

# Equality impact assessment (EIA) form: evidencing paying due regard to protected characteristics

(Form updated April 2019)

## Proposal to close Weaverthorpe CE VC Primary School from 31 August 2022

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যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদেরকে বলুন।

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے پوچھئے۔



**Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are public documents. EIAs accompanying reports going to County Councillors for decisions are published with the committee papers on our website and are available in hard copy at the relevant meeting. To help people to find completed EIAs we also publish them in the Equality and Diversity section of our website. This will help people to see for themselves how we have paid due regard in order to meet statutory requirements.**

Name of Directorate and Service Area	CYPS Strategic Planning Team
Lead Officer and contact details	Andrew Dixon, County Hall
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the EIA	Matt George, Strategic Planning Officer
How will you pay due regard? e.g. working group, individual officer	LA Officers and School Governing Body
When did the due regard process start?	Consultation started on 7 January 2022

**Section 1. Please describe briefly what this EIA is about.** (e.g. are you starting a new service, changing how you do something, stopping doing something?)

The proposal is to close Weaverthorpe CE VC Primary School from 31 August 2022. A period of consultation with the community has been carried out, including written consultation and an online public meeting. A statutory representation period will follow.

**Section 2. Why is this being proposed? What are the aims? What does the authority hope to achieve by it?** (e.g. to save money, meet increased demand, do things in a better way.)

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Weaverthorpe CE VC Primary School, in the Ryedale area, was inspected by Ofsted in January 2020 and found to be 'Inadequate'. The inspection report was published by Ofsted in July 2020.

Any maintained school that is judged inadequate by Ofsted is required to become a sponsored academy. The Regional Schools Commissioner has been unable to secure an Academy Trust to sponsor the school due to viability concerns. Where a school would not be viable as an academy, it is expected the local authority will close the school and that the Secretary of State can direct them to do so if necessary.

Formal partnership with another local maintained school was explored as an option to sustain Weaverthorpe School both educationally and financially. Local Authority officers and the Diocese of York (the Church body with responsibility for the school) worked together to discuss the situation with the potential partner schools in the local area during the summer and autumn terms of 2021. None of those discussions resulted in an acceptable partnership proposal for the future of Weaverthorpe School.

It is considered highly unlikely that a partnership arrangement with another local school, such as federation or amalgamation, can now be identified. The school is in a vulnerable position for multiple reasons, not least because the temporary leadership arrangements cannot continue beyond the end of the current academic year. The interim executive board of Weaverthorpe CE VC Primary School decided, with regret, that in line with the advice of local authority officers they would ask the County Council to consider a consultation on the future of the School.

#### **Section 3. What will change? What will be different for customers and/or staff?**

If this proposal went ahead, Weaverthorpe CE VC Primary School would close with effect from 31 August 2022. It is proposed that the catchment area of Luttons Community Primary School is expanded to include the current Weaverthorpe School catchment area. There is an area of Weaverthorpe's catchment area that is currently shared with Hertford Vale CE Primary School and it is proposed that area (Butterwick) remains part of Hertford Vale's catchment area.

#### **Section 4. Involvement and consultation (What involvement and consultation has been done regarding the proposal and what are the results? What consultation will be needed and how will it be done?)**

The consultation period ran from 7 January 2022 to 18 February 2022. Consultation documents were distributed to a wide range of stakeholders, and two online public engagement meetings were held. The consultation document, responses, and notes of the public meetings are included in the report to the Executive on 22 March.

#### **Section 5. What impact will this proposal have on council budgets? Will it be cost neutral, have increased cost or reduce costs?**

Please explain briefly why this will be the result.

Should the amalgamation go ahead from 31 August 2022, any deficit on the Weaverthorpe CE School budget on that date would be absorbed by the County Council.

If the school closed, there could be a potential additional cost to the Local Authority in providing transport to other schools. Free home to school transport would be provided for entitled pupils

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in accordance with the revised catchment area arrangements in accordance with the County Council's Home to School transport policy and as set out in the report to Executive on 22 March 2022.

<b>Section 6. How will this proposal affect people with protected characteristics?</b>	<b>No impact</b>	<b>Make things better</b>	<b>Make things worse</b>	<b>Why will it have this effect? Provide evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.</b>
Age		x	x	<p>Currently there are only 21 pupils on roll and six of those are currently in Year 6 and will leave in summer 2022 to transition to secondary provision. If the decision is taken to close the school this adversely affects the current cohort.</p> <p>Moving to an alternative school will increase the opportunities for pupils to work and play with children their own age.</p>
Disability	x			<p>Pupils – The school is mainstream offering universal provision.</p> <p>Expertise will be utilised from the County Council to provide appropriate SEN support.</p> <p>Staff – As an organisation NYCC will continue to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 which obligates us to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate disabled individuals as employees or service users.</p>
Sex	x			No impact is anticipated.
Race	x			No impact is anticipated.
Gender reassignment	x			No impact is anticipated.
Sexual orientation	x			No impact is anticipated.
Religion or belief			x	If the decision is taken to close the School, this will adversely impact upon those pupils who wish to be educated in a Church of England School. Parents can apply to another CE school and the local authority will do its best to comply with their preference through the co-ordinated preference exercise.
Pregnancy or maternity	x			No impact is anticipated.
Marriage or civil partnership	x			No impact is anticipated.

<b>Section 7. How will this proposal affect people who...</b>	<b>No impact</b>	<b>Make things better</b>	<b>Make things worse</b>	<b>Why will it have this effect? Provide evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.</b>
..live in a rural area?			x	<p>This proposal would have an adverse impact for those living within its catchment that attend the school as they would have to travel to alternative schools.</p> <p>The nearest school to Weaverthorpe, 2.5 miles from Weaverthorpe CE VC Primary School, is Luttons Community Primary School, which has places available in all year groups. This school has the capacity to take any additional pupils as a result of the proposed closure, and has indicated a willingness to do so.</p> <p>Free home to school transport would be provided for entitled pupils within the enlarged catchment area in accordance with the County Council's Home to School Transport policy. The County Council's Home to School transport policy sets out that free school transport will be provided to the catchment school or nearest school to a child's home address if it is over the statutory walking distances set out by law.</p> <p>The County Council is minded to apply discretion as allowed under the Home to School Transport policy in the circumstances of a school closure as set out in the report to Executive on 22 March 2022 and arrangements for home to school transport will be confirmed at the end of the statutory process following consultation.</p>
...have a low income?	x			There may be adverse impact on those families with low incomes by the proposed closure of the school. However, this would be mitigated by the LA provided transport assistance, in line with the Transport Policy.
...are carers (unpaid family or friend)?	x			No impact is anticipated.

**Section 8. Geographic impact – Please detail where the impact will be (please tick all that apply)**

North Yorkshire wide	
Craven district	

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Hambleton district	
Harrogate district	
Richmondshire district	
Ryedale district	x
Scarborough district	
Selby district	
<b>If you have ticked one or more districts, will specific town(s)/village(s) be particularly impacted? If so, please specify below.</b>	
Weaverthorpe and Butterwick	

**Section 9. Will the proposal affect anyone more because of a combination of protected characteristics? (e.g. older women or young gay men) State what you think the effect may be and why, providing evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.**

All pupils and staff at the school would experience changes under these proposals that staff and governors would need to manage sensitively.

The County Council's Officers now feel that this decision is in the best interests of children and families served by the school.

Local authority officers have undertaken a managed and co-ordinated process for the allocation of alternative school places for September 2022, and for those allocations to be implemented in the event that the School does proceed to closure through the statutory process.

County Council is minded to apply discretion as allowed under the Home to School Transport policy in the circumstances of a school closure as set out in the report to Executive on 22 March 2022 and arrangements for home to school transport will be confirmed at the end of the statutory process following consultation.

<b>Section 10. Next steps to address the anticipated impact. Select one of the following options and explain why this has been chosen. (Remember: we have an anticipatory duty to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled people can access services and work for us)</b>	<b>Tick option chosen</b>
<b>1. No adverse impact - no major change needed to the proposal.</b> There is no potential for discrimination or adverse impact identified.	
<b>2. Adverse impact - adjust the proposal</b> - The EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. We will change our proposal to reduce or remove these adverse impacts, or we will achieve our aim in another way which will not make things worse for people.	
<b>3. Adverse impact - continue the proposal</b> - The EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. We cannot change our proposal to reduce or remove these adverse impacts, nor can we achieve our aim in another way which will not make things worse for people. (There must be compelling reasons for continuing with proposals which will have the most adverse impacts. Get advice from Legal Services)	<b>x</b>

**4. Actual or potential unlawful discrimination - stop and remove the proposal**

– The EIA identifies actual or potential unlawful discrimination. It must be stopped.

Explanation of why option has been chosen. (Include any advice given by Legal Services.)

Weaverthorpe is designated as a rural school under the Designation of Rural Primary Schools (England) Order. The School Organisation regulations and guidance contain a presumption against closure of rural schools, and it is a requirement that proposers must consider the effect of the discontinuance of any rural primary school on the local community. The statutory guidance specifically states that 'This does not mean that a rural school will never close, but the case for closure should be strong and a proposal must be clearly in the best interests of educational provision in the area.' Careful consideration to alternatives to closure of the school, including transport implications and the impact on local people and the wider community has been given. A detailed analysis of these issues is contained in the Statutory Proposals and the report to Executive. It is concluded that the case for closure is strong and in the best interests of educational provision in the area.

**Section 11. If the proposal is to be implemented how will you find out how it is really affecting people? (How will you monitor and review the changes?)**

Monitoring of standards will be carried out through the County Council's Education & Skills Team and through Ofsted inspections. Monitoring of sufficiency of school places in the area will be undertaken by the CYPS Strategic Planning Team.

**Section 12. Action plan.** List any actions you need to take which have been identified in this EIA, including post implementation review to find out how the outcomes have been achieved in practice and what impacts there have actually been on people with protected characteristics.

Action	Lead	By when	Progress	Monitoring arrangements
Not applicable				

**Section 13. Summary** Summarise the findings of your EIA, including impacts, recommendation in relation to addressing impacts, including any legal advice, and next steps. This summary should be used as part of the report to the decision maker.

The purpose of the consultation and proposed decision is to ensure that the children are provided with the best education provision in the area in a sustainable, stable and effective manner. In order to achieve these aims the proposal to close Weaverthorpe School needs to be considered. Whilst it is recognised that there may be adverse impact upon those with protected characteristics of age and religion/belief, there are more positive impacts that will result if these proposals are implemented. As these proposals develop any adverse impacts will be carefully monitored, and all reasonable mitigations will be taken.

**Section 14. Sign off section**

This full EIA was completed by:

Name: M George  
Job title: Strategic Planning Officer  
Directorate: CYPS  
Completion date: 22/2/22

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Authorised by relevant Assistant Director (signature): A Newbold  
Date: 3 March 2022