



NORTH YORKSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

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| Date of meeting: | Thursday, 21 May 2020 |
| Title of report: | SPECIAL FREE SCHOOL – SELBY |
| Type of report: Delete as required | For decision / discussion / information only |
| Executive summary: Including reason for submission | The paper provides a briefing on progress to establish a free Special School in Selby. Progress has been delayed due to Covid-19 but the trust competition stage and work in respect of design and site have continued. |
| Budget / Risk implications: | None |
| Recommendations: | Schools Forum are asked to note the contents of the report. |
| Voting requirements: | N/A |
| Appendices: To be attached | N/A |
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| Presenting officer: If not the originator | |

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this briefing is to update Schools Forum on the current position in respect of the special free school for the Selby area.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 North Yorkshire County Council was notified in March 2019 that their bid for a special free school in the Selby area had been approved by the Secretary of State to move to the next stage.
- 2.2 The proposed school will be for up to 100 pupils aged 3 to 19 with needs in the areas of communication and interaction and/or cognition and learning needs. Communication and interaction needs will include speech language and communication needs and Autism.
- 2.3 Since the approval of the bid two strands of work have been progressed. These are:
- The trust competition stage to identify an academy trust to open and operate the school
 - Work with the DfE in respect of the design and site for the school.
- 2.4 As a result of the impact of Covid-19 progress in both strands of work have been delayed. The trust competition stage was also delayed due to the General Election in December 2019. The sections below set out the current position.

3.0 THE TRUST COMPETITION STAGE

- 3.1 Applications from trusts interested in opening and operating the school were received by 30th September 2019. There then followed a robust assessment process set out by the DfE but undertaken by both the DfE and North Yorkshire County Council. From a North Yorkshire point of view, the following were involved in the assessment process:
- Local authority officers from Inclusion, Education and Skills, Finance and HR
 - Headteachers from mainstream and special schools
 - Parent/carer representative.
- 3.2 The assessment process has concluded, however due to Covid-19 final sign-off for the successful trust has not been completed by the Secretary of State. As a result, no further information can be provided at the stage, nor can any work be progressed with a trust. At present there is no indication as to when the Secretary of State will take this action. North Yorkshire County Council Officers are in regular contact with the team in DfE dealing with the process to appoint the trust to keep up to date with the situation.

4.0 THE SITE AND DESIGN FOR THE SCHOOL

- 4.1 The proposed site for the school is in Osgodby. The site was deemed as most suitable in the context of the bid for the free special school.
- 4.2 Whilst there has been some delay, work has been able to continue with the DfE in respect of the site and potential design for the school. The DfE still need to complete the feasibility study for the site and the outcome of this is awaited.
- 4.3 The school will be designed and procured by the DfE and their consultants though they will work with NYCC and the trust appointed to open and operate the school. The planning authority for the school will be Selby District Council. A planning application for the school will be submitted by the DfE's consultant. There is no date for this as yet. There will be public consultation in respect of the planning application.

5.0 NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 North Yorkshire County Council will continue to work with the DfE in terms of the site and the building of the school, and once the appointment of the trust to open and operate the school is announced, will also work with them on the development.
- 5.2 As soon as the successful trust is announced, this will be communicated to all relevant parties, and the Council website pages for the school will be updated. Further specific communication will also be planned with parents and carers in the Selby area, and with schools and settings.

STUART CARLTON

Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service