



Northumberland County Council

Consultation on School Structures in Coquet Partnership

Notes of Meeting

Meeting:	Barndale House School Governors' Meeting
Location:	Barndale House School, Howling Lane, Alnwick, NE66 1DQ

Date & Time:	Monday 6 th June 2022 at 5.00 pm
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Present:	
<u>NCC Representatives:</u>	Sue Aviston (Head of School Organisation and Resources) Lorraine Fife (School Place Planning and Organisation Manager) Deborah Anderson (Project Support Officer)
<u>Barndale School:</u>	Headteacher Six Governors

1.	<u>Welcome and Introductions</u>
	<p>SA welcomed everyone to the meeting and those present were noted above.</p> <p>NCC Officers briefly outlined their roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SA - Head of School Organisation and Resources for the local authority. Has a range of responsibilities, one of which is school re-organisation.• LF - School Place Planning and Organisation Manager. Responsibilities includes managing the consultation process, ensuring it runs smoothly and meets statutory guidelines etc.
2.	<u>Purpose of Meeting</u>
	<p>SA outlined the purpose of the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To explain the proposals which were approved by Cabinet on 10th May 2022 and currently being consulted on.• To provide an opportunity for governors to ask questions about the proposals.• Brief, but not verbatim, notes would be published as part of the report to Cabinet.
3.	<u>Context and Rationale for the Proposals</u>
	<p>SA explained the background:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council has allocated the Coquet partnership funding (£25.5m) to replace or refurbish its school buildings.• Prior to any work commencing the Council seeks assurances that it is investing in a structure that will deliver improved outcomes and will be viable and sustainable for generations to come.• Outlined the work that had been done with school leaders in the partnership over the last year.

4.	<u>Outcomes of Discussions with School Leaders</u>
	<p>Briefly summarised the outcomes of discussions held with school leaders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 'Vision for the Coquet Partnership' agreed. The vision included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ improved educational outcomes/offer for all pupils. ○ improved and extended SEND offer. ○ ensuring that the community supports the model. ○ ensuring that schools work together to further develop the partnership, creating a sustainable and viable model of education for the future. ○ ensuring best value for the capital investment by NCC. • Main views from school leaders regarding the current structure and a two-tier structure. Noted that both models had their pros and cons.
5.	<u>Standards in the Coquet Partnership</u>
	<p>The standards in the partnership were summarised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KS2 standards have been a concern for several years. • 2019 is the last validated data (2020 and 2021 data is not validated due to Covid). • In 2019 only 27% of students met the expected standard for Reading, Writing and Maths - worst result in the county and nationally. This is a significant concern to the local authority and Regional Schools Commission. • KS4 and KS5 performance was much improved, particularly in relation to Progress 8 and Average Point Score.
6.	<u>Viability and Sustainability</u>
	<p>SA advised that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth rate in the partnership remains steady (this is not the case in other parts of the county). • Challenge for this partnership is retention of pupils (approximately 25% of pupils leave the partnership to attend schools in other areas). • As school budgets are predominately based on pupil numbers this equates to a loss of funding for schools. (Potentially an additional £1m would be available across the partnership if those pupils were retained.)
7.	<u>What are the Proposals</u>
	<p>SA outlined the proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council is consulting on two proposals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Model A – this is the current structure. ○ Model B – this is a change to a primary/secondary structure of education (all first schools extend their age range up to age 11 and James Calvert Spence College reduces its age range to become an 11-18 secondary school). • Due to site constraints with the Amble First site, we are proposing that Amble First School relocates to the South Avenue site and takes up part of the building. • As part of the consultation, we are asking for other ideas.
8.	<u>What are the Implications of the Proposals for Staff in the Coquet Partnership</u>
	<p>SA briefly outlined the implications for staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If Model A remains in place - no implications for staff apart from the annual 'business as usual' decisions. • If Model B is implemented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ First Schools would need to redesign their curriculum and staffing structures - there could be opportunities to look at the leadership structure and recruit additional staff. ○ James Calvert Spence College would need to redesign its staffing structure as

	<p>it would no longer need teaching staff for Years 5 and 6. Those staff would be deemed to be “at risk”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim is to protect staff and retain the good teaching which is already in the partnership. NCC officers would work with headteachers in the partnership to develop a staffing protocol which all schools in the partnership would be asked to adopt. This would provide stability for both the staff and pupils. • Trade Unions are aware of the consultation and can be contacted, if required, by individual members.
9.	<u>Special Educational Needs in Coquet Partnership</u>
	<p>SA shared predicted forecasts for SEMH and ASD pupils and advised that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is currently no specialist provision within the Coquet partnerships for pupils with SEND. • 60 pupils with SEND leave the partnership to be educated in 11 different provisions. • Increases of SEMH and ASD are being seen across the county and nationally. • The capital funding, which has been allocated to the Coquet partnership, together with funding from Central Government and other Council funding gives us the opportunity to meet capacity needs locally. • As local authorities can't open new schools the Council is proposing to create a satellite provision, run by Barndale House School, which would be co-located alongside Amble First School on the South Avenue site. • Stressed that although co-located Amble First School and the SEND provision would be separate schools with their own entrances, outdoor areas and facilities. • This is the Council's suggestion, however, other ideas for meeting SEND demands are welcomed.
10.	<u>Other Implications of Model A and Model B</u>
	<p>LF outlined the implications under both models as follows:</p> <p><u>Catchment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposing no changes to catchment areas under either model. <p><u>Admissions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposing no changes to admission arrangements for nursery/reception pupils. • Under Model B, admission into James Calvert Spence College would change from Year 5 to Year 7. <p><u>Timeline</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential timeline for Model B would be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ September 2022/2023 – operate as currently. ○ September 2024 – Year 4 pupils would remain at their current first school and become Year 5. James Calvert Spence College would not receive Year 5 and would operate from Year 6 upwards. ○ September 2025 – Year 5 pupils would move up to become Year 6. Pupils in Year 6 at James Calvert Spence College would move up to Year 7. ○ September 2026 – Year 6 pupils from primary schools would transfer to James Calvert Spence College into Year 7. • The current (2022) Year 3 pupils would be the last year group to transfer into Year 5 at James Calvert Spence College. The pupils in Year 2 pupils would become the first Year 5 pupils in the primary schools.

	<p><u>Early Years</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following discussion with colleagues from early years it is believed that there is sufficient, good provision within the partnership. • We are therefore not proposing to increase early years provision as part of this consultation. <p><u>Transport</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposing no changes to eligibility for home to school transport under either model. • If Model B implemented pupils in Years 5 and 6 wouldn't have as far to travel which could result in a small saving for the Council's Home to School Transport budget. However, this wouldn't have any bearing on the outcome of this consultation. <p><u>School Buildings/Capital Allocation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As stated, the Council has allocated £25.5m towards investment in school buildings within the partnership. • Officers will be developing indicative budgets for any potential building work required under either model. This would include the SEND provision. • Outcomes from the consultation, together with the indicative costs, presented to Cabinet for consideration.
11.	<u>Next Steps</u>
	<p>LF advised that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consultation runs until midnight on 29th June 2022. • Good to have a response from you, as a governing body, to the proposals. However, can also respond as an individual. • Public event scheduled for Saturday 16th June at Amble Masonic Hall. • Feedback and responses will be analysed, and report presented to FACS and Cabinet Committees in September. • Cabinet would decide whether or not to approve and move to formal "statutory" consultation. If formal consultation approved this would be for four weeks and Cabinet would make a final decision in November 2022.
12.	<u>Questions</u>
	<p><i>Q – In relation to the forecast data predicting ASD children – does that take into consideration those in special provision where the school may be more proactive in getting a diagnosis or EHCP?</i> The figures are just those children in special schools with an EHCP.</p> <p><i>Q – You stated that 60 children attend 11 different establishments. Are those establishments all in Northumberland or are some out of county?</i> It is both. There will be some cases where specialist provision is required.</p> <p><i>Q – Is rural uplift funding still available? If so, could this support some of the funding needs?</i> SA not aware of any. In terms of revenue funding sparsity funding might be available but it would depend on meeting the criteria.</p> <p><i>Q – Discussed the first school going into part of South Avenue and potentially the SEND provision having space there. What about the pupils already at James Calvert Spence? Is the building big enough for everyone to be accommodated?</i> James Calvert Spence runs a split site and there is sufficient capacity to house all pupils on the Acklington Road site while the South Avenue site is remodelled. However, can't pre-empt any consultation decision therefore the finer details still need to be worked out.</p>

Q – Would there be investment in this site?

That would form part of the wider SEND Capacity Strategy which will be launched shortly. Not appropriate to share details or ideas at this stage. However, aware of the issues and challenge you have with this building and site.

Q – In terms of the budget – would it be one school budget?

Depends on how you, as a governing body/headteacher, want to run things. SA reiterated the reasons why we are proposing a satellite provision and not opening a new school. Would be up to the Headteacher how the sites are run and managed. For example, at Ashdale the headteacher is at one site with the deputy at the other.

Q – If resources are shared would that also include staff (eg. staff employed at Barndale working at the Amble site?) and would interview arrangement be as they are now?

Potentially. The contract of employment is with Barndale, but you could have a local arrangement in place that a staff member spends a percentage of their time in Amble. In relation to interviews, we would ask you to consider the staff at risk. Aware that specialist teachers would be required but there could be learning support assistants that with some CPD and retraining could be employed.

Q – So there wouldn't be a requirement to TUPE the staff from the middle school?

No, but we would ask that you consider them for interview. If the staff are not suitable you still have the option to advertise externally.

Q – Individuals would need to be employed prior to provision opening, would we have to employ them on our budget?

Might depend on where the staff are coming from. If they are existing staff already in the partnership, that might be a different conversation than bring more staff in. It also relates to how places are commissioned.

Q – Really exciting opportunity but do have concerns that you are asking us to double the size of the school in a short timeframe. This would include interviewing staff and ensuring that curriculum/resources were in place. What extra support can you give Barndale to increase capacity?

Couldn't give funding but could offer physical support. Looking to provide specialist support to the whole of the partnership (eg. HR). Could also agree a programme of growth to ensure the school could deal with it.

Q – Would children currently attending Barndale remain at Barndale, or would they move to Amble?

That might depend on what is most appropriate for the child.

Q - Is it the ambition that the 60 children remain within the partnership?

Yes, the ambition is for children to remain in their partnership where they can and reduce the number of out of county placements. However, it might depend on if specialist provision is required.

Q – What size would the provision be?

Need to look at the data, but potentially looking at a 50 place all aged provision.

Q – What input will the headteacher have regarding the remodelling of the building at South Avenue, Amble?

Input from the headteacher would be at the next stage, if approved. The headteacher would be required to think about the education vision, how it would look and how it would work.

Q – Would the strategy that is coming out in September impact on this consultation?

The idea is that there will be an overall capacity strategy showing demand for places across Northumberland on a partnership-by-partnership basis. This would be similar to what we have done in Coquet. We would then suggest ideas how the demands/issues could be met.

One governor stressed that we didn't want a situation where parents wanted pupils to attend the Amble site rather than Barndale due to condition and challenges of the Barndale site.

Q – What happens if the partnership remains with Model A?

We would still need to look at a provision for SEND.

Q - Do all schools in the partnership have to agree or is it a majority decision?

No, it is a consultation, and we ask what people's preferences are, but it is not a referendum based on the number of votes received. An education professional's view (eg. headteacher) would hold more weight as it is based on opinion and what the impact would be.

SA finished the meeting by thanking the governors for taking the time to attend the meeting. The meeting closed at 6.15 pm.