

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

22 JULY 2020

STATEMENT OF EDUCATION & SKILLS PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Covid-19 – impact on schools and early years

Firstly I would like to pay tribute to North Yorkshire's education community including schools, Multi Academy Trusts and early years and childcare settings for their response to the Covid-19 situation. Working with the Local Authority schools and settings have had to overcome many challenges including staffing, creation of 'bubbles', social distancing, welfare of pupils, on-line learning and a constantly changing direction of travel. Most schools have been open for vulnerable children and children of key workers throughout lockdown and, working with the LA, hub arrangements for weekend and school holiday periods were established for these groups. Vulnerable children have remained a priority for all schools throughout this period.

The wider reopening of schools on 1 June, initially limiting class sizes to a maximum of 15 pupils and working in 'bubbles', meant that some schools, because of their physical nature and available staffing, found the position challenging but all have done their best to ensure that as many all eligible pupils as possible are in attendance. At the time of writing my statement some 17,798 pupils (21%) are attending North Yorkshire schools.

We are now working with schools to plan for the full reopening of schools in September and we continue to support headteachers, staff and governors to prepare for the new academic year. Many challenges will need to be addressed including budgetary issues due to Covid 19 spend, the educational achievement gap, capacity and space in school, children's welfare and adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of the children. There are also concerns about the need for young people to catch up specifically in the year groups where there are exams approaching in 2021.

I would also like to praise the many private, voluntary and independent early education and childcare providers who continued to make provision available for as many children as possible under the government guidelines and to do their best for children and families in difficult circumstances. There are concerns about the impact of Covid-19 on the financial sustainability of many providers and we will continue to work with the sector to ensure our providers are still financially viable in the longer term.

Strategic Plan for SEND Education Provision 0-25

The Strategic Plan has been updated to include phase 2. The updated plan was published in June 2020 and can be found here <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/send-specialist-support-and-inclusion>. The updated plan covers:

- Reviewing and developing early years provision for children with SEND
- Commissioning additional targeted mainstream provision to fulfil the aims in the plan
- Continuing to work with the DfE and the appointed trust to develop the special free school in Selby
- Exploring how we can develop provision for children and young people with Autism, and with social, emotional and mental health needs
- Developing a capital programme to support the Strategic plan
- Developing joint working and joint commissioning.

Work has also continued to deliver actions in the plan and the following points give an update:

- The introduction of the new alternative provision model via the PRS is on schedule to be implemented in September 2020.
- Development of the new targeted provision model in mainstream schools is continuing with the focus on the first 9 provisions.
- Phase one of the capital work for Mowbray school (Ripon) will be complete by the end of July and funding has been secured for work in phases 2 and 3.
- The new locality SEND hubs are due to be implemented from September 2020, as is the new medical education service.

There have been very positive developments in respect of the parent/carer forum for North Yorkshire. The forum relaunched and rebranded in June 2020 with a new name – Parent Carer Voice North Yorkshire. The new website is at <https://www.parentcarervoicenuk.org/>. Significant progress has been made in partnership working and co-production between the Council, Parent Carer Voice and health colleagues.

School funding

The local authority has continued with the implementation of the national funding formula and, in 2020-21, every primary and secondary school will have received a minimum £3,750 per pupil and £5,000 per pupil respectively. However, we continue to be concerned about the financial sustainability of small, rural secondary schools in particular and we continue to lobby for recognition of sparsity and rurality to ensure schools in North Yorkshire are funded appropriately. The financial pressures in High Needs and SEND are well documented and we are also concerned about the financial pressure facing some of our special schools. We continue to work proactively with local authority maintained schools to support and challenge them to take action to avoid deficit wherever possible.

The local authority has provided advice and guidance to schools during the Covid-19 pandemic to monitor additional expenditure, claim back eligible costs from central government and to furlough staff, where appropriate. Some additional financial support has also been provided to those Early Years providers who remained open during the 'lockdown' period for the children of keyworkers and vulnerable children. The local authority was, and remains, grateful for their contribution and we continue to work closely with the sector to ensure the local authority remains able to provide help and support, where appropriate.

Schools Capital

The Schools Capital Programme for 2020/21 was approved by Executive on 9 June 2020.

The pandemic has affected the delivery of capital projects to varying degrees dependant on individual circumstances. Due to the practical difficulties presented some projects scheduled for this summer will now take place next year following agreement with the affected schools. However, construction and maintenance will be possible on many school sites in this coming period. Examples of some of our more significant schemes where, despite initial delay, contractors have now been able to commence site works are as follows:

- Hambleton CE Primary School – expansion scheme
- Killinghall CE Primary School – expansion scheme
- Middle Deepdale, Scarborough – new build for relocation and expansion of Overdale CP School

- Sherburn Hungate CP School – expansion scheme

In late June the Government announced that substantial additional investment is to be made in school buildings. A rebuilding programme will start in 2020-21 with the first 50 projects, supported by over £1 billion in funding. It is not clear at this stage whether local authorities will have a role in any bidding or selection process for these projects. In addition £560m is to be allocated for repairs and upgrades to schools and the County Council can expect to receive a share of that based on the usual formulaic distribution based on the condition of our school estate. Further details are expected to be announced as part of the Spending Review.

School organisation changes

The following school organisation decisions were taken by Executive or individual Executive Member on 9 June 2020:

- To approve the closure of Clapham CE VC Primary School on 31 August 2020.
- To approve publication of statutory notices on removal, alterations and establishment of Special Need provisions in Mainstream Schools from 1 September 2020. The representation period is live until 17 July. The Executive will further consider the matter in August 2020.
- To formally confirm the establishment of satellite specialist sixth form provision for Springhead School on the former Graham Lower School site in Scarborough and to confirm an increase in capacity.

North Yorkshire Coast Opportunity Area Programme

The North Yorkshire Coast Opportunity Area Programme is a £6million scheme funded by the Department for Education and focussed on improving social mobility in Scarborough, Whitby and Filey. The programme was able to continue during the COVID 19 outbreak, recruiting more than 20 new teachers to posts using virtual interviewing and gifting hundreds of books to families across Scarborough district in partnership with the National Literacy Trust. The DfE has confirmed additional funding will be provided to the programme to continue until August 2021. This funding will be used to boost projects that show a promising impact in improving outcomes in the early years, improve speech, language and communication skills for children in primary school and support engagement for learning in secondary schools. The programme will also consider whether funding is needed to respond to education and social mobility issues arising from the COVID 19 and the impact it has had on student learning.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR PATRICK MULLIGAN