



# Northumberland County Council

## CABINET

**Date: 13 September 2022**

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### **The Outcomes of Consultation on Proposals for the Coquet Partnership**

Report of the Joint Interim Director of Children's Services - Audrey Kingham

Cabinet Member for Children's Services: Councillor Guy Renner-Thompson

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### **Purpose of Report**

This report sets out the analysis of feedback from consultation on proposals for schools in the Coquet Partnership to reorganise to a 2-tier (primary/secondary) system of education. It also sets out an analysis of the feedback on the proposal to provide additional specialist SEND places to meet the growing need for places for children and young people diagnosed with a primary need of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH) within the Coquet Partnership area.

Cabinet approved consultation in the light of both the feedback received from the Governing Bodies in the Coquet Partnership and the proposed investment of £25.5m in school buildings in the partnership. Cabinet is now asked to permit the publication of a Statutory Proposal setting out proposals to reorganise schools (excluding NCEA Warkworth Primary which is already a primary school) in the Coquet Partnership within a 2-tier (primary/secondary) structure, and to permit the publication of a Statutory Proposal to increase the number of pupils at Barndale House Special School through the expansion of the school onto an additional site in Amble.

If the Statutory Proposals are approved for publication, Cabinet would need to make a final decision on the proposals within two months of the end of the representation period.

### **Recommendations**

#### **It is recommended that Cabinet:**

- a) Note the feedback from the informal (non-statutory Consultation).
- b) Note that consultation that took place between 11 May and 29 June, summarised at paras. 18 to 26 of this report.

- c) Decide in the light of this report and any recommendations arising from the Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee whether to permit the publication of a Statutory Proposal setting out the intention of the Council to implement the proposals as follows:
- Extend the age range of Amble First School from an age 4-9 first school to an age 4-11 primary school and relocate the school building with effect from 1 September 2024;
  - Extend the age range of Amble Links First School from an age 2-9 first school to an age 2-11 primary school and expand the school in accordance with table 5 of the report building with effect from 1 September 2024;
  - Extend the age range of Broomhill First School from an age 3-9 first school to an age 3-11 primary school and expand the school building with effect from 1 September 2024;
  - Extend the age range of Red Row First School from an age 3-9 first school to an age 3-11 primary school and expand the school building with effect from 1 September 2024;
  - Reduce the age range of James Calvert Spence College from an age 9-18 school to an age 11-18 secondary school with effect from 1 September 2025;
- d) Decide in the light of this report and any recommendations arising from the Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee whether to permit the publication of a Statutory Proposal setting out the intention of the Council to increase the number of pupil places at Barndale House Special School by 50 places for children and young people diagnosed with special educational needs, primarily those with ASD, SEMH, Speech Language and Communication (SLCN) and Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) through the addition of a satellite site in the current South Avenue site of JCSC. Cabinet should note that this is a standalone proposal and is not dependent on the outcome of the decision in relation to the proposals for the first schools and JCSC set out at recommendation c).
- e) Note that Cabinet has previously approved capital investment in the Medium Term Plan to replace/refurbish the buildings of JCSC on its current site. Cabinet is therefore asked to note the preferred building solutions and the associated indicative capital costs of the proposals set out in recommendations c) to f) set out in para. 55 of this report and note that the Medium Term Plan would need to be increased by £11.1m to accommodate these capital costs as detailed in para. 55 of this report. Also, to note £2m of the additional funding required from MTFP will be achieved by reducing the budget for Astley as detailed in para. 55 of this report.
- f) Note that the outcomes of the publication of the Statutory Proposals would be brought back to Cabinet within 2 months of the date of their publication for a final decision.

## **Link to Corporate Plan**

These proposals are most closely linked to the Council's priority for Learning (achieving and realising potential, but it is also strongly linked with the priority for Connecting (having access to the things you need).

## **Key Issues**

1. On 10 May 2022, at the request of schools in the Coquet Partnership Cabinet approved the initiation of informal (pre-statutory) consultation on proposals to change the organisation of schools in the Amble Partnership from the current first and middle/high structure, to a 2-tier (primary/secondary) structure.
2. The background and rationale for the proposal are set out fully in the Report of Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services, 10 May 2022 provided in the Background Papers to this report.
3. A proposal to increase pupil places at Barndale House Special School through the creation of a satellite school within the Coquet Partnership area was also included in this consultation. The Council has a strategic aim of working towards the provision of sufficient specialist places within Northumberland so that relevant children and young people are able to have their needs met as close to their local communities as possible.
4. Six weeks of consultation (excluding school holidays) began on 11 May and concluded at midnight on 29 June 2022. The method and format used to carry out consultation is set out at paras.18 to 26, while the feedback and analysis is summarised in paras. 27 to 45.
5. In the light of the educational rationale from schools and Governing Bodies, and the feedback received from consultation, Cabinet is recommended to approve the publication of the statutory proposals both in relation to the reorganisation of the mainstream schools in Coquet Partnership and the increase in pupil numbers at Barndale House Special School. The implications of these recommendations are set out in paras. 11 – 17 of this report.

## **Background Information**

6. In 2016, Cabinet approved the allocation of funding towards replacement or refurbishment of JCSC buildings, while in 2022 the capital allocation in the Medium term Plan was increased to £25.5m towards the improvement of school buildings in the Coquet partnership as a whole.
7. Before such capital investment is made in school buildings in the Coquet Partnership, officers recommended that Cabinet receive assurance that it would be spent on an organisational school structure that supports viable and sustainable schools at all phases of education in the area, with a view to encouraging increased numbers of parents to enroll their children in schools at all phases of the education system in the area. This is in line with the Council's objectives to provide good local education for all children and young people in the county.
8. In light of para. 6, Council Officers met with the headteachers and Chairs of Governors in the Coquet Partnership in January to March 2022 at full partnership level and as individual schools, to determine their views on the current and preferred structure of schools in the partnership. A summary of feedback from these meetings was set out in the Report of the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services Report, 10 May 2022. Overall, the feedback received from the majority of schools clearly pointed to the desire to carry out a consultation on proposals for schools to be organised within a 2-tier (primary/secondary) structure.

9. There is currently no specialist provision for children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) within the Coquet Partnership. Currently, there are 60 pupils from Reception to Year 11 who have to travel daily to specialist provision outside of their local area and some out of county for their education. In particular, the Council's data indicates there is a growing need for additional specialist provision for children and young people with Autism (ASD) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) as a primary SEN need right across the county. This growing trend also applies to the Coquet Partnership - forecasts for the number of children requiring places in specialist provision with ASD and SEMH as a primary need are provided in Table 1 and Table 2:

**Table 1 - Forecast for number of pupils with ASD as a primary need requiring specialist provision and living in Coquet Partnership**

Final Forecasts Year Group	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
2022	1	2	4	13	3	9	3	8	4	4	7	7
2023	1	1	2	9	12	5	12	3	6	5	4	8
2024	1	1	2	5	9	22	7	15	3	9	6	4
2025	1	1	2	3	5	16	29	9	12	4	9	6
2026	1	1	2	4	3	8	21	38	7	17	4	10
2027	1	1	2	4	4	6	11	27	31	10	17	4
2028	1	1	2	4	4	6	7	14	22	41	10	19
2029	1	1	2	4	4	6	8	10	12	30	43	11

Note: Shaded figures show year on year increase within a particular year group

**Table 2 - Forecast for number of pupils with SEMH as a primary need requiring specialist and living in Coquet Partnership**

Final Forecasts Year Group	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
2022	3	5	8	10	7	8	8	9	9	8	5	7
2023	3	7	8	8	14	6	7	10	10	8	8	5
2024	3	8	11	9	11	11	5	8	10	8	9	8
2025	3	8	12	11	11	9	11	6	9	9	9	8
2026	3	8	12	13	15	10	9	12	6	7	9	8
2027	3	7	12	13	17	13	9	10	13	5	8	9
2028	3	7	11	13	17	14	12	10	11	11	6	7
2029	3	7	12	11	17	14	13	14	11	9	12	6

Note: Shaded figures show year on year increase within a particular year group

- The discussions on the structure of schools in the Coquet Partnership have therefore presented the opportunity to discuss the predicted growing demand for special educational needs in the area with mainstream schools and Barndale House Special School in order to form a 'joined-up' approach to the education of all children and young people living in this area.

### Implications for individual schools

- Amble First School – The Governing Body of the school wish to extend the age range of the first school to become a primary school within a 2-tier(primary/secondary) structure within the partnership. Pupils on roll at the school in Year 4 on 31 August 2024 would be retained on roll at the school in September 2024 as Year 5, and as Year 6 in September 2025. In order for the school to extend its age range, the school would need to relocate to a different site, as its current site is not suitable for expansion. The proposed site under the 2-tier (primary/secondary) proposal is the current site of JCSC at Acklington Road, and it is proposed that this site would be shared with the proposed satellite site of Barndale House Special School (see paras. 17 and 55).
- Amble Links First School - The Governing Body of the school wish to extend the age range of the first school to become a primary school within a 2-tier (primary/

secondary) structure within the partnership. Pupils on roll at the school in Year 4 on 31 August 2024 would be retained on roll at the school in September 2024 as Year 5, and as Year 6 in September 2025. The school building would need to be expanded to accommodate the additional 2 year groups (see para. 55).

13. Broomhill First School - The Governing Body of the school wish to extend the age range of the first school to become a primary school within a 2-tier (primary/secondary) structure within the partnership. Pupils on roll at the school in Year 4 on 31 August 2024 would be retained on roll at the school in September 2024 as Year 5, and as Year 6 in September 2025. The school building would need to be expanded to accommodate the additional 2 year groups (see para. 55).
14. Grange View CE First School - The Governing Body of the school wish to extend the age range of the first school to become a primary school within a 2-tier (primary/secondary) structure within the partnership. Pupils on roll at the school in Year 4 on 31 August 2024 would be retained on roll at the school in September 2024 as Year 5, and as Year 6 in September 2025. The school building would need to be expanded to accommodate the additional 2 year groups (see para. 55).
15. Red Row First School - The Governing Body of the school wish to extend the age range of the first school to become a primary school within a 2-tier (primary/secondary) structure within the partnership. Pupils on roll at the school in Year 4 on 31 August 2024 would be retained on roll at the school in September 2024 as Year 5, and as Year 6 in September 2025. The school building would need to be expanded to accommodate the additional 2 year groups (see para. 55).
16. James Calvert Spence College (JCSC) – While the Governing Body of the school supports the current system of organisation in the partnership, they have confirmed their commitment to work hard to make whichever school structure is in place a success. Under a 2-tier(primary/secondary) structure, the school would not receive a Year 5 group from September 2024 and from September 2025 would become an age 11-18 school, with transition into Year 7 only from that date onwards. Students who would be in Year 5 at JCSC in August 2024 would transfer as Year 6 to dedicated accommodation at the Acklington Road site in September 2024 (see para. 49). Funding for the replacement/refurbishment of the JCSC buildings is already approved by Cabinet and the proposed building solution is set out at para. 55.
17. Barndale House Special School - The Governing Body of the school recognises the need to increase specialist provision in the North of Northumberland and supports the proposal to increase numbers at the school through the creation of a satellite school located at the current Acklington Road site. Under the current structure of schools in the Coquet Partnership, the Barndale satellite school would share the site with JCSC, while under the proposed 2-tier (primary/secondary) proposal, Barndale would share the site with Amble Primary School (as it would become).

## The Consultation Process

18. Informal (pre-statutory) consultation began on a proposal for a 2-tier model of school organisation in the Coquet Partnership on 11 May and closed on 29 June 2022 in line with DfE Guidance. A consultation register of relevant stakeholders was drawn up and is included at Appendix 2 of this report.
19. A consultation document was developed, including a questionnaire, setting out the background, rationale (including data and information on structures and standards in schools in the partnership) and the implications of the proposal. The document also set out the rationale for the increase of additional places at Barndale House Special School with a view to creating a satellite provision within the Coquet Partnership area.
20. The consultation document was circulated directly to parents, staff, Governors and other stakeholders in the Consultation Register via an electronic link. The link to the document was also published on the Council's website, on Twitter and Facebook and a notice highlighting the consultation displayed in the local library in Amble.
21. In addition, a dedicated consultation 'padlet' was set up to hold the consultation document, frequently asked questions and other relevant information for stakeholders.
22. Council officers held meetings with the Governing Body and staff group at each of the Coquet Partnership schools impacted by the proposals during the 6 week consultation period. A meeting was also held with the Governing Body of NCEA Warkworth CE Primary although this school would not be directly impacted by the reorganisation proposals.
23. Officers met with the Governing Body of Barndale House Special School to gauge their views specifically on the proposed increase in pupil numbers and satellite site, as this proposal is not directly linked with the reorganisation of schools and could be implemented within the current structure or within the 2-tier (primary/secondary) structure in order to address the growing number of children and young people being diagnosed with ASD and SEMH within the Coquet Partnership area.
24. Summaries of these meetings are provided at para. 44 of this report.
25. A public event was held in Amble Masonic Hall on Saturday, 11 June between 10.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. Council Officers and at least one representative from each school were on hand throughout the day to assist with any queries or provide additional information to stakeholders. Laptops were also made available to stakeholders wishing to complete a consultation questionnaire on the day. The event was attended by 15 parents and members of the community; the Council also provided transport to and from the event from the villages of Broomhill, Red Row, Widdrington and Widdrington Station, but this transport was not taken up by any parents or members of the community living in those areas on the day.
26. Should Cabinet approve the publication of the statutory proposals set out under the Recommendations, there would be a four-week period of statutory consultation during which time all interested parties would be able to submit comments either for or against the proposals. The statutory proposals would be published on 15 September, closing on 13 October 2022.

## Feedback from Consultation

27. This section of the report summaries the feedback from consultation on the proposals for the reorganisation of schools in the Coquet Partnership to a 2-tier (primary/secondary) structure, and on the proposal to create specialist provision within the area through the increase of pupil places at Barndale House Special School via the creation of a satellite site in Amble.

Responses from Governing Bodies and staff were as follows (full responses are included in the Background Papers to this report):

28. Amble First School

The Governing Body believes that of the two options outlined Model B is by far the most preferable. There has been a desire from the first schools for such a change for a number of years and reassurances have been given that no schools will be closed.

Splitting a key stage is problematic, not just in terms of educational achievement but the children will have studied different curriculum topics leading to repetition for some.

If Model B is adopted, we would expect to continue developing good working relationships between all the schools and ensure a smooth transmission from primary to secondary.

An extract from their response states:

*“Our hope and desire is that Amble First could move to the middle school site to allow expansion; this decision is a ‘no-brainer’.*

*Primary educators are the experts at delivering the primary curriculum and the change to a two-tier system fits in well with key stages. These children need to be supported and developed to reach their potential, and we believe that could be best achieved by developing primary schools across the partnership.”*

Staff at Amble First School are keen for the schools to change to a two-tier system as the children would benefit academically, socially and emotionally from spending a further two years in a primary setting.

The staff are aware that the current key stage 2 results in the partnership are not as good as they should be. They believe that by allowing the children to stay in primary education it would help to improve results at key stage 2 as the curriculum could be organised more effectively, ensuring clear progression of knowledge and skills. The middle school currently faces the challenge of designing a curriculum for Years 5 and 6 who have all covered different topics in their first schools which leads to repetition for some pupils and a lack of coverage for others. Converting to a primary school would enable all children to receive the full curriculum coverage across key stage 2.

The school recognised that some children are ready for transition and others, particularly SEND children, find transition difficult. Those children would benefit from the stability of a further two years in the same class with familiar school staff. By reducing the number of transitions, they could keep the same high level of support in place for longer.



An extract from their response states:

*“We are aware that any change to primary would involve a move for us. This is something that we would welcome. We are increasingly aware of the age of our building and the money that we have to spend on repairs and maintenance. We are also aware of the views of parents who feel that we do not have as much to offer as other schools in the area due to not having a school field.*

*A move to a new building would hopefully provide us with some more space so that we could support our children better. We are concerned that if we do not move to new premises, prospective parents will look to other schools with better facilities, and we may see a further decline in numbers.”*

## 29. Amble Links First School

The Governing Body has met on several occasions to discuss the proposal and is in agreement with Model B. A number of reasons were cited including:

- improved key stage 2 outcomes,
- fitting in with national curriculum key stages and other areas in the county/country
- enabling children to move at a point when they are more emotionally resilient to do so
- contributes to keeping children in the Coquet partnership

They did, however, have a few concerns regarding updating first schools to take year 5 and 6 pupils. These concerns included:

- the hope that the work would be done to the highest standard and that no one school would appear to be better equipped/resourced
- work would be carried out with a long-term view and not in a temporary way
- that all facilities are fit for purpose

The provision of a SEND facility is welcomed, but the governors felt it would be better if this could be a purpose-built school ensuring longevity.

An extract from their response states:

*“Children complete key stage 2 on one site and are not uprooted in the middle, which can result in a fall in attainment. This continuity would help to address the need to improve key stage 2 outcomes.”*

From the available options the majority of staff at Amble Links First School preference was for Model B. Some of the reasons cited for this decision included:

- Children are too young to move up and, due to their age, are quite vulnerable – many are not yet mature enough to be given the levels of independence/freedom that they get at middle school.
- Many children in Year 4 are concerned about bullying as they move to middle school.
- Staff are committed to building on their current successful work in designing the curriculum and taking this into upper key stage 2. There would be more consistency in curriculum delivery across key stage 2 – this is something that has

not worked well when the key stage has been split and there has been lack of cohesion between schools.

- Fewer and better time of transition points will benefit children's learning and well-being – two tier would eliminate the splitting of key stage 2 which is disruptive.
- SEND – Staff would be keen to have additional provision in the local area, so fewer children are transported out of the area. This would help those children to feel more a part of the community and to keep the length of the school day shorter.

The staff also raised some concerns and questions including:

- Concerns raised that if other Amble Schools get rebuilds or refurbishments, would other schools get additional investment too? Amble Links could be left to be the only school in Amble that doesn't appear to be 'shiny and new' - being seen as the second-rate school in Amble.
- If we remain as a three tier system, what will happen to the money earmarked for the partnership? Will it still be invested in schools?
- SATS are, of course, a concern. Staff would require additional training and support both for teaching and leading subjects in upper KS2.

### 30. Broomhill First School

The Governing Body believes that a change to primary/secondary would bring the partnership in line with the majority of schools in England. Reorganisation will remove the phase transfer in the middle of a key stage allowing schools to take full responsibility and accountability for full key stages. It would provide stability, consistency and continuity for pupils throughout their primary/secondary years, in-line with the National Curriculum and end of key stage assessments.

An extract from their response states:

*“As a Governing Body, we believe that each first school is best suited to continue the education of the children in their schools to the end of key stage 2; staff know the children well and can build on their understanding of the unique needs of each pupil, strong relationships have been developed with families and care givers to support their child's education and emotional well-being.”*

### 31. Grange View CE VC First School

The Governing Body want to offer the best possible education for all pupils whilst ensuring the long-term viability of the schools in the partnership and as such support the move to Model B.

We believe staff in first schools are best place to continue the educational journey of the children. In addition, accountability for key stage 2 assessments lies with one establishment and children's prior knowledge can be built on accurately avoiding repetition that can happen at middle schools.

Practicalities of arranging a smooth transition in the middle of a key stage has proven difficult for all schools involved and the time and effort this entails could be spent accelerating the progress of the pupils in their current settings.

It is essential to consider the long-term structure of the partnership for the investment to be spent effectively to best meet the educational and well-being needs of the children.

An extract from their response states:

*“The implementation of the primary/secondary system will provide stability, consistency and continuity for pupils throughout their primary and secondary years which is in line with the National Curriculum and key stage assessments.*

*As governors, we can assure you we have the commitment, drive and determination to make this proposal work.”*

### 32. Red Row First School

The Governing Body for Red Row First School confirm they are supportive of the proposed change to a two-tier system. They are keen for all children within Red Row, and the partnership, to receive the best education possible.

An extract from their response states:

*“The transition at key stage 2 has a huge impact on children and is often unsettling. We at Red Row are keen to maintain and progress our children to achieve the best they can. We thrive to nature them to achieve the best and moving at 11 years of age will help us do this.”*

The staff at Red Row First School supported Model B for the following reasons:

- Better outcomes for children in the partnership
- Continuity of the Curriculum to tie in with National end points
- Continuity of provision throughout KS2

### 33. NCEA Warkworth C of E Primary School

The school is already a primary school within the partnership. Due to changes within the Alnwick Partnership, they felt it was important to seek primary status to enable children, if they wanted to, to transfer to Alnwick in year 7, whilst leaving a transition route open to James Calvert Spence College at either year 5 or year 7. With that experience the Governing Body supports Model B. They believe it would bring some conformity across both the Coquet and Alnwick Partnerships. The governors also support the provision of Special Education Needs within the Partnership which enhances the Model B proposals.

An extract from their response states:

*“... we believe that by ensuring that children stay within the partnership in their primary schools until year 6 and complete their SATs this will be beneficial to the partnership as a whole”.*

### 34. James Calvert Spence College

The Governing Body of James Calvert Spence College welcomes the proposed capital investment. They view the consultation as an opportunity to provide the

community with the education structure most suited to the children both now and in the future to provide them with the very best start in life.

Whilst they are committed to the current structure of the school with pupils having access to fantastic facilities earlier in their education journey, coupled with unrivalled pastoral support they understand the need to consider the effectiveness and sustainability of an alternative model before the proposed capital investment proceeds.

The governors do have some operational concerns including financial implications and staffing protocol during any transition period.

Whatever the outcome of this consultation, James Calvert Spence College will work tirelessly to make either system a success.

An extract from their response states:

*“Our focus is to provide the best possible education for the children in our community, work for them and unite our partnership education system. We will support the decision made following the consultation and we will work as hard as it takes to make the future model work effectively, whatever that model might be.*

*We have a shared commitment with our colleagues across the Coquet Partnership to the best outcome for our children and young people and to the communities we all serve.”*

### 35. School Staff Across the Partnership

In addition, 12% of staff across the partnership responded to the online survey with 10% in favour of Model B and 2% unsure.

### 36. Barndale House School (in relation to proposed increase of places via a satellite school in Amble)

The Governing Body welcomes the local authority’s enthusiasm, support and confidence in us as a school. It is incredibly humbling that the Coquet partnership would want to work collaboratively with our provision. As a Governing Body we recognise what our role would be with this and the opportunities it could provide:

- A SEND hub that mainstream schools can use for CPD, intervention and outreach.
- Bringing professional services together on a single site.
- Children receiving support in their locality (stronger community links)
- Securing outcomes for SEND pupils through all Schools in Coquet partnership, and improved SEND provision in the north of Northumberland.
- Specialist support base for those pupils needing early intervention.

Whilst the proposal brings opportunities it also brings some challenges and as a Governing Body, we would want to ensure that:

- Barndale can provide an excellent quality of education over both sites in fit for purpose environments.
- The transitional phase is transparent and allows growth at an appropriate rate.

- Capacity is built to ensure effective strategic and operational leadership over both sites.
- Barndale can continue to make decisions regarding the admissions of places to ensure pupils needs can be met appropriately.
- Our pupils and parents are clear that the extended provision would not result in a move of pupils from their current peer group.
- There is sufficient capacity to build a specialist hub of services in both provisions to ensure that the locality can be supported.

An extract from their response states:

*“Our governors are a strong body of people who have a genuine interest and personal investment in young people with SEND (school leaders, parents, health professionals, community providers and mainstream colleagues) and as such feel our viewpoints represent the wider school community and advocate for children and young people with SEND.”*

## **Responses and Evidence Collated from Other Sources**

### **37. Response from the Newcastle Diocesan Education Board (NDEB)**

As always, The Newcastle Diocesan Education Board (NDEB) wishes to ensure that the best local solutions are carefully looked at for the entire local community, not just the church schools and that all schools work effectively together for the benefit of all children within that community.

The Board have considered the wider information presented in the consultation document and following discussion with their schools in the partnership, are supportive of Model B and the proposal to move to a full primary/secondary structure across the partnership.

In relation to the growing numbers of children in need of specialist SEN provision, and the fact that several children across the partnership are required to travel lengthy distances to access specialist provision, the Board is supportive of the proposal to develop local specialist provision within the partnership and for it to be located within the current James Calvert Spence College building.

An extract from their response states:

*“The NDEB hopes that the outcome of the current consultation will provide a clear direction for the future of the schools going forwards, ensuring the best educational interests of all of the children across the Coquet partnership can be met.”*

### **38. Response from the Diocese of Hexham of Newcastle**

The Diocese supported Model B. The reasons cited in support of model B included the removal of a split key stage; the curriculum being in line with national curriculum phases, improved provision and accountability and better transition between key stages and schools.

An extract from their response states:

*“Single system to facilitate shared working and sharing of good practice including moderation and training.”*

### 39. Pupils

Staff in Amble Links First, Broomhill First and Grange View First Schools initiated discussions with the pupils on the proposals for the Coquet partnership. Their comments are noted below:

#### *In Support of Model A*

- I'd like to make new friends at middle school and see friends from other schools.
- Meet new teachers.
- More clubs.
- It might have better things.

#### *In Support of Model B*

- We would get more time to spend with our younger brothers or sisters.
- Staying here means you can spend longer being in the same class with your friends and you won't leave them behind.
- I'm angry that it is not happening now, I want to stay here at this school.
- Familiar with this school and won't be scared.

In addition, the Council developed a separate questionnaire for students at James Calvert Spence College. Only four responses to the questionnaire were received from students and all were in favour of Model A.

Main reasons were:

- You need to learn to adapt to different environments this helps progress this further.
- It gets students more used to the idea of changing workplaces this would better prepare them for the reality of getting/changing jobs.

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

### 40. Summary of feedback from County Councillors with wards in Coquet Partnership area

No responses were received from Councillors with wards in the Coquet partnership.

### 41. Summary of feedback from Town and Parish Councils in the Coquet Partnership area

*Amble Town Council* - The Town Council would support the community's choice.

An extract from their response states:

*“... would urge that NCC retain as many existing staff as possible should changes be made.”*

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

42. In total 3029 consultees were sent a link to the informal consultation document and questionnaire directly and 125 responses were received to the consultation.

The survey asked which structure of schools in the Coquet Partnership would be the best option for providing improved outcomes for all children and young people in the area and for securing a sustainable and viable education for this and future generations? 92% of the respondents thought that Model B, a primary/secondary model, would provide improved outcomes and be a sustainable and viable option.

3% thought that Model A, the current structure, would provide improved outcomes and less than 5% responded that they didn't know which model would provide improvements.

From the responses received around 50% were from parents/carers of pupils currently attending schools within the partnership, 25% from staff and governing bodies and the remainder from other interested stakeholders.

Main reasons given in support for "Model A" were:

- Consultees believed that the three-tier structure worked for themselves and plenty of generations before and after.
- Didn't see the issue with key stage 2 being across different schools.
- It would take significant investment to increase the capacity of the first schools and it wouldn't be financially viable for first schools to have science labs, cookery rooms, design technology/IT rooms etc. all of which children should be doing at age 9.
- Amble First School isn't big enough to accommodate another two school years on its current grounds.

Main reasons given in support for "Model B" were:

- This model would allow pupils to complete Key Stage 2 in one school rather than having to change school midway through the key stage at a crucial time in their development.
- Accountability for Key stage 2 results not in question if children remain in primary school.
- Implementation of a primary/secondary model would provide consistency and continuity for pupils which is in line with the national curriculum and key stage assessments.
- Children would benefit from transfer at the end of year 6 rather than year 4 as they would be more mature to cope with the changes and there would also be fewer transitions for the children to make during their education.
- Children would be older and more independent by Year 6 for travelling to school on their own.
- Would be consistent with the rest of the County and would bring the North East up to date with the rest of the Country.

Main reasons given in support for "Don't Know" were:

- Neither model addressed the real issue which is the continued low outcomes at the end of key stage 2. Feel that until this is known there is little point in taking action.
- Both models have their advantages and disadvantages. Would be happy with either outcome.
- The friendships developed through meeting new friends can have a massive influence on well-being and mental health and can help a child grow in confidence.

The survey also asked consultees if Model B (primary/secondary) was implemented was the proposal to locate a satellite school, run by Barndale Special School, for children and young people with special educational needs on a shared site with Amble First School a good solution for improving SEND provision in the area. 82% of the consultees thought that this was a good solution.

However, if Model A (current structure) remained in place 70% of consultees thought the proposal to locate a satellite school, run by Barndale Special School, on a shared site with a school in the partnership was a good solution for improving the SEND provision in the area.

Main reasons given by consultees were:

- Would enable this group of pupils to be educated closer to and within their home communities as well as providing expertise from the Special School to the partnership
- Allow for a smoother transition for those children with additional needs.
- Any extra provision has got to be a bonus for the area
- Important to keep children with special needs close to home. If we can avoid transporting our most vulnerable children across the county, then I believe we should.
- Children would not have to travel as far, be less disruptive and would save money.
- This would be a marvellous addition to the development and investment in the Coquet Partnership and would hopefully result in cost savings over time.



## Summary of Feedback received via meetings at schools

43. Council Officers had meetings with the Governing Body and staff body of Red Row, Grange View CE, Amble First, Amble Links, Broomhill First Schools and JCSC and with the Governing Body of NCEA Warkworth CE Primary to consider the proposal to reorganise the partnership to a 2-tier (primary/secondary) structure during the informal consultation period; union representatives were present at the meetings held with staff groups. Officers also met with the Governing Body of Barndale House Special School to discuss the proposed increase in pupil numbers via a satellite school in Amble. Summaries of these meetings are set out below:

### 44. Amble First School, 16 May 2022

#### a. Staff Meeting

- Twelve members of staff attended the meeting.
- Questions were asked about the SEND provision, i.e., what would the age be and how divided would the site be.

#### b. Governing Body Meeting

- There were seven governors present.
- Discussed the costs of refurbishment and whether there was any flexibility regarding the budget and who bears the cost of the refurbishment.
- Staffing protocol was discussed, and it was noted that re-organisations were a difficult time for staff. Governors hoped support would be available.

### Red Row First School, 18 May 2022

#### a. Staff Meeting

- Eight members of staff attended the meeting.
- There was discussion around two-year old provision and whether it was deemed adequate within the partnership.
- Questioned whether it would be possible to come to a decision sooner to aid earlier implementation of any proposal.
- Staff felt that the perception in the community would be that it was already a “done deal”, particularly with what happened at Druridge Bay.

#### b. Governing Body Meeting

- There were six governors present.
- Funding for the proposals was discussed and it was asked if the Edwin Street site was sold whether the money would be re-invested into the partnership.
- Wrap-around provision was raised and whether there was any consideration to provide this as part of the consultation.
- Discussed if Model B was approved when would it be implemented.

### Amble Links First School, 23 May 2022

#### a. Staff Meeting

- There were 19 members of staff in attendance at the meeting.
- The budget allocated to the partnership was raised and it was queried whether it would be sufficient for the proposals.
- Discussed the forthcoming public event and whether there would be a meeting, in the same format as these meetings, for parents.

- Staffing issues and the staffing protocol was discussed. A staff member asked whether there would be opportunities for redundancy.
- b. Governing Body Meeting
- Nine members of the governing body attended the meeting.
  - Noted that under Model B building works would be required at a number of schools – would there be sufficient funding available to convert all the first schools into primary schools. Would there be any possibility that the proposals won't go ahead.
  - Discussed the SEND satellite provision and queried how big it would be.

#### Grange View First School, 24 May 2022

- a. Staff Meeting
- Thirteen members of staff attended the meeting.
  - Staffing implications were raised, particularly if Model B was implemented and the staffing protocol was discussed.
- b. Governing Body Meeting
- There were eight governors present.
  - Discussed if Model B was implemented what the proposals would be around converting the first schools into primary schools.
  - Governors asked why Model B couldn't be implemented sooner.
  - Staffing issues raised and objectives of the staffing protocol discussed.

#### Broomhill First School, 25 May 2022

- a. Staff Meeting
- There were seven members of staff present.
  - Discussed implications of the proposals, particularly if community didn't support the proposal but the schools did.
  - There was discussion around potential building work and what the implications could be.
  - Staffing issues were raised, and the staffing protocol was discussed.
- b. Governing Body Meeting
- Five governors were present.
  - Discussed implications around buildings, capacity and what works would be needed to convert to a primary school.
  - Talked about the public event taking place on 16<sup>th</sup> June and what the format would be and expectation from the school.
  - Governors concerned at what was being reported, incorrectly, on social media by some parties and whether the Council has any influence.
  - Raised staffing implications and governors expressed concern that they would have no input as it would be delegated to the headteacher through the staffing protocol.
  - The lack of early years provision in the area was raised and it was queried whether any work had been done into the reasons why 400 children leave the catchment for their education.

#### James Calvert Spence College, 26 May 2022

- a. Staff Meeting
- Twenty members of staff attended the meeting.

- There was discussion and questions regarding building works in relation to the South Avenue site, the high school site and whether it was definite that there would be a new build for the high school.
  - Questions were asked if there were any plans for the Edwin Street site or the former Druridge Bay land.
- b. Governing Body Meeting
- The meeting was attended by eight governors.
  - Standards in the partnership was discussed and the governors were disappointed that the Cabinet report gave little recognition of the progress made at James Calvert Spence College and insisted that James Calvert Spence is a good school.
  - Had Section 106 applications been considered as they could provide some opportunities for funding.
  - One governor questioned the available options in the survey and stated that the questions were too wordy.

Barndale House School, 6 June 2022

- a. Governing Body Meeting
- Seven governors were present
  - Discussed the forecasted numbers in relation to pupils with special education needs and the proposals for the satellite provision.
  - Implication for staff was raise and the staffing protocol was outlined.

NCEA Warkworth CE Primary School, 7 June 2022

- a. Governing Body Meeting
- Six governors were in attendance, and they thanked the local authority for providing an update on the proposals for the partnership.
  - For consistency across the partnership the Governing Body would be supportive of Model B as consistency in education provision is better for parents.
  - Converting to become a primary school had been successful for Warkworth CE Primary and they believe it would be for the other schools in the partnership.

#### 45. Alternative Proposals received during consultation

There was one alternative model received during consultation.

##### **Alternative Model Theme A**

The change to a primary/secondary model needs to take place sooner than the proposed date - it needs to impact as many children and year groups as it can.

##### Commentary

It is understandable that some parents of children in specific year groups have expressed a desire to implement a change to the structure of schools in the Coquet Partnership on a faster timeline than the proposed reorganisation date of 1 September 2024.

However, there are some key reasons why it has been decided that it would be in the best interests of the majority of the children and young people educated in schools in the partnership to reorganise in September 2024;

- it is important for the continuity of education for the majority of pupils that that as many current staff working in the partnership. In order to achieve this, schools must redesign their staffing structures, consult on them, and appoint staff to posts that will start in September 2024. This would necessarily take some months to do but would provide the staff currently employed in schools in the partnership with certainty and hopefully make them less likely to seek employment elsewhere.
- All of the first schools in the partnership would require building works to make them suitable to become primary schools. Providing a longer lead in time to the reorganisation would provide greater certainty that these works would be completed on time for the change and would be less likely to impinge on schools during term time.

### **Commentary on Consultation Feedback and Conclusion**

#### **46. Proposal for reorganisation of the Coquet Partnership to a 2-tier (primary/secondary) structure**

All first schools in the Coquet Partnership are supportive of the proposed reorganisation to a 2-tier(primary/secondary) structure. The key themes around their educational rationale were:

- The first schools have expressed a desire for change in the school structure for a number of years;
- First schools are well placed to deliver the primary curriculum to the end of KS2 as primary specialists;
- The 2-tier(primary/secondary) structure matches the National Curriculum and is in line with the majority of the schools nationally;
- Having fewer transitions will benefit children with SEND especially.
- Schools have accountability for whole key stages in the 2-tier(primary/secondary) structure.

In their responses, all Governing Bodies in the partnership have shown commitment to making a change to a new structure work if it is approved for the benefit of the children and young people in the Coquet Area, including the Governing Body of JCSC although they remain supportive of the current structure. The staff groups who responded have all indicated their support for the proposed reorganisation, largely for the same educational reasons.

While the response from parents and the general public was relatively low, responses were overwhelmingly in favour of the move to 2-tier (primary/secondary, with 92% supporting the proposal – of these consultees, 50% were parents/carers and 25% were schools and school staff. Some parents highlighted in particular that children would be better prepared to journey to school independently at age 11 than at age 9.

Given the educational rationale presented by the majority of the Governing Bodies in the partnership, Cabinet is recommended to approve the publication of the statutory proposal setting out proposals to reorganised schools in the Coquet Partnership (outwith NCEA Warkworth as it is already a primary) to a 2-tier(primary/secondary) structure of organisation with effect from 1 September 2024.

The proposal to extend the age range of Grange View CE First School from an age 3-9 first school to an age 3-9 primary school and to enlarge the school building was also included within the informal (non-statutory) consultation. However, this school is a voluntary Controlled school and under school organisation regulations the Council is permitted to approve prescribed alterations to voluntary schools by following the non-statutory process, providing the usual principles of law are adhered to, which are:

- Act rationally;
- Take into account all relevant and no irrelevant considerations; and
- Follow a fair procedure

As consultation on the proposal for Grange View CE First School has taken place in conjunction with the proposals for the other relevant schools in the partnership, it is recommended that the final decision on whether to extend the age range of this school is made at the same time as the other schools which are subject to the Statutory Proposal.

Note that while NCEA Warkworth CE Primary School forms part of the Coquet Partnership, as it is already a primary school it formed no part of the proposals at informal (pre-statutory) consultation, although the school and parents of pupils attending were invited to respond

47. Proposal for the increase in pupil numbers at Barndale House Special school through the creation of a satellite site in Amble

Of the responses received to consultation in relation to the proposal to create a satellite site of Barndale House in Amble, 82% were in favour of the proposal under a 2-tier system and 70% in favour under the current system.

With 60 young people with SEND in the partnership leaving their home communities daily to attend provision in other partnerships or out of county and data indicating that the need for specialist places is growing in this area and across the county, it appears there is agreement that this proposal would be welcomed by the Coquet area community.

Cabinet it therefore recommended to approve the publication of a statutory proposal to increase places at Barndale House Special School through the creation of a satellite school at the current JCSC building in Amble.

**Implications of the Proposal for reorganisation of the Coquet Partnership to a 2-tier (primary/secondary) structure**

48. Proposed model

Table 3 shows the current structure of schools in the Coquet Partnership. In this structure, pupils leave their first school at the end of Year 4 and join JCSC as the feeder secondary for Year 5, (or another school according to parental choice).

**Table 3 – Current Structure of schools in Coquet Partnership**

School	Number on Roll in Jan 2022	Capacity (net number of children able to be educated in the school building)	Forms of Entry (size of classes in each year group)	Planned Admission Number (PAN)
Amble First	108	150	1FE	30
Amble Links First	129	138	1FE	30
Broomhill First	66	75	0.5FE	15
Grange View CE First	83	150	1FE	30
Red Row First	83	120	1FE	29
*NCEA Warkworth CE Primary School	139	159	0.83FE	25
JCSC	735 inc sixth form	1058	4FE	120

\*NCEA Warkworth CE Primary has provision for pupils to the end of Year 6 but is shown in this model for completeness.

Table 4 shows the proposal model of organisation of schools in the Coquet Partnership under a 2-tier (primary/secondary) structure. In this structure, pupils would leave first school at the end of Year 6 and would join JCSC as the feeder secondary for Year 7 (or another school according to parental choice). The Planned Admission Number (PAN) of Red Row First School would also be changed from 29 to 30 as a tidying up exercise.

**Table 4 – Proposed 2-tier (primary/secondary structure of schools in Coquet Partnership)**

School	Number on Roll in Jan 2022	Planned Capacity (net number of children able to be educated in the school building in Reception to Year 6)	Planned Forms of Entry (number of classes in each year group)	Planned Admission Number (PAN - number of children in each class)
Amble First	108 (150)	210	1FE	30
Amble Links First	129 (138)	210	1FE	30
Broomhill First	66 (75)	105	0.5FE	15
Grange View CE First	83 (150)	210	1FE	30
Red Row First	83 (120)	210	1FE	30
NCEA Warkworth CE Primary School	139	159	0.83FE	25
JCSC	735 inc sixth form	810	4FE	120

\*NCEA Warkworth CE Primary already has provision for pupils to the end of Year 6 but is shown in this model for completeness.

#### 49. Timeline for Implementation

*Amble, Amble Links, Broomhill and Grange View CE First Schools*

##### **1 September 2024**

- Pupils in Year 4 on 31 August 2024 in all the above first schools would be retained by their new primary schools as the new Year 5.

##### **1 September 2025**

- Pupils in Year 5 on 31 August 2025 in all the above first schools would be retained by their new primary schools as the new Year 6.

### **1 September 2026**

- Pupils in Year 6 in these primary schools on 31 August 2026 would transfer as the new Year 7 to JCSC, or to another school providing education in those year groups according to parental preference.

## *JCSC*

### **5 June 2023**

- From 5 June 2023 (or as near as reasonably practicable), students in Years 5 and 6 located at the South Avenue site of JCSC (and students in Years 7 and 8 if located at South Avenue at that time) would relocate to the Acklington Road site into suitable accommodation.

### **1 September 2023**

- Students on roll at first schools on 31 August 2023 would transfer as usual into Year 5 at JCSC but would be located at the Acklington Road site.
- Students on roll in Years 5, 6 and 7 at JCSC on 31 August 2023 would transfer into Years 6,7 and 8 at the school and would remain located at the Acklington Road site.

### **1 September 2024**

- The school would not receive a Year 5 intake and would operate with Year 6 to Year 13 only.

### **1 September 2025**

- Students in Year 6 on 31 August 2025 in JCSC would transfer into Year 7.
- JCSC would have intakes into Year 7 only from this date onwards.

## 50. Implications for staff

Should approval be given for the schools in the Coquet Partnership to reorganise to a 2-tier(primary/secondary) structure, there would be implications for staff in all of the relevant schools. First schools becoming primaries would need to redesign their staffing structures to reflect the requirements of a primary school and it is expected that they would need additional staff for their new Year 5 and 6 classes. JCSC would also need to redesign its staffing structure if it is approved to become an age 11-18 secondary school as it would no longer require teaching provision for Years 5 and 6. It would be the intention of Council Officers to work with all schools in the partnership to develop a staffing protocol in order to manage the transition of staff through reorganisation with the aim of retaining as many of the existing staff within schools as possible. To this end, initial discussions with Governing Bodies of all schools impacted and with Trades Unions would be undertaken as soon as possible if the proposal is approved.

## 51. Catchment areas

There are no proposals to change any of the catchment areas of schools within the Coquet Partnership. Should reorganisation to the 2-tier structure be approved, the first schools becoming primary would become the catchment schools for pupils living

in those areas up to the end of Year 6, while JCSC would be the catchment school for pupils living in the 'greater' Coquet catchment area from Year 7 onwards.

Also, to note that the proposal to extend the age range of Amble First School includes a proposal to relocate the school to the current South Avenue site of James Calvert Spence College (JCSC) in Amble as the school is not able to expand on its current site. As the distance between the two schools is less than 2 miles, and the school remains within its existing catchment area a statutory proposal is not required for this relocation.

#### 52. Special Educational Needs Provision

Apart from the proposed increase in pupil numbers at Barndale House Special School as set out in this report, current SEN provision at the first schools and JCSC would continue to be provided should reorganisation be approved. Reorganisation may benefit some pupils with SEN who would be able to remain at their primary school for an additional 2 years.

#### 53. Early Years Provision

While the extent and the quality of early years provision in the Coquet Partnership was considered as part of this consultation, officers in the Council's Early Years team confirmed that there is enough provision of sufficient quality currently in the partnership area and that any changes to current early years provision in schools have a destabilising effect.

#### 54. Transport

Eligibility for Home to School Transport in Northumberland is arranged in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy. Should the proposal for reorganisation of the Coquet Partnership to a 2-tier (primary/secondary) system be approved, pupils remaining in their first schools as they become primary would have shorter distances to school in Years 5 and 6. This may result in a small saving to the Council's Home to School Transport budget.

#### 55. Buildings Implications

Building costs set out in Table 5 below are indicative and would be subject to further detailed work should the proposed to reorganise schools to a 2-tier structure be approved. Also, to note replacement mobile classroom works were already schedule at Amble First and Red Row. The estimated costs below include the replacement works in order to achieve better value through a larger tendering exercise should the reorganisation of schools goes ahead.



**Table 5 – Estimate of Building costs to first schools implement reorganisation**

<b>School</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Indicative cost</b>
Amble First School	Relocation to current JCSC South Avenue Site	£3.1m
Amble Links First School	Two classrooms, one group room and additional WC provision	£825k
Broomhill First School	One classroom, one group room, a Medical Inspection room and additional WC provision	£1,038
Red Row First School	Three classrooms (includes replaces of some existing accommodation), two group rooms and additional WC provision	£1,746
Grange View CE First School	One classroom, one group room, staff room and additional WC provision	£1,025
James Calvert Spence	New build Secondary school.	£22.8m
Barndale Off Site provision	Refurbished JCSC South Avenue site.	£5.6m
<b>Total</b>		<b>£36.134</b>

The table below sets out how the overall reorganisation would be funded if approval is given to implement the changes following the statutory process and Cabinets' final decision later in the year. The Funding below also includes increasing the value of contribution from MTFP by £2m which will be achieved by reducing the budget allocation for Astley and Whytrig new build project. This has been possible as the scope of the project was reduced when Cabinet decided not to support the closure of Seaton Sluice Middle and therefore the size of the building reduced to reflect the reduction in pupil numbers.

**Table 6 – Funding breakdown to deliver Capital improvements above.**

<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Value</b>
NCC Capital (MTEFP)	£27.5m (inclusive of £2m Astley savings against budget)
SEND Capital Grant	£1.5m
Capital Maintenance Grant (SCIP)	£5.5m
Basic Need	£1.6m
<b>Total</b>	<b>£36.1m</b>

As stated, capital funding has already been allocated for the replacement/refurbishment of the JCSC buildings and therefore this project would be the subject of a separate business case for approval by Cabinet, which would be provided to Cabinet with the outcomes of the statutory consultation towards However, the extend of this project will depend on whether Cabinet approves the proposed reorganisation to the 2-tier structure, in which case the replacement buildings at JCSC would need to accommodate Years 7 to 13 only.

**56. Sport and Recreation**

There would be no negative impact on the current sport and recreation facilities at the first schools proposed to become primaries under the proposed reorganisation to the 2-tier structure.

It is expected that the sport and recreation facilities at JCSC will be enhanced through the provision of the new buildings, including enhanced provision for the local community.

**Implications of the Proposal for the increase in pupil numbers at Barndale House Special school through the creation of a satellite site in Amble**

**57. Proposed model**

In light of the lack of specialist provision currently within the Coquet Partnership area and the growing number of children and young people being diagnosed with a primary need in ASD and SEMH across the county, including in this area, it is proposed that Barndale House Special School would increase its planned pupil numbers in order to operate a satellite site in Amble. Over time, this would enable pupils with SEND who live in the Coquet area to attend provision close to their home communities in line with the Council’s objectives.

It is proposed that the satellite site would be designated for pupils aged 4 to 16 with primary needs in ASD, SEMH, SLCN and MLD and would have capacity for 50 pupils. It is also proposed that this provision would grow in a phased and managed way and that no pupils living in the Coquet area who already attend specialist provision would be compelled to transfer to this provision.

In addition to the main objective of creating local specialist provision within the Coquet area, the Council also supports the objectives of the Governing Body of Barndale House Special School, as set out in their response to this consultation. As being:

- Creation of a SEND hub within the Coquet Partnership that mainstream schools can use for Continuous Professional Development, intervention and outreach.
- Bringing professional services together on a single site.
- Securing outcomes for SEND pupils through all schools in Coquet partnership, and improved SEND provision in the north of Northumberland.
- Specialist support base for those pupils needing early intervention.

58. Timeline for Implementation

If approval is given to increase places at Barndale House via the proposed satellite site in Amble, it is proposed that this provision would open at the proposed site in September 2024.

59. Implications for staff

Should Cabinet approve the increase in places for Barndale House, additional staff would be required to meet the needs of the additional students at the satellite site in Amble.

60. Transport

Students attending special schools in Northumberland are subject to the same eligibility criteria for Home to School Transport as mainstream students. It is anticipated that the provision of local specialist provision within the Coquet Partnership area would reduce the need for many students with the relevant SEND primary needs to travel outside of their local area, and therefore this would have a positive impact on the Council's Home to School Transport budget.

61. Building Implications

It is proposed that the new Barndale House satellite provision would be located on a shared site at the current JCSC South Avenue site, either with JCSC if the current organisation of schools in the partnership remains in place, or with Amble First School if reorganisation to a 2-tier structure is approved.

Initial work has provided an indicative cost as set out in para 55 of the report.

62. Sport and Recreation

It is expected that pupils at the proposed satellite site of Barndale House in Amble would have suitable access to playing fields at the current JCSC South Avenue site.

## **IMPLICATIONS ARISING OUT OF THE REPORT**

<b>Policy:</b>	This report directly links to the Council's Corporate aim 'Living, Learning - We will ensure the best education standards for our children and young people.
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	Capital investment of £25.5m has been allocated by the Council in the Medium-Term Plan. Part of the rationale for informal consultation is to provide assurance to Cabinet that investment would be made within a sustainable and viable school structure for the medium to long-term. A detailed Business Case for investment would be brought forward to Cabinet once the structure of schools has been decided.
<b>Legal</b>	Consultation carried out on proposals has complied with School Organisation guidance and regulations. The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 confirm that the matters within this report are not functions reserved to Full Council
<b>Procurement</b>	An outline business case (OBC) will be developed and submitted to cabinet with the outcomes of the statutory consultation which will also set on the procurement options and recommendations to deliver best value for the councils investment.
<b>Human Resources:</b>	There may be some implications for staff in schools in the wider Coquet Partnership should reorganization to a Primary Secondary structure be approved for implementation by Cabinet at a later date. If the status quo remains in place, there may be some implications for JCSCS staff should the school move onto one site.
<b>Property</b>	Refer to 'Finance and value for money' above
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> X No <input type="checkbox"/>	Impact assessment is contained as Appendix 3 of this report
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	A full project risk assessment will be presented as part of the OBC, following the statutory consultation.
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	This report has considered Section 17 (CDA) and the duty it imposes and there are no implications arising from it.
<b>Customer Considerations:</b>	The proposal set out in this report is based upon a desire to improve outcomes for children and young people and their families in Northumberland
<b>Carbon Reduction</b>	It is not envisaged that these proposals would have a significant positive or negative impact on carbon reduction
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	
<b>Wards</b>	Amble; Druridge Bay; Amble West and Warkworth.

## **Background Papers**

Report of the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services, 10 May 2022  
– Proposals for the Coquet Partnership

## Report Sign Off

	<b>Full name</b>
Service Director Finance & Deputy S151 Officer	Alison Elsdon
Interim Monitoring Officer/Legal	Suki Binjal
Joint Interim Executive Director of Children's Services	Audrey Kingham
Interim Chief Executive	Rick O'Farrell
Lead member for Children Services	GRT

## Appendices

Appendix 1 - Consultation About School Structures in the Coquet Partnership

Appendix 2 - Consultation Register

Appendix 3 - Equalities Impact Assessment

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Northumberland  
County Council

# CONSULTATION ABOUT SCHOOL STRUCTURES IN THE COQUET PARTNERSHIP



**11 MAY – 29 JUNE 2022**

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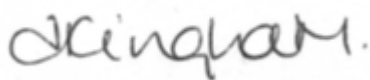
## Introduction

Northumberland County Council has committed £25.5m towards the replacement and refurbishment of school buildings in the Coquet Partnership. However, before carrying out this work to schools, the Council needs to know that it is investing in a school structure that will deliver consistently good outcomes for all children and young people, and that it is sustainable for the current and future generations to come.

Over the last few months, Council officers have been talking to Headteachers and school Chairs of Governors to gain their views on the current educational structure in Coquet. While there were some varying responses, the school leaders all agreed that it is now the right time for the views of everyone with an interest in education in Coquet to be captured. The schools have therefore asked the Council to carry out a wider consultation with parents, staff, governors, pupils and the wider public.

This consultation document sets out the key issues faced by schools in the partnership and asks for your views on whether the current structure or the proposed primary/secondary school structure would deliver a good and sustainable school system in the Coquet area. We are also asking if you have any alternative suggestions that you think could be a viable option for delivering these aims.

Whether you are a member of staff in a Coquet school, a parent of school-age children, a local resident, or anyone with an interest in education in the area, I hope that you will take this opportunity to submit your views and help to shape the future of schools in the Coquet Partnership.



Audrey Kingham  
Interim Executive Director of Children's Services  
Northumberland County Council

## BACKGROUND TO THE CONSULTATION



### **Current structure of schools in the Coquet Partnership**

The Coquet Partnership currently has a mixed organisation of schools and academy, with 5 first schools, 1 primary academy and James Calvert Spence College (JCSC), which is an age 9-18 school.

The Coquet Partnership includes the following schools:

- Amble First – age 4-9
- Amble Links First– age 2-9
- Broomhill First – age 3-9
- Grange View CE First – age 3-9
- Red Row First – age 3-9
- NCEA Warkworth Church of England Primary (academy) – age 2-11
- James Calvert Spence College – age 9-18

Some schools also have provision for children from age 2 which are run separately from the school e.g. Amble First.

Children in the first schools leave at the end of Year 4 and transfer into Year 5 at JCSC. A school structure that includes a transfer at the end of Year 4 is in keeping with the 3-tier system that was prevalent across Northumberland, and which now remains in 5 of the 14 school partnerships in the county.

In 2016, the Governing Body of NCEA Warkworth Church of England Primary School decided to extend the age range of the school to become a primary with provision for children aged 2 to 11. Therefore, children leave this school at the end of Year 6 and transfer to either JCSC in Year 7 or more often, join a local secondary school (usually The Duchess High School in Alnwick if there are places available). Warkworth is therefore organised within the primary secondary structure and matches the structure of the National Curriculum Key Stages. As Warkworth is therefore already structured as a primary school, it does not form part of this consultation in relation to any proposals for change, but the views of staff, governors and parents of children attending the school in relation to changes to structure for other schools are welcomed as Warkworth does form part of the overall Coquet Partnership.

As JCSC was formed from the amalgamation of JCSC South Avenue (formerly named Amble Middle School) and JCSC Acklington Road, the school operates across a split site. Depending on the size of year groups in any given year, either Years 5 and 6 or Years 5, 6 and 7 are educated at the South Avenue building, while Years 7 or 8 onwards are educated at the Acklington Road site. In any event, at the of either Year 7 or 8, students transfer from South Avenue to the Acklington Road site.

The issue of which school structure would best serve the children and young people living in the Coquet area has been talked about among the local schools for a number of years, but consensus was never reached on a decision to consult on structure. However, with the difficulties caused by the COVID pandemic now being largely overcome, the Council is once again planning its investment programme in schools and it is necessary to ensure that such investment is made in a viable and sustainable school system in the Coquet Partnership.

# PART 1 – RATIONALE FOR THE CONSULTATION



## Key Stages within the National Curriculum

Table 1 shows the age of children within a particular Year Group and Key stage of the National Curriculum when organised within a primary/secondary system of schools.

**Table 1**

Age	Year Group	Key Stage	Phase
3-4	Nursery/pre-school	Early Years	PRIMARY
4-5	Reception class	Early Years	
5-6	Year 1	KS1	
6-7	Year 2	KS1 (Assessment)	
7-8	Year 3	KS2	
8-9	Year 4	KS2	
9-10	Year 5	KS2	
10-11	Year 6	KS2 (Assessment)	
<b>Phase Change to Secondary</b>			
11-12	Year 7	KS3	SECONDARY
12-13	Year 8	KS3	
13-14	Year 9	KS3	
14-15	Year 10	KS4	
15-16	Year 11	KS4 (GCSE's taken)	
16-17	Year 12	KS5	SIXTH FORM
17-18	Year 13	KS5 ('A' levels taken)	

Table 2 shows the age of children within a particular Year Group and Key stage of the National Curriculum as organised within the current school structure in the Coquet Partnership (note schools organised within the 3-tier system in Northumberland also have

a phase change at the end of Year 4 like JCSC, but also at the end of Year 8, unlike JCSC which has only one transition into the school at Year).

**Table 2**

Age	Year Group	Key Stage	Phase
3-4	Nursery/pre-school	Early Years	PRIMARY
4-5	Reception class	Early Years	
5-6	Year 1	KS1	
6-7	Year 2	KS1 (Assessment)	
7-8	Year 3	KS2	
8-9	Year 4	KS2	
<b>Phase Change to James Calvert Spence College</b>			
9-10	Year 5	KS2	PRIMARY
10-11	Year 6	KS2 (Assessment)	
11-12	Year 7	KS3	SECONDARY
12-13	Year 8	KS3	
13-14	Year 9	KS3	
14-15	Year 10	KS4	
15-16	Year 11	KS4 (GCSE's taken)	
16-17	Year 12	KS5	SIXTH FORM
17-18	Year 13	KS5 ('A' levels taken)	

As can be seen from Table 2, the phase change to JCSC occurs halfway through Key Stage 2, therefore the first schools have responsibility for KS2 in Years 3 and 4, while JCSC has responsibility for teaching KS2 in Years 5 and 6, including assessment at the end of Year 6. JCSC then has responsibility for the whole of KS3 to KS5.

### **Views of Headteachers and Chairs of Governors of schools in the Coquet Partnership 2022**

Discussions about the structure of the Coquet Partnership have been going on among the teaching professionals and Governing Bodies for a number of years. In late 2019, this resulted in a letter being submitted to the Council from the headteachers of the first schools setting out their request and rationale for consultation to the Council for a consultation with the wider public. However, there was not a consensus for a consultation across all schools at that point and therefore the proposal for consultation was not taken forward.

The Council had also committed to the allocation of capital funding to refurbish or replace school buildings in the Coquet Partnership in its spending plans, but with the arrival of the COVID Pandemic, these projects had to be delayed. Now that building projects can once again be undertaken, the Council is now keen to ensure that the allocated funding for school building projects is spent within school organisation structures that will deliver

improved outcomes for all children and young people and that will have long-term viability and sustainability.

Therefore, in early 2022 Council officers arranged a number of informal meetings with Headteachers and Chairs of Governors in the earlier part of this year to ascertain whether there remained a desire to review how schools are organised in the partnership. The full outcomes of these discussions are set out in a report to the Council's Cabinet which is available at

<https://northumberland.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=140&MId=1405>.

A key step forward arising from these discussions was agreement on a vision for the Coquet Partnership, which is:

- Improve the educational outcomes and offer for all pupils within the Coquet Partnership, to ensure every child meets their potential.
- Improving and extending SEND offer for children and young people in Coquet Partnership so that their needs are met locally, and travel times are reduced significantly.
- Ensure the Coquet community supports the education model in order that the community thrives.
- Ensure schools work together to further develop the partnership and create a sustainable and viable model of education for the future, that meets the wider needs of the community.
- Ensuring the best value for NCC capital investment as well as any wider investment opportunity which may arise.

A notable point in relation to this vision is that whatever school structure is in place in the Coquet Partnership, all schools going forward need to work together more closely to improve outcomes for children and young people. In relation to the overall structure of schools that would support this vision, officers asked the headteachers and Chairs of Governors about their views about the benefits and challenges of both the current structure of schools in Coquet Partnership with the phase change at the end of Year 4 and the primary/secondary or '2-tier' system, where the phase change occurs at the end of Year 6. The main views on the two structures were as set out in Table 3:

**Table 3**

<b>Main views on current structure</b>	<b>Main views on 2-tier system (primary/secondary)</b>
Current structure no longer the right fit for the partnership or educational journey	Majority of schools support consultation on 2-tier option for partnership
No accountability for key stages	One school has accountability for whole Key Stage
Transition currently splits key stages	Transition at end of KS2 in line with National Curriculum
Children not 'ready' for middle school at age 9 e.g. travelling on bus	Longer term viability under 2-tier
Schools losing children to primaries in other partnerships	Timing of any change important
Many children are happy to move into Year 5 at 'middle' phase	
Both models have their pros and cons	

There were other themes that arose from discussions with the schools, particularly in relation to provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs in the Coquet. Overall, while there were some varying views about the structure of schools, the majority of schools supported asking the Council to consult on a proposal for a primary/secondary 2-tier structure in the Coquet Partnership.

### **Educational standards and outcomes in the Coquet Partnership**

#### Ofsted Ratings

All first schools in the Coquet Partnership currently have an Ofsted rating of 'Good', while JSCS has a rating of Requires Improvement, although in its last monitoring visit by Ofsted it is taking effective action.

#### Standards and education outcomes

##### *KS1:*

First and primary schools assess their pupils at the end of KS1 at age 7 in order to identify the support a child will need as they enter KS2. Although the results are collected by the Council for submission to the Department for Education (DfE), they are not published at the school level (although parents will be informed of their own child's results by the school).

##### *KS2:*

Primary schools, middle schools in Northumberland and middle/high schools such as JCSC carry out the national KS2 SAT tests at the end of Year 6. KS2 SAT tests were cancelled in 2020 and 2021, therefore the last available data is from Summer 2019. While JCSC is responsible for Years 5 and 6 and carries out the KS2 assessment of the whole

key stage, the first schools in the partnership are responsible for teaching in Years 3 and 4 of KS2. Table 4 shows the percentage of pupils in JCSC who achieved the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths at the end of KS2 in 2019, 2018 and 2017, together with the average percentage at Northumberland and England level in those years.

**Table 4**

<b>Year</b>	<b>JCSC</b>	<b>Northumberland Average</b>	<b>England Average</b>
2019	27%	66%	65%
2018	38%	65%	64%
2017	25%	61%	61%

The Council's average is based on all schools that test at the end of KS2, which includes all primary schools and middle schools.

**KS4:**

At age 16, students sit their GCSE examinations which marks the end of KS4. The last verified outcomes at GCSE (Key Stage 4) for JCSC were in summer 2019 and these are set out in Table 5. GCSE grades were awarded in 2020 and 2021, but as a result of the COVID pandemic different systems had to be used to award grades in those years. While the DfE has stated that the results in 2020 and 2021 cannot be compared meaningfully to results from 2019 as a result of the change to the award systems, they are also presented in Table 5 for information.

**Table 5 – GCSE results, JCSC**

		<b>GCSE 2019</b>	<b>GCSE 2020</b>	<b>GCSE 2021</b>
Progress 8 (0 = Expected Progress)	<b>JCSC</b>	<b>-0.02</b>	<b>0.23</b>	<b>0.64</b>
	Northumberland average	-0.12	N/A	N/A
	England average	-0.03	N/A	N/A
%Achieving Grade 5+ inc Eng and Maths	<b>JCSC</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>31.8%</b>	<b>34.6%</b>
	Northumberland average	43%	N/A	N/A
	England average	43%	N/A	N/A
Attainment 8 (higher figure is best)	<b>JCSC</b>	<b>45.5</b>	<b>43.7</b>	<b>42.3</b>
	Northumberland average	46.5	N/A	N/A
	England average	46.7	N/A	N/A

Table 5 indicates that JCS's results in 2019 at GCSE are stronger in comparison at both county and national (England) level, being positioned 6<sup>th</sup> out of 16 high/secondary schools



in Northumberland for Progress 8, 11<sup>th</sup> out of 16 for % achieving Grade 5+ including English and Maths, and 9<sup>th</sup> out of 16 for Attainment 8. Although not directly comparable to 2019 results as stated previously, Progress 8 scores in 2020 and 2021 appear to have improved. Furthermore, JCSC has reported that caution was taken in awarding Grade 5 and above in 2020 and 2021, resulting in achievement slightly below 2019.

Table 6 shows the results of the combined pass rate of English and Maths only at Grade 4 and above in 2019, 2020 and 2021, which indicates an improving picture over time

**Table 6 – JCSC Combined pass rate English and Maths**

2019	59.4%
2020	57.9%
2021	62.8%

*KS5 ('A' level):*

At the end of KS5, students undertake 'A' level examinations or assessments for technical/vocational qualifications. JCSC results at 'A' Level for 2019 are set out in Table 7.

**Table 7 - 'A' level results 2019**

2019		
Progress Score	<b>JCSC</b>	<b>0.12 (average)</b>
Average result per A Level (Grade)	<b>JCSC</b>	<b>C+</b>
	Northumberland average (state funded)	C+
	England average (all schools)	C+
Average Points per A level	<b>JCSC</b>	<b>32.92</b>
	Northumberland average	32.59
	England average	34.01

In relation to other high/secondary schools in Northumberland, JCSC was 4<sup>th</sup> out of 16 for Level 3 value added, 4<sup>th</sup> out of 16 for Average Point Score, 1<sup>st</sup> out of 16 for achievement of grades AAB+ in 2 or more facilitating subjects and 5<sup>th</sup> out of 16 for the best 3 A-levels.

### **Pupil Data and Information**

Table 8, Row 1 shows the number of pupils living in the Coquet Partnership of statutory school age (Reception to Year 11 **but not including children attending specialist provision**) and the number of children who attend a school in the partnership; Row 2 and Row 3 break this number down by school phase.

**Table 8 – Number of pupils living in Coquet area (excluding pupils attending special schools) and where they attend school**

<b>Row 1</b>	<b>Total no. Pupils living in Coquet Partnership catchment areas (Reception to Yr 11)</b>	<b>Actual No. Pupils living in Coquet area who attend Coquet Partnership schools (Reception to Yr 11)</b>
	<b>1,651</b>	<b>1,234 (75% of Total)</b>
<b>Row 2</b>	<b>Total no. pupils who live catchment areas of first schools and Warkworth Primary</b>	<b>Actual No. pupils who live catchment areas of first schools and Warkworth Primary and who also attend those schools Autumn 2021</b>
	<b>698</b>	<b>596 (85% Total)</b>
<b>Row 3</b>	<b>Total no. pupils who live in JCSC catchment area (Year 5 to year 11)</b>	<b>Actual No. Pupils who live in Coquet area and who also attend JCSC Autumn 2021 (Year 5 to year 11)</b>
	<b>953</b>	<b>638 (67% of Total)</b>

Row 2 in Table 8 indicates that parents of 15% of the pupils who live in the Coquet catchment area choose to send their children to schools outside of the area rather than to the first schools or Warkworth CE Primary. Row 3 indicates that parents of 33% of pupils who live in the JCSC catchment choose to send their children to schools outside of the JCSC catchment area.

Some schools in Coquet Partnership do attract a small number of pupils from other Northumberland catchments. Once these pupils are taken into account, Table 9 shows the number of surplus (unfilled) places by school phase:

**Table 9 – Number of Surplus places in Coquet Partnership**

<b>School Phase</b>	<b>No. Surplus (unfilled) places</b>
All First Schools	*194
JCSC	174

*\*Note – even if all children living in first school catchments attended those schools, there would still be some surplus places.*

In simple funding terms, if the first schools attracted the 15% of pupils (see Table 8) who live in their catchment areas but attend other schools, they would have an additional £338k allocated to their budgets. There are more pupils who live in the catchment of JCSC and attend other schools than there are surplus places at the school, but if JCSC was able to

fill its 174 surplus places from that group of pupils (see Table 9), it would have an additional £755k in its budget. Therefore, attracting local pupils into schools is a key factor in the viability and sustainability of a school partnership.

The number of children being born in the Coquet Partnership who will enter the school system in the future has fallen slightly in the last 2 years or so, but overall it is relatively steady when compared to other partnerships in the county; also, when compared to data over a longer period the numbers of children being born in the partnership appear to be cyclical (Table 10). However, the number of future pupils does point to the need for all schools in the partnership to attract their catchment pupils in order to maintain a viable and sustainable school system. This is particularly important in relation to a school’s financial viability, as under the National Schools Funding Formula each child attracts a lump sum which forms the majority of a school’s budget.

**Table 10 – Coquet Partnership future pupil numbers**

<b>Pupils entering Reception in September 2025</b>	<b>Pupils entering Reception in September 2024</b>	<b>Pupils entering Reception in September 2023</b>	<b>Pupils entering Reception in September 2022</b>
113	119	139	143

There is some housebuilding planned within the partnership locally over the next 5 years or so which will impact on a small number of schools, but due to parental preference there is sufficient capacity for pupils within their own catchment schools for the foreseeable future without the need to create additional school places.

### **Special Educational Needs**

There is currently no specialist provision for children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) within the Coquet Partnership. Currently, there are 60 pupils from Reception to Year 11 who have to travel daily to specialist provision outside of their local area for their education. In particular, the Council’s data indicates there is a growing need for additional specialist provision for children and young people with Autism (ASD) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) as a primary SEN need right across the county. This growing trend also applies to the Coquet Partnership, as can be seen from the forecasts for number of children in special schools with ASD and SEMH in Table 11 and Table 12.

**Table 11 - Forecast for number of pupils with ASD as a primary need living in Coquet Partnership**

<b>Final Forecasts Year Group</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
2022	1	2	4	13	3	9	3	8	4	4	7	7
2023	1	1	2	9	12	5	12	3	6	5	4	8
2024	1	1	2	5	9	22	7	15	3	9	6	4
2025	1	1	2	3	5	16	29	9	12	4	9	6
2026	1	1	2	4	3	8	21	38	7	17	4	10
2027	1	1	2	4	4	6	11	27	31	10	17	4
2028	1	1	2	4	4	6	7	14	22	41	10	19
2029	1	1	2	4	4	6	8	10	12	30	43	11

*Note: Shaded figures show year on year increase within a particular year group*

**Table 12 - Forecast for number of pupils with SEMH as a primary need living in Coquet Partnership**

<b>Final Forecasts Year Group</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
2022	3	5	8	10	7	8	8	9	9	8	5	7
2023	3	7	8	8	14	6	7	10	10	8	8	5
2024	3	8	11	9	11	11	5	8	10	8	9	8
2025	3	8	12	11	11	9	11	6	9	9	9	8
2026	3	8	12	13	15	10	9	12	6	7	9	8
2027	3	7	12	13	17	13	9	10	13	5	8	9
2028	3	7	11	13	17	14	12	10	11	11	6	7
2029	3	7	12	11	17	14	13	14	11	9	12	6

*Note: Shaded figures show year on year increase within a particular year group*

A small but significant number of children in the Coquet Partnership are also diagnosed with Speech, Learning and Communication needs particularly in the primary years, which often leads to a diagnosis of ASD in the secondary years.

Discussions on the structure of schools in the Coquet Partnership have also opened the opportunity to share this data with headteachers in order to have a 'joined-up' approach to all education in the area. Therefore, officers and headteachers have had some initial discussions to explore how and where appropriate specialist provision could be provided in the Coquet area. This consultation is therefore also your opportunity to share your views with us on these initial ideas for SEN provision and these are set out in Part 2 'Proposal for Reorganisation of the Coquet Partnership' later in this document.

## **Early Years Provision**

Northumberland County Council also has a statutory duty to manage the availability of childcare provision across the county and to ensure sufficient flexible provision for working parents, parents taking up training or returning to work and for eligible children in receipt of the 2, 3 and 4 year old free funded entitlement.

Including settings based at schools, there are currently 13 early years provisions across the Hadston and Coquet Partnership. These providers have all been judged to be Good or better by Ofsted and officers have also judged that they provide enough sufficient, sustainable choice and flexibility to meet current demand in the area.

As a result, developing new similar provision or extending the current offer in some schools would be likely to have a direct impact on the current stable Early Years market for some long established private and voluntary section provisions, who also offer wrap around and holiday care, including specialist tailored provision for 2yr olds who serve the local community in proximity.

Given the potential to destabilise the Early Years market and in view of the consultation on school structure, the Council is not proposing to make any changes to the current Early Years offer within the Coquet Partnership as part of this consultation.

## PART 2 - PROPOSAL FOR REORGANISATION OF SCHOOLS IN THE COQUET PARTNERSHIP



In the light of the data and information set out in Part 1 of this consultation document, the Council is consulting on whether or not to reorganise the structure of schools in the Coquet Partnership and would like your views on the following proposed models of school organisation.

### Model A – Current school structure of Coquet Partnership

Model A (see Table 13) is the current structure of schools and if there was no change in the Coquet Partnership, this structure would remain in place:

**Table 13 - Model A: current structure of Coquet Partnership**

School	Number on Roll in Jan 2022	Capacity (net number of children able to be educated in the school building)	Forms of Entry (size of classes in each year group)	Planned Admission Number (PAN)
Amble First	108	150	1FE	30
Amble Links First	129	138	1FE	30
Broomhill First	66	75	0.5FE	15
Grange View CE First	83	150	1FE	30
Red Row First	83	120	1FE	**29
*NCEA Warkworth CE Primary School	139	159	0.83FE	25
JCSC	735 inc sixth form	1058	4FE	120

\*Note while NCEA Warkworth is included to provide the full overview of the partnership, it would not form any proposals as part of this consultation.

\*\*Should the current structure remain in place in Coquet Partnership, the PAN at Red Row may be changed to 30 in future years (not for Sept 2022 or 2023 admissions) as a tidying up exercise.

It should be noted that for significant improvements to be made in outcomes at KS2 if this structure is retained, there would have to be increased collaboration between the first schools and JCSC.

### **Model B – Proposed Model of Organisation**

Model B (see Table 14) proposes a fully primary/secondary structure in the Coquet Partnership. Under Model B, all current first schools in the Partnership would extend their age ranges to become either age 2-11, 3-11 or 4-11 primary schools and would retain their current Year 4 into Year 5 in the first year of reorganisation, and retaining Year 6 in the second year becoming full primary schools at that point.

JCSC would reduce its age range in a phased way from an age 9 to 18 school to an age 11 to 18 secondary school, having Years 7 to 13 (sixth form). In the first year of reorganisation the school would operate with Years 6 to 13 and in the second year and thereafter it would operate with Years 7 to 13.

It is not possible to expand Amble First School to become a primary school on its current site, therefore it is proposed that it would relocate to the current Year 5 to Year 8 building of JCSC at South Avenue under Model B.

It is also proposed under Model B that Red Row First School would increase its Planned Admission Number from 29 to 30 as a tidying up exercise.

**Table 14 - Model B: Proposed structure of Coquet Partnership under primary/secondary structure**

<b>School</b>	<b>Number on Roll in Jan 2022</b>	<b>Planned Capacity (net number of children able to be educated in the school building)</b>	<b>Planned Forms of Entry (size of classes in each year group)</b>	<b>Planned Admission Number (PAN)</b>
Amble First	108 (150)	210	1FE	30
Amble Links First	129 (138)	210	1FE	30
Broomhill First	66 (75)	105	0.5FE	15
Grange View CE First	83 (150)	210	1FE	30
Red Row First	83 (120)	210	1FE	30
NCEA Warkworth CE Primary School	139	159	0.83FE	25
JCSC	735 inc sixth form	810	4FE	120

## **Proposal for Special Educational Needs provision in Coquet Partnership**

Earlier in this document, data and information was provided to demonstrate the growing numbers of children and young people in the Coquet Partnership in need of specialist educational provision, which is currently unavailable within the local area. Early discussions with headteachers, including a headteacher in a local special school, have indicated that a specialist provision within the Coquet Partnership is necessary to prevent this needy group of children and young people having to take long journeys to and from school and to enable them to be educated as close to their home communities as possible.

In the light of this ambition, it is proposed that a specialist provision could be developed and managed within Coquet Partnership as a satellite provision of Barndale House Special School. This satellite model has already been implemented in another part of the county, with Ashdale Special School in Ashington being a satellite of The Dales Special School in Blyth. It is further proposed that the satellite school for Coquet Partnership could be located within the current JCSC building at South Avenue under the Model B proposal along with Amble First School, as it is large enough to be fully separated into two provisions. Alternative proposals for SEND provision in the Coquet Partnership are welcomed as part of this consultation, including ideas if Model A (current school structure) was to remain in place.

### **Timeline for implementation**

The outcomes of this consultation will be considered by the Council's Cabinet in September 2022. If the Cabinet decides that the current organisation of schools should remain in place i.e. Model A, the timeline for implementation would relate to the programme of investment in school buildings only where it is decided investment is needed. A business case would need to be prepared for approval by the Council's Cabinet and this would set out in detail the planned works to schools, the costs and the proposed timeline for completion before the project could commence. In relation to JCSC, it is envisaged that the refurbishment or new build would be completed during the academic year beginning September 2025 or as near as practically possible.

Should the Council's Cabinet decide to approve the implementation of Model B at a future point, the timeline for the reorganisation of the schools would be as follows:



## **1 September 2024**

- The first schools in the Coquet Partnership would extend their age ranges to become primary schools and would retain their Year 4 pupils on roll at the schools on 31 August 2024 as they become Year 5.
- Works needed to the buildings of the first schools to enable them to become primary schools with provision for Years 5 and 6 would be completed in time for the new academic year.
- JCSC would not receive a Year 5 and would operate with Years 6 onwards.

## **1 September 2025**

- The primary schools in the Coquet Partnership would retain their Year 5 pupils on roll at the schools on 31 August 2025 as they become Year 6.
- Pupils on roll in Year 6 at JCSC on 31 August 2025 would become the new Year 7 as the school reorganises to become an age 11 to 18 secondary school. Entry into JCSC is at Year 7 only from this point forward.

## **Other areas for consideration as part of these proposals**

### Implications for staff

If the current structure of schools remains in place in the Coquet Partnership, there would be no specific implications for staff working in the schools.

There would be implications for staff if the structure proposed under Model B (primary/secondary) was implemented. First schools becoming primary schools would need to redesign their curriculum and staffing structures to incorporate appropriate teaching and learning for pupils in Years 5 and 6, and this would be likely to include the recruitment of additional staff. Likewise, JCSC would no longer need teaching staff for Years 5 and 6 and they would also redesign their staffing structures.

In order to ensure that as many staff as possible would be retained within the Coquet Partnership of schools if a restructure is approved, Council HR Officers will work with schools and staff representatives (Trade Unions) during this consultation period to develop a 'Staffing Protocol' agreement to ensure that the appointment process across the schools is fair for all staff.

### Buildings and capital funding

As stated earlier in this consultation document, the Council has already allocated £25.5m towards investment in school buildings in the Coquet Partnership. During the consultation period, officers will develop a budget for carrying out building works under both Model A and Model B during the informal consultation.

The costs for the proposed specialist education provision for the Coquet Partnership will also be developed during the consultation period.

All indicative costs would then be presented to the Council's Cabinet for consideration along with the outcomes of this consultation to assist them in making their decision in light of the recommendations put forward.

### School Catchment Areas

School catchment areas would remain the same under either Model A or Model B (primary/secondary). However, under Model B first schools would extend the age range they cover up to the end of Year 6. Similarly, the catchment area of JCSC would remain the same under either model, but in the case of Model B it would only include pupils from Year 7 onwards. The following map shows the individual catchment areas of the first schools and the 'greater' catchment area of JCSC outlined around them.

Any suggestions for changes to catchment areas and their rationale are welcome as part of this consultation.

### Admissions Arrangements

There would be no change to the Admissions Arrangements into Reception classes in the first schools in the partnership under Model A or under Model B should they become primary schools. Admissions into JCSC would remain the same under Model A i.e. into Year 5, but under Model B, admissions into the school would change to entry at Year 7.

### Transport

There would be no changes to the way in which children are assessed for eligibility for school transport suggested as part of this consultation under either Model A or Model B.

If Model B was approved for implementation, pupils including those eligible for transport would remain in their first schools for an additional 2 years in Years 5 and 6 and therefore, there may be a small saving to the Council's Home to School Transport policy as a result.

### Sport and recreation

As a result of the Council's commitment to capital investment of £25.5m in the Coquet Partnership whether under Model A or Model B, there will be an opportunity to provide enhanced sporting facilities at the JCSC site as a result of remodelling/rebuilding. If Model B is approved for implementation, there may also be an opportunity to improve the current sport and recreation facilities in some first schools.

## Alternative Proposals

While this consultation has presented Model A (current structure) and Model B (primary/secondary structure) as the proposed alternative, you may have an alternative suggestion for addressing the issues set out in this document. If you have any alternative suggestion, please set this out in the questionnaire and response form that accompanies this document.

## How can I find out more about this proposal?

A public drop-in event has been arranged during this consultation period for you to find out further information about any aspect of this proposal.

### Public Drop-in event

**Date: Saturday 11 June, 10.00 - 4.00 p.m.**

**Venue: Gloster Terrace, Amble, NE65 0LN**

**All interested parties are welcome to drop-in at any time within the above hours.** There will also be separate meetings held in schools with staff working in schools in the Coquet Partnership and their representatives, and with Governing Bodies during the consultation period. Staff and Governors will be contacted directly with the date and time of these meetings.

An online Padlet dedicated to the consultation on school structure is also available by following this link <https://padlet.com/Northumberland/Coquet> Additional information is posted on the padlet, including Frequently Asked questions that may assist you in your response to the consultation.

## How can I submit my views about this proposal?

A six-week consultation (school weeks) on the proposals set out in this consultation document began on **Wednesday 11 May and will end at midnight on 29 June 2022.**

The Council is very keen to hear your views on the proposal set out in this consultation document and also to learn if you have any alternative proposals.

A link to a questionnaire is here: <https://haveyoursay.northumberland.gov.uk/education-skills/proposals-for-school-organisation-in-the-coquet-pa/> (**copy and paste link into browser**) please complete the electronic questionnaire if you can. However, if you or someone you know would prefer to send a hard copy, please request a printed form by contacting [educationconsultation@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:educationconsultation@northumberland.gov.uk) stating that you require a printed survey form for the Consultation on School Structures in the Coquet Partnership.

To return your completed hard copy form, please send to:

**School Organisation and Resources Team**

**Children's Services,**

**County Hall**

**Morpeth**

**Northumberland**

**NE61 2EF**

At the end of this consultation, all feedback received will be considered by the Council's Cabinet before deciding on whether or not to move to the next steps in the process.

**Thank you for participating in this consultation**

# Proposals for School Organisation in the Coquet Partnership

## Overview

Northumberland County Council has committed £25.5m towards the replacement and refurbishment of school buildings in the Coquet Partnership. However, before carrying out this work to schools, the Council needs to know that it is investing in a school structure that will deliver consistently good outcomes for all children and young people, and that it is sustainable for the current and future generations to come.

Over the last few months, Council officers have been talking to headteachers and school Chairs of Governors to gain their views on the current educational structure in Coquet. While there were some varying responses, the school leaders all agreed that it is now the right time for the views of everyone with an interest in education in Coquet to be captured. The schools have therefore asked the Council to carry out a wider consultation with parents, staff, governors, pupils and the wider public.

This consultation document sets out the key issues faced by schools in the partnership and asks for your views on whether the current structure or the proposed primary/secondary school structure would deliver a good and sustainable school system in the Coquet area. We are also asking if you have any alternative suggestions that you think could be a viable option for delivering these aims.

Whether you are a member of staff in a Coquet school, a parent of school-age children, a local resident, or anyone with an interest in education in the area, I hope that you will take this opportunity to submit your views and help to shape the future of schools in the Coquet Partnership.

Audrey Kingham

Joint Interim Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services

Northumberland County Council

## Introduction

Northumberland County Council has committed £25.5m towards the replacement and refurbishment of school buildings in the Coquet Partnership. However, before carrying out this work to schools, the Council needs to know that it is investing in a school structure that will deliver consistently good outcomes for all children and young people, and that it is sustainable for the current and future generations to come.

Over the last few months, Council officers have been talking to headteachers and school Chairs of Governors to gain their views on the current educational structure in Coquet. While there were some varying responses, the school leaders all agreed that it is now the right time for the views of everyone with an interest in education in Coquet to be captured. The schools have therefore asked the Council to carry out a wider consultation with parents, staff, governors, pupils and the wider public.

This consultation document sets out the key issues faced by schools in the partnership, and asks for your views on whether the current structure or the proposed primary/secondary school structure would deliver a good and sustainable school system in the Coquet area. We are also asking if you have any alternative suggestions that you think could be a viable option for delivering these aims.

Whether you are a member of staff in a Coquet school, a parent of school-age children, a local resident, or anyone with an interest in education in the area, I hope that you will take this opportunity to submit your views and help to shape the future of schools in the Coquet Partnership.

Audrey Kingham

Joint Interim Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services

Northumberland County Council

## Your details

1 What is your name?

2 What is your email address?

3 What is your postcode (eg. NE65 0TD)?

*(Required)*

4 In what capacity are you responding to the consultation (scroll through to most appropriate description of your capacity):

*(Required)*

*Please select only one item*

- Parent/Carer of a pupil currently attending Amble First School
- Parent/Carer of a pupil currently attending Amble Links First School
- Parent/Carer of a pupil currently attending Broomhill First School
- Parent/Carer of a pupil currently attending Grange View CE First School
- Parent/Carer of a pupil currently attending Red Row First School
- Parent/Carer of a pupil currently attending James Calvert Spence College
- Parent/Carer of a pupil currently attending NCEA Warkworth CE Primary School
- Governor of Amble First School
- Governor of Amble Links First School
- Governor of Broomhill First School
- Governor of Grange View CE First School
- Governor of Red Row First School
- Governor of James Calvert Spence College
- Governor of NCEA Warkworth CE Primary School
- Staff Member of Amble First School
- Staff Member of Amble Links First School
- Staff Member of Broomhill First School
- Staff Member of Grange View CE First School
- Staff Member of Red Row First School
- Staff Member of James Calvert Spence College
- Staff Member of NCEA Warkworth CE Primary School
- Pupil/Student of Amble First School
- Pupil/Student of Amble Links First School
- Pupil/Student of Broomhill First School
- Pupil/Student of Grange View CE First School
- Pupil/Student of Red Row First School
- Pupil/Student of James Calvert Spence College
- Pupil/Student of NCEA Warkworth CE Primary School
- Parent/Carer of pupil/student in another school in Northumberland
- Staff Member in another School in Northumberland
- Governor in another School in Northumberland
- Pupil/Student in another School in Northumberland
- Councillor on Amble Town Council
- Councillor on Acklington Parish Council
- Councillor on East Chevington Parish Council
- Councillor on Hauxley Parish Council
- Councillor on Togston Parish Council
- Councillor on Warkworth Parish Council
- Councillor on Widdrington Village Parish Council
- Councillor on Widdrington Station and Stobswood Parish Council
- Resident/member of the community living in the Coquet Partnership
- Resident/member of the community living outside of the Coquet Partnership
- Other

5 If you selected 'Other' in question 7 please state below



6 Having read the consultation document, which structure of schools in the Coquet Partnership do you think will be the best option for providing improved outcomes for all children and young people in the area and for securing a sustainable and viable education in the Coquet Partnership for this and future generations?

*(Required)*

*Please select only one item*

- MODEL A (current structure, phase change at end of Year 4)
- MODEL B (primary/secondary structure, phase change at end of Year 6)
- DON'T KNOW

7 Please give the reasons for your answer below

*(Required)*



8 Having read the consultation document, if Model B was implemented in the Coquet Partnership do you think the proposal to locate a satellite school run by Barndale Special School for children and young people with Special Educational Needs on a shared site with Amble First School Amble is a good solution for improving the SEND provision in the Coquet area and enabling this group of pupils/students to be educated closer to and within their home communities?

*(Required)*

*Please select only one item*

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

9 Please give the reasons for your answer below:

*(Required)*

10 Having read the consultation document, if Model A remains in place within the Coquet Partnership do you think the proposal to locate a satellite school run by Barndale Special School for children and young people with Special Educational Needs on a shared site with a school in the partnership is a good solution for improving the SEND provision in the Coquet area and enabling this group of pupils/students to be educated closer to and within their home communities?

*(Required)*

*Please select only one item*

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

11 Please give reasons for your answer below

*(Required)*

12 Do you have an alternative suggestion or proposal you would like to put forward either in relation to the school structure in Coquet Partnership or in relation to specialist provision for children and young people with SEND in the area? (If not, please state 'None')

(Required)

13 Do you have any general or additional comments that you would like the Council's Cabinet to consider, eg. early years or catchment areas? (If not, please state none).

(Required)

#### THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THIS CONSULTATION

**Please note:** If you contact officers of the Council directly then your response will be re-directed to the consultation inbox to ensure your views are taken into account. Unfortunately, due to the potential number of responses to this consultation it will be impossible for officers to individually acknowledge receipt of replies or comments.

**Related information:**

Coquet Partnership padlet is [here](https://padlet.com/Northumberland/Coquet) <<https://padlet.com/Northumberland/Coquet>> .

## Consultation Register – NCC

### Proposals for the Coquet Partnership

Consultation – 23<sup>rd</sup> May to 29<sup>th</sup> June 2022

<b>Consultees</b>
<p>Schools in Coquet Partnership directly affected by proposals – Governors, Staff, Parents and Pupils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amble First</li> <li>• Amble Links First</li> <li>• Broomhill First</li> <li>• Grange View First</li> <li>• Red Row First</li> <li>• James Calvert Spence College</li> <li>• NCEA Warkworth CE Primary</li> </ul>
<p>Other Northumberland Schools in local area possibly affected – Headteacher and Chair of Governors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Branton Community Primary</li> <li>• Ellingham C of E Aided Primary</li> <li>• Embleton Vincent Edwards C of E Primary</li> <li>• Felton C of E Primary</li> <li>• Hipsburn Primary</li> <li>• Longhoughton C of E Primary</li> <li>• Seahouses Primary</li> <li>• Shilbottle Primary</li> <li>• St Michaels C of E Primary</li> <li>• St. Paul's RC Voluntary Aided Primary</li> <li>• Swansfield Park Primary</li> <li>• Swarland Primary</li> <li>• The Duchess's Community High</li> <li>• Whittingham C of E Primary</li> </ul>
<p><b>Public</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCC Website</li> <li>• Libraries - Amble Library and Widdrington Library</li> </ul>

**Diocesan representatives**

- CE, Paul Rickeard
- RC, Deborah Fox

**Town & Parish Councils**

- Amble Town Council
- East Chevington
- Acklington
- Widdrington and Stobhill
- Widdrington
- Warkworth
- Hauxley
- Togston

**Local MP (for information/response)**

- Annemarie Trevelyn MP

**Local Members (for information/response)**

- Amble West with Warkworth (*Cllr Jeff Watson*)
- Amble (*Cllr Terry Clark*)
- Druridge Bay (*Cllr. Scott Dickinson*)
- Pegswood (*Cllr David Towns*)
- Longhorsley (*Cllr Glen Sanderson*)

**Unions**

- NEU
- NASUWT
- Unison
- ASCL
- NAHT
- GMB

## 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:

Proposals for the reorganisation of the Coquet Partnership of schools from the current structure to a 2-tier (primary/secondary) structure.

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

Consultation on proposals for schools in the Coquet Partnership (with the exception of NCEA Warkworth CE Primary School which has previously reorganised) to reorganise to a 2-tier (primary/secondary) system of education has taken place with all relevant stakeholders, including parents of pupils on roll at schools in the partnership, staff of those schools, Governors of the schools, relevant parish/town council and pupils/students.

The schools that would be reorganised should the statutory proposal be published and subsequently approved would be:

- Amble First School
- Amble Links First School
- Broomhill First School
- Grange View CE First School
- Red Row First School
- James Calvert Spence College (JCSC)

Consultation with these stakeholders has also taken place on a proposal to provide additional specialist SEND places to meet the growing need for places for children and young people diagnosed with a primary need of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH) within the Coquet Partnership area. This proposal would see Barndale Special School in Alnwick extend its provision to include a satellite site based within the South Avenue site of the current JCSC.

Cabinet approved consultation in the light of both the feedback received from the Governing Bodies in the Coquet Partnership and the proposed investment of £25.5m (previously to consultation) in school buildings in the partnership.

If the Statutory Proposals are approved for publication, Cabinet would need to make a final decision on the proposals within two months of the end of the representation period.

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

Disability   Sex   Age   ~~Race~~   ~~Religion~~   Sexual orientation

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

Employees who are married/in civil partnerships

4) The characteristics checked above are not relevant because:

In the medium to long-term and in relation to both the reorganisation of the mainstream schools within the statutory proposal and the expansion of Barndale Special School onto a satellite site, there is no reason to believe that these statutory proposals would affect more positively or negatively than their peers any group of children, parents or staff linked with these schools defined by their religion, race or gender-reassignment status. Should the Council decide to implement the proposed statutory proposals at a future date, during the immediate process of transition, families would be invited to inform the Council that they are concerned about the impact that the change may have on the support networks for any individual children who may be at particular risk of harassment or discrimination. Reasonable adjustments would be made to support individual students where appropriate.

As the statutory proposals do not include school closure proposals it is not envisaged that there would be any staff redundancies within the current first schools. Indeed, in relation to the first schools and to Barndale Special School, it is envisaged that additional staff would be needed to implement the proposed changes to these schools.

James Calvert Spence College would no longer need staff for Year 5 and 6 classes as it would become an age 11-18 secondary school and therefore there may be some staff within that school that could become at risk of redundancy. Existing HR policies covering organisational change and redundancy would apply to staff employed at any of the maintained schools affected. These are designed to ensure that the equalities duties of the Council and the schools are fully met.

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

## **PART 2 – Relevance to different Protected Characteristics**

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

### **Disability**

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

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

There are 11 students on roll at the first schools in Coquet Partnership who have been allocated an EHCP, while there are 10 students with an EHCP on roll at JCSC.

It is therefore expected that a number of students on roll at these schools will have EHCPs by the time the proposal is planned to be implemented as soon as possible after **11 May 2023**. Should the proposal be approved, individual transition plans would be developed to ensure that the impact of the relocation on this group of students is minimal and planned for effectively.

Any students who were offered a place at the proposed satellite site of Barndale Special School in Amble would similarly have suitable transition plans in place in accordance with their needs.

Any member of staff, or parent or a carer of a student at one of the schools who has a disability would not be affected disproportionately by the proposal as any reasonable adjustments or arrangements would be put in place at the new buildings as part of the design process.

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

Refer to para. 5

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

No evidence has arisen during consultation that the implementation of the proposed statutory proposals would affect any current arrangements for disabled people to participate in public life. However, in relation to residents living in the areas around the location of the school sites in particular, should any impact in this regard come to light, ameliorating and proportionate measures would be investigated to address any negative impact.

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

No evidence has arisen during consultation to suggest that the implementation of the proposed statutory proposals would affect public attitudes to disabled people. However, should any impact in this regard come to light, ameliorating and proportionate measures would be investigated to address any negative impact.

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

No evidence has arisen during consultation to suggest that the implementation of the proposed statutory proposals would affect public attitudes to disabled people. However, should any impact in this regard come to light, ameliorating and proportionate measures would be investigated to address any negative impact.

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

The premise of these proposals in relation to the reorganisation of the mainstream schools is that educational outcomes for all students in their schools would improve. Therefore, it is envisaged there would be disproportionate advantage of the proposal to all students on roll at the relevant mainstream schools within the partnership.

In relation to the development of a satellite site of Barndale Special School in Amble, while it is also envisaged that their educational outcomes would improve, they would also be able to receive their education closer to their home communities thus reducing travelling times to school and also enabling them to develop friendships with students in their local area. It is therefore envisaged that these students would be disproportionately advantaged both educationally and socially.

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

Should this proposal be implemented, there would potentially be opportunities for positive impacts for disabled people within the design of the new buildings that are not currently in place in existing buildings. See also para. 10.

## **Sex (Gender)**

12) What do you know about usage of the services affected by this change, decision or proposal in relation to people of a certain gender, about their experiences of it, and about any current barriers to access?

Schools in the Coquet Partnership and Barndale House Special School are co-educational.

13) Could people of a certain gender be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

No evidence has arisen during consultation to suggest that either boys or girls would be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the statutory proposals. However, should this proposal be approved to go to statutory consultation, this EIA would be updated with any evidence where it suggested that there could be any gender based disproportionate advantage or disadvantage.

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

There is currently no evidence from consultation to suggest that the ability of people of a certain gender to participate in public life would be affected by the



implementation of the statutory proposals. However, should any impact in this regard come to light, ameliorating and proportionate measures would be investigated to address any negative impact.

15) Could the change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards people of a certain gender (e.g., by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)

To date, there has been no evidence to suggest that public attitudes to people with people of a certain gender. However, ameliorating actions would be implemented in the event that issues were identified.

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

Should the statutory proposals be implemented, the risk of harassment or victimisation of people of a certain gender, such as bullying, would be monitored. Should evidence be identified that risk of harassment had increased, relevant actions stated would be undertaken to address the reasons for harassment or victimisation, including awareness programmes.

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

No evidence has so far been identified to suggest that people of a certain gender could be disproportionately disadvantaged through the implementation of the proposal. However, ameliorating actions would be implemented in the event that issues were identified.

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

It is envisaged that the positive impacts of both statutory proposals would affect a people of different sexual orientations equally. However, while none have been so far identified, any opportunities to create positive impacts for people with different genders would be identified.

## **Age**

19) 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?

First schools in the Coquet Partnership provide education to young people from the age of 2,3 or 4 to age 9, while JCSC provides education to young people between the ages of 9 and 18. Students on roll at these schools at the proposed date of implementation would be impacted. It is proposed that the new Barndale Special School satellite site would educate children and young people aged 2 to 18.

Staff at the schools all schools identified in the statutory proposals are employed equitably in accordance with the relevant school and council's employment policies. All appropriate HR processes and procedures would be adhered to throughout any

staff consultation and redundancy process (if any were necessary) in line with NCC policies.

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

While the premise of the proposal is that students would be advantaged educationally, there may be other impacts such as shorter journeys to school e.g. for children attending first schools that become primaries, they would receive their Year 5 and 6 education at their local school, while children who may be allocated a place at the new Barndale Special school satellite would be likely to have a shorted journey to school than may have been the case if they attended an alternative specialist provision. Therefore, shorted journeys would be seen as advantageous to those students.

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

There is no evidence to suggest from informal consultation that the proposed statutory proposals would have any effect on the ability of different age groups to participate in public life.

22) 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 from informal consultation that the proposed statutory proposals would affect public attitudes to different age groups.

24) 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?

Should the proposals be approved to go to statutory consultation and evidence come to light that there are risks that people of different age groups could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the proposal, this EIA would be updated, and reasonable steps approved to be implemented to address such risk.

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

The premise of the proposal is to create a positive impact for all students on roll in schools in the Coquet Partnership and for those students who would be allocated a place at the Barndale Special School satellite site in relation to improved educational outcomes.

## **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.*

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

There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal would create any barriers to students accessing at any of the schools that would be included in the statutory proposals as all students eligible for Home to School Transport would receive it.

In relation to the proposed reorganisation of the Coquet Partnership mainstream schools, any parent of a student in a school in the partnership who may be pregnant or who has other children under 26 weeks old would not be disadvantaged as children in the first schools would stay at their school as it became primary up to the end of Year 6. This could therefore be advantageous to this protected group.

Any staff of schools named in the statutory proposals who may be pregnant would have the same rights extended to them under reorganisation, or in the case of Barndale Special School, if such staff took up a post at the proposed satellite site in Amble.

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

See para.26.

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

There is no evidence to suggest that the statutory proposals would have any effect on the ability of pregnant women or those with children under 26 weeks participate in public life under the proposals.

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

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

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

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

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

No, for the reasons set out at para. 26.

32) 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. 26.

## **Sexual Orientation**

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

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

There is currently no evidence to suggest that any student on roll in a school named in the statutory proposals or a member of staff who identifies as LGBT employed by these schools would be disproportionately impacted positively or negatively should approval be given to implement the proposal.

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

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

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

There is currently no evidence from informal consultation to suggest that different sexual orientations would be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the implementation of the statutory proposals. However, ameliorating actions stated in para. 33 would be implemented in the event that issues were identified.

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

There is currently no evidence from consultation to suggest that the ability of people with different sexual orientations to participate in public life would be affected by the implementation of the statutory proposal. However, ameliorating actions stated in para. 33 would be implemented in the event that issues were identified.

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

To date, there has been no evidence to suggest that public attitudes to people with different sexual orientations. However, ameliorating actions stated in para. 33 would be implemented in the event that issues were identified.

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

Should the proposal be implemented, the risk of harassment or victimisation of people with different sexual orientations would be monitored. Should evidence be identified that risk of harassment had increased, the relevant actions stated in para. 33 would be implemented.

There is currently no evidence to suggest that any member of the public, pupil in one of the schools named in the statutory proposals, parent of a pupils on roll in the schools named in the statutory proposals or member of staff employed in one of the schools named in the statutory proposals who identifies as LGBT would be more or less likely to be at risk of harassment or victimisation. Should the approval be given to implement the proposals. However, should any of this group of people who identifies within this protected group be identified as at risk as a result of the implementation of this proposal, the authority would encourage the staff of the relevant schools to use the Stonewall Education champion's resources and to increase awareness of any potential issues such as increased risk of bullying.

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

No evidence has so far been identified to suggest that people with different sexual orientations could be disproportionately disadvantaged through the implementation of the statutory proposal. However, ameliorating actions stated in para. 33 would be implemented in the event that issues were identified.

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

While none have been so far identified, any opportunities to create positive impacts for people with different sexual orientations would be implemented, possibly through the implementation of the actions set out in para. 33.

## Human Rights

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

While there is no specific evidence to suggest that the implementation of the proposal would impact positively on human rights, the rationale for this proposal as originally consulted on is to provide improved educational outcomes for all students on roll in schools in the Coquet Partnership and for those students who would be allocated a place at the satellite site of Barndale Special School in Amble, with a view to improving the life chances of those students.

## PART 3 - Course of Action

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

<b>X</b>	The equality analysis has not identified any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken.
	The equality analysis has identified risks or opportunities to promote better equality; the change, decision or proposal would be adjusted to avoid risks and ensure that opportunities are taken should they be required.
	The equality analysis has identified risks to equality which will not be eliminated, and/or opportunities to promote better equality which will not be taken. Acceptance of these is reasonable and proportionate, given the objectives of the change, decision or proposal, and its overall financial and policy context.
	The equality analysis shows that the change, decision or proposal would lead to actual or potential unlawful discrimination or would conflict with the Council's positive duties to an extent which is disproportionate to its objectives. It should not be adopted in its current form.

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

From the initial analysis of the possible negative or positive impacts of the proposal on the groups with protected characteristics, the premise of the proposal as originally consulted on suggests that students on roll at schools in the Coquet Partnership and those students who would be allocated a place at the satellite site of Barndale Special School in Amble would be disproportionately advantaged. Should a decision be made by the Council's Cabinet to take move to the formal statutory processes, any evidence arising from the statutory consultations that suggests that there could be possible negative impacts, identified 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**

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

This EIA has assessed in the light of feedback from the informal consultation period set out earlier in this report. Should the proposals be approved and the

process move to the publication of statutory proposals, the EIA would be further updated at the end of the statutory period. Appropriate action would be identified in the light of the consultation and where necessary, an action plan with timescales developed.

## **PART 5 - Authorisation**

Name of Head of Service and Date Approved

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