

**Record of Stakeholder meeting regarding proposal to permanently increase numbers at Springwater School, Starbeck from September 2025**

**Public Meeting held on 2 October 2024 at 5:30pm**

**Present:** Mike Finlay (Headteacher of Springwater School), Chris Reynolds, (Head of SEND Strategic Planning and Resources North Yorkshire Council (NYC), Sue Turley (Strategic Planning Officer, NYC)

Councillor Philip Broadbank, North Yorkshire Councillor for Fairfax and Starbeck, 3 school governors including Chair of Governors, member of Unison, 5 members of the public attended from the community, including; representation from the Starbecks Residents' Association, Starbeck Community Library and Starbeck in Bloom

AGENDA

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting opens – brief welcome - Introduction to the Panel</li> </ul>	Chris Reynolds Head of SEND Strategic Planning and Resources
Presentation	Chris Reynolds
Question and Answer Session	Chris Reynolds and Sue Turley
Meeting Close	Chris Reynolds

**1. Welcome**

**Chris Reynolds (Head of SEND Strategic Planning and Resources)**

Chris welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced other staff members from NYC present and the Headteacher Mike Finlay.

Chris explained that as required under the Council's constitution Cllr Annabel Wilkinson, Executive Member for Education, Learning and Skills provided agreement that this consultation be undertaken. The Executive Committee of North Yorkshire Council is the decision-maker for this proposal. The committee can choose to approve, reject, or amend the proposal.

**Chris explained the following roles and responsibilities as part of the process:**

**Officers of NYC** are conducting this consultation on behalf of the Council.

Officers are authors of the report to the Executive and will therefore take notes of the meeting today so that all views can be reflected in the report.

**Governing Board of Springwater School, Starbeck** is responsible for the strategic direction of the school, including how to optimise the use of resources and maximise value for money. Members of the Governing Board are here today including the Chair of Governors Shelagh Morris to answer general questions from the public.

**The Headteacher and Leadership team** are responsible for operational management of the schools. The Executive Headteacher and senior leaders are accountable to the Governing Board.

### 2. Presentation from NYC

Chris Reynolds, NYC, explained that the meeting was being held to discuss the proposal to permanently increase numbers at Springwater School from September 2025 and that this was the question that would be determined by members. Should members approve, the capital scheme for expansion at Springwater School will follow.

Chris Reynolds provided a presentation which covered:

- Background to the proposal
- Local Area SEND Strategy
- Evidence of demand for EHCPs
- The proposal
- Why has Springwater School been chosen
- How will this affect pupils at the school
- Details of the new accommodation
- Staffing
- What happens now
- How can people comment

#### Background to the proposal

The slides explained the background to the proposal that we want all children and young people with SEND in North Yorkshire to have the best educational opportunities so that they can achieve the best outcomes; be able to attend a school or provision locally, where they can make friends and be part of their local community; and make progress with learning, have good social and emotional health and be prepared for a fulfilling adult life.

North Yorkshire Council has a duty to keep its special education provision under review and ensure there is the right type of provision and enough places to meet the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Springwater School is a community special school in Starbeck near Harrogate serving children from 2 to 19 years. The school have provided 112 school places during the academic year 2023/24

The Council have developed a specific SEND Capital Investment Programme which aims to increase the availability of specialist places. This will be achieved through expansion of existing special schools, the building of new special schools and investment in mainstream SEN resource bases, known locally as Targeted Mainstream Provisions.

### Local Area SEND Strategy

The slides explained the Local Area SEND Strategy, supported by the SEND Capital Programme and the intention to reshape educational provision across mainstream, Targeted and Specialist provision to ensure that children can attend school more locally without long travel times and have that children and families have more choice in where their child goes to school.

### Evidence of demand for Education and Healthcare Plans (EHCPs)

Chris Reynolds went onto explain that there has been an increase in the number of children with EHCPs (Education Health and Care Plans) in North Yorkshire, by 95% since 2018 from 2606 to c.5100. Whilst the majority of children with EHCPs have their needs met in their local mainstream schools, special school places have increased from c.820 in 2018 to c1450 in 2024. The rise in EHCPs and demand for specialist places is forecast to continue on a similar trajectory in future years. The proposed expansion of Springwater School will help manage some of the school place pressures generated by the increase in the number of EHCPs funded by the LA. It will also provide wider benefits in educating children closer to their local communities and reducing travel time and costs.

### What is being proposed?

Chris Reynolds explained that the proposal is that Springwater School permanently increases the number of places the School can offer to pupils from 112 to 157 from 1 September 2025 and that the school site is expanded to accommodate additional pupil numbers at the School.

### Why has Springwater School been chosen?

Chris Reynolds explained that the school meets the required need for additional places, without causing concern of over provision, have an Ofsted rating of Good with outstanding leadership and management; has the capacity to provide suitable accommodation within existing internal and external space available; the LA has confidence in the leadership capacity of the school to accommodate the additional numbers.

### How will this affect pupils at the school?

Chris Reynolds said pupils will notice some changes to the school layout and environment but those are likely to be limited. There will be a significant improvement in facilities for children educated at the school. The school will grow gradually in numbers and the increase will be phased so the change in pupil numbers will occur over a period of time. School staff will carefully plan transition to the newly provided spaces and prepare children for works to be taking place around the school.

### Details of the new accommodation

Chris Reynolds explained the aim of the building project is to create a well-designed SEN provision which is fit for purpose and will improve the existing provision in the main school building.

Two North Yorkshire Council buildings have been identified for upgrading and re-modelling, these are adjacent to the current school site and further along the High Street:  
1) Starbeck Central, 2) Meadowbank

Additional facilities will include; dedicated classroom spaces, group rooms, hygiene/changing facilities, secure outdoor space, Sports Court for recreation and physical education, Training Kitchen, dedicated outdoor sixth form area and reception/office space. Ramped access will be created between the existing and the new site.

### Staffing

Chris Reynolds said staff will generally be unaffected, however, a larger school might offer more opportunities for professional development. Immediately prior to this meeting, a staff briefing session at the school had been held.

What happens now and how people can comment?

Chris Reynolds stated the consultation runs until the 11 October 2024 and urged people to respond either online or by freepost. A report will be prepared and presented by Cllr Wilkinson to the Council's Executive on 5 November 2024.

Chris Reynolds then presented a slide with the details of those present at the meeting who would take questions from the audience:

- Mike Finlay – Headteacher Springwater School
- Shelagh Morris – Chair of Governors, Springwater School
- Chris Reynolds - Head of SEND Strategic Planning and Resources NYC
- Sue Turley – Strategic Planning Officer NYC

### 3. Questions

A parent asked if the Woodfield new school is still going ahead and how the plans for Springwater would affect current pupils on roll, year groups and what learners would the expanded school cater for?

Chris Reynolds replied saying that Woodfield School is still going ahead and that the LA is now at the phase of appointing a Trust to run the school.

The expansion of the site at Springwater would provide for a particular cohort of students with a range of needs including cognition and learning needs, Autism and Profound and Multiple learning needs. The school will decide on the best use of the space for learners.

Chris Reynolds went on to say that North Yorkshire is the lowest funded authority in England but the council's intention, alongside expanding specialist capacity, is to enhance facilities both in Targeted Mainstream and specialist provision. We are aware that staff at the school find space/facilities and meeting rooms at the school challenging. We are trying to respond to the need for more space and we are looking to do the best with the space we have available. Springwater School has been prioritised within the Council's SEND capital programme to receive significant investment to expand. We have been speaking to the governing board for a long time now to plan the most effective use of the space. The GB are in agreement with the planned expansion.

A parent highlighted staff retention at the school and particularly Teaching Assistants (TAs) as a concern and that the school struggle with supporting smaller numbers of children.

Chris Reynolds replied saying that recruitment and retention of specialist teaching staff, TAs and leaders is a challenge across the sector.

A parent governor added they did not want to see a dilution of provision at the school due to larger pupil numbers but didn't feel this would be the case, adding there will naturally be a larger body of staff in an expanded school with better facilities and this could mean career development opportunities for staff.

A Unison representative said they had met with staff members and what they had heard was reassuring regarding space and numbers. The staff group they were working with were all very positive around the changes. The additional 45 pupils would be gradual and there would be an opportunity to review how things are working in practice.

A member of the community thought NYC would want the additional pupils at the school as soon as possible.

Chris Reynolds responded saying that the plans for Springwater are part of a number of schemes to be delivered through the SEND Capital Investment Programme and they will take time to fully deliver.

Mike Finlay provided reassurance that the increase in numbers will be carefully controlled in collaboration with NYC.

Cllr Broadbank NYC as local councillor and as a Trustee of the Library Volunteers asked about the parking and the use of the side road adjacent to the Library and how these were impacted by the expansion scheme.

Chris Reynolds said that that the site is constrained, the expansion plans include a dedicated drop off and pick up point to alleviate congestion in the school's main car park. It is intended that the sideroad will become part of the school site and managed by the school and a barrier installed. The school could park their minibuses down this access road and therefore free up the main school car park for staff parking. The disabled parking bay at the front of the library will remain in place.

A member of the community said they had not seen the plans for the expansion of the school.

Sue Turley said that the plans had previously been shared at a meeting with Library Volunteers and Harrogate in Bloom representatives.

A member of Starbeck in Bloom asked what was happening to the flowerbed outside the entrance and the footpath in front of the Library.

Sue Turley replied saying the flowerbed will be removed as discussed previously with the library volunteers group and Starbeck in Bloom in order to provide additional school parking spaces. There remains an opportunity to have an additional freestanding planter (to those located outside the doors of the library) provided by NYC to Starbeck in Bloom and that NYC welcomed a further discussion on this. Clarification regarding the public footpath in front of the additional parking spaces at the front of the new school entrance/Community Library since the meeting had been confirmed and this will remain. Also confirmed following the meeting, no plants or bulbs will be removed from the flower bed by contractors and Starbeck in Bloom will be contacted to remove these prior to any works in this area by NYC (as discussed at the meeting in January 2024).

Chris Reynolds said following the meeting held with Library Volunteers and Starbeck in Bloom in January 2024, information was sent and a further follow up email responding to

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additional queries from the group was sent by NYC. Chris confirmed that these documents could be resent again including the building plans. NYC would be happy to talk through the proposed expansion plans again but in essence, there were limited options available to alleviate fully the parking pressures at and around the site.

A member of the community said that putting the parking away at the Starbeck Central end of the school was an issue.

Mike Finlay added there were opportunities to look further at how the parking onsite is managed, staggered start and finish times was one example.

Chris Reynolds acknowledged the issues raised regarding parking and they were all part of the challenge and demand for additional specialist provision on site.

The Chair of the Starbecks Residents' Association said the group welcomed the expansion of the school and asked if the new plans would provide an opportunity to work with Starbeck Primary School opposite?

Chris Reynolds said that the previous Headteacher had been involved in conversations with the school previously and that these would be revisited by the new Headteacher.

Chris Reynolds closed the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions.

The meeting **closed** at 18:15