

SCHOOL ORGANISATION REPORT FOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

1. Consultation report on Norfolk County Council's proposal to;
 - Close Shelton with Hardwick Primary School on 31 December 2019
 - Extend the catchment area of Hempnall Primary School from 31 December 2019
2. Permission to publish a Public Notice to close Shelton with Hardwick Primary School on 31st December 2019.

ANALYSIS OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Norfolk County Council undertook a consultation between 4 June and 16 July 2019 on a proposal to close Shelton with Hardwick Primary School and change the catchment area of Hempnall Primary School. If this proceeds the change would be made from 31 December 2019. The consultation document is available on; <https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/shelton-with-hardwick/>

Purpose of report:

This report is in four parts:

Part 1: the consultation process

Part 2: analysis of consultation responses

Part 3: resource implications

Part 4: conclusion and recommendation

PART 1: The consultation process:

Over 200 consultation documents were distributed in accordance with the Department for Education guidance on statutory school organisation changes. Consultees included pupils, parents and carers, staff, governors, other schools in the local area, the local MP, the local District and County Councillors, Diocesan Bodies and early years providers.

Three stakeholder events were agreed with the Headteacher, Chair of Governors and the County Council prior to the start of the consultation and were held as follows:

13 June, 6.30 – 7.30pm at Shelton with Hardwick Primary School – 13 people attended

14 June, 6.30 – 7.30pm at Hempnall Primary School – 28 people attended

4 July, 6.30 – 7.30pm at Shelton with Hardwick Primary School – 0 people attended.

The notes from these meetings are available on;

<https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/shelton-with-hardwick>

The local county councillor was briefed on the proposal on 4 June 2019 and the Lead Member for Children's Services was briefed on the proposal on 4 June and 12 July 2019.

Part 2; analysis of consultation responses

A total of 30 people responded using the consultation feedback form. Please see summary analysis of consultation responses in Appendix A.

In response to the question how much do you agree or disagree with the proposal to close Shelton with Hardwick Primary School;

- 70% (21 people) agreed or strongly agreed
- 27% (8 people) neither agreed or disagreed
- 3% (1 person) strongly disagreed.

The main points raised in support of the proposal to close the school were:

- Feels inevitable given so few children and the school is not financially viable
- Better to have 1 school rather than stretch resources across 2 schools
- Combining children and resources is a great idea

The concerns about the proposal were:

- No evidence that Norfolk County Council has done anything to manage and secure the long term sustainability of Shelton
- Shelton with Hardwick School is a special place, with great staff, it will be sad to see it close
- Need for an additional classroom or funding for extra class at Hempnall to accommodate all the children
- Why delay the closure until December 2019, why not close in September 2019

In response to the question how much do you agree or disagree to extend the catchment area for Hempnall Primary School;

- 77% (23 people) agreed or strongly
- 17% (5 people) neither agreed or disagreed
- 6% (2 people) disagreed.

The main points raised in support of the proposal to extend the catchment area were:

- It makes logical sense, the most practical solution, no other reasonable option
- Hempnall has space to grow

The concerns about the proposal to extend the catchment area were:

- Extra accommodation is needed at Hempnall
- Concerns about car parking and roads around the school as very busy
- Has consideration being given to other options for the catchment area, as future children in Shelton may choose other local schools.

Part 3: Resource implications

There are no capital project costs associated with this project.

Shelton with Hardwick Primary School is federated with Hempnall Primary School and therefore has one budget for both schools. If Shelton with Hardwick school were to close on 31 December 2019, it is predicted there will be a surplus budget in 2019/2020 which will remain with the Federation.

The school building and immediate surrounds are leased from Norwich Diocese. The County Council would have to give six months notice to terminate the lease. The lease for the field from a local landowner expires in April 2020.

Hempnall Primary School has the space and capacity for the additional children, although we appreciate this may mean the re-allocation of rooms back into classrooms.

Part 4: Conclusion and Recommendation

Sadly there has been no change in the sustainability of Shelton with Hardwick Primary School, in that there remains;

- No pupils registered at the school from 1 September 2019.

Therefore it is difficult to deliver and sustain quality education for children now and in the future.

It is anticipated that there will be approximately 130 children on roll at Hempnall in September 2019. There are currently 5 good sized classrooms in operation at the school, plus a library room which was previously a classroom. The school therefore has sufficient space for the number of children attending the school.

Traffic and car parking issues are common issues for many schools and their governing body.

The school cannot close any earlier than 31 December 2019, as there is a legal process to undertake to close a school, which cannot be completed before September 2019.

Hempnall Primary School was selected as the catchment school for future children from Shelton as it is not only in the same Federation with Shelton, but also the closest primary school. In addition 50% of the children who attend Shelton live in the Hempnall catchment area already. Norfolk County Council is required to invite parents to state their preference of school.


Taking into account all statutory requirements in relation to the initial consultation have been complied with and the views of those who have expressed an interest in this proposal have been taken fully into account, it is recommended that this proposal proceeds to the next stage of formal Public Notice.

In pursuant of the delegated powers granted to me by Part 6.2 of the Council's constitution, together with the decision of the Children's Services Committee (10th

July 2014) and in accordance with the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013, I hereby determine a Public Notice should be issued on the proposal;

- To close Shelton with Hardwick Primary School on 31st December 2019
- To change the catchment area of Hempnall Primary School

The Public Notice will appear in the Eastern Daily Press at the start of the autumn term, on 12th September 2019.

Signed:  _____

(Executive Director of Children's Services)

Date: 21st August 2019.

Appendix A

Shelton with Hardwick Primary School consultation - Summary analysis of responses									
Total number of responses = 30									
Method of response									
Online			Letter				Email		
27							3		
Respondent * please note respondents could tick all categories that apply									
Pupil	Parent/ Guardian	Member PTA	Staff	Governor	Local resident	Local business	Local sports group	Local community group	Other
0	25	3	4	1	0	0	0	0	3
Response Analysis – How far do you agree or disagree with our proposal to close Shelton with Hardwick Community Primary School, from 31st December 2019									
*please note respondents could tick all categories that apply									
			Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	
Total									
Pupil									
Parent/Guardian			9	8	7		1		
Member of the PTA				1	1				
Member of Staff			2	1	1				
Governor			1						
Local resident									
Local business									
Local sports group									
Local community group									
Other				2	1				
Response Analysis – how far do you agree or disagree with our proposal to extend the catchment area of Hempnall Primary School from 31 December 2019?									
(please note respondents could tick all categories that apply)									
			Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	
Total									
Pupil									
Parent/Guardian			8	12	4	1			
Member of the PTA				1		1			
Member of Staff			1	2					
Governor			2						
Local resident									
Local business									
Local sports group									
Local community group									
Other				1	1	1			
Comment by key themes – 28 respondents									
Shelton is not financially viable/sustainable with low numbers of pupils								17 people	
Hempnall can grow, is a 'Good' school, this will be better for staff and pupils								10 people	
No other option, makes sense to extend Hempnall catchment								8 people	
Concerns about the class sizes at Hempnall								3 people	
Concerns about Hempnall accommodation with lack of budget support and increase in pupils								3 people	
Concerns about parking at Hempnall with increase in pupils								2 people	

Better to concentrate staff and pupils in one school	2 people
Future Shelton children may want to go to other schools, closer to home	1 person
Norfolk County Council should be held accountable for management of small rural schools and there is no evidence of support to Shelton's sustainability	1 person
Happy memories at Shelton and three generations have attended, feel forced into changing school	1 person
Sad to see the school close, it is a special place	1 person
If Hempnall can extend its catchment, why can't Shelton	1 person
Is it possible to merge the two schools and use Shelton for either early years or Years 5+6, to avoid the loss of the site and save overcrowding at Hempnall	1 person
Why delay the closure until December 2019, why can't you close in September 2019	1 person