

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 September 2009

Work Programme Report

1.0 Purpose of Report

This report asks the Committee to:

- a. note the information in this report.
- b. confirm, amend or add to the list of matters shown on the work programme (attached at Annex A).

2.0 Mid Cycle Briefing – 6th August

1. New Look, No Shush! Strategy for our Library and Information Services

This strategy has already been presented to the Safe & Sustainable, Communications and Care & Independence Overview & Scrutiny Committees and due to the busy agenda of the Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee it was agreed to bring this to the Mid Cycle Briefing.

Members welcomed the strategy and during discussions asked if any consideration was being given to library opening hours. They were advised that a Review of Service Delivery is underway, but this is in the early stages of development.

The Chairman commented that the committee would be interested to learn of the outcomes of this review in due course.

As a last comment your Chairman suggested that a visit to the newly opened Catterick Library, by a small group of members, would be a useful opportunity to see for themselves what is being done to welcome and encourage young people and future generations into 21st century libraries. He has requested your Scrutiny Officer to liaise with Library Services to accommodate a mutually convenient time to visit.

2. Harrogate Admissions arrangements

A briefing paper was circulated with the Mid Cycle agenda papers which set out the issues/background, policy implications, the options for alternative admissions arrangements for Harrogate and the proposed consultation process for the revised admission arrangements for 2011/12. (Copy attached at annex B)

On behalf of the Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee two requests were made (i) to have sight of the timetable of events for the Consultation Process in Harrogate (venues/dates etc) and (ii) that the outcome of the Consultation is presented to the Committee.

3. Liaising with Secondary Schools in adjoining LEA's – requested by Cllr Blackie

Cllr Blackie raised the matter of cross border liaisons between primary and secondary schools.

Officers explained that there is information available to help parents decide where their child(ren) should be educated and that all parents receive a copy of the Guide for Parents Admission to Schools and together with a copy of the Common Application form. The Guide advises parents on completing the Common Application form and advises that all schools should be listed in order of preference including any school in a neighbouring local authority.

It is a statutory requirement for NYCC to liaise with the Schools Admission Authority by a certain date to advise them of the names of all parents who have expressed a preference for a particular school. The Admissions Authority replies and confirms whether they can meet that preference.

4. Septembers Agenda – ‘Enjoy & Achieve’

Members agreed that it would be useful to have a balanced picture of achievements by Young People across North Yorkshire to include the position on curriculum developments and a particular focus on young people at risk of under achieving.

5. Post Scrutiny Review update – School Meals Service

A briefing paper was circulated which set out the take up of school meals in both primary and secondary schools. This item will be discussed in more detail at the October Mid Cycle briefing.

3.0 Early Support Programme Users

Following the briefing on Improving the Health and Well-Being of Young Children at the July meeting it was suggested that a small group of Members meet with 3-4 parents to hear their views on Services for young children and their families, and their opinions on how well they were consulted about services which are important to them.

A meeting has been arranged for the 8th September at the Thirsk Children’s Centre and the outcome of this event will be fed back as a verbal report at today’s meeting.

4.0 Work Programme

Next In-depth Scrutiny Review

At the Mid Cycle briefing Members debated the focus of the next scrutiny review and considered the suggestions following the last committee meeting:

- Support for Young carers
- Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- Education and attainment of looked after children and transition arrangements
- Evaluating Extended Schools
- Support for gifted and talented young people

The Chairman referred to the recession triggering a surge in the number of young people aged between 16-24 who are not in education, employment or training and considered that a scrutiny review on Young People NEET in North Yorkshire would be timely.

Reducing the proportion of young people NEET is a key national priority for the DCSF and also a priority for North Yorkshire County Council who have the lead responsibility for reducing the proportion of young people NEET in their area (Local Area Agreement NI 117).

5. Next Meeting of the Committee

The next meeting of the Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee is the 13th November and looks into the priorities under Make a Positive Contribution. Members of the committee may wish to contribute to the agenda on specific priority areas under this next key outcome or indeed, raise any other topic or issue.

4.0 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

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- a. note the information in this report.
- b. confirm, amend or add to the list of matters shown on the work programme (attached at Annex A).

HUGH WILLIAMSON
Head of Scrutiny and Corporate Performance
County Hall, Northallerton

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Date: 2 September 2009
Background Documents: None
Annexes: Annex A - Work Programme
Annex B – Harrogate Admissions Arrangements

**YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WORK PROGRAMME from January 2009 – December 2009**

Every Child Matters Outcomes

1 Be Healthy

2 Stay Safe

3 Enjoy & Achieve

4 Make a positive contribution

5 Economic Well-Being

In-depth Scrutiny Projects

SUBJECT	AIMS/TERMS OF REFERENCE	ACTION/BY WHOM	TIMESCALES
<i>Young People not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)</i>	<i>To review the actions being taken to support Young People into Employment, Education or Training.</i>	<i>To be confirmed</i>	

OVERVIEW REPORTS

SUBJECT	AIMS/TERMS OF REFERENCE	ACTION/BY WHOM	TIMESCALES
Every Child Matters - Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire 2008	North Yorkshire County Council commissioned the Schools Education Unit (SHEU) to collect baseline data about children and young peoples health related behaviour. Baseline data was collected from 4016 primary school pupils and 6527 secondary school students from across North Yorkshire Schools. Members have requested a briefing on the current position regarding the Every Child Matters Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire (HRBQ) survey 2008.	Corporate Director C&YP Service / Quality & Improvement	Jan 09
Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)	CAA is a new approach to assessing the performance of local public services in an area and Members of the Committee requested a briefing on the subject	Scrutiny and Performance Team	Jan 09

**YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WORK PROGRAMME from January 2009 – December 2009**

1 Be Healthy	2 Stay Safe	3 Enjoy & Achieve	4 Make a positive contribution	5 Economic Well-Being
SUBJECT		TERMS OF REFERENCE	ACTION/BY WHOM	TIMESCALES
Stay Safe Priorities: Safeguarding children and young people Reduce Bullying and discrimination and improve access to information Provide safe environments for children and young people Tackle domestic abuse in North Yorkshire Support children and young people on the edge of care Procedures for tracking children notified to the LA as missing from school		Members have requested briefings on the following areas: 1. Integrated Computer System arrangements 2. The outcome of the audit undertaken on Safeguarding arrangements for children and young people in North Yorkshire. 3. Reducing the incidence of bullying and discrimination 4. Tracking missing children	Corporate Director C&YPS Ann McMorris, Local Safeguarding Board Manager Diane McConnell, CYPS Alan Critchlow, CYPS	
Economic Well Being Priorities: Delivering the 14-19 improvements and developing a Commissioning Plan for (16-19 and LDD to 25 years) learners and providers as required by "Raising Expectations" Prepare children and young people for working life Improve access to information, advice and support Managing the transition to adult life Raising aspiration and fulfilling potential Access to education and training Ensure decent, secure, affordable housing Support families to improve economic well-being		Members have requested briefings on the following areas: What is being done to increase the number of training/employment opportunities for 16-19 year olds Reducing NEET figures for all young people Improvements to secure, affordable housing for 16-24 year olds	Corporate Director/Lead Assistant Director CYPS/ Partner Agencies	May 09

**YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WORK PROGRAMME from January 2009 – December 2009**

1 Be Healthy	2 Stay Safe	3 Enjoy & Achieve	4 Make a positive contribution	5 Economic Well-Being
SUBJECT		AIMS/TERMS OF REFERENCE	ACTION/BY WHOM	TIMESCALES
Be Healthy Priorities: Strategy for Learning Difficulties and Disabilities Ensure young people have a healthy weight and active lives Support maternal health and new parents Support and promote positive mental health Improve the sexual health of young people Reducing substance and alcohol misuse		Health promotion/prevention Birth to Primary School focus to include: - Tackling obesity - Integrated working - Early support programmes for children with complex needs - Update on School Nurse Service Commissioning Services – new arrangements following publication of Transforming Community Services document	Corporate Director/Lead Assistant Director CYPS and NYYPCT	21 July 09
Stay Safe: Priority Safeguarding		Members requested that this issue remains as a reoccurring item on their work programme throughout 2009/10 to ensure they receive regular updates. Summary briefing on Lord Laming's Report "The Protection of Children in England" is requested for July meeting	Corporate Director CYPS	21 July 09
Enjoy & Achieve Priorities: Improve achievement Prepare all children to succeed Attend, participate in and enjoy learning Effective support for learners Reduce disadvantage for vulnerable groups Improving the network of services		<i>Raising aspirations</i> <i>Improving access and inclusion for vulnerable groups (support for young carers)</i> <i>Programmes for gifted and talented pupils</i>	Corporate Director/Lead Assistant Director CYPS/ Partner Agencies	Sept 09

**YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WORK PROGRAMME from January 2009 – December 2009**

1 Be Healthy	2 Stay Safe	3 Enjoy & Achieve	4 Make a positive contribution	5 Economic Well-Being	
SUBJECT		AIMS/TERMS OF REFERENCE		ACTION/BY WHOM	TIMESCALES
Make a Positive Contribution Priorities: Contributing to school and community life Increase participation in shaping services Encourage participation in positive activities Encourage participation in sports, art and culture Youth Crime Prevention Strategy Reduce rates of offending and re-offending		<i>Reducing anti social behaviour - outcome of the Scarborough Restorative Justice Pilot.</i> <i>Using the arts and cultural opportunities to improve outcomes for young people</i> <i>Supporting youth participation and involvement</i> <i>Engaging Young people in voluntary community based activities</i>		Corporate Director/Lead Assistant Director CYPS/YOT Manager / NY Police	Nov 09
Stay Safe: Priority Safeguarding		Members requested that this issue remains as a reoccurring item on their work programme throughout 2009/10 to ensure they receive regular updates.		Corporate Director CYPS	2009/10
Building Capacity Priorities: Parenting Strategy Integrated Local Services – Delivery Strategy Tools for Integrated Working					Nov

**YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WORK PROGRAMME from January 2009 – December 2009**

1 Be Healthy	2 Stay Safe	3 Enjoy & Achieve	4 Make a positive contribution	5 Economic Well-Being
SUBJECT		AIMS/TERMS OF REFERENCE	ACTION/BY WHOM	TIMESCALES
Financial Services		Delivering C&YPS VFM plan		Nov
Economic Well Being Priorities: Delivering the 14-19 improvements and developing a Commissioning Plan for (16-19 and LDD to 25 years) learners and providers as required by "Raising Expectations" Prepare children and young people for working life Improve access to information, advice and support Managing the transition to adult life Raising aspiration and fulfilling potential Access to education and training Ensure decent, secure, affordable housing Support families to improve economic well-being		Outcomes following the meeting in May 2009: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress report on Young People not in education, employment and training and the key stage 4 engagement programme Members were keen to follow up on the outcome of the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children & Learning Bill and requested a further briefing when this is available. Briefing on Accommodation for Care Leavers Update on the joint scrutiny review Transport for Young People (14-19 Diplomas) These issues may be progressed through either the Mid Cycle Briefing, full committee or joint working with another Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Corporate Director/Lead Assistant Director CYPS/ Partner Agencies/Employers	2010

Please be aware this is a working document, therefore topics and timeframes could alter

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE
CORPORATE DIRECTOR MEETING WITH EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

24 July 2009

ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS FOR HARROGATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS 2011/12

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To brief Executive Members on a proposed consultation on admission arrangements for Harrogate area community secondary schools for 2011/2012

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1. A number of parents in the Harrogate town area objected to the 2009/10 admissions arrangements operating in the Harrogate town and rural areas which give priority to those in the town area.
- 2.2. The Schools Adjudicator who considered the objection came to the view in May 2009 that the arrangements are unfair but did not require the County Council to change them.
- 2.3. Parents have submitted a further objection to the unchanged 2010/11 arrangements. A decision from the adjudicator is anticipated on this further objection by the end of July 2009.
- 2.4. Although not required by law to change the admission arrangements there is now a clear need to consult widely on future arrangements to ensure the policy is as equitable as possible for all children in the Harrogate area.
- 2.5. It is not possible to undertake a consultation on such a complex issue in time to make any changes to the arrangements for 2010/11. It is therefore proposed to undertake a two-stage consultation on arrangements for 2011/12 commencing in September 2009.
- 2.6. As this is a complex and sensitive policy issue affecting a number of communities the approval to consult is a key decision to be taken by the Executive.

3. ISSUES AND BACKGROUND

- 3.1. In July 2008 a number of parents in the Harrogate town area made an objection to the Schools Adjudicator in respect of the admissions policy which operates in the Harrogate town and rural areas.
- 3.2. The admission arrangements in Harrogate apply to the three Harrogate Community Secondary Schools - Harrogate Grammar School, Harrogate High School and Rossett School. These schools serve the Harrogate Town and Rural areas (see map).
- 3.3. The two other Secondary Schools in Harrogate – St Aidan's CE High School and St John Fisher RC School are Voluntary Aided Schools. The Governing Bodies decide their own admission arrangements and so are not party to the objections to the

Schools Adjudicator. Both VA schools serve a wider area than the Harrogate Town and Rural areas. Their presence is one of a number of factors which makes admissions in Harrogate very complex.

- 3.4. The objections predominantly arose out of concerns by parents in the town area about how places were allocated at Harrogate Grammar School which had around 170 more applicants than it had places. They expressed the view that children in the rural area who have priority for places at all three community secondary schools are given an unfair advantage and that this disadvantages children living very close to oversubscribed Harrogate schools who are effectively denied a place.
- 3.5. The Schools Adjudicator in reaching her determination on 29th September 2008 upheld the parents' objections and determined that the Authority should carry out a full consultation on possible models for allocating places before determining admission arrangements for 2010 "to achieve more equitable arrangements for all applicants, town and rural, for a place at Harrogate Community Schools. The admission arrangements for children transferring in 2009 should stand." She was unable to identify a potentially fairer alternative.
- 3.6. The County Council's legal advisors considered that the Adjudicator had exceeded her powers in making this determination and on the basis of advice from counsel in October 2008 the County Council pursued a judicial review against the Schools Adjudicator's determination which led by agreement to the quashing of the original determination in March 2009.
- 3.7. A fresh determination of this objection was then made by a different Adjudicator which concluded in May 2009 that the policy was unfair. In line with the agreement reached between the County Council and the Schools Adjudicator no further action was ordered in respect of changing admission arrangements for 2009/10, the only year to which the objection applied. There is however the clear expectation inherent in the determination that the County Council will need to make efforts to address the perceived unfairness in the policy in the future.
- 3.8. A further series of objections on the same grounds in relation to the 2010/11 admission arrangements were received on 1 June 2009. A response was provided on 22nd June. The outcome of this further objection is anticipated before the end of July 2009.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. The admission arrangements are set out in full in the 'Guide for Parents' sent to all parents of children transferring to secondary school which states:

"If the number of applications exceeds the Maximum Admission Limit after the admission of children where the school is named in the Statement of Special Education Needs (SEN) the following oversubscription criteria will apply:

- children and young people in public care
- children the Authority believes have special social or medical reasons for admission
- children living in the normal area of the school. Within this criterion children living in the Harrogate Rural area are given priority over children living in the Harrogate Town area."

- 4.2. This latter point is known locally as the “rural passport”. The priority is given to rural children because, without it, children living in the rural area would rarely get a place at the school of their choice because of distance from the town schools. Generally, it has operated satisfactorily for nearly 40 years, with few complaints from parents. However, in 2008/9 there was a change in the way the “rural passport” operates because of a change in the law about the way places are allocated at oversubscribed schools arising out of the Government’s 2007 School Admissions Code.
- 4.3. The changes to the way in which school places are allocated affect all other admission authorities as well as North Yorkshire. Priority can no longer be given “according to the order of the other schools” named by parents on the application form. In effect, we have to treat all the preferences named as equal. Before the new Code, we took first preferences from the rural area, then first preferences from the town, then second preferences from town, then second preference from rural and so on down through the order of choice. Now, under the Code, in applying the North Yorkshire criteria, we have to allocate all preferences expressed by rural parents before those expressed by town parents.
- 4.4. The effect of this was that a small number of additional rural children gained priority over town children. In 2007 63 rural children were allocated places at Harrogate Grammar School. In 2008, the figure was 82. However, the difference of 19 cannot all be attributed to the change caused by the Code. Year group size goes up and down and in 2008 there were 10 more rural children than 2007.
- 4.5. The impact of this on the town parents was to shrink the distance of children living near Harrogate Grammar who were offered a place from 1.02 to 0.78 miles. In 2009, when oversubscription for Harrogate Grammar School was smaller (399 applicants in total compared with 447 in 2008) and the number of Rural area pupils was slightly lower (81 pupils) this increased again to 0.98 miles.
- 4.6. The Schools Adjudicator’s determination upheld the parents’ view that the rural children were afforded an unfair advantage over the town children through the operation of the admissions arrangements.
- 4.7. In dealing with the new objection about the 2010/11 admissions, theoretically the adjudicator could order the County Council to change the 2010/11 arrangements. It would be extremely challenging in practical terms for the County Council to implement such a decision as the County’s 2010/11 admission arrangements were determined in February 2009 and parents are currently completing application forms for September 2010 admission. Changes to the admission arrangements would require changes to the new, not yet fully implemented, electronic admissions system which could take six months or more to adapt. Whilst it is recognised that administrative arrangements are not a significant consideration in connection with a longer term change, they do affect the sound delivery of change for which there is too little notice. That, in turn, can impact adversely on parents and pupils.
- 4.8. It will be necessary to consult with parents on alternative arrangements for 2011/12 and beyond to see if a solution can be identified which does not create equal or greater inequity than the current arrangements are perceived by some to do. This consultation needs to be a two-stage process to ensure that parents have the opportunity to fully consider the alternatives before the arrangements for 2011/12 are determined. This process could not be undertaken in time for the County Council to make changes for 2010/11.

5. OPTIONS FOR ALTERNATIVE ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS FOR HARROGATE

5.1. A considerable amount of work has been undertaken by officers in analysing potentially fair alternatives and their likely impact. It is clear that any change to the current arrangements will increase some children's chances of obtaining a place in their preferred school while reducing the chances of other children. Under all potential options for change the reduced chance of gaining a place in a preferred school would impact within Harrogate Town as well as in the Rural area.

5.2. There are large numbers of alternative methods that could be used each one with various permutations. Officers have considered in some detail around 17 of those which are most likely to be considered fair in relation to the School Admissions Code. They fall broadly into five categories:

- Catchment areas
- Distance to nearest school
- Proportional/quota systems
- Banding by ability
- Random allocation or lottery systems

5.3. Each method has advantages and drawbacks from a parental perspective but different options impact in different ways on different families depending on where they live. Each would impact in a different way on the current pattern of school attendance in Harrogate. All would also need to be considered in the light of how priority will be given for siblings and how tie-break situations will be dealt with.

6. CONSULTATION PROCESS FOR REVISED ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2011/12

6.1. Given the complexity of this issue it is considered that a two stage consultation process will be required to allow a comprehensive consideration of alternatives. This needs to be dovetailed with the statutory consultation on admission arrangements for the whole of North Yorkshire for 2011/12. The timescale for this would be as follows:

Executive members briefing on options	24 July 2009
Executive approval to consult on options	25 August 2009
Stage 1 consultation – Consultation on options	7 September to 2 November 09
Executive approval to consult on proposed admission arrangements for 2011/12	10 November 2009
Consultation on proposed admission arrangements	27 November – 22 January 2010
Admissions Forum consultation	Late January 2010 – date tbc
Executive approval of arrangements	22 January 2010
County Council determination of all admission arrangements for 2010/11	No later than 15 April 2010 – date tbc
Design and implementation of new system	April – September 2010
Publication of admission arrangements	June 2010

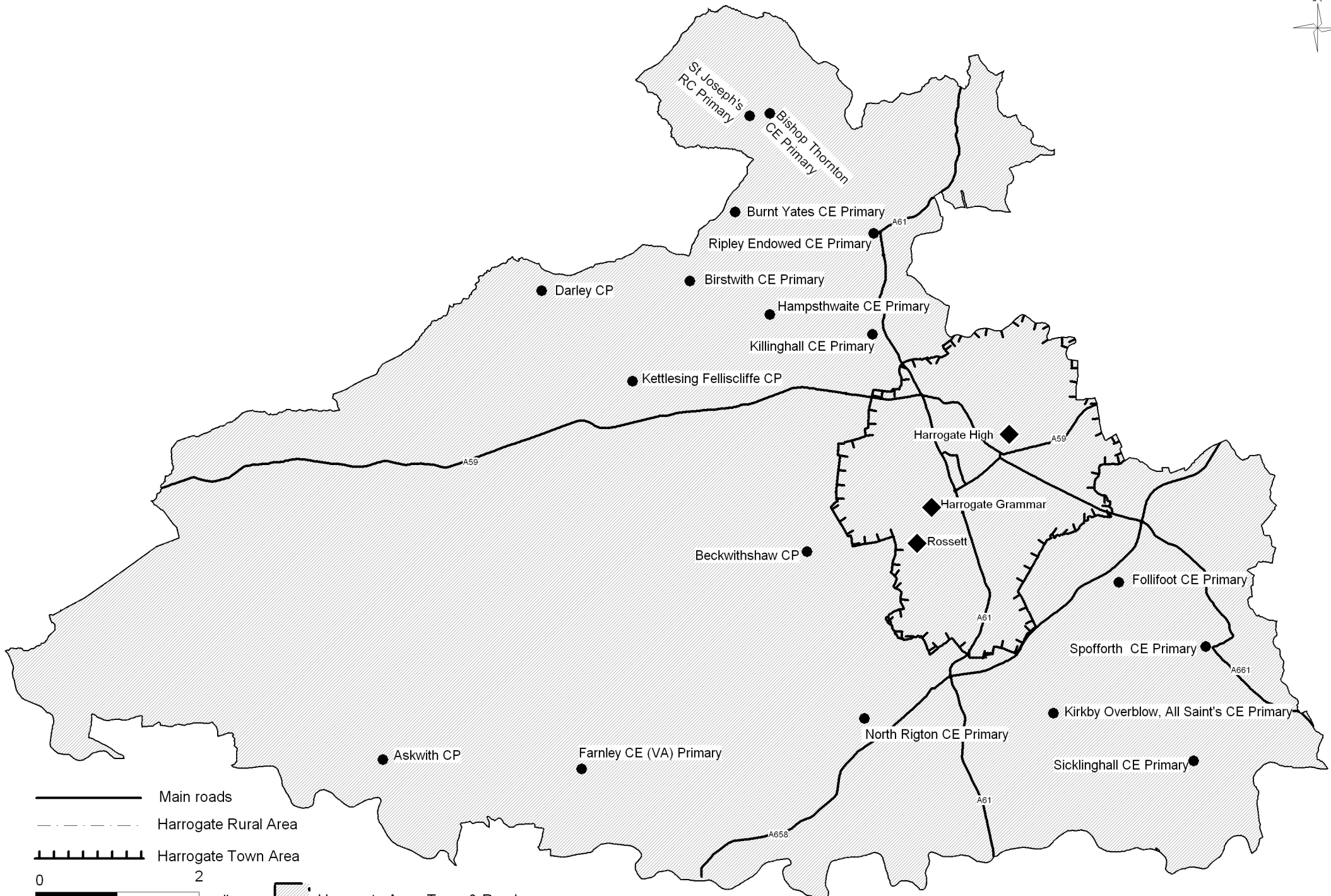
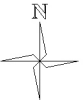
6.2. This timescale, even for implementation in time for the 2011/12 admissions round is very challenging and is dependant on ensuring that consultation periods comply with admissions law and County Council consultation arrangements. The requirement under the School Admissions Code is a minimum of 8 weeks consultation in respect of the proposed arrangements. There is a risk that the necessary changes to the electronic admissions system could compromise this timescale. Implementation is likely to require significant additional in terms of administration and ICT development.

7. RECOMMENDATION

That Executive Members endorse the proposal to seek approval from the Executive on 25th August 2009 to undertake a consultation on admission arrangements for the Harrogate area for 2011/2012.

CYNTHIA WELBOURN
CORPORATE DIRECTOR – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE.

Report prepared by Suzanne Firth, Strategic Planning Manager
13 July 2009



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2. Compilation & Analysis: Nicola Howells, CYPs Strategic Services, NYCC