

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

18 March 2025

**THE WENSLEYDALE SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM, LEYBURN – PROPOSAL TO  
CEASE SIXTH FORM PROVISION**

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide the Executive Member with information upon which to make a decision on proposals published by North Yorkshire Council to change the age range at The Wensleydale School and Sixth Form, effective from 31 August 2025, by ceasing the Sixth Form Provision.

**2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 This report provides information about the response to the publication of statutory proposals to change the age range at The Wensleydale School and Sixth Form, effective from 31 August 2025, by ceasing the Sixth Form Provision
- 2.2 The report recommends that the proposal should be determined as published.
- 2.3 The report is supported by several appendices as listed below: -
- Appendix A: Statutory Proposals
  - Appendix B: Statutory Notice
  - Appendix C: Equalities Impact Assessment
  - Appendix D: Climate Change Impact Assessment

**BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Education and Inspections Act 2006 sets out the procedures for making changes to a maintained school. These are detailed in School Organisation regulations and guidance.<sup>1</sup> The regulations and guidance apply to Local Authorities and governing bodies proposing to make changes, and to Local Authorities (including the Council's Executive and Executive Members) acting as decision-makers.

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<sup>1</sup> School Organisation (Prescribed alterations to maintained schools (England)) Regulations 2013 and Department for Education statutory guidance Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools Statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers, March 2025.

- 3.2 The Governing Board of The Wensleydale School and Sixth Form, Leyburn asked North Yorkshire Council to consult on the permanent closure of the Sixth Form provision. The sixth form has been temporarily suspended since September 2023.
- 3.3 On 5 November 2024 the Executive Member for Education, Learning and Skills gave approval for consultation on proposals to change the age range at The Wensleydale School and Sixth Form, effective from 31 August 2025, by ceasing the Sixth Form Provision. The consultation commenced on 11 November 2024 and closed on 20 December 2024.
- 3.4 The Executive met on 21 January 2025 and considered a report in respect of the proposal to cease Sixth Form provision at The Wensleydale School, and which included a consideration of all the responses to the proposal that were received during the consultation period. The Executive approved a recommendation that statutory proposals be published to close the sixth form with effect from 31 August 2025.
- 3.5 The statutory proposals were published on 31 January 2025 giving 4 weeks until 28 February 2025 for representations to be made.
- 3.6 The statutory proposals that were published proposed that:
- The Council should change the age range at The Wensleydale School and Sixth Form, effective from 31 August 2025, by ceasing the Sixth Form Provision.

The full statutory proposal is attached at Appendix A.

- 3.7 The statutory proposals and public notices were published on 31 January 2025. The public notice, placed on the school gates and in the Northern Echo newspaper, invited written objections or comments to be submitted by 28 February 2025. A copy of the notice is attached as Appendix B. At the time of the publication of the notice, a copy of the complete proposal, including all the information required in the school organisation regulations and guidance, was published on the Council's website.

## **4 ISSUES RAISED IN RESPONSE TO THE STATUTORY PROPOSALS**

- 4.1 No responses to the statutory proposals were received.

## **5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 School funding**

Under Local Management of Schools, schools are responsible for their own budgets. It is for heads and governors to determine at school or federation level how to optimise the use of resources and maximise value for money.

## 5.2 Capital implications

There are no capital implications as a result of this proposal.

## 5.3 Transport costs

As there are currently no pupils in the sixth form at The Wensleydale School and Sixth Form there would be no immediate transportation costs. Any pupils living in the catchment area for The Wensleydale School and Sixth Form applying for post 16 places would be assessed under the Council's Post 16 Transport Policy Statement at the appropriate time. As such, future transport costs cannot be estimated.

# 6 **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

## REGULATIONS AND GUIDANCE

6.1 The consideration and determination of school organisation proposals by the Local Authority is set out in regulations and in guidance produced by the Department for Education.<sup>2</sup> Careful regard has been had to these provisions.

## PRELIMINARY CHECKS

6.2 The Decision Maker must consider, on receipt of each proposal:-

- whether any information is missing;
- whether the published notice of the proposal complies with statutory requirements;
- whether the statutory consultation has been carried out prior to the publication of the notice;
- and whether the proposal is related to other published proposals.

6.3 Having undertaken an audit of these preliminary checks, the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) advises that:-

- all information required has been supplied;
- the published notice complies with statutory requirements;
- statutory consultation has been carried out prior to publication of the notice;
- and that the preliminary points for consideration have been dealt with sufficiently to permit the Executive or Executive Member to proceed to determine this proposal.

## TYPES OF DECISION THAT CAN BE MADE

6.4 In considering proposals for making changes to school provision, the Executive (or the Executive Member for Schools, if there are no objections received during the representation period), as Decision Maker can decide to:

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<sup>2</sup> See footnote 1.

- reject the proposals;
- approve the proposals;
- approve the proposals with a modification;
- approve the proposals subject to them meeting a specific condition

## **7 PROCEDURE FOR THE MEETING**

7.1 The Executive agreed on 25 September 2007 that in making a decision on school organisation proposals:-

(a) The Executive must have regard to decision makers' guidance published by the DfE and to the Executive Procedure Rules laid down in the North Yorkshire County Council Constitution.

(b) All decisions must give reasons for the decision, indicating the main factors/criteria for the decision.

## **8 REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

8.1 The consultation document and the report to Executive Members on 5 November 2024 set out the key concerns. These concerns were explored in further detail in the report taken to the Executive Committee on 21 January 2025.

8.2 Due to the wider offering of specialist courses in colleges of Further Education, the withdrawal of government funding for the BTEC and CTEC qualifications in vocational subjects the school focussed on, and the demographics of the area, numbers on roll at the sixth form provision at The Wensleydale School and Sixth Form decreased, making it more difficult to maintain a viable post-16 provision in terms of quality of experience, subject breadth and financial viability.

## **9 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **10 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken in respect of this proposal and is attached as Appendix C. The assessment concluded that:-

*The purpose of the consultation and proposed decision is to ensure that the children are provided with the best education provision ... Whilst ... there may be adverse impact upon those living within the school's catchment area, there are more positive impacts that will result if these proposals are implemented. As these proposals develop, any adverse impacts will be carefully monitored and all reasonable mitigations will be taken.*

10.2 A Climate Change Impact Assessment has been undertaken in respect of this proposal and is attached as Appendix D. The assessment concluded that: -

*There is likely to be a negative impact associated with some increased use of vehicles to transport the students to and from other post 16 providers. Ultimately there is an overriding consideration in this proposal to provide the best outcome for the education of students in the local area and no other educationally sustainable option has been identified.*

## **11 RECOMMENDATIONS**

11.1 That having undertaken the required preliminary checks, the Executive Member resolves that the four key issues listed above in paragraph 6.3 have been satisfied and there can be a determination of the proposals.

11.2 The following proposals be determined:

- to change the age range at The Wensleydale School and Sixth Form, effective from 31 August 2025, by ceasing the Sixth Form Provision.

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Report prepared by Mark Ashton, Strategic Planning Team.

### List of Appendices

Appendix A: Statutory Proposals

Appendix B: Statutory Notice

Appendix C: Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix D: Climate Change Impact Assessment

### Background documents

Report to Executive, 21 January 2025

Report, Corporate Director’s Meeting with Executive Members, 5 November 2024