Hexham, NEXX XXX

March X, 2018

Re. Closure of Whitley Chapel First School

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write in relation to Northumberland County Council’s recent consultation regarding the restructuring of schools in West Northumberland.

As a [insert scenario here e.g. parent of children/ex pupil/local resident] at Whitley Chapel C of E First School, which has been earmarked for closure in all three of the county council’s proposed scenarios, I would like to outline my concerns.

Potential points to include:

* Potential adverse impact on children’s education and well-being (not assessed in consultation documents)
* Children from the age of four travelling long distances to school
* Closure would have adverse effects across the community including a loss of jobs
* Lack of school means it would be difficult to attract young families to the area, with far reaching impact including ageing community and economic effects due to shrinking population
* In school’s absence, the parish hall and church may also be under threat
* Removing parental choice
* Lack of early years provision in the area
* Suggested alternative school not C of E

I strongly feel that Whitley Chapel School should NOT be closed.

Potential points to include:

* Good academic results, high standards
* Happy, enthusiastic children
* Not in financial deficit, budget well-managed
* Unique learning environment that nurtures the whole child
* Setting of school allows for a multitude of outdoor activities
* Not over-capacity in terms of staff numbers
* Growing local population
* Buildings improved and updated, ‘future-proofed’
* Strong governing body
* Community help with sharing of expertise, volunteers helping in classrooms, as well as financial donations
* National Funding Formula (2020) expected to improve financial situation
* Track record of listening and responding to stakeholders- serving the community. Prepared to change and be flexible when required

It is also concerning that NCC’s consultation documents provide no specific information about how any of the three proposed scenarios for the future of the education system will solve the stated problems. As such, they are not fit for purpose.

In short, there is no rational reason for the closure of Whitley Chapel First School, and in fact closure would be likely to have far-reaching adverse effects both to local children now and in the future, and also the wider community. I therefore hope that Northumberland County Council will reconsider their decision to impose any change to the school system in West Northumberland.

Yours sincerely,