

# **NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL**

## **THE EXECUTIVE**

**22 August 2023**

### **Proposal to amalgamate Wavell Community Junior School and Catterick Garrison, Wavell Community Infant School to create a single 3-11 primary school across both school sites**

#### **Report by the Corporate Director – Children and Young People’s Service**

#### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To report the outcome of the public consultation, carried out by the Children and Young People’s Service, on the proposal to amalgamate Catterick Garrison, Wavell Community Infant School and Wavell Community Junior School.
- 1.2 To ask the Executive to consider the responses to the consultation and to authorise the publication of statutory notices on the proposal, which would result in the technical closure of Wavell Community Junior School as a separate entity and the enlargement and change of age range of Catterick Garrison, Wavell Infant School (to be known as Wavell Community Primary School), with effect from 8 April 2024.
- 1.3 To ask the Executive to schedule taking a final decision on the proposal at the Executive Meeting on 17 October 2023.

#### **2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 On 30 May 2023, at a meeting of the Executive Members for the Children and Young People’s Service, the Executive Member for Education, Learning and Skills gave approval for consultation on a proposal to amalgamate Catterick Garrison, Wavell Community Infant School and Wavell Community Junior School to create a single 3-11 primary school across both school sites.
- 2.2 The proposal is that a single primary school, serving children aged 3-11, will be created from 8 April 2024 by the amalgamation, enlargement and change of age range of Catterick Garrison, Wavell Community Infant School and the associated technical closure of Wavell Community Junior School.
- 2.3 The consultation commenced on 8 June 2023 and closed on 20 July 2023. This report details the responses to the consultation and asks the Executive to consider authorising the publication statutory notices, and to schedule taking a final decision on the proposal on 17 October 2023.

2.4 The report is supported by a number of Appendices as listed below:

- Appendix 1: Published consultation document
- Appendix 2: List of consultees
- Appendix 3: Notes of the public consultation meeting
- Appendix 4: Responses to the consultation document
- Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix 6: Climate Change Impact Assessment
- Appendix 7: Draft Statutory notice
- Appendix 8: Draft Statutory proposals

### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Wavell Community Schools Federation brings together the governance of the two schools in a single federated governing body. They both serve the same catchment area in the north of Catterick Garrison and the infant and junior schools have adjacent buildings on one site.

3.2 Wavell Community Infant School was judged to be Good when recently inspected by Ofsted in July 2022. The inspectors said staff 'have high expectations of what pupils can achieve' and the pupils are keen to meet those expectations.

3.3 Wavell Community Junior School was judged Requires Improvement (RI) by Ofsted in 2018 and again following their inspection in 2021. As a consequence of being judged RI on two successive occasions, the Department for Education (DfE) is able to apply new powers to intervene in schools that are deemed as 'not making the necessary improvements'.

3.4 In order to promote high standards in schools and support the government's levelling up agenda, the Secretary of State introduced a new intervention measure from 1 September 2022. The new measure applies to a school if the school's overall effectiveness at its most recent Ofsted inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 was 'Requires Improvement' (RI), and the school's overall effectiveness was also below Good at the inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 immediately before the most recent inspection. On 1 March 2023 the DfE's Regional Director for Yorkshire and Humber indicated an intention to issue Wavell Community Junior school with a Directive Academy Order (DAO).

3.5 The Wavell Community Schools Federation governing board met on 20 April 2023 and, after careful consideration, asked the Local Authority to consult on a proposal to amalgamate the two schools. The governing board has made the request because they are satisfied that amalgamation would benefit pupils by building on the work of the Federation. This would be achieved by the simultaneous process of a change of age range for Wavell Community Infant School, and the technical closure of Wavell Community Junior School. The governing body would also take the opportunity to rename the continuing

school. The current Ofsted judgement for the Junior School, and the DfE's powers of intervention attached to it, would no longer be applicable after amalgamation.

#### **4.0 ISSUES TO CONSIDER**

##### Learning and Progress

- 4.1 It is considered that learning and progress can be even better if the two schools come together as a single school. The expertise of staff currently in the schools could be better targeted across the full age range and across all key stages to raise standards, and the single school would have fully integrated arrangements for assessment of learning, including recording of progress.
- 4.2 Currently each school has a separate Ofsted inspection, but the single school would have a single Ofsted inspection which would allow a judgement to be made on the provision for all children through the primary age range.
- 4.3 The career opportunities offered in an 3-11 school would be more attractive to applicants when staffing vacancies arise in the future, which should aid recruitment and retention.
- 4.4 Parents would be able to see the whole school offer through to age 11 when they are making their decision to express a preference for primary school and so be able to make a more informed decision.

##### Transition

- 4.5 Children who transfer between the infant and junior schools and then a secondary school (such as Risedale) experience two transition points. It is recognised that a transition can interrupt and slow down children's progress, and so multiple transfers are not to the advantage of children. Creating an all-through primary school would reduce the number of school transfers.
- 4.6 It is considered that this interruption in progress at times of transition between Key Stages is even more marked in infant and junior schools, when the transition between Key Stages 1 and 2 coincides with a transition between two different schools.
- 4.7 It is considered that an amalgamated school would deliver a smoother transition between Key Stages and help to ensure that the good progress made by children at Key Stage 1 is maintained and built upon at Key Stage 2.

##### Pupil Places

- 4.8 As of May 2023 there are 105 pupils in the Infant School (excluding nursery pupils) and 165 pupils in the Junior School. Following DfE statutory guidance,

the amalgamated 3-11 school would have a net capacity of 420 places and, as such, would have sufficient space to accommodate the combined 3-11 cohort. It is proposed to reduce the Published Admission Number (PAN) of the newly amalgamated school from 72 to 60. As the PAN would reduce slightly, there will be a small overall reduction in school places across Catterick Garrison. There are however surplus places in local schools, and this is largely expected to remain the case given the change of plan around significantly expanding army personnel in Catterick. Although Catterick Garrison accommodates new housing in the Richmondshire Local Plan, the capacity of the amalgamated school will be sufficient to provide pupil places for the foreseeable future, including any pupils generated by Service Families Accommodation or open-market housing.

### Governance

- 4.9 The two schools are separate institutions, albeit serving the same area. The Wavell Community Schools Federation brings together the governance of two schools. If the amalgamation went ahead, the Wavell Community Schools Federation would be disestablished from 7 April 2024 and a newly constituted governing board would be set up for the single school from 8 April 2024.

### Catchment area

- 4.10 Should the amalgamation proceed, the school's catchment area around Hipswell would remain the same, as would eligibility for home to school transport. Most pupils in both schools come from service families and the single primary school would continue to have strong ties to the military community on Catterick Garrison.

## **5.0 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

- 5.1 A consultation document (Appendix 1) was distributed to the list of consultees (Appendix 2). The document was also published on the consultation section of the NYC website. The consultation period ran from 8 June 2023 to 20 July 2023.
- 5.2 A public meeting was held at Wavell Community Junior School on 22 June 2023. A record of the meeting is attached as Appendix 3.

## **6.0 RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION AND OTHER KEY ISSUES**

### Analysis of Responses

- 6.1 17 individual respondents replied during the consultation period. Appendix 4 provides detail of the responses in full.
- 6.2 12 respondents are in favour of the proposal to amalgamate, while three

respondents objected to the proposal and two responded 'don't know.'

- 6.3 Nine of the 17 respondents are in favour of the reduction in the PAN to 60, one is against the reduction and seven responded 'don't know'.

#### Points raised in written responses

- 6.4 The points raised from the responses included:
- Many people in the community already see the Infant and Junior school as one;
  - Removing the transition will help the welfare of pupils;
  - Not having to apply for a place in the junior school will make parents lives easier;
  - Views regarding school funding and the lump sum issue;
  - Questions regarding school uniform.
- 6.5 A parent said the schools are already seen as virtually combined, since they federated and that an amalgamation 'will only make this more final'.
- 6.6 A parent responded that removing the transition between schools will not only make life better for pupils; it will make life easier for the parents, since it would eliminate the need to apply for the Juniors when moving from Year 2 to 3.
- 6.7 One consultee asked if pupils would need to reapply, if the proposal went ahead.

#### Response

Should the schools amalgamate, existing pupils at both schools would automatically be placed on roll at the amalgamated school.

- 6.8 A parent responded that they fully supported the move for 'our community, the wonderful staff that work at Wavell and most of all our children'
- 6.9 One consultee asked what is being done with the recent Ofsted report for the Junior School.

#### Response

School leaders are working with the Local Authority's School Improvement Advisors to address the recommendations in the report. The latest monitoring visit made by His Majesty's Inspectors to the school in November 2022 reported that 'Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good'.

- 6.10 One consultee asked if SEND children would be supported through transitions and any staffing changes.

### Response

For every child with an Education, Health and Care Plan naming either of the two schools, the amalgamation will be considered at the point of their annual review. Any queries or concerns can be discussed either with the School Special Educational Needs Coordinator, North Yorkshire Special Educational Needs Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS), or with the Council's SEND and Inclusion services if required.

- 6.11 One consultee said they were concerned about the halving of funding but recognised this would be similar for other schools.

### Response

As set out in Section 8 below, there will be transitional funding protection arrangements for 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years.

- 6.12 Two of the three respondents who objected to the proposal did not give their reasons in the comments section, while one said that the management of the school needed to be more open about what is happening.

### Response

The consultation document (Appendix 1) gives a full explanation of the rationale for the proposal and was circulated to all consultees (Appendix 2). The public consultation period lasted 6 weeks and the record of the public meeting (Appendix 3) shows that on the night there were detailed presentations by the panel on the proposal and the opportunity to ask questions.

- 6.13 One consultee asked if uniforms would remain the same and another was worried about the cost of new school uniform.

### Response

Should the proposal be approved and the Governing Body of the newly amalgamated school decide to make any changes to the existing uniforms, they would consult with parents/carers, and ensure that any changes meet the guidance shared by the DfE for reducing the cost of the overall school uniform.

### Issues raised in the public meeting

- 6.14 A recurring theme at the public meeting from parents and teaching staff was around the fact that 97% of the children in the Wavell schools were from service families and that children from military families are already unsettled due to experiencing multiple transfers and transitions as a consequence of their parents being posted at regular intervals. It was said that these numerous transitions between schools and places were unsettling and that it was a good thing to help reduce transitions for the pupils by bringing the two Wavell schools together.

A teacher said she was also a military parent who had personally experienced the stress of those postings and transitions and therefore thought this was a good reason for reducing further stress for the pupils through transitions.

6.15 Other parents at the public meeting reflected that they perceived there to be a high proportion of children in the Wavell schools who have Special Educational and Disability needs (SEND). They felt that continuity is important for all children, but that the situation is different in Catterick as a garrison community and the children had experienced less continuity due to postings. It was argued that pupils with SEND could be particularly unsettled by transitions and that amalgamation would help to settle them and provide emotional stability.

#### 6.16 Conclusion

The consultation has demonstrated there is clear support for the proposal.

### 7.0 PROPOSALS

7.1 The proposals are to amalgamate Catterick Garrison, Wavell Community Infant School and Wavell Community Junior School.

7.2 Legally, two statutory proposals would be required for the amalgamation:

- i) Catterick Garrison, Wavell Community Infant School – enlargement and change of age range, and
- ii) Wavell Community Junior School – technical closure of the school as a separate entity

7.3 These proposals, which would be linked, will follow the DfE’s statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers.<sup>1</sup>

7.4 The two statutory proposals are set out in full in Appendix 8.

7.5 The two statutory proposals will follow the same timescales. Suggested key dates are shown below:

Publication of statutory notices. Representation period starts (4 weeks)	11 September 2023
Representation period ends	9 October 2023
Final decision by the Executive (or Executive Member).	17 October 2023
Proposed date the Junior School would technically close and the amalgamated school would begin to operate	7 April 2024 & 8 April 2024

### 8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The implications for revenue and capital funding were set out in the report to Executive Members on 30 May 2023.

#### Capital Position

8.2 No capital works are needed for this proposal. The buildings are already connected for pupils by a corridor and there is a single reception point for parents.

### Revenue Position

8.4 School budgets are funded largely by pupil numbers so amalgamating the schools would not lead to an increase in revenue funding. The combined revenue funding would be smaller because the lump-sum would cease for the Junior School on amalgamation, although transitional funding protection arrangements allow for both lump-sums to be retained from the point of amalgamation for the remainder of the financial year that amalgamation takes place and provide 85% of the two lump-sums received in the next financial year.

8.5 Based on the amalgamation taking effect on 8 April 2024, the table below shows the retention of lump sums for that financial year and the amalgamated school retaining 85% of their lump sums for the financial year 2025/26.

Financial Year	Infant School Lump-sum (£k)	Junior School Lump-sum (£k)	Amalgamated School Lump-sum (£k)^	Total Lump-sum (£k)
2023-24	128	128		
2024-25	128	128	-	256
2025-26			217.6	217.6
2026-27			128	128

Figures may change as a consequence of any changes in DfE's National Funding Formula.

8.6 Wavell Federation's combined accounts would need to be split-out so that the infant school's budget is retained, and the junior school's accounts could be closed-down and deficit withdrawn. The consultation document, and comments made by school leaders at the public meeting, reflected that the Federation are considering options to improve their financial position over the coming period.

## **9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The Education and Inspections Act and School Organisation regulations and guidance<sup>1</sup> apply to the processes involved in publishing statutory proposals. Careful regard has been had to these provisions. The proposals are in accordance with the statutory requirements.

## **10.0 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no Human Rights issues in relation to this decision.

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<sup>1</sup> DfE Opening and Closing Maintained Schools. Statutory Guidance for Proposers and Decision Makers (January 2023) and Making Significant Changes (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools). Statutory Guidance for proposers and decision makers (January 2023).



## **11.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken in respect of these proposals and is attached (Appendix 5).

## **12.0 NEXT STEPS**

12.1 It is proposed to publish a statutory notice and statutory proposals on 11 September 2023 (Appendices 7 and 8). The statutory notice would be published in a local newspaper and displayed at the main entrance to the schools. The statutory proposals would be published on the Council's website. These would provide four weeks for representations to be made to the Council, by 9 October 2023.

12.2 The Executive agreed a model for decision-making on school organisation proposals on 25 September 2023. If approval is given to publish statutory notice and proposals, it is proposed that a final decision on these proposals is taken by the Executive on 17 October 2023.

## **13.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

13.1 The Executive is recommended to give approval to publish a statutory notice and statutory proposals on 11 September 2023 proposing:

- To amalgamate Catterick Garrison, Wavell Community Infant School and Wavell Community Junior School through the technical closure of Wavell Community Junior School as a separate entity and the enlargement and change of age range of Catterick Garrison, Wavell Community Infant School to create a single 3-11 primary school across both school sites, with effect from 8 April 2024.
- To reduce the PAN applicable to the Reception Year of the newly amalgamated school to 60 for the 2024/25 academic year and beyond.

13.2 That the Executive schedule taking a final decision on these proposals on 17 October 2023.

Stuart Carlton  
Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service

Report prepared by: Mark Ashton - Strategic Planning Officer.

### **List of Appendices:**

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Background Documents

Report of Corporate Director Meeting with Executive Members – 30 May 2023

DfE Schools causing concern guidance October 2022 - [Schools Causing Concern  
Guidance Update \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/guidance/schools-causing-concern-guidance-update)