

School organisation proposals to remove residential provision, to change from single sex to co-educational provision, and to increase the number of day places at Brompton Hall School

School and Local Authority details

Proposals published by North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall, Northallerton, DL7 8AD, to make significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to Brompton Hall Community Special School, High Street, Brompton-by-Sawdon, Scarborough, North Yorkshire, YO13 9DB.

Description of alterations and evidence of demand

Proposals by North Yorkshire County Council to:

- 1) Remove residential (boarding) provision at Brompton Hall School from 1 September 2024, with no new residential placements made from September 2023.
- 2) Change from single-sex (boys) to co-educational provision at Brompton Hall School from 1 September 2023.
- 3) Phased increase in the number of day places at Brompton Hall School from 67 to up to 85 from 1 September 2023.

These three proposals are linked and will only be implemented subject to all the proposals being approved.

As part of the statutory responsibilities of the Local Authority to keep its special educational provision under review, and to ensure that the needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are suitably met, a review of residential provision at Brompton Hall School has been undertaken.

Brompton Hall is one of two maintained special schools in North Yorkshire that offer 4 night per week residential provision. It provides day, extended day and residential provision for children and young people aged 8 – 16 years with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. The school's current designation is as a single sex, boys' school.

Between 2018 and 2021 there has seen a steady decline in demand for residential placements, from 38 to 29. The forecast for the next 3 years, with placements based on assessed care and educational needs, indicates a sharp decrease which will have significant implications for the viability of the school budget.

The falling demand for the residential offer at Brompton Hall School is highly likely to continue. Demand in the East of the county for Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) special school provision is continually outstripping supply. There is an inequity in the offer that currently exists in the East of the county where there is no specialist provision for girls with SEMH.

Objectives (including how the proposal would increase educational standards and parental choice)

Ceasing the residential offer at Brompton Hall School will improve SEND services as:

- More young people with SEMH needs grow up in a family environment.
- More young people with SEMH needs will be able to access day and extended day places at a school close to their families and communities.
- The viability of the school will be improved.
- Girls will have a local special school offer which does not currently exist.

Changing the designation of Brompton Hall School from single sex, boys, to co-educational will improve SEND services for people as:

- There will be a maintained local offer for day and extended day placements for girls and those who identify as non-binary with SEMH needs in the Scarborough, Whitby, Ryedale area.

In June 2021 the school was subject to an Ofsted inspection as a result of which the school was rated as 'Inadequate' in all areas. The school currently has an acting Headteacher and an Interim Executive Board has been established to provide governance. The local authority has been working closely with the school to address the various concerns highlighted. Under the direction of the Regional Schools Commissioner the school has been instructed to convert to an Academy and Venn Multi Academy Trust have been identified as the preferred trust to run the school in future.

Moving forward it is essential to the improvement of the school under the direction of an Academy Trust or otherwise that the local authority's commissioning intentions are clear so they are able to rapidly improve standards and contribute to meeting the growing need of children with SEMH needs requiring specialist placements.

The local authority has a duty to ensure that assessed care needs of children are met and whilst the Brompton Hall offer provides one option for such the local authority will always preference the provision of such care in a family based setting wherever possible and appropriate.

The effect on other educational institutions within the area

There is not expected to be any effect on other schools, academies and educational institutions.

Project costs and indication of how these will be met, including how long-term value for money will be achieved

In constructing the financial analysis, it has been assumed that;-

- no new residential placements are made at Brompton hall from September 2022 onwards - and that all residential provision is discontinued with effect from September 2024

Appendix 6: Draft Statutory Proposals

- all pupils who would otherwise have been admitted into residential provision will access extended day provision (in the same percentages and funding rates as applicable to the rest of the school population)
- no other placement costs are incurred as a result of the discontinuation of residential provision

The financial analysis at this point has not considered potential severance costs incurred as a result of the proposed changes, and it has not taken into account the potential capital spend that will need to be incurred to convert spaces to facilitate an increase in the day capacity at the school. However, high level assessments are being undertaken to ascertain any potential works that may be needed.

An assumption has been made that, in the future, pupils who would otherwise have been in residential provision will require transport to school on a daily basis, and costed on the basis of average journey distance of 15 miles, two pupils per route and an average cost of £5 per mile. The costs necessarily require some speculation because we are assessing the needs of pupils not yet known to the local authority (i.e. future cases where pupils attend on a day basis rather than are allocated residential placements)

Applying these assumptions generates a reduction in spend of approximately £408k in a full financial year (2025/26) to the high needs budget or £237k to the overall local authority resources when the additional transport costs are taken into account.

Brompton Hall School ended the financial year 21/22 with a positive balance of £350k, but the position had deteriorated to a deficit balance of £102k by the end of the 22/23 financial year. The school has recently reviewed and submitted a revised five year financial plan predicated upon the changes to residential provision taking effect and residential provision discontinuing from summer 2023, and that proposed change being is accompanied by expansion of day placements to approximately 85 over a three year period. The resultant budget projections are that the school will have a cumulative negative balance of £218k by the end of the 2026/27 financial year. However, efficiency review work undertaken in Autumn 2021 identified a number of significant further opportunities – which have not been incorporated into the budget at this juncture, with the school potentially converting to academy status in the near future. This has led the local authority to conclude that the school can both have a sustainable budget position and not be adversely impacted by the changes proposed to residential provision.

The particular challenge relating to Brompton Hall will be the risk of the residential provision not being viable during the 2 year transitional period - because the school is unable to safely reduce staffing levels directly in proportion to the planned reductions in the number of residential placements. Any proposed changes to residential funding to support the school through this period would need to be ratified by North Yorkshire School's Forum.

Implementation plan

Appendix 6: Draft Statutory Proposals

Residential placements for those pupils who currently have one will continue until September 2024. This will enable the majority of young people to naturally reach the end of their time at the school in year 11 and move on. The County Council's services and the school will work together to ensure that the most appropriate support is put in place for young people to transition to new arrangements based on their individual circumstances.

Consultation

The County Council consulted under the Children and Families Act 2014 from 7 February to 25 March 2022 on proposals to change special educational provision at Brompton Hall School. This first consultation included stakeholder events for parents and professionals. The responses made were set out in the report to the Executive on 21 June 2022.

The County Council consulted specifically on the school organisation proposals from 29 June to 8 September 2022. A copy of the consultation paper is attached as Appendix 1. A list of the consultees is attached as Appendix 2. Two online public consultation meetings were held and notes of these meetings are attached as Appendix 3. The consultation responses received are attached as Appendix 4.

Related proposals

This proposal is not related to any other proposals

Procedure for making responses (support, objections and comments)

Within four weeks from the date of publication of this proposal, any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to Corporate Director-Children and Young People's Service, North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall, Northallerton, DL7 8AE, or emailing schoolorganisation@northyorks.gov.uk by 5pm on 27 October 2022.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - consultation paper

Appendix 2 - list of consultees

Appendix 3 - consultation responses

Appendix 4 - notes of public consultation meetings