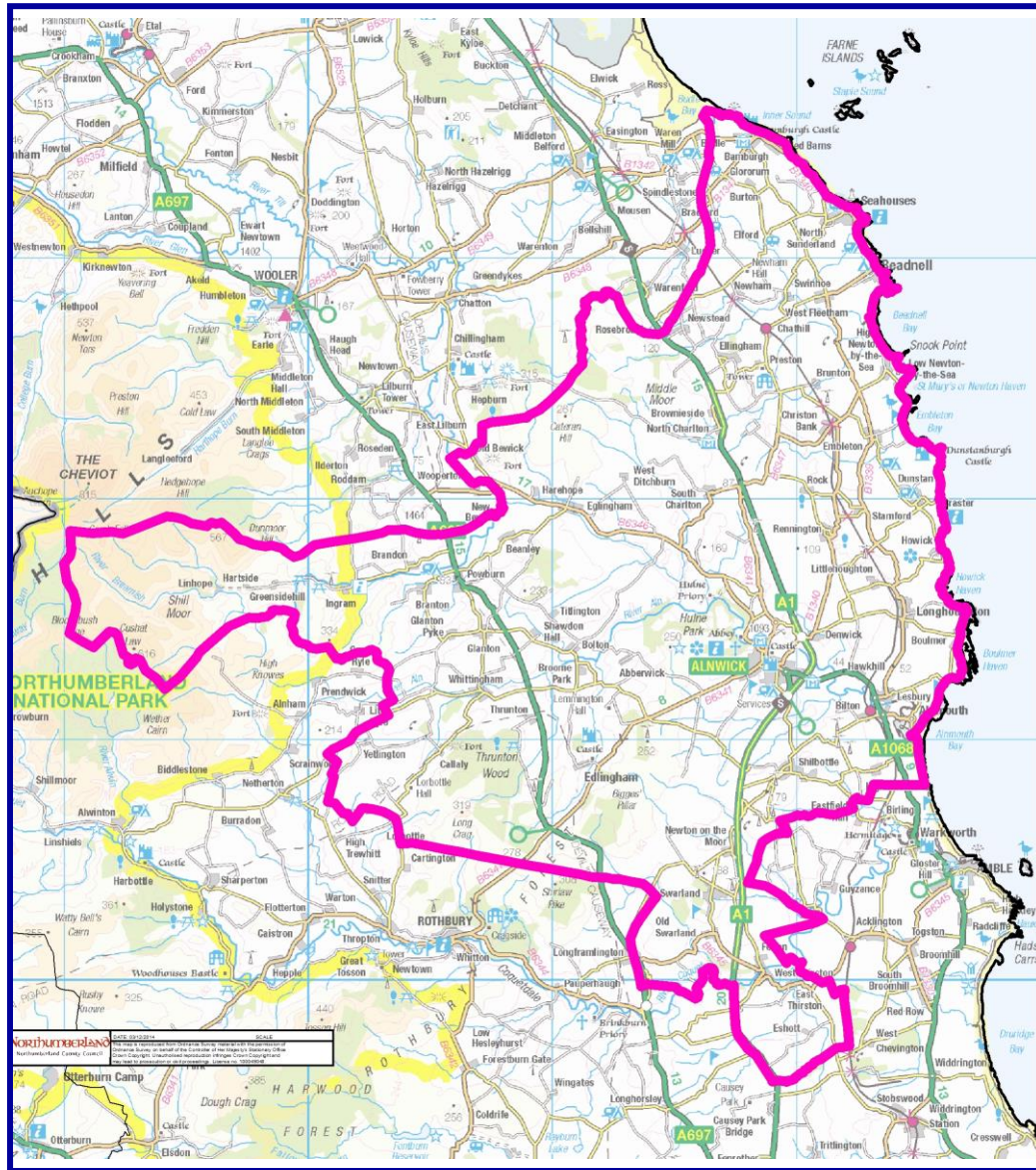


# ALNWICK PARTNERSHIP

## FURTHER CONSULTATION



2 JULY – 22 OCTOBER 2015

# **ALNWICK PARTNERSHIP FURTHER CONSULTATION**

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 In November 2014, schools in the Alnwick partnership requested that the Local Authority carry out a consultation on the structure of schools in the partnership; many of their requests were based upon the belief that change was necessary to maintain and sustain a good quality of education in the longer term. At that time, the Council had no plans to change structures, extend or reduce age ranges or close schools in the partnership. The Council's strategy for school improvement is set out in the 'Director of Education Annual Report and Education Service Statement', which is available on the Council's website at:

<http://northumberland.gov.uk/alnwickconsult>.

This does not advocate a particular school structure across the Partnership or across Northumberland as a whole; rather the strategy focuses on ensuring good standards of leadership and teaching and challenging issues of underperformance where it occurs.

- 1.2 However, it is a crucial part of the Council's role to respond to schools and provide system leadership to ensure that structures allow appropriate progression opportunities for pupils. Council officers recommended that a consultation process should take place so that the preferences and plans of individual schools could be shared with the wider community and the implications of these individual school plans could be analysed in terms of long-term sustainability. If individual schools or groups of schools in other partnerships plan to change age ranges, then similar consultations may have to be considered. Hence there may be an incremental change to the structure of schools in Northumberland, but the process would be driven by local schools with advice from the Council as necessary. National education policy continues to devolve more powers to individual schools and academies, therefore it is vital that the Council plays a leading role in ensuring there is a coherent and high quality educational system across the county.
- 1.3 At the outset of this consultation, officers collated the requests from individual schools and presented three broad models for discussion. It was made clear to consultees that the council had no preferred option and these were simply models to stimulate debate and that the consultation was the result of impetus from schools. However, it was also made clear that the outcome of the consultation might result in proposals that would propose significant changes to schools, including potential closures and that further consultations might be necessary.

## **2. WHAT WERE THE MAIN PROPOSALS RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL'S CABINET IN THE REPORT ARISING FROM THE ORIGINAL CONSULTATION?**

The Council's Cabinet should:

- a) Consider the outcomes of the consultation and consider the feedback from the Governing Bodies of all the schools involved, including community and church schools;
- b) Note the views expressed by the Governing Bodies of the eight Church schools in the Alnwick Partnership, who are responsible for decision-making with regard to the change of age range of their schools;
- c) Decide in the light of the report and recommendations from the Petitions Committee and the Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee whether to permit further consultation, in line with statutory requirements, on a proposal which includes the following changes to school structure in the Alnwick partnership:
  - The Duchess's Community High School becomes an 11-18 Secondary school from 1 September 2017 on a single site (or as soon as practicable thereafter);
  - Lindisfarne, Duke's, Seahouses, and St Pauls RC Aided Middle Schools close on 31 August 2017; these schools would not receive a Year 5 intake in September 2016;
  - Hipsburn, Shilbottle, Swansfield Park, Swarland and Seahouses First Schools become Primary schools from 1 September 2016;
  - St Michael's CE, Longhoughton CE, Ellingham CE, Felton CE, Whittingham CE and St Pauls RC First Schools become Primary schools from 1 September 2016;
  - Embleton Vincent Edwards CE First School closes with effect from 31 August 2016; and
  - Branton First School closes with effect from 31 August 2017.

**If further consultation was agreed then it was recommended that Cabinet also:**

- d) Approve the development of a detailed buildings plan for each school to establish a deliverable and definitive overall budget;
- e) Approve the development of a detailed transport plan for each school to ensure any changes adhere to the council's policy and national guidelines;
- f) Note that the outcomes of the further consultation and plans would be brought back to Cabinet at their November 2015 meeting for a decision on whether or not to permit the publication of a Statutory Proposal on the proposals outlined above;
- g) Note that, subject to a decision by Cabinet to approve the implementation of Model B (revised) at a later date, Cabinet are able to approve the revised capital spend detailed in the report.

- h) Note this report is relevant to the Economic Growth priority included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2013-2017 and that the Medium Term Plan would need to be amended to accommodate the indicative capital costs outlined in this report.

Cabinet agreed that further consultation was necessary and this document informs that process.

### 3. EVIDENCE BASE USED TO INFORM THE PROPOSAL

The full report to Cabinet containing the outcomes of the original consultation is available on the NCC website at [northumberland.gov.uk/ReportAlnwickOutcomes](http://northumberland.gov.uk/ReportAlnwickOutcomes).

#### 3.1 Summary of the views of schools

- **Hipsburn First School** – The Governing Body expressed the desire to become a Primary school.
- **Shilbottle First School** – The Governing Body expressed the desire to become a Primary school
- **Swansfield Park First School** – The Governing Body expressed the desire to become a Primary school.
- **St Michael's CE First School** – the Governing Body expressed the desire to become a Primary school
- **Longhoughton CE First School** – The Governing Body had already approved the publication of a Statutory Notice to extend the upper age range of the school to become Primary with effect from 1 September 2016
- **Ellingham CE Aided First School** – the Governing Body made a decision to approve the extension of the upper age range of the school to become Primary with effect from 1 September 2016.
- **Whittingham CE First School** - the Governing body expressed a desire to become a Primary school
- **St Paul's RC Aided First School and St Paul's RC Aided Middle School** Strongly supported a single site High School which would provide education for children aged 11-18 and believed that the key stage 3 pupils would benefit educationally, being taught consistently by the same teachers who will take them through to their GCSE examinations.
- **Duchess Community High School and Lindisfarne Middle School and Dukes Middle School** (Aln Federation joint Governing Body) –expressed the desire to establish an 11-18 school on a single site and close the two middle schools in their federation.
- **Felton CE Controlled First School** – the Governing Body made an extended response to the consultation in which they recognise benefits of Model B (moving to Primary) for many schools but concluded that Model C (no change) would be preferential for their school.
- **Swarland First School** – the Governing Body of the school was in favour of Model C (no change), their letter stated that without substantial capital expenditure, the high quality education of their students would be jeopardised. Swarland First School could not be expected to provide the same quality of education as at present for an increased number of students, but without the adequate funding that governors believe is necessary."
- **Embleton Vincent Edwards CE First School** – the Governing Body were in favour of Model C, no change. The Governors expressed concern that if other schools became Primary then it could have an adverse effect on their



small school. Funding from a small number of pupils in Year 5 and 6 would be insufficient to expand facilities, buildings and possibly staffing, unless their numbers grew significantly. At present their predicted numbers would not warrant them radically adapting provision for Year 5 and 6.

- **Branton First School** - the school submitted a joint response from Governors, parents, staff and members of the local community, which was **in favour of Model C (no change)**. In supporting Model C they emphasised that Branton First School is a very good school and they believe Glendale Middle School acts as a good bridge to the Duchess High. They wish to change partnership areas to become part of the Berwick Partnership.
- **Seahouses First School** – the school did not submit a response from governors
- **Seahouses Middle School** – the Governing Body submitted a response in favour of **Model C (no change)**, they believed that the three tier system of education, first, middle, high provided a better match to their needs. Particular issues highlighted were transport, curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

Responses from schools outside the Alnwick Partnership that would be impacted by changes were as follows:

- **Belford First School** – The Governing Body submitted an extended response setting out reasons for their support of Option B – the primary school model in the Alnwick Partnership and expresses a desire that a similar arrangement is put into place in the Berwick Partnership.
- **St Mary's CE Middle School, Belford** – The Governing Body submitted a detailed response setting out positive benefits of middle schools in rural areas and for that reason no change was necessary. They also proposed further discussion regarding any other proposed model that offers greater protection to the rural communities, including the creation of a new high school to accommodate pupils from Seahouses, Wooler and Belford.
- **Glendale Middle School** – the Governing Body were in favour of Model A (amalgamation of The Duke's and Lindisfarne Middle Schools) or Model C (no change) and put forward a strong argument in favour of a system that includes middle schools.
- **Wooler First School** – the Governing Body was in favour of Model A, but believed the published timescale was too short (2015). Governors did not believe Model B would resolve the problems within the educational system in Northumberland and therefore favoured Model C – no change.
- **Warkworth CE First School** - The Chair of Governors and Headteacher of the school did not state whether they were in favour or not in favour of any of the models. However they felt there should be consistency between and within the Alnwick Partnership and the Coquet Partnership. Their school might need to change to ensure consistency of progression by becoming a primary school depending upon which overall system is adopted.
- **Dr Thomlinson's Middle School** was consulted, but did not submit a formal response from the Governing Body.

### **3.2 Summary of the views received via the questionnaire survey**

Around 593 responses to the Council's consultation were received from groups or individuals, 250 of which were from consultees linked with the Seahouses area.

**Overall responses:**

Option A		Model B		Model C	
Yes	171	Yes	153	Yes	360
No	265	No	394	No	189

Officers attempted to analyse and collate the main reasons given in favour and against the various options and presented them to cabinet in the report which is available on the NCC website at [northumberland.gov.uk/ReportAlnwickOutcomes](http://northumberland.gov.uk/ReportAlnwickOutcomes).

**3.3 Summary of meetings held with Staff, Governors, Parents and the Public**

A total of 52 meetings were held including 18 with staff, 16 with Governing Bodies and 18 with parents and the public. Four additional meetings were held in schools outside of the partnership that might be significantly affected by any of the proposals. Approximately 1200 individuals attended the meetings with some of the parent/public meetings at some schools attracting 200 consultees.

Many comments/questions/issues were raised; in many instances meetings lasted for more than 2 hours. Detailed notes were taken and analysed separately by council officers, full details are available in the document presented to Cabinet on the NCC website at [northumberland.gov.uk/ReportAlnwickOutcomes](http://northumberland.gov.uk/ReportAlnwickOutcomes).

**3.4 Summary of the correspondence from the Church of England Diocese of Newcastle**

The Local Authority received a written response to the consultation from the Church of England Diocese of Newcastle. They stated that a meeting of the six CE schools directly affected had been held and they confirmed that some are more keen, and in a better position than others, to extend their age range. All however made it clear that if the Alnwick middle schools were to close then their preference would be to become primary schools. To remain as a first school (with pupils having to transfer to primary school for Years 5 and 6 before going on to secondary school) would present pupils and parents with the perceived weaker elements of the three tier system (in particular two transfers of school) and none of the claimed benefits (for example access to specialist facilities).

The board shared the concerns of the Diocesan schools about the possibility of a mixed economy, in which first, middle and primary schools existed together across Alnwick. The board believed that extending the age range of the high school, to include years 7 and 8 should not go ahead without a very clear and firm commitment from the local authority to finance a suitable extension on the new site within two years.

**3.5 Summary of the correspondence from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle**

A letter from the Director of Education from the RC Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle was received and stated that if the decision is to continue with a middle school model then the diocese would support this and if the decision was to move to a primary model incorporating an 11-18 secondary school on a single campus the diocese would also support this. The latter would mean that St Paul's RC First School would become an all-through primary school. If the decision was to move to an 11-18 High school, but with Years 7 and 8 educated on a different campus to Years 9 – 13, then they would wish to give careful consideration as to the appropriate course of action for their schools.

### 3.6 Summary of responses from parish councils

All of the parish councils in the Alnwick Partnership area were consulted on the proposals for schools in the partnership. Responses were received as follows:

- **Thirston Parish Council** recognises the benefits of Model B, but has concerns regarding the ability of small rural first schools to offer adequate educational provision for pupils Years 5 and 6. They felt that some change to the system was inevitable if the system was to remain viable.
- **Beadnell Parish Council** expressed support for the continuation of the middle school system in the Seahouses area. They stated that while Model B may suit schools in the Alnwick area, it was not of educational benefit to children attending and feeding into Seahouses Middle School and would suggest an additional option which allows rural areas to retain a three-tier system with Alnwick town consulting on moving towards a two-tier system – the mixed economy approach.
- **Longframlington Parish Council** expressed the desire to preserve the pathway of pupils living in Longframlington to Dr Thomlinson's Middle School and then to King Edward VI High School.
- **Belford Parish Council** expressed concern that the future of St Mary's CE Middle School at Belford may be put at risk if a two-tier system was implemented in Alnwick Partnership.

### 3.7 Summary of responses from pupils

Feedback from pupils in schools in the Alnwick Partnership was also sought as part of the consultation process. Older students in the middle schools and high schools were invited to complete the Response Form (electronically or in hard-copy), while some of the first schools were able to gather feedback from their pupils via classroom discussions.

Pupils in the following schools submitted joint responses and several others submitted individual responses; **Seahouses Middle School, The Duke's Middle School, St Michaels CE First School, Swansfield Park First School, Swarland First School**. Full analysis was carried out as part of the process and views can be seen in the document submitted to cabinet.

**Seahouses First School** submitted a 'Save our Middle School' Petition in which they set out the reasons why they believe Seahouses Middle School should remain open, together with signatures from all the year groups in the school.

### 3.8 'Save Seahouses Middle School' - Petition

A petition was submitted for consideration by the petitions committee. The petition asked petitioners to agree with the statement below:

*"As a community we are fighting against the proposal of closing our Middle School, due to the proposed reorganisation of the Alnwick Partnership. We do not want our children travelling to Alnwick at age 11. If this decision is approved it will have a massive effect on the area. Please sign our petition and help us fight for our school and our children's future."*

The petition gathered 1, 216 signatures.

### 3.9 Summary of alternative models that were proposed

Around 370 consultees suggested alternative models or variations to the three models (A, B, C) consulted upon. Similar alternative models or variations were pooled with an indication of how many consultees proposed that model in the paper put to cabinet. Twenty-one collated alternative models or variations were put forward. Further details can be found in the report to Cabinet on the outcomes of consultation on the NCC website at [northumberland.gov.uk/ReportAlnwickOutcomes](http://northumberland.gov.uk/ReportAlnwickOutcomes).

The full responses from consultees summarised in this section can be found at [northumberland.gov.uk/ReportAlnwickOutcomes](http://northumberland.gov.uk/ReportAlnwickOutcomes).

## 4. THE RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDING THE PROPOSAL

### Overview

4.1 The Local Authority has a duty to try to ensure that school structures are coherent and provide sufficient high quality places for pupils. Schools and academies have the power to change age ranges and can do so unilaterally. As has been repeatedly stated throughout this process, the consultation has been brought about by the schools themselves who want to ensure that changes they make do not have unintended negative impact on other schools. The process began by officers clearly stating three principles:

1. The Council has no over-arching policy to move from a three-tier to a two-tier system of school structure.
2. The Council has no over-arching policy to close small rural schools as long as they are viable, sustainable and provide a good quality of education.
3. The Council and its officers must look at the sustainability of schools, academies and systems over the long term and work in partnership with all interested bodies to ensure that we provide the best quality of educational opportunity we can to our children and young people.

4.2 However as a result of this consultation, officers are recommending the closure of some small schools and the four middle schools in the Alnwick Partnership. The establishment of an 11-18 school in Alnwick based on a single site appears to have had almost universal support. If that change was to be agreed, it would have inevitable knock-on effects across the Alnwick Partnership and in other partnerships. The Council cannot make one significant change to the system without considering the system as a whole.

4.3 In Seahouses, there are 174 children and two schools, a first school and a middle school. If this proposal was adopted a new primary school would be established on the middle school site. In the view of officers, this would ensure the long term future of a sustainable school in Seahouses village.

4.4 If this proposal was to be adopted, all middle schools would close across the Alnwick Partnership. Therefore, if any first schools were to remain in the partnership, children would have to transfer to one of the newly established primary schools at the end of Year 4 or to a middle school outside the high school catchment area. In this latter case, it would mean that parents would have the choice to send children to the 11-18 school at the end of Year 6 in Alnwick or wait until the end of Year 9. Educational evidence is clear that children who join schools at times other than the normal time of entry are significantly less likely to



achieve well than their peer group. In this case, the vast majority of children would join Alnwick Duchess High school at the beginning of Year 7.

- 4.5 Many first schools have expressed their determination to become primary schools. Governors have the power to take those steps without reference to the local authority and some have already begun this process. The Council cannot ignore the impact this would have on other schools. However, many consultees (including some schools themselves), expressed concern that small first schools would find it difficult to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils in Years 5 and 6, should they become primary schools. Other consultees felt that having very small numbers of pupils in Years 5 and 6 would limit opportunities for social interaction between children of similar ages and ability. Officers believe that these are valid concerns and that the implementation of national government changes to curricular structures, and the changed expectations of Ofsted, would increase these difficulties if very small primary schools were established.

### **Individual elements of the proposal**

#### **4.6 Expand the Duchess High School Building at the Greensfield site to accommodate students in Years 7 and 8.**

This was the alternative proposal with the greatest support. Many respondents believed that many of the benefits of Model B would be lost if the students in Years 7 and 8 were educated separately from the main body of the school and council officers agree. As a result of this feedback, Council officers have carried out feasibility work on this proposal and have identified that this change to the original proposal could be achieved at a cost of around £6m.

#### **4.7 Closure of Embleton Vincent Edwards CE First School on 31 August 2016**

Although the proposal is to close this school, viable alternative proposals are being sought during the further consultation period. However, it is important at this stage to explain the reasons for the proposal. The closure is not being recommended because Embleton is a small school, but because if all the other changes are made across the Alnwick Partnership it is believed that it would not remain viable as a First school. There would be no feeder middle school. The school would be unable to become a viable primary school for the reasons outlined above regarding curriculum offer. There are two local schools within reach of the school, both of which are CE schools that would enable reasonable transport arrangements to be put in place. The Diocese has not expressed a concern about the closure of the school and the proposed new arrangements in terms of offering appropriate provision. The closure date of 31 August 2016 in relation to Embleton Vincent Edwards CE First School is being proposed because middle schools in the Alnwick Partnership would not have an intake into Year 5 in September 2015 and therefore these pupils would either have to join the Year 5 at one of the continuing primary schools or would have to find a place in a middle school outside of the Alnwick Partnership. Parents would continue to be able to exercise their preference for any school should they wish to do so. It is proposed that the catchment area of Embleton Vincent Edwards CE First School should be split between Ellingham CE First School and Longhoughton CE First School.

#### **4.8 Close Branton First School on 31 August 2017**

On-going discussions will take place at the school to see if closure can be avoided and alternative solutions found. However it is important at this stage to explain the reasons for the proposal. The closure is not being recommended because Branton is a small first school but because if all the other changes are made across the Alnwick

Partnership, it would mean the school would not enable children to have a coherent pathway between the age of 4 and 18 and this could potentially disadvantage them educationally. There would be no feeder middle school in Alnwick and this would mean children would move out of catchment to Glendale school in the Berwick Partnership as they do now; in itself this is not a problem and has become custom and practice. However, children would then transfer back to The Duchess Community High School in Year 9. The main drawback of this solution would be that children would be joining an 11-18 school in Alnwick with a well-established cohort of children who had been at that school for 2 years. Educational evidence shows this is not a good model and can disadvantage a child's progress. The alternative would be for Branton to become a primary school; for the reasons outlined above officers do not think this is a viable solution. We believe that there are local schools within reach that would enable reasonable transport arrangements to be put in place; however further work is being done on this issue. In addition to the complications of the situation in Alnwick Partnership, there can be no long term-guarantee that schools in the Berwick Partnership would not also decide to change. The date of 31 August 2017 in relation to Branton First School is being proposed as pupils in Year 4 in the school in August 2016 could apply for a place in Year 5 at Glendale Middle School for September 2016. Branton First School would then operate as a first school (Reception to Year 4) for a further year before closing in August 2017. It is proposed that the catchment area of Branton First School should be allocated to Whittingham CE First School (see paragraph 'Catchment Areas' later in this document).

#### **4.9 Seahouses, Alnwick Lindisfarne, The Duke's and St Paul's RC Middle Schools to close on 31 August 2017**

The original proposal (Model B) schedule for closure of middle schools has been delayed based on feedback from consultees who believed that closure of the schools in August 2016 was too soon to ensure as smooth a transition as possible for pupils and would cause unacceptable disruption. The revised proposal would see the middle schools close in August 2017, but operate without a Year 5 from September 2016. The change in the timeline for closure is also linked to the need to accommodate Years 7 and 8 pupils with the rest of The Duchess's Community High School at the Greensfield site. Officers have established that the proposed extension to the building could be ready for September 2017. This would remove the need for the high school to operate on two sites for an extended period (there may still be a need to operate for a short time on two sites if building works are not quite complete by September 2017).

- 4.10 In relation to Seahouses Middle School specifically where there is much opposition to the proposal, viable alternative proposals are being sought during consultation. It is important to state the principle upon which this proposal is founded; that is the establishment of a single primary school on the current middle school site that would enable the village to have a school that would be successful and sustainable in the longer term. Such a proposal would not disadvantage children by forcing them to join a well-established cohort of children in Year 9.
- 4.11 Government guidance requires that certain additional criteria should be considered when proposing the closure of small, rural primary schools and therefore this will be addressed as part of this consultation process. A diagram setting out the proposed transition of pupils in more detail is provided in 'Timeline for implementation of proposed Model B (revised)' on page 11.





















## 5. PROPOSED STRUCTURE OF SCHOOLS

The proposed structure of schools in the Alnwick Partnership is given in the table below:

SCHOOL	CURRENT SITUATION			PROPOSED PRIMARY/SECONDARY MODEL		
	Net Capacity in Sept 2014 (Number on Roll in Jan 2015)	Forms of Entry (FE)	Planned Admission Number (PAN) 2014/15	Capacity	Forms of Entry (FE)	Planned Admission Number (PAN)
Swansfield Park First School	210 (201)	1.6	48	315	1.5	45
St Michael's CE First School	210 (122)	1.4	42	210	1	30
St Paul's RC VA First School	135 (129)	0.8	24	210	1	30
Branton First School	30 (13)	0.2	6	<b>Proposed closure - 31 August 2017</b>		
Ellingham CE VA First School	65 (53)	0.4	12	105	0.5	15
Embleton Vincent Edward's CE First School	75 (24)	0.4	12	<b>Proposed closure - 31 August 2016</b>		
Felton CE First School	70 (56)	0.7	22	105	0.5	15
Hipsburn First School	108 (92)	0.7	20	150	0.7	21
Longhoughton First School	187 (99)	1.7	35	210	1	30
Seahouses First School	115 (74)	0.8	23	150	0.7	21
Shilbottle First School	85 (116)	0.8	25	210	1	30
Swarland First School	110 (66)	0.7	22	120	0.6	17
Whittingham First School	75 (46)	0.5	15	105	0.5	15
Alnwick Lindisfarne Middle School)	535 (355)	4	120	<b>Proposed closure - 31 August 2017</b>		
The Duke's Middle School	342 (151)	2.3	68	<b>Proposed closure - 31 August 2017</b>		
Seahouses Middle School	144 (102)	1.1	34	<b>Proposed closure - 31 August 2017</b>		
St Paul's RC VA Middle School	261 (182)	1.7	50	<b>Proposed closure - 31 August 2017</b>		
The Duchess's Community High School	1181 (1109)	10	300	1651 (all pupils at Greensfield site)	8.3	250

## 6. TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PROPOSED MODEL

The diagram below shows the journey individual pupils in relevant year groups would undertake should this model be implemented:

	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Sep-14										
Sep-15										
Sep-16										
Sep-17										
Sep-18										

Key

FIRST	PRIMARY	MIDDLE	HIGH	SECONDARY
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6.1 As can be seen from the diagram, those pupils currently in Year 4 in the first schools (July 2015) would be the final year group to undergo two moves between schools, firstly in September this year to middle school and then in September 2017 when they would become the new Year 7 at The Duchess's High School. Staff at both the middle schools and the high school would carefully manage the transition of the new Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9 intake into The Duchess's High School as they move there in September 2017.

If the model were approved, the detailed timeline for implementation would be as follows:

- **Hipsburn, Shilbottle, Swansfield Park, Seahouses, Swarland, St Michael's CE, Longhoughton CE, Whittingham CE, Ellingham CE, Felton CE, St Paul's RC First Schools -**

### 1 September 2016

- Pupils in Year 4 in the first schools on 31 August 2016 would be retained by their new primary schools as Year 5.
- All four middle schools in the partnership would not receive a Year 5 intake and operate with Years 6, 7 and 8 only.

### 1 September 2018

- Pupils in Year 6 in the primary schools on 31 August 2018 would transfer as the new Year 7 to The Duchess's Community High School at the Greensfield site.

- **Branton First School: Proposed closure timeline**

### 1 September 2016



- Pupils in Year 4 in Branton First School on 31 August 2016 would transfer either to Glendale Middle School (this is the common pattern currently) or another middle school or to one of the new primary schools in the partnership according to parental preference as Year 5.

### **31 August 2017**

- Branton First School would close.

### **1 September 2017**

- All pupils would be guaranteed a place in Whittingham CE Primary School, which is the proposed catchment school, or to another school offering primary provision according to parental preference.

## **• Embleton Vincent Edwards CE First School: Proposed closure timeline**

### **31 August 2016**

- Embleton Vincent Edwards First School would close.

### **1 September 2016**

- All pupils would be guaranteed a place at Ellingham CE Primary School or Longhoughton CE Primary School, whichever is the relevant proposed catchment school, or to another school offering primary provision according to parental preference.

## **• Alnwick Lindisfarne, The Dukes, Seahouses and St Paul's Middle Schools**

### **1 September 2016**

- All four middle schools in the partnership would not receive a Year 5 intake and operate with Years 6, 7 and 8 only.

### **31 August 2017**

- The middle schools in the partnership would close on 31 August 2017.

### **1 September 2017**

- Pupils in Year 8 in all the middle schools in August 2017 would transfer as Year 9 as usual to either The Duchess's Community High School at its new site at Greensfield, or to another high school according to parental preference.
- Pupils in Years 6 and 7 in all the middle schools in August 2017 would be guaranteed a place as the new Years 7 and 8 in The Duchess's Community High School, although some pupils in Years 6 and 7 in St Paul's Middle School may choose to transfer to St Benet Biscop RC High School in Bedlington to join the Year 7 and Year 8 cohorts in that school or to another middle, high or secondary school according to parental preference.

## **• The Duchess's Community High School**

### **1 September 2016**

- The Duchess Community High school will relocate to its new building on the Greensfield site in Alnwick.
- The school will receive its new Year 9 intake as normal.

### **1 September 2017**

- The school will receive its new Year 9 intake as normal.
- The school would receive new Years 7 and 8 transferring from the closed middle schools, to be educated in new accommodation on the Greensfield site. However, should the new accommodation not be complete, it may be necessary to use the Lindisfarne site as a short-term temporary measure.

## 1 September 2018

- The school would receive some additional pupils from Middle Schools outside of the partnership subject to places being available.
- The Duchess Community High school would receive its new Year 7 transferring from the primary schools.

## 7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS OF THE MODEL

### 7.3 Catchment Areas

If the model is approved for implementation, the catchment areas of Ellingham CE First School and Longhoughton CE First School would expand from September 2016 to incorporate relevant sections of the Embleton Vincent Edwards CE First School catchment as a result of the proposed closure of the school in August 2016. The catchment area of Whittingham CE First School is proposed to expand in September 2017 to incorporate the catchment area of Branton First School as a result of its proposed closure in August 2017. The maps showing the proposed changes to the catchment areas of these schools are available to view from the Council's website at <http://northumberland.gov.uk/alnwickconsult>.

**Whatever final proposals are agreed, parents are still able to exercise their parental preference for a place for their child at any school, although a place would only be allocated if one was available.**

### 7.4 School Transport

Transport for individual pupils is always arranged in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy. A detailed transport plan for each school will be developed to ensure any changes made through the implementation of the proposed Model B (revised) adhere to the council's policy and national guidelines. This will be of particular importance in regard to those schools which may be closed.

Further information on the Council's Home to School Transport provision is available on the Council's website at <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/schooltransport>.

### 7.5 Implications for school buildings

Estimated building costs of this proposal are set out in the following table, although further detailed work would be required if the changes were approved for implementation.

School	Description	Costs
St Michael's CE First School	School has capacity within current building	Nil
Felton CE First School	School has capacity within current building	Nil
St Paul's RC First School	School has capacity within current building	Nil
The Duchess's High School	Modify new build to allow Years 7 and 8 pupils to be accommodated on single site	£6m
Swansfield Park First School	Extension works to accommodate additional pupils	£1.1m

Seahouses Middle school	Remodel school building to primary	£895k
Shilbottle First	Extension works to accommodate additional pupils	£743k
Hipsburn First school	Extension works to accommodate additional pupils	£260k
Swarland First School	Extension works to accommodate additional pupils	£57k
Whittingham CE First School	Internal remodelling to create an additional classroom	£66k
Longhoughton CE First School	Extension works to accommodate additional pupils	£260k
Ellingham CE First School	Extension works to accommodate additional pupils	£260k

The total cost of funding the capital work associated with this proposal is **£9.6m** plus any dilapidation costs associated with The Duke's Middle School. These costs would be funded as set out in the following table:

<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Contribution</b>
Council's Medium Term Plan	£4.5m
School's Capital Investment Programme	£4.9m
LCVAP (church capital grant) (90% of C of E Aided costs.) NOTE: Further discussions to take place with diocese regarding this process	£234k

## **6. HOW CAN I MAKE MY VIEWS ABOUT THESE PROPOSALS KNOWN?**

The Council's Cabinet would like to hear your views on the changes set out in this document and in particular whether you have any alternative suggestions. A questionnaire is attached to the end of this document for you to complete with your views and return via one of the suggested methods.

Consultation meetings for parents will be held at Embleton Vincent Edward's CE First School, Branton First School and Seahouses Middle School (for parents of Seahouses First and Seahouses Middle School) during October (details below).

Council Officers will also offer to meet with governors and staff in all schools to clarify any of the issues raised in this document.

You can express your views about the various proposals via this document. Electronic copies are available to download from the Council's website at

**<http://northumberland.gov.uk/alnwickconsult>**

Following the closure of consultation on **22 October 2015**, Council officers will produce a report setting out the findings of the consultation for the Council's Cabinet.

The Council's Cabinet will meet in November 2015 to decide whether or not to proceed to the next steps in the process in relation to this proposal for the ten community schools in the Alnwick Partnership and Embleton Vincent Edward's CE First School.

The Governing Bodies of Ellingham CE VA First School, Felton CE First School, Longhoughton CE First School, St Paul's RC VA First School, St Paul's RC VA Middle School, St Michael's CE First School and Whittingham CE First School would also need to decide in the light of this model whether or not to proceed to the next steps in relation to their individual schools.

## **REQUESTS FOR CONSULTATION MEETINGS**

In addition to this consultation document, the Governing Body of any school impacted by the proposals set out in this document may request a meeting with Council Officers during the consultation period. Additional meetings may also be requested by the Governing Body to include parents, staff and community members. If you would like to arrange a meeting, please contact:

Lorraine Fife, 01670 624050 or email [Lorraine.Fife@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Lorraine.Fife@northumberland.gov.uk)

**by Friday 11 September 2015.**

Where additional meetings are agreed, the Council and school will inform Governors, staff and parents of the date and venue. It is likely that these meetings if requested will be held in late September or early October. As much notice as possible will be given for any additional meetings, but subject to when requests are made meetings may have to be held with relatively short notice.



## **FURTHER CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM - ALNWICK PARTNERSHIP**

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### **PART 1- ABOUT YOU**

Your name (Optional): .....

Are you responding mainly as a (tick one box only):

Parent/carer of child(ren) in Alnwick Partnership School(s): ☐ Governor in Alnwick School: ☐

Staff Member in Alnwick Partnership school: ☐ Pupil in Alnwick Partnership School: ☐

With which school in the Alnwick partnership do you most associate with?

Parent/carer of child(ren) in school(s) outside Alnwick Partnership: ☐ Governor in school outside Alnwick Partnership: ☐

Staff Member in school outside Alnwick Partnership: ☐ Pupil in school outside Alnwick Partnership: ☐

If you ticked any of the above, with which school do you most associate with?

Parish Councillor: ☐ Parish/town council: .....

Resident in Alnwick Partnership area: ☐ Town/village: .....

Resident outside of Alnwick Partnership area: ☐ Town/village: .....

Other: ☐ Please clarify: .....

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### **PART 2 – YOUR VIEWS ON THIS MODEL**

**Q1) Do you agree that The Duchess's Community High School building at the Greensfield site should be extended to include accommodation for the Year 7 and 8 pupils effective from September 2017?**

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐

**Your reasons or any alternatives you would like to propose:** (please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

**Q2) Do you agree that Embleton Vincent Edwards CE First School should close with effect from 31 August 2016 and the catchment area changes made?**

**Yes**

☐

**No**

☐

**Don't Know**

☐

**Your reasons or any alternatives you would like to propose** (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary).

**Q3) Do you agree that Branton First School should close with effect from 31 August 2017 and the catchment area changes made?**

**Yes**

☐

**No**

☐

**Don't know**

☐

**Your reasons or any alternatives you would like to propose** (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary).

**Q4) If you have any general alternative suggestions please set them out below.**

(please continue on a separate sheet if necessary).

**SUBMITTING YOUR RESPONSE FORM:**

**There are three ways that you can submit your response form;**

**1) You can use the electronic form on the Council's website at**

**<http://northumberland.gov.uk/alnwickconsult>**

**2) You can return this form attached to an email**

**email [Lorraine.Fife@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Lorraine.Fife@northumberland.gov.uk)**

**3) You can return your Response Form in hard copy to:**

**FAO Lorraine Fife, Children's Services, FREEPOST MP135, County Hall,  
MORPETH, NE61 1BR**

**THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THIS CONSULTATION  
THE CLOSING DATE FOR CONSULTATION IS 22 OCTOBER 2015**