

**Cabinet**

**13 July 2022**

**Proposal to close Forest of Teesdale Primary School on 31 August 2022**

**Key Decision: CYPs/03/2022**



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## **Report of Corporate Management Team**

**John Pearce, Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services**

**Councillor Ted Henderson, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services**

### **Electoral division(s) affected:**

Barnard Castle West.

### **Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To seek Cabinet approval to close Forest of Teesdale Primary School on 31 August 2022, taking account of the Local Authority's duties as prescribed in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to secure sufficient places and to ensure good outcomes for all children and young people in the local area.

### **Executive summary**

- 2 Forest of Teesdale Primary School has the lowest pupil numbers of any school in Co. Durham and serves the least populated part of the county. There is currently one child on roll although that pupil is not currently being taught on site.
- 3 The most recent Ofsted inspection of 8 October 2018 judged the school to be 'Good, but the nature of the improvements required meant that a follow up inspection within 18 months should have taken place. However, COVID has delayed this, and a section 5 inspection is now overdue. The proposed closure of the school has been brought to the attention of the Regional Schools Commissioner with the aim of either delaying the inspection until after 31 August 2022 or eliminating the need for one depending on whether or not Cabinet agrees the proposal.

- 4 The Ofsted Report identified some improvement priorities relating to curriculum enrichment and consequently the collaboration with the other small schools in what was created to be an 'Upper Dales Federation', was necessary to maintain appropriate standards of provision and an appropriate curriculum for all children.
- 5 Whilst the Federation has worked in terms of enriching the curriculum and providing greater social opportunities for all pupils across all schools, parents/carers have not chosen to enrol their children at Forest of Teesdale Primary School.
- 6 At a special meeting of the Upper Durham Dales Federated Governing Body held on 11 January 2022, Governors voted unanimously for consultation to commence as soon as possible to close Forest of Teesdale Primary School.
- 7 It was agreed by the Corporate Director on 9 February 2022, to use their delegated powers to agree the start of a proposal to close the school on 31 August 2022.
- 8 Following the completion of the initial consultation process, the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services approved the issuing of a statutory notice proposing to close Forest of Teesdale Primary School on 31 August 2022.
- 9 The statutory notice was issued on 5 May 2022. During the 4 week statutory representation period, no comments were received.
- 10 As part of the statutory process there are a range of factors that must be considered by Cabinet as the decision maker. These are covered in paragraphs 30 to 40 of this report.

## **Recommendation**

- 11 Cabinet is recommended to:
  - (a) agree to close Forest of Teesdale Primary School on 31 August 2022.

## Background

- 12 Forest of Teesdale Primary School, set in the small rural community of Forest-in-Teesdale, has the lowest pupil numbers of any school in Co. Durham and serves the least populated part of the county. There is currently one child on roll although that pupil is not currently being taught on site; no pupils started in Reception in September 2021, and there are no expressions for a 1<sup>st</sup> preference to start in Reception at Forest of Teesdale Primary School for September 2022. There is no anticipated development in this part of the county that will bring about an increase to these numbers.
- 13 Since 1945, the County Council has held a lease of the school building, remaining in occupation pending the implementation of the renewal process by the landlords, Lord Barnard, with the lease managed by the Raby Estates. The termination date of the current lease is 31 May 2022, but the agreement will continue until being terminated by providing 3 months' notice. This would incur a rental cost of £562.50 from the date notice is given until the date that the lease ends.
- 14 The Council is currently in discussions with Raby Estates to identify and agree the scope of work required to the building for it to be handed back to an acceptable standard. A schedule of requirements has very recently been provided by the landlord, which appear reasonable in view of the current condition of the property. The cost of the works required by the landlord will be assessed by the Council and the necessary work put in place to put the property into a condition that allows it to be handed back to the landlord. The terms of the rental agreement mean that these costs will fall to the Council.
- 15 The most recent Ofsted inspection of 8 October 2018 judged the school to be 'Good. The Ofsted report identified weaknesses and consequently a decision was made to enrich and widen the curriculum for pupils at the school in collaboration with other small primary schools in the upper dales including Wearhead, St John's Chapel and Rookhope Primary schools.
- 16 The breadth of curriculum and the opportunity for social development of pupils at Forest of Teesdale was the key driver for the Federation with other schools. Governors accept that pupil numbers are unlikely to increase over the next 5 years to enable the breadth of curriculum and social development needs required for the school to be sustainable.
- 17 When potential financial liability is also a factor, and a school faces a poor future Ofsted outcome due to weaknesses identified that the school does not the capacity to correct, it becomes incumbent on a local authority to take steps to resolve in the best interests of pupil outcomes.

- 18 Indications, therefore, from pupil data and Ofsted reports show that decisions should be taken promptly to provide sustainable and effective education for the one pupil who is on roll at Forest of Teesdale Primary School.
- 19 At a special meeting of the Upper Durham Dales Federated Governing Body held on 11 January 2022, Governors voted unanimously for consultation to commence as soon as possible to close Forest of Teesdale Primary School.
- 20 This view was supported by officers with the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services using delegated powers based on a report of 9 February 2022 to agree consultation be undertaken to close the school on 31 August 2022.
- 21 In undertaking this process, the Council has referred to the Department for Education (DFE) guidance – "Opening and closing maintained schools November 2019". This guidance states that the decision-maker (in this case the Cabinet) needs to be satisfied that appropriate fair and open local consultation has been carried out and that the proposer (in this case the Council's Education Service) has given full consideration to all the responses received. The decision-maker should not simply take account of the numbers of people expressing a view. Instead, they should give the greatest weight to responses from those stakeholders likely to be most affected by a proposal – especially parents of children at the affected school(s).
- 22 An initial, non-statutory consultation on a proposal to close Forest of Teesdale Primary School on 31 August 2022 was held between 28 February and 10 April 2022. Meetings with Governors of the Upper Durham Dales Federation and staff of Forest of Teesdale Primary School were held on 2 and 7 March 2022. A live event was held over Microsoft Teams on 9 March for parents, the wider community and other stakeholders to hear the proposal explained by senior council officers and for them to ask questions and express views.
- 23 The responses to the consultation were received and considered by officers in the Council. Of the 22 responses received, 3 (13.6%) respondents strongly disagree with the proposal, 2 (9.1%) disagree with it, 14 (63.7%) strongly agree with it, 3 (13.6%) agree with it.
- 24 In summary, the main concerns expressed by those strongly disagreeing or disagreeing with the proposal were: closing Forest of Teesdale Primary School could be the catalyst for other small rural schools to close and that parents should be encouraged to send their children to Forest of Teesdale Primary School.

- 25 Those strongly agreeing or agreeing with the proposal felt that closing Forest of Teesdale Primary School is the only means of providing a sustainable future for education in the Upper Durham Dales area and that the proposal was the correct one due to low pupil numbers and sustainability. The funding required to keep Forest of Teesdale Primary School open could be more effectively allocated across the school system.

### **Decision to Issue a Statutory Notice**

- 26 After considering all of the consultation responses received, the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services agreed to publish proposals to close Forest of Teesdale Primary School. A statutory notice was therefore published on 5 May 2022.
- 27 Significantly more responses received during the initial consultation period supported the proposal than did not support it as indicated in paragraph 23 of this report. Those respondents opposed to the proposal did not provide evidence of how sustainable numbers could be achieved or alternative viable options to support their preferred option which is to retain Forest of Teesdale Primary School.
- 28 Once a proposal is published there follows a statutory 4-week representation period during which comments can be made. These must be sent to the Local Authority. Any person can submit representations, which can be objections or expressions of support. The representation period is the final opportunity for people and organisations to express their views about the proposal. Once the representation period has closed (2 June 2022), a decision on the proposal must be made by the decision-maker (in this case the Cabinet) within 2 months, i.e. by 2 August 2022.

### **Responses to the proposal published on 5 May 2022 (The Statutory Notice Period)**

- 29 No responses were received by the end of the 4-week statutory notice period.

### **Decision-Making Process - Factors to be considered by Cabinet**

#### *Consideration of Consultation and Representation Period*

- 30 Cabinet needs to be satisfied that the appropriate fair and open local consultation and representation period have been carried out and that the proposer (in this case the Local Authority) has given full consideration to all the responses received. If the proposer has failed to meet the statutory requirements, this proposal may be deemed invalid and therefore should be rejected. Consultation was carried out in

accordance with Department for Education (DFE guidance) 'Opening and closing maintained schools, November 2019.

- 31 Cabinet must consider all the views submitted, including all support for, and objections to and comments on the proposal. No responses were received during the statutory notice period. The statutory notice published on 5 May 2022, and which expired on 2 June 2022 (the representation period) was prepared in accordance with the regulations and complied with statutory requirements.

### *Education Standards and Diversity Issues*

- 32 Cabinet should consider the quality and diversity of schools in the local area that pupils from Forest of Teesdale would be displaced to if the school was to close. The one pupil on roll at Forest of Teesdale Primary School has been taught at St. John's Chapel Primary School since September 2021. This school is also part of the Upper Durham Dales Federation and was judged "Good" in the most recent Ofsted Inspection undertaken in March 2019. Evidence to date suggests that the child is progressing both educationally and socially by being educated in this school.
- 33 The proposal to close Forest of Teesdale Primary School will have a positive impact for students, their families, and staff. The significantly low pupil numbers prevent the school from providing an effective curriculum and also endanger its long term financial viability. It is believed that this proposal provides the best future option for the children, the school, and the community it serves based on educational outcomes, pupil numbers, and sustainable finances.

### *National Curriculum*

- 34 All maintained schools must follow the National Curriculum unless they have secured an exemption for groups of pupils or the school community. The proposal to Forest of Teesdale Primary School on 31 August 2022 has no impact on this requirement as all schools in County Durham follow the National Curriculum.

### *Equal Opportunity Issues*

- 35 Cabinet must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which requires them to have 'due regard' to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination;
  - advance quality of opportunity;
  - foster good relations;

- 36 An equality impact assessment (Appendix 2) has been carried out on this proposal. It is evident that there would be limited impact on protected groups of pupils as only one pupil is currently on roll and is not being educated at Forest of Teesdale Primary School.

### *Travel and Accessibility*

- 37 The pupil currently on roll at Forest of Teesdale Primary School has been taught at St. John's Chapel Primary since September 2021 and is being provided with free home to school transport. Consequently, there will be no increase in travelling time from that currently experienced.

### *Funding*

- 38 The closure of Forest of Teesdale Primary School will enable pupils to be educated in a larger and more viable establishment. If the school closes, cost-savings of £113,000 per annum will be made. In addition there will also be a saving of £2,250 per year by not renewing the lease with Raby Estates for the use of the building. The termination date of the current lease is 31 May 2022, but the agreement will continue until being terminated by providing 3 months' notice. This would incur a rental cost of £562.50 from the date notice is given until the date that the lease ends.

There will be costs incurred in bringing the building to an acceptable standard as per the terms of the lease with Raby Estates. A schedule of requirements has very recently been provided by the landlord, which appear reasonable in view of the current condition of the property. The cost of the works required by the landlord will be assessed by the Council and the necessary work put in place to put the property into a condition that allows it to be handed back to the landlord. The terms of the rental agreement mean that these costs will fall to the Council.

### *Rural schools and the presumption against closure*

- 39 DfE guidance – "Opening and closing maintained schools November 2019" states that there is a presumption against the closure of rural schools. This does not mean that a rural school will never close, but the case for closure should be strong and the proposal clearly in the best interests of educational provision in the area. We believe the information provided in this report clearly shows why the proposal is in the best interests of educational provision in this area.
- 40 When considering the proposal to close Forest of Teesdale Primary School on 31 August 2022, Cabinet must consider:
- The likely effect of the closure of the school on the local community; The primary purpose of a school has to be the

educational provision for pupils attending that school, and as such, the community benefit of the school, whilst a factor to consider, cannot be the primary reason for maintaining the school;

- The proportion of pupils attending the school from within the local community i.e. is the school being used by the local community; There is only one pupil on roll at Forest of Teesdale Primary School, no preferences have been expressed for a place in Reception for September 2022 and there is no projected growth in the area which would result in more pupils attending Forest of Teesdale Primary School;
- Educational standards at the school and the likely effect on standards at neighbouring schools; The most recent Ofsted inspection of 8 October 2018 judged the school to be 'Good'. The Ofsted report identified weaknesses and consequently a decision was made to enrich and widen the curriculum for pupils at the school in collaboration with other small primary schools in the upper dales including Wearhead, St John's Chapel and Rookhope Primary schools;
- Whether the school is now surplus to requirements (e.g. because there are surplus places elsewhere in the local area which can accommodate displaced pupils, and there is no predicted demand for the school in the medium or long term); All of the data indicates that there are sufficient places at other schools within a reasonable travelling distance to accommodate the current pupil on roll and there is no predicted demand for places in the future;
- Any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the closure of the school, and the likely effects of any such increase; There will be no increase in the use of motor vehicles as the council is currently providing free home to school transport to the one pupil on roll at Forest of Teesdale Primary School to attend St. John's Chapel Primary School;
- Any alternatives to the closure of the school. The Upper Durham Dales Federation was created which included Forest of Teesdale of Primary School in an attempt to preserve education in small rural areas. However, whilst the Federation has worked in terms of enriching the curriculum and providing greater social opportunities for all pupils across all schools, parents/carers have not chosen to enrol their children at Forest-of Teesdale Primary School. There is no likelihood of pupil numbers increasing in the future and consequently there is no alternative to closure.



## Conclusion

- 41 As evidenced through this report and the initial 2 February 2022 report to Corporate Management Team, the proposal to close Forest of Teesdale Primary School on 31 August 2022 will have a positive impact for students, their families. The key objective of the proposal is to improve educational outcomes for pupils in the area which have been negatively impacted by the extremely small number of children on roll at the school. This is affecting its ability to offer an effective education and in due course will impact on the financial viability of the school.
- 42 Schools need to be sustainable to meet the challenges in a rapidly changing educational environment. The objectives of this proposal are to significantly enhance the quality of education provision for children within local communities whilst ensuring choice of provision and curriculum breadth are enhanced. The proposal to close Forest of Teesdale Primary School on 31 August 2022 and for children in that area to be educated in a larger school that allows for more social interaction and which provides a broader education will provide a sustainable model to improve education outcomes in the area. Therefore, educationally it is in the best interests of children and their families.
- 43 Officers believe this recommendation provides the best future option for the children, the school, and the communities it serves based on educational outcomes, pupil numbers, site issues and sustainable and equitable finances.
- 44 Should Cabinet agree to close Forest of Teesdale Primary School, it will impact on the amount of funding across the Upper Durham Dales Federation as there will be a reduction of one lump sum to the value of £121,300 and other smaller elements of formula funding. However, the proposal to close the school will result in a fairer distribution of the significant funding currently allocated to educate one pupil.
- 45 Most responses received during the initial consultation were in support of the proposal. The large majority of responses (77.3%) supported the proposal, and those respondents who do not support it have not suggested alternative practicable solutions for the education of children and young people living in the area.
- 46 No responses were received to the statutory notice.

## Background Papers

- Delegated Decision Reports dated 19 April 2022 and 9 February 2022.

- Corporate Management Team Report dated 2 February 2022 'Options for the future of Forest of Teesdale Primary School'.
- Consultation document: 'Proposal to close Forest of Teesdale Primary School on 31 August 2022'.
- Consultation document distribution list –May 2022
- Public notice: 'Proposal to close Forest of Teesdale Primary School on 31 August 2022'.

**Author(s)**

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

The actions described in this report are intended to comply with the Council's duty to exercise its functions with a view to promoting high standards and the fulfilment of each pupil's learning potential in accordance with S13A of the Education Act 1996.

### **Finance**

Schools are funded through Dedicated Schools Grant and operate to delegated budgets, which are the responsibility of individual school Governing Bodies. The National Funding Formula puts more funding into pupil-led factors than school-led factors, which could create longer term challenges for smaller schools, because the increase in pupil-led funding will be of less benefit to schools with smaller numbers of pupils.

The closure of Forest of Teesdale Primary School will enable pupils to be educated in a larger and more viable establishment. If the school closes, cost-savings of £113,000 per annum will be made. In addition there will also be a saving of £2,250 per year by not renewing the lease with Raby Estates for the use of the building. The termination date of the current lease is 31 May 2022, but the agreement will continue until being terminated by providing 3 months' notice. This would incur a rental cost of £562.50 from the date notice is given until the date that the lease ends.

There will be costs incurred in bringing the building to an acceptable standard as per the terms of the lease with Raby Estates. The Council's Corporate Property Department is currently in discussions with the Raby Estates to agree the landlord's requirements in connection with the termination of the Council's occupation. The cost of the works required by the landlord will be assessed by the Council and the necessary work put in place to put the property into a condition that allows it to be handed back to the landlord.

There will be costs associated with a compulsory redundancy.

### **Consultation**

Consultation has been carried out in accordance with DfE statutory guidance. The approach to consultation is described in the report.

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

The proposal to close Forest of Teesdale Primary School is expected to bring about educational improvement for children by them being educated in a larger, more sustainable school in either Teesdale or Upper Weardale.

The focus on improved education outcomes is seen as a positive experience in a child's education and ensures that children who are protected under the Equality and Diversity/Public Sector Equality Duty can maximise their potential.

The main groups affected are children attending Forest of Teesdale Primary School, their families and staff.

Consideration over whether to close Forest of Teesdale Primary School will lead to improved standards and a better curriculum offer.

The proposal to close Forest of Teesdale Primary School will benefit pupils, staff and parents. Education will be provided in a larger establishment which offers greater social interaction to facilitate a positive learning experience for children and provide equal access to all.

The main groups affected are children attending Forest of Teesdale Primary School, their families and staff. An Equality Impact Assessment is included in Appendix 2 to this report.

## **Climate Change**

The recommendation of this report involves increased use of transport from Forest-in-eesdale to St. John's Chapel. This will be more than compensated by the reduction in the number of schools and subsequent reduction in the pupil carbon footprint and use of antiquated heating systems. This will contribute to the Council's net zero carbon target.

## **Human Rights**

Human rights are not affected by the recommendation in this report.

## **Crime and Disorder**

No impact.

## **Staffing**

There will be a compulsory redundancy deemed necessary in relation to the recommendation in this report which will be subject to DCC policies and will be managed in line with HR processes.

## **Accommodation**

The Forest of Teesdale Primary School building is leased by the Council from Raby Estates. Part of the lease states that the property should be "in good and tenable repair internally and externally". The requirements of Raby

Estates regarding the condition of the building are not yet known, though there is a condition maintenance backlog of £98,684.

### **Risk**

A key risk is that because of actions taken by the Council (including the failure to make timely interventions), pupils do not receive an adequate education.

### **Procurement**

None.

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## Appendix 2: Durham County Council Equality Impact Assessment

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The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) requires Durham County Council to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people from different groups. Completion of this template allows us to provide a written record of our equality analysis and demonstrate due regard and must be used as part of decisions making processes with relevance to equality.

Please contact [equalities@durham.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@durham.gov.uk) for any necessary support.

### Section One: Description and Screening

<b>Service/Team or Section</b>	Children and Young People Service
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Graeme Plews, School Places and Admissions Manager
<b>Subject of the impact assessment</b>	Options for the future of Forest of Teesdale Primary School.
<b>Report date (Cabinet/CMT/Mgt team etc)</b>	CYPSMT 27 January 2022 CMT 02 February 2022
<b>MTFP Reference (if relevant)</b>	
<b>Start Date</b>	February 2022
<b>Review Date</b>	At various planned stages within the development of the proposal.

### Subject of the Impact Assessment

Please give a brief description of the policy, proposal, or practice as appropriate (a copy of the subject can be attached or insert a web-link)

The purpose of the impact assessment is to provide information for the decision-making process. It is designed to appraise the likely impacts of the proposals on people with characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010.

This equality impact assessment will assess the potential impact on the two different options, to consider the future provision of education for pupils attending

Forest of Teesdale Primary School. This will ensure that a solution is found to the current challenges associated with falling pupil rolls, the quality of education provision and the breadth and efficiency of the curriculum.

## **Background**

Forest of Teesdale Primary School, set in the small rural community of Forest-in-Teesdale, has the lowest pupil numbers of any Durham school and serves the least populated part of the county. There is currently 1 child on roll in Year 6, though that pupil is being taught at St. John's Chapel Primary School currently; no pupils started in Reception in September 2021, and nobody to date has expressed a 1<sup>st</sup> preference for their child to start in Reception at Forest of Teesdale Primary School for September 2022. There is no anticipated development in this part of the county that will have the effect of increasing these numbers.

Since 1945, the County Council has held a lease of this building, remaining in occupation pending the implementation of the renewal process by the landlords, Lord Barnard, with the lease managed by the Raby Estates. The most recent lease will lapse on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022 and has been extended on an annual basis. This currently is set at, £2,250.

An Atkins condition survey on the school was conducted on 24/03/2017. The outstanding condition backlog on this small building was estimated at £98,664 (not including additional costs that would arise from removal of asbestos, from fees and 24% optimum bias, plus any other necessary mitigations). The terms of the rental agreement mean that these costs will fall to the Council under the arrangement to "At all times to keep premises in good and tenantable repair." The financial obligation of the landlord only extends to: "Pay fair proportion of the costs of the maintenance and repair of septic tank within premises."

The most recent Ofsted inspection (date 08/10/2018) judged the school to be 'Good (minus)'. This should have involved a follow up inspection within 18 months, however, COVID has delayed this and a section 5 inspection is now overdue.

The Ofsted report identified many weaknesses and consequently a decision was made to enrich and widen the curriculum for pupils at the school in collaboration with other small primary schools in the upper dales including Wearhead, St John's Chapel and Rookhope Primary schools.



This group of schools became a formal Federation from September 2019 all keeping their own individual URN numbers but federating under one governing body.

The table below shows the current and projected pupil rolls for Forest of Teesdale Primary School.

School	Capacity	Projected Rolls					
		NOR 2021/22	NOR 2022/23	NOR 2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Forest of Teesdale Primary	35	1	1	1	1	1	1

This EIA considers the two options outlined within the report, and the potential impact of each:

- Option 1 - Do nothing, retaining the current education arrangements of the federation in the hope that additional pupils enrol.
- Option 2- Consult on a proposal to formally close Forest of Teesdale Primary School on 31 August 2022;

If the preferred option is to close Forest of Teesdale Primary School, a public consultation process on the closure of the school would be required.

Who are the main people impacted and/or stakeholders? (e.g., general public, staff, members, specific clients/service users, community representatives):

General Public, Governors, Staff, Parents, Pupils, Primary schools within the area, Elected Members, MPs, Neighbouring Schools, Trade Unions, Diocese, Department for Education, Community Groups, Parish Councils, Residents' Associations, AAP Board, Neighbouring Authorities, CAS/DCC Staff

## Screening

Is there any actual or potential negative or positive impact on the following protected characteristics<sup>1</sup>?

Protected Characteristic	Negative Impact Indicate: Yes, No or Unsure	Positive Impact Indicate: Yes, No or Unsure
Age	Unsure (depending on option selected)	Unsure (depending on option selected)
Disability	Unsure (depending on option selected)	Unsure (depending on option selected)
Gender reassignment	N	N
Marriage and civil partnership (‘eliminate discrimination’ employment only)	N/A	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	N/A	N/A
Race	Unsure (depending on option selected)	Unsure (depending on option selected)
Religion or Belief	N	N
Sex	Unsure (depending on option selected)	Unsure (depending on option selected)
Sexual orientation	N	N

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Please provide **brief** details of any potential to cause discrimination or negative impact. Record full details and any mitigating actions in section 2 of this assessment.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics>

### Overall impact on pupils

There will be limited impacts on pupils as only 1 child currently attends Forest of Teesdale Primary School and they are not currently educated on the site. If the process does result in closure, it is possible in the future there will be an increase in travel time for any pupils for who Forest of Teesdale would have been their nearest school.

Positive impacts are likely to occur with improved teaching and learning facilities which will allow increased opportunities for greater social interaction and breadth of experiences, resulting in a positive impact on pupils.

### Overall impact on staff

There may be a requirement for staff reductions within the Upper Weardale Federation if option 2 is implemented.

### **Age**

#### Pupils

There will be no impact as primary education will still be available.

#### Staff

There will be no impact in relation to staff reductions, as a result of any of option 2 being implemented.

### **Disability**

#### Pupils

There are no potential impacts associated with transferring schools for the pupil currently on roll at Forest of Teesdale Primary School as that pupil is currently being taught at an alternative school and this arrangement is expected to continue.

Staff

There are no potential impacts on staff in relation to the options proposed.

**Sex**

Pupils

There are no potential negative impacts associated with transferring schools for the pupil on roll at Forest of Teesdale Primary School as that pupil is currently being taught at an alternative school and this arrangement is expected to continue.

Positive impacts could occur through the options as the pupil will have the opportunity to make new friends and become part of a wider friendship group.

Staff

There are no potential impacts on staff in relation to the options proposed.

#### **Review of equality impact based on specific proposed options**

**Option 1 – Do nothing retain the current education arrangements of the federation in the hope that additional pupils enrol**

If this option was implemented, families in Forest of Teesdale would have a primary school in the village.

In relation to potential equality impacts, option 1 would have a potential positive impact as it would allow pupils to continue to attend a school within their local community which would alleviate any potential stress of travelling to a school outside of their local area for their primary education. However, as highlighted in the report if the situation remains the same, this would have a potential negative impact on the quality of education provided.

#### **Option 2 – Close Forest of Teesdale Primary School on 31 August 2022**

If this option was implemented a more sustainable solution to education in the upper dale and enhance the curriculum and learning opportunities for the small number of pupils in this location would be provided.



However, this option would have a potential negative impact in relation to those pupils living in Forest of Teesdale. Pupils would be expected to travel out of their local community to attend a primary school, which may have cost implications for some families if they were not eligible for school transport.

Please provide **brief** details of positive impact. How will this policy/proposal promote our commitment to our legal responsibilities under the public sector equality duty to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation,
- advance equality of opportunity, and
- foster good relations between people from different groups?

We recognise the need to treat all those involved in the review fairly; in particular we have had regard to the named 'protected' characteristic and our specific duty to carry out our discussions and decision making in ways that eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations; for people who share a relevant protected characteristic; and those who do not.

### **Evidence**

What evidence do you have to support your data analysis and any findings?

Please **outline** any data you have and/or proposed sources (e.g., service user or census data, research findings. Highlight any data gaps and say whether or not you propose to carry out consultation. Record your detailed analysis, in relation to the impacted protected characteristics, in the following section of this assessment.

Current data identifies one pupil on roll at Forest of Teesdale Primary School who is being educated in an alternative school.

### **Screening Summary**

On the basis of this screening is there:	Confirm which refers (Y/N)
Are you proceeding to full impact assessment (sections 2&3 of this template) based on the screening (section 1) information provided?	Y

### **Sign Off**

Lead officer sign off:	Date:
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Equality representative sign off (where required):

Date:

S Tracey, C Holt

If carrying out a full assessment please proceed to section two.

If not proceeding to full assessment, please ensure your screening record is **attached to any relevant decision-making records or reports**, retain a copy for update where necessary, and forward a copy to [equalities@durham.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@durham.gov.uk)

If you are unsure of assessing impact please contact the corporate equalities team for further advice at [equalities@durham.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@durham.gov.uk)

### Section Two: Data analysis and assessment of impact

Please provide details of impacts for people with different protected characteristics relevant to your screening findings. You need to decide if there is or likely to be a differential impact for some. Highlight the positives e.g., benefits for certain groups, advancing equality, as well as the negatives e.g., barriers for and/or exclusion of particular groups. Record the evidence you have used to support or explain your conclusions and any necessary mitigating actions to ensure fair treatment.

Protected Characteristic: **Age**

What is the actual or potential impact on stakeholders?

Record of evidence to support or explain your conclusions on impact.

What further action or mitigation is required?

Option 1  
This would have a potential negative impact by the school not being able to offer a broad and balanced curriculum and would deny the opportunity for the pupil to form peer groups.

Current data (January 2022) shows the percentages for the following year group:  
  
Year 5- 1 pupil

Consultation with young people and parents/cares to understand further the potential issues the options bring.  
  
Ensure this EIA is updated as the proposal develops.

<p>Option 2</p> <p>This option will have a potential positive impact in relation to educational opportunities, facilities and accessibility for children aged 4-11.</p>		<p>Regular correspondence with pupils, and with parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of changes and able to support their children.</p> <p>Need to consider home to school transport for pupils.</p> <p>If required all school-based staff will be supported by the relevant school policies and procedures.</p>
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Protected Characteristic: **Disability**

What is the actual or potential impact on stakeholders?	Explain your conclusion considering relevant evidence and consultation	What further action or mitigation is required?
No impact		

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Protected Characteristic: **Gender reassignment**

What is the actual or potential impact on stakeholders?

Explain your conclusion considering relevant evidence and consultation

What further action or mitigation is required?

No potential impact

Protected Characteristic: **Marriage and civil partnership ('eliminate discrimination' employment only)**

What is the actual or potential impact on stakeholders?

Explain your conclusion considering relevant evidence and consultation

What further action or mitigation is required?

No impact

Protected Characteristic: **Pregnancy and maternity**

What is the actual or potential impact on stakeholders?

Explain your conclusion considering relevant evidence and consultation

What further action or mitigation is required?

No potential impact

Protected Characteristic: **Race**

What is the actual or potential impact on stakeholders?

Explain your conclusion considering relevant evidence and consultation

What further action or mitigation is required?

No potential impact.

Current pupil data indicates the pupil on roll at Forest of Teesdale Primary School is White British.

Protected Characteristic: **Religion or belief**

What is the actual or potential impact on stakeholders?

Explain your conclusion considering relevant evidence and consultation

What further action or mitigation is required?

No potential impact

Protected Characteristic: **Sex**

What is the actual or potential impact on stakeholders?	Explain your conclusion considering relevant evidence and consultation	What further action or mitigation is required?
No potential impact.	Current pupil data indicates an even split of male/female pupils at the alternative school currently being attended by the pupil on roll at Forest of Teesdale Primary School.	

Protected Characteristic: **Sexual orientation**

What is the actual or potential impact on stakeholders?	Explain your conclusion considering relevant evidence and consultation	What further action or mitigation is required?
No potential impact		

[Section Three: Conclusion and Review](#)

**Summary**

Please provide a brief summary of your findings; a summary of any positive and/or negative impacts across the protected characteristics, links to the involvement of different groups and/or public consultation, mitigations and conclusions made.

From the process of equalities impact assessment, it is evident that there would be no potential or actual impact on protected groups of pupils, and staff.

Will this promote positive relationships between different communities? If so how?

## Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescales for implementation	In which plan will the action appear?
As part of the consultation process ensure that we engage with all young people and families to understand the impact.			
Ensure this EIA is updated as the proposal develops			
Regular correspondence with pupils, and with parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of changes and able to support their children.			
Need to consider home to school transport for pupils			

## Review and connected assessments

Are there any additional or connected equality impact assessments that need to be undertaken? (If yes, provide details)	
When will this assessment be reviewed? Please also insert this date at the front of the template	As and when the proposal develops.

## Sign Off

Lead officer sign off:	Date:
Equality representative sign off (where required):	Date:

**Please ensure this equality impact assessment**