

PONTELAND PARTNERSHIP CONSULTATION

MARCH – MAY 2016

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MARCH 17 – MAY 11 2016

Background

On 23 February 2016, the headteachers of the six first schools in the Ponteland Partnership invited the Local Authority to a meeting to discuss the future school structure within the partnership following a proposal that they become part of a multi-academy trust (MAT). Following further meetings, the headteachers of all six first schools said they had the support of their Chairs of Governors, and sent requests to the Council asking that a consultation take place on extending their schools' age ranges to include Years 5 and 6. This did not involve conversion to a MAT, rather it focussed on move to a Primary-Secondary model. In the light of the requests from the first schools, the Council also met with the headteacher of Ponteland High School; he stated that he would support a consultation. He met with his Governing body and subsequently confirmed that they thought a consultation was necessary. The Governing Bodies of Ponteland Middle School and Richard Coates CE Middle School have now also requested an open consultation.

Consultation on the proposed changes in relation to the six community schools was approved by the Council's Cabinet on 16 March; the consultation will run from **17 March to 11 May 2016**. The 'community schools' in the partnership are Belsay, Stamfordham, Ponteland and Darras Hall First Schools, Ponteland Community Middle School and Ponteland Community High School.

Richard Coates CE Middle School, Whalton CE First School and Heddon on the Wall St Andrew's CE First School are voluntary schools and their Governing Bodies have also approved consultation to take place on the proposals for their schools. Their consultation is running in conjunction with the Council's, but those individual Governing Bodies will analyse the feedback relevant to their schools and will make their own decision whether or not to proceed.

The proposed model on which consultation is taking place is as follows:

- All six first schools to extend their age ranges to become primary schools (retaining pupils up to the age of 11)
- Ponteland High School to extend its age range to become an age 11 to 18 secondary school.
- Ponteland Middle School to close.

- Richard Coates CE Middle School to change its age range to become a 3 to 11 primary school.

Alternative models will be considered as part of the consultation.

In the Autumn of 2015, an informal consultation was carried out by the Council on a proposal to relocate 3 schools (Ponteland Community High School, Ponteland Community Middle School and Darras Hall First School) to brand new school buildings on a shared site in the South West of Ponteland, together with new leisure facilities for the town. Governors, parents and staff of the three schools and other relevant interested parties, including local County Councillors, town and parish councils and local interest groups, were asked for their comments on the proposal.

349 consultees submitted a written response and over 700 consultees attended a consultation event in Ponteland on 7 November 2015. While there were many and varied responses received, the overwhelming response from Governors, staff and parents of Ponteland Community Middle School and Darras Hall First School was that they did not support the proposed relocation of the 3 schools to the shared site. However, while the Governing Body of Ponteland High School responded to the consultation that they had a number of concerns regarding the building, overall they welcomed the opportunity to develop state of the art educational facilities for students as their school buildings are no longer fit for purpose and do not enhance their educational experience. Since the closure of that consultation, Council officers have been analysing the feedback and carrying out further work on alternative models, which they were planning to put to the Council at a later date. This did not involve any changes to school structure e.g. 3-tier to 2-tier or academisation.

- There are 3,258 children attending schools in the Ponteland partnership.
- 1,670 of these children live in the partnership catchment area (51%)
- 127 come from other parts of Northumberland (4%)
- 1,142 are children who come from Newcastle (35%).
- 1,091 students attend Ponteland High school; 343 (31%) of children are from Newcastle and 394 (36%) are from the Ponteland catchment area.
- 609 students attend Ponteland Middle School; 380 (62%) of children are from Ponteland catchment and 219 (36%) from Newcastle.

- 446 pupils attend Darras Hall First School; 326 (73%) are from Ponteland and 116 (26%) are from Newcastle.

Parents have the choice to send their children to any school where there is capacity; any proposals to change schools would not alter this right. Table 1 shows where the current pupils within each school in the partnership reside.

Table 1

	Total No Children	No. in catchment	No outside catchment but in greater Ponteland catchment	No. outside greater Ponteland catchment, but live in Northd.	No. from Newcastle
Belsay First School	69	26	34	5	4
Darras Hall First School	446	275	51	4	116
Heddon on the Wall St Andrews First School	137	73	9	6	49
Ponteland First School	299	112	33	5	149
Stamfordham First School	79	54	19	6	0
Whalton CE Aided First School	52	22	4	26	0
Richard Coates CE Middle School	476	159	25	30	262
Ponteland Middle School	609	283	97	10	219
Ponteland High School	773 (Not inc 6th Form)		394	36	343

The schools in the Ponteland Partnership have had discussions on a proposal to create a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) with the Department for Education. The MAT was proposed to include all of the schools within the partnership across the first, middle and high school phases. However, to date, there has been no consensus to submit an application for a MAT. The Council has had very limited involvement in these discussions.

It was assumed that the meeting to which the six first schools invited the Council was to obtain the views of the Council regarding the schools proposal to form a MAT.

The Government’s policy in recent years has been to create an increasingly autonomous school system and it is proposed by them that all schools should be academies or in the process of becoming academies by 2020. While the Council does not have a policy with regard to structures of schools, it has a statutory duty to challenge and support schools and academies to improve standards, support continuity of special education, ensure sufficiency of school places and smooth transition between schools and other duties. Therefore, the Council must take account of the views of schools and academies and where necessary carry out consultations such as this one.

EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

SCHOOL	CURRENT OFSTED GRADE	DATE OF LAST INSPECTION
Belsay First School	Outstanding	2008
Whalton CE Aided First School	Outstanding	2006
Stamfordham First School	Outstanding	2012
Darras Hall First School	Outstanding	2008
Ponteland First School	Good	2011
Heddon on the Wall St Andrew’s First School	Good	2012
Ponteland Middle School	Outstanding	2013
Richard Coates CE Middle School	Good	2013
Ponteland High School	Good	2012

¹In 2015, 64% of the students in Ponteland High School who took GCSE examinations achieved 5 A* to C grades, including English and Maths; the national average is 56%. 58% of students made 3 levels of progress in English between Key Stages 2 and 4

¹ Source - The Annual Report of the Director of Education and Skills, 2016

compared to a national average of 69%. 79% of the students made 3 levels of progress in maths compared to 70% nationally.

CURRENT MODEL

Schools in the Ponteland Partnership are organised as follows:

First School – Early Years (nursery and Reception) to Year 4

Middle School – Year 5 to Year 8

High School - Year 9 to Year 13

First schools are responsible for Early Years, Key Stage 1 and the first two years of Key Stage 2. Most children change school at the end of Year 4 to join a middle school. Middle schools then deliver the rest of the Key Stage 2 curriculum in Years 5 and 6 and then teach the first two years of Key Stage 3; most students leave middle school at the end of Year 8 and complete Key Stage 3 in the high school in Year 9; students choose their GCSE options in Year 9. The high school is also responsible for Key Stage 4 (GCSE) and sixth form (Key Stage 5).

MODEL PROPOSED FOR CONSULTATION

Under the structure proposed, schools would be organised as follows:

Primary School – Early Years (nursery) to Year 6 (Key Stage 1 and 2)

Secondary School – Year 7 to Year 13 (Key Stage 3,4,5)

While the majority of pupils in this country are educated in schools organised within the primary/secondary system, there are a small number of local authorities, about 17 out of 150 where middle schools continue to operate in a substantial way. There is a mixture of school structures in Northumberland, 5 will have a primary/secondary model from September 2016, 5 will have a first/middle/high model from September 2016 and 3 have a mixture.

The first schools and high school headteachers in the Ponteland Partnership have expressed a view that a primary/secondary system of organisation in the partnership would achieve improved outcomes for all pupils. They wish to gather the views of others, including parents, staff and pupils.

The proposed new model would mean:

- Belsay, Ponteland, Whalton CE, Stamfordham, Darras Hall and Heddon on the Wall St Andrews CE First Schools would extend their age ranges to include Years 5 and 6 with effect from 1 September 2017;
- Ponteland Community Middle School would close with effect from 31 August 2019;
- Richard Coates CE Middle School would change its age range to become a 3 to 11 primary school with effect from 1 September 2019;
- Ponteland Community High School would extend its age range to become an age 11 to 18 secondary school with effect from 1 September 2019.

Table 2 shows the current and proposed structure and pupil numbers of schools

Table 2 – Proposed Model

SCHOOL	CURRENT MODEL			PROPOSED MODEL		
	Capacity in Sept 2015 (Number on Roll in Oct 2015)	Forms of Entry (FE)	Planned Admission Number (PAN) 2015/16	Capacity	Forms of Entry (FE)	Planned Admission Number (PAN)
Belsay First School	75 (69)	0.5	15	105	0.5	15
Darras Hall First School	450 (446)	3	90	420	2	60
Heddon on the Wall St Andrew's CE First School	150 (137)	1	30	210	1	30
Ponteland First School	300 (299)	2	60	420	2	60
Stamfordham First School	82 (79)	0.5	18	140	0.6	20
Whalton First School	50 (52)	0.3	10	70	0.3	10
Richard Coates CE Middle School	549 (476)	4	120	420 (as primary)	2	60
Ponteland Middle School	518 (609)	5	150	CLOSE		
Ponteland Community High School	1159 (Y9-Y11 - 773) (Y9-6 th F 1091)	9	272	1,200 (Y7-Y11) 1,600 (Y7-Y13)	8	240

If the proposed model was approved, the timeline and the transition arrangements for pupils would be as follows: **PLEASE NOTE : ANY PROPOSED CHANGE DOES NOT TAKE AWAY THE RIGHT OF PARENTS TO EXPRESS A PREFERENCE FOR ANY SCHOOL AT ANY TIME, PROVIDED PLACES ARE AVAILABLE.**

TIMELINE

All First Schools in the Ponteland Partnership

1 September 2017

- Pupils in Year 4 on 31 August 2017 would be retained by their new primary schools as Year 5.

1 September 2018

- Pupils in Year 5 in the primary schools on 31 August 2018 would be retained as Year 6 from 1 September 2018.

1 September 2019

- Pupils in Year 6 in the primary schools on 31 August 2019 would transfer as the new Year 7 to Ponteland Community High School.

Ponteland Community Middle School;

1 September 2017

- Ponteland Middle School would not receive a Year 5 intake and would operate with Years 6, 7 and 8 only

1 September 2018

- Ponteland Middle School would operate with Years 7 and 8 only

31 August 2019

- Ponteland Middle School would close on 31 August 2019.

1 September 2019

- Pupils in Year 8 in the middle school in August 2019 would transfer as Year 9 as planned to Ponteland Community High School.
- Pupils in Year 7 in the middle school in August 2019 would transfer as the new Year 8 to Ponteland Community High School.

Richard Coates Middle School

Option 1

1 September 2017

- Richard Coates CE Middle School would implement a temporary change of age range from age 9 to 13 to age 3 to 13. This temporary arrangement would be in place for 2 years until 31 August 2019;
- The school would receive children into a new nursery class and Reception
- The school would not receive a Year 5 intake, but would continue to operate Years 6, 7 and 8 classes.

1 September 2018

- The school would receive further intakes into nursery and Reception and would also operate with Years 1, 7 and 8.

1 September 2019

- Pupils in Year 8 in the middle school in August 2019 would transfer as Year 9 as usual to Ponteland Community High School. Pupils in Year 7 in the middle school in August 2019 would transfer as the new Year 8 to Ponteland Community High School. Richard Coates CE Middle School would change its age range to become an age 3 to 11 primary school and would relocate to the current Ponteland First School building.

Option 2

The Governing Body of Richard Coates CE Middle School are proposing an alternative transition model, whereby their school would become an age 3 to 13 school from September 2017, but would admit pupils into all year groups across the primary phase up to Year 6 from that date on the basis of the new proposed Planned Admission Number (PAN). Views are sought on this proposal.

Ponteland Community High School

1 September 2019

- Ponteland Community High School would change its age range from 13 to 18 to age 11 to 18. It is proposed it would relocate to a new building.
- Pupils in Years 7 and 8 in the middle schools would transfer as the new Years 8 and 9.

- Pupils in Year 6 in the primary schools in August 2019 would transfer as the new Year 7.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS SHOULD THIS PROPOSAL BE AGREED

(Note: other alternative proposals will be considered).

Staff

There would be implications for staff in all schools within the whole of the Ponteland Partnership as a result of the proposals, especially for those staff employed in the two middle schools. Detailed discussions with the Governing Bodies of all schools impacted and with the Trades Unions are being undertaken about how any negative implications of the proposals could be minimised and further details will be shared with staff as soon as they are available during the consultation through a series of visits to schools facilitated by Council Officers.

Catchment Areas

The catchment areas of Whalton CE, Heddon on the Wall CE, Belsay and Stamfordham would not alter should they become primary schools and Ponteland Community High School's catchment area would also remain the same.

The proposed model includes the change of Richard Coates CE Middle School to become a 3-11 primary school, therefore the school would need to be allocated a primary catchment area and this would be different to its current middle school catchment. There would need to be adjustments made to the catchment area of Ponteland First School due to its proposed relocation, and to the catchment area of Darras Hall due to the proposed reduction in its Planned Admission Number (PAN) from 90 to 60.

There would no longer be a requirement for a catchment area for Ponteland Middle School.

Early Years

As part of the consultation, there is a need to consider current Early Years provision in the proposed primary schools in the light of the Government's policy to increase free entitlement to childcare to 30 hours a week for working parents from September 2016. We would welcome views on this issue.

School Transport

Transport for pupils affected by the proposed reorganisation, should it be approved, would be arranged in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy. Should the proposed model be approved for implementation, most pupils in Years 5 and 6 would have shorter journeys to schools as they would be educated for an additional two years in their local communities.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

There is no specialist SEND provision currently within any of the schools in the Ponteland Partnership. However, provision across Northumberland is in the process of being reviewed in order to ensure there is equity of service across the county for all children. Therefore, it is proposed that during the consultation, stakeholders and other interested parties would be encouraged by the Council to provide their views on extending the range of support that Ponteland Community High School is able to offer children aged 3-18 with SEND. This provision would be for around 50—100 children and could be modelled on successfully integrated provision found in other Northumberland schools e.g. Northumberland Church of England Academy.

Implications for existing school buildings

An initial desk-top analysis of school buildings suggests that the associated costs of a shift from a First school to a Primary school model would be affordable. Detailed buildings costs in relation to the model would be worked up and provided as part of the consultation process.

Implications on proposed new school buildings

The previously planned building development was based upon the proposal to build a new First, Middle and High school on a shared site in the south east of Ponteland. If the schools moved to a primary/secondary model this would no longer be an appropriate option. Feedback from the community and schools arising from the initial consultation was carefully analysed and it was decided due to negative feedback to radically change the proposals. In the light of the recent proposal from schools, a new building structure would be necessary. If agreed, then new buildings would be constructed for Ponteland Community High School and Ponteland Primary School on a shared site with leisure facilities. There are at least two potential sites: the current high school site and the current leisure site. While the leisure site is the preferred option, as it brings provision closer to the community and the town centre, alternative options on location are being sought as part of the overall consultation. Visual suggestions of the buildings are available on the Council's website and further detailed drawings will be made available at the consultation events in April (see 'Taking Part in the consultation')

Sport and Recreation

There would be no impact on Sport and Recreation provision at Belsay, Whalton CE, Darras Hall, Stamfordham, Heddon on the Wall St Andrews CE First Schools or Richard Coates CE Middle School. As the proposal includes the relocation of Ponteland High School and Ponteland Primary School (if agreed) to a shared site that would include new leisure facilities.

TAKING PART IN THE CONSULTATION – MAKING YOUR VIEWS KNOWN

The Council and the Governing Bodies of the 3 voluntary schools would like to hear your views on the model of school organisation set out in this document and whether you have any alternative proposals. A response form is attached for your use at the back of this document. The form can either be sent by Freepost or attached electronically to an email – contact details are provided on the form. Alternatively, you can hand in your forms to any of the schools in the Ponteland Partnership.

Consultation is open until midnight on **11 May 2016**. In addition to completing the form, you may wish to attend one of the school meetings or local authority consultation events.

The local authority consultation events will take place on:

- **SATURDAY 23 APRIL, 10.00 A.M. TO 3.00 P.M. – PONTELAND HIGH SCHOOL**
- **THURSDAY 28 APRIL, 3.00 P.M. TO 7.00 P.M. – PONTELAND MEMORIAL HALL**

In addition Governors will be encouraged to hold their own meetings at their individual schools. These meetings are for parents of children attending the schools so that they can gain an understanding of their schools individual position on the consultation. Dates of these meetings will be made available by the schools themselves.

In addition Council officers will hold meetings with school leaders, governors and staff. The dates of these meetings will be arranged separately with the schools.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE FEEDBACK FROM CONSULTATION?

Following the review of all feedback received from consultees, the decision on whether or not to proceed to the next steps in the process will be made by the County Council's Cabinet at the end of May – this decision will be made in relation to the six community schools. The Governing Bodies of Richard Coates CE Middle School, Whalton CE First School and Heddon on the Wall St Andrews CE First School, as voluntary schools, will decide individually, in consultation

with the Diocese whether or not they wish to change the age ranges of their schools.

Electronic copies of the consultation document are available to download from the Council's website and from the websites of the all of the schools:

www.northumberland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations

www.belsay.northumberland.sch.uk

www.darrashall.northumberland.sch.uk

www.pontelandfirst.northumberland.sch.uk

www.stamfordham.northumberland.sch.uk

www.whalton.northumberland.sch.uk

www.heddon-school.co.uk

www.pontelandmiddle.northumberland.sch.uk

www.pontelandcoates.northumberland.sch.uk

www.pchs.northumberland.sch.uk

Please now go on to the Consultation Response Form.

CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM
VIEWS ON PROPOSED STRUCTURE OF THE PONTELAND
SCHOOLS

PART 1- ABOUT YOU

Your name (Optional):

Your postcode:

Are you a Northumberland resident? YES NO

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 none of the above: please specify whether you are a:-

Local Resident: Town or village in which you live:

Parish Councillor: Parish/town council:

Other: Please clarify:

Please now continue to the questions overleaf.

PART 2 – YOUR VIEWS ON THE PROPOSED MODEL (YOU NEED NOT RESPOND TO ALL QUESTIONS)

- 1) **Do you agree that Belsay, Stamfordham, Darras Hall and Ponteland First Schools should change their age ranges to include Years 5 and 6 with effect from 1 September 2017?**

Yes No Don't know/
Not applicable

Your reasons for ticking the above (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary).

- 2) **Do you agree that Heddon on the Wall St Andrew's CE First School should change its age range to include Years 5 and 6 with effect from 1 September 2017?**

Yes No Don't know/
Not applicable

Your reasons for ticking the above (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary).

3) Do you agree that Whalton CE First School should change its age range to include Years 5 and 6 with effect from 1 September 2017?

Yes

No

Don't know/
Not applicable

Your reasons for ticking the above (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary).

4) Do you agree that Richard Coates CE Middle School should change its age range from an age 9 to 13 middle school to an age 3 to 11 primary school with effect from 1 September 2019?

Yes

No

Don't know/
Not applicable

Your reasons for ticking the above (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary).

5) Do you agree that, should Richard Coates CE Middle School become a primary school from September 2019, pupils should be admitted into all year groups up to Year 6 from September 2017 on the basis of the new proposed Planned Admission Number as part of transition arrangements? (Refer to page 8)

Yes

No

Don't know/
Not applicable

Your reasons for ticking the above (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary).

6) Do you agree that Ponteland Middle School should close with effect from 1 September 2019?

Yes

No

Don't know/
Not applicable

Your reasons for ticking the above (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary).

7) Do you agree that Ponteland Community High School should change its age ranges from an age 13 to 18 high school to an age 11 to 18 secondary school with effect from 1 September 2019?

Yes No Don't know/ Not applicable

Your reasons for ticking the above (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary).

8) Do you agree that Ponteland Community High School and Ponteland First School should relocate to new buildings with new community Leisure facilities on the preferred shared site at the current Ponteland Leisure site?

Yes No Don't know/ Not applicable

Your reasons for ticking the above (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary).

9) Do you support the development of specialist places for students with Special Educational Needs (SEND) within the proposal at Ponteland Community High School?

Yes

No

Don't know/
Not applicable

Your reasons for ticking the above (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary).

PART 3 – ALTERNATIVE MODELS

- 10) If you have an alternative suggestion to any of the options set out in this document that would deal with the issues raised, please set it out below.**
(please continue on a separate sheet if necessary).

Now 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**