CABINET
Date: 16 March 2016

Outcomes of Consultation on Proposed Amalgamation of James Calvert Spence College (Middle) and James Calvert Spence College (High) schools

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children’s Services

Cabinet Member: Councillor Robert Arckless, Children’s Services

Report prepared by Andrew Johnson, Director of Education and Skills

Purpose of Report

This report presents the outcomes of the consultation carried out by the Council on behalf of the Governing Body of the James Calvert Spence Federation on the proposal to amalgamate James Calvert Spence College, South Avenue (middle school) with James Calvert Spence College, Acklington Road (high school). The consultation took place between 9 December 2015 and 17 February 2016.

Feedback received during the consultation period has been used to help determine the final conclusions and recommendations set out in this report.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1) note the outcomes of consultation outlined in this report and the proposed alternative solutions outlined in paragraph 14 of this report;

2) note the consultation process undertaken by the Council on behalf of the Governing Body of the James Calvert Spence Federation and the outcomes of that consultation;

3) note any recommendations from the Family and Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to this proposal;

4) decide whether or not to approve the publication of a statutory notice on the proposal to amalgamate James Calvert Spence College, South Avenue with James Calvert Spence College, Acklington Road with effect from 1 June 2016—this would require the formal closure of James Calvert Spence College, South Avenue with effect from 31 May 2016.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the Economic Growth priority included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2013-2017.
Key Issues

1. James Calvert Spence College (JCSC) South Avenue (middle school site) forms part of the James Calvert Spence Federation of schools, which also includes James Calvert Spence College (JCSC) Acklington Road (high school site) and Acklington CE First School, which recently joined the Federation. There is an Executive Headteacher in place with responsibility over the three schools in the federation. As a hard federation, all three schools are strategically managed by one Governing Body.

2. On 8 December 2015, at the request of the Governing Body of the James Calvert Spence Federation, Cabinet gave permission for consultation on a proposal to amalgamate JCSC South Avenue and JCSC Acklington Road. Consultation commenced on 9 December 2015 and closed on 17 February 2016.

3. Specific details of the consultation process are set out in the background to this report, but in short feedback was gathered from statutory consultees via a consultation document available in both electronic and hard copy format. A drop-in session was held for staff and a separate meeting was held for parents and any other interested parties at JCSC South Avenue in January 2016, although no consultees took up the opportunity attend these meetings.

4. With regard to the Council’s consultation process, a letter notifying the opening of the consultation and information on how the consultation document could be accessed was sent to all parents, staff and Governors in JCSC South Avenue, JCSC Acklington Road and Acklington CE First School. Other consultees included local parish councils, unions, and other schools in the Coquet Partnership. The total number of stakeholders consulted was circa 1,575. The consultation register setting out the full list of consultees is included at Appendix 1 and a copy of the consultation document is included at Appendix 2 of this report.

5. The consultation document set out the following questions to consultees and also asked for any further comments:

   1. *Do you agree with the proposal to amalgamate James Calvert Spence College, South Avenue with James Spence College, Acklington Road?*

   2. *If you have an alternative suggestion to the proposal set out in this document, please set it out below.*

Five consultees responded to the consultation; three consultees indicated that they agreed with the proposal, while two indicated they did not agree. The main reasons provided by consultees to their responses are set out in paragraph 11. Given the low response rate to the consultation, it could be construed that the overwhelming majority of consultees are comfortable with the proposal of the Governing Body of the James Calvert Spence Federation.

6. If this proposal were to be adopted following consultation, JCSC South Avenue would close as a separate entity on 31 May 2016 and JCSC Acklington Road would extend its range from age 13 to 18 to age 9 to 18 from 1 June 2016.

7. The comments and observations of all consultees who responded during this consultation have been considered in preparing this report and its conclusions and recommendations. In the light of that analysis, Cabinet is recommended to approve the publication of a Statutory Notice to amalgamate JCSC South Avenue and JCSC Acklington Road with
effect from 1 June 2016, necessitating the closure of JCSC South Avenue with effect from 31 May 2016.

8. Should agreement to the publication of a Statutory Notice be given, the public would have four weeks to make representations, which might be in the form of comments or objections. Within two months of the end of the four-week representation period, Cabinet would be required to make a decision on the proposal. If Cabinet is not able to consider the proposal within this timescale, they must forward the proposal and any representations received during the representation period to the Schools Adjudicator.
BACKGROUND

Outcomes of Consultation on Proposed Amalgamation of James Calvert Spence College (Middle) and James Calvert Spence College (High) schools

The Consultation Process and Feedback

9. A consultation document outlining the proposals was distributed to circa 1,575 consultees, a full list of whom is provided at Appendix 1 of this report. Five consultees responded formally to the consultation; it should also be noted that at least two phone calls were received from consultees requiring further information on the proposal but it is not clear whether those consultees were included in the group who formally responded. In addition to the availability of the consultation document, a drop-in session was held for staff in the JCSC Federation and a meeting was held on 21 January 2016 at JCSC South Avenue for parents and any other interested parties. The consultation process and meetings were also advertised on the Council’s website. While the purpose of the meetings/drop-in sessions was to allow consultees the opportunity to understand the content of the proposals and their implications and to make known their views on the proposals and to suggest alternatives, no consultees in fact attended.

10. Five consultees responded to the consultation either by completing and returning a hard-copy of the consultation document or via the electronic form on the Council’s website. Three of the consultees who responded agreed with the proposal, while two did not agree. One consultee identified themselves as a parent, one as a parent and member of staff, two consultees were local residents and one was a Governor in Amble First School.

11. The main reasons why other consultees either agreed or did not agree with the proposal to amalgamate JCSC South Avenue and JCSC Acklington Road are as follows:

11.1 Main responses in support of the proposal to amalgamate JCSC South Avenue and JCSC Acklington Road:

- The amalgamation of the two schools can only benefit the students age 9 to 18 years by having no interruption to the years of study allowing the students to gain in confidence
- It seems sensible and logical
- Appear to be advantages in the reduction of administrative workload and a cohesive approach to education across the age ranges 9- 19. Under the proposed arrangements we do not believe that there would be any major impact upon Amble First School other than a potential benefit for the long term prospects of our pupils.

11.2 Main responses against the proposal to amalgamate JCSC South Avenue and JCSC Acklington Road:

- Northumberland’s three tier system is out of date and not synchronised with national systems, which causes additional problems through transition at non-standard-tested times. Amalgamating these two schools will effectively continue the three tier system within this partnership and will thus be to the detriment of the children and their education. Northumberland County Council needs to look to the future, rather than allow its schools to embed themselves further in a failing system.
- There are a number of issues which will not be solved by this amalgamation e.g. 5-10 min journey of staff between the sites only during break or lunch can result
in many specialist staff not teaching classes that they could otherwise deliver if all year groups were in the same building.

- If the two schools become one there is a risk that poor results in the middle school could negatively impact improvements made at the high school. I also think that if the two schools become one there is a risk that the poor results achieved by the middle school recently could drag down the improvements achieved by the high school. This could impact negatively on both schools in a 'one stop' OFSTED.

Commentary

The rationale for the amalgamation of the two schools as set out in paragraph 12 below is based on the desire to remove existing barriers between the schools which prevent flexibility and impact on outcomes for students. Rather than having a negative impact, the Governing Body believes that the amalgamation of the two schools will enable the good practice within both schools to be more effectively shared and built upon so that standards at both sites are raised and better outcomes for students achieved.

12. Students in JCSC South Avenue and JCSC Acklington Road were also consulted on the proposed amalgamation via discussions within their Tutor Groups and at assembly. The comments received from students were as follows;

- Doesn't really affect students
- Only benefit is to parents - because they don't have to apply for high school because they know they already have a place for their child
- Doesn't effect year 11 because they are going into 6th form anyway
- It will be easier for our teacher because they only have to have one ofsted inspection rather than two
- If they (students based at the South Avenue site) are perfectly behaved during an Ofsted visit and students up the high school weren't (or vice versa) would this mean they would get an inaccurate report? Would they still get their own section on the report or would it be just blended into one?

13. Given the extent of the consultation and the low response rate, it could be construed that the vast majority of consultees are content with the proposal of the Governing Body of the James Calvert Spence Federation to amalgamate JCSC South Avenue and JCSC Acklington Road.

Alternative Solutions put forward during consultation

14. During consultation, alternative solutions or suggestions were sought from consultees that they thought may resolve the issues identified in the rationale for the proposal. The following alternative solutions were put forward and commentary on the viability of each solution is offered:

**Alternative Solution 1:**

The Coquet partnership should change to a two tier system, in line with national systems, providing primary and secondary schools that do not split curricula or involve transition at times out of step with the way curricula and assessment are designed.

**Alternative Solution 2:**

Consult on moving Years 7 and 8 to the Acklington Road site and on moving Years 1-4 [presumably including pre-school] from Acklington CE First in to the South Avenue site,
ideally amalgamating with Amble First School. Acklington Road and South Avenue should then either become two schools (aligning themselves with most of the rest of the county) or become one school (3-18 years). The Amble First School building could be sold and the money used to renovate South Avenue and extend Acklington Road to accommodate the two extra year groups. Staff could then be used where needed within their specialism at Acklington Road which would reduce the number of staff needed (thus allowing more money to improve the buildings) and allow the most appropriate staff to teach each class. This would dramatically improve the quality of education and the most logical and fair way to use the current educational resources and budget in Amble.

Conclusion on Alternative Solutions

These proposals would only be considered for consultation by the Council if the relevant schools requested consultation on such proposals.

Implications of the proposal to amalgamate JCSC South Avenue and JCSC Acklington Road

The Rationale for the Proposal

15. The rationale for the amalgamation of the two schools is based on the desire of the Governing Body to maximise current systems to ensure a continuity of approach between the schools, enhance management flexibility and remove any existing barriers or unnecessary bureaucracy between the schools. Thereby creating a seamless management structure and planning strategy and allowing better transition when pupils transfer from one site to the other at age 13. The Governing Body believes that this proposal to amalgamate the two schools would therefore have a positive impact on outcomes for pupils at age 16 and thereby improve their life chances. Currently each school has to create and monitor its own self-evaluation report, operational and strategic plan and budget.

16. It is likely that parents and students would see very few changes to either school structure or organisation. However in the longer term the improved flexibility provided by the new structure would enhance capacity to invest in the schools and improve efficiency.

17. Catchment Areas and Admissions Arrangements

Should the two schools become amalgamated, the catchment area of JCSC South Avenue would not be affected as it is identical to the catchment area of JCSC Acklington Road. From September 2017, there would be only one intake into the amalgamated school at Year 5 and therefore the Planned Admission Number (PAN) of JCSC Acklington Road from September 2017 is proposed to be set at 120 in line with the current PAN of JCSC South Avenue. This would be a considerable advantage to parents who would no longer have to apply for a place for their child in Year 9 at JCSC Acklington Road. However, parents residing outside of the catchment area who wished to apply for a place for their child in Year 9 at the amalgamated school would continue to be able to do so, and subject to a place being available would be offered a place in the school.

18. Parents of pupils currently in Year 4 in first schools who have applied for a place in Year 5 in JCSC South Avenue for September 2016 and parents of pupils currently in Year 8 in JCSC South Avenue who have applied for a place in Year 9 in JCSC Acklington Road for September 2016 would be offered a place in the newly amalgamated school subject to the Council’s Admissions Policy in accordance with the current process.
19. **Staff**

Should the proposal be approved, it is the intention of the Governing Body of the James Calvert Spence College Federation to continue to educate the pupils aged 9 to 13 at the South Avenue site. Therefore, the site would require the existing staffing arrangements to remain in place. Staff in JCSC South Avenue and JCSC Acklington Road are employed by the County Council and Managed by the Federated Governing Body of the James Calvert Spence College Federation and have mobility clauses within their employment contracts which enable them to work within either of the two schools. As the amalgamation of the two schools would be an administrative change rather than a physical change to the location of staff or a change to their terms and conditions, there would be no anticipated staff redundancies as a result of this proposal.

20. **Transport**

There would be no change to the transport arrangements of pupils who currently attend or who would attend the South Avenue site in the future. In any event, the Council’s Home to School Transport Policy is applied on an individual basis.

21. **Additional Needs**

Current provision for pupils with additional needs at JCSC South Avenue would be unaffected by the proposed amalgamation. There is no specialist additional needs provision currently within the school and there are no proposals to change this situation. The amalgamation may allow further development of shared support provision or investment in shared resources.

22. **Buildings**

As stated, it would be the intention of the Governing Body of the federation to continue to provide education to pupils aged 9 to 13 at the South Avenue site, therefore there are no cost implications for school buildings arising from this proposal. The amalgamation would allow for further development of joint use of buildings, sharing of resources and investment.

23. **Finance**

As two distinct schools, JCSC South Avenue and JCSC Acklington Road are funded as separate entities through Northumberland’s Formula for Funding Schools. However, should JCSC South Avenue amalgamate with JCSC Acklington Road after 1 April 2016 the extended age range school, formed by this amalgamation, will receive funding equivalent to the formula funding of the two schools added together for the appropriate proportion of the year. Therefore, JCSC Acklington Road as the continuing school on two sites would not be financially disadvantaged in the financial period 2016/17.

24. **Timeline**

It is proposed that the amalgamation of JCSC South Avenue and JCSC Acklington Road would be implemented in accordance with the following arrangements and timeline:

**31 May 2016**
- James Calvert Spence College, South Avenue would close.

**1 June 2016**
- James Calvert Spence College, Acklington Road would extend its age range from an age 13 to 18 school to an age 9 to 18 school and would incorporate the
catchment area of James Calvert Spence College, South Avenue for admissions into Years 5 to 9.

1 September 2016
- Revised Planned Admissions Numbers (PANs) come into effect for all new admissions to all schools.

1 September 2017
- New Planned Admission Number for James Calvert Spence College, Acklington Road of 120 comes into effect for admissions into Year 5.
# IMPLICATIONS ARISING OUT OF THE REPORT

## Policy
The consultation has been consistent with the Council’s policy to implement changes in the structure of schools as appropriate in accordance with local wishes and needs so as to ensure that pupils attend only good schools.

## Finance and value for money
As two distinct schools, JCSC South Avenue and JCSC Acklington Road are funded as separate entities through Northumberland’s Formula for Funding Schools. However, should James Calvert Spence College, South Avenue be approved to amalgamate with JCSC Acklington Road after 1 April 2016, the extended age range school formed by this amalgamation will receive funding equivalent to the formula funding of the two schools added together for the appropriate proportion of the year. Therefore, JCSC Acklington Road as the continuing school on two sites would not be financially disadvantaged in the financial period 2016/17.

There would be no costs associated with redundancies as a result of this proposal (refer to para. 19).

It is not expected that there will be any impact on the council’s home to school transport budget as a result of this proposal.

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

## Human Resources
Should the proposal be approved, it is the intention of the Governing Body of the James Calvert Spence College Federation to continue to educate the pupils aged 9 to 13 at the South Avenue site. Therefore, the site would require the existing staffing arrangements to remain in place. Staff in JCSC South Avenue and JCSC Acklington Road are employed by the County Council and Managed by the Federated Governing Body of the James Calvert Spence College Federation and have mobility clauses within their employment contracts which enable them to work within either of the two schools. As the amalgamation of the two schools would be an administrative change rather than a physical change to the location of staff or a change to their terms and conditions, there would be no anticipated staff redundancies as a result of this proposal.

## Property
There are no immediate implications for property as a result of this proposal.

## Equalities
An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out concurrently with the consultation process and is attached as Appendix 3.

## Risk Assessment
A full risk assessment has been carried out on this proposal.

## Carbon Reduction
There would be no impact either positively or negatively on Carbon Reduction as a result of this proposal.
Crime & Disorder
This report has considered Section 17 (CDA) and the duty it imposes and there are no implications arising from it.

Customer Considerations
The proposed amalgamation of James Calvert Spence College, South Avenue and James Calvert Spence College, Acklington Road is primarily based on the desire of the Governing Body to remove any existing barriers to a seamless transition between the two school sites when pupils move at age 13. The Governing Body believes that this proposal to amalgamate the two schools would therefore have a positive impact on outcomes for pupils at age 16 and thereby improve their life chances.

Consultation
This report has been considered by the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services and the Chief Legal Officer.

Wards
Amble; Amble West with Warkworth; Druridge Bay

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Deputy Chief Executive/DCS Report to Cabinet 8 December 2015
Response Forms from Consultation

Report sign off

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Email: Andy.Johnson@northumberland.gcsx.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Consultation Register
Appendix 2 - Consultation Document
Appendix 3 - Equalities Impact Assessment
Appendix 1

Consultation Register

Proposal for amalgamation of JCSC South Avenue and JCSC Acklington Road – Statutory Consultation

CONSULTEES

Schools directly affected by proposal (parents, staff, Governors and students):

James Calvert Spence College South Avenue
James Calvert Spence College Acklington Road
Acklington CE First School (not pupils)

Other schools potentially impacted (headteacher, Chair of Governors and parents)

Warkworth CE First School
Amble First School
Amble Links First School
Broomhill First School
Red Row First School
Grange View CE First School

Other schools potentially impacted (headteacher, Chair of Governors)

Barndale House Special School
Cleaswell Hill Special School

CE Diocese

RC Diocese

MP – Ann-Marie Trevelyan

Parish Councils
Warkworth, Amble by the Sea, Hauxley, Togston, East Chevington, Acklington, Cresswell, Widdrington Station and Stobswood, Widdrington Village, Tritlington and West Chevington

Unions
CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

PROPOSAL TO AMALGAMATE JAMES CALVERT SPENCE COLLEGE, SOUTH AVENUE AND JAMES CALVERT SPENCE COLLEGE, ACKLINGTON ROAD

CONSULTATION
9 DECEMBER 2015 - 17 FEBRUARY 2016
The Governing Body of the James Calvert Spence College Federation have asked Northumberland County Council to consult on a proposal to amalgamate James Calvert Spence College, South Avenue and James Calvert Spence College, Acklington Road from 30 April 2016. This means the schools would join to become one age 9 to 18 school, but would operate across the two existing sites.

This Consultation Document set out the reasons why the Governing Body believe this proposal would be beneficial for students and also provides the opportunity for students, parents, staff and members of the community to share their views before any decisions are made.
WHAT ARE THE REASONS FOR THE PROPOSAL TO AMALGAMATE JAMES CALVERT SPENCE COLLEGE, SOUTH AVENUE AND JAMES CALVERT SPENCE COLLEGE, ACKLINGTON ROAD?

James Calvert Spence College, South Avenue is a middle school within the James Calvert Spence Federation, which includes James Calvert Spence College, Acklington Road (high school) and Acklington CE First School.

While there is one Executive Headteacher and one Governing Body for all three schools, each school has its own budget and has to comply with government regulations, including having separate Ofsted inspections and other management processes.

As a federation, all three schools work together closely. However, the Governing Body of the James Calvert Spence Federation believes that if James Calvert Spence College (JCSC), South Avenue and James Calvert Spence College (JCSC), Acklington Road were amalgamated into one school, this would enable the current management systems in the two schools to be maximised for efficiency by removing any existing barriers and bureaucracy. The Governing Body believes that through the creation of one school rather than two, there would need to be only one management structure and one planning strategy; this would enable a more efficient transition when students transfer from one site to the other at age 13. They believe that the benefits of better transition would lead to improved outcomes for students at age 16 and therefore improve their life chances.

WHAT WOULD BE THE PROCESS FOR AMALGAMATING THE TWO SCHOOLS?

In order to amalgamate the two schools, JCSC South Avenue would need to formally close and would lose its unique reference number (URN). At the same time, JCSC Acklington Road would need to extend its age range from age 13 to 18 to age 9 to 18.

The Governing Body’s formal proposal is therefore as follows:

- Close JCSC South Avenue with effect from 30 April 2016;
- Extend the age range of JCSC Acklington Road from age 13 to 18 to age 9 to 18 with effect from 1 May 2016.
WHICH BUILDINGS WOULD BE USED FOR EDUCATION?

Students in Years 5 to 8 would continue to be educated in the current JCSC South Avenue building and would then transfer to the current JCSC Acklington Road building for Year 9 onwards. Outwardly, there would appear to be no change to the current arrangements between the two schools, but as one school, with one management system and one staff across the two buildings, there would be even stronger links, increased capacity and greater sharing of management resources.

WHAT IMPACT WOULD THE AMALGAMATION HAVE ON STAFF?

The staff working at either JCSC South Avenue or JCSC Acklington Road already have mobility clauses within their contracts; this enables them to work at either site and amalgamation would enhance this arrangement even further. As the Governing Body would intend to continue to educate students in Years 5 to 9 at the South Avenue site following amalgamation, the existing staffing arrangements would need to remain in place. Therefore, there would be no anticipated staff redundancies as a result of this proposal.

WHAT IMPACT WOULD THE AMALGAMATION HAVE ON ADMISSIONS AND CATCHMENT AREAS?

The catchment areas of JCSC South Avenue and JCSC Acklington Road are identical and therefore there would be no impact in this regard. However, if the schools are amalgamated and become one school, from September 2017 there would be only one intake of students into the school in Year 5. The intake or ‘Planned Admission Number’ (PAN) would be set at 120, which is the current PAN for JCSC South Avenue.

Students would then transfer to the current JSCS Acklington Road building for Years 9 onwards, but would not need to apply for admission as it would be the same school on two sites. However, any parents who did not live in the JCSC catchment area, but who expressed a preference for a place at the school from Year 9 would be able to apply and would be offered a place if one is available.

Parents of students who are currently in Year 4 at first schools who have applied for a place for their child in Year 5 at JCSC South Avenue and parents of students who have applied for a place for their child in Year 9 at JCSC Acklington Road in September 2016
would be offered a place in the newly amalgamated school, subject to the Council’s Admissions Policy.

WHAT IS THE PROPOSED TIMELINE OF THE AMALGAMATION?
If the amalgamation of JCSC South Avenue and JCSC Acklington Road is approved, the proposed timeline for implementation would be as follows:

30 April 2016
- James Calvert Spence College, South Avenue would close.

1 May 2016
- James Calvert Spence College, Acklington Road would extend its age range from an age 13 to 18 school to an age 9 to 18 school and would incorporate the catchment area of James Calvert Spence College, South Avenue for admissions into Years 5 to 9.

1 September 2016
- Revised Planned Admissions Numbers (PANs) come into effect for all new admissions to all schools.

1 September 2017
- A new Planned Admission Number for James Calvert Spence College of 120 comes into effect for admissions into Year 5.

WHAT IMPACT WOULD AMALGAMATION OF THE TWO SCHOOLS HAVE ON FINANCE?
As JCSC South Avenue and JCSC Acklington Road are currently two separate schools, they are funded separately through the Council’s Formula Funding for Schools. If the two schools amalgamated after 1 April 2016, JCSC Acklington Road as the continuing school would receive the combined funding of the two schools for the remaining portion of the financial year. Therefore, the continuing school would not be financially disadvantaged in the 2016/17 financial period.

WOULD THERE BE ANY IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL TRANSPORT FOR STUDENTS AS A RESULT OF THE PROPOSED AMALGAMATION?
If amalgamation was approved, there would be no impact on school transport arrangements as the current sites at South Avenue and Acklington Road would continue to be used.
HOW CAN I MAKE MY VIEWS ABOUT THESE PROPOSALS KNOWN?
The Council’s Cabinet and the Governing Body of the James Calvert Spence College Federation would like to hear your views on the proposal set out in this document and 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 to Lorraine Fife, Children’s Services, FREEPOST MP135, County Hall, MORPETH, NE61 1BR by Wednesday, 17 February 2016. Alternatively, there is an electronic version of the feedback form at the back of the Consultation Document that can be accessed from the Council’s website at www.northumberland.gov.uk/SchoolsConsultations

Following a review and analysis of all feedback received from consultees and in light of the reasons for carrying out consultation, the decision on whether or not to proceed to the next steps in the process would be made by the County Council’s Cabinet around April 2016. Meetings are being held by the Council at JCSC South Avenue for staff, Governors, parents and the wider community on Thursday, 21 January 2016 (see below for details). The purpose of these meetings is for Council Officers and the Governing Body to present the issues and the reasons for the proposals and to provide attendees with the opportunity to ask questions and clarify any of the issues that have been raised in this document. It will also be an opportunity for you to express your views about the proposal. Please attend the meeting for the group that you most associate with. Electronic copies of this document are available to download from the Council’s website at www.northumberland.gov.uk/SchoolsConsultations

Following the closure of consultation on 17 February 2016, Council officers will produce a report setting out the findings of the consultation for the Council’s Cabinet. As stated earlier, the Council’s Cabinet will then decide whether or not to continue the proposal to the next stage.

MEETINGS ON PROPOSAL

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| James Calvert Spence College, South Avenue | Thursday 21 January 2016 | Staff of James Calvert Spence College, South Avenue and James Calvert Spence College, Acklington Road only – 4.00 p.m.  
Governing Body of James Calvert Spence College Federation only – 5.30 p.m.  
Parents and public – 6.00 p.m. |
CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM
VIEWS ON PROPOSED AMALGAMATION OF JAMES CALVERT SPENCE COLLEGE, SOUTH AVENUE AND JAMES CALVERT SPENCE COLLEGE, ACKLINGTON ROAD

PART 1 - ABOUT YOU

Your name (Optional): __________________________________________

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

Parent/carer: ☐ Governor: ☐
Staff Member: ☐ Pupil: ☐

If you ticked any of the above, with which school or schools are you associated?

________________________________________________________________________

If you ticked none of the above, please tell us if you are a:

Resident: ☐ Town or village in which you live: __________________________________________________________________
Parish Councillor: ☐ Parish/town council: __________________________________________________________________
Other: ☐ Please clarify: __________________________________________________________________

PART 2 – YOUR VIEWS ON THE PROPOSAL

1) Do you agree with the proposal to amalgamate James Calvert Spence College, South Avenue with James Spence College, Acklington Road?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don’t know ☐

What are your reasons for ticking the above?

________________________________________________________________________
ALTERNATIVE MODELS

2) If you have an alternative suggestion to the proposal set out in this document, please set it out below.

(please continue on a separate sheet if necessary).

THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THIS CONSULTATION

Please return your Response Form to:
FAO Lorraine Fife, Children’s Services, FREEPOST MP135, County Hall, MORPETH, NE61 1BR

Or send your response electronically to:
email Lorraine.Fife@northumberland.gov.uk
Cabinet 16 March 2016
Outcomes of consultation on proposed amalgamation of JCSC South Avenue and JCSC Acklington Road

Equality Impact Assessment

To be completed for all key changes, decisions and proposals. Cite specific data and consultation evidence wherever possible. Further guidance is available at: http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3281

Duties which need to be considered:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

PART 1 – Overview of the change, decision or proposal

1. Title of the change, decision or proposal:

Proposal under consultation December 2015 – February 2016
Amalgamate James Calvert Spence College (JCSC), South Avenue with James Calvert Spence College (JCSC), Acklington Road with effect from 1 June 2016, necessitating the closure of JCSC South Avenue with effect from 31 May 2016.

2. Date of equality impact assessment:

Initial assessment December to February 2016. This EIA would be updated at the end of the 4-week statutory period should Cabinet give approval for publication of a Statutory Proposal.

3. Brief description of the change, decision or proposal:

As provided in 1.

4. Name(s) and role(s) of officer(s) completing the assessment:

Lorraine Fife, FACT Board and School Organisation Officer
5. Overall, what are the outcomes of the change, decision or proposal expected to be? (E.g. will it reduce/terminate a low-priority service, maintain service outcomes at reduced cost, or change the balance of funding responsibility for a service which will remain the same?)

The rationale for the amalgamation of the two schools is based on the desire of the Governing Body to maximise current systems to ensure a continuity of approach between the schools, enhance management flexibility and remove any existing barriers or unnecessary bureaucracy between the schools. Thereby creating a seamless management structure and planning strategy and allowing better transition when pupils transfer from one site to the other at age 13. The Governing Body believes that this proposal to amalgamate the two schools would therefore have a positive impact on outcomes for pupils at age 16 and thereby improve their life chances. Currently each school has to create and monitor its own self-evaluation report, operational and strategic plan and budget.

It is likely that parents and students would see very few changes to either school structure or organisation. However in the longer term the improved flexibility provided by the new structure would enhance capacity to invest in the schools and improve efficiency.

6. If you judge that this proposal is not relevant to some protected characteristics, tick the box below (and explain underneath how you have reached this judgement)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Religion</th>
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<th>Sexual Orientation</th>
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People who have changed gender ☒ Women who are pregnant or have babies ☒ Employees who are married/in civil partnerships ☒

The characteristics checked above are not relevant because:

Should the proposal to amalgamate JCSC South Avenue and JCSC Acklington Road be approved, students on roll at both schools are unlikely to be impacted by the amalgamation as not students would continue to be educated within their current buildings and taught by their current teachers.

There is no reason to believe that the staff or students of JCSC South Avenue and JCSC Acklington Road pupils would be affected more positively or negatively than their peers in relation to their gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or gender-reassignment status. Furthermore, there is no reason to believe that staff or parents who are pregnant or have babies or who are married or in civil partnerships would be more positively or negatively affected by the proposal.

Should the proposal be approved, staff, families and students will be invited to let the Governing Body of the James Calvert Spence Federation know if they are concerned about the impact that the amalgamation may have on any aspect of life in and around school.
PART 2 – Relevance to different Protected Characteristics

Answer these questions both in relation to people who use services and employees

Disability

Note: “disabled people” includes people with physical, learning and sensory disabilities, people with a long-term illness, and people with mental health problems. You should consider potential impacts on all of these groups.

7. What do you know about usage of the services affected by this change, decision or proposal by disabled people, about disabled people’s experiences of it, and about any current barriers to access?

There is currently no evidence to suggest that any member of the community with a disability would be disproportionately impacted positively or negatively should the proposal to amalgamate JCSC South Avenue and JCSC Acklington Road be approved.

Any student, parent or member of staff in either JCSC South Avenue or JCSC Acklington Road who has a disability would not be affected by these proposals as any arrangements already in place to ameliorate such disability would continue to be provided at both school sites, which are proposed to continue to provide education to the current age groups (age 9-13 at JCSC South Avenue and age 13-18 at JCSC Acklington Road).

8. Could disabled people be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

There is no reason to believe that the proposed amalgamation would affect disabled students, staff or parents more positively or negatively than their peers. In particular, the support identified through the special educational needs system will continue to be provided as currently to any students who require such services currently or in the future.

During the immediate process of amalgamation, the Governing Body of the James Calvert Spence Federation would consult families about any concerns regarding specific potential impacts on individuals. The Governing Body would ensure that appropriate individual arrangements were made where this is necessary to avoid potential adverse impacts.

9. Could the change, decision or proposal affect the ability of disabled people to participate in public life? (e.g. by affecting their ability to go to meetings, take up public appointments etc.)

The proposed changes would not affect any current arrangements for disabled people to participate in public life as students enrolled at JCSC South Avenue and JCSC Acklington Road would continue to be educated at their current site. Any needs of disabled students, staff or parents who may attend the school that come to light during the consultation but that are not currently addressed would be reviewed and where
possible amelioration included within the current arrangements for access to the buildings.

10. Could the change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards disabled people? (e.g. by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)

There is no evidence to suggest that the proposed amalgamation would affect public attitudes towards disabled people.

11. Could the change, decision or proposal make it more or less likely that disabled people will be at risk of harassment or victimisation?

There is currently no evidence to suggest that the proposed amalgamation would increase or decrease any risk of harassment or victimisation above that which may already exist to any student, member of staff or member of the community with a disability. In line with current special educational needs systems, families are consulted about any potential issues for individual children arising from the disruption of support networks during the process of transition to the Acklington Road site at the end of Year 8 and this process would continue.

12. If there are risks that disabled people could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal, are there reasonable steps or adjustments that could be taken to reduce these risks?

There is no evidence to suggest that there are any risks of disproportionately disadvantaging any students or members of staff with a disability in either of the two schools directly impacted by the proposal.

13. Are there opportunities to create positive impacts for disabled people linked to this change, decision or proposal?

See para. 8 above.

**Age**

14. What do you know about usage of the services affected by this change, decision or proposal by people of different age groups, about their experiences of it, and about any current barriers to access?

JCSC South Avenue provides education to students between the age of 9 and 13, while JCSC Acklington Road education to aged 13-18. Only pupils within these age ranges would be directly affected by the proposal.

It is proposed that should the two schools be approved to amalgamate, education for students at the two sites of the continuing school would continue to be configured as they currently are, therefore students educated currently at either the South Avenue or Acklington Road sites would continue to be educated at those sites by the same staff.
and transition to the Acklington Road site would continue to take place at the end of Year 8 as it does currently.

15. Could people of different age groups be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

While it is not envisaged that any different age groups either among staff or students would be disproportionately disadvantaged by the amalgamation of the two schools, as a result of the amalgamation there would no longer be a need for parents of students to have to apply for a place at JCSC Acklington for Year 9 onwards. This would provide parents and students with the confidence that once a place had been allocated at the continuing school from Year 4, this would then secure that place until the age of 18.

16. Could the change, decision or proposal affect the ability of people of different age groups to participate in public life? (e.g. by affecting their ability to go to meetings, take up public appointments etc.)

There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal would have any effect on the ability of different age groups to participate in public life.

17. Could the change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards people of different age groups? (e.g. by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)

There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal would have any effect on public attitudes towards people of different age groups.

18. Could the change, decision or proposal make it more or less likely that people of different age groups will be at risk of harassment or victimisation?

As students currently based at JCSC South Avenue or JCSC Acklington Road would continue to be educated in their current buildings, there would be no impact of this proposal on the likelihood of people that people of different age groups would be at more or less risk of harassment or victimisation.

19. If there are risks that people of different age groups could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal, are there reasonable steps or adjustments that could be taken to reduce these risks?

There is no evidence to suggest that people of different age groups could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the proposals. However, refer to para. 15.

20. Are there opportunities to create positive impacts for people of different age groups linked to this change, decision or proposal?

Refer to para. 15.
**Human Rights**

21. Could the change, decision or proposal impact on human rights? (e.g. the right to respect for private and family life, the right to a fair hearing and the right to education)

| □ | The Equality analysis has not identified the potential for any discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken. |
| □ | The Equality analysis has identified risks or opportunities to promote better equality; the change, decision or proposal will be adjusted to avoid risks and ensure opportunities are taken. |
| □ | The equality analysis has identified risks to equality which will not be eliminated and/or opportunities to promote better equality which will not be taken. Acceptance of these is reasonable and proportionate given the objectives of the change, decision or proposal and its overall financial and policy context. |
| □ | The equality analysis shows that the change, decision or proposal would lead to actual or potential unlawful discrimination, or would conflict with the Council’s positive duties to an extent which is disproportionate to its objectives. It should not be adopted in its current form. |

Explain how you have reached the judgement ticked above, and summarise any steps which will be taken to reduce negative or enhance positive impacts on equality.

From the analysis of the possible negative or positive impact of the proposal on groups with protected characteristics, there is no evidence to suggest that any of these groups would be disproportionately disadvantaged or advantaged by the proposal. Should the proposals be approved for implementation by the Council Executive at a later date, any further evidence arising from the statutory consultation period would be analysed to establish whether or not there were certain risks to any or all of those groups. Steps to reduce negative impacts or enhance positive impacts would then be defined.

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Cabinet 16 March 2016
Outcomes of consultation on proposed amalgamation of JCSC South Avenue and JCSC Acklington Road
PART 4 - Ongoing Monitoring

Should Cabinet approve this proposal to be taken to the next stage, which is the publication of a Statutory Proposal opening up a four week period of statutory consultation, this EIA would be updated following the collection of evidence during the statutory consultation. Appropriate action would be identified in the light of the statutory consultation and where necessary, an action plan with timescales developed.

PART 5 - Authorisation

Name of Head of Service and Date Approved

Once completed, send your full EIA to: Irene.Fisher@northumberland.gov.uk. A summary will then be generated corporately and published to the Council’s website.