

SCHOOL ORGANISATION COMMITTEE OF CABINET

AGENDA

Meeting to be held on Thursday 10 November 2022 at 12.00pm in
Committee Room 1, City Hall, Sunderland

ITEM		PAGE
1.	Receipt of Declarations of Interest (if any)	
2.	Apologies for Absence	
3.	Proposal to Lower the Age Range of Thorney Close Primary School	1
	Report of the Director of Children's Services (copy attached).	
4.	Proposed Changes to the Link School	23
	Report of the Director of Children's Services (copy attached).	

Elaine Waugh,
Assistant Director of Law and Governance

City Hall,
SUNDERLAND

2 November 2022

**SCHOOL ORGANISATION COMMITTEE OF CABINET
– 10th NOVEMBER 2022**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report: Proposal to Lower the Age Range at Thorney Close Primary School

Author(s): Director of Children’s Services

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to seek a decision on the Council’s proposal to lower the age of admission at Thorney Close Primary School to facilitate the admission of two-year olds

Description of Decision: School Organisation Committee of Cabinet is asked to:

Note the responses to the statutory and pre-publication consultations and consider the statutory proposal which is to:

Lower the age range of Thorney Close Primary School, Torquay Road Sunderland, SR3 4BB from 3 – 11 years of age to 2 – 11 years of age with effect from 1st January 2023

Under the provisions of the relevant Regulations, the Authority may approve published proposals with or without modification or may reject them.

The Committee is requested to approve the proposal as detailed above.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? Yes

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Reason for the Decision

- Thorney Close Primary School currently offers statutory early years provision for children from the age of three. The school’s current offer focuses on the delivery of the statutory 15-hour entitlement. Lowering the age of admission at the school would allow the extension of this provision to include 2-year-old children and would enable the delivery of the free early years entitlement available to disadvantaged families.
- Lowering of the age of admission would ensure the ongoing sustainability of early years provision for 2-year-olds in the area. It would also enable parents with both two-year-old children and older children who may already attend the school to drop their children at one single setting instead of multiple settings across the area, therefore making 2-year-old provision more convenient and accessible to an increased range of families.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

- Retain the current range at Thorney Close Primary School

Impacts analysed.

Equality Privacy Sustainability Crime and Disorder

Is the Decision consistent with the Council's co-operative values? Yes

Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution? Yes

Is it included in the 28-day Notice of Decisions? Yes

REPORT TITLE - PROPOSAL TO LOWER THE AGE RANGE AT THORNEY CLOSE PRIMARY SCHOOL**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES****1. Purpose of the Report**

The purpose of this report is to seek a decision on the Council's proposal to lower the age of admission at Thorney Close Primary School to facilitate the admission of two-year olds

2. Description of Decision**2.1 School Organisation Committee of Cabinet is asked to:**

Note the responses to the statutory and pre-publication consultations and consider the statutory proposal which is to:

Lower the age range of Thorney Close Primary School, Torquay Road Sunderland, SR3 4BB from 3 – 11 years of age to 2 – 11 years of age with effect from 1st January 2023

Under the provisions of the relevant Regulations, the Authority may approve published proposals with or without modification or may reject them.

The Committee is requested to approve the proposal as detailed above.

3. Current Position

3.1 Thorney Close Primary School is a maintained primary school maintained by Sunderland City Council.

3.2 Thorney Close Primary School is to relocate to a new school building and school site in 2025. The current school accommodates 280 primary aged children and 40 FTE nursery aged children.

3.3 The school currently offers a morning only nursery class for 3- and 4-year-olds. It does not currently offer either funded or paid for provision for 2-year-olds.

3.4 2-year-old provision is currently locally available at the Thorney Close Early Education Centre. However, that provision will close in January 2023 resulting in a reduction in local nursery places.

4.0 Proposal

4.1 It is proposed that the age of admission at the school is lowered to enable the delivery of an early years provision to 2-year-olds. This could include a combination of funded delivery, via the 2-year-old disadvantaged offer, or paid placements.

4.2 The current school building has surplus class bases. It is projected that utilising this surplus space would allow the delivery of up to 16 FTE 2-year-old places without the need for significant modification.

- 4.3 Expansion of the current school offer would enable parents whose preference is for their children to transition through primary school at a single setting, from nursery to year 6, to do so from an earlier age. It would also allow parents with children across multiple age ranges to access an educational setting with only one drop off with, for example, 2-year-olds and 7-year-old siblings accessing provision at a single site.
- 4.4 Thorney Close Primary School is a specialist setting for primary aged children with hearing impairments. While it is not proposed that the early years provision becomes a specialist hearing impairment nursery this would mean that children as young as two would have the opportunity to access a setting and staff with a greater specialism in this area should that be required.
- 4.5 The Council has also considered the long-term viability of neighbouring early years settings within this proposal. Given the concerns around the sustainability of other early years provision in the area it is considered that the inclusion of a two-year-old provision within the school offer would provide greater long-term safeguarding around 2-year-old provision in the area.
- 4.6 Subject to approval of the proposal, it is proposed that the provision commences in January 2023.

5.0 Numbers on Roll and Impact of Planned Housing

- 5.1 At the Summer 2022 Census point there were 27 funded nursery children on roll at Thorney Close Primary School. There were 243 children on roll in years Reception – Year 6.
- 5.2 This proposal would result in a minimum of an additional 16 FTE nursery places (or 32 places at 15 hours per place) being offered at the school from January. Should current nursery numbers remain as they were in Summer 2022 this would result in a potential nursery cohort of 59 children
- 5.3 This capacity would mitigate any potential local loss in provision while also ensuring that current early year's requirements from current developments in the area could be met.

6.0 Consultation

- 6.1 In July 2022 Cabinet approved a proposal to commence the School Organisation processes required to lower the age range at Thorney Close Primary School.
- 6.2 A pre-publication consultation was carried out between 18th July 2022 and 18th September 2022. The pre-publication consultation contained the Council's proposal to lower the age range at Thorney Close Primary School.
- 6.3 Consultation was carried out with the following groups
- Parents of pupils
 - Current staff
 - Trade Union Representatives
 - The wider local community

In total the Council received one response to the pre-publication consultation. The response supported the Council's proposal. The response is included at Appendix 1.

6.4 The Council published notification of the statutory proposals for the proposal to lower the age range at Thorney Close Primary School on 28th September 2022. The statutory notice period ended 25th October 2022. The statutory notice was published in the following places:

- Sunderland City Council's website
- Thorney Close Primary School's website
- The Sunderland Echo

6.5 In addition to the publication of notices the following groups were consulted with as part of this process:

- Parents of pupils attending the school
- Current staff

6.6 The Council received one response to the notice that supported the Council's proposals. The statutory notice and the full proposal document are attached at Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 and the responses are attached as Appendix 4.

6.7 There were no objections to the proposals.

7.0 Next Steps

7.1 Subject to the proposal's approval, the Council will commission capital works at the school to facilitate a January 2023 implementation.

8. Reasons for the Decision

8.1 Thorney Close Primary School currently offers statutory early years provision for children from the age of three. The school's current offer focuses on the delivery of the statutory 15-hour entitlement. Lowering the age of admission at the school would allow the extension of this provision to include 2-year-old children and would enable the delivery of the free early years entitlement available to disadvantaged families.

8.2 Lowering of the age of admission would ensure the ongoing sustainability of early years provision for 2-year-olds in the area. It would also enable parents with both two-year-old children and older children who may already attend the school to drop their children at one single setting instead of multiple settings across the area, therefore making 2-year-old provision more convenient and accessible to an increased range of families.

9. Alternative Options

Retain the current age of admission at Thorney Close Primary School

9.1 This would not enable parents of both 2-year-old and school age children to have the opportunity to access provision from a single setting. Additionally, the opportunity to provide sustainable nursery places within the new build (planned for 2025) to ensure that early years provision can be safeguarded in the Sandhill Ward in future years would be lost.

10. Impact Analysis

Sustainability – This proposal will ensure that appropriate, high quality early years provision will be retained in the Sandhill ward.

Equalities Analysis – The proposal is not projected to disadvantage any individual, social group or organisation. The Equalities Assessment is attached as Appendix 5.

11. Other Relevant Considerations / Consultations

11.1 Co-operative values – At Annual Council in May 2015, it was resolved that the following statement be included in the Constitution to reflect the values of the “Co-operative Council”.

“Sunderland City Council is a co-operative council and in being so will act ethically in all its actions while adhering to and actively promoting its co-operative values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. These values will underpin its decision making and actions.”

11.2 Financial implications

As 2-year-old pupils will be funded either via census or paid placements there are no revenue implications for the Council associated with this proposal.

The capital investment requirement is estimated to be £0.050m and would be funded from school capital grants the within the current approved Capital Programme.

11.3 Legal Implications

Throughout the process, from informal consultation to the publication of the statutory proposals, the Council has complied with the requirements of the applicable legislation (the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013) and has also adhered to the Department for Education’s 2018 Statutory Guidance ‘Making Significant Changes (‘Prescribed Alterations’) to Maintained Schools’.

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Pre-Publication Consultation Outcomes

Appendix 2 – Statutory Notice

Appendix 3 – Full Proposal Document

Appendix 4 – Responses to Statutory Notice

Appendix 5 – Equalities Assessment

13. Background Papers

Report to Cabinet - Lowering the Age of Admission at Thorney Close Primary School
– 14th July 2022

Proposal to Develop a 2-Year Old Nursery Provision at Thorney Close Primary School

1

Responses

08:38

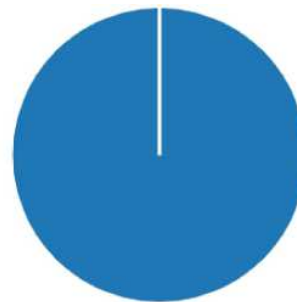
Average time to complete

Active

Status

1. Do you agree with the proposal to develop a two year old nursery provision at Thorney Close Primary School?

● Yes	1
● No	0
● No Comment	0



2. If no, please tell us why you do not agree with the proposal

1

Responses

Latest Responses

"N/A"

3. Are you responding to this consultation as one of the below?

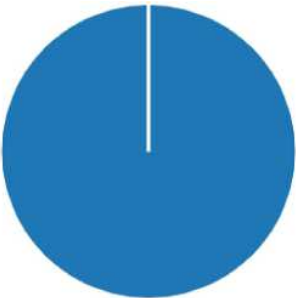
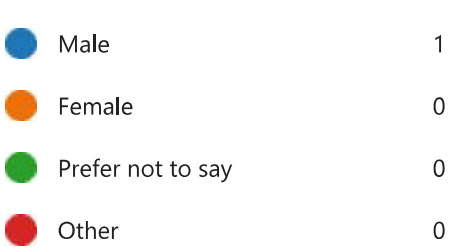


4. How did you hear about this survey?

1
Responses

Latest Responses
"From council officer"

5. Which gender do you identify as?



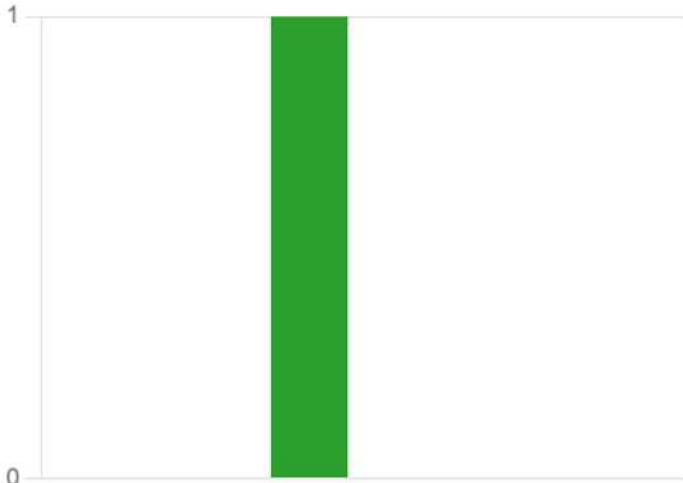
6. Please specify your age group

- Under 16 0
- 16 to 25 0
- 26 to 35 1
- 36 to 45 0
- 46 to 55 0
- 56 to 65 0
- 66 to 75 0
- Over 75 0
- Prefer not to say 0



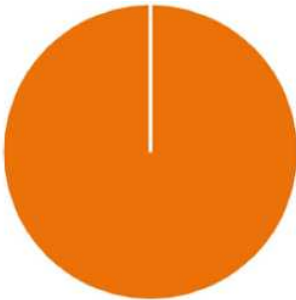
7. How would you describe your ethnic group?

- Asian or Asian British 0
- Black or Black British 0
- White or White British 1
- Mixed Ethnicity 0
- Prefer not to say 0
- Other 0



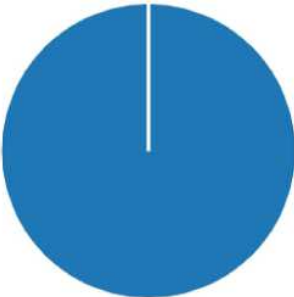
8. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

- Yes 0
- No 1
- Prefer not to say 0



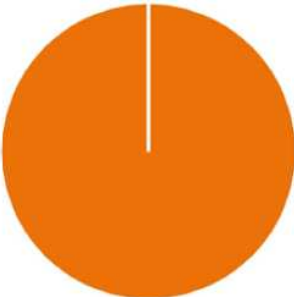
9. Do you live in the UK?

● Yes	1
● No	0
● Prefer not to say	0



10. If you live in the UK, please tell us the first section of your postcode. (Useful to understand survey responses across Sunderland)

● Prefer not to say	0
● Other	1



THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SUNDERLAND

NOTIFICATION OF STATUTORY PROPOSAL TO LOWER THE AGE RANGE AT THORNEY CLOSE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, that it is the intention of Sunderland City Council, City Hall, Plater Way, Sunderland SR1 3AA to:

Lower the age range of Thorney Close Primary School Torquay Road, Sunderland, SR3 4BB from 3 – 11 years of age to 2 – 11 years of age with effect from 1st January 2023.

Thorney Close Primary School is a maintained primary school maintained by Sunderland City Council.

The current school building offers a nursery provision for children aged 3 and above. This proposal will result in a nursery provision for 2, 3 and 4-year-old children.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposals. The complete proposals have been published on the website <https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/article/13038/School-organisation-consultations>

Copies of the complete proposals can be obtained from: Retained Education Functions Lead, Sunderland City Council, Plater Way, Sunderland SR1 3AA,

by telephoning 07917 504203 or by e-mailing alan.rowan@sunderland.gov.uk.

Within four weeks from the date of publication of the proposals, any person may object to or make comments on the proposals by sending them to the Retained Education Functions Lead, Sunderland City Council, Plater Way, Sunderland SR1 3AA, or by e-mailing them to schoolorganisation@sunderland.gov.uk.

Signed: Patrick Melia

Chief Executive

Sunderland City Council

Publication Date: 28th September 2022

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SUNDERLAND
NOTIFICATION OF STATUTORY PROPOSALS TO LOWER THE AGE RANGE OF
THORNEY CLOSE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Local Authority Proposals

Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, that it is the intention of Sunderland City Council, City Hall, Plater Way, Sunderland SR1 3AA, to:

- Lower the age range of **Thorney Close Primary School, Torquay Road Sunderland, SR3 4BB** from 3 – 11 years of age to 2 – 11 years of age with effect from 1st January 2023

Thorney Close Primary School is maintained by Sunderland City Council. The school currently offers a nursery provision for children aged 3 and above. This proposal will result in a nursery provision for 2, 3 and 4-year-old children.

Reason for the Lowering of the Age Range at Thorney Close Primary School

Thorney Close Primary School currently offers statutory early years provision for children from the age of three. The school's current offer focuses on the delivery of the statutory 15-hour entitlement. Lowering the age of admission at the school would allow the extension of this provision to include 2-year-old children and would enable the delivery of the free early years entitlement available to disadvantaged families.

Lowering of the age of admission would ensure the ongoing sustainability of early years provision for 2-year-olds in the area. It would also enable parents with both two-year-old children and older children who may already attend the school to drop their children at one single setting instead of multiple settings across the area, therefore making 2-year-old provision more convenient and accessible to an increased range of families.

Effect on other Schools, Academies and Educational Institutions in the Area

This proposal is not anticipated to impact on the recruitment of other settings. It is noted that the Thorney Early Education Centre will be closing in January 2023 and the delivery of 2-year-old places will provide parents who would previously have enrolled children at that setting with an alternative local nursery place.

Project Costs

There is sufficient surplus physical capacity in the current Thorney Close Primary School buildings to deliver this programme without major capital works. Minor alterations, such as additional toilets and hygiene areas, will be required and a budget of £75k has been allocated to support this work.

Pupil Numbers and Admissions

In the Summer 2022 Census collection there were 27 funded nursery children on roll at Thorney Close Primary School. There were 243 children on roll in years Reception – Year 6.

Displaced Pupils

There will be no pupil displacement linked to this proposal, but the setting will provide a potential education setting for those pupils displaced by the closure of a local day-care.

Impact on the Community

The community will benefit from the availability of increased nursery school places. This will result in more parents and carers within the Sandhill Ward benefiting from the opportunity to access a funded place for 2-year-olds within statutory walking distance of their home address.

Families moving into the area will have a greater opportunity to secure school places for children across multiple year groups at a single school. Parents with a 2-year-old child and 7-year-old child will be able to drop off or collect their child from one location. This will benefit parents who currently do multiple drop-offs for their primary and nursery aged children.

The additional nursery provision will safeguard the long-term provision of nursery places in the Sandhill Ward for the future.

Balance of Denominational Provision

There will be no impact on the balance of denominational provision as the school does not have a religious character.

Special Educational Needs Provision (SEND)

Thorney Close Primary currently specialises in provision for children with hearing impairment. While the 2-year-old provision will not be a specialist SEN offer the expertise across the wider school would be beneficial for any children that attend and who do have additional sensory requirements.

Travel

The Council has considered the impact of travel within this proposal. The provision will be based at the current school site. It will offer a maintained nursery offer within a locality, will offer alternative places in a ward where alternative 2-year-old places are currently at risk and will enable some parents to reduce travel through the delivery of a 2 to 11 year-old offer on one site.

Consultation

An informal (pre-publication) consultation upon the proposals took place during the following dates:

- 18th July 2022 – 18th September 2022

Consultees recommended in the relevant statutory guidance were consulted via a Consultation Document that was made widely available on the Council's website and the website of Thorney Close Primary School. Consultees included parents, staff, pupils, the local ward councillors and staff representatives (unions).

The consultation received 1 response. That response supported the proposal.

Submission of Objections and Comments on Proposal

A copy of this proposal can be viewed on the Sunderland City Council website at

<https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/article/13038/School-organisation-consultations>

It can also be requested via:

E-mail: alan.rowan@sunderland.gov.uk

Telephone: 07917 504203

Post: Retained Education Functions Lead, City Hall, Plater Way, Sunderland, SR3 1AA.

Within four weeks of the Publication Date below, any person may object to or make comments on the proposals by sending their written representations:

By e-mail to :-

schoolorganisation@sunderland.gov.uk

Or by post to :-

Alan Rowan
Retained Education Functions Lead
City Hall,
Plater Way,
Sunderland,
SR1 3AA

Signed : Patrick Melia,
Chief Executive,
Sunderland City Council.

Publication Date: 28th September 2022

Good morning,

Please accept this email as submission of a formal comment in support of the statutory proposal to lower the age range at Thorney Close Primary School on the basis that it will safeguard provision in the Thorney Close area and in Sandhill Ward.

Thanks and best wishes, Paul

Paul Edgeworth

Liberal Democrat councillor for Grindon, Hastings Hill, Springwell and Thorney Close

EQUALITY ANALYSIS

You must complete this in conjunction with reading Equality Analysis Guidance

Name of Policy/Decision/Project/Activity:
Proposal to Lower the Admission Age at Thorney Close Primary School

Date:
10/11/2022

Version Number: One

Equality Analysis completed by:
Name/Job title: Alan Rowan – Retained Education Functions Officer

Responsible Officer or Group:
Name/Job title: Alan Rowan

Is the Activity:
New/Proposed (X) Changing/Being Reviewed () Other ()

1. Purpose and scope

Purpose

In this section outline briefly:

- what the policy, decision or activity is and what the intended outcomes/benefits are (linked to the Corporate Outcomes Framework)
- over what period of time the outcomes will be achieved
- why it needs to be implemented or revised
- what populations are affected by the proposal
- who is expected to benefit and how, i.e. young people, older people, carers, BME groups, ward areas/communities, etc
- whether there are any overlaps with regional, sub-regional, national priorities.

The decision is to make changes to the age of admission at Thorney Close Primary School. It will enable the school to compliment its existing 3 and 4 year old nursery offer with a new provision for 2 year old children. It will provide both funded and unfunded places and ensure that any potential deficit of places linked to the discontinuation of other local provisions are offset

Intelligence and Analysis

Please describe:

- What sources of information have been used to inform this assessment/analysis (this should include but is not limited to consultations, resident/service user feedback and statistical data and intelligence)
- **What the information is telling you** – this should be broken down by each of the protected characteristics or other identified groups which could be disadvantaged. Each of the aims of the equality act should be considered in relation to each of the protected characteristics.

The proposal is based on current nursery recruitment, projected future demand (based on birth rate analysis and housing development projections) and the potential impact of the closure of the Thorney Close Early Education Centre. Discussions with the school on the benefits of an all through (2-11) provision have also been considered.

This has resulted in the view that the school can offer a sustainable, high-quality provision that will meet the needs of all local families. The school has the physical capacity to deliver the provision and it is considered that there will be ongoing demand for places.

June 2015

Gaps in intelligence and information

Having analysed the information available to you:

- are there any gaps in intelligence or areas where understanding needs to be improved? Please describe what these are and what actions you intend to take to obtain/improve the information. These actions should be covered in the action plan.
- are there any groups who should be expected to benefit who do not? Please describe why not and whether you will amend the decision to change this outcome. This should also be covered in the action plan.

It is not considered that further intelligence would influence the proposals further

Additional Impacts

The policy or action may also have an impact on other groups or individuals which are not covered by statutory requirements. Please outline any additional individuals or groups which have not already been covered. This could include socio-economic groups, voluntary and community sector, carers or specific communities which face additional challenges (such as former coal mining areas or areas of high deprivation)

2. Analysis of impact on people

In this section you must **review the intelligence described above and summarise the intended and potential impact of the policy, decision or activity** on the people of Sunderland. This includes specific consideration of the impact on individuals, groups with protected characteristics and communities of interest within the city. Please briefly outline any positive, neutral or negative impacts on the specific groups below. Please note that any negative impacts should have a corresponding action in the action plan in the page below.

In this assessment it is important to remember the **Council is required to give due regard to:**

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality 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.

Each of these aims must be summarised in turn in relation to the groups outlined below.

Characteristic	List of Impacts		
	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Age	Pupils aged 2 – 11 will be the primary beneficiaries. Children will be able to access an appropriate local provision but also become accustomed to a local provision from an early age		
Disability	There is an SEN specialism at the school. While this provision is not considered a specialist nursery provision there will be benefits for children with hearing impairments from being in an environment with highly trained staff		
Gender/Sex	NA		
Marriage & Civil Partnership	NA		
Pregnancy and	NA		

June 2015

maternity			
Race/Ethnicity	NA		
Religion/belief	NA		
Sexual Orientation	NA		
Gender identity	NA		

Please add any additional groups mentioned in “additional impacts” above to this table.

3. Response to Analysis, Action Plan and Monitoring

In this section please outline what actions you propose to take to minimise the negative, and maximise the positive, impacts that have been identified through the analysis. By considering and implementing these actions the policy or action can be refined to make sure that the greatest benefits are achieved for the people of Sunderland. The performance monitoring process should also be set out to explain how ongoing progress is going to be followed to make sure that the aims are met.

From the analysis four broad approaches can be taken, (No major change; continue with the policy/action despite negative implications; adjust the policy/decision/action; or stop the policy/action). Please indicate, using the list below, which is proposed.

- No Major Change ()
- Continue Despite Negative Implications ()
- Adjust the Policy/Decision/Project/Activity ()
- Stop ()

Action Plan

ACTION	WHO	WHEN	MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

PLEASE ENSURE THE COMPLETED EQUALITY IMPACT ANALYSIS TEMPLATE IS PUBLISHED ON <http://citypoint/equalityanalysis/default.aspx>, WITH THE RELEVANT ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION APPENDED, i.e. POLICY/STRATEGY. THE EQUALITY ANALYSIS MUST BE PRESENTED AT ANY DECISION POINT.

**SCHOOL ORGANISATION COMMITTEE OF CABINET
– 10th NOVEMBER 2022**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report: Proposed Changes to the Link School

Author(s): Director of Children’s Services

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to seek a decision on proposals to increase the capacity of Sunderland’s Pupil Referral Unit (The Link School/ PRU); to establish satellite delivery sites in the Coalfields, Washington and South Sunderland areas; and to establish a Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) specialist provision at the potential Coalfields satellite provision.

Description of Decision: School Organisation Committee of Cabinet is asked to:

Note the responses to the pre-publication consultation and the responses received during the statutory representation period on the PRU re-organisation proposals

Consider the three related statutory proposals which are to:

- Enlarge and increase the capacity of Sunderland’s Pupil Referral Unit from 172 to 220 places with effect from 1st January 2023;
- Establish satellite sites for Sunderland’s Pupil Referral Unit in Hetton, Washington and South Sunderland; and
- Establish a resourced Social, Emotional and Mental Health Unit at Sunderland’s Pupil Referral Unit.

Under the provisions of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 the Authority may approve published proposals with or without modification, or may reject them. The Committee is requested to approve the three related proposals.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? Yes

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

The proposals contained within this paper have been identified as necessary to ensure that Sunderland City Council continues to effectively meet its statutory duty to ensure that there are enough local school places to meet demand.

The proposal to provide satellite provision sites for Sunderland’s PRU ensures that provision can be accessed within localities. This will reduce the need for young pupils, particularly those aged between 5 and 11 years of age, to travel to the city centre to access appropriate provision for their needs.

Assessment centre models within the satellites will increase the potential for a pupil's successful re-integration back to into their substantive school place while also facilitating greater cross key stage working with their substantive mainstream setting or, alternatively, lead to a more appropriate special school or provision placement.

The proposal to establish a SEMH provision in the Coalfields will ensure that provision is located and distributed across the city, with the current SEMH provision all based in the city centre. It will also provide much needed additional capacity in Sunderland resulting in fewer out of area or independent school placements.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

- Retain current PRU site locations only – This would not enable pupils to access specialist provision within their home localities leading to extended travel time, high transport costs and greater potential for failed re-integration back into substantive school places following pupils' period in a resourced provision.
- Retain current levels of SEMH provision – As the city's mainstream SEHM provision is currently at capacity this will result in pupils being placed in out of area or independent places, resulting in increased travel time, a need to commission out of area residential places or placement at independent settings which would lead to pressure on the local High Needs Block.

Impacts analysed;

Equality Privacy Sustainability Crime and Disorder

Is the Decision consistent with the Council's co-operative values? Yes

Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution? Yes

Is it included in the 28 day Notice of Decisions? Yes

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE LINK SCHOOL**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES****1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek a decision on proposals to increase the capacity of Sunderland's Pupil Referral Unit (The Link School/ PRU); to establish satellite delivery sites in the Coalfields, Washington and South Sunderland areas; and to establish a Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) specialist provision at the potential Coalfields satellite provision.

2. Description of Decision

- 2.1 School Organisation Committee of Cabinet is asked to:

Note the responses to the pre-publication consultation and the responses received during the statutory representation period on the PRU re-organisation proposals.

Consider the three related statutory proposals which are to:

- Enlarge and increase the capacity of Sunderland's Pupil Referral Unit from 172 to 220 places with effect from 1st January 2023;
- Establish satellite sites for Sunderland's Pupil Referral Unit in Hetton, Washington and South Sunderland; and
- Establish a resourced Social, Emotional and Mental Health Unit at Sunderland's Pupil Referral Unit;

Under the provisions of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 the Authority may approve published proposals with or without modification, or may reject them. The Committee is requested to approve the three related proposals.

3. Current Position

- 3.1 In 2019 Sunderland Council amalgamated three local authority-maintained Pupil Referral Units. That resulted in the creation of a single school offering a 5 – 16 alternative provision with bases at two sites, with a site at the former Springwell Dene School accommodating pupils between 5 and 14 and the Pallion Centre accommodating pupils aged 15 and 16. The two sites have the capacity for 172 pupils.
- 3.2 In 2020 two pilot schemes were developed that established 'assessment centres' within two local schools. The assessment centres offer an additional 12 places at each site and aim to ensure appropriate placement of children in future settings.
- 3.3 Demand for places at the PRU currently exceeds capacity with 189 pupils registered for 172 places. There is currently a waiting list for places.
- 3.4 The city's core primary aged Alternative Provision (AP) offer is currently based within the vicinity of the city centre, either at the Springwell Dene site or via the current pilot

based out of Hudson Road Primary School. Most children accessing the provision from outside that area do so via home to school transport, with the travel to and from their placements by taxi or shared bus. This, in some cases, results in over 16 miles of travel each day for primary aged children.

- 3.5 Following consultation with Headteachers in the Coalfields area there was general agreement that a provision in the locality on an early intervention placement basis is needed, particularly considering the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on children's mental health, emotional well-being, increased anxiety, and lower school attendance.
- 3.6 An average of 8 primary aged children residing in the Coalfields over each of the 3 previous academic years received a statutory assessment for special educational needs whilst attending the Link School or because of intervention in the Link School. Currently there are pupils at the KS1 Link School who have an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) and are placed at the Link School as there are no commissioned places available in specialist provision.

4.0 Proposals

- 4.1 To make provision more accessible and geographically appropriate for younger pupils within localities, the proposal is that a Key Stage 1 (KS1) and Key Stage 2 (KS2) unit is established in the Coalfields area of the city. In the first instance it is proposed that the unit provides alternative provision places to pupils between the age of 5 and 11. The alternative provision school places would include a focus on children with high levels of persistent absenteeism, school phobia and those at risk of becoming elective home educated.
- 4.2 Should the proposal proceed the unit will be managed within the city's core PRU provision, complementing the existing provision at the Springwell Dene and Pallion sites. There will be a requirement to increase the number of commissioned places, and, by association, the capacity of the PRU to facilitate this. It is proposed that the Coalfields Unit delivers 16 additional places for 5 to 11-year-olds.
- 4.3 It is also proposed that the units currently operating as pilot schemes based out of Oxclose Community Academy and Hudson Road Primary School are formalised as part of the City's permanent AP offer. This will result in the requirement for a further 24 additional places, with 12 places offered for children aged 5 to 11 and 12 places offered for children aged 11 to 16.
- 4.4 Should the above proposals be implemented this would result in an increase in the City's PRU capacity from 172 pupils. It is proposed that the total increase is to 220 pupils, enabling the PRU to utilise surplus capacity at the current Springwell Dene site which will become available following the development of a Coalfields provision and alternative placement of children at that setting who would normally access the Springwell Dene provision.
- 4.5 To resolve capacity requirements associated with oversubscription to the city's SEMH primary provision it is also proposed that the unit in the Coalfields includes a resourced SEMH provision for primary aged children with an EHCP who require a placement at a specialist behavioural setting. It is, again, proposed that this development is delivered by Sunderland's substantive PRU provider. It is proposed that 8 places are developed and offered. While it is anticipated that the development of this offer would enable appropriate pupils from the Coalfields to access a more

geographically appropriate provision this provision would not be limited to those residing in that area of the city.

- 4.6 A suitable site is required to deliver the Coalfields AP and resourced SEMH unit. The former Hetton le Hole Nursery building, vacant since Summer 2021, has been identified as a potential site for the provision. It is considered geographically appropriate for the children that would access the provision, remains an educational asset and is appropriately sized to accommodate the projected cohort of 24 pupils.
- 4.7 It is projected that, subject to the approval of the above proposals, the first admission to either the Coalfields KS1/KS2 satellite site or the proposed SEMH provision will be September 2023.

5.0 Outcomes

The proposal would secure the following outcomes:

5.1 Increased capacity within the local alternative provision sector

The proposal would result in a 48-place increase in local AP capacity across the three areas (Coalfields, Washington, and East Sunderland). The capacity in Washington and East Sunderland would support the permanent establishment of the Assessment Hub model in the city while the capacity allocated in the Coalfields would support the delivery of localised Key Stage 1 and 2 provision in that area.

5.2 Increased appropriateness of placements within the local alternative provision model and SEND

The proposal would formalise current pilot schemes in Washington and East Sunderland that focus on assessment and subsequent appropriate placement within commissioned places. The permanent delivery of that model ensures that pupils with additional behavioural requirements are placed in provision that best meets their needs and the receiving provision has a greater level of understanding and assessment information on how best to accommodate those pupils.

The establishment of a Coalfields KS1/ KS2 satellite AP setting would ensure the youngest pupils that access commissioned places at the PRU would be able to do so in a location more appropriate to their needs. Increased appropriateness in this context includes a provision setting that reduces the requirement for excessive daily transport, that increases the option for attendance at both an AP setting and a substantive school placement and that ensures the cohort is taught with an age-appropriate peer group.

However, while the Coalfields site will provide a pupil's predominant AP placement there will be pupil movement between the satellite sites and the PRU's main delivery site in Springwell. This will enable all pupils attending the provision to access specialist materials and other educational resources at those sites as required by their established learning plans.

5.3 Reduced central administrative costs

The development of a Coalfields KS1/ KS2 satellite and Behavioural Unit for pupils in receipt of an EHCP will enable pupils to access provision within their locality. It is anticipated that most of the pupils attending the provisions will be resident in the

Coalfields or that travel to the Coalfields satellite will be less than the travel time to the main KS1/KS2 delivery site in Sunderland City Centre. This will result in efficiencies to the Home to School transport budget.

The establishment of an 8 place SEMH provision would, as above, reduce home to school transport requirements for those pupils with an EHCP and for whom the provision would be suitable. Currently primary aged pupils accessing SEMH provision do so at North View Academy in West Sunderland.

When local places are at capacity, as they have been since 2020/21, out of area provision or independent places are sought as an alternative. The creation of additional, local SEMH places, as well as additional AP places, would result in savings to the local High Needs Funding Block when compared to independent and out of area provision. Further information on potential savings is included in paragraph 12.2.

It is also considered that, in addition to increasing the appropriateness of provision to children in localities, the refurbishment of the Hetton site would result in a lower capital expenditure than, for example, the extension of the existing Springwell site. The proposal would therefore result in both long-term revenue savings and short-term capital savings.

6.0 Statutory Requirements

- 6.1 The proposals included within this paper are subject to the requirements of the applicable school organisation legislation, which required publication of notice of the proposed alterations below.

Enlargement / Increase in Capacity

- 6.2 The proposal will result in an increase from 172 places to 220 places at the city's PRU. As the proposal expands the capacity of the provision by in excess of 30 places and 25% of the current capacity this element of the proposal is subject to completion of the relevant statutory process

Expansion onto an Additional Site (Or Satellite Site)

- 6.3 The proposal will result in the expansion of the existing provision from the current two sites (Pallion and Springwell) to five sites (to include Hudson Road Primary School, Oxclose Community Academy, and the former Hetton le Hole Nursery School).
- 6.4 Operationally the provision will be managed under the PRU's existing leadership systems including the existing Management Committee and Senior Leadership. Pupils will have designated host sites but will, as required, have access to resources from any of the PRU's five delivery sites. Staffing will also be shared across the five sites. It is therefore an expansion of existing provision as opposed to the development of a new provision.

Establish a Special Educational Needs (SEN) Provision

- 6.5 The proposal seeks to establish an 8 place SEMH SEN provision. This would be a provision that is reserved for pupils with Special Educational Needs and falls outside the scope of the PRU's current offer. As with the increase in capacity and expansion

onto a satellite site the establishment of a SEN provision within a mainstream setting is subject to school organisation requirements as set out in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and related Regulations.

7. Current Position

Consultation

7.1 In June 2022 Cabinet approved a proposal to commence the School Organisation processes required to make changes to the Link School.

7.2 A pre-publication consultation exercise took place between 28 June and 22 September 2022. The pre-publication consultation contained the Council's proposal to make the changes to the Link School as outlined in Section 6 of this paper.

7.3 Consultation was carried out with the following groups

- Parents of pupils attending the Link School
- Current staff
- Local schools and nurseries
- Trade Union Representatives

In total the Council received 73 responses. All but one supported the Council's proposals. Responses are collated as Appendix 1 of this report.

7.4 The Council published notification of statutory proposals to make changes to the Link School. The four-week statutory notice period ended 25th October 2022. Statutory notices were published in the following places:

- Sunderland City Council's website
- The Link School (PRU) website
- The Sunderland Echo

7.5 In addition to the publication of notices the following groups were consulted with as part of this process:

- Parents of pupils attending the PRU provision
- Current staff
- Unions
- All Schools in the city

7.6 Notification of proposed changes was also provided to the Department for Education, as is required when seeking to establish a satellite site. The Council did not receive any responses to the notices. The notice and full statutory proposals document are attached at Appendix 2 and 3 respectively.

8. Next Steps

8.1 Subject to approval of the proposals included under Section 6 the Council will implement the increase in capacity at the Link School and the formalisation of units at Hudson Road Primary School and Oxclose Community Academy in January 2023.

- 8.2 Capital works will be procured to refurbish the former Hetton le Hole Nursery site with a view to work commencing in January 2023 to facilitate admissions to the PRU provision and SEMH provision at the site commencing in advance of the 2023/24 academic year.

9. Reasons for the Decision

- 9.1 The proposals contained within this paper have been identified as necessary to ensure that Sunderland City Council continues to effectively meet its statutory duty to ensure that there are enough local school places to meet demand.
- 9.2 The proposal to provide satellite provision sites for Sunderland's PRU ensures that provision can be accessed within localities. This will reduce the need for young pupils, particularly those aged between 5 and 11 years of age, to travel to the city centre to access appropriate provision for their needs.
- 9.3 Assessment centre models within the satellites will increase the potential for a pupil's successful re-integration back to into their substantive school place while also facilitating greater cross key stage working with their substantive mainstream setting or, alternatively, lead to a more appropriate special school or provision placement.
- 9.4 The proposal to establish a SEMH provision in the Coalfields will ensure that provision is located and distributed across the city, with the current SEMH provision all based in the city centre. It will also provide much needed additional capacity in Sunderland resulting in fewer out of area or independent school placements.

10. Alternative Options

Retain current PRU site locations only – This would not enable pupils to access specialist provision within their home localities leading to extended travel time, high transport costs and greater potential for failed re-integration back into substantive school places following pupils' period in a resourced provision.

Retain current levels of SEMH provision – As the city's mainstream SEMH provision is currently at capacity this will result in pupils being placed in out of area or independent places, resulting in increased travel time, a need to commission out of area residential places or placement at independent settings which would lead to pressure on the local High Needs Block.

11. Impact Analysis

Equalities – Proposals contained within this document have been subject to staff and union consultation. All decisions have been undertaken in a fair, equitable and transparent manner, and will not affect those groups who have protected characteristics under the general equality duty. The Equalities Assessment is attached as Appendix 4.

Sustainability – This project will ensure the continuation of PRU provision in the city. It will result in appropriate provision continuing, with enhancement, for those who require it within their own localities

12. Other Relevant Considerations / Consultations

12.1 Co-operative values – At Annual Council in May 2015, it was resolved that the following statement be included in the Constitution to reflect the values of the “Co-operative Council”.

“Sunderland City Council is a co-operative council and in being so will act ethically in all its actions while adhering to and actively promoting its co-operative values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. These values will underpin its decision making and actions.”

12.2 Financial implications –

The capital costs associated with the redevelopment of the former Hetton le Hole Nursery building are anticipated to be £0.5m to £0.6m. These will be funded from available School’s Basic Need Capital funding within the current approved Capital Programme.

Cost of 8 SEMH places (EHCP) in the proposed resourced provision would be £10,660 per place plus top up with a total funding requirement of £137,280 (£17,160 per place)

During the 2021/22 academic year there were 7 young people with an EHCP that attended the Link School and who went on to access Ashbrooke School at an average cost of £0.054m per year due to the lack of commissioned places at special schools. The total cost to accommodate that number of pupils at an independent setting over five years is estimated at £1.890m. Should those pupils instead have been accommodated in the provision, as outlined in this proposal, this would represent a cost-avoidance to the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant of £1.289m over five years. The average cost avoided per pupil over the five-year period is £0.257m without any other administrative savings for example reductions in home to school transport included.

12.3 Legal Implications

Throughout the process, from informal consultation to the publication of the statutory proposals, the Council has complied with the requirements of the applicable legislation (the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013) and has also adhered to the Department for Education’s Statutory Guidance – [Making Significant Changes \(‘Prescribed Alterations’\) to Maintained Schools, October 2018](#).

13. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Pre-Publication Consultation Outcomes

Appendix 2 – Statutory Notice for Proposal to Make Changes to the Link School

Appendix 3 – Full Proposal – Changes to the Link School

Appendix 4 – Equalities Assessment

10. Background Papers

9th June 2022 Cabinet report – PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT – SCHOOL ORGANISATION PROPOSALS AND PROCUREMENT OF CAPITAL WORKS

LINK School Proposals 2022

73

Responses

02:29

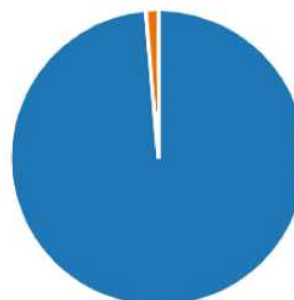
Average time to complete

Active

Status

1. Do you agree with the proposal to increase the number of Alternative Provision school places in the City?

● Yes	72
● No	1
● No Comment	0



2. If no, please tell us why you do not agree with the proposal

1

Responses

Latest Responses

3. Do you agree with the proposal to establish an Alternative Provision in the Coalfields for pupils aged 5 to 11?

● Yes	72
● No	0
● No Comment	1



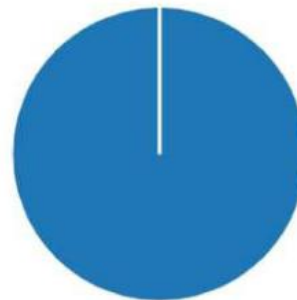
4. If no, please tell us why you do not agree with the proposal

0
Responses

Latest Responses

5. Do you agree with the proposal to make the pilot Alternative Provision sites in East Sunderland and Washington permanent features of the City's Alternative Provision offer?

● Yes	73
● No	0
● No Comment	0



6. If no, please tell us why you do not agree with the proposal

0
Responses

Latest Responses

7. Do you agree to establish a specialist primary school unit in the Coalfields for children aged 5 to 11 with additional social, emotional, and mental health support requirements?

● Yes	72
● No	0
● No Comment	1



8. If no, please tell us why you do not agree with the proposal

0
Responses

Latest Responses

9. Do you have any additional comments on any of the Council's proposals?

73
Responses

Latest Responses

"No"

"NO"

"This is king over due "

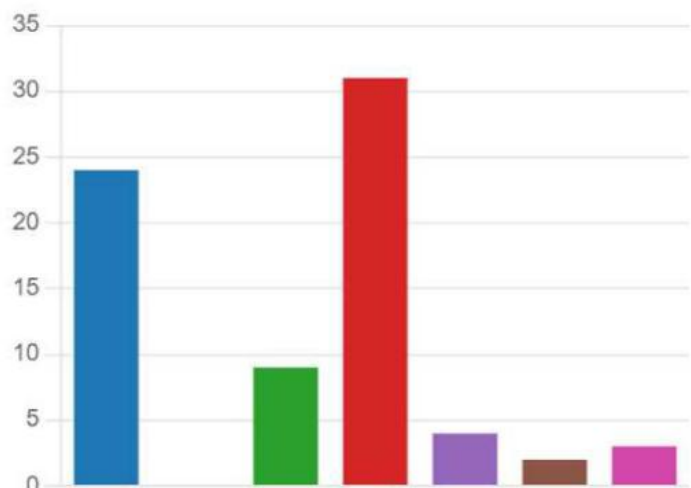
[Update](#)

17 respondents (23%) answered **provision** for this question.



10. Are you responding to this consultation as one of the below?

- A parent 24
- A carer 0
- A local resident 9
- School staff member 31
- School Governor 4
- Local Councillor 2
- Other 3



11. How did you hear about this survey?

73

Responses

Latest Responses

"Facebook"

"Email"

"The links school "

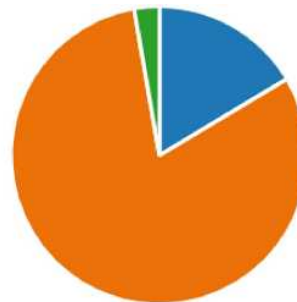
[Update](#)

18 respondents (25%) answered **email** for this question.



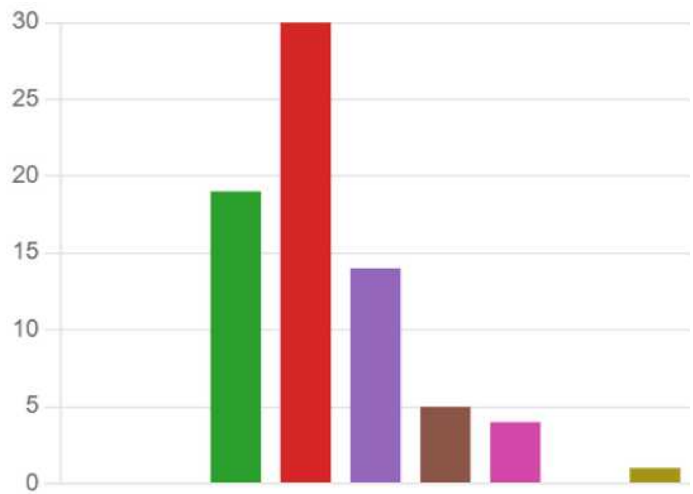
12. Which gender do you identify as?

● Male	12
● Female	59
● Prefer not to say	2
● Other	0



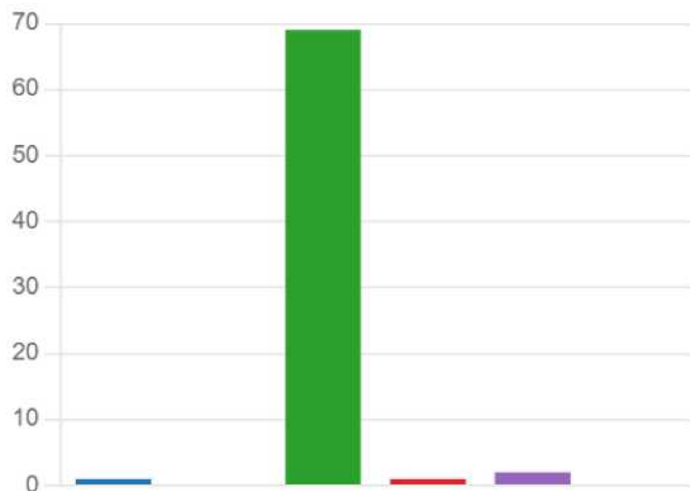
13. Please specify your age group

● Under 16	0
● 16 to 25	0
● 26 to 35	19
● 36 to 45	30
● 46 to 55	14
● 56 to 65	5
● 66 to 75	4
● Over 75	0
● Prefer not to say	1



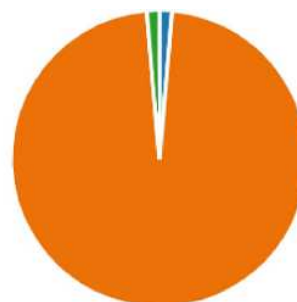
14. How would you describe your ethnic group?

● Asian or Asian British	1
● Black or Black British	0
● White or White British	69
● Mixed Ethnicity	1
● Prefer not to say	2
● Other	0



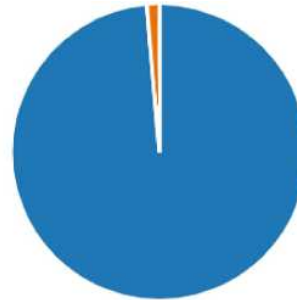
15. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

● Yes	1
● No	71
● Prefer not to say	1



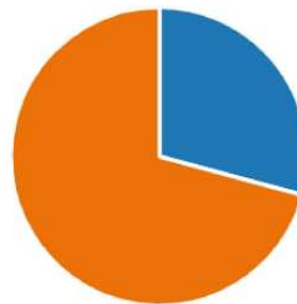
16. Do you live in the UK?

● Yes	72
● No	1
● Prefer not to say	0



17. If you live in the UK, please tell us the first section of your postcode. (Useful to understand survey responses across Sunderland)

● Prefer not to say	21
● Other	51



Hetton Town Council



The Hetton Centre
Welfare Road
Hetton le Hole
DH5 9NE

Tel: 0191 561 6600
Mobile: 0753 867 3657
email: townclerk@hettontowncouncil.gov.uk

11 August 2022

Mr A Rowan
Retained Education Function Lead
Neighbourhood Directorate
Sunderland City Council

Via email: alan.rowan@sunderland.gov.uk

Dear Mr Rowan

Link School (Pupil Referral Unit) Expansion Consultation - Coalfields Unit

Thank you for attending the Town Council meeting on 18 July 2022 to outline the proposal of the City Council and answer Member's questions.

I am writing to formally notify you of the Town Council's position.

The Town Council notes the capacity issues affecting the Link School and is supportive of the proposals to utilise the site of the former Hetton Nursery School to provide a satellite facility for the Link School. The Town Council welcomes the enhancements for pupils in the Coalfields area.

Town Council does have some concerns on behalf of residents relating to the practical operation of the site pertaining to parking provision; and requests that careful consideration be given to this aspect to avoid potential disruption and nuisance.

Town Council requests that information dissemination and the consultation methodology be reviewed to ensure it is inclusive as many of the site's neighbours are elderly and may not be able to engage on-line.

I trust the above information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Keedy', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Graeme Keedy
Town Clerk

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SUNDERLAND

NOTIFICATION OF STATUTORY PROPOSALS FOR THE LINK SCHOOL

Sunderland City Council's 'The Link School/ Pupil Referral Unit provision proposals' entail three related statutory proposals as set out below.

ENLARGEMENT/ INCREASE IN CAPACITY

Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, that it is the intention of Sunderland City Council, Plater Way, Sunderland SR1 3AA to make a prescribed alteration to

The Link School, Swindon Road, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR3 4EE

by increasing the number of available places from 172 places to 220 places with effect from 1 January 2023.

ESTABLISH SATELLITE SITES

Related to the first proposal, notice is given in accordance with Section 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, that Sunderland City Council, Plater Way, Sunderland SR1 3AA intends to make a prescribed alteration by establishing satellite sites for

The Link School, Swindon Road, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR3 4EE

with effect from 1 January 2023. Sites will be in the Coalfields, Washington and Central Sunderland.

ESTABLISH A RESOURCED SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH UNIT

Related to the first and second proposals, notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, that it is the intention of Sunderland City Council, Plater Way, Sunderland SR1 3AA to make a prescribed alteration to

The Link School, Swindon Road, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR3 4EE

by establishing an 8-place resourced SEN Unit. This will be based at the proposed Coalfields satellite provision.

The Link School is a Pupil Referral Unit/ Alternative Provision school maintained by Sunderland City Council.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposals. The complete proposals have been published on the website <https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/article/13038/School-organisation-consultations>

Copies of the complete proposals can be obtained from: Retained Education Functions Lead, Sunderland City Council, Plater Way, Sunderland SR1 3AA,

by telephoning 07917 504203 or by e-mailing alan.rowan@sunderland.gov.uk.

Within four weeks from the date of publication of the proposals, any person may object to or make comments on the proposals by sending them to the Retained Education Functions Lead, Sunderland City Council, Plater Way, Sunderland SR1 3AA or by e-mailing them to schoolorganisation@sunderland.gov.uk.

Signed: Patrick Melia

Chief Executive

Sunderland City Council

Publication Date: 28th September 2022

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SUNDERLAND

NOTIFICATION OF STATUTORY PROPOSALS FOR THE LINK SCHOOL

Local Authority Proposals

Sunderland City Council's 'The Link School/ Pupil Referral Unit provision proposals' entail three related statutory proposals as set out below.

1. ENLARGEMENT/ INCREASE IN CAPACITY

Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, that it is the intention of Sunderland City Council, Plater Way, Sunderland SR1 3AA to make a prescribed alteration to

- **The Link School, Swindon Road, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR3 4EE**

by increasing the number of available places from 172 places to 220 places with effect from 1 January 2023.

2. ESTABLISH SATELLITE SITES

Related to the first proposal, notice is given in accordance with Section 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, that Sunderland City Council, Plater Way, Sunderland SR1 3AA intends to make a prescribed alteration by establishing satellite sites for

- **The Link School, Swindon Road, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR3 4EE**

with effect from 1 January 2023. Sites will be in the Coalfields, Washington and Central Sunderland.

3. ESTABLISH A RESOURCED SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH UNIT

Related to the first and second proposals, notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, that it is the intention of Sunderland City Council, Plater Way, Sunderland SR1 3AA to make a prescribed alteration to

- **The Link School, Swindon Road, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR3 4EE**

by establishing an 8-place resourced SEN Unit for the 2023/24 academic year. This will be based at the proposed Coalfields satellite provision.

The Link School is a Pupil Referral Unit/ Alternative Provision school maintained by Sunderland City Council.

Enlargement / Increase in Capacity

The proposal will result in an increase from 172 places to 220 places at the Link School. As the proposal expands the capacity of the provision by more than 30 places and 25% of the current capacity this element of the proposal is subject to completion of the relevant statutory process.

Expansion onto an Additional Site (Or Satellite Site)

The proposal to provide satellite provision sites for the Link School ensures that a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)/ Alternative Provision (AP) can be accessed within localities. This will reduce the need for young pupils, particularly those aged between 5 and 11 years of age, to travel to the city centre to access appropriate provision for their needs. Assessment centre models within the

satellites will increase the potential for a pupil's successful re-integration back to their substantive mainstream setting or, alternatively, lead to a more appropriate special school or provision placement.

The proposal will result in the expansion of the existing provision from the current two sites (Pallion and Springwell) to five sites (to include a satellite for primary aged pupils at Hudson Road Primary School (Villiers Street South, Sunderland SR1 2AH) and the former Hetton le Hole Nursery School (Victoria Street, Hetton-le-Hole, Houghton le Spring, Tyne and Wear, DH5 9DG) and a secondary aged satellite at Oxclose Community Academy (Dilston Close Oxclose Village, Washington NE38 0LN)).

Operationally the provision will be managed under the Link School's existing leadership systems including the existing Management Committee and Senior Leadership. Pupils will have designated host sites but will, as required, have access to resources from any of the Link School's five delivery sites. Staffing will also be shared across the five sites. It is therefore an expansion of existing provision as opposed to the development of a new provision.

Establishment of a Special Educational Needs (SEN) Provision

The proposal seeks to establish an 8 place Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) SEN resourced provision. This would be a provision that is reserved for pupils with Special Educational Needs and falls outside the scope of the Link School's current offer.

The proposal to establish a SEMH provision in the Coalfields will ensure that provision is located and distributed across the city, with the current SEMH provision all based in the city centre. It will also provide much needed additional capacity in Sunderland resulting in fewer out of area or independent school placements.

Implementation.

Subject to the approval of the above proposals

- Capacity of the Link School will be increased from 1st January 2023
- The satellite units in Washington and Central Sunderland will be operational from 1st January 2023
- The opening date of the satellite unit in the Coalfields is subject to the completion of required capital works. It is projected that the unit will be operational from Easter 2023
- The opening date of the Social, Emotional and Mental Health provision (co-based with the Coalfields Satellite Provision) is subject to the completion of required capital works. It is projected that the unit will be operational from Easter 2023

Reason for Proposals

Demand for places at the Link School exceeds supply. This is resulting in pupils either being accommodated in mainstream school places that are not able to fully meet their wider needs, or, alternatively, being transported to out of authority provision.

Demand for places at the Link School come from across the city but supply of places is predominantly based in the city centre. This requires travel from pupils in localities. This can

result in some pupils travelling for between 1 and 2 hours each day to access the PRU/ AP provision.

The proposals will result in the following benefits:

Increased capacity within the local alternative provision sector

- The proposals would result in a 48-place increase in local AP capacity across the three areas (Coalfields, Washington, and East Sunderland). The capacity in Washington and East Sunderland would support the permanent establishment of the Assessment Hub model in the city while the capacity allocated in the Coalfields would support the delivery of localised Key Stage 1 and 2 provision in that area.

Increased appropriateness of placements within the local alternative provision model and SEND

- The proposals would formalise current pilot schemes in Washington and East Sunderland that focus on assessment and subsequent appropriate placement within commissioned places. The permanent delivery of that model ensures that pupils with additional behavioural requirements are placed in provision that best meets their needs and the receiving provision has a greater level of understanding and assessment information on how best to accommodate those pupils.
- The establishment of a Coalfields KS1/ KS2 satellite AP setting would ensure the youngest pupils that access commissioned places at the PRU would be able to do so in a location more appropriate to their needs. Increased appropriateness in this context includes a provision setting that reduces the requirement for excessive daily transport, that increases the option for attendance at both an AP setting and a substantive school placement and that ensures the cohort is taught with an age-appropriate peer group.
- However, while the Coalfields site will provide a pupil's predominant AP placement there will be pupil movement between the satellite sites and the PRU's main delivery site in Springwell. This will enable all pupils attending the provision to access specialist materials and other educational resources at those sites as required by their established learning plans.

Reduced central administrative costs

- The development of a Coalfields KS1/ KS2 satellite and Behavioural Unit for pupils in receipt of an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) will enable pupils to access provision within their locality. It is anticipated that most of the pupils attending the provisions will be resident in the Coalfields or that travel to the Coalfields satellite will be less than the travel time to the main KS1/KS2 delivery site in Sunderland City Centre. This will result in efficiencies to the Home to School transport budget.
- The establishment of an 8 place SEMH provision would, as above, reduce home to school transport requirements for those pupils with an EHCP and for whom the provision would be suitable. Currently primary aged pupils accessing SEMH provision do so at North View Academy in West Sunderland.
- When local places are at capacity, as they have been since 2020/21, out of area provision or independent places are sought as an alternative. The creation of additional, local SEMH places, as well as additional AP places, would result in savings to the local High Needs Funding Block when compared to independent and out of area provision.
- It is also considered that, in addition to increasing the appropriateness of provision to children in localities, the refurbishment of the Hetton site would result in a lower capital

expenditure than, for example, the extension of the existing Springwell site. The proposal would therefore result in both long-term revenue savings and short-term capital savings.

Effect on other Schools, Academies and Educational Institutions in the Area

The proposal is anticipated to have positive implications for other schools, academies and educational institutions in the area.

- Pupils on roll at mainstream schools who take up placements within the PRU provision will have access to resources and provision that is consistent with their substantive mainstream placements while out of school.
- Greater resource for PRU attendees will lead to a higher quality and more varied educational delivery which may facilitate more efficient transition for pupils who are to be re-integrated into their substantive mainstream school places post placement.
- Re-integration of Coalfields based younger children back into their mainstream school places will be assisted. The closer proximity between the PRU and local primary schools will allow phased re-introduction where children will have the opportunity to attend their substantive mainstream place as well as access PRU provision.
- The permanent establishment of the Assessment Satellite Hubs in Washington and Central Sunderland will continue the work of the pilots. Feedback from the pilot schemes identifies that no pupil who attended a hub place was subsequently subject to a permanent expulsion on their return to a substantive mainstream place.
- Increased local SEMH capacity will ensure that pupils are placed appropriately and that children, for whom it has been identified that a mainstream place is not appropriate, will not be retained in that setting due to lack of capacity in the SEN sector. This will ensure schools and academies can allocate resources more effectively.

Project Costs

While not part of this statutory process, the proposal to amalgamate the City's PRU provision is linked to the intention to refurbish the former Hetton le Hole Nursery School site as the Coalfields Satellite and SEMH Unit.

The £0.5m refurbishment of the former Springwell Dene School will include rehabilitation of all classrooms and teaching support areas, rehabilitation and development of external teaching and social areas and the delivery of new ICT infrastructure and associated equipment.

Pupil Numbers and Admissions

Given the nature of PRU provision the number of pupils on roll is subject to fluctuation across the academic year. The Link School's Admission data for the full 2021-22 academic year is included below

Group		Total Numbers KS1-4			
		During Year		Current	
		No	%	No	%
All	On Roll	259	100%	182	100%
Gender	Boys	164	63%	110	60%
	Girls	95	37%	72	40%
Pupil Premium	No	86	33%	62	34%
	Yes	173	67%	120	66%
Children Cared For	No	244	94%	172	95%
	Yes	15	6%	10	5%
SEN Status	Pupil with EHCP	16	6%	5	3%
	Pupil with SEND Support	190	73%	130	71%
	No Additional Support	53	21%	47	26%

Enrolment data for the Hub Pilots (2021/22) is included in the table below

Group		HUBPRIM				HUBSEC			
		During Year		Current		During Year		Current	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
All	On Roll	16	100%	5	100%	28	100%	11	100%
Gender	Boys	14	88%	5	100%	18	64%	4	36%
	Girls	2	13%	0	0%	10	36%	7	64%
Pupil Premium	No	7	44%	3	60%	8	29%	5	45%
	Yes	9	56%	2	40%	20	71%	6	55%
LAC	No	16	100%	5	100%	27	96%	11	100%
	Yes	0	0%	0	0%	1	4%	0	0%
SEN Status	EHCP	0	0%	0	0%	1	4%	0	0%
	SEND Support	15	94%	5	100%	24	86%	10	91%
	No SEND	1	6%	0	0%	3	11%	1	9%

Displaced Pupils

The proposal will not result in displaced pupils. It will ensure pupils who would ordinarily access a place at the provision are more likely to receive one (because of the increased capacity) or ensure that pupils already accessing the provision but who are required to travel from localities to do so can be accommodated at a setting that is more appropriately located.

Pupils accessing SEMH provision will be those who have been identified by an Education, Health and Care Plan Placement Panel as requiring that provision. Mainstream school placements will have been considered unsuitable to meet the needs of pupils. On that basis there is no displacement associated with the delivery of a SEN unit at the Link School.

Impact on the Community

The move to increase the capacity of and establish satellite sites for the Link School will not impact on the community. The PRU is a citywide resource. Therefore, amalgamating and moving part of the provision will not result in mainstream places being removed from a community.

The three satellite sites are to be based at established education settings or buildings that until recently have been used exclusively for educational use. They have already operated within the local community settings in which they are located.

Wider positive impacts will come from the development of locality provision. Specifically, the ability for young people from the Coalfields to access a site (either for an Alternative Provision or SEMH placement) that enables them to continue to attend a school place near their home without excessive travel.

Balance of Denominational Provision

There would be no impact on the balance of denominational provision as the City's PRU provision does not have a religious character.

Rural Primary Schools

Sunderland's PRU provision does not fall within the categorisation of a rural primary as set out in Section 15 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Furthermore, the school is not listed on the DfE's List of Designated Rural Primary Schools 2018.

Maintained Nursery Schools

Not applicable - There is no nursery implication within this proposal.

Sixth Form Provision

Not applicable - There is no provision for students aged 16 to 19.

Special Educational Provision

The proposal will deliver a SEMH unit within the Coalfields Link School satellite site. This provision will be for primary aged children with the majority who will attend the unit living in the Coalfields area. It responds to the need for additional SEMH places in the city, the ambition to ensure there is appropriate local provision for pupils and utilises the expertise of the Link School in providing for this cohort.

Travel

There would be significant decrease in car use because of these proposals. The delivery of locality sites will enable pupils to access provision nearer to their homes. This will reduce both the period spent travelling to and from provision and the costs associated with that travel.

Consultation

An informal (pre-publication) consultation upon the proposals took place during the following dates:

- 28th June 2022 to 20th September 2022

Consultees recommended in the relevant statutory guidance were consulted via a Consultation Document that was made widely available on the Council's website and PRU websites. Consultees included parents, staff, pupils, local schools and academies, early-years providers, the local Councillors and staff representatives (unions).

There were 74 responses to the consultation. 73 supported the Council's proposals and 1 objected to the Council's proposals. The objection was to the proposal to establish a satellite provision in the Coalfields.

Submission of Objections and Comments on Proposals

A copy of this proposal can be viewed on the Sunderland City Council website at

<https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/article/13038/School-organisation-consultations>

It can also be requested via:

E-mail: alan.rowan@sunderland.gov.uk

Telephone: 07917 504203

Post: Retained Education Functions Lead, City Hall, Plater Way, Sunderland, SR1 3AA.

Within four weeks of the Publication Date below, any person may object to or make comments on the proposals by sending their written representations:

By e-mail to :-

schoolorganisation@sunderland.gov.uk

Or by post to :-

Alan Rowan

Retained Education Functions Lead

City Hall,

Plater Way,

Sunderland,

SR1 3AA

Signed : Patrick Melia,

Chief Executive,

Sunderland City Council.

Publication Date: 28th September 2022

EQUALITY ANALYSIS

You must complete this in conjunction with reading Equality Analysis Guidance

Name of Policy/Decision/Project/Activity:
Making Changes to the Link School

Date:
10/11/2022

Version Number: One

Equality Analysis completed by:
Name/Job title: Alan Rowan – Retained Education Functions Officer

Responsible Officer or Group:
Name/Job title: Alan Rowan

Is the Activity:
New/Proposed (X) Changing/Being Reviewed () Other ()

1. Purpose and scope

Purpose

In this section outline briefly:

- what the policy, decision or activity is and what the intended outcomes/benefits are (linked to the Corporate Outcomes Framework)
- over what period of time the outcomes will be achieved
- why it needs to be implemented or revised
- what populations are affected by the proposal
- who is expected to benefit and how, i.e. young people, older people, carers, BME groups, ward areas/communities, etc
- whether there are any overlaps with regional, sub-regional, national priorities.

The decisions are to make changes to the Link School. The Link School provides Sunderland's Alternative Provision (AP)/ Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) resource.

This decision will increase the capacity of the Link School, it will create delivery sites in localities, formalise 'Assessment Centre' models in two local schools and establish a resourced unit for primary aged children with additional education needs relating to their Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) requirements. It will create new high-quality provision for the local population and contribute to Sunderland's corporate Healthy City aims.

The outcomes will be realised on an ongoing basis from the point of implementation (January 2023)

The proposal needs to be implemented to resolve over subscription for the city's AP provision, lack of local AP provision within localities (particularly the coalfields) and oversubscription to local SEMH providers. It will ensure that young people who need an AP or specialist school place are able to access one locally with a reduction in the requirement to travel to a city centre hub.

It will benefit young people accessing the provision. Those expected to access the provision resultant from the proposals are aged 5 – 11 years of age

Intelligence and Analysis

Please describe:

- What sources of information have been used to inform this assessment/analysis (this should include but is not limited to consultations, resident/service user feedback and statistical data and intelligence)
- **What the information is telling you** – this should be broken down by each of the protected characteristics or other identified groups which could be disadvantaged. Each of the aims of the equality act should be considered in relation to each of the protected characteristics.

June 2015

The proposals were developed following evaluation of local demand data for AP and SEMH places, consideration of recruitment to AP schools from the Coalfields, the costs of provision of travel and the potential requirement to provide out of area or independent provision should places local mainstream places not be developed and consultation with local headteachers. All identified the following

- There is a deficit in local AP places
- There will be emotional, social and education benefits in reducing travel requirements for young people requiring an AP provision

In advance of the publication of full proposals the Council carried out a pre-publication consultation. The consultation was live for 6 weeks with 73 responses being received. Of those 72 supported the Council's proposals

June 2015

Gaps in intelligence and information

Having analysed the information available to you:

- are there any gaps in intelligence or areas where understanding needs to be improved? Please describe what these are and what actions you intend to take to obtain/improve the information. These actions should be covered in the action plan.
- are there any groups who should be expected to benefit who do not? Please describe why not and whether you will amend the decision to change this outcome. This should also be covered in the action plan.

It is not considered that further intelligence would influence the proposals further

Additional Impacts

The policy or action may also have an impact on other groups or individuals which are not covered by statutory requirements. Please outline any additional individuals or groups which have not already been covered. This could include socio-economic groups, voluntary and community sector, carers or specific communities which face additional challenges (such as former coal mining areas or areas of high deprivation)

2. Analysis of impact on people

In this section you must **review the intelligence described above and summarise the intended and potential impact of the policy, decision or activity** on the people of Sunderland. This includes specific consideration of the impact on individuals, groups with protected characteristics and communities of interest within the city. Please briefly outline any positive, neutral or negative impacts on the specific groups below. Please note that any negative impacts should have a corresponding action in the action plan in the page below.

In this assessment it is important to remember the **Council is required to give due regard to:**

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality 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.

Each of these aims must be summarised in turn in relation to the groups outlined below.

Characteristic	List of Impacts		
	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Age	Pupils aged 5 – 11 will be the primary beneficiaries. Proposals will result in increased appropriateness of school place allocation		
Disability	Provision will be created for pupils with SEMH. This will enable pupils who are unable to access a local, suitable school place to do so. Waiting time for places will be reduced, time in less appropriate mainstream settings will be reduced and accessibility of provision will be increased		
Gender/Sex	NA		
Marriage & Civil Partnership	NA		
Pregnancy and	NA		

June 2015

maternity			
Race/Ethnicity	NA		
Religion/belief	NA		
Sexual Orientation	NA		
Gender identity	NA		

Please add any additional groups mentioned in “additional impacts” above to this table.

3. Response to Analysis, Action Plan and Monitoring

In this section please outline what actions you propose to take to minimise the negative, and maximise the positive, impacts that have been identified through the analysis. By considering and implementing these actions the policy or action can be refined to make sure that the greatest benefits are achieved for the people of Sunderland. The performance monitoring process should also be set out to explain how ongoing progress is going to be followed to make sure that the aims are met.

From the analysis four broad approaches can be taken, (No major change; continue with the policy/action despite negative implications; adjust the policy/decision/action; or stop the policy/action). Please indicate, using the list below, which is proposed.

- No Major Change ()
- Continue Despite Negative Implications ()
- Adjust the Policy/Decision/Project/Activity ()
- Stop ()

Action Plan

ACTION	WHO	WHEN	MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

PLEASE ENSURE THE COMPLETED EQUALITY IMPACT ANALYSIS TEMPLATE IS PUBLISHED ON <http://citypoint/equalityanalysis/default.aspx>, WITH THE RELEVANT ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION APPENDED, i.e. POLICY/STRATEGY. THE EQUALITY ANALYSIS MUST BE PRESENTED AT ANY DECISION POINT.

