

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE
CORPORATE DIRECTOR MEETING WITH EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

9 January 2024

Boroughbridge High School, Boroughbridge – Proposal to cease Sixth Form Provision

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Executive Member approval to consult on a proposal that the Council should change the age range at Boroughbridge High School, effective from 31 August 2024, by ceasing the Sixth Form Provision.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

- 2.1 At a recent meeting of the federated Governing Board of Boroughbridge High School and King James's School, Knaresborough it was resolved, to ask North Yorkshire Council to consult on the permanent closure of the Sixth Form at Boroughbridge High School. The sixth form has been temporarily suspended since September 2022.
- 2.2 Boroughbridge High School has worked in collaboration with other schools since 2016 to ensure that students have access to a wide post 16 offer and to try to maintain Sixth Form provision at the school. Initially the school collaborated with Easingwold and Thirsk Schools, but this collaboration ended when Easingwold School joined the Outwood Multi Academy Trust. Boroughbridge High School has subsequently moved to post-16 collaboration with King James's School, Knaresborough. This partnership was formalised through a federation of the two schools in January 2021.
- 2.3 In response to falling numbers of sixth form pupils, and following consultation in Autumn 2021, the decision was made in Spring 2022 by the federated Governing Board to temporarily suspend entries to the Sixth Form at Boroughbridge High School for two years to take effect from September 2022. Due to the demographics of the area, numbers on roll at Boroughbridge High School have decreased, making it more difficult to maintain viable class sizes at post-16 in terms of quality of experience, subject breadth and financial viability.

3 BOROUGHBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL SIXTH FORM

Pupil numbers

- 3.1 The numbers on roll at the School have been falling for several years as shown in the table below. This is partly due to an overall general reduction in the numbers of local children in the catchment area, with particularly smaller cohorts for entry in 2018/19 and 2020/21.

Pupil numbers at Boroughbridge High School from academic year 2013/14 to 2023/4 and forecast pupil numbers to 2027/28

Year	Y6 Feeder Cohort in catchment schools	Pupil numbers Y7 –Y11	Pupil numbers 6th form	Total pupil roll	Estimated additional pupils from housing	Total pupils incl. estimated housing yield
2013/14	130	625	131	756		
2014/15	123	613	115	728		
2015/16	120	585	88	673		
2016/17	134	576	78	654		
2017/18	126	511	57	568		
2018/19	99	439	53	492		
2019/20	129	429	52	481		
2020/21	107	411	34	445		
2021/22	128	412	12	424		
2022/23	137	434	4	438		
2023/24	128	464	0	464		
2024/25	132	474	0	474	11	485
2025/26	127	505	0	505	22	527
2026/27	127	502	0	502	32	534
2027/28	150	514	0	514	43	557

- 3.2 The school population is now stabilising and is projected to increase in future. However, even if all A level students could be retained at Boroughbridge High School, the Governing Body does not feel that numbers would be large enough to provide a high quality post-16 provision both in terms of curriculum and experience, or that it would be financially viable.
- 3.3 Housebuilding in the area may have an impact on the size of the intake to the school, but this impact is expected to be slow, and it could be some years before the school returns to its previous size.

Funding

- 3.4 Pupil numbers primarily determine the funding for school budgets. The funding model for post-16 education has changed in recent years and now favours larger sixth forms than Boroughbridge High School has ever had. Historically, funding intended for those in years 7 to 11 at the school to some extent subsidised the provision of a sixth form, but this has become increasingly unsustainable as schools have faced increasing cost and funding pressures over recent years.
- 3.5 A Department for Education research report into 'Understanding costs of A level provision' published in 2017 stated that 'According to the providers that took part in the research, the average minimum class size required to cover costs was 11.7.' This is larger than Boroughbridge High School had been able to operate, other than in a handful of subjects.
- 3.6 The Department for Education now expects, for both maintained schools and academies, that any proposals for new sixth forms should provide at least 200 places

and should either directly, or through partnership, offer a minimum of 15 A level subjects, and that the average class size should be at least 15, unless there is a clear educational argument to run smaller classes.¹

Standards

3.7 In May 2023 Ofsted judged the overall effectiveness of Boroughbridge High School as 'Requires Improvement', with the quality of education rated as 'good', behaviour and attitudes as 'requires improvement', personal development as 'good' and leadership and management as 'requires improvement'. This followed previous overall judgements of 'Good' in 2012, confirmed by a short inspection in 2016 and an initial (section 8) inspection in 2022. This latest Ofsted report sets out what the school needs to do to improve, as well as its existing strengths. School leaders, governors and the Local Authority will continue to work together on school improvement taking account of these recommendations.

Staffing

3.8 The School has advised that there would be no changes to staffing as a result of the proposed permanent closure of the Sixth Form.

4 ALTERNATIVE SIXTH FORM PROVISION IN THE LOCAL AREA

4.1 In September 2023, out of 62 students who had attended Boroughbridge High School in Year 11, 84% chose to remain in education, with 65% of these following vocational courses. Those studying Level 3 courses (A Level/BTEC) went to York College (12), Harrogate Grammar (5), St. Aidan's (<5), King James (<5) and Thirsk (<5).

4.2 In September 2022, out of 91 students who had attended Boroughbridge High School in Year 11, 89% chose to remain in education, with 51% of these following vocational courses. Those studying Level 3 courses (A Level/BTEC) went to York College (20), St. Aidan's (9), King James (8), Ripon Grammar School (<5) and Harrogate Grammar (<5).

4.3 As at October 2022, Year 11 and 12 pupils living in the Boroughbridge High School catchment area were attending the following North Yorkshire school sixth forms:

School	Total
Boroughbridge High School	<5
Harrogate Grammar School - Academy	13
King James's School	21
Ripon Grammar School	19
Rossett School - Academy	<5
Skipton Girls' High School - Academy	<5
Ermysted's Grammar School	<5
St John Fisher Catholic High School	12
St Aidan's Church of England High School - Academy	34
The Dales School	<5

¹ DfE, Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools Statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers (January 2023); Making significant changes to an open academy Departmental guidance for all types of academy trust (January 2022).

Springwater School	<5
	110

- 4.4 If they choose to stay within the Federation, Year 11 students at Boroughbridge High School have opportunities during the year to meet with the King James's School post-16 team, in order to secure a smooth transition from Year 11 to Year 12. King James's School, Knaresborough was last inspected by Ofsted in January 2023 (section 8 inspection) which judged the school as continuing to be a good school. The report states 'Students in the sixth form flourish. There is a broad range of subjects available. Pastoral support for sixth-form students is also highly effective.' The Sixth Form is based in a new purpose-built centre, opened in September 2019.

Transport

- 4.5 Boroughbridge High School run a free minibus service from Boroughbridge High School to King James's School at the beginning and end of the school day so that sixth form students can, if they wish, travel initially to Boroughbridge High School. Direct buses also run from the Boroughbridge catchment area to St. Aidan's & St. John Fisher Associated Sixth Form in Harrogate, and to York College, and there are also public transport services to Knaresborough, Harrogate and York.
- 4.6 North Yorkshire Council provides assistance with transport to sixth form or college to students who qualify. To qualify for assistance with transport to sixth form or college, the following applies:
- students must be over 16 and under 19 on 1 September 2023 and live in North Yorkshire
 - students must be attending the nearest sixth form or further education college to their home address, or the sixth form of the secondary school which is recognised as the normal school for your home address
 - the course attended must be full-time for instance, more than 12 hours a week
 - the sixth form or college is the nearest establishment offering a course that the Council consider suitable to a student's career choice, or that is a pre-requisite for entry into higher education (see below for more details)
 - the nearest sixth form or college is more than three miles from the home by the shortest walked route
 - students must have agreement from their parent or guardian to pay for the pass

Transport assistance needs to be renewed annually and is not provided for students on apprenticeships or work placements.

Further details are available at:

<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-and-college-transport/transport-sixth-form-or-college>

5 OTHER NORTH YORKSHIRE SCHOOL SIXTH FORMS

- 5.1 Other school sixth forms in North Yorkshire have experienced similar challenges to those faced by Boroughbridge High School, resulting in the suspension of provision. At Wensleydale School in Leyburn, the Governing Body has agreed to suspend post 16 provision from September 2023 for up to two years. Recent years have also seen removal or suspension of sixth form provision at academy schools in North Yorkshire.

6 CONSULTATION PROCESS AND TIMESCALE

- 6.1 Statutory guidance and legislation sets out the process for making school organisation changes to local-authority-maintained schools.² For community schools like Boroughbridge High School, the Local Authority as proposer and decision maker can alter the upper or lower age range of the school, including the removal of sixth form provision, by following a statutory process.
- 6.2 Should a decision be made to initiate a consultation, a period of six weeks is proposed, including one week within February half-term. A draft timetable is set out below.
- 6.3 The final decision on closure would be taken by the Executive (or by the Executive Member for Schools if there are no objections during the representation period).

Suggested key dates are shown below:

Approval to Consult by Executive Members	9 January
Consultation opens	19 January
Consultation closes	1 March
Council's Executive considers consultation response	19 March
Executive decision to publish statutory notices	19 March
Publication of statutory notices	4 April
Representation period starts (4 weeks)	4 April
Representation period ends	2 May
Final decision by Council's Executive	28 May or 18 June
Implementation	August 2024

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 That the Executive Member for Education, Learning and Skills provide approval to consult on proposals:
- to change the age range at Boroughbridge High School, effective from 31 August 2024, by ceasing the Sixth Form Provision.

Stuart Carlton
CORPORATE DIRECTOR – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE.

Report prepared by John Lee, Strategic Planning Officer

² DfE, Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools Statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers (January 2023); The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013.

Action AgreedExecutive Member
Date:

Action RequestedCorporate Director
Date:



Consultation Document

Proposal to change the age range at
Boroughbridge High School, by ceasing the Sixth
Form Provision
from 31 August 2024

January 2024

OFFICIAL

This paper sets out details of a proposal by North Yorkshire Council to change the age range at Boroughbridge High School, by ceasing the Sixth Form Provision with effect from 31 August 2024. It gives the background to the proposal. There will be a public meeting on ## at ##.

Background

At a recent governing body meeting of the federated Governing Board of Boroughbridge High School and King James’s School, Knaresborough it was resolved to ask North Yorkshire Council to consult on the permanent closure of the Sixth Form at Boroughbridge High School.

Boroughbridge High School has worked in collaboration with other schools since 2016 to ensure that students have access to a wide post 16 offer and to try to maintain Sixth Form provision at the school. Initially they collaborated with Easingwold and Thirsk Schools, but this collaboration ended when Easingwold School joined the Outwood Multi Academy Trust. Boroughbridge High School has subsequently moved to post-16 collaboration with King James’s School, Knaresborough. This partnership was formalised through a federation of the two schools in January 2021.

In response to falling numbers of sixth form pupils, and following consultation in Autumn 2021, the decision was made in Spring 2022 by the federated Governing Board to temporarily suspend entries to the Sixth Form at Boroughbridge High School for two years to take effect from September 2022.

Due to the demographics of the area, numbers on roll at Boroughbridge High School have decreased, making it more difficult to maintain viable class sizes at post-16 in terms of quality of experience, subject breadth and financial viability.

Pupil Numbers

The numbers on roll at Boroughbridge High School have been falling for several years as shown in the table below. This is partly due to an overall general reduction in the numbers of local children in the catchment area, with particularly smaller cohorts for entry in 2018/19 and 2020/21.

Pupil numbers for 11-16 and 16-18 year olds at Boroughbridge High School from academic year 2013/14 to 2023/4 and forecast pupil numbers to 2027/28

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The school population is now stabilising and is projected to increase in future. But even if all A level students could be retained at Boroughbridge High School, the Governing Body does not feel that numbers would be large enough to provide a high quality post-16 provision both in terms of curriculum and experience, or that it would be financially viable.

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Standards

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Alternative sixth form provision in the local area

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- students must be attending the nearest sixth form or further education college to their home address or the sixth form of the secondary school which is recognised as the normal school for their home address
- the course attended must be full-time for instance, more than 12 hours a week
- the sixth form or college is the nearest establishment offering a course that the Council consider suitable to a student's career choice, or that is a pre-requisite for entry into higher education (see below for more details)
- the nearest sixth form or college is more than three miles from the home by the shortest walked route

- students must have agreement from their parent or guardian to pay for the pass

Transport assistance needs to be renewed annually and is not provided for students on apprenticeships or work placements.

Further details are available at:

<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-and-college-transport/transport-sixth-form-or-college>

The Proposal

For the reasons above it is proposed to change the age range at Boroughbridge High School, from 31 August 2024, by ceasing the Sixth Form Provision.

What Happens Next?

Your views about this proposal are welcomed. You can either complete and return the attached response sheet, or submit an online response

Paper responses should be returned to North Yorkshire Council at the address below:

FREEPOST RTKE-RKAY-CUJS
Boroughbridge High Sixth Form Proposal
Strategic Planning
North Yorkshire Council
County Hall
NORTHALLERTON
DL7 8AE

Online responses may be submitted by following this link:

<#>

Responses to the consultation will be published on the Council's website. Your personal details, and those of others you may refer to, will not be published.

The closing date for responses is 5pm on 1 March 2024

All responses to the consultation received by this date are scheduled to be considered by the Council's Executive on 19 March 2024.

If the Council's Executive decides to proceed with the closure proposal, then statutory notices would be published in the local press on 4 April 2024. These notices would provide a further four weeks for representations to be made. A final decision is then

scheduled to be taken by North Yorkshire Council's Executive in May or June. If agreed, the sixth form provision would cease from on 31 August 2024.

Anticipated Key Dates

All dates are subject to approvals at each stage.

Consultation opens	19 January
Public meeting	##
Consultation closes	1 March
Council's Executive considers consultation response	19 March
Statutory Notices published (4 weeks for representations to be made)	4 April – 2 May
Final decision by Council's Executive	May or June
Proposed implementation date	31 August 2024

Boroughbridge High School Sixth Form Consultation

This is a consultation on proposals to change the age range at Boroughbridge High School, by ceasing the Sixth Form Provision from 31 August 2024.

We are collecting this information for the purpose of gathering views on the proposal. Your personal data will not be published or passed to any other organisation unless a legal obligation compels us to do so.

Reading our Privacy Notice will help you understand how and why we process your personal data. www.northyorks.gov.uk/privacy-notices

Do you have any comments about the closure proposal?
(Please do not disclose any personal information in your answer)

DRAFT

Do you have any comments about catchment areas?
(Please do not disclose any personal information in your answer)

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What is your interest/status? Parent / Governor / Teacher / Community / Other

Other (please state)	
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Name of school: (if applicable)	
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To confirm your proximity to school and to prevent duplicate responses we are asking you to provide your name and address. This information will be removed from any analysis or reports.

Name:	
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Address:	
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Postcode:	
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To help us assess whether we have provided clear information, please let us know whether you found this consultation easy to understand? **Yes / No**

Please send this response sheet to the following "FREEPOST" address. You do not need to use a postage stamp.

FREEPOST RTKE-RKAY-CUJS
Boroughbridge High Sixth Form Proposal
Strategic Planning
North Yorkshire Council
County Hall
NORTHALLERTON
DL7 8AE

Or to submit your response online go to:
[##](#)

To be received by no later than 1 March 2024