

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

18 JULY 2018

STATEMENT OF EDUCATION & SKILLS PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Sherburn High School fire

Members may be aware of the serious fire at Sherburn High School overnight on Monday 2 July. The school's gym and changing rooms suffered significant damage but the Fire and Rescue Service were able to prevent further damage to teaching and administration areas of the school. Fortunately no staff, pupils or emergency service crews were injured as a result of the incident. Investigations into the cause of the blaze continue. It is helpful also that Year 11 and 13 students have completed their public examinations and there will be reduced numbers of students in school when it reopens.

Local authority officers and contractors have been working with the Headteacher and school staff around the clock to make arrangements to enable the school to reopen as quickly as possible and I am sure you wish to join me in expressing our thanks to them and to the fire crews for their support at this difficult time.

School funding

In North Yorkshire our annual High Needs budget of £45m has pressures of over £4m despite real-terms reductions in funding. We continue to have real concerns about the level of funding we receive and the support that we, in turn, can provide to our mainstream and special schools. In consultation with schools, we have transferred 0.5% of the Schools Block, equating to approximately £1.6m, to the High Needs Block for 2018-19. This is only a temporary measure and will be insufficient to meet current costs and anticipated increases in demand. We will continue to lobby DfE on High Needs to secure a better deal for children in North Yorkshire.

We also recognise that a growing number of schools are experiencing financial pressures with more schools projecting medium-term deficit positions and a reduction in collective school balances. The local authority is responding to this position and will be working to support and challenge schools to achieve good quality, financially sustainable provision.

School Ofsted inspections

Overall 87.3% of children across North Yorkshire attend a good or outstanding school. This is higher than both national and regional averages: 86.3% across England and 81.1% across Yorkshire and the Humber, it places North Yorkshire third in the region.

The five most recent Ofsted inspections in North Yorkshire schools resulted in four schools being judged good and one outstanding.

Strategic Plan for SEND Education Provision 0-25

The formal consultation on proposals in the Strategic Plan took place from 18th May to 28th June 2018. During the consultation there were focus groups for children and young people and meetings for parents/carers and professionals in all areas of the county, as well as an online survey. The responses to the consultation are now being collated and considered, prior to any amendments being made to the plan and approval to publish and implement being sought through the democratic process.

Home to school transport – consultation on proposals for children and young people with special educational needs

You will recall that, following public consultation, County Council approved changes to the policy at its meeting on 16 May 2018. The changes, to be implemented from September 2018, were:

- to continue to provide transport assistance for post-16-18 SEND students but subject to payment of a £490 flat rate annual contribution (with 50% reduction for lower income families), bringing them into line with charges for mainstream pupils. These charges are regardless of actual cost of transport and distance travelled.
- young people aged 19 years and over to be assessed using the adult social care assessment process. This will identify if the young person has means to support transport to education. Where alternatives are not available the Council will continue to provide support where necessary. This will ensure equity with other users of transport within the adult social care system.
- to introduce the option of an enhanced mileage allowance for families for statutory aged children (mainstream and SEND) if the parent/carers wishes to transport their child to school themselves. This is a voluntary agreement with parents/carers and is designed to increase transport options

A further 30 day consultation on an enhanced mileage rate for parents and the formula to be used to calculate this allowance was requested to allow families the opportunity to explore how this rate would benefit them. The final decision has been delegated to the Director of Children and Young People Services and The Executive. This consultation is now live and will finish on 22 July.

Implementation of the post 16 and post 19 changes has started, with correspondence sent to parents/carers of all year 11 and above pupils currently in Home to School Transport.

School Organisation

Burnt Yates (CE) Primary School was subject to a Directed Academy Order following an Ofsted inspection in December 2016 which judged the school to be 'Inadequate'. In March 2018 the Executive approved the publication of statutory proposals to close the School. This followed careful consideration of the responses to public consultation carried out by the Children and Young People's Service. The statutory proposals were published on 22 March 2018, giving four weeks for representations to be made. Following publication no responses were received by the end of the notice period of 19 April 2018. The Executive Member for Education and Skills determined the matter on 22 May 2018 and the school will close on 31 August 2018.

The Governing Body of Oatlands Infant School, Harrogate, have recently consulted on a proposal that the school change its age range to become a Primary school. The School is an academy as part of the Red Kite Learning Trust and as such the Regional Schools Commissioner is the decision maker on the matter. The Children and Young People's Service responded to the consultation on 27 April 2018. Twenty one per cent of schools in North Yorkshire have now converted to academy status (with 43% of secondary schools now academies) compared to a national picture of 35% of schools which are academies (72% secondary schools).

North Yorkshire Coast Opportunities Area

The North Yorkshire Coast Opportunity Area Programme has invested in a range of projects to date, focussed on improving social mobility in Scarborough, Whitby and Filey. These projects have focused on improving outcomes in early years settings, support for reading skills in secondary schools and attracting high-quality teachers to schools in the area. These projects are in

addition to £820k investment in extra-curricular activities through the Essential Life Skills Fund, which is being run with the Stronger Communities team. Awards to date have already been made: the Stephen Joseph Theatre, North Yorkshire Youth, North Yorkshire Sport, Northstead Community Primary School, Creative Briefs and NYMAZ.

Cllr Patrick Mulligan
Executive Member for Education and Skills