

## **NYCC Portfolio Holder for Education & Skills Letter Jan23**

Cllr.Annabel.Wilkinson@northyorks.gov.uk

**Emailed 16/01/2023**

Dear Cllr.Wilkinson

### **Re: Proposal to NYCC to Close Eskdale School, Whitby**

We would like to request a full and transparent review of the future of education in the Whitby catchment area. Whitby is the ninth largest town in North Yorkshire, an *urban settlement situated in a sparsely-populated rural area* with very limited educational and skills training for the over 16's, and very limited public transport. We wish to ensure a fully informed proposal can be made, prior to any school closure being recommended if this is deemed necessary.

Further to a previous Whitby Community Network meeting with NYC Let's Talk Community much was made of the siloisation of current NYCC departments, therefore can you please confirm in writing the following issues have been addressed to ensure the sustainability of the town and the educational facilities in the Whitby & District area, before any consultation is considered.

- 1. What long term planning has been carried out for education and skills training in the Whitby catchment area, including the possibility of academisation of the schools?** The proposal to close Eskdale school has now arisen on at least two occasions in the last ten years, around 70% of sixth form pupils have been forced to seek education elsewhere - some with additional transport costs to the family, and adult education has all but disappeared from this area. Why was the University Technical College built in Scarborough, rather than considering a new school and/or improving the educational facilities in Whitby? Why has no action been taken previously bearing in mind the reports prepared on or behalf of NYCC and our MP's comments made in 2018? (see note1) and the funding available to schools particularly for skills training? How many times will the schools need to change the name and uniforms, bearing in mind the call for academisation? If school expansion is required in the future, will there be any provision to allow for this, bearing in mind the very limited land availability for development due to the surrounding National Park? What forecasts are there for additional pupils based on proposed housing development, the opening of the polyhalite mine, and the possible reduction in second/holiday homes possibly leading to families returning to Whitby?
- 2. Has the health and well being of our young people been considered and evaluated?** Health in Coastal Communities is already considered poor (see Note 2 - CMO Annual Report 2021), and following two years disrupted education due to the Covid pandemic, is a school closure the answer, particularly one much loved by parents and pupils as demonstrated by the high ratio of pupils?
- 3. Has an assessment been carried out with regards to possible increased traffic congestion if the present proposal is progressed?** Caedmon - Normanby site has no

coach parking, Mayfield Road the main access road through Whitby, near the traffic lights, is used for parking coaches?

4. **The closure of a school could have a massive impact on green spaces/playing pitches in Whitby ( see note 4), what assessment has been made to counter these losses and to meet well-being, playing pitches, Active Travel and biodiversity requirements?** Green spaces are already below the national level, with further SBC plans for housing developments on three green spaces, part of the golf course, and a playing field site has been proposed for a new cemetery, with the adjacent one recently developed for housing. - all very much against local residents' wishes. The proposal would also lose some excellent sports facilities particularly for the east side of Whitby where major housing developments are taking place and there is presently no Leisure facility available.
5. **Has an assessment been made on the risk to the Esk Valley train line?** This brings pupils to the school, by a form of public transport that should be fully supported by the new Council, yet this line could be put at risk if further children opt out of a North Yorkshire school due to lack of choice.
6. **Has the effect of the changes proposed been reviewed against the York & North Yorkshire's Routemap to Carbon Negative (see note 6)?** Will continued loss of children to this area through lack of educational facilities, housing, public transport etc., lead to increased movement of children to other schools, reducing the chances of the Combined Mayoral authority achieving its proposed aim for Net Zero?
7. **Has digital connectivity to our catchment area and schools been reviewed to ensure full advantage can be taken of future technology?** The likelihood that future technology / on-line courses will offer the potential for the Whitby schools to become a "hub" offering secondary/higher and adult education /retraining across the full range of subjects both technical & academic needs to consider.
8. **Whitby has a lack of community halls, schools are very under-utilised, therefore can they not be multi-purposed to provide further community facilities?** New playing pitches adjacent to Eskdale school utilise changing facilities from the school, also the larger housing estates on the outreaches of the town do not have any community facilities or playing fields.
9. **What are the Council and our MP's doing to ensure fair funding is available for education and skills training in North Yorkshire, particularly in the more deprived areas?** North Yorkshire secondary schools are placed 140 out of 150 local authorities in terms of funding level per pupil. On average, a school in North Yorkshire will receive £5,713 per pupil in 2022-23 compared to a national average of £6,213 (see note 9)
10. **Has a review been carried out on the validity of the Maritime Hub, and whether this money would be better invested in educational and skills training (including a Maritime Academy) benefiting all local people, and utilising an existing school building?** The proposed development area is at present subject to Court proceedings, located on Level three flood plain, in a key conservation area, a building of this type would not be in keeping with recommendations made by the report '[Celebrating our Distinctive Heritage](#)' (see point 10). The whole of Endeavour Wharf

is built on unstable, reclaimed land with a history of subsidence and the piles for the foundations of any building would need to go down over 60 ft before they reached "solid" ground.

There is a need for NYCC to look at the whole future provision of education in Whitby and District, which we suggest must be carried out before taking any decision about the future of Eskdale School, or in fact any school, to ensure the long term sustainability of this area. We believe this should be an open and transparent process for residents and in particular pupils and parents of the schools catchment area, to make an informed decision on an issue which will affect this area for many years to come.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Joyce Stangoe

Secretary, Whitby Community Network

Cc: NY Cllrs, SBC Cllrs, WTC, Parish Councils, MP for Scarborough and Whitby.

#### Notes:

##### 1. NYCC reports on Education

- North Yorkshire School Improvement Strategy 2019-2020. Building Capacity Accelerating Improvement See: [https://cyps.northyorks.gov.uk/sites/default/files/School%20improvement/77590\\_NY%20School%20Improvement%20Strategy\\_2019-2020%2027%20March.pdf](https://cyps.northyorks.gov.uk/sites/default/files/School%20improvement/77590_NY%20School%20Improvement%20Strategy_2019-2020%2027%20March.pdf)
- North Yorkshire's Rural Commission 2021 report See: <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/north-yorkshire-rural-commission>
- Skills Strategy 2021-2026 - Empowering people for a greener, fairer, stronger economy. Y&NY LEP See: [https://www.ynylep.com/Portals/0/adam/HtmlNewApp/alp63QUIDkWDb9UTrkEQ4A/ButtonLink/83179-LEP-Skills-strategy-brochure-A4-2021-2026\\_LANDSCAPE\\_v3.pdf](https://www.ynylep.com/Portals/0/adam/HtmlNewApp/alp63QUIDkWDb9UTrkEQ4A/ButtonLink/83179-LEP-Skills-strategy-brochure-A4-2021-2026_LANDSCAPE_v3.pdf)
- Revitalising Rural, Realising the Vision RURAL FURTHER EDUCATION, TRAINING AND SKILLS See: <https://rsnonline.org.uk/images/revitalising-rural/rural-fe-training-skills.pdf>
- NYCC minutes of "Scarborough & Whitby Area Constituency Committee" from Sept. 2018 stated: *"The Rt Hon Robert Goodwill MP said that, at present, there were not enough children in Whitby to support the schools there. This meant that the schools competed for children. The schools that were not able to keep the numbers up faced significant budgetary pressures. He noted that the expansion of housing in and around Whitby and the opening of the Potash mine would both help the situation in the medium term."* See:

<https://edemocracy.northyorks.gov.uk/Data/Scarborough%20and%20Whitby%20Area%20Constituency%20Committee/20181212/Agenda/01%20Scarborough%20&%20Whitby%20ACC%20Minutes%2026%20Sept%202018.pdf>

## **2. Health in Coastal Communities**

CMO Annual Report 2021: Health in Coastal Communities update for Scarborough and Whitby Area Constituency Committee Friday 23 September Presenter: Natalie Smith (Head of HAS Population Health Planning) and Dan Atkinson (Public Health Manager)

“Pockets of high levels of deprivation are found across North Yorkshire but they are most highly concentrated in the coastal towns. 43% of the neighbourhoods (LSOAs) in the coastal towns of Filey, Scarborough and Whitby fall within the most deprived national quintile of the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019.”

## **4. SBC Green Spaces/Playing Pitches**

Supplementary Planning Document Nov. 2014

See: <https://www.scarborough.gov.uk/sites/scarborough.gov.uk/files/files/Green-Space-Supplementary-Planning-Document.pdf>

Scarborough Borough Local Plan Green Space Audit May 2014

<https://www.scarborough.gov.uk/sites/scarborough.gov.uk/files/files/Green-Space-Audit.pdf>

SBC Playing Pitch Strategy July 2021

[https://www.scarborough.gov.uk/sites/scarborough.gov.uk/files/files/PPS\\_Stage%20D\\_Main%20strategy%20document.pdf](https://www.scarborough.gov.uk/sites/scarborough.gov.uk/files/files/PPS_Stage%20D_Main%20strategy%20document.pdf)

Scarborough Borough Playing Pitch Strategy/Appendix A: Site Action Plans 2021

[https://www.scarborough.gov.uk/sites/scarborough.gov.uk/files/files/Scarborough%20Borough%20PPS\\_Stage%20D\\_Strategy%20Appendix%20A\\_Site%20Action%20Plans\\_June2021.pdf](https://www.scarborough.gov.uk/sites/scarborough.gov.uk/files/files/Scarborough%20Borough%20PPS_Stage%20D_Strategy%20Appendix%20A_Site%20Action%20Plans_June2021.pdf)

## **6. York & North Yorkshire's Routemap to Carbon Negative See:**

<https://www.ynylep.com/routemap>

## **9. Schools Funding:** North Yorkshire County Council Scarborough and Whitby Area Constituency Committee 25 November 2022 Schools, Educational Achievement and Finance Report

<https://edemocracy.northyorks.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1229&MId=5125&Ver=4>  
[Schools, Educational Achievement & Finance PDF 521 KB](#)

[View item 7. as HTML 270 KB](#)

## **10. 'Celebrating our Distinctive Heritage'** jointly commissioned by Historic England and the York & North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership See:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/celebrating-distinctive-heritage/>

We note from the Scarborough News that Scarborough Council has approved an additional budget of £900,000 to progress the planned Whitby Maritime Hub to pre-construction RIBA stage 4. The Maritime Hub as far as we can ascertain is a massive office block with a small Maritime training academy. The original aim of this project according to the Whitby Town Deal Town Investment Plan October 2020, highlighted the issue of *“Low levels of educational attainment and aspirations of young people”* and stated a Statement of success *“By 2035 Whitby is the place where people and businesses achieve their potential. The town offers high level skills and training pathways, vibrant startup and co-worker space along with modern workspace for businesses building the tech of the future. There are excellent opportunities for development, growth and sustainability. The jewel in our crown is the Whitby Coastal and Maritime Training Academy which attracts students and professionals from around the globe who wish to live and develop their careers in one of the finest places in the world.”*