

Cabinet: 7th December 2010

Review of the implementation of the cabinet decisions taken on

- **17th December 2009 to approve the linked statutory proposals to Discontinue Birkdale High School and Enlarge Earlsheaton Technology College, The Community Science College @ Thornhill and Westborough High School**
- **16th February 2010 to approve a modification to the proposals agreed by Cabinet for Earlsheaton Technology College on 17 December 2009 to reduce the number of places from 1,350 to 1,200 places for 11 to 16 year olds.**

Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Yes, this report will have an impact on more than 2 wards
Is it in the Forward Plan?	Yes
Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Yes
Cabinet member portfolio	Children and Young People

Electoral wards affected and ward councillors consulted: Dewsbury East, Dewsbury South, Dewsbury West

Public or private: Public

1. Purpose of report

- To advise Members on the cancellation of the capital funding available for the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme and the implications for the implementation of the linked statutory decisions made by Cabinet for changes to secondary schools in the Dewsbury area.
- To advise members of the officer conclusions that there are projected to be sufficient secondary school places to meet the likely pupil demand for school places in Dewsbury over the next ten years without the need for the permanent places at Birkdale High School
- To advise Members that the reasons are still valid for making the statutory decisions regarding the linked statutory proposals to discontinue Birkdale High School and enlarge Earlsheaton Technology College, The Community Science College @ Thornhill and Westborough High School
- To request that Members make the decision to modify the statutory decisions that they have previously made regarding the linked statutory proposals to discontinue Birkdale High School and enlarge Earlsheaton Technology College, The Community Science College @ Thornhill and Westborough High School so that the planned discontinuation of Birkdale High School can proceed according to the agreed timetable.

2 The 2009 BSF Statutory Proposals for the High Schools in Dewsbury

- On 17th December 2009, Cabinet approved the linked statutory proposals to discontinue Birkdale High School and enlarge Earlsheaton Technology College, The Community Science College @ Thornhill and Westborough High School
- Section 2.1 below lists the objectives of the statutory proposals
- Section 2.2 below lists the details of the **decisions made including the conditions for the decisions and the reasons** for the decisions.
- On 16th February 2010, in the light of the Schools Adjudicator's decision regarding schools in Mirfield, Cabinet approved a modification to the proposals agreed by Cabinet for Earlsheaton Technology College on 17 December 2009 to reduce the number of places from 1,350 to 1,200 places for 11 to 16 year olds.
- The statutory proposals listed details of the arrangements for pupils displaced by the discontinuation of Birkdale High School and the staged implementation of the enlargements of Earlsheaton Technology College, the Community Science College@ Thornhill and Westborough High School to accommodate the displaced pupils from Birkdale High School. These arrangements are shown in Appendix 1.

2.1 The objectives of the proposal to discontinue Birkdale High School and the related proposals to enlarge Earlsheaton Technology College, The Community Science College @ Thornhill and Westborough High School

These were integral to the strategic plan for provision in north Kirklees described below.

- *Kirklees Council proposes to use the opportunity provided by the national BSF programme to significantly improve and enhance the overall educational opportunities and achievements of all young people in Kirklees.*
- *Kirklees Council is taking a strategic Authority-wide approach to ensure that all future secondary schools will:*
 - *offer high quality education to all*
 - *provide a full broad curriculum*
 - *be financially viable and therefore have future security*
 - *have high quality facilities*
 - *be welcoming and comfortable for all students and community users*
 - *strengthen community cohesion*
 - *enhance carbon efficiency as much as possible*
- *The underlying principles supporting the proposals are that:*
 - *the optimum size of future 11-16 schools should be 1200-1500 pupil places*
 - *secondary schools in Kirklees should be in the best possible locations to serve the communities of Kirklees taking into account site availability, building suitability and the best value investment of capital resource provided by government BSF funding.*
 - *change will be managed to ensure safe and well planned transitions whilst maintaining quality and standards for pupils and families.*

The proposal to discontinue Birkdale High School and the related proposals to enlarge Earlsheaton Technology College, The Community Science College @ Thornhill and Westborough High School would create three viable and sustainable 11-16 schools, within the optimum size range, best placed geographically and making best use of the existing buildings and sites to serve the Dewsbury area

2.2 The Cabinet Decisions taken on 17th December 2009 including conditions and reasons

Proposals to discontinue Birkdale High School – and proposals to enlarge Earlsheaton Technology College, the Community Science College @Thornhill and Westborough High School

“That the linked statutory proposal to discontinue Birkdale High School and the linked statutory proposals to make the prescribed alterations to enlarge Earlsheaton Technology College, The Community Science College at Thornhill and Westborough High School be approved, **subject to the following** specified events occurring by 31 August 2011:-

- (a) the grant of any necessary planning permissions under Part 3 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 necessary for the enlargement of the physical capacity of Earlsheaton Technology College, The Community Science College at Thornhill and Westborough High School
- (b) the entering into an agreement for any necessary building project supported financially by the Department for Children Families and Schools in connection with the programme known as “Building Schools for the Future” required for physical enlargement of the capacity of Earlsheaton Technology College, The Community Science College at Thornhill and Westborough High School.”

“That the reasons for approving the linked statutory proposals above are that the proposals would contribute to the North Kirklees area-wide strategic plan to improve the whole system of provision for all children by:-

- (a) creating more diverse provision, shaped by parents, across North Kirklees offering excellence and a fair choice to all families;
- (b) raising standards for all pupils in North Kirklees;
- (c) promoting the 5 outcomes of Every Child Matters that are at the heart of the overall strategy for raising standards for raising standards for all pupils in North Kirklees;
- (d) matching pupil places to the communities where pupils live and create viable and sustainable schools for the future;
- (e) maintaining provision in the Dewsbury area and to promote community cohesion within the Dewsbury community;
- (f) reducing the amount of vehicular traffic in the Westborough area and promoting sustainable travel to school;
- (g) supporting further partnership working and providing a viable and sustainable breadth of 14-19 curriculum;
- (h) maintaining and enhancing good provision for the additional and special educational needs of all pupils;
- (i) create large enough schools to maintain the future viability and sustainability of quality secondary provision in North Kirklees.“

2.3 The Admission arrangements for September 2011

- The admission arrangements for 2011 were proposed in the consultation documents for the Dewsbury schools and subsequently agreed by Cabinet following the annual admissions consultation in Spring 2010.
- Parents of year 6 pupils expressed their preferences for transfer to secondary schools in September 2011 during the first part of the Autumn term 2010 and the process was completed by the national deadline of 31st October 2010 to enable “co-ordination” with neighbouring Admissions Authorities.
- Birkdale High School was not given a Published Admission Number (PAN) for September 2011 as the proposal to discontinue the school in August 2011 had been approved in December 2009. Birkdale High School was not available to parents in Autumn 2010 to include in their preferences for transfer to secondary school in September 2011. Birkdale High School was not included in the Secondary Admissions Guide for Parents for 2011.
- The PANs for Earlsheaton Technology College, The Community Science College @Thornhill and Westborough High School were all set at 240 pupils for admission to year 7 in September 2011.
- Revised secondary Priority Admission Areas (PAAs) for the Dewsbury high schools also applied for year 7 admissions in September 2011.

3. 2010 Review of the Implementation of the BSF proposals

3.1 The cancellation of the BSF investment programme

- On 5th July 2010, the Secretary of State announced the cancellation of the BSF programme for north Kirklees and north Huddersfield.
- Officers and members in consultation with stakeholders have been considering how to proceed with the statutory proposals associated with the BSF programme. The earliest construction work was planned to start in January 2012 and this required significant changes in the organisation of some schools in summer 2011. The preparatory work for these changes is now advanced and the implementation of changes to the admissions arrangements is now difficult or impossible to amend. Pupils, parents and staff are now concerned by the uncertainty about the future - expectations have been raised about the proposed changes and there is an urgent need to bring certainty and clarity about the immediate future for the school communities.

3.2 Pupil Places and Pupil Demand in the Dewsbury Priority Admission Areas

3.2.1 The Capacity of Dewsbury High Schools (**revised and updated August 2010*)

Table 1 Capacity of Dewsbury schools (not including St John Fisher Catholic High School)	Net capacity range [current]	Maximum Net capacity	Potential year group	Number of pupils Jan 2010
Birkdale High School	729-810 [760]	810	162	480
Earlsheaton Technology College	949-1055* [900]	1055	211	866
The CSC @Thornhill	938-1043* [900]	1043	208	660
Westborough HS	907-1008* [900]	1008	201	879
Total		3916	782	2885

- The current surplus capacity in the 4 Dewsbury schools is $3916-2885=1031$ places when using the maximum capacities of the schools. (NB. The net capacity range for Birkdale High School has yet to be updated).
- If the Birkdale High School places are removed it would leave a total capacity of **3106** places ie a potential total yeargroup of **620** pupils. This gives a total of **221** places more than the Jan 2010 number of pupils.

3.2.2 The Demand For Pupil Places In the Dewsbury Priority Admission Areas

Table 2 Dewsbury schools secondary place planning (not including St John Fisher Catholic HS)											
School year	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Projected Year7 cohort	570	581	546	556	582	578	600	625	626	635	651
Projected 11-16 population	2893	2853	2840	2831	2835	2843	2862	2941	3011	3064	3137
Dewsbury surplus without Birkdale HS **	213	253	266	275	271	263	244	165	95	42	-31

** ie a total capacity of 3106 from Table 1 above.

- The Year 7 cohort is broadly constant at about 570-580 pupils from 2010 to 2015 (with a slight dip in 2012, 2013). It then starts to grow by about 25 pupils per year.
- If Birkdale High School closes, Earlsheaton Technology College, The Community Science College @Thornhill and Westborough High School, with a maximum net capacity of 620 places per year, could accommodate the year 7 cohorts up to 2016/17. The total year 7 cohort would exceed 620 from 2017/18 onwards but the total places would be sufficient until 2020/21.

- In 2020/21 an extra 31 places in total are required. This would equate to approx 150 additional places if demand stabilised at this level (a total of $5 \times 651 = 3255$ places would be required. This is $3255 - 3106 = 149$ above current max capacity) or an additional 300 places by 2025 if the Y7 cohorts continued to grow by 15 pupils per year. An increase of 150 places could be achieved by a modest capital investment in the existing schools.
- The additional places required by 2020 are considerably below the additional capacity that keeping Birkdale High School open would bring to the system

3.2.3 Pupil Population and Capacity - Changes In Surrounding Areas

- The pupil projections in Table 2 above do not take into account any changes in the pupil numbers in neighbouring PAAs – Batley, Mirfield, Spen Valley. The Dewsbury projections make assumptions about the continued migration of pupils out of Dewsbury into Mirfield etc. Increases in the pupil population in neighbouring areas are likely to reduce the net outflow from Dewsbury and increase the local demand.
- Increases in the wider area capacity eg through the establishment of one or more “free” schools could increase the outflow of pupils from the Dewsbury area and so reduce the demand for places.

3.2.4 Conclusion : Pupil Places and Pupil Demand in the Dewsbury PAAs

- The demand for pupil places in Dewsbury can be met from within the existing maximum capacity of 3 high schools – Earlsheaton Technology College, The Community Science College @Thornhill and Westborough High School until 2020 onwards. A small increase in places from 2020 – perhaps by 150 in total by 2025 – would be best met by limited expansion of the existing high schools.

3.3 Admission arrangements

- The Governing Body of Birkdale High School, a community school, lodged an objection with the Schools Adjudicator to the fact that Kirklees Council, as the admission authority, set an admission number of zero for the school in September 2011.
- The Schools Adjudicator considered the admission arrangements for Birkdale High School, and made a determination, on 11 October 2010, to not uphold the objection. [see Appendix 4 for the full determination].

3.4 Equalities Impact Assessments

- Equalities Impact Assessments were carried out in relation to the statutory proposals. These have been re-examined in relation the review of the implementation of the proposals. It is concluded that the Impact Assessments remain valid and should continue to inform the process of implementation.

3.5 Discussion and Conclusions: The Way Forward.

- Whilst capital investment that would have updated school buildings would have been a major improvement in facilities for the young people of Dewsbury, the objectives for the proposals can be substantially met without the significant investment afforded through BSF funding.
- The overall supply of secondary pupil places in Dewsbury is sufficient to meet the projected demand for the next 10 years **without using the places at Birkdale High School.**
- The plan to create three viable and sustainable 11-16 schools, best placed geographically and making best use of the existing buildings and sites to serve the Dewsbury area would still be achieved by the closure of Birkdale High School (even though the schools would not be within the optimum size range of 1200-1500 places until further investment was possible). The likely revenue budget constraints in the future make this approach the best route to the efficient use of resources to target learning and pupil achievement rather than maintaining costly surplus places.
- Retaining the long term additional capacity of Birkdale High School would represent poor value for money and would have a detrimental impact on the revenue funding available for other schools in Kirklees.

- The **admissions arrangements** for September 2011 are determined. The new school PANs and PAAs will apply for the year 7 entry cohort in 2011. The 3 high schools have sufficient capacity to accommodate up to 240 year 7 pupils if so required. The PANs and PAAs can be revised if necessary for year 7 in September 2012 and subsequent year 7s through the annual admissions consultation process which will take place in the late autumn/early spring term every year.
- The **objectives** for the proposals and the **reasons** that Cabinet approved the proposals are still valid and therefore proposals should be modified for reconsideration by Cabinet.
- **The conclusion is that the agreed statutory proposals to discontinue Birkdale High School in August 2011 should be implemented without BSF funding and that therefore the statutory decisions should be modified to remove the conditions attached.**

4 The Proposed Modifications to the Decisions

That the conditions (a) and (b) listed below approved as part of the decision made by the Cabinet of Kirklees Council on 17th December 2009 (as shown in para 2.2 above) are removed

That the linked statutory proposal to discontinue Birkdale High School and the linked statutory proposals to make the prescribed alterations to enlarge Earlsheaton Technology College, The Community Science College @ Thornhill and Westborough High School be approved, subject to the following specified events occurring by 31 August 2011:-

- (a) the grant of any necessary planning permissions under Part 3 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 necessary for the enlargement of the physical capacity of Earlsheaton Technology College, The Community Science College @ Thornhill and Westborough High School
- (b) the entering into an agreement for any necessary building project supported financially by the Department for Children Families and Schools in connection with the programme known as "Building Schools for the Future" required for physical enlargement of the capacity of Earlsheaton Technology College, The Community Science College @ Thornhill and Westborough High School.

4.1 Revised Transition Plan for the Closure of Birkdale High School (see Appendix 1)

The arrangements for the pupils displaced from Birkdale High School as a result of the closure aim to provide a calm, secure and supportive environment for every young person to complete their secondary education with minimum disruption and with the maximum opportunities to enable them to achieve their potential.

In practical terms, it is proposed that the Birkdale High School site and buildings (subsequently referred to as the Halifax Road site of Westborough High School) would be retained on a transitional basis to provide additional short term capacity as part of Westborough High School to accommodate former pupils of Birkdale High School, smoothing their transition and maintaining their continuity of learning.

In January 2011 individual discussions would take place with families of pupils at Birkdale High School to agree and refine the arrangements for every pupil. This would be done in collaboration with Kirklees LA officers and all the schools in the Dewsbury Learning Partnership.

Every Birkdale High School pupil would be offered a place at Westborough High School, based on the Halifax Road site of the former Birkdale High School.

Pupils would also be able to express a preference for places at the other schools in the Dewsbury Learning Partnership - Earlsheaton Technology College, The Community Science College @Thornhill and St John Fisher Catholic High School (Note: A limited number of places may be available at St John Fisher Catholic High School within their existing capacity).

In addition, parents/carers have the opportunity to apply for a place at any other secondary school with places.

In September 2011

- There would be no admission of 11 year old (Year 7) pupils to Birkdale High School
- A new arrangement of Priority Admission Areas (PAAs) would be in place for the three Dewsbury High Schools as well as revised Published Admission Numbers (PANs) to provide sufficient places for all Dewsbury 11 year olds.
- The names of all Birkdale pupils would be transferred to the rolls of other Dewsbury High Schools. (or any other High School with places)
[The projected numbers of pupils are shown in brackets.]
- **Year 11** pupils (current Year 10) would remain on the former Birkdale High School-Halifax Road site as part of Westborough High School to finish their GCSE courses with their GCSE course staff wherever possible. [102 pupils]
- **Year 10** pupils (current Year 9) would have been given the opportunity to express a preference for transfer to another school with places. Pupils would be able to remain on the former Birkdale High School site as part of Westborough High School for 2 years to finish their GCSE courses [90 pupils]
- **Year 9** pupils (current Year 8) would have been given the opportunity to express a preference for transfer to another school with places. Pupils would be able to remain on the former Birkdale High School-Halifax Road site as part of Westborough High School to finish their Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 studies.[75 pupils]
- **Year 8** pupils (current Year 7) would have been given the opportunity to express a preference for transfer to another school with places. Pupils would be able to remain on the Birkdale High School-Halifax Road site as part of Westborough High School to consolidate their Year 7 learning, finish their Key Stage 3 studies and then Key Stage 4 courses. [54 pupils]

From September 2012

- **Year 11** pupils (current Year 9) would remain on the Westborough High School-Halifax Road site to finish their GCSE courses. [max 90 pupils]
- **Year 10** pupils (current Year 8) would remain on the Westborough High School-Halifax Road site for 2 years to finish their GCSEs [max 75 pupils]
- **Year 9** pupils (current Year 7) would remain on the Westborough High School-Halifax Road site to finish their Key Stage 3 studies and then Key Stage 4 courses. [54 pupils]

4.2 Modified Proposal to enlarge Earlsheaton Technology College

The enlargement would be carried out in stages from 1st September 2011 to accommodate pupils displaced by the closure of Birkdale High School within the revised maximum net capacity of the school of 1055 pupil places.

- **School Year 2011-12:** With a projected roll of 862 pupils the capacity would be increased to accommodate up to 60 additional year 7 pupils (ie up to a revised PAN of 240) and any pupils in years 8, 9 or 10 displaced from Birkdale High School expressing a preference for Earlsheaton Technology College up to a maximum of 200 pupils per year.
- **School Year 2012-13 :** A revised PAN of 210 would be proposed during the annual admission consultation. The capacity would be increased further up to 1055 places to accommodate the next cohort of up to 210 year 7 pupils.
- **From September 2013** the permanent capacity of the school would be 1055 places The actual and projected numbers of pupils would be closely monitored and the PAN would be adjusted on an annual basis through the annual consultation process on admission arrangements in order to manage the number of pupils effectively within the revised maximum net capacity of the school of 1055 pupil places.

4.3 Modified Proposal to enlarge The Community Science College @ Thornhill

The enlargement would be carried out in stages from 1st September 2011 to accommodate pupils displaced by the closure of Birkdale High School within the revised maximum net capacity of the school of 1040 pupil places.

- **School Year 2011-2012** : With the projected roll of 750 pupils, the physical capacity would be sufficient to accommodate up to 240 year 7 pupils and some pupils in years 8, 9 or 10 displaced from Birkdale High School expressing a preference for The Community Science College @ Thornhill would also be included in the overall size of 900 pupils.
- **School Year 2012-13** : A revised PAN of 208 would be proposed during the annual admissions consultation. The capacity would be increased to 1040 to accommodate the next cohort of up to 208 year 7 pupils.
- **From September 2013** the permanent capacity of the school would be 1040 places. The actual and projected numbers of pupils would be closely monitored and the PAN would be adjusted on an annual basis through the annual consultation process on admissions arrangements in order to manage the number of pupils effectively within the revised maximum net capacity of the school of 1040 pupil places.

4.4 Modified Proposal to enlarge Westborough High School

The enlargement is maximised from 1st September 2011 to accommodate pupils displaced by the closure of Birkdale High School and utilising the building on the former Birkdale High School site on Halifax Road as a flexible additional accommodation for up to 4 years. The total capacity of the school reduces as the former pupils from Birkdale High School progress through to the end of Year 11.

- **School Year 2011-12** : The capacity would be increased to 960 on the Westborough High School-Stockhill Street site to accommodate up to 240 year 7 pupils plus an additional 350 places on the Westborough High School-Halifax Road site to accommodate all of the year 8 to 11 pupils displaced from Birkdale High School (NB available places on the Halifax Road site are solely reserved for those pupils on role at Birkdale High School at the time of closure) .
- **School Year 2012-13** : Governors would be recommended to propose a revised PAN of 200 during the annual admissions consultation. The capacity on the Westborough High School-Stockhill Street site would be increased further to 1000 places to accommodate the next cohort of up to 200 year 7 pupils plus an additional 220 places on the Westborough High School-Halifax Road site to accommodate all of the remaining year 9 to 11 pupils displaced from Birkdale High School (NB available places on the Halifax Road site are solely reserved for those pupils on role at Birkdale High School at the time of closure).
- **From September 2013** the permanent capacity of the school on the Westborough High School-Stockhill Street site would be 1008 places. The actual and projected numbers of pupils would be closely monitored and the PAN would be adjusted on an annual basis through the annual consultation process on admissions arrangements in order to manage the number of pupils effectively within the revised maximum net capacity of the school of 1008 pupil places. The additional capacity on the Westborough High School-Halifax Road site would be managed to accommodate all of the remaining pupils displaced from Birkdale High School (NB available places on the Halifax Road site are solely reserved for those pupils on role at Birkdale High School at the time of closure).

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL

5.1 Ambitions

Life chances for young people : Working in partnership to improve educational attainment for the under 16s and help them to reach their full potential. Schools will be at the hearts of their communities and aim to reflect the communities they serve. The proposals will make a significant contribution towards progressing our Every Child Matters outcomes and addressing issues in the Children and Young People Plan, and closing gaps in health, attainment, skills, employment, housing and wages. The proposals offer the opportunity to continue to significantly improve and enhance the overall educational opportunities and achievements of young people in Kirklees.

The improvement in examination results at Birkdale High School in 2010 is to be applauded and the hard work of pupils and staff with family support must be acknowledged. The results for all of the Dewsbury schools are now above 30% of pupils obtaining 5 or more GCSE grades C or above including English and maths. This provides a solid foundation for further improvement in outcomes opportunities and aspirations for young people in Dewsbury.

Lead Kirklees out of recession : Making sure we emerge with a stronger economy and better paid jobs. The proposals for change aim to extend and improve and strengthen partnerships for learning for 14 to 19 years olds and post 16 provision thereby creating stronger links to local economies;

Provide effective and productive services: Ensuring services are focused on the needs of the community and are excellent value for money. The plan to create three viable and sustainable 11-16 schools, best placed geographically and making best use of the existing buildings and sites to serve the Dewsbury area would still be achieved by the closure of Birkdale High School. The likely revenue budget constraints in the future make this approach the best route to the efficient use of resources to target learning and pupil achievement rather than maintaining costly surplus places.

Support older people to be healthy, active and involved in their communities: Helping people to improve their health and well-being. We will focus on preventative work and empowering people to make informed decisions.

5.2 Human Resources implications

5.2.1 The primary aim of the HR strategy is to retain the committed staff and their expertise within the schools in the area. A key consideration during the implementation of the HR strategies will be the continuity of pupils' education and ensuring standards are maintained.

5.2.2 A detailed review of the implications for staffing and Human Resources associated with implementing the agreed proposals is set out in **Appendix 5 in the private report**.

5.2.3 The consultation process and subsequent discussions with groups of staff, and ongoing negotiations with the trade unions has contributed to developing the following approach:

- recognition that all parts of the school community should participate in both the staffing implementation exercise plus the change and leadership programmes
- a database to be developed that holds all the relevant details around staff skills and experience along with each persons career and personal aspirations
- an HR framework to be used across the borough, recognising individuals at risk, ensuring processes are fair, and supporting individuals in terms of their career ambitions and personal aspirations
- these proposals were put to governing bodies in the Summer term, seeking agreement to fully participate in the HR framework. It is clearly important that the vast majority, if not all, schools participate – so enabling all employment opportunities to be utilised
- following agreement by schools a memorandum of understanding will be drawn up between the Council and the schools community. The terms of the memorandum will provide mechanisms which will facilitate the support to individuals and schools with regard to the very practical implications of the changes

It is recognised that the size and complexity of the change will bring a range of tensions and stress to individuals. Discussions with other neighbouring Councils have given us the opportunity to ensure we learn from their experience in managing the implementation of changes in schools. The approach set out above takes lessons from others experience and draws upon the very best of existing arrangements.

5.3 Financial Implications

- Earlsheaton Technology College, The Community Science College @ Thornhill and Westborough High School can accommodate the projected demand for 11-16 pupil places in Dewsbury within the existing maximum capacity until 2020 onwards.
- Further condition and suitability work on school buildings can be carried out subject to the availability of capital funding following the outcomes of the Comprehensive Spending Review

6. Consultees and their opinions

- The Brighter Futures consultation documents give full details of the original proposals with an area-wide summary in the overview document: “Brighter futures for our children and young people” and specific details in the “Brighter futures – Dewsbury” and “Heckmondwike, Liversedge, Mirfield and Ravensthorpe” documents.
- The cabinet report of 12th March 2009 describes the outcomes of the “Brighter futures” consultation that took place between September and November 2008 and contains full details of the consultees and the consultation process along with a thorough analysis of the opinions received through the “Brighter futures” consultation. (See Annexes 1, 6 and 7 of the report)
- The subsequent BSF consultation documents detail the revised proposals for Birkdale High School, Earlsheaton Technology College and Westborough High School. No further consultation was required for proposals to expand The Community Science College @ Thornhill.
- The cabinet report of 15th July 2009 describes the outcomes of the “BSF” consultation that took place between April and June 2009 and contains full details of the consultees and the consultation process along with a thorough analysis of the opinions received through the “BSF” consultation.
- The cabinet report of 17th December 2009, brought stakeholders views, comments and representations regarding the statutory proposals for Decision Makers consideration.
- Following the Government announcement about the cancellation of BSF funding, further discussion and consultation about the possible way forward including modifications to the agreed proposals have taken place with headteachers, governing bodies, The Dewsbury Learning Trust, and the DfE. Written notes of formal consultations are included in full in Appendix 2 and are summarised in sections 6.1 to 6.6 below
- Following the cancellation of BSF, the LA has received petitions, letters and deputations in relation to the closure of Birkdale High School. The letters and petitions received are summarised in section 6.7 below. Full details are listed in Appendix 3.

6.1 Consultation with The Dewsbury Learning Trust

- Kirklees LA approached The Dewsbury Learning Trust to take a lead in the implementation of the closure of Birkdale High School. The Dewsbury Learning Trust is the charitable foundation with The University of Huddersfield, Kirklees College, Heckmondwike Grammar School and Kirklees Council working together as partners with Westborough High School.
- In collaboration with Westborough High School Governing Body and with reassurances about matters relating to the technical aspects of the role, The Trust agreed to accept the LA proposal.

6.2 Consultation with the Governing Body of Birkdale High School [see Appendix A2.1]

- Governors questioned the school net capacity figures and the level of surplus places and suggested that the pressure from increasing pupil numbers at the remaining Dewsbury secondary schools could present difficulties in raising standards and supporting further improvement and achievement.
- The particular strength of provision for children with significant learning needs at Birkdale High School was highlighted
- It was suggested that parents were not aware of the revised proposals and how this would affect them and their children.
- The LA should ensure continuity of transition for students and look carefully into protecting the staff at Birkdale High School with bespoke support packages and flexible contracts.
- Concern was expressed about the length of time the LA has taken to produce detailed plans since the announcement in July – this has had an impact on pupils, staff and families

6.3 Consultation with the Governing Body of Earlsheaton Technology College [see Appendix A2.2]

- Governors' main concern is that without BSF capital there is not the funding to make the school big enough to cope with the extra children
- With another Year 7 class, governors stated it would be difficult to find teaching rooms for all classes and some specialist teaching could not be in specialist rooms. This problem would be compounded year on year for another four years as the school takes in an extra class each September

6.4 Consultation with the Governing Body of St John Fisher Catholic High School [Appendix A2.3]

- Governors stated that the withdrawal of BSF funding has changed the landscape so that the original aims may not be met by closing Birkdale High School and questions whether shutting the school is the best way to drive the standards agenda.
- Governors stated that the (erroneous) aim of an optimum size 1200 cannot be met by the new proposals that will mean schools of smaller size. Figures given for surplus places cannot be relied upon and there may well be overcrowding in remaining schools when Birkdale High School is closed.
- Westborough High School may manage the Birkdale site in the interests of the Westborough High School Trust rather than the Dewsbury Learning Partnership and there are potential concerns that would not arise with community school governance.
- The school welcomes the proposed reduction in size of Westborough High School from 1200 in the original BSF scheme to 1000, but increasing the numbers at Westborough could make the traffic situation worse and affect pupil's safety and the local residents' right to live in a happy and peaceful neighbourhood.
- The governors would wish for an active approach to integrate existing Westborough and Birkdale students
- Issues regarding the protection of sports facilities for both schools need to be addressed. Any new or temporary accommodation must not be at the expense of playing fields close to the schools.
- Governors acknowledge that funding will now be tight and that money should be used where it is most needed and for the benefit of all students in all Dewsbury secondary schools.
- Decisions taken now will shape the life chances of the next generation of the town and therefore need to be as informed as possible.

6.5 Consultation with the Governing Body of The Community Science College @ Thornhill [see Appendix A2.4]

- Governors were happy to admit more pupils but were concerned about using the capacity of 1040 at the college without any promised investment in buildings. It was felt that specialist accommodation, such as science and technology rooms would be insufficient to cope with increased numbers and some minority subjects such as food technology, music and art would require increased accommodation. Better circulation space, a new entrance, lunch time and wet weather facilities would also be required.
- The college would benefit from more pupils. More pupils would bring economies of scale which would help the college to provide some of the minority subjects in Years 10 and 11. This would help in ensuring that a good range of GCSE subjects could be regularly and reliably offered.

6.6 Consultation with the Governing Body of Westborough High School [see Appendix A2.5]

- After a detailed discussion, the Governing Body of Westborough High School resolved unanimously to carry out the role proposed by the LA in the implementation of the closure of Birkdale High School which includes the management of the transferring pupils, the associated staffing and the Halifax Road site and buildings.

6.7 Letters and petitions received

- The LA received 316 responses from stakeholders in relation to the planned closure of Birkdale High School.
- Of these responses, 63 were from pupils/ex-pupils, 240 from parents/carers & grandparents and 13 from staff members (one staff member submitted three responses).
- The responses were made up of two petitions, three deputations (one of which was also a petition), 62 individual letters and 250 letters of a standard format, each with the same wording. 5 of the letters were written in community languages.

Letters received

Total Pupils	63
Total Staff	13
Total Parent/Carers	239
Duplicates	1
Total number of letters	316

Type of letter

Standard Letters from Parents/Carers	239
Standard Letters from Pupils	11
Letters in community languages	5

- One Petition submitted in two parts on 22nd July 2010 (75 signatures) and 15th September 2010 (1015 signatures)
- One Deputation to Cabinet on 15th Sep 2010 by Headteacher at Birkdale High School.
- One Deputation to Council on 28th September 2010 – Headteacher at Birkdale High School.

7. Next steps

If Cabinet approves the modification to the original linked decisions, officers should work with the Dewsbury school community to:-

- a. Communicate the implementation of the re-organisation to pupils, parents, staff, governors, and the wider community;
- b. Provide HR support for Birkdale High School staff and Heads/Governors of schools in the Dewsbury Learning Partnership and Kirklees wide to manage the long term placement of staff;
- c. Provide financial advice and support for governing bodies to enable financial planning and budget setting for 2011-12;
- d. Develop and implement detailed transition plans for pupils in the Birkdale High School in consultation with parents/carers, Heads and governors;
- e. Support Birkdale High School to bring about the closure in a positive, sensitive and dignified manner;
- f. Carry out the annual consultation about admission arrangements for 2012-13 and subsequent years to actively manage the PANs for the Dewsbury secondary schools in order to maintain the school pupil populations within the agreed capacities of the school buildings;
- g. Carry out net capacity / curriculum / specialist facility audits at the Dewsbury secondary schools together with condition and suitability assessments in order to inform future capital bids.

8. Officer recommendations

Members are requested to;

- 8.1.1** Confirm that the reasons for the discontinuation of Birkdale High School and associated expansions of Earlsheaton Technology College, The Community Science College @ Thornhill and Westborough High School still apply.
- 8.1.2** Confirm that there is sufficient capacity at Earlsheaton Technology College, The Community Science College @ Thornhill and Westborough High School to provide the number of places needed to accommodate the projected number of 11-16 year olds up to 2020 without the BSF capital investment.
- 8.1.3** Acknowledge the role of The Dewsbury Learning Trust in supporting the implementation of the closure of Birkdale High School as proposed by the LA.
- 8.1.4** Note the review of the implications for staffing and Human Resources associated with implementing the agreed proposals as set out in Appendix 5 in the private report.
- 8.1.5** Confirm that the agreed proposals should be implemented, ie the discontinuation of Birkdale High School, and the associated transition plans for the other Dewsbury secondary schools, following the agreed timetable
- 8.1.6** Modify the decisions made on 17th December 2009
- to approve the linked statutory proposal to discontinue Birkdale High School and the linked statutory proposals to make the prescribed alterations to enlarge Earlsheaton Technology College, The Community Science College @Thornhill and Westborough High School be approved, subject to the following specified events occurring by 31 August 2011:-*
- (a) the grant of any necessary planning permissions under Part 3 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 necessary for the enlargement of the physical capacity of Earlsheaton Technology College, The Community Science College @ Thornhill and Westborough High School*
- (b) the entering into an agreement for any necessary building project supported financially by the Department for Children Families and Schools in connection with the programme known as "Building Schools for the Future" required for physical enlargement of the capacity of Earlsheaton Technology College, The Community Science College @ Thornhill and Westborough High School.*
- by removing the clause "subject to the following specified events occurring by 31 August 2011" and removing the conditions in paragraphs (a) and (b)above.
- 8.1.7** Request officers to initiate with the highest priority all necessary procedures to implement the re-organisation, including processes to support HR, finance, admissions and any works to buildings to make provision for pupils from 1st September 2011.

9. CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' RECOMMENDATION

We, the Cabinet Members for Children and Young People, support the recommendations set out by officers in the previous section of this report.

We set out below the considerations which have led to our arriving at this position. We will consider any further material matters that are brought to our attention in advance of, and during, the Cabinet meeting on 7th December 2010 and will make our final, oral, recommendations at the end of the discussion of this item at the meeting

Following the government announcement in the summer to cancel BSF capital funding and the uncertainty about primary capital funding we have been reviewing the feasibility of implementing the statutory decisions that we have made to re-organise secondary schools in Dewsbury.

Although the cancellation of BSF funding is a major disappointment and a missed opportunity to modernise the facilities at all of the secondary schools in north Kirklees, we acknowledge that the existing buildings of Earlsheaton Technology College, The Community Science College @ Thornhill and Westborough High School would be able to accommodate the projected number of 11-16 year olds in the Dewsbury area until 2020.

We are very conscious of the current over-provision of secondary school places in north Kirklees. Recently the Government has given permission for business cases to be prepared for "free schools" in the Batley and Birkenshaw areas, which, if approved, would add a further 1200-1400 surplus places into the secondary education provision in north Kirklees.

We support the officers' conclusions that the reasons for the re-organisation still apply. We also conclude that the re-organisation can take place without the injection of BSF capital into the Dewsbury High Schools.

We therefore support the officers' recommendations above.

Contact officers

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Supporting Documents

- Schools for the Future – Vision for Learning
- Report to Cabinet 16 September 2008: Schools for the Future ‘Brighter Futures’ consultation
- Brighter Futures Consultation Documents:
 - Overview document: “**Brighter futures for our children and young people**”
 - Brighter futures - **Dewsbury**. A consultation document on the future of secondary education.
 - Brighter futures - **Heckmondwike, Liversedge, Mirfield and Ravensthorpe**. A consultation document on the future of secondary education.
- Report to Cabinet 12 March 2009: Outcome of ‘Brighter Futures’ Consultation
- Equality and Community Cohesion Impact Assessment September 2008
- Report to Cabinet 12 March 2009: Revised BSF Proposals
- Recommendations of Overview and Scrutiny Review 31 March 2009
- Minutes of Cabinet Meeting 09 April 2009
- BSF Consultation Documents:
 - Overview document: Building Schools for the Future
 - Building Schools for the Future - Statutory consultation on a proposal to close Birkdale High School
 - Building Schools for the Future - Statutory consultation on a proposal affecting Earlsheaton Technology College
 - Building Schools for the Future - Statutory consultation on a proposal affecting Westborough High School
- Report to Cabinet 15 July 2009: Outcome of ‘BSF Consultation and recommended next steps’
- Report to Cabinet 17th December 2009 : Decisions re Statutory Proposals
- Report to Cabinet 16th February 2010 : Modification of Statutory Proposals
- DCSF Guidance for Decision Makers ‘Expanding a Maintained Mainstream School’
- DCSF Guidance for Decision Makers ‘Closing a Maintained Mainstream School’
- Report to Cabinet 25th March 2010 : Annual Consultation on Admission Arrangements
- Secondary School Guide for Parents 2011-12

Appendix 1

DETAILS FROM THE ORIGINAL CABINET REPORT RE STATUTORY PROPOSALS DECEMBER 2009

The proposed arrangements for pupils displaced by the discontinuation Birkdale High School and the staged implementation of the enlargements of Earlsheaton Technology College, The Community Science College@ Thornhill and Westborough High School to accommodate the displaced pupils from Birkdale High School.

A1.1 2009 Proposal to discontinue Birkdale High School : Arrangements for Displaced Pupils
(Ref Proposal : Section 11: Details of the schools or FE colleges which pupils at the school for whom provision is to be discontinued will be offered places, including any interim arrangements.)

- *Pupils displaced from Birkdale High School would be offered places at the other schools in the Dewsbury High School Partnership - Earlsheaton Technology College, The Community Science College at Thornhill, Westborough High School and St John Fisher Catholic High School (Note: Only a limited number of places may be available at St John Fisher Catholic High School within their existing capacity).*
- *Places may also be available at other Kirklees High Schools.*

In September 2011

- *There would be no admission of 11 year old (Year 7) pupils to Birkdale High School*
- *A new arrangement of Priority Admission Areas (PAAs) would be in place for the three Dewsbury Community High Schools as well as revised Published Admission Numbers (PANs) to provide sufficient places for all Dewsbury 11 year olds.*
- *The names of all Birkdale pupils would be transferred to the rolls of the other Dewsbury High Schools.*
- *The former Birkdale High School buildings would be carefully managed and operated by the Dewsbury High School Partnership to maintain the continuity of learning and smooth the transition for all Birkdale High School pupils, following the arrangements below. [The projected number of pupils is shown in brackets.]*
 - *Year 11 pupils would remain on the former Birkdale High School site to finish their GCSE courses with their GCSE course staff wherever possible. [101 pupils]*
 - *Year 10 pupils would transfer to one of the Dewsbury High Schools following individual discussions, together with their parents, to select their Key Stage 4 courses and the most appropriate High School. [84 pupils]*
 - *Year 9 pupils would remain on the former Birkdale High School site to finish their Key Stage 3 studies, as far as possible with their Year 8 staff. During the school year they would have individual discussions, together with their parents, to select Key Stage 4 courses and the most appropriate High School to move to in September 2012. [97 pupils]*
 - *Year 8 pupils would remain on the Birkdale High School site to consolidate their Year 7 learning and have individual discussions with their parents to decide the most appropriate High School to move to in September 2012. [95 pupils]*

In September 2012

- *Year 10 pupils would transfer to their selected Dewsbury High School [97 pupils]*
- *Year 9 pupils would transfer to their selected Dewsbury High School [95 pupils]*

A1.2 2009 Proposal to enlarge Earlsheaton Technology College : Implementation details

(Ref Proposal : Section 2 - Implementation and any proposed stages for implementation)

The enlargement would be carried out in stages from 1st September 2011 to accommodate pupils displaced by the closure of Birkdale High School to achieve the final increased capacity by 1st September 2013.

- **School Year 2011-2012** : The physical capacity would be increased to accommodate up to 270 year 7 pupils and up to 84 year 10 pupils displaced from Birkdale High School requiring a maximum of 1041 places (if **all** former Birkdale year 10 pupils transfer to the school). The additional share of 93 pupils of the 273 remaining on the former Birkdale site would give a maximum total of 1140 on roll.
- **School Year 2012-13** : The physical capacity would be increased further to accommodate the next cohort of up to 270 year 7 pupils and up to 97 year 9 and 95 year 10 pupils displaced from Birkdale High School requiring a maximum of 1356 places (if **all** the remaining former Birkdale pupils transfer to the school).
- **From September 2013** the permanent physical capacity of the school would be 1350 places.

A1.3 2009 Proposal to enlarge The Community Science College @ Thornhill : Implementation details

(Ref Proposal : Section 2 - Implementation and any proposed stages for implementation)

The enlargement would be carried out in stages from **1st September 2011** to accommodate pupils displaced by the closure of Birkdale High School to achieve the final increased capacity by **1st September 2013**.

- **School Year 2011-2012** : With the projected roll of 622 pupils, the physical capacity would be sufficient to accommodate up to 240 year 7 pupils and up to 84 year 10 pupils displaced from Birkdale High School (if **all** former Birkdale year 10 pupils transfer to the school). The additional share of 98 pupils of the 293 remaining on the former Birkdale site would also be included in the overall size of 900 pupils.
- **School Year 2012-13** : The physical capacity would be increased to accommodate the next cohort of up to 240 year 7 pupils and up to 97 year 9 and 95 year 10 pupils displaced from Birkdale High School requiring a maximum of 1115 places (if **all** the remaining former Birkdale pupils transfer to the school).
- **From September 2013** the permanent physical capacity of the school would be 1200 places

A1.4 2009 Proposal to enlarge Westborough High School : Implementation details

(Ref Proposal : Section 2 - Implementation and any proposed stages for implementation)

The enlargement would be carried out in stages from **1st September 2011** to accommodate pupils displaced by the closure of Birkdale High School to achieve the final increased capacity by **1st September 2013**.

- **School Year 2011-2012** : The physical capacity would be increased to accommodate up to 240 year 7 pupils and up to 84 year 10 pupils displaced from Birkdale High School requiring a maximum of 1000 places (if **all** former Birkdale year 10 pupils transfer to the school). The additional share of 98 pupils of the 293 remaining on the former Birkdale site would give a maximum total of 1100 on roll.
- **School Year 2012-13** : The physical capacity would be increased further to accommodate the next cohort of up to 240 year 7 pupils and up to 97 year 9 and 95 year 10 pupils displaced from Birkdale High School requiring a maximum of 1260 places (if **all** the remaining former Birkdale pupils transfer to the school).
- **From September 2013** the permanent physical capacity of the school would be 1200 places.

Appendix 2 : Notes of consultation with Governing Bodies

A2.1 Consultation with the Governing Body of Birkdale High School

Notes of the Meeting held at on Wednesday 24th November 2010

9 governors and 2 LA officers were in attendance

Governors commented on the proposals to cabinet regarding implementation of decision to close Birkdale High School

- Governors raised issues with the figures in the report relating to Net Capacities and pointed out that Birkdale's range had not been checked for some time. They expressed concern that surplus places had been calculated using an estimated figure for the school. Given the number of LA visits to the school the GB felt that the net capacity could have been calculated.
- Governors raised concerns about the ability within the schools left in Dewsbury to address specialist provisions such as Science and Technology and the ability particularly around the buildings in other schools to provide the level of provisions for children currently provided at Birkdale.
- Governors were concerned about the ability to maintain and raise standards and that this would be affected by the closure. They pointed to the increase in numbers of the remaining schools and the pressure that this would create both in terms of teaching and space and that this presented significant difficulties in raising standards and supporting further improvement and achievement.
- It was suggested that greater "efficiency" would have a negative effect on effectiveness and would work against further improvement in standards
- Governors highlighted the need to consider children with significant SEN/additional learning needs and their belief that the 3 remaining schools would find it very difficult to cater for this group of students currently at Birkdale
- Governors highlighted concerns about the consultation with parents on the closure and reorganisations of the remaining schools and that in their view parents were not aware of the revised proposals and how this would affect them and their children.
- Governors expressed concern that the majority of the surplus places were at Thornhill and pointed to the fact that travel to Thornhill is a difficult journey for children who currently choose Birkdale
- Governors raised concerns regarding staffing should the plans be approved and expressed a concern that the LA ensure continuity of transition for students and look carefully into protecting the staff at Birkdale.
- A request for a bespoke support package for staffing was made with flexibility in contracts to enable smooth transition for both staff and students
- Concern was expressed about the length of time the LA has taken to produce detailed plans since the announcement in July – this has had an impact on pupils, staff and families

A2.2 Consultation with the Governing Body of Earlsheaton Technology College

The planned LA consultation meeting on 29th November with governors was cancelled due to inclement weather.

Governors sent comments regarding the proposals

Parent Governor

As the saying goes "You can't fit a pint in a half pint pot". Therefore, without any permanent additional building works being carried out before the implementation of pupil transfer from Birkdale to Earlsheaton I feel quite concerned over exactly where these additional pupils are expected to be housed/taught within the existing building as there is barely enough room in the school at

present (the school may have the square footage required per pupil, but in real terms we all know that this is only a mathematical equation).

Within the proposals what Health & Safety issues have been taken into consideration with regards to pupil requirements - welfare of the children is of paramount. We all want the best for our children and feel very let down by the BSF being cancelled. However, closing one school to hinder another doesn't quite seem the way to go !!!

Staff Governor

Does 'enlargement' of Earlsheaton TC mean additional building? If not the proposals are impractical.

As Curriculum Manager it is already difficult to 'room' the number of classes we already have, especially in specialist areas. This year we have had to turn a normal classroom into a science lab in order to fulfil the timetable. If we were to add in another Year 7 class it would be difficult to find teaching rooms for all classes and some specialist teaching could not be in specialist rooms. This problem would be compounded year on year for another four years as we take in an extra class each September and the extra classes already in school move through with the year groups.

It was fine with the expansion the BSF plan promised, but without it the numbers just don't add up.

Chair of Governors

With regards to the closure of Birkdale High School and the impact it will have on us, my main concern is that now the plans for BSF have been stopped and we will not have the funding to make the school bigger how will we cope with the extra number of children coming into the school?

Where will we put them?

A2.3 Consultation with the Governing Body of St John Fisher Catholic High School

The letter below was received following a discussion with 8 governors and 1 LA officer on 23rd November 2010

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the reorganisation of schools in Dewsbury. Governors would like Councillors to take into consideration the following when they are reaching their decision.

- There appears to be an understanding that the reasons for reorganisation remain in entirety. This is questionable. The withdrawal of BSF funding has changed the landscape considerably. The aims of the original proposals will not necessarily be met by closing Birkdale. Standards at Birkdale have risen dramatically in recent times and one must question whether shutting the school is the best way to drive the standards agenda. The council previously considered, wrongly in our view, that 1200 was the optimum size for a school. This aim cannot be met by the new proposals that will mean schools of smaller size.
- Figures given for surplus places cannot be relied upon and there may well be overcrowding in remaining schools when Birkdale is closed. This is because the upper range net capacity assessments have been used in the calculations and negative assumptions must be made regarding movement in and out of the Dewsbury catchment areas for the figures to work. Councillors should also be aware that the population of St John Fisher School is in excess of its net capacity range.
- It must be clearly understood that the plans in place will mean that the management of Birkdale High School will be conducted by Westborough High School in the interests of the Westborough High School Trust. The Dewsbury Learning Partnership is a "soft federation" only. Whilst there is good cooperation between local schools at present, there are dangers in this situation.
- St. John Fisher Catholic High School Governors are concerned about the impact that the Trust status held by Westborough High School may have in the future in relation to the operation of the Birkdale site. In particular, the potential risk in terms of land ownership and development, and subsequent dangers such as the possibility of the school increasing its PAN once the initial student numbers have worked through the school. We would prefer that the land at Birkdale remains in public ownership under Local Authority control.

- The school welcomes the proposed reduction in size of Westborough High School from 1200 in the original BSF scheme to 1000.
- Westborough and St. John Fisher are both large schools and, by increasing numbers at Westborough, the traffic situation could become worse than it already is. In accepting that the PAN for Westborough will change this will mean totally different pedestrian/traffic movement and there does not appear to be a revised Student Travel Plan to encompass the proposed changes. Whilst three schools currently operate in close proximity, joint planning by the three schools and good fortune in terms of the Priority Admission Areas that currently exist has kept problems to a minimum. There are great dangers in pushing ahead with these plans that the delicate balance that currently exists will be upset to the detriment of pupil's safety and the local residents' right to live in a happy and peaceful neighbourhood.
- We are concerned that the lack of integration that may take place between existing Westborough and Birkdale students in the early years after closure may lead to those on the Birkdale site feeling that they are second class citizens.
- Concerns expressed by Governors previously regarding the protection of sports facilities for this school and Westborough, which were not fully resolved when funding for the BSF project was withdrawn, need to be addressed. The need to provide temporary accommodation or new build for the Oxford Road/Stockhill street site must not be done at the expense of playing fields close to the schools. Use of public parks are not a safe alternative in the 21st Century.
- We acknowledge that funding will now be tight and that money should be used where it is most needed and for the benefit of all students in all Dewsbury high schools.

I hope that the points above will be fully considered by Councillors when they debate the issues in the coming weeks. It hardly needs stating that decisions taken now will shape the life chances of the next generation of the town and therefore need to be as informed as possible.

Yours sincerely, Chair of Governors, Headteacher

A2.4 Consultation with the Governing Body of The Community Science College @Thornhill

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Governing Body held at on Thursday 18 November 2010

10 governors and one LA officer were in attendance

A confidential Briefing Note for Governors was tabled concerning the proposals relating to the re-organisation of Dewsbury High Schools and the closure of Birkdale High School. It was noted that the LA needed to consult with the High Schools that would be affected by this proposal in order to put the views of their Governing Body to the LA Cabinet who were meeting on 7 December to consider the proposals.

It was noted that the removal of the BSF funding meant that all schemes originally proposed could not be carried out but there would be some funding available. The primary reason for the closure of Birkdale High School was the excess capacity in Dewsbury High Schools of 1031 places compared with the net capacities of the schools. It is projected that 3 LA High Schools with their existing net capacities could cater for the demand for places until at least 2020/2021.

The details of the transition arrangements were explained. No Year 7 would enter Birkdale in September 2011 and this meant additional pupils may be added to the Earlsheaton, Thornhill and Westborough roles. Numbers will not be known until current Year 6 preferences are processed. Year 11 pupils will stay on the Birkdale site (managed and operated by Westborough on behalf of the Dewsbury Learning Partnership). Year 8, 9 and 10 pupils will be given the opportunity to express a preference for transfer to another High School or they may remain at the Birkdale site. In terms of Thornhill CSC, the proposal is to accommodate up to 240 Year 7 pupils in 2011 together with some additional pupils in Year 8, 9 and 10 displaced from Birkdale. From September 2012 a revised PAN (planned admission number) of 208 would be proposed and the capacity of the school increased to 1040.

There followed a general discussion, at which the following points were noted:

- There was concern about increasing capacity to 1040 at the college without any promised investment in buildings.
- Specialist accommodation (such as Science Laboratories and Technology rooms) would be insufficient to cope with increased numbers. To support the current student staff ratio there would be a need for at least 7 laboratories, 7 specialist rooms (currently 6 of each)
- Minority subjects (such as Food technology, music and art) currently taught in small rooms would require increased accommodation.
- From where would additional space come? New labs and technology rooms would take space from elsewhere in the college. The proposals would have serious implications without investment in extending buildings.
- There was some concern expressed about the school becoming bigger and impersonal
- The Head noted that the economy of scale with more pupils would enable the college to justify some of the minor subjects in Years 10 and 11. This would help in ensuring a good range of GCSE subjects could be regularly and reliably offered.
- The Head commented that the college would benefit from more pupils but would need extra accommodation. This would be not just teaching spaces but would include better circulation space, a new entrance, lunch time and wet weather facilities etc.
- In conclusion, governors were happy to admit more pupils but conditional on increased accommodation preceding additional numbers.

A2.5 Consultation with the Governing Body of Westborough High School [24 Nov 2010]

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body of Westborough High School held on 24 November 2010

12 governors were in attendance and two LA officers were in attendance

The Head of School Organisation and Planning for the Authority, presented a model for the proposed re-organisation of Dewsbury High Schools. The chief aim of the Authority was to put forward proposals which would benefit all of the students in Dewsbury. A Cabinet decision was to be taken by Kirklees Council on the 7 December 2010.

Funding under BSF had been cancelled in July and this had led to a review of the implementation of all agreed capital projects.

One of the aims of the new proposals was to further improve achievements and standards, whilst reducing the number of surplus school places in Dewsbury. Westborough would be directly affected by the proposal to close Birkdale High School. The optimum size for high schools was between 1200 to 1500. In August 2010 the capacity in the 4 Dewsbury High Schools was 3916, with only 2885 places being filled, thus leaving a surplus capacity of 1031 places.

The Authority predicted that the Year 7 Cohort would remain static till 2017 and children could be accommodated in 3 existing High Schools. After 2020, if additional places were needed, building onto existing schools would be considered.

A Transition Plan had been drawn up for the closure of Birkdale High School. The aim was to continue school life as calmly and smoothly as possible for the students still in education at Birkdale. There would be no admission of 11 year old pupils to Birkdale High School in September 2011. It was planned that after September, 2011 the former Birkdale High School pupils would be able to choose to remain on the former Birkdale High School site on Halifax Road as pupils of Westborough High School. Year 11 pupils would stay on the Halifax Road site to complete their examination courses. Pupils in Years 10, 9 and 8, would be asked to express their preference for transfer to another school with places, or to study on the Halifax Road site as part of Westborough high school.

Governors' questions were invited.

A governor asked what would eventually happen to the Birkdale buildings.

The Secretary of State had to approve the use of former school buildings. There were currently no long term plans.

A governor asked about new buildings for Westborough, a Health and Safety Inspector had commented upon the poor quality of the two temporary classrooms. Governors were told that much better, modular buildings were now on the market, some with several rooms. The temporary classrooms would be replaced with appropriate accommodation for the eventual extra Year 7 students and longer term investment considered when the availability of capital was known.

A governor asked if the Head Teacher was happy with the new proposals. The Head Teacher replied that she had undertaken a long debate with her Leadership Team and that the Trust had already been established to serve the children of both Westborough and Birkdale. The only difference was that there would be no new buildings. The Head Teacher said that she felt that she had a Leadership Team that would be strong enough to manage the transitional arrangements effectively. She also felt that she was backed by a strong governing body.

The following resolution was passed:

RESOLVED: After a detailed discussion, the Governing Body of Westborough High School resolves: To carry out the role proposed by the LA in the implementation of the closure of Birkdale High School which includes the management of the transferring pupils, the associated staffing and the Halifax Road site and buildings. (Unanimous)

Appendix 3 Deputations, Letters and Petitions

Correspondence received in relation to the closure of Birkdale High School between July and November 2010

The LA received 316 responses from stakeholders in relation to the planned closure of Birkdale High School.

Of these responses, 63 were from pupils/ex-pupils, 240 from parents/carers & grandparents and 13 from staff members (one staff member submitted three responses).

The responses were made up of two petitions, three deputations (one of which was also a petition), 62 individual letters and 250 letters of a standard format, each with the same wording. 5 of the letters were written in community languages.

Details of responses:

Petition – 22nd July 2010 75 Signatures

We, the undersigned, represent parents, pupils, governors, staff and friends of Birkdale High School.

We petition Kirklees Metropolitan Council to keep Birkdale High School open for the education of our current and future children. We believe that:

- Birkdale offers a high quality education, personalised to the needs of all local children; - through improving results and regular Ofsted feedback it is clear that Birkdale is on a rising trend and has the capacity to maintain improvements into the future, for the continued benefit of our children and the wider community;
- the withdrawal of BSF funding to expand the other Dewsbury schools removes the justification for the closure of Birkdale High School;
- without BSF funding, the other Dewsbury schools will not be able to offer the high quality education for our children that is available at Birkdale.

Deputation/Petition to Cabinet – 15th September 2010 1013 Signatures

Extract from minutes of cabinet meeting:

“Cabinet received the following petitions:-

a) A petition from supporters of Birkdale High School seeking the retention of the school and asking for a meeting with Cabinet Members prior to the meeting at which the final decision on the school will be taken..”

Details of petition:

We, the undersigned, represent parents, pupils, governors, staff and friends of Birkdale High School.

We petition Kirklees Metropolitan Council to keep Birkdale High School open for the education of our current and future children. We believe that:

- Birkdale offers a high quality education, personalised to the needs of all local children; - through improving results and regular Ofsted feedback it is clear that Birkdale is on a rising trend and has the capacity to maintain improvements into the future, for the continued benefit of our children and the wider community;
- the withdrawal of BSF funding to expand the other Dewsbury schools removes the justification for the closure of Birkdale High School;
- without BSF funding, the other Dewsbury schools will not be able to offer the high quality education for our children that is available at Birkdale.

I am here this evening to bring to your attention our concerns regarding the plans to continue to close Birkdale High. You will remember our initial concerns regarding the closure plans. Our major concern was about the size of the schools which were being created within Dewsbury using the buildings for school for the future funding. Our concerns haven't changed - indeed they have intensified as we learn that you are intending to squeeze the children in Dewsbury into three schools without the necessary funding to accommodate them using the Birkdale site as an extension of Westborough in the short term.

Birkdale High School has continued to flourish despite the difficult circumstances in which it has been placed. Our exam results have increased from 38% 5A* to C in 2009 to 64% this year. Our results including Maths and English have increased from 24% in 2009 to 37% this year. These results are of no surprise to us. We knew how well our students were performing because of our rigorous tracking systems and excellent teaching. We knew that all our improvement strategies were having an impact on achievement. We knew that our personalised curriculum meant that all our students were engaged and focused.

We exceeded targets set for us by 17% this year - we have no doubt that we will continue to sustain this progress. Our rigorous tracking system shows this to be so.

We continue to maintain a balance budget and have in the past removed a deficit budget of £400,000. We believe we are offering good value for money.

Ofsted have reputedly graded the leadership in the school as good and have repeatedly given us a 'good' grading for our capacity to improve.

So why, we ask, would you close the school?

Why, when you do not have the resources available to create the extra places in another Dewsbury School would you continue with the plan which needed BSF funding?

The extra places needed in the other Dewsbury schools for our existing cohort are not readily available. We know that Westborough is full - to create a split site will impact negatively on standards and not offer the economy of scale.


There are many unanswered questions within North Kirklees; Free Schools, Academy, single sex education in Batley, a change from three tier to two tier in the Cleckheaton area. All of these aspects of change have implications for Dewsbury and so to plan for Dewsbury as separate to the rest of North Kirklees seems short sighted and open to mistake being made.

The Government will announce its review spending review in October and the possibility of the introduction of further funding streams for education. Surely it makes sense to wait for these announcements before making final decisions. As we have repeatedly said, this is about the next 50 years of education in Dewsbury and North Kirklees. We MUST get this right.

In the meantime the students at Birkdale are in safe hands and will continue to make good progress. Is it worth jeopardising their futures by creating uncertainty amongst pupils and staff, and by making a split site school where standards will probably fall and the economies will not be achieved?

We ask that you take time to reconsider the Birkdale situation. We ask that you do not allow yourselves to feel bound by a closure notice which was made with BSF funding. We ask that you recognise that Birkdale will continue to deliver a good standard of education to the most deprived area of Dewsbury.

Can you afford to make a mistake because you acted too quickly?



Why close Birkdale?

Surplus places

	Now	Adj PAN	Surplus places - now	Surplus places - new PAN
Birkdale	760	810	280	330
Westborough	900	1008	21	129
Earlsheaton	900	1055	34	189
Thornhill	900	1043	240	282
With Birkdale	3460	3916	575	1031
Without Birkdale	2700	3106	-185	221

Standards

	2009 NC	2010 NC	2009 Overall	2010 Overall
Westborough	34	40	55	64
Thornhill	29	44	56	83
Earlsheaton	40	32	47	42
Birkdale	24	38	38	64

Comparison of surplus places to increase in standards

	% surplus places	% inc for NC	% inc overall
Westborough	2%	18%	16%
Thornhill	27%	52%	48%
Birkdale	37%	58%	68%

For how long will Kirklees need the Birkdale site?

- Figures show us that the site will be needed beyond 2015.
- Westborough has 2% surplus places – in 2011/12 spaces will be needed for 1310 students. Westborough can only offer 1030 (maximum net capacity) – for ever
- In 2014/2015 there will be a need for 1200 spaces in Westborough
- A. O'Sullivan has acknowledged that the Birkdale site will be needed for some years after closure

Split site implications

- Children or staff moving between sites
- Economy of scale which was argued for during BSF no longer applies
- Costs could be more because of travel expenses for staff
- Difficulty in creating an identity and a consistency of approach when on two sites
- **Standards will be compromised**

Reduced choice for families in North Kirklees


- Lack of accommodation will mean more children will have to travel
- Lack of accommodation will lead to less children being given their first choice of school
- Families in Batley will be faced with single sex schools as their only choice
- More families may choose to send their child out of area

The next 10 years

- By 2020 there will not be enough school places in Dewsbury
- Class sizes will rise as population rises
- Children with additional needs will receive less support
- **Standards will fall**

- There are 2 schools of less than 400 in South Kirklees supported by the LA.

Why not support Birkdale in Dewsbury?



Letters - Received between September & November 2010

- As a teacher at Birkdale High School, I would like to put forward my views on the proposed closure. I strongly feel that any decision over the future of the school should be made with an informed and open mind so I do hope that you will seriously consider the views of those who have been responsible for making Birkdale the success it is now. When I joined Birkdale in 2005, the school had been placed in Special Measures and achievement was low. However, through efficient management and organisation, careful planning and the ongoing implementation of strategies for improvement the school can now boast results which are in line with, if not better, than several schools in the area. Last year 64% of students gained 5 A*-C and 38% of these including Maths and English. In my subject, English 47% of students gained a C or above, a huge achievement considering many of these students entered the school with attainment below the national average and also came from backgrounds where English was not the first language. From once being a school which had a reputation as "failing", Birkdale is now a thriving and successful place of learning and I feel that this dramatic improvement of results can be put down to a dedicated leader and a team of staff who have worked tirelessly to help students achieve their goals. The relatively small size of the school enables staff to give students the personalised learning they need in order to achieve their potential. In my role as Teaching and Learning Manager for English, I was able to know the characters and capabilities of every single Year 11 student, which enabled special intervention to be put in place to help those individuals succeed. This approach is of vital importance in a school where many students come from under privileged backgrounds of those where academic achievement is not held in high regard. As Birkdale has a high percentage of children from backgrounds of extreme deprivation, it concerns me that many of these children would not achieve their potential if they were in a larger school. Students are given the self-belief and development they need to succeed and I feel that many of our vulnerable students would slip through the net and only be known as faceless pieces of data rather than individuals with their own personal needs. As a final point, I ask you to carefully consider the impact of school closure on the lives of young people of Birkdale, the lives of children who see their school as a sanctuary and a place where they feel safe and valued. Birkdale has clearly shown it's self to be a school where Every Child Matters and will continue to meet the diverse needs of its students. It is for this reason that it must remain open.
- Dear Cabinet Member My name is ?? and I writing to tell you about my feelings about the decisions that is being made about my school getting shut down. I am 15 years old and are in year ten, I have been going to Birkdale for four years and I love attending it, it's very community minded and loving and caring. The schools is also small but it is monitored and each student gets a lot of attention. Think twice please before you come to a final decision because our lives depend on it. My future will be ruined if you carry on with the plan. I also want to point out that our school has achieved massively throughout these past years. I will be overwhelmed to hear you've decided to withdraw your heartbreaking plan. The pupils, staff and parents are also disagreeing with the plan.
- Dear Cabinet Member Hello my name is ?. I am in yr 9 and I go to Birkdale High School. I am writing to persuade you not to go ahead with the school closure.
The school should not close because the children's education will suffer and their future will be spoilt as well as they will be squeezed into other schools with people who they do not know. The teachers over there will not care about them. All for what? Just to save money! If the council was concerned about losing money they could have thought of other ways. NOT BY RUINING KIDS FUTURES!
Birkdale is lovely and it is improving its going up. The kids are learning so many things! Please save our school! Wouldn't you give some extra money to get a better future for your children?
- Dear Cabinet Member My name is?. I am 14 years old from Birkdale High School. I live in Dewsbury with my mum, my dad and brother who is now at collage. I am writing to say how much we love Birkdale and why I think we should keep the school open because we are moving to year 11 and I truly think that I deserve my GCSE's like all the other schools. I am also aware our school is getting better results than other schools. Also we are a small community so each of us gets maximum Support from our staff and teachers. I also think of Birkdale High School as home since we all are well cared for and everyone is prepared for learning. So please rethink about your plan and don't close our school.
- Dear Cabinet Member
My name is ?? and I am writing to persuade you not to close Birkdale High School. I am only 14 years old, and I have just start to do my GCSE and I can also feeling that all of my teachers and all staff that is working in the Birkdale are going to give me maximum support, that I can GCSE grade C or more. And I am thinking that if you close our school and I gone have no choice to more and go to school where is about 35 students in one class I don't get maximum support from staff and teachers. Also our GCSE results have improved we are as good as if not better than several schools in Kirklees. I am from Poland and in England about three years now when I came first time Birkdale I can't speak or writing in English but there is lots of school in Kirklees that will help people like Birkdale help me. Because you want to close Birkdale, my litter sister must go to different school then me and she needs lots of help in English and I don't think so that if you close Birkdale she gone have no help from staff in different school.

- Dear Cabinet Member My name is ? and I am writing to say our GCSE results have improved, we are as good if not better than several schools in Kirklees. We are a small school so each student gets maximum support from staff and students. Our school motto is 'Forward to Success' but we will not be successful if you still plan to close us! You still haven't told us pupils why you want to close us, we all think it's a good school and the teachers want to achieve the best out of us, they all want every single one of us to have amazing results but your wanting to stop that, why? I have been working on my GCSE for 2 years now and I have one year left with you wanting to close the school then it's most likely I will fail and it will be all down to you! Alison O'Sullivan describes our school as "wonderful" so please tell me why you are going ahead with the closure; I have too many questions and no answers!
- Dear Cabinet Member My name is ? and I am writing to tell you not to close Birkdale High School because you get high grades in this school. Our results last year were 64% of students achieved or more C at GCSE and we deserve the same success as we have worked very hard and do not want to put our exam results at risk. Birkdale is a small school so we get all the support we need and all the teachers know our abilities so they can give us lots of help in lessons. I think the school is great the teachers are really good they're good at teaching and help you out with your work and make sure you get the best grades possible. The school has improved over the last 5 years. This school used to be in special measures but over the last 5 years it's become one of the best schools in the area. Please rethink the decision to close the school - imagine if it was your son or daughter who had received a good education and enjoyed their school life for it all to be wasted. Cutting costs and saving money is not a good reason for closing a school - think about the lives and futures of myself and the other young people in Dewsbury.
- Dear Cabinet Member
My name is ? and I am writing to persuade you not to close Birkdale High School our GCSE results have improved we are as good if not better than several schools in Kirklees we are improving every year. I am in year 10 and I have 1 year to go and this year is very important to me this year will decide my future I have and what job I have. In life everyone makes mistakes decisions but they make right ones. I want you to make the right decision and leave Birkdale open for all of us. So we get good grades. All the teachers know what we are weak on and strong on. So they do know us really well.
- Dear cabinet member My name is ? and I am in Year 10 and I am writing to persuade you not to close Birkdale High School down. Our GCSE results have improved we are as good if not better than several schools in Kirklees. We are a small school so each student gets maximum support from staff and teachers. There are several schools that are not achieving the results we are. I am in Year 10 these are the two most important year of my life, which will decide what job I'll get and if I don't get good grades I won't have any money to get a car or have enough money to live on my own that's why I don't want the school to close down. I really like the way the teachers educate the pupils in this school. The school is really friendly. I really look forward to education and I like how the classes are over here for example: Westborough classes are big that means every one does not get the same support as you get in Birkdale high school. From the past three years Birkdale have improved their grades and now they are going to close it down. Everyone from the school care about the school and no one wants the school to close down. For Birkdale closing would be a bad thing to the school, pupils, staff and the community.
- Dear Cabinet Member
My name is ? I am writing to you to persuade you to not close our Birkdale High School because our GCSE results have improved and we are as good as if not better than several schools in Kirklees. We are improving every year. We are a small school so each student gets maximum support from staff and teachers. There are several schools that are not achieving the results that we are. I am in year 10 and I think that if Birkdale High School closes all the teachers will look for another job and when we go to year 11 there will be supply teachers. That time we will be doing our GCSE's and we won't get the grades that we want to get. I think that Birkdale High School is a good school with good people and good staff who can help us to achieve good grades. Anyone who is in Birkdale can get the grades they want by the help of the teachers that work in Birkdale. I think you should think again about closing our school.
- Dear Cabinet Member
My name is ?, am a student a Birkdale High School in year 10 and am writing to you to persuade you not to close Birkdale down. There are many reasons why you should keep it open over 500 students, staff members of the school and students parents are writing to you why Birkdale High School Shouldn't close down and to me that is a lot of letters to be fair. They maybe people who say that "Birkdale is a rubbish school" and that's from people who have never come to Birkdale so how would they know what Birkdale is like. So we are going to prove to those people that Birkdale is a brilliant school. The school has improved so much in past four years while I've been at Birkdale and it's getting a lot better. The GCSE's results are getting a lot better each year and the staff members are really proud of last year 11 as they did so well on there exams. Birkdale high School is really Brilliant school most of my family have come to this school and to be fair this school is like one big family to me all of us together are just like brothers and sisters we are so close we all stick together to matter and is this school close down it will feel like we have lost a home. If you decide to close the school us year 10s won't get the grades we need to get into collage and jobs and others we all need a future for when we leave the school we don't leave here with grades like F & Es we won't get grades like Cs and over.

So can really think about it for the future you never know this school could be the best in Kirklees. So far I really think that Birkdale is the best because this school means everything to me the teachers the staff members and the students are brilliant and we are proud to say that we go to Birkdale High School.

- Dear Cabinet Member

My name is ? and I am in year 9. I am writing to you regarding the closure of Birkdale High School.

You should not close this school because of various reasons and I will point a few out for you. Firstly my brother came here and got good qualifications and I would like the same too.

Secondly, all the work we have done so far would go to waste. What about the teachers? What about our grades? They are better and better each year and if not have improved. Also our levels are as good as other schools too.

Also the lives of young children would be in danger/risk. Plus we will lose all our work and I hope you think about the decision you are about to make. And think carefully what's more important the lives of young children or the closure of this school? In that way our education would suffer and If you do shut the school down we will end up with a low pay job and not enough money to provide for ourselves.

- Dear Cabinet Member

Over the past 3 years there has been a proposal of Birkdale High School closing down and Westborough getting enlarged; well its safe to say Birkdale High School does not want this to happen. Peoples futures and staff job's are at risk and its easy to make the decision without knowing how we feel and how it affects us all but Birkdale High School are standing up for what we want. And what if your children went to any school that was proposed to close and you children's education was at risk and they was not going to get the predicted grades they was going to get but cant know because there was substitute teachers every lesson, us at Birkdale High School feel high of their grades because it is our future.

Furthermore lets say Birkdale High School does close then in about 2020 Dewsbury will need another school and also lets get real you don't have the money to close us down and enlarge Westborough. Nether the less I have worked for my GCSE level for two years, we started our GCSE early because the year 9 exams were thrown away, and I have one year left if I was moved to another school I have no chance get the grades that I have predicted or get higher. If you are wondering who I am I am ?and I am in year 10 the things I like about Birkdale High School is that its really fun and educational and I have got lots out of my 4 years at Birkdale High School the teachers and pupils know and understand about the different abilities and tackle it with their head held high. I urge you. NOT TO CLOSE BIRKDALE HIGH SCHOOL!

- Dear Cabinet Member

my name is ? and I am, 13 years old in year 9.I am writing to you about the schools closure.

I think Birkdale should not close because the school grades are better than before and are also very good and may be better than other schools. Another reason is, if the school closes then the year 9's (including me) education will be messed up because we will choose our options later on in year 9, school will be shut and we will do our GCSE's in a different school and all our work will be wasted. I hope we will have taken this letter in consideration and do something about the school.

I think some good things about this school is that the people in this school are well behaved and better than the previous years as so is the progress.

- Dear Cabinet Member,

I am writing to persuade you that Birkdale should not close because Birkdale is a good school, you can see that by looking at our fantastic exam results. I had a meeting with Alison O'Sullivan and she said "One of the reasons why were closing Birkdale is because that there are less people". Now you think why are there less people??? The rate of our pupils was increasing until in the headlines came 'School Closure' then parents had to think again. So it's not our fault that there are less people, it is Kirklees Council's fault!!!

Personally, I want Birkdale to stay open because the education here is fantastic and there is a REALLY friendly atmosphere in Birkdale, I also had a meeting with the MP of Dewsbury 'Simon Revel' and he said "As soon as I stepped inside Birkdale I knew that this place is friendly" he also said "All the pupils are really jolly" so now how could you even think about shutting a friendly, supportive school???

- Dear Cabinet Member,

My name is ? and I am writing to give my view of why the school should not be closed.

I think Birkdale should not be closed because it is a great school which is achieving very well, and improving a lot and getting good results. Birkdale is doing better than other schools in Kirklees like Earlsheaton and were also getting better results than them.

Why close Birkdale, there are other schools you can close. There are many things I like about Birkdale, I like the teachers because they help me when I don't understand anything and the support me all the way from the start to the 'til the end of the lesson.

Why all the fuss? To save some money, if Birkdale closes there will be many problems no just for me but for the teachers and the parents of all the students. There will be a disaster in the moving and shifting of schools. Some people won't even get proper education any more just imagine it.

Won't you have problems if your child was moved to a different school where the education is not as good and it's not the same atmosphere. Just think about it.

- Dear Cabinet Member,

My name ?. I am writing this letter regarding the school closure. There are many reasons why you shouldn't close Birkdale. For example the education here is very good. The teachers teach in a very respectful manner and help us to achieve the best.

If you close our school we will have to leave our old friends behind and try to make new friends, buy new uniforms, and we'll have to get used to how other teachers teach.

I am currently in year 9 we will be starting our GCSE's very soon! If you send us to a different school we'll have to start the whole revision again!

If you close Birkdale, we'll get pushed into other schools, the classes will get bigger and then it'll become harder for the teachers to teach and for that reason we might not understand the lesson.

Our views need to be included! We have a right to give our opinions!

Thank you!
- Dear Cabinet Member,

My name is ? (year9) writing to you to tell you why I think it is bad to close Birkdale.

One reason I think it is bad to close our school is that I am starting my GCSE's and I don't want my work to go down the drain, when I have worked very hard and I want a good job as there aren't many jobs out there. Now I a starting my GCSE's and I want a good mark so I don't want supply teachers.

Also my friends are here and I don't want to go to another school and be bullied.

I don't want this school to close at all. Please save our school.
- Dear Councillor Mehboob Khan,

as a cabinet member I am aware that you will be making the decision whether or not to close Birkdale. I am a past pupil from Birkdale, and left the school last summer. Whilst at Birkdale I managed to achieve seven C's and three B's at GCSE this includes my maths and English results. I genuinely believe the grades I did due to my school, during my time at Birkdale I didn't have the best reputation; I had a bad history of truancy, lateness, and constantly disrupted lessons. Despite my behaviour I was never given up on, I realise that any other school would have had me permanently excluded, but Birkdale continuously pushed me to work and attend my lessons.

I am now a student at St John Fisher Catholic sixth form, thanks to Birkdale I had the choice of three collages to go to, a position I never thought I'd be in. St John Fisher's has made me realise one of the main reasons I did well at Birkdale and that is because the size of the class it was easier to listen and communicate with the teacher, it also meant we had more one on one time with the them. Whilst at St John Fisher I often find myself not paying attention because of the amount of people in our classes, it makes it harder for the teacher to control what we're doing and can take a huge chunk out of the lesson before we get started. Another massive difference that has a huge impact on my learning is the amount of support, at Birkdale teachers never hesitated to use their free time when we needed their help, and the amount of revision sessions they were held unbelievable! Sadly the support I got from Birkdale is not available at Fishers, mainly because the schools size.

I am also aware that the closure of the school is based mainly on the capacity of the school. In 2007 the number of pupils that joining Birkdale started to fall; coincidentally this is the same time the school closure was made public in the press. Although I am not a parent, I understand that most wouldn't be willing to send their children to a school undergoing the treat of closure, as no parent would want disruption throughout their child's education. I would like you to thoroughly reconsider your decision of shutting down the school, and seriously evaluate the consequences and the impact it will have on a mass amount if people. Why let other children, in the same position as me , miss out on a first class education.
- Dear Councillor Smith,

As you are Deputy Leader of the Cabinet I am aware that you will be reconsidering the future of education in North Kirklees as the BSF funding is no longer available.

I have been a teacher at Birkdale High School for the pat five years. I chose to work at Birkdale as I felt it was a good school where I could, as an English teacher make a difference. During the past five years I believe that all the teachers at Birkdale have made a significant impact upon the lives of our students. During this time we have seen the results steadily rise from 12% A* to C when I started to five years ago to this years fantastic 64% A* to C. whilst we were delighted with our results, they did not particularly surprise me. As head of year 10 and 11 I was well aware that this is what we expected to get. I knew that we were on track to achieve results that were much above the FFT targets set out for us. I knew this because of the strategies we have implemented and because of the extensive work done by both staff and pupils alike. I have to question the reasoning behind the decision to close a school that is very much the result of well chosen strategies and a shared school vision of success. We fully expect to improve upon these results this summer.

There seems to be no definitive as to where our children will go. I understand that there is much talk of a surplus places, but I am not quite sure where this surplus exists, certainly Westborough and St John Fisher seems to be operating at full capacity at the moment to cram our KS3 students into these schools does not seem to me to be a recipe for success. Parents actively choose Birkdale High School for their children because of the size. They understand that we can provide personalised curriculum for their child and as a result their child will succeed.

In the news there is much talk about need for more school after 2015 I ask then, does it actually make

economic sense to close a school site in 2013 when its capacity will be much in demand just a few years later? It has come to my attention that the authorities are happier to support Fartown with its low numbers, why then are they not prepared to support Birkdale with its greater numbers and rising exam results success? I realise that it must be difficult to make a decision about the future of a school if you have not first hand experience of how that school operates. It is to that end that I would suggest that if you would like to visit the school to experience the excellent work that we do, I would be happy to liaise with Chris Caraher our head teacher to facilitate this visit.

I ask you to reconsider your decision to close Birkdale High School with these thoughts in mind.

- Dear Councillor,

As you are a member of the Cabinet I am aware that you will be reconsidering the future of education in North Kirklees as the BSF funding is no longer available including your plans to close Birkdale High School. As a teacher working at Birkdale High School for the last two years and a resident of Dewsbury I am deeply concerned with the future of the school especially after the decision to scrap BSF funding. The plans to extend the other schools namely Westborough, Earlsheaton and Thornhill is most definitely not going to happen at the scale it should have, in order to provide a quality education that the pupils deserve. Yet you are still thinking of closing one of the most improved schools in the area. Even if the council is able to provide funding for the extension of these schools from their own budgets, which will be difficult in the current climate of spending cuts, it will not be possible to provide the quality education that is required for the young people of Dewsbury which they rightly serve.

Moving on to the closure notice, I am shocked that the council is prepared to close the school based on the current closure notice, which is so closely linked to the BSF proposals. This in my opinion is deeply worrying as consultations with staff and the wider community were based on better provision being provided at the other schools. Now that this has changed, no consideration has been given to amend the closure notice and without consultation with the community about their needs. It is the education of the future residents of Dewsbury that is in the balance and I am in no doubt as I am sure you are that the future of the Dewsbury community will be built on a successful education which can not be provided in over crowded schools. Birkdale High School has continued to improve at a rapid pace achieving 64% 5A* to C and 38% including English and Maths. This is due to the commitment of the staff that are even at this stage of uncertainty are still planning, working hard and striving to improve the future of pupils at this school. Seeing the work that is carried out on a daily basis most definitely these results will continue to improve providing the school is given a chance.

As a resident of Dewsbury I am aware of the Kirklees arguments for closing the school based on the intake but consideration must be given to the fact that BSF proposals in place have been looming over the school for a number of years. This has most definitely meant there has been a drop in intake for at least the last few years as parents would not wish to uproot their children from a school which they have settled in. Yet Kirklees is willing to do this to those parents who have showed faith in the school and recognise the fantastic education that the school continues to provide in these uncertain times.

The only losers in closing Birkdale High School will be the pupils who are at crucial stages of their education. Many students have started their GCSE's early, completing crucial modules which more than likely will go to waste. STOP and THINK! Please give careful consideration for the future of our children and the community.

- Dear Councillor,

Re: plans to close Birkdale I am writing to ask you to consider my views as you may be involved in the decision to close Birkdale High School or keep it open. I have worked here in the school for 4 years and I have seen a school which was stuck with a poor reputation transform into a fantastic school over the time I have been here. You have no doubt seen all the figures for achievement this year at Birkdale (64% 5 A-C, 38% including English and Maths) and that has come about with good leadership, hard work, organisation, planning and lots of skill in implementing strategies for improvement. Yet the council still plan to close and thus in my opinion as well as many other people's, compromise the education and futures of hundreds of pupils. These pupils may be a place number at another school but at Birkdale they have a chance of going forward to success as the people they are with better chances in life and you will be taking some of these chances away. The plans to close Birkdale were initially on the BSF proposals of expanding three other local schools. This is not happening any more, I do not wish to go over the arguments of surplus places and size as they are open to interpretation in different ways, if the council does not have the funding to expand the other schools then the other schools will be crowded, standards will drop which will affect the futures of not just the pupils from Birkdale but also the other schools. This will also have an impact on the community as the futures of individuals will be uncertain. At Birkdale we are trying to provide positive futures of pupils for the better and the work will be undone and the effects will show in a community that is beginning to see signs of improvement in itself go backwards. There is population boom in Dewsbury which means that more schools will be needed in the near future so why does it make sense in closing a school that is doing very well? The consideration should be long term and for the benefit of the people of Dewsbury. I hope that careful consideration is given to my views as the priority is the education of the children in Dewsbury.

- Dear Councillors,

We are a year 11 form from Birkdale High School. We take this opportunity to write to you to ask you to stop and think about the proposal to close Birkdale High School and the direct impact that it will have on our

education.

We don't need others to tell us what a good school we are we know that this is recognised throughout the authority - what puzzles us is why would anyone in all good conscience, want to close us when we are so obviously on an upward trend?

For five years we have watched our school grow, we have forged relationships with our dedicated staff and now we are in our very real danger of losing all this as a threat of closure becomes more imminent. All we want to do at this stage of our educational careers is to continue working towards our goals safe in the knowledge that we are in the best place to succeed.

Please consider how you would feel if you children lost their compass on the most important journey that they had undertaken. You must block this proposal for with and return to us our right of a quality education.

- Dear Councillors, We are a year 10 form from Birkdale High School and we are writing to express our dismay and concern regarding the threat of closure that is hanging over us.
As year 10's we are well aware of the fact that if the proposed closure goes ahead, we are in the most precarious situation of all the pupils in the school. Should the closure go ahead it is proposed that we stay on the Birkdale site as a satellite of Westborough supposedly taught by former Birkdale staff. We question how you can make this assumption given that our teachers appear to know nothing about their futures. We believe that the reality is that we are more likely to lose our dedicated teachers and end up with a second hand education at best.
If we end up without our teachers do we get experienced permanent staff from Westborough or would this "satellite" of Westborough receive supply staff? As we are sure you can appreciate, we have an expectation that we will be achieving higher results in line with Birkdale's current outstanding performance. We feel like we are being treated like sacrificial lambs to the slaughter and that our education is secondary to the politicking that is going on.
We are in the privileged position to have seen our results go up! How can you deny us our chance to add to this? We implore to stop and think about what consequences this will have on our futures and what impact it will have upon Kirklees.
- Dear Councillors,
We are a year 10 form from Birkdale High School and we are writing to express our dismay and concern regarding the threat of closure that is hanging over us.
As year 10's we are well aware of the fact that if the proposed closure goes ahead, we are in the most precarious situation of all the pupils in the school. Should the closure go ahead it is proposed that we stay on the Birkdale site as a satellite of Westborough supposedly taught by former Birkdale staff. We question how you can make this assumption given that our teachers appear to know nothing about their futures. We believe that the reality is that we are more likely to lose our dedicated teachers and end up with a second hand education at best.
If we end up without our teachers do we get experienced permanent staff from Westborough or would this "satellite" of Westborough receive supply staff? As we are sure you can appreciate, we have an expectation that we will be achieving higher results in line with Birkdale's current outstanding performance. We feel like we are being treated like sacrificial lambs to the slaughter and that our education is secondary to the politicking that is going on.
We are in the privileged position to have seen our results go up! How can you deny us our chance to add to this? We implore to stop and think about what consequences this will have on our futures and what impact it will have upon Kirklees. 10 VVO Birkdale High School
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10 SRY Birkdale High School

- Dear Councillors,
We are a year 11 form from Birkdale High School. We take this opportunity to write to you to ask you to stop and think about the proposal to close Birkdale High School and the direct impact that it will have on our education. We don't need others to tell us what a good school we are we know that this is recognised throughout the authority - what puzzles us is why would anyone in all good conscience, want to close us when we are so obviously on an upward trend? For five years we have watched our school grow, we have forged relationships with our dedicated staff and now we are in our very real danger of losing all this as a threat of closure becomes more imminent. All we want to do at this stage of our educational careers is to continue working towards our goals safe in the knowledge that we are in the best place to succeed. Please consider how you would feel if you children lost their compass on the most important journey that they had undertaken. You must block this proposal for with and return to us our right of a quality education.
11 TBT Birkdale high School
- Dear Councillors, We are a year 11 forms from Birkdale High School. We take this opportunity to write to you to ask you to stop and think about the proposal to close Birkdale High School and the direct impact that it will have on our education. We don't need others to tell us what a good school we are we know that this is recognised throughout the authority - what puzzles us is why would anyone in all good conscience, want to close us when we are so obviously on an upward trend?
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11 JFO Birkdale high School
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11 AKI Birkdale high School
- Dear Councillors, We are writing to you in our capacity as a year 9 form from Birkdale High School to express our anger and dismay at the proposal to close our school. This is an exceptionally important year for us in our educational career. We are supposed to be making informed choices about which subjects we would like to continue with in upper school and then in college or the workplace. We feel that this is almost impossible given that we do not know what will be happening to us.
Allison O'Sullivan talked to the student council about merging us with Westborough High School. We do not want this as we are happy and confident in our school with our teachers. How can you guarantee that we can do the same subjects with this merger? How can you guarantee that they will be using the same exam boards, as we have already started a number of our GCSE's? How can you guarantee the personalised learning that we receive in our school? How can you guarantee that we will maximise our potential under a new regime? We think that you cannot offer us any guarantees whatsoever. Birkdale high School is a fun place to be. We enjoy our lessons and take our learning seriously. We know our teachers and feel that this will help us to do well. Why should we be the victims in this process? GCSEs are meant to be the start of our future, our introduction to work of further education. All we are faced with at the moment is an uncertain future and the prospect of losing our school, our teachers and our identity. We ask you think again and leave

Birkdale to continue to grow. We are confident that you will not be disappointed. We enjoy our school and happy to say we go to Birkdale. 9 RTU Birkdale High School

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We are writing to you in our capacity as a year 9 form from Birkdale High School to express our anger and dismay at the proposal to close our school. This is an exceptionally important year for us in our educational career. We are supposed to be making informed choices about which subjects we would like to continue with in upper school and then in college or the workplace. We feel that this is almost impossible given that we do not know what will be happening to us. Allison O'Sullivan talked to the student council about merging us with Westborough High School. We do not want this as we are happy and confident in our school with our teachers. How can you guarantee that we can do the same subjects with this merger? How can you guarantee that they will be using the same exam boards, as we have already started a number of our GCSE's? How can you guarantee the personalised learning that we receive in our school? How can you guarantee that we will maximise our potential under a new regime? We think that you cannot offer us any guarantees whatsoever. Birkdale high School is a fun place to be. We enjoy our lessons and take our learning seriously. We know our teachers and feel that this will help us to do well. Why should we be the victims in this process? GCSEs are meant to be the start of our future, our introduction to work of further education. All we are faced with at the moment is an uncertain future and the prospect of losing our school, our teachers and our identity.
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9 CMU Birkdale High School
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9 AAN Birkdale High School
- Dear Sir or Madam
My name is ?. I go to Birkdale High School. You are trying to close my school and I would like to change your mind. I would like to give you some examples why you should not close my school.
We are all friendly to each other and we have a lot of respect for each other and we are a small school so we get a lot of help in class. In a school with lots of kids in a class we might not get the help we need. If we have to move to another school we will not settle that quickly and it will be hard for everyone to get used to all of us. It will be hard for us to get used to the classes and the new school system. And I already have settled in my school and I know my timetable and my teachers.
If you close my school you will affect our education because if you shut it next year I will be in year 9 and I might be picking my options for my GCSE Exams if you ruin my GCSE Exams you will ruin my future.
- Dear Sir or Madam
I may not have been at this school long but it has been inspiring working at this school I have been to two different high schools and out of the two this is the best school for learning I have better attendance and better grades because the school and teachers are better. I am in year 10 I really had appalling attendance in my old school because I didn't like the school because in the lessons no one did any work so I was very distracted. I think I would get better grades and GCSE I would probably go back to the way I used to be if I changed school because I am appalled that you are even considering that a perfectly great school that is Birkdale High School this school is good I love this school and everyone in it would agree with that and this is also a well graded school so you would regret closing the school down so in my opinion this school is great and getting better consistently if you did you would make the people get worse grades because of people lack of one on one teaching on pupils so less people will get A to C's in GCSE so I will say to you please don't close the school it is perfect for the area it is perfect so please think again.
If it is not about the grades and not about the people if it's about the building it is a perfect size and shape for the people in and around it the people around it love it and the people in it love it why are you even thinking of

closing the school down. I and every one else in the school thinks that you should leave the school the way it is that is because it is the way we think of Perfect nothing could be better so please don't change it because it does not need changing so rethink closing the school please

- Dear sir or madam,
my name is ? and I am writing to put a stop to closing Birkdale High School.
We at Birkdale love our school and the teachers in it. If it closes at Birkdale the staff would go and people who would be teaching us would not be qualified as much as what our teachers are now. So if you have a heart then you would stop it too. It is a great school and it doesn't deserve to close. We have good GCSE results and we have worked for it to not happen. I like Birkdale because of great friends and teachers who look out for you they don't judge you of your past they focus on your future so you get a great GCSE grade. My life an education would suffer because everything that I have learnt would be undone and then I will not get a GCSE grade. Please don't let it close.
- Dear Sir,
My name is? And I am writing to persuade you not to close Birkdale High. Our GCSE results have improved we are as good if not better than several schools in Kirklees. There are several schools that are not achieving the results we are. We really don't think you are being fair, if your child was in the same situation you would also not agree for the school to close. We are a small school so each student gets maximum support from staff and teachers. Please think twice about the decision, our future depends on it.
- Dear Sir/Madam
I am an ex pupil at Birkdale High School. I recently left at the end of year 11 and because of the opportunities that Birkdale gave me such as; sending me to the build academy in Batley and extra English and Maths lessons I was able to build up my skills to persuade a career in the construction industry and now I am an apprentice bricklayer at Miller Homes, who also took me for my work experience provided by Birkdale. The misguided proposal to close Birkdale would be a huge disappointment to me and my fellow pupils of last year's Year 11 as I feel I have given a positive start in life and I am sure I am not the only one to agree, and I am also sure we would not be if Birkdale were to stay open. Birkdale High School over reached their end of year target of 47% 5A* to C in, which we achieved 64% A* to C, better than some of our partner schools in Dewsbury and Heckmondwike such as Earlsheaton and Spen Valley. 'Forward to success' is our motto and yet another outstanding success Birkdale will achieve if we were to stay open. I urge you to consider these points. I am someone who has had first hand experience of the success that a student can achieve at Birkdale - surely you can owe it to future generations to achieve the same kind of success? Please do not vote to close Birkdale.
Thank you for your time.
- Dear Sir/Madam I am writing to inform you about the closure of Birkdale High School.
As being part of this school I clearly disagree to the closure of our school as just recently our attendance, achievement, grades have gone higher and the behaviour has improved massively as the exclusion has gone down which shows the behaviour has improved hence less exclusions.
I would just like to say when discussing the closure of our school our achievement, grades, attendance has gone higher and our behaviour has only improved because of the entertainment, rewards, credits & prizes our Headteacher has given us and told us about. Not just that she had made us feel very special and she kept us safe also not just let us run out she has taken care of us. We believe the point of being a small school is we are all together and the teachers are focussed on each and every one of us they know who we are and our abilities. If you are thinking to join our schools together we can not get along with each other at all as every day new fights will occur between us. I would just to say in the past week we have got on with fourteen different religions and got on really well easily without any problems. I would just like to remind you about the last time when the governor wanted to join + together that couldn't stand each other they didn't work well together at all and hated each other. I hope you don't want the same to happen to us I hope you understand this reason as to why we do not want to join Birkdale and Westborough together. And lastly the consequences of our school are outstanding because after somebody has done something wrong they don't want to do it again because the trouble that they are in is bad that they don't want it to happen again to make the same mistake again. I hope that you take in mind on what has been written.
(I am a pupil from Birkdale High School)
- Dear Sir/Madam
I am writing to inform you about the closure of Birkdale High! I think it is very important that you read our letters because we are fighting for our school. The closure is affecting the teachers but mostly the students. As a student at Birkdale, education is very important to us, it will help us in later life but if we move school it will affect us badly. Birkdale High is a friendly place for children to be, the child quickly makes friends. What's special about this school is that we allow people from around the world come to our school. Our school also has as strict policy about bullying. Our teachers handle them extremely well. Birkdale is a safe place to be because we have our own personal space, we also have many fire exits. The teachers look after the children to the best of their ability. All the students here are focused on their work, aiming to get a good education. As Castle Hall was fighting for their school and won. It is now our turn to fight the battle for Birkdale high school.

- Dear Sir/Madam
My name is? And I writing to you to ask you to keep Birkdale High School open. If you close this school our GCSE scores will be harmed and our grades will drop and when we apply for our job and they look at out records they won't accept us because of poor GCSE results. I love my school because of all the kind teachers and students and there are many clubs we can go to and loads of activities such as Basketball, Football, Dancing and some music activities such as singing and drumming. If you send us to all to a different schools it will be hard to fit in and there will be many fights of which school was better, and I will take the teachers a long time to get to it, so it means longer fights the more injuries. If they are in a class people will feel left out and there and there will be more people messing about in class. 64% of last years students got A to C levels in the GCSE exams and if you keep this school open we could improve and even get to the top of the league table!
- Dear Sir/Madam
My name is? and I am writing to inform you that this situation of closing the school down will affect loads of peoples careers and their education will not be of a good standard because if the teachers decide to leave we will be taught by supply and teachers which will not get grades we need good teaching as we are taking our GCSE's soon. The reason why you should not close the school down because we are improving our grades every time this year we got 64% of grade C or above which is better than most of schools in this area so what's the problem students will receive 5 or more GCSE's.
I like this school because the teaching and the teachers try their best to get you a grade which is suitable for the job you want in your future. I like this school because of the rules and relegations are strict as possible which gets you to learn to the best of your ability. The teachers are friendly and helpful and everyone knows each other. If this school closes our education will be ruined by the teaching we will get towards the end of the year also our future will be ruined as well so why would some one ruin other people's lives please think again.
- Dear Sir/Madam My name is ? I am in Year 8 and I am 12 years old. I am writing to you to let you know about the school closure. I am afraid that the school will close. There are many reasons not to close it. We don't want to close it because I get more help here; as different races come together at Birkdale, the teachers push us so that we get higher grades, because last years yr 11's got the highest grades in Birkdale's history and the year 11's got it because WE WORK AS A TEAM!!!!
SAVE OUR SCHOOL
- Dear Sir/Madam
My name is ? and I am writing to persuade you not to close our school down. You should not close Birkdale because our GCSE results have improved we are as good as if not better than several other schools in Kirklees. Birkdale is a small school so the pupils get maximum support in all there work. Students like coming to Birkdale and teachers like working at Birkdale. I am in year 10 so these are two very important years of my life. When I came to Birkdale I have met friends that I really get along with and if you close Birkdale down then I will lose them because we will find a new job so we won't have any teachers to help us get our GCSE so our education will suffer so that means we cant go to collage and that we won't get good jobs.
- Dear Sir/Madam
My name is ? and I am 12 years old. I am in year 8. I am writing to you to ask you that you don't close Birkdale. I have fantastic teachers and I have made new friends quickly. We have just started Birkdale and we know our way round school. If we then start a new school we will find it difficult to find our way round. It will also disturb our education. Also when we start a new school we have to make new friends. Birkdale is the closest school from my house, so it is easy to travel to. If we change school we will have to travel more, which means we will get late and disturb our education. When have more students in our class it will be more difficult for our teacher to teach our lesson. We get a lot more help at Birkdale. When we change school we won't get help because there won't be lots of people in our class to help. !!!!!!!SAVE OUR SCHOOL!!!!!!!
- Dear Sir/Madam
My name is ? and I am in year 10 at Birkdale High School I may not have been at this school that long but it has been inspiring work at this establishment. I have been to two different high schools and out of the two Birkdale is the better school for those who want to learn. I have gained better attendance and better grades at Birkdale because Birkdale is the better school and the teachers are more helpful and a friendlier environment to work in, I am now in year 10 of Birkdale High School but before I came to Birkdale I had an Appalling attendance because in the lesson it was distracting by people behaving badly but the teachers helped me get a better attendance. I think I would get better GCSE results if you do not close down the school because if you closed the school I would not have as much one on one with a teacher so if I didn't understand I would fall behind and get a low mark for my GCSE and less people would get and A to C grade in our GCSE's.
I am appalled that you would try to close a perfectly good school down like Birkdale this school is a good no a perfect good I was like this school and everyone in and around Birkdale would agree with me and this is also a well graded school so you would regret closing the school down, in my opinion this school is great and getting better consistently if you did the school you would make people get worse grades because of all the changes they are facing so I will say to you please don't the school down it is perfect for the area and the people near it is just perfect so please think again. If it's not about the grades and not about the people if it's about the building it is a perfect size and shape for the people in and around it and the people in it love it, so why even think about closing the school down. I and every one else in the school think that you should leave

the school the way it is because it is perfect in our eyes nothing could be better so please don't change it because it does not need changing so please rethink closing the school down.

- Dear Sir/Madam My name is ? and I am a pupil at Birkdale High School. I know you are a part of the Kirklees council and you want to do well for the public citizens, but you need to think of the pupils of Birkdale and with the closure of the school you are interfering with the education of us. We are doing better than most schools in the Kirklees area scoring 64% in GCSE, A+ to C.
This school is a good environment for learning with the teachers making the learning as fun as they can. Everyone knows everyone is trying to save the school because we all love this school. The teachers at this school will no longer have a job and the students will lose out on the exam results they deserve. My stepsisters both came and my other siblings all hope to come here one day. All the staff and student are proud to be part of Birkdale and the improvements the school have made and Birkdale will become outstanding if it stays open. I do not want my future and education to suffer because it is cheaper to close the school. What is more important - the lives of young people or cutting costs? THINK AGAIN AND SAVE THE SCHOOL
- Dear Sir/Madam
My name is ? I am writing to you about the decision you have made on closing Birkdale High School. I do not want Birkdale High School to be closed because there are going to be many problems, such as our education could be ruined because of the different styles of the different styles of teaching, and not to leave out we are settled in Birkdale High School. Birkdale is a community not just a school.
Our achievement have recently been the best in the whole of Kirklees and have risen from the bottom all the way to the top, and have come out with the Best GCSE results. I would just like to tell you that you are making the wrong decision on closing Birkdale High School BUT we will not stand away from this because you are making the wrong decision on closing Birkdale High School. We would not joint with the Westborough because fights WILL occur everyday. That makes the community look bad.
SAVE OUR SCHOOL!!!
- Dear Sir/Madam
My name is ? and I am writing to the Cabinet Members. I am currently attending Birkdale High School, and the notion that the school has to shut down is Ludicrous. Our grades are much better than they were 5 to 6 Years ago. We at Birkdale High School are just as good as the other schools in the area, and maybe even better.
How can you guarantee the same support from the teachers as we get here? How can you close our school so blindly? If you had a child coming to Birkdale High School, would you let the school close? I highly doubt it. Think of us as your own children. Respect our education. If you send us to schools that are not prepared for so many students, how can you say that our education will not be effected? Even is you don't close Birkdale High School down, and send Westborough students here, how can you guarantee our supportive teachers will stay? You can't. Please rethink the Decision and Keep Birkdale Open.
- Dear Sir/Madam
My name ? and I am student at Birkdale High School. I am writing to tell you what a great school we are and that if you close us down how much that will affect our community. To begin with we have had a better than ever GCSE results we have been above lots of other schools that are worse than us actually we got 64% grade A-Cs and we find that excellent that is one reason to keep us open. My other reason is that we all work well together and we have amazing food it is healthy and really nice. Plus our health and safety is wow!
- Dear Sir/Madam
Hello my name is ? and is writing to persuade you not to close our school. I am in Year 10, next year I will be in Year 11 it's going to be my GCSE year I want to achieve good grades so I can get further in life. But I might not be able to achieve my target because the school closure. Many people might leave Birkdale high of the closure notice. Teachers might leave and students will lose staff and the supply teachers might come and our grades will suffer.
So how are I and other students meant to achieve our target? Please do not close this school down people are looking forward in life at Birkdale, not to be let down!!
- Dear Sir/Madam
Hello my name is ? and I am in Year 8. I would like to ask you why are you closing our school down? How come you are not closing the other school and you are closing down Birkdale High School? That could affect the education of every pupil in this school. Further on, what are we going to do when we don't go to school? If you close our school, which school are we going to? Please save our school, don't shut it down.
- Dear Sir/Madam
I am writing to inform you about the school. I am aware our school Birkdale High has been planned to be shut down. Many pupils including myself are very worried and so are our parents. We are one of the unique schools even though we are quite small; these are some of our reasons. We are unique because of many things; such as our behaviour for achievement site it motivates us too work, our small school etc. Firstly my school is like a big family. We work together and get on really well. Because our school is small, it gives us more of an advantage of working better to the best of our abilities. I have asked many pupils in my year, and they have all stated that they enjoy working in this school due to the shortage of pupils in the class. Moreover

the support and help we get from our teachers is excellent. I feel as though I am really supported and get the help that I need.

Secondly, the system we have in school "Behaviour for achievement" helps motivate the students in their learning. As soon as this system started, we found that the students were making great progress; the percentages of the grades were rising every term. Thirdly I would like to give an example of a previous event-taking place similar to this. And the cause of this happening led to children fighting, playing truant and other children not being able to do as they wished. Fourthly our GCSE results were beyond expected if it's not about them then why are you shutting us down?

Now ask yourselves this "you're putting all this behind you and willing to create a school of destruction, disaster and catastrophe?" which will lead to bright, honoured and great achieving students to play truant, fight and bully because they are being disrespected. However, instead of using/wasting money on knocking the school building down and then rebuild another school, that money could be spent on the schools facilities, extending the school etc. By merging two schools will cause a bigger problem within the school, also within the community. Students will be grouped with their previous school friends, which will cause havoc on the grounds and in the building.

Westborough is going to be full of students which will put too much pressure on the teachers and will lead them wanting a pay rise, why not use all that money on Birkdale's facilities and help improving it instead of starting again.

- Dear sir/madam

My name is ? and I'm in year 8. I am aware of you trying to shut the school down, this will affect my education severely so I have decided to write you a letter showing my anger and worry of the school shutting down. And try to express how me and lots of others will and shall be effected if this closer may carry on. Birkdale high school is a brilliant school and teachers and all other staff are wonderful at getting the job done. Last year 64% of the year 11 students got A*-C outstanding accomplishment. I understand your reason of not info students at the school but too many students in shyness not participating and fights/arguments which will equal up to bad results. Though on the other hand less students will resulting loss of all that which like our last years year 11 showed will equal in better results. Please rethink your decision look at who you are effecting and how badly.

- Dear Sir/Madam

My name is ? . I am in Year 8 and I don't want this school to close. I have a lot of reasons for this. Birkdale is a fantastic school. Breaking this school would be like breaking down a community. We call Birkdale High School a community because we are all one. We all help each other. Also my education will be in danger. It will be ruined. This is because a bigger class may result in me getting less help. Consequently less help means lower grades. At this school I enjoy my school life. I am also settled here. Going to a bigger school will make me get lost. We have gained better results than some of the bigger schools in Kirklees. This is because we are a small school. A smaller school is a better school. As a school we are one! So please rethink your decision and keep Birkdale open. I want to succeed in life.

- Dear Sir/Madam

My name is ? and I am in Year 8 at Birkdale . I am writing to let you know that Birkdale should not close. The reason why it should not close is that it is a really good school. We are all friendly to each other and we have a lot of respect for each other as well. We are a small school so we get a lot of the help in class. In a school with loads of kids in a class we might not get the help we need. If we have to move to another school we will not settle that quickly and it will be hard for everyone to get used to all us new kids if we move. It will be hard for us to get used to the classes and the new school system and we might also get lost. If you close our school you will affect our education. Because if you shut it next year I will be in Year 9 and I might be picking my options so the options I pick might not be in the other schools at the moment it is easy for me to get to school if I went to another school it could be difficult - I love my school - please don't close it

- Dear sir/madam

My name is ? and I am in Year 8 at Birkdale high school. I am writing to inform you why you should keep Birkdale high school open. For example if you look at the school leader boards you will see how much Birkdale high school has improved over the years, Birkdale is higher than some schools over in Dewsbury and since you are not expanding any of the other schools there is no reason why you should close Birkdale High School. The year elevens will not learn anything when they come to do their exams if teachers start to leave to find over jobs they will be supply teachers nearly a different one every day. I will lose a lot of my friends that I have made if we all go different schools I like Birkdale High school and the teachers in it and they all know me and the teachers at the over school will not know me. When Castle Hall was threatened to be shut down they did a strike and you kept them open so why not do the same for Birkdale High school. We all get along at Birkdale and if we go to different schools there will be more fights

- Dear Sir/Madam My name is ? and I'm writing to you because of the idea of Birkdale high school closure. And I'm trying to persuade you not to close the school, there are many points I would like to tell you about. Like if you close the school where will 500 kids go? How is this going to help the community? Because its better if we leave the school open. In the last few years the results of this school have gone up a lot. We also get more

support because it's a small school and there are lesser fights than bigger school. For example Leeds High School it was a disaster! Two different schools that absolutely hate each other. So why try to close this school down to save money when you're destroying a community. So think twice before you regret it.

- Dear Sir/Madam

My name is ? . I am in Year 8 at Birkdale High School. I am writing to you because of the school closing down. I am going to give you some reasons on why you should not close the school down.

The first reason is you can't close the school down because this school is like a big family. We might not get along sometimes but we are still here for each other and if you split up this school you will be splitting up a family. If we move to a different school we might get bullied and even fall behind in our work and then get bad grades and not get a good job. Secondly Birkdale is not just a school we are a community and to split up a school does not take much but to split up a school takes a lot because it is wrong and we will not let you split us up. You can not just go and close Birkdale down because that is not what a good citizen does but I guess you are not a good citizen. We are supposed to look up to you but you are setting a bad example to everyone. If you close this school down you will have to live with the guilt of it as long as you live. Do you really want to be responsible for what you have done? Dear Sir/Madam My name is ? and I am in Year 8. I am writing to inform you that we are not happy about Birkdale's closure. Just think how it will affect our education. Here are some reasons why you should keep Birkdale open. If you close Birkdale lots of pupils will have to move schools, which will increase the effect of our education. All the teachers would have to look for a new job. I have been at this school for a year now and it is one of the best GCSE improvement scheme in Kirklees. So why do you have to think about closing it down? The teachers are amazing, really nice and really helpful. Birkdale is like a little community not just a school and I really like Birkdale so far. Just think of our education and how it could be ruined by the closure. My brother is in Year 10 and he is supposed to be doing his GCSEs next year and just think of how he could fail them by Birkdale closing. I hate the fact that Birkdale might be closing. Birkdale is a small school but that is one of the unique things about it and we get a really good education. If we are stuck in class I guarantee that every teacher will help us. If you are so cruel to close Birkdale how many people would you disappoint? You let Caste Hall stay open so I think you should let Birkdale stay open. If you do keep it open you will save peoples education and jobs. If you decide to close it people will risk at losing their education and jobs. Thank you for taking your time to read this letter I hope it has changed your mind about closing it. It will save our education.

- Hi my name is ? I am writing this letter regarding the closure. There are many reasons why you shouldn't close our school Birkdale. The education is excellent because my brothers achieves high levels hopefully I will as well. If Birkdale shuts down were going to have to buy new uniforms, have supply teachers every now and again I mean what are we meant to achieve, leave our best friends and try make some new ones which is going to be hard. I love the teachers here their teaching is superb and all they want for us is to achieve good levels and look forward to the future. I am now in year 9 and I ma gonna start my GCSE's very soon, and I don't want to be under a lot of stress no one does. P.S I just wanted to tell you and ask you, we are a good school there is nothing wrong with us so why do you want to shut Birkdale.
S ave Our School

- I am a relatively new member of staff at Birkdale High - this is my second year of teaching in this institution and I am proud to say that I am a member of the team at Birkdale High. I am against the closure of the school. Some of you may not be surprised to hear that as quite obviously working at Birkdale High is how I make a living - however this has not been a reason for my decision to support the campaign to overturn the closure notice. There are a number of reasons why I feel this way. These are outlined below:- * I came into teaching more than 10 years ago with a view of improving the life chances for under privileged children, by offering them an education which would set them up for life. Having worked in several schools I have found pupils at Birkdale are given plenty of opportunity to receive an education which has (without a doubt) increased their life chances.

* I came into education having lived through an era where education included extensive pastoral care. Pastoral care of pupils is a deeply entrenched philosophy and is part of Birkdale High's ethos. I have never seen pupils that have received so much care and consideration. Given that a quite a significant number of Birkdale High's pupils are from minority/disadvantaged backgrounds - this is an extremely important factor that needs to be taken into consideration. Many vulnerable pupils will find the transition process extremely difficult to handle - particularly those pupils on the Additional Needs Register. I personally am not in favour of reducing these pupils' future life chances - as in the long run Kirklees may end up paying more to support these pupils' needs when they become adults. By cutting costs i.e. closing Birkdale, Kirklees is increasing the risk of reducing our vulnerable pupil's prospects. This was not a reason why I came into education and goes against the basic philosophy of education. * As a significant number of Birkdale's pupils come from deprived backgrounds, many pupils arrive at Birkdale having spent a significant time in their life under achieving and therefore appear on the Additional Needs Register. For those pupils being education in a smaller institution means that the staff are fully aware of each pupils needs and we can identify and support pupils with issues - quickly. Many vulnerable pupils can become lost in a larger school and this can lead to reducing a pupils life chances. * Birkdale is an inclusive school and is on the journey to achieve the Inclusive status both locally and nationally, by the end of this Academic year. I feel, as educators we have a moral obligation to offer our pupils the best education and pastoral care to bridge the gaps that may reduce a pupils life chances. I feel

Birkdale bridges those gaps well but is still not complacent and is striving forward to continue on the journey of development. I feel Birkdale High is in many respects a beacon school and closing a school that is making such a difference to vulnerable pupils, does not make sense to me. I hope you see that too. Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

- I am a teacher at Birkdale High School. I have worked for the Local Authority for 36 years giving, I believe good service throughout this time. Throughout I have worked with different styles of Head Teacher who did their best for their pupils but never in all this time have I worked with such an inspirational Head who is respected by her staff and who have driven progress with such commitment. The progress that Birkdale High is making now is testament to the high regard that teaching staff, parents, and pupils hold her in and her understanding of how to cater more than adequately for their needs. She has also been able to maintain staff morale throughout everything and there has been no flight due to the circumstances. I can assure you that if the decision to close goes ahead there will certainly be a rush to find other posts and the authority will lose a large number of committed teachers. We are all insulted that Alison O'Sullivan sites our exam results and progress as another reason for closing the school as it will aid the integration of staff and pupils into other institutions!! On the contrary, we all know that change such as this will disrupt our pupil's education, however hard we try, and some of the massive gains we have made will be lost especially as many staff will feel that they will have to look elsewhere for work! At the same time a Head teacher who has given so much will be repaid by losing her job. It seems that in the eyes of the local authority officers we are damned if we do make progress and damned if we don't!

My whole teaching career has been spent working with and for pupils in socially deprived areas first at Deighton and now at Birkdale. The one constant in all circumstances is the need for these children to be encouraged and cared for in an environment where child is known and can be given individual attention, Every Child Matters. Social deprivation must be acknowledged and we must work to compensate. At Birkdale we are able to do this. Our improving results bear testament to our success as do social and cultural experiences our pupils have access to. We have recently been awarded Artsmark Gold, the highest accolade from the Arts Council, at our first time of applying. The assessor awarded Gold even though we believed we would achieve Silver because he was so impressed with the school, its ethos, our Arts opportunities and curriculum and the enthusiasm of our pupils. After our recent production of Grease the Kirklees Improvement Officer for Music said that every aspect of our performance was of the highest quality and that the performance was absolutely wonderful and she was so impressed she put this in writing. This is the sort of experience that underprivileged pupils such as ours need. This is only one example of good practice which is evident throughout the school curriculum. We can provide this in a smaller school and encourage and engage pupils who would otherwise be overwhelmed. The loyalty of staff to the school and community is also testament to the Head and to the bond between the pupils and all staff in the school, not just the teaching staff. We are told the Birkdale building would remain open and staff and pupils would automatically become part of Westborough High School. Why? There is no gain in this rush to close the school. Why not take time, allow the progress to continue, keep options open so that there is flexibility to deal with what the future holds. The senior management team, staff, pupils and parents of this school have all worked so hard to build sustainable progress please allow us to continue. The reason given for this closure is that there are surplus places in N Kirklees. That may be so, but with the futures of many schools in the area in doubt Birkenshaw, Batley area, (Castle Hall) and possibly others, wouldn't it make sense to hold fire and leave more options open.? The comment made by Mollie Walton in a council meeting at the beginning of the BSF consultation that "we should have closed Birkdale the first time around" proved to us that there are still councillors who have sort of vendetta against our school. I was at this meeting and her derisory comments were incredibly insulting and prejudiced. I was assured by Councillor Smithson at the time that she would be disbarred from voting last time because of her prejudicial interest. I feel sure that this must also be the case this time. I would hope that there are other councillors who are open minded enough to look at this question anew and to listen to the view of a large number of their electorate although I notice a large proportion of the Cabinet is Huddersfield based and no one from our immediate area is represented. Dewsbury has been in the news in the recent past for all the wrong reasons. It is known to be a community in great need of help and attention and there is a drive to find ways of binding the whole community together to overcome deprivation which is apparent to all. This will not be achieved by closing a school which is manifestly raising the aspirations of the most deprived within the community

- I am currently employed by Kirklees Council to work at Birkdale High School. I am writing to you about the continued progress towards closing Birkdale High School at the end of August 2010. I am somewhat surprised that Kirklees Council continues to progress with the closure of the school, as the letter which we received to notify us of the impending closure notice clearly states "Decision: the linked statutory proposals to discontinue Birkdale High School and enlarge Earlsheaton Technology College, The Community Science College @ Thornhill and Westborough High School" - Heading from letter dated 22nd December 2009 from) Since the Government pulled back on the funding for BSF, most LA's that I am aware of withdrew their School Closure Notices as they were linked to BSF which was no longer able to continue without funding. Whilst Kirklees Council are continuing with the closure of Birkdale High School I would have thought the decision process would have had to been started again in order to take into account the changes in available funding from the Government and allow people to be consulted appropriate with current information. One of the reasons we have been told about the closure of Birkdale is to go ahead, is that there are 1000 surplus spaces

for children in Dewsbury.

"We know that based on school capacities, there are over a thousand surplus places currently in the system in Dewsbury, and projections show that the closure of Birkdale High School would leave sufficient capacity in the system until at least 2020." (Excerpt from an e-mail sent from Alison O'Sullivan, Director for Children and Young People & John Edwards Assistant Director for Children & Young People)

Whilst I am not aware of individual school numbers, it is my understanding from colleagues, that Westborough High School is full. I can only imagine that the figure of a 1000 which was quoted by Alison O'Sullivan includes the spaces at Birkdale. If you were to remove the number of surplus spaces at Birkdale this would leave a more understandable number approx 600. currently we have 432 students at the school who would need to be accommodated in other schools around. As already stated Westborough is "full" and the funding support from BSF is no longer available. If Westborough is "full" this would mean that students would have to be accommodated at Earlsheaton High School or Thornhill Specialist Science School which I envisage would only make travel to school for a majority of the students a lengthier one. Surely considerations should be given for inconvenience to the students, their parents and any financial expenses incurred. I myself have children who have had to travel by bus, approximately 3.5 miles to school each day. This was a choice that I made as a parent; however it is one which has incurred financial expenditure to us as a family, and one which having made the choice of the school was a seven year commitment (this included sixth form). The families from which some of the children at Birkdale come from are going to have a choice of two schools and both of them are likely to be a distance away which will incur extra travel expense for anything up to four years. Parents are not making a choice in the first instance as I did, but due to the closure of the school will have to choose between two schools further away. Kirklees are taking away/limiting the choices available to these parents. This is a hardship for families in these difficult times being experienced by many of not having spare money available. Since I joined the school in 2005 under the direction of Mrs Caraher the school has continue to raise achievement and make progress. Some of the data which evidences this below 5a* - C 2009 = 38% 2010 64% 5A* - C (maths and English) 2009 24% 2010 38% CVA 2009= 979 2010 = 1004 - estimated. The students because of the size of the school, are able to receive a very personalised plan of learning. Qualifications are matched based on background, ability, and what is their career path in life is. The school has very mixed ethnicity and for more than a few this is their first school in the UK. If these students were to join a school with a cohort size of over 1000, it is my belief and the belief of staff at Birkdale that the students would not excel as they have done, but would find it more difficult to achieve in such a large size school. In the last week I understand Kirklees are proposing to close Birkdale and merge students and staff with Westborough High School and effectively run a split school site. This information has come verbally through staff at Kirklees to our school. I feel that Kirklees should have written to each member of staff and each parent individually to inform them of their plans for the future of the school and put their decision up for consultation as was done when the closure of Birkdale was sought under BSF. I also understand that Kirklees Council are continuing to support and keeping open the school on the Fartown site. This school is also a small school in cohort size, though I do not know that exact number of pupils I believe it to be less than Birkdale, so I am confused about how the council can continue to support Fartown whilst still continuing with such zeal to go ahead with the closure of Birkdale. I would like to ask that as representatives of the people of Kirklees you ensure that all aspects of the decision to close Birkdale High School and the impact in the community are give full and proper consultation and consideration and that your decision represents the feeling in the community and the best outcome for those students and staff who are going to be affected by the decision. Thank you for your consideration.

- I am writing to you regarding the proposals to continue to close Birkdale High School, despite the withdrawal of the BSF Funding following the general election. I am the Deputy Head of the school, and as such I have made a series of principled emotional arguments, which I will summarise here. But I will also give you my personal view on the debate. The original plans for reorganisation of education in North Kirklees were, I believe flawed. The Dewsbury Community is a deprived one, and the Dewsbury West community even more so. The plans to create much larger schools were always in my opinion, likely to lower standards, as there is much research to show that pupils from such challenging communities benefit from the more personalised approach provided by smaller schools. The evidence from the improving trend at Birkdale reinforces this research: we had made our improvements through a combination of improved teaching and a personalised curriculum that meets the needs of all our pupils. This simply would not happen in a larger school, as our families do not have the skills of the confidence to pressurise a school to insist that special programmes are created for their children's unique needs. Furthermore, everyone recognises the hypocrisy of Local Authority that supports two schools of less than 400 pupils in Huddersfield, whilst pushing for the closure of a school of well over 400 in Dewsbury. Of course, we all know that our numbers are only this low because we have had the threat of closure hanging over our head for years, but our numbers have never collapsed - because of the quality of our provision. I have seen through the jobs section of TES that there are a lot of schools nationally with pupil rolls of 500-700. We do not see why Kirklees cannot support this school when other authorities would clearly do so. Since BSF funding was withdrawn, there have been a host of uncertainties added to the situation we find ourselves in: *as the 3 tier system in the Cleckheaton area is dismantled, we expect the new "BBG Free School"; * Batley Grammar is trying to re-launch its self as a state funded "Free School" * and there is huge confusion over single sex education in Batley regarding the proposed new academy and the move of the Girl's school to the BBEC site.

It could take 2 years or more for this confusion to settle into a recognised pattern. Why would you reduce your options in the middle of all this confusion? At the very least, a delay of 2 years will allow the future to become clear before committing to paper the pattern of schooling in north Kirklees that makes sense to all. As it has been explained to us, the plan for our school is to close Birkdale, TUPE the staff to Westborough, and leave our pupils being taught in our building, by our staff, simply without a full senior team. This is hardly going to create significant savings. However, as the uncertainty forces staff to seek more secure employment in other schools, I predict a significant drop in standards. I have to remind you that cheap is not synonymous with value for money: value for money takes outcomes into account as well as costs, and we have a team at Birkdale that will deliver consistently rising outcomes. No-one can understand why you are so determined to dismantle this team, and jeopardise the futures of the pupils. This is not just an argument about Birkdale however. The new plans involve increasing the Planned Admission Number (PAN) of Westborough, Earlsheaton and Thornhill without any expansion to their school buildings. This means in practice that class size in these schools will rise (more pupils into the same number of classrooms can only lead to increased class size) and inclusion provision will be cut back, as Heads cut SEN or EAL provision to bring classrooms back into use. There can only be on result from this - lower standards in the remaining schools. You must also keep in mind that we admit significant numbers of pupils that have been rejected by other schools - and we help them find success. We are a school that has a history of integrating immigrant families into our community, most recently the influx of Hungarian and Roma families living in Ravensthorpe. These families will also be added to the rolls of our neighbouring schools - under circumstances that work against them finding additional space and resources to deal with the challenges of EAL children with inconsistent educational histories. Again, the outcome will be further downward pressure on standards. At Birkdale, we have worked tirelessly to raise standards - not with the quick fix that you see in some areas but sustainable, long term improvement that is allowing our students to leave with qualifications, attitudes and aspirations that will lead them to a future of work and economic stability. The current policy to close Birkdale can cram pupils into the remaining schools will drag the whole of Dewsbury backwards. It will reduce the community's ability to stand up to the recession and grow out of it, and as a result, social problems in Dewsbury will worsen in the long term. I am not claiming that keeping Birkdale open will in itself undo the damage of recession, but through our school leaver's successes, but it will make significant contribution to the long term regeneration of the town. You need to realise that staff at Birkdale (and similar schools) have chosen to work there because they are committed to supporting such a community. There is no-one working at Birkdale because they are not good enough to go any where else- quite the opposite. You will come to recognise that our commitment to social change will make us fight for the school using all means and routes available to us. We believe in what we do and we believe that the families we serve deserve our support to create better life chances for the next generation. It should be your role as a Labour administrator to work with us and support us in our struggle to improve the life chances of our pupils. It is not too late to stop the closure plan, and give our school the future that our community deserves. I urge you to stand up for principle and social justice, to ensure that our under privileged students can start adulthood on a less uneven playing field, and to do this by keeping Birkdale open.

- I am writing to you, as I am shocked about the closure of the Birkdale High School. As you are aware many people think that this idea many people such as teachers and current pupils in Y 10. The school's progress in the last few years has been massively improved. You can tell this by our GCSE results this year. The school has a target 30% A*-C grades. We have gone over our expectations and we scored 38% beating some of our local schools. This year we are expecting that our school will achieve even a better score. I am currently in Y10 and I think that you are making a large mistake. I am currently thinking about the future of this school. When the final decision was made to close this school, many teachers will decide to leave. This might leave us in a bad situation. Some of our GCSE teachers might leave, leaving us with inexperienced teachers. Birkdale high School is not a very large school. Many schools in Kirklees are larger than our school. Pupils in Birkdale get a lot of attention and personalised learning which pupils in other schools can dream about. When this school will be shut down, pupils will be squeezed into other schools making them suffer from lack of attention like they would get in Birkdale. Birkdale high School also has a good reputation in terms of behaviour and dealing with people who don't wish to follow our rules. The new rewards system introduced to Birkdale high School by our head teacher Mrs Caraher is a good way to reward people for working hard and during school terms, which reflects on our GCSE scores. Behaviour 4 achievement is a system which rewards you for things like no lates for the term or being on or above target in all of your subjects. Being a part of Birkdale High School is not just coming to school to get bored; it is a way to spend your time with your friends. Have a good time on break times or have a chat. It is a large community of people, which has no enemies in school and want to have a good time. Everyone is nice, friendly and respects staff and pupils. In conclusion I would like you to think about the fact that this school is a special place for pupils and staff. Please can you think again before you make the final decision about the closure of the school. This school has a beautiful future and you can help us to improve our standards. Birkdale become a place that every child in the entire world would like to come.
- I write to express my concerns over the proposal to close Birkdale High School despite the failure of Kirklees BSF funding bid. The council will not know whether it has the funds to expand neighbouring schools until the October spending review, yet it is being asked to commit to the "DChYPs" unfunded education plans. Councillors are effectively being asked to buy a "pig in a poke".

I have worked at Birkdale High School for over a year and Fartown High School for the previous two and a half years. It never ceases to amaze me how much more Birkdale High School has achieved without the same access to funding as Fartown - it represents great value for money. As a smaller school, even a single child not achieving their full potential has a significant impact on the school's results. I have been impressed by Birkdale High School's use of data to target resources to the individual child. Data is not just collected; it's used - something that's self evident from this year's exam results. It's also telling that despite focus on National Challenge, resources were not taken away from those students who were unlikely to achieve a Grade C or above in English and Maths - as a school, we care about ALL of our students. As a member of staff at Birkdale High I find myself perplexed by the continued drive to shut our school. I have so many unanswered questions. * Under BSF neighbouring schools were to be expanded to accommodate our students - the funding for this expansion has gone. How can we still be planning to move our students into schools that don't have enough capacity unless they're expanded? *If we do move our students into these schools, wont increased crowding have a detrimental effect on both our students, and the students already at those other schools? How will that improve standards? *If Westborough High is to take over our site permanently, won't that have a terrible impact on our student's confidence? When Alison O'Sullivan visited our student council she had to reassure them that she didn't think we were a bad school. How can they believe that if our school buildings stay open but our school is shut? (At least with a merger of Westborough High and Birkdale High, both sets of students would be starting afresh at a new school - there wouldn't be the feeling that any of them were second class citizens)

We find ourselves trying to fight against a proposal that has not been outlined in detail:

* Will the other schools in Dewsbury be expanded? * Will Westborough High uses our site permanently? * How will this be funded? * How will a two site school work? * How will this save costs, and more importantly, how will it improve standards? * If we don't know what the plans are, how can we have been consulted about them? On that basis alone, the plans to close Birkdale High School should be put on hold so that the people of Dewsbury can have their say. John Edwards emailed our school to say "Elected Members will take the time necessary to reach considered views on the best way forward to achieve our goals". I ask that you take a little extra time, put the plans on hold, and wait to see what funding will be available. The education of thousands of children, not just those at Birkdale High School, is at stake - not just now, but for years to come.

I appreciate that the DChYP has spent a great deal of time on the plans for education in north Kirklees, and that they are not responsible for the government turning down their bid for funding - however their plans are non longer suitable.

I firmly believe that people go into politics to make the world a better place - pressing ahead with these plans will not achieve that noble aim - please think again.

- Letter written in language other than English To: Councillor M Khan(Leader of the Council), Councillor K Smith (Deputy Leader of the Council), A O'Sullivan(Director of the Children's and Young People's Service)
I am the parent of a child who attends Birkdale High School in Dewsbury. I am writing to tell you that I am not prepared to accept the closure of the school. My reasons for this are set out below.
1. Originally, I believe that the new and improved facilities would be built at other Dewsbury and Batley schools. Now that the new government has cancelled BSF programmes for Kirklees, these new facilities are no longer going to be built, and I am not willing to have my children "squeezed" into inadequate provision in another school when Birkdale provides a caring and nurturing environment for my children. 2. I am pleased with the equality of education provided by Birkdale and am confident that my child will continue to achieve well. I am concerned these standards will not be maintained if the closure goes ahead. 3. I see no reason to close a school that has proven track record of improvement. Now that there is no extra funding, my child will be disadvantaged by being educated on a spilt site. Please can you respond to this letter, and reassure that my children will continue to attend Birkdale High School, and that I will be able to choose Birkdale for any children still in primary school? Yours truly,
- My name is ? and I am writing to persuade you not to close Birkdale High school. I think Birkdale should stay open because this school has improved a lot in the last few years, we are getting as good as many schools in Kirklees that you are keeping open, unlike many schools we are improving each year and this is because we are a small school and because off that each student gets lots of support from all teachers and other members of staff within the school. Many other schools students do not fill their full potential because of the size of the school and classes make it hard to get support like in our school. Several schools in the Kirklees area are not getting the GCSE results Birkdale are. I am currently in year ten and after this year only have one year left and I feel if you decide to close Birkdale down this will affect mine and many other people's education because teachers will start to leave to find other jobs and many students will also have to leave. Many students will leave because teachers will not be specialist in that certain subject been learnt because their teacher will not know all that a specialist teacher would do. I hope you take what I have said on board and decide to keep our school open.
- The original of this letter is written in Hungarian To: Councillor M Khan(Leader of the Council) councillor K Smith(Deputy Leader of the Council) A O'Sullivan(Director of the Children's and Young People's Service)
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2. I am pleased with the equality of education provided by Birkdale and am confident that my child will continue to achieve well. I am concerned these standards will not be maintained if the closure goes ahead.

3. I see no reason to close a school that has proven track record of improvement. Now that there is no extra funding, my child will be disadvantaged by being educated on a spilt site.

Please can you respond to this letter, and reassure that my children will continue to attend Birkdale High School, and that I will be able to choose Birkdale for any children still in primary school?

- To Whom It May Concern, my name is ? and I am a student from Birkdale High School. Today I am writing to tell you about my wonderful school. All of the education we get is excellent and nearly everyone knows each other and are friends. The health and safety and all the normal rules are really good and we understand them. We really enjoy coming to school and learning we will try to improve ourselves if only you don't close down our school and thank you for your time.
- To whom it may concern
Hello my name is ? I am a student from Birkdale High school. I am writing to tell you of what I think about the closure of the school. I agree with some of your issues but I also have many reasons why the school should stay open. Birkdale grades have improve the attendance has improved also the behaviour has improved which has caused less exclusions. To get to the cost to run this school may look pretty high to you but actually it is a small school where the cost will be lower.
- To whom it may concern,
Hello my name is ? I am a student at Birkdale High School. I am writing to tell you what I think about you warning to close us down. To say we are a small school we are, I understand, but when we it came to leaning, relationship and achievement we are making. The smaller the school the better learning and I am sure that what you want more achievement. In the past 5-7 years the grades are going up that's good. Behaviour getting better and the attendance
- To whom it may concern, I feel very strong about the school closure because I think this school is good as it is about the polite teachers, and know the pupils have got levels, good attendance, good behaviour, the teachers have good support with the pupils the are is good and population and the community, it is a very safe school, and there is good grades, it is a small school so the students get more good education, it is 95% friendly school, good and support from the staff.
- To: Councillor M Khan(Leader of the Council), Councillor K Smith(Deputy Leader of the Council), A O'Sullivan(Director of the Children's and Young People's Service)
I am the parent of a child who attends Birkdale High School in Dewsbury. I am writing to tell you that I am not prepared to accept the closure of the school. My reasons for this are set out below.
1. Originally, I believe that the new and improved facilities would be built at other Dewsbury and Batley schools. Now that the new government has cancelled BSF programmes for Kirklees, these new facilities are no longer going to be built, and I am not willing to have my children "squeezed" into inadequate provision in another school when Birkdale provides a caring and nurturing environment for my children . 2. I am pleased with the equality of education provided by Birkdale and am confident that my child will continue to achieve well. I am concerned these standards will not be maintained if the closure goes ahead. 3. I see no reason to close a school that has proven track record of improvement. Now that there is no extra funding, my child will be disadvantaged by being educated on a spilt site.
Please can you respond to this letter, and reassure that my children will continue to attend Birkdale High School, and that I will be able to choose Birkdale for any children still in primary school.
- Written in a language which is not English, To: Councillor M Khan(Leader of the Council)Councillor K Smith(Deputy Leader of the Council), A O'Sullivan(Director of the Children's and Young People's Service)
I am the parent of a child who attends Birkdale High School in Dewsbury. I am writing to tell you that I am not prepared to accept the closure of the school. My reasons for this are set out below.
1. Originally, I believe that the new and improved facilities would be built at other Dewsbury and Batley schools. Now that the new government has cancelled BSF programmes for Kirklees, these new facilities are no longer going to be built, and I am not willing to have my children "squeezed" into inadequate provision in another school when Birkdale provides a caring and nurturing environment for my children . 2. I am pleased with the equality of education provided by Birkdale and am confident that my child will continue to achieve well. I am concerned these standards will not be maintained if the closure goes ahead.
3. I see no reason to close a school that has proven track record of improvement. Now that there is no extra funding, my child will be disadvantaged by being educated on a spilt site.
Please can you respond to this letter, and reassure that my children will continue to attend Birkdale High School, and that I will be able to choose Birkdale for any children still in primary school?
- Written in Hungarian
This letter is available for you to sign and send. If you could personalise it, or write your own letter that makes similar points it will carry more weight with the council decision makers - but this standard letter is better than

no letter at all. I am a parent of a child who attends Birkdale High School in Dewsbury. I am writing to tell you that I am not prepared to accept the closure of the school. My reasons for this are set out below:

To: Councillor M Khan(leader of the council) councillor K Smith(Deputy leader of the council)A O'Sullivan(Director of the children's and Young People's Service)I am a parent of a child who attends Birkdale High School in Dewsbury. I am writing to tell you that I am not prepared to accept the closure of the school. My reasons for this are set out below:

1. Originally, I believed that new and improved facilities would be built at other Dewsbury and Batley schools. Now that the Government has cancelled the BSF programme for Kirklees, these new facilities are no longer going to be built, and I am not willing to have my children "squeezed" into inadequate provision in another school when Birkdale provides a caring and nurturing environment for my children.
2. I am pleased with the quality of education provided by Birkdale and am confident that my child will continue to achieve well. I am concerned that these standards will not be maintained if the closure goes ahead.
3. I see no reason to close a school that has a proven track record of improvement. Now that there is no extra funding, my child will not benefit from new facilities but will be disadvantaged by being educated on a split site. Please can you respond to this letter, and reassure me that my children will continue to attend Birkdale High School, and that I will be able to choose Birkdale for any children still in primary schools.

- Written In Hungarian.

To: Councillor M Khan(Leader of the council) Councillor K Smith(Deputy leader of the council) A O'Sullivan(Director of the children's and Young People's Service)

I am a parent of a child who attends Birkdale High School in Dewsbury. I am writing to tell you that I am not prepared to accept the closure of the school. My reasons for this are set out below:

1. Originally, I believe that the new and improved facilities would be built at other Dewsbury and Batley schools. Now that the new government has cancelled BSF programmes for Kirklees, these new facilities are no longer going to be built, and I am not willing to have my children "squeezed" into inadequate provision in another school when Birkdale provides a caring and nurturing environment for my children .
2. I am pleased with the equality of education provided by Birkdale and am confident that my child will continue to achieve well. I am concerned these standards will not be maintained if the closure goes ahead.
3. I see no reason to close a school that has proven track record of improvement. Now that there is no extra funding, my child will be disadvantaged by being educated on a split site. Please can you respond to this letter, and reassure that my children will continue to attend Birkdale High School, and that I will be able to choose Birkdale for any children still in primary school?

Appendix 4 Determination by the Schools Adjudicator 11 October 2010

Case reference: ADA/002132 Admission Authority: Kirklees Council
Date of decision: 11 October 2010
Determination

In accordance with section 88H (4) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I have considered the admission arrangements for Birkdale High School, Dewsbury, a community school in Kirklees. I do not uphold the objection from the School's Governing Body to the fact that Kirklees Council, as the admission authority, has set an admission number for the School in September 2011 of zero.

The Referral

1 Under section 88H(2)(b) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, the Governing Body of Birkdale Community High School (the School), Dewsbury, has referred an objection to the decision made by Kirklees Council (the Council), the School's admission authority, to reduce the School's admission number to zero with effect from 1 September 2011. Under Regulation 24(2) (b) (ii) of the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements) Regulations 2008 the Governing Body **is** entitled to object to this decision.

2 The Governing Body states that the Council's decision to discontinue the School, taken at a meeting of the Council's Cabinet on 17 December 2009, was conditional on receipt of funding from the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) initiative. These resources would have enabled the capital works necessary to expand other local schools to cater for the pupils who might otherwise have attended the School. The Governing Body contends that, following the General Election of May 2010, the new Government's decision to cancel Kirklees BSF wave 6 is a "*significant alteration to the plans which should be re-consulted on.*" Given this view, the Governing Body believe that the Council were premature in publishing a statement, in the Council's secondary school admissions booklet, of their intent to reduce the planned admission number of the School to zero for September 2011. Accordingly, the Governing Body **is objecting to the fact that the Council has determined admission arrangements, which have the effect of** implementing the reduction in the School's admission number.

Jurisdiction

3 The School's admission number for September 2011 was determined by the Council as part of its overall admission arrangements for community schools under section 88C of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (the Act). The Council is the admission authority for the School.

4 Under section 88H (2) (b) of the Act, the Governing Body of the School has objected to the admission arrangements determined by the Council. Under Regulation 24(2)(b)(ii) of the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements) Regulations 2008 the Governing Body **is** entitled to object to the Council's decision to determine the School's admission number as zero with effect from 1 September 2011..

5 I am satisfied that I have the power to consider this referral under section 88H(4) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and that I have jurisdiction on this matter.

Procedure

6 In considering this matter I have had regard to all relevant legislation, guidance and the School Admissions Code. I have also considered the following:

- the School's letter of referral and supporting documentation, including letters of support from several parents;
- the Council's response to the referral and supporting documentation;
- the Council's booklet for parents seeking admission to secondary schools in the area in September 2011.

Background and Consideration

7 On 17 December 2009 the Council's Cabinet took the decision to discontinue Birkdale High School subject to certain conditions being met. The decision was linked to proposals to expand the admission numbers of three other local secondary schools. The minutes of this meeting record these conditions as follows:

"Subject to the following specified events occurring by 31 August 2011:

- (a) *the grant of any necessary planning permission under Part 3 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 necessary for the enlargement of the physical capacity of Earlsheaton Technology College, The Community Science College at Thornhill, and Westborough High School.*
- (b) *the entering into an agreement for any necessary building project supported financially by the Department for Children, Families and Schools in connection with the programme known as "Building Schools for the Future" required for physical enlargement of the capacity of Earlsheaton Technology College, The Community Science College at Thornhill, and Westborough High School."*

8 On 25 March 2010, the Council's Cabinet determined its admission arrangements for community schools. I have no evidence to suggest that the statutory consultation process leading up to this decision did not fully meet statutory requirements. In the Cabinet report entitled "Annual Consultation on Admission Arrangements" the author made the following specific reference to Birkdale School in a section headed "key points".

"Changes to note for 2011/12: Birkdale High School will cease to admit pupils from September 2011."

9 It is clear that the recommendation to reduce the School's admission number to zero was brought to the attention of the decision makers and there is no evidence of any objections being made to this proposal during the consultation period. I believe that the Cabinet's decision to determine admission arrangements for community schools in Kirklees, including Birkdale High School, met all statutory requirements.

10 On 5 July 2010, the new Secretary of State for Education announced the cancellation of a range of BSF funded projects, including what is known as Kirklees Wave 6 which was the resource that had been identified to fund the capital works associated with the Dewsbury reorganisation proposals, which included the decision to discontinue the School. Revised capital allocations are expected as part of the new Government's comprehensive spending review.

11 On 6 September 2010, the Council published its Secondary School Guide for Parents 2011-12. It contained the following statement.

"A final decision about the planned closure of Birkdale High School in August 2011 has not been taken. However, Birkdale High School will not admit year 7 pupils in September 2011."

This statement is somewhat misleading as the decision to close the School was formally taken on 17 December 2009 and the admission arrangements were determined on that basis. As the date by which the conditions attached to the proposals need to be fulfilled has not yet passed, the proposals still stand.

The same booklet indicated that the admission numbers of the three schools referred to above had been increased in line with the December 2009 Cabinet decision.

12 In its letter to the adjudicator dated 14 September 2010, the School's Governing Body:

- noted the Council's statement in the admission booklet that a final decision about closure had not been taken;
- contended that the decision of the Secretary of State to cancel BSF funding means that condition (b) set out in paragraph 7 above could no longer be met and that the Council should therefore review its decision to discontinue the School;
- set out its belief that, in light of the above, the Council's implementation of a zero admission number for 2011 is unfair and pre-empts the review they believe the Council should now undertake into the future of the School.

13 As a result of the Government's new approach to capital funding, the Council is reviewing its reorganisation proposals but, as yet, has made no formal decision to change its plans. The Council has pointed out that, although the funding for the original BSF programme has been withdrawn, this does not preclude other capital resources being made available by either the Government or the Council. Although the new Government has yet to decide on its approach to capital funding for schools there has been no suggestion that there will be none at all. It seems reasonable to assume that a new capital funding regime will replace BSF. Although the School is right to note that BSF is specifically referred to in the conditions attached to the Cabinet's December 2009 decision I believe it is unreasonable to take the view that solely because BSF no longer exists the whole reorganisation proposals should be revisited. It seems entirely reasonable that the Council should wait until potential alternative sources of capital funding become clear and then review, if necessary, whether it is feasible for the reorganisation to proceed and whether condition (b) can be met. The Council expects to receive further news on the Government's position on capital funding through the outcome of the comprehensive spending review which is due later this month. **It will**

then take a fully informed decision on the future of the reorganisation proposals. Until that time the Council have no option but to continue on the basis that the proposals as determined will be implemented. I therefore reject the School's view that the cancelling of the BSF programme, in itself, should cause a review of the decision made when determining the admission arrangements to reduce the admission number to zero in September 2011.

14 The Council states that the December 2009 decision to discontinue the School was clearly made on the condition that funding for the necessary expansion of the other three schools would be forthcoming by 31st August 2011 and that there is still sufficient time for this condition to be met. Until such time that it becomes clear that condition (b) cannot be met, the Council's decision to discontinue the School stands. Even if it proves to be the case that condition (b) cannot be met, the Council believes that "*There is sufficient capacity within the existing secondary school buildings to accommodate the projected 11-16 pupil population until 2020 without using the capacity of Birkdale High School and without any capital investment in building alterations.*" I believe that the Council has properly taken the decisions to discontinue the School and to reduce the 2011 admission number to zero. As things stand, I believe the Council has no option but to continue to implement the proposals until such time as they are formally revoked. I therefore do not accept the School's view that the implementation of the zero admission number for 2011 is unfair.

15 The Council will assess the extent to which it is able to meet the stated conditions as events unfold. If, in due course, the Council decide that the conditions cannot be met and the planned re-organisation cannot proceed, the statutory proposals will need to be revoked or modified and it will then be open to the Council to seek an in year variation to their determined admission arrangements from the adjudicator due to a major change in circumstances.

Conclusion

16 I therefore conclude that the decision to reduce the admission number of Birkdale High School to zero is in keeping with all statutory requirements and I therefore do not uphold the objection.

Determination

17. In accordance with section 88H (4) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I have considered the admission arrangements for Birkdale High School, Dewsbury, a community school in Kirklees. I do not uphold the objection from the School's Governing Body to the fact that Kirklees Council, as the admission authority, has set an admission number for the School in September 2011 of zero.

Dated: 11 October 2010

Signed: Schools Adjudicator: John Simpson