

North Yorkshire County Council
Scarborough & Whitby Area Constituency Committee

15 March 2023

Receipt of Petition ‘Save Eskdale School’

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To advise of a petition containing more than 500 signatures.
- 1.2 To ask the Area Constituency Committee to consider a response.

2.0 The Petition

- 2.1 A petition has been received by the County Council. This is a paper-based petition with 2,468 signatures, all of which are of people who live, work or study in the county.
- 2.2 The wording of the petition is ‘Save Eskdale School’ with no covering letter providing any further context.

3.0 The County Council’s Arrangements for Receiving and Responding to Petitions

3.1 The key features of the County Council’s arrangements for receiving and debating petitions, as published on the County Council’s website, are as follows:

- Receipt of the petition is published on the County Council’s website (which has been done in the case of this petition).
- If a petition contains 500 or more signatures (but less than 30,130 signatories), it will be scheduled for debate at the next meeting of the appropriate Area Constituency Committee.
- The petition organiser is offered the opportunity to speak for five minutes at the Area Constituency Committee meeting to present his/her petition. Subsequently, at the meeting, the petition will be discussed by County Councillors for a maximum of 15 minutes and a decision will be made on how to respond to the petition.
- Possible responses by the County Council to petitions, as shown on the website, are:
 - (a) to take the action requested by the petition.
 - (b) not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate.
 - (c) to commission further investigation into the matter, for example by a relevant committee; or
 - (d) where the issue is one on which the county council executive is required to make the final decision, the county council will decide whether to make recommendations to inform that decision.
- The petition organiser will receive written confirmation of this decision. This confirmation will also be published on the website.

3.2 In accordance with the arrangements described above, the petition organisers have been invited to join today’s meeting to present their petition.

4.0 Children & Young People’s Service Officers’ Feedback Regarding the Petition

- 4.1 The Whitby Secondary Partnership was formed in July 2019, bringing together the governing bodies of the two secondary schools in the town, Caedmon College Whitby and Eskdale School, to form a single Governing Board responsible for both schools. Eskdale School is an 11-16 school and Caedmon College Whitby is an 11-18 school. The Whitby Sixth Form, although technically part of Caedmon College Whitby, serves both schools. An Executive Headteacher is responsible for both schools and works with two Heads of School and two Senior Leadership Teams.
- 4.2 Eskdale School operates from a single site on the east side of Whitby. Caedmon College Whitby’s 11-16 provision mainly operates from the Normanby Site (formerly Whitby Community College) and the Whitby Sixth Form is based on the Scoresby Site (formerly Caedmon School), both on the west side of the town.
- 4.3 In December 2022, the Governing Board of the Whitby Secondary Partnership decided to ask North Yorkshire County Council to commence a consultation process on their proposal to amend the structure of the Whitby Secondary Partnership. Their initial proposal was that Caedmon College Whitby and Eskdale School amalgamate from 1 September 2023, however following further consideration, the Governing Board requested that NYCC consult on the amalgamation taking place from 1 September 2024.
- 4.4 The Governing Board set out three linked factors as the reasons for their proposal to amalgamate Caedmon College Whitby and Eskdale School: low pupil numbers, significant financial challenges at both schools and an imperative to give the best education and curriculum to the young people of Whitby. More details about these are set out in the report to the Executive Member for Education, Learning and Skills of 7 February 2023 (Appendix A).
- 4.5 On 7 February 2023, the Executive Member for Education, Learning and Skills considered the request from the Governing Board of the Whitby Secondary Partnership, and Local Authority officers’ initial analysis of the Governing Board’s proposal (Appendix A) and approved public consultation on the proposal to amalgamate Caedmon College Whitby and Eskdale School.
- 4.6 This report outlines the public consultation process, which runs from 20 February to 31 March. The Council’s Executive will review the responses to the consultation on 18 April and decide whether or not to proceed with the proposal by publishing statutory proposals and notices. These notices would provide a further four weeks for representations to be made, by 25 May 2023. A final decision would then be scheduled to be taken by the Council’s Executive on 20 June 2023. If agreed, the schools would amalgamate from 1 September 2024.
- 4.7 Consultation Process
On 7 February 2023, the Executive Member for Education, Learning and Skills considered the request from the Governing Board of the Whitby Secondary Partnership, and approved consultation to amalgamate Caedmon College Whitby and Eskdale School. The consultation began after the half-term break on 20 February and will end on 31 March 2023.
- 4.8 During this six-week consultation period, a consultation document (Appendix B) is available on the County Council’s website at <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/current-consultations> and consultees (Appendix C) have been notified. Consultees will be able to submit comments on the proposal, and these will be presented in a report to the Executive on 18 April 2023 for consideration by the decision makers.
- 4.9 Frequently Asked Questions are being compiled based on queries that are being raised regularly in the consultation responses and are available on the Whitby Secondary

Partnership website at http://www.whitbysecondarypartnership.org/?page_id=256#page-content where there is also a vision for the newly amalgamated school - A Quality First Education for Whitby, produced by the Partnership.

4.10 Two public meetings have taken place at Whitby Pavilion on Wednesday 8 March at 12.30 pm and 6.30 pm, attended by 65 and 172 people respectively. Notes of these meetings will be included in the report to Executive on 18 April.

4.11 Next Steps

The consultation period will end on 31 March 2023 and then on 18 April the Council's Executive will consider a report that will include all the comments submitted during the consultation period. The decision for the Executive will be whether or not to approve the publication of Statutory Proposals, which would set out the proposal in a formal sense and notify the public of the intention to amalgamate the schools through the proposed technical closure of Eskdale School and the Eskdale site, and an increase in the planned admission number of Caedmon College Whitby as the amalgamated school.

4.12 If approved the Statutory Proposals would be published on 27 April 2023 and a further period of four weeks would be observed where stakeholders would once again have an opportunity to comment on the proposal before a final decision was taken by the Executive on 20 June 2023. If this decision were to approve the proposal, then Eskdale School would technically close on 31 August 2024 and the newly named amalgamated school would begin to operate from 1 September 2024.

5.0 Recommendations

5.1 That the Committee notes the petition and considers a response.

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Background Document: North Yorkshire County Council's petitions information and advice, a copy of which is on the County Council's website at <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/petitions-information-and-advice>

Appendices:

Appendix A: Report of Corporate Director Meeting with Executive Member for Education, Learning and Skills, 7 February 2023

Appendix B: Consultation document

Appendix C: List of consultees