

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OSC

REPORT TO CABINET

20 July 2023

Outcomes of the Consultation on Proposals for the Berwick Partnership

The report was presented Sue Aviston, Head of School Organisation and Resources, to the Committee at their meeting on 18 July 2023.

During the meeting, several questions and comments were raised, and assurances were sought with regards to the smooth transition for pupils and teachers, ethos preservation, staff protection, performance monitoring and accountability, public input, and infrastructure standards.

The committee members sought reassurance that the ethos of good schools would be preserved and carried through to the new systems. Officers emphasised the importance of maintaining the existing values and principles that have contributed to the success of these schools. Effective communication strategies were discussed to ensure all stakeholders are well-informed about the changes, in light of the low public participation numbers in the consultation process.

Members were informed about close collaboration with headteachers to develop a staffing protocol, ensuring continuity for children. To support staff and students during this process, new posts would be created, and a contingency budget with the support of the School's Forum was made available for additional pastoral care and Continuing Professional Development.

FACS were keen to understand how the transition progress would be monitored. officers explained that to ensure a successful transition, a dedicated project group would be established to manage the change effectively. The committee inquired about how the transition progress would be monitored, and officers confirmed that continuous monitoring would be conducted, with no specific end date. They also expressed the intention to work closely with Berwick Academy to oversee improvements

Councillors asked about the social value guarantees that could be included in the procurement process, including apprenticeships. Any contracted awarded by NCC, has social value conditions embedded and any tendered work carried out would be no different. With officers offering their assurance that contractors would be held accountable for fulfilling these requirements.

Officers also reassured members that there would be no loss of playing fields and highlighted that the outline business case for Berwick Academy would include enhancements to these facilities. Regarding infrastructure, the committee asked if the new schools would meet the new standards of ventilation, to which the officers confirmed that all school buildings would meet the DfE standards for air quality and ventilation.

Following these discussions, the Committee, unanimous, **agreed** to advise the Cabinet they supported the recommendations as outlined in the report.

**WAYNE DALEY
CHAIR**