



Northumberland County Council

Phase 2 Consultation – Education in the Berwick Partnership

Notes of Meeting

Meeting:	Tweedmouth Middle School – Governors Meeting
Location:	Tweedmouth Middle School, Billendean Terrace, Spittal, Berwick upon Tweed, Td15 2DJ

Date & Time:	Tuesday 15 th November 2022 at 5.30 pm
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Present:	
<u>NCC</u>	Sue Aviston (SA) (Head of School Organisation and Resources) Audrey Kingham (AK) (Joint Interim Director of Children’s Services/Director of Education and Skills) Lorraine Fife (LF) (School Place Planning and Organisation Manager) Deborah Anderson (DA) (Project Support Officer)
<u>School</u>	Headteacher 5 Members of the Governing Body
<u>Also in Attendance</u>	Cllr. Georgina Hill

1.	<u>Welcome and Purpose of Meeting</u>
	SA welcomed everyone to the meeting and those in attendance were noted above. Four of the governors in attendance had been present in the staff meeting which took place prior to this meeting. At the governors’ request NCC officers did not repeat the presentation.
2.	<u>Discussion, Comments and Questions</u>
	<i>Q - What is the relationship between Northumberland County Council and the Academy?</i> NCC have no decision-making authority with the Academy and the Academy is accountable to the DfE and their team. However, the Director of Children’s Services (DCS) has a statutory responsibility and duty for the children of Northumberland who attend the academy. <i>Q – Why hasn’t the DfE intervened in respect of the Academy?</i> Can’t speak for the DfE. However, can state that the Council has a good working relationship with the DfE and the Regional Schools’ Commissioner and do have regular challenging conversations regarding all academies in Northumberland.

A governor stated:

- *The town of Berwick has unique demands and its own mindset.*
- *Cllr Renner-Thompson stated that the aim is to attract back the pupils leaving the partnership.*
- *There will never be sufficient finance to make the Academy viable and transferring Years 7 and 8 from middle schools would only plug the gap temporality.*
- *Middle class people, who can, will send their children elsewhere. For others there isn't the choice.*
- *Don't believe the models proposed are right. Not seeing an independent analysis of what the educational need is in Berwick.*

Q – In relation to the Academy we are seeing multiple years of poor performance.

Ofsted validates that the Academy is improving, and the three recent monitoring visits have judged the school to be taking effective action.

However, shifting a poor reputation is really hard.

Q – In relation to Cllr Renner-Thompson's comment regarding getting 200+ young people back into the partnership. Is this possible?

One of the Council's priorities is to meet needs closer to home.

Q – Do the Council know or understand the needs of the partnership.

The team is trusted to deliver what has been asked and the objective is to represent the views of the partnership in respect of the consultation.

Can't lose sight of how much work has already gone into this process and the consensus view of headteachers in the partnership regarding how we came up with the two proposals we are consulting on.

A Governor requested:

- *All governors, of all Berwick partnership schools, be brought together to meet to discuss options without headteachers being present.*
- *There is an opportunity to revisit what was said in the workshops.*

Agreed to give this request some consideration but advised that it would need to be at the end of the individual school meetings.

SA finished the meeting by thanking governors for attending and the meeting closed at 7:10 pm.