limit of a foundation or voluntary school to add sixth form provision by following the statutory process, see [part 5](#).

GBs of foundation and voluntary schools can propose:

- an age range change of up to 2 years (except for adding or removing a sixth form) by following the non-statutory process, see [part 4](#).
- an age range change of 3 years or more (including adding or removing a sixth form) by following the statutory process, see [part 5](#).

Before making such a proposal, the GB should consult with LAs, and where the school is designated as having a religious character the trustees of the school, dioceses or relevant diocesan boards, or any other relevant faith body, to understand the place management needs of the area.

GBs of community schools can propose the alteration of their upper age limit to add sixth form provision following the statutory process, see [part 5](#).

GBs of community special and foundation special schools can propose a change of age range of 1 year or more following the statutory process, see [part 5](#).

Where a proposed age range change would also require an expansion of the school's premises, the LA or GB must also ensure that they act in accordance with the requirements for proposals for the [enlargement of premises](#).

In cases where the age-range of the school has changed, this should be altered on GIAS. For example if the age-range is changed so that the school no longer caters for pupils below compulsory school age, the lower age range of the school would need to be increased so as not to include that age group.

The table below sets out who can propose a change of age range and what process must be followed:

Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
LA for voluntary and foundation	Alteration of upper or lower age range of up to 2 years (excluding adding or removing a sixth form)	Non statutory process	LA	NA
GB of voluntary and foundation	Alteration of upper or lower age range by up to 2 years (excluding adding or removing a sixth form)	Non statutory process	GB	N/A
GB of voluntary and foundation	Alteration of upper or lower age range by 3 years or more	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees
LA for community and community special	Alteration of upper or lower age range by 1 year or more (for community schools including the adding or removal of sixth form or nurse provision)	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese
GB foundation special	Alteration of upper or lower age range by one year or more	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees
GB community special	Alteration of upper or lower age range by one year or more	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese
LA for community	Alteration of upper age range so as to add or	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese

Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
	remove sixth form provision			
LA for voluntary and foundation	Alteration of upper age range so as to add sixth form provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees
GB of voluntary and foundation	Alteration of upper age range so as to add sixth form provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees
GB of community	Alteration of upper age range so as to add sixth form provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese
GB of voluntary and foundation	Alteration of upper age range so as to remove sixth form provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees

Adding a sixth form

The department wants to ensure that all temporary (which is anticipated will be in place for no more than 2 years) and permanent provision is of the highest quality and provides genuine value for money. There is a departmental expectation that proposals for the addition of sixth form provision will only be put forward for secondary schools that are rated as 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted. Proposers should also consider the supply of other local post-16 provision in the area and assess if there is a genuine need for the additional provision.

In deciding whether new sixth form provision would be appropriate, proposers and decision makers should consider the following guidelines:

- **Quality:** The quality of pre-16 education must be good or outstanding (as rated by Ofsted) and the school must have a history of positive Progress 8 scores (above 0);
- **Size:** The proposed sixth form will provide at least 200 places and there should be sufficient demand for those places;
- **Subject Breadth:** The proposed sixth form should - either directly or through partnership - offer a minimum of 15 A level subjects. LAs may wish to consider the benefits of delivering a broader A level curriculum through

partnership arrangements with other school sixth forms. Working with others can offer opportunities to:

- o Improve choice and attainment for pupils
- o Deliver new, improved or more integrated services
- o Make efficiency savings through sharing costs
- o Develop a stronger, more united voice
- o Share knowledge and information.

Schools proposing a partnership arrangement must include evidence of how this will operate on a day-to-day basis, including timetabling and the deployment of staff;

- **Demand:** There should be a clear demand for additional post-16 places in the local area (including evidence of a shortage of post-16 places and a consideration of the quality of Level 3 provision in the area). The proposed sixth form should not create excessive surplus places or have a detrimental effect on other high quality post-16 provision in the local area;
- **Financial viability:** The proposed sixth form should be financially viable (there must be evidence of financial resilience should student numbers fall). The average class size should be at least 15, unless there is a clear educational argument to run smaller classes – for example to build the initial credibility of courses with a view to increasing class size in future.

Not all changes in age range to add a sixth form will necessitate a change to the school's admissions arrangements, for example a school may set up sixth form provision solely for its own pupils. However, if the intention is to also admit external applicants to the sixth form the school will need to adopt a sixth form PAN and may also wish to add academic entry requirements on changing its age-range.

The addition of post-16 provision requires a change of age-range, therefore, where a decision-maker is considering a proposal to add post-16 provision, they should refer to the section on changing an age range.

Closing an additional site

For foundation and voluntary schools that are already operating on a satellite site(s), GBs must follow the statutory process in [part 5](#) if they are proposing the closure of one or more sites, where the main entrance at any of the school's remaining sites is one mile or more from the main entrance of the site which is to be closed. The LA may make such a proposal for a community school following the statutory process in [part 5](#).

The table below sets out who can propose the closure of an additional site and what process must be followed:

Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
LA for community	Closure of one or multiple sites	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese
GB voluntary or foundation	Closure of one or multiple sites	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees

Transfer to a new site

Where the main entrance of the proposed new site for a school would be more than two miles from the main entrance of the current school site, or if the proposed new site is within the area of another LA:

- LAs can propose the transfer to an entirely new site for community schools, community special schools and maintained nursery schools following the statutory process in [part 5](#).
- GBs of voluntary, foundation, foundation special and community special schools can also propose a transfer to a new site following the statutory process in [part 5](#).

The table below sets out who can propose a transfer to a new site and what process must be followed:

Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
LA for community, community special and maintained nursery	Transfer to new site	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese
GB voluntary foundation or foundation special	Transfer to new site	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees
GB community special	Transfer to new site	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese

Changes of category

GBs of all categories of maintained schools, apart from GBs of foundation special schools, may propose to change category by following the statutory process. The [addition or removal of a foundation](#) is described in [part 6](#). Where GBs are proposing a change of category covering a change in provision (e.g. from mainstream to special school) they are encouraged to seek advice by emailing schoolorganisation.notifications@education.gov.uk.

For a proposal to change the category of a school to voluntary-aided, the decision-maker should be satisfied that the GB and/or the foundation are able and willing to meet their financial responsibilities for building work. The decision-maker may wish to consider whether the GB has access to sufficient funds to enable it to meet 10% of its capital expenditure for at least five years from the date of implementation, taking into account anticipated building projects.

Guidance on adding or changing a designated religious character can be found in the [Opening and closing maintained schools](#) guidance.

The table below sets out who can propose a change of category and what process must be followed:

Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
GB of voluntary	VC to VA VA to VC	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees
GB of voluntary	VC or VA to foundation school VC or VA to foundation school and acquire a foundation VC or VA to foundation school, acquire a foundation and majority foundation governors on GB	Statutory process	GB	For proposals at a VA school when decided by the GB: LA CofE Diocese RC Diocese
GB of foundation	Foundation school to VC or VA	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees

Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
GB of foundation	Acquire foundation Acquire a majority of foundation governors on the GB Removal of foundation and/or reduction in majority of foundation governors on GB	Statutory process	GB	N/A
GB of community	Community to VC or VA	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese
GB of community	Community to foundation school Community to foundation school and acquire foundation Community to foundation school and acquire majority of foundation governors on GB	Statutory process	GB	N/A
GB of foundation special	Remove foundation and/or reduce majority of foundation governors on GB	Statutory process	GB	N/A

Single sex school becoming co-educational (or vice versa)

Proposers can seek to change their school from single sex to co-educational (or vice versa) when they can show that this would better serve their local community. A co-educational school cannot change its nursery or post-16 provision to single sex.

When making a decision, LAs will need to consider the demand for and balance of school places for boys and girls in line with the [Equality Act 2010](#).

The table below sets out who can change a school from single sex to co-educational (or vice versa) and what process must be followed:

Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
LA for community or community special	To co-ed or single sex provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese
GB of foundation, foundation special or voluntary	To co-ed or single sex provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees
GB of community special	To co-ed or single sex provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese

Mainstream school: establish/remove/alter special educational needs (SEN) provision

When considering any reorganisation of provision that the LA recognises as reserved for pupils with special educational needs, including that which might lead to children being displaced, proposers will need to demonstrate how the proposed alternative arrangements are likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for those children.

The table below sets out who can propose to establish, remove or alter SEN provision and what process must be followed:

Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
LA for community	Establish, remove or alter SEN provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese
LA for voluntary and foundation	Establish or remove SEN provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees
GB of foundation	Establish, remove or alter SEN provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees

Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
and voluntary				

Change the types of need catered for by a special school

The table below sets out who can propose a change to the type of need catered for by a special school and what process must be followed:

Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
LA for community special	Change designation and categories of SEN provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese
LA for foundation special	Change designation and categories of SEN provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees
GB of community special	Change designation and categories of SEN provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese
GB of foundation special	Change designation and categories of SEN provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees

Boarding provision

The introduction of boarding provision can require the statutory process to be followed (depending on the type of school in question – see table below). LAs and GBs will need to consider how the Prescribed Alterations Regulations apply in conjunction with this guidance and, where there is any doubt, seek independent legal advice, as the department cannot advise on individual cases.

LAs can propose for:

- community schools; the establishment, removal or alteration (decrease by 50 pupils or 50% whichever is the greater) of boarding provision by following the statutory process in [part 5](#).

- community special schools; the establishment, removal or alteration (increase or decrease by 5 places or more where there are both day and boarding places) of boarding provision following the statutory process in [part 5](#).

GBs of voluntary and foundation schools can propose the establishment or increase of boarding provision following the non-statutory process in [part 4](#) and the removal or alteration (decrease by 50 pupils or 50% whichever is the greater) of boarding provision by following the statutory process in [part 5](#).

GBs of special schools can add or remove boarding provision or, where the school makes provision for day and boarding pupils, can increase or decrease boarding provision by five pupils or more following the statutory process in [part 5](#).

The table below sets out who can propose to establish, change or remove boarding provision and what process must be followed:

Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
LA for community	Add, remove or change (decrease by 50 pupils or 50% whichever is greater) boarding provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese
LA for community special	Add, remove or change (increase or decrease by 5 pupils or more) boarding provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese
GB of foundation or voluntary	Add boarding provision	Non-statutory process	GB	N/A
GB of foundation or voluntary	Remove or change (decrease by 50 pupils or 50% whichever is greater) boarding provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees
GB of foundation special	Add, remove or change (increase or decrease by 5 pupils or more) boarding provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees
GB of community special	Add, remove or change (increase or decrease by 5 pupils or more) boarding provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese

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:

- Proposal presented under formal statutory consultation 5 September to 3 October 2019 - proposal to extend the age range of West Woodburn First School to become a primary school with effect from 1 September 2020.

2) Date of equality impact assessment: October 2019

Assessment following formal statutory consultation process.

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

As provided in 1.

4) Name(s) and role(s) of officer(s) completing the assessment:

Lorraine Fife, School Organisation Manager

5) 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?)

The proposal to extend the age range of West Woodburn First School had already been consulted on informally and formally as part of the Education in the West Consultation of 2018 which included all proposals for all remaining maintained first schools and middle

schools in Haydon Bridge Partnership and proposals for all schools and academies in Hexham Partnership. Following the publication of a statutory proposal to extend the age range of West Woodburn in 2018, the Council's Cabinet decided not to approve the proposal to extend the age range of the school at that point due to issues with staffing capacity and finance at the school. Subsequently, the school has become part of The River Rede Foundation together with Otterburn Primary School and has governance under one federated Governing Body and leadership and management under a shared Executive Head between the two schools. The school's budget is also forecast to be in surplus for the next four years as a result of efficiencies within the federation and projected pupil numbers.

The federated Governing Body of The River Rede now feel that the school is in a stable and viable position and would like the school to become a primary school in line with the other schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership, given the now prevalent primary/secondary system across the partnership.

maintained been ese proposals were originally brought forward by the Governing. Children on roll at West Woodburn at the end of Year 5 would no longer have a clear educational pathway to the middle school phase and could be faced with 2 school phase transfers within 2 years. The Governing Bodies of the two first schools believe it would be in the best educational interests of the children to become primary schools to the end of Year 6 when children would then feed to Year 7 at a secondary school in Bedlington or another secondary school according to parental choice.

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 c	Sex - X	Race X	Religion X
Sexual Orientation X			
People who have changed gender X			Women who are pregnant or have babies c
Employees who are married/in civil partnerships X			

6) The characteristics checked above are not relevant because:

Should the proposal to extend the age range of West Woodburn First School be approved, pupils on the roll of the school in Year 4 in August 2020 would remain on the roll of the school into Year 5 in September 2020. They would then remain on the roll of the school into Year 6 in September 2021 and transfer into Year 7 at secondary school or another school in accordance with parental preference in September 2022.

In the medium to long-term, there is no reason to believe that the proposal would affect more positively or negatively than their peers any group of children, parents or staff defined by their gender, age, race, sexual orientation or gender-reassignment status. During the immediate process of transition, we would 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 within these protected groups who may be at particular risk of harassment or discrimination.

Existing HR policies covering organisational change would apply to staff employed at West Woodburn First School. These are designed to ensure that the equalities duties of the Council and the schools are fully met.

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.

7) 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?

Statutory consultation has not shown any evidence to suggest that any member of the community with a disability would be disproportionately impacted positively or negatively should the proposal to extend the age range of West Woodburn be approved.

Any pupil, parent or member of staff of the school who has a disability would not be affected by these proposals as any arrangements already in place to ameliorate such disability as the proposals advocate that the school would retain pupils into Year 5 and then into Year 6. No evidence has come to light during the statutory consultation process of any individual who would be categorised within this protected group, but appropriate arrangements would be made where this is necessary to avoid potential adverse impacts should the need arise.

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

There may be an advantage to the proposal that would affect disabled children, more positively than their peers as children would be able to remain at the school for a further two years. In particular, this could be an advantage to children identified with special educational needs who would continue at the school for a further two years, thus providing continuity. This continuity would potentially benefit parents also with regard to the positive impact on family life.

During the immediate process of transition, we would consult families about any specific potential impacts on individuals; for instance, because of loss of support networks or the need to replicate reasonable adjustments made to accommodate disabled children, and we would ensure that appropriate individual arrangements are made where this is necessary to avoid potential adverse impacts.

9) 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 proposed changes would not affect any current arrangements for disabled people to participate in public life as adjustments as all currently arrangements at the school would remain in place.

10) 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 extension of the age range of the school would affect public attitudes towards disabled people.

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

There is currently no evidence to suggest that the extension of the age range of the school 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.

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.

12) 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?

There is no evidence to suggest that there are any risks of disproportionately disadvantaging any pupils or members of staff at the school.

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

See para. 8 above.

Age

14) 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?

West Woodburn First School provides education to pupils between the ages of 4 and 9. Only pupils within this age range would be affected by the proposal.

Staff at the school are employed equitably in accordance with the schools' and council's employment policies. Should approval for the proposals be given by Cabinet at some point in the future, it is not expected that any staff would be at risk of redundancy. However, the school would need to carry out a staffing restructure as they would need to be organised as a primary rather than a first school. Any changes to a member of staff's working arrangements would be made in accordance with the schools' and council's employment policies deal on an equitable basis, regardless of age.

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

See para. 14. Above.

16) 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.)

Statutory consultation has not shown any evidence to suggest that the proposals would have any effect on the ability of different age groups to participate in public life more or less than already occurs. No evidence has arisen during statutory consultation to suggest that anyone within this protected group would be prevented from participating in public life.

17) 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)

There is no evidence to suggest that this proposal would affect public attitudes towards pupils in the protected groups or any pupils on roll at the school.

18) 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?

Statutory consultation has not shown any evidence to suggest that this proposals would increase or reduce the risk of harassment or victimisation of this of pupils on roll at these schools should the latter extend their age ranges. All schools have anti-bullying policies

and arrangements in place e.g. split-time lunches and playtimes etc, to ensure that any harassment or victimisation of pupils is dealt with effectively.

19) 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?

Refer to para. 14.

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

Should this proposal be approved, pupils on roll at West Woodburn would be able to stay at the school for another two years and therefore remain within their home community for this additional period. There would also be one less school phase change for pupils on roll at West Woodburn to undergo.

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.

21) 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?

Staff at West Woodburn First School are employed equitably in accordance with the school's and council's employment policies. Should approval be given to extend the age ranges of these schools, any staff reorganisation would be carried out in line with the council's employment policies on an equitable basis, including for those staff who may currently be pregnant or on maternity leave.

Statutory consultation has not shown any evidence to suggest that the proposals would create any barriers to pupils accessing any of the school impacted by the proposal who have a parent who may be pregnant or who has other children under 26 weeks old. The proposal could have a positive impact for some families where a parent who may be pregnant or who has other children under 26 weeks old may benefit from the child on roll at West Woodburn remaining at the current school site for an additional two years. Should approval be given for the implementation of the proposal and subsequent evidence arise that anyone within this protected group would be impacted negatively by this proposal, appropriate individual arrangements to the extent possible would be put in place to ameliorate any avoid potential adverse impacts.

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

See para. 23.

23) 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.)

Statutory consultation has not shown any evidence to suggest that the proposals would affect the ability of this protected group to participate in public life under the proposals.

24) 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)

Statutory consultation has not shown any evidence to suggest that the proposals would have any effect on public attitudes to this protected group under the proposals.

25) 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?

Statutory consultation has not shown any evidence to suggest that the proposal would make it more or less likely that this protected group would be at risk of harassment or victimisation under the proposals.

26) 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?

Statutory consultation has not shown any evidence to suggest that the protected group would be disproportionately disadvantaged by the proposals.

27) 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. 23.

Human Rights

28) 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)

Statutory consultation has not shown any evidence to suggest that the proposal would impact positively or negatively on the human rights of any of the protected groups identified within this EIA.

PART 3 – Course of Action

29) Based on a consideration of all the potential impacts, tick one of the following as a summary of the outcome of this assessment:

X	The equality analysis has not identified any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken.
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30) 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 impact of the proposal on groups with protected characteristics, there is no evidence to suggest that any of these groups would be disproportionately disadvantaged by the proposal. However, as the proposal involves extending educational provision at West Woodburn First School for a further two years, there are some potential advantages that could be enjoyed by some protected groups as outlined. Should the proposal be approved for implementation, the EIA would be reviewed to ensure that if any evidence arises 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

31) 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 been updated following the statutory consultation period. Should Cabinet approve the implementation of the statutory proposal in relation to West Woodburn First School, the EIA would be further updated at that time. 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