



Northumberland County Council

Your ref: Education in west update letter

Our ref: WD/JP

Enquiries to: Wayne Daley

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Date: 18 July 2018

Dear Parent or Guardian

Education in West Northumberland

I wanted to write to update you on the latest position in relation to investment into education in your area.

On Tuesday 10 July 2018 Cabinet approved a plan for the creation of a sustainable education system in the west of the county with massive investment into schools planned.

I want to thank everyone who took the time to provide their comments and feedback through the consultation process. We have genuinely welcomed how engaged all schools, parents, pupils and partner agencies have been.

By being actively involved, you have helped us to shape this plan.

We know how important schools are to local communities and we have been able to consider all possible solutions available to us and as a result, retain parental choice in the west of the county.

At Tuesday's meeting a £5.1m injection of cash was approved to fund the capital work associated with the proposed model for relevant schools in Haydon Bridge Partnership. This includes the creation of a 0-11 pre-school and primary provision in Bellingham, improve facilities for art and technology and provide community spaces.

We have also saved Haydon Bridge High school from threatened closure.

Significant investment was approved for teaching and infrastructure at Haydon Bridge High School, which will be used to rationalise buildings, better safeguard the site and upgrade the interior of the remaining buildings.

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At its May meeting, Cabinet had instructed officers to develop options and indicative costings to replace the buildings of Hexham Middle School and Queen Elizabeth High School, which form the Hadrian Learning Trust - It is estimated that this work would cost in the region of £36-40m.

So what happens next?

A detailed business case will now be carried out to establish a preferred site and develop a robust project budget to provide new buildings for the Hadrian Learning Trust.

During the recent consultations on age range change, support was expressed to bring together Hexham Middle School and Queen Elizabeth High School onto one site. This would potentially create educational and operational benefit and provide good value for money. In light of this feedback, the scope of the project will also include single site options.

A preferred option will be identified for consideration by Cabinet in the Autumn.

An engagement exercise will take place allowing parents, pupils and stakeholders to express their views on the options under consideration during the development of the business case.

We know transport is a concern for parents of affected Bellingham pupils and we will be working closely on a one-to-one basis with them, to develop a robust travel plan for each and every pupil.

The age ranges will now be extended in Kielder, Bellingham, Otterburn and Greenhaugh village primary schools, ready for the start of the September 2019 school year. However, officers felt it was not appropriate to recommend any changes at West Woodburn First School at this time. We will also be working with all the staff to ensure there is a smooth transition into the new arrangements ready for September 2019.

Once again I would like to thank you very much indeed for all of the excellent input that parents have provided to this process.

Please be assured that improving education across the county is one of the council's highest priorities.

We want every child to have access to the very best possible education in the best possible learning environments.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wayne Daley', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Councillor Wayne Daley
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services