

**Notes of Public Consultation Meeting concerning Caedmon College and Eskdale School.**

**Meeting held on 8 March 2023** at 6.30pm at Whitby Pavilion, West Cliff, Whitby

**Present:** Christina Zanelli (Co-Chair of Governors, Whitby Secondary Partnership (WSP)); Su Crossland (Co-Chair of Governors, WSP), Mark Taylor (Vice Chair of Governors, WSP); Jamie Henshaw (Executive Headteacher, WSP) County Cllr Annabel Wilkinson (Executive Member for Education and Skills, NYCC); Stuart Carlton (Corporate Director, Children and Young Peoples Service, NYCC); Howard Emmett (Assistant Director, Strategic Resources, NYCC); ,Amanda Newbold (Assistant Director, Education, Learning and Skills, NYCC), John Lee (Strategic Planning Officer, NYCC); pupils, parents, residents and other interested parties.

**Apologies:** None

172 people were present.

**AGENDA**

6:30	Meeting Opens – Brief welcome	Assistant Director, Education and Skills, NYCC
6:30	Opening Remarks	Executive Member for Education, Learning and Skills, NYCC
6:35	A Presentation on the Whitby Secondary Partnership on; <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Proposal</li><li>• Background to the proposal</li><li>• How can people comment</li></ul>	Co-Chairs of Governors Whitby Secondary Partnership (WSP), Executive Headteacher, WSP, Local Authority Officer
6:50	Questions and Answers	Executive Member for Education Learning and Skills
	Closing Remarks	
8:30	Meeting Closes	

**1. Welcome**

Amanda Newbold, the Assistant Director, Education and Skills, NYCC, opened the public meeting at 6.30 pm and she welcomed those present.

**2. Executive Member’s Opening Remarks**

Cllr Annabel Wilkinson, introduced herself as the Executive Member for Education, Learning and Skills at NYCC.

Cllr Wilkinson outlined the agenda, saying that the Co-Chairs and the Executive Headteacher of the Whitby Secondary Partnership would make a slide presentation on the proposal. She said there would be an opportunity to hear people’s views in the question and answer session following their presentation.

**3. Presentation from the Whitby Secondary Partnership.**

## Appendix 4B Notes of the 18:30 public consultation meeting

The Whitby Secondary Partnership presented several Powerpoint slides, which included explaining the proposal and the proposal's background. Other slides covered pupil numbers and financial issues, while final slides covered consultation timescale and details on how to respond to the consultation.

The proposal to amalgamate Caedmon College Whitby and Eskdale School was outlined. It was explained that this proposal would result in the technical closure of Eskdale School and Eskdale site and an increase in the planned admission number for Caedmon College.

The slides explained how the background to the amalgamation proposal has three parts, the falling roll, the financial position and ambitions for a more comprehensive curricula choice and the best education for children in Whitby.

Su Crossland, the WSP Co-Chair of Governors, spoke about the formation of the Whitby Secondary Partnership, which brought together the previous bodies of the two schools under a single federated governing body and an executive headteacher responsible for both schools.

Ms Crossland outlined the capacities in the two schools and that there were over 40% surplus places between them. She then presented slides which showed that this surplus was the result of the decline in pupil numbers in both schools over time and explained how the lack of a critical mass impacted their finances.

Christina Zanelli, WSP Co-Chair of Governors, then spoke about finance. She presented a slide outlining the current and forecast financial position of Eskdale and another slide on the financial forecasts of Caedmon. These predicted increased deficits.

Ms Zanelli said both schools had received Notices of Financial Concern, which restricted their ability to provide an ambitious curriculum. A third slide presented by Ms Zanelli showed the improved forecast position of the amalgamated school.

The Executive Headteacher of the Whitby Secondary Partnership, Jamie Henshaw, then spoke about the vision of the amalgamated school. The vision covered three aspects: Standards; Pastoral and Inclusion; and Curriculum Improvement.

Mr Henshaw said the vision included a seven-year curriculum road map that is a blend of both academic and vocational choices. He said that in the vision there is a direct pathway between KS4 and KS5 and that a curriculum will be provided that is highly engaging. There would be a dedicated pastoral team and inclusion will see teams work together in an inclusion hub.

Mark Taylor, the Vice Chair of Governors of WSP, then presented slides on staff, school sites and on admissions. He explained that if the schools amalgamated, governors would undertake a detailed review of staff structures and create a new staffing model to fit the needs of a newly enlarged, amalgamated school.

Mr Taylor spoke about the school sites and explained that the Normanby site had been chosen because it is the only one of the three sites which offers an opportunity to accommodate all 11-16 pupils on one site. He further explained that the Scoresby site currently operates as the Sixth Form College and its facilities have been adapted specifically for that purpose.

Finally, Mr Taylor spoke about proposed changes to the admission arrangements. The proposal would include an increase in the Published Admissions Number (PAN) for the amalgamated school. He explained that the current PAN of Eskdale is 110 and for Caedmon is 184. It is proposed to increase the PAN to 240 in the newly amalgamated school.

Mr John Lee, a Strategic Planning Officer, NYCC, then outlined the consultation's timescales and he emphasised that a two-stage consultation process would take place before any decisions on the proposals are taken. All views expressed at this public meeting would form part of the report which is considered when the decision on whether to proceed to the second statutory consultation is taken. The statutory consultation would be a further 4-week period when there would be a further opportunity for comments and responses.

Mr Lee then handed over to Cllr Wilkinson, who chaired the question and answer session.

#### **4. Questions and Answers – chaired by Cllr Annabel Wilkinson.**

Cllr Annabel Wilkinson, the Executive Member for Education, Learning and Skills, invited questions from those present.

A parent asked what guarantees could be given that standards will go up if the proposal goes ahead. She added that her son had selected GCSE PE and that getting rid of the site with the 3G football pitch would not help him improve in this subject. She also thought that the Caedmon site had limited sports facilities. She said that her son would not get the education he deserves and concluded by adding that some staff had left due a member of staff.

Jamie Henshaw, the Executive Headteacher of the Whitby Secondary Partnership, responded by saying that his Year 10 and Year 11 staff are dedicated to helping the pupils achieve the exam grades that they deserve.

Mr Henshaw added that, if the proposal to amalgamate the two schools is agreed, the current Year 10 and Y11 will still finish their GCSEs on the existing school sites.

Mr Henshaw agreed that the 3G pitch is a fantastic facility and said they would look at the possibilities if they could continue to be able to use it.

Cllr Wilkinson said that under the Local Government Reorganisation, with one authority, North Yorkshire Council will have responsibility for Leisure facilities, and this should help with any decisions on potential future use of the 3G pitch.

A Year 11 student said that they would be leaving school soon and asked why their year had been failed and why the proposal had not been arranged much earlier.

Ms Zanelli responded that the proposal was previously considered in 2016. She added that the proposal was not about thinking that Eskdale School was not good enough. It is rather that the federation has not had the resources that the staff would want, but it is doing the best it can.

A parent said that the proposal spoke about saving money and challenged the cost of senior leadership across the two schools. They said that they had a child at school with ADHD and asked what account had been taken of the Equality Act and of the Disability Act. They asked whether an Impact Assessment had been made of the impact on a Special Education Needs Child of attending one large school.

Mr Henshaw replied that the amalgamated school would have a Special Education Needs Hub. That it will have, as part of that Hub, Targeted Mainstream Provision (TMP). There would be a TMP leader. He said that pupils' education, health, and care plans would have access to the Hub and access to the mainstream school.

The parent responded that the child has sensory needs that could not be catered for in a larger school. She said that parents will choose other smaller schools.

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Mr Henshaw responded that the TMP will include a sensory room.

John Lee, Strategic Planning Officer, responded by outlining the purpose and remit of an Equality Impact Assessment and said that one is being completed and will be published as part of the report on the consultation.

A resident, and Press reporter, said that, in business, when concern has been expressed about finance the management is looked at. He asked for a vote of no confidence in the board.

A parent said that they were concerned about road safety around the Normanby school site. They asked whether Highways were proposing to improve road safety as part of the proposal.

Mr Lee responded that no additional bus services were envisaged in the proposed amalgamation; that parents would make their own decisions on transporting their children but that sustainable travel plans were encouraged.

A parent said that a staff restructure was proposed. They were concerned that this restructure would focus on reducing the number of class teachers, while not reducing what they perceived to be top heavy management.

They also challenged the financial forecast as short-sighted, in that it only forecast 3 years ahead, whereas they believed that it should be five years.

Ms Zanelli responded that 3 years is normal to ensure the school is financially viable.

A pupil asked whether the proposed amalgamation would increase the likelihood of bullying occurring.

Mr Henshaw responded that the schools would work hard on transition procedures. He added that, if the proposal is approved, the stronger financial position would enable an improved and dedicated pastoral system to be implemented. The amalgamated school's behaviour system would also be made clear.

A former pupil at Eskdale explained how they had started work in Cleveland Potash in 1978. At that time, he said, Cleveland Potash had only a few staff. But it grew and brought workers and their families to the area. Similarly, he believed that, with the new investment, the new Potash workers will buy houses in Whitby. He forecast a high number of workers moving to Whitby in the coming years and he said their families would all need school places.

A pupil asked about dining and whether pupils would go hungry in the amalgamated school. They said that there were already waiting some time for lunch and were worried some pupils would get no food at all in the amalgamated school if catering arrangements did not improve.

Mr Henshaw responded that he is already speaking to the catering company to ensure an improved service. He added that he has also held discussions with the catering company so that they take into account a potential increase in pupil numbers.

A parent said that the impact of the proposal on children was not being taken into account, only the impact on finance. They were concerned that the increase in size of the school would put children at an increased risk of violence and bullying.

Mr Henshaw responded that he had tried to outline the Pastoral and Inclusion strand of the educational vision for the proposal. He said that he would ensure that a stronger pastoral team is in place and that this pastoral team would help eliminate bullying.

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A pupil asked whether this would also eliminate drugs from the school.

Mr Henshaw said his staff and management did everything in their power to ensure the schools are safe and to provide the best support.

Amanda Newbold said that her advisers would explore these issues further with the school and then ensure the school were providing a response to parents.

A member of the Town Council, spoke about his concerns with traffic congestion around Caedmon College and how the school faces a main road. He said that under the amalgamation proposal there would be more parents dropping off children on the main road. He added that the proposal needed to consider improved access to the school.

The town council member added that the closure of the Eskdale site would result in the loss of green space. He was also concerned about travelling distance to the 3G pitch.

He said that Scarborough College was very popular and advertised itself; he asked how many post 16 students live in Whitby but attend the College and whether there is a pro-active programme of advertising Whitby's sixth form.

Mr Henshaw responded that the sixth form is marketed within the available budget and that he hoped that the increased breadth of courses provided under the proposal would help attract more pupils.

A pupil said that the proposal would prevent pupils who wanted to move and change between the two schools, if they were not happy with one, or to prevent bullying.

Mr Henshaw responded that both schools do what they can to prevent bullying and that a recent initiative is the involvement of 'Place to Be' in both schools. He explained how 'Place to Be' would work on both sites to provide pupils someone to speak to in confidence.

A pupil raised the issue of vaping and said that this could happen in school toilets.

Mr Henshaw said that changes were being made around school toilets so that they could be used responsibly and that sanctions are taken against pupils who do not adhere to these expectations.

A parent spoke about having a child with autism who did not want to use the school canteen because they could not sit in their own private and personal space. He asked for support.

An ex-teacher of creative subjects criticised the management structure of the federation, saying that there were too many tiers of management.

He said that the sixth form was not viable, since it had too few students, and that the proposal is just a means to enable the amalgamated school to become an academy.

Another ex-teacher said that while the combined figure for surplus places was outlined, it did not show that the surplus places were higher in one of the schools. He said this meant governors had not been clear and transparent.

Su Crossland, Co-chair of governors, replied that there were empty spaces in both schools. She said that the key factor was the lower number of younger pupils coming into the schools and how this intake was forecast to reduce even further. Ms Crossland pointed out that

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Eskdale, for example, has the capacity to take 110 Year 7 children but has only taken in 44 Year 7 pupils.

A parent said that they were a parent of a current Year 9 and that she was concerned that the Year 9 pupils are guinea pigs for the transition arrangements. She said that her child had already had the significant disruption around Covid arrangements and now had to face this further disruption to her education.

Mr Henshaw responded by saying that the transition of **all** pupils from both schools would be a priority. He said that no child would be disadvantaged in the process and that staff would work to prevent disruptions in learning.

A sixth form student said that they were concerned about comments that the school does not need a sixth form. She said she wanted to keep the sixth form.

Another sixth form student said they wanted to say that they were very happy in the sixth form. They said they understand that some people want the choice of another sixth form, but pointed out that other students may not want to travel.

A town councillor said that while they had been assured that the town and county councils would work together, they were not working together on this proposal. He said that the UTC in Scarborough is successful because students are trained there to go into industry. He also challenged whether the Executive Committee have the right to make the decision.

Cllr Wilkinson explained that the Executive is the main decision-making body for the council who would determine this proposal.

A resident said that the proposal was a back door route to privatisation and academisation. They asked for plans of all alternative proposals to be shared publicly. They concluded that it would be difficult to play football on the squashed site and that a special education unit should be built in Whitby.

A pupil raised concerns about dining facilities and whether a new uniform will have to be purchased under the proposal.

Mr Henshaw said he was aware of the costs of uniforms and that they would work to minimise costs of any uniform.

The Chair, Cllr Wilkinson, thanked the pupil for expressing her personal experiences in school and asked whether there were any final comments or views on the proposal.

County Cllr Neil Swannick (Cllr for Whitby Streonshalh division) said he had attended both the afternoon and the evening public consultation meetings, and he had listened carefully to the comments made at both meetings.

He said he hoped that the issues raised during both sessions will be listed on the Report to the Executive Committee.

Cllr Swannick spoke about his alternative proposal. He is keen for a brand-new secondary school, with modern facilities, to be built in Whitby. This brand new, purpose built, school would, he said, bring everyone together. It would also be more cost efficient because it would be highly energy efficient. This is the option he will fight for.

Cllr Wilkinson started to draw the meeting to a close, by asking whether there were any final questions.

A pupil was concerned that there would not be enough specialist classrooms. She spoke about there only being one specialist DT Food classroom and her experience in DT when GCSE exams for older students were taking place. She also said that the corridors would be too narrow for an increased number of students.

A pupil said they were concerned pupils would not have a choice of school under the amalgamation proposals.

## **5. CLOSING REMARKS**

The Chair, Cllr Wilkinson, drew the meeting to a close by thanking everyone for their thoughtful questions.

Cllr Wilkinson assured those present that all their comments would be included in the record of the meeting, and this would be considered in the final report.

The Meeting Closed at 8.45 pm

Post Meeting Note: After the public meeting finished, the following written question was submitted to Cllr Wilkinson by a parent:

'There has been much discussion of lower numbers of pupil. Has the root cause been analysed? Is the root cause the lower number of children due to second homes and unaffordable housing for local people in Whitby town and rural villages? Should the root cause be addressed rather than a temporary solution of reducing the school provision?'