

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE

CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S MEETING WITH EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

15 January 2019

**Arkengarthdale Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek Member approval to consult on a proposal that the County Council should close Arkengarthdale Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School from 31 August 2019.

**2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 At a governing body meeting at Arkengarthdale Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School on Thursday 15 November 2018 it was resolved, with regret and reluctance to ask the Local Authority to consult on closure proposals.

The motion, based on the view that it will no longer be possible to provide the full spectrum and quality of educational experiences for all key stages, was passed unanimously.

- 2.2 The Governing Body of Arkengarthdale CE VC Primary School, near Langthwaite, have not reached this decision lightly and have already worked hard to support the school through sharing a headship and working collaboratively with Richmond Methodist School to make sure that good standards of teaching and learning are available for all pupils.

Arkengarthdale School has collaborated with Richmond Methodist Primary School in headship and teaching. However, Richmond Methodist School's governing body have taken the decision to focus leadership on their school and, as pupil numbers will fall to 2, Arkengarthdale's governors have now reached the conclusion that these measures will not offer a solution that will sustain the school in the long term.

- 2.3 There are three main concerns. Firstly, the number of children at Arkengarthdale has been falling over the past few years. There will be 6 pupils on role at the beginning of this Spring Term 2019 and these are projected to fall to just 2 in September 2019. This is well below the capacity of the school – which is designed to accommodate 60 pupils if all spaces are in use.
- 2.4 Secondly, as numbers have fallen it is increasingly difficult to provide the remaining pupils with access to the full range of experiences they need. This is particularly the case in relation to opportunities for working and playing with children of their own age and gender.
- 2.5 Thirdly, the predicted financial position is a concern. The school is predicted to go into deficit in the 2019/20 financial year, with a greater deficit in the 2020/21 financial year.

### 3.0 ARKENGARTHDALE CE VC PRIMARY

#### Pupil numbers

- 3.1 Arkengarthdale is a 4-11 CE VC Primary School and currently has 6 children on roll. The school is located in the Richmond outer area, serving families living near the village of Langthwaite and surrounding area. The number of children at Arkengarthdale CE VC Primary School has been falling over the past few years:

2013/14 – 31  
2014/15 – 27  
2015/16 – 19  
2016/17 – 13  
2017/18 – 15  
2018/19 – 6  
2019/20 – 2 (expected)

- 3.2 There are currently only 6 pupils on roll in the school and this is predicted to drop to 2 pupils in September 2019. The school is designed to accommodate up to 60 pupils if all spaces are in use and therefore has the potential to contribute 60 places in the local area. Forecasts indicate that these numbers will not recover significantly in the longer term and may reduce still further. In these circumstances, it is difficult to deliver quality education.

- 3.3 The current numbers in each year group at the school are:

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Published Admission Number</b>
Reception	0	8
Year 1	0	8
Year 2	1	8
Year 3	0	8
Year 4	1	8
Year 5	1	8
Year 6	3	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>56</b>

#### Finance

- 3.4 Pupil numbers determine the school budget. With these low numbers, and a reduced budget, the finances are not sustainable. The school is projecting deficits in year of £17.4k in 2019/20 and £35k in 2020/21, and cumulative deficit of £68k in 2021/22. These were based on pupil assumptions of 9 in 2019/20 and 5 in 2020/21, so the position will deteriorate further as pupil numbers have fallen and there appears to be no reasonable prospect of recovery.

## Breadth of Curriculum

- 3.5 Numbers at Arkengarthdale have fallen more quickly than anticipated. As numbers fall, it is increasingly difficult to provide the remaining pupils with access to the full range of experiences they need.
- 3.6 The most recent full Ofsted inspection was in February 2014. At this time there were 31 pupils on roll. OFSTED said that “The teaching is good overall”. A more recent “short” inspection in May 2018 confirmed this “good” judgement and commended the collaboration with Richmond Methodist School, particularly the ‘Enrichment Friday’ which enabled pupils to experience learning in a larger school context.
- 3.7 However, as numbers have fallen since then, the School’s Governing Body and the Local Authority have become increasingly concerned that pupils do not have access to the full range of experiences they need, particularly opportunities for working and playing with children their own age. These concerns about being able to preserve the quality and breadth of the curriculum are the key concern.

## **4.0 PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES IN THE LOCAL AREA**

- 4.1 There are 2 other primary schools within 6 miles of Arkengarthdale CE VC Primary School (shown in Appendix 1). Across the area there are places available for all the pupils currently at Arkengarthdale CE VC Primary School (Appendix 2).
- 4.2 The nearest school to Arkengarthdale is Reeth CP which has places available in all year groups apart from Reception. There is currently capacity in all year groups at Gunnerside Methodist, which is the next nearest school. Both of these schools have adjacent catchment areas to that of Arkengarthdale School. It is initially thought appropriate that the catchment area of Reeth CP be enlarged in future but the consultation process would seek views of local schools, the Diocese and other stakeholders on the future arrangements for the existing catchment area of Arkengarthdale School. There are also places available at Askrigg CE, Trinity Academy Richmond, Richmond Methodist, St Mary’s RC Richmond, Ravensworth CE. All these schools, apart from Trinity Academy Richmond were rated Good in their last Ofsted inspection.
- 4.3 There are also 4 schools in the Durham area, all around 11 miles away. The four Durham schools, their OFSTED rating and distance from the school are provided in Appendix 4.
- 4.4 Parents will be able to express a preference for any local school and if there are places available they will be accepted. Schools may agree to accept children above their admission number.
- 4.5 Appendix 3 provides projected numbers based on forecast birth rates, with potential additional pupils from outstanding housing permissions and proposed housing allocations.

## **5.0 CONSULTATION PROCESS AND TIMESCALE**

- 5.1 Should a decision be made to initiate a consultation on the proposed closure of Arkengarthdale CE VC Primary School, a period of six term-time weeks is recommended. A draft timetable is set out below. A draft consultation document is attached in Appendix 5.

- 5.2 A separate staff consultation process, including a meeting for staff and their professional associations and unions, would run in parallel with the consultation on the closure proposal.
- 5.3 The final decision on closure would be taken by the Executive (or by the Executive Member for Schools if there are no objections during the representation period).
- 5.4 Suggested key dates are shown below:

Approval to Consult by Executive Members	15 January 2019
Consultation opens (6 weeks during term time)	25 January 2019
Public meeting	18 February 2019
Consultation closes	15 March 2019
County Council's Executive considers consultation response	16 April 2019
Executive decision to publish statutory notices	16 April 2019
Publication of statutory notices	2 May 2019
Representation period starts (4 weeks)	2 May 2019
Representation period ends	30 May 2019
Final decision by County Council's Executive	25 June 2019
Proposed school closure date	31 August 2019

- 5.5 The school building is not owned by the County Council. The detached playing field is owned by the County Council, as the land was gifted. There is a covenant for it to be used for community use. Decisions about the future use of the school building and detached playing field will be taken by the owners after the closure proposal has been determined.

## 6 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The Executive Member for Schools is recommended to provide approval to consult on a proposal to close Arkengarthdale CE VC Primary School from 31 August 2019.

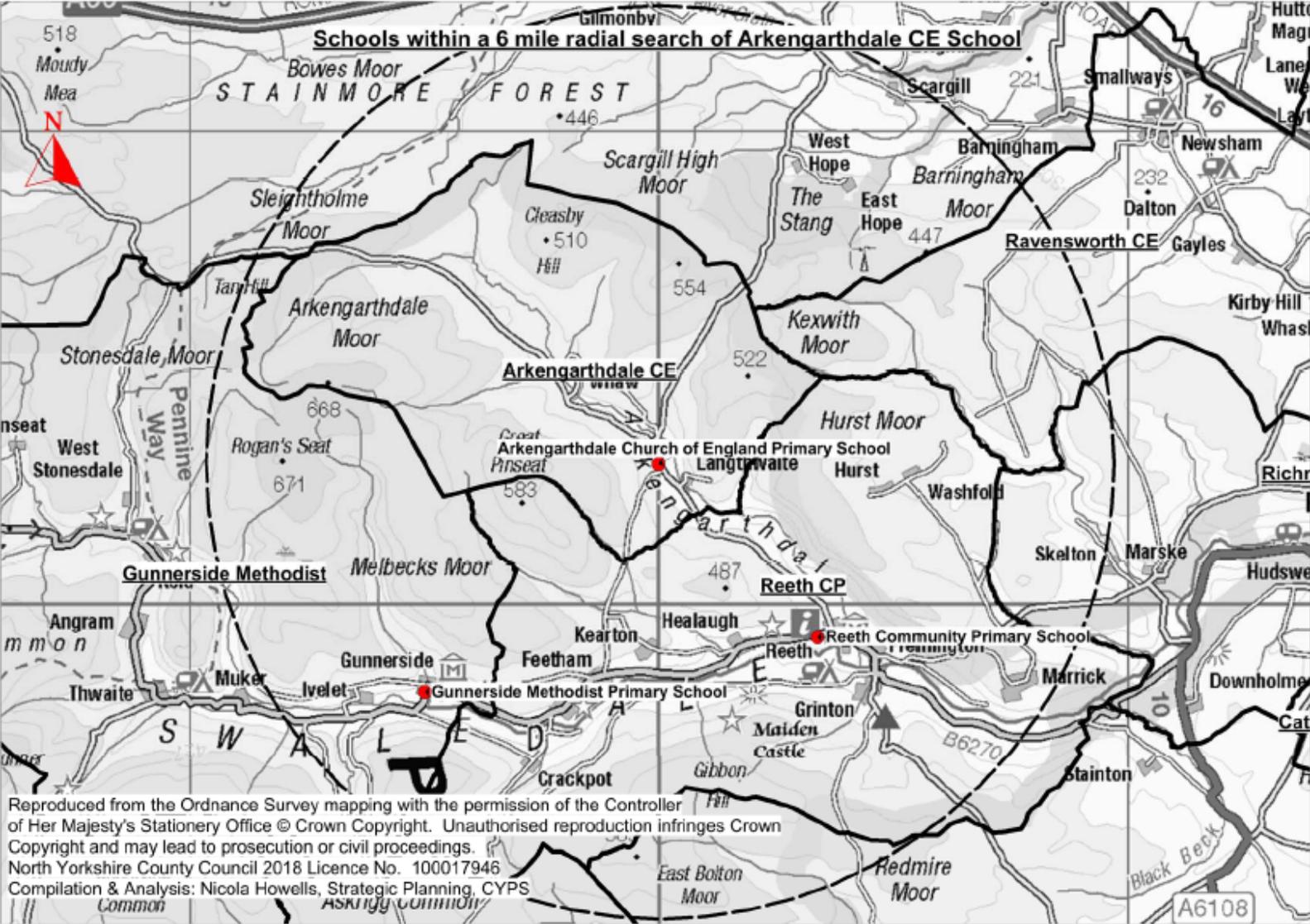
Stuart Carlton  
CORPORATE DIRECTOR – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE.

Report prepared by Mark Ashton, Strategic Planning Officer

Action Agreed .....Executive Member  
Date:

Action Requested .....Corporate Director  
Date:

Appendix 1



Appendix 2

School	Distance from Arkengarthdale School	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total on roll	Net Capacity
Arkengarthdale CE	NA	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	8	56
Reeth CP	3.7	PAN	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	43	56
Gunnerside Methodist	5.8	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	19	51
Askrigg CE	11.4	PAN	PAN	Places	PAN	Places	PAN	Places	39	52
Trinity Academy (Richmond CE)	15.0	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	176	315
Richmond Methodist	15.2	PAN	Places	Places	Places	Places	PAN	PAN	307	315
St Mary's RC, Richmond	15.3	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	PAN	Places	173	202
Ravensworth CE	15.7	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	54	84

PAN = School is at planned admission number, all applications will be dealt with on an individual basis and Admissions Team will have discussions with appropriate Headteacher to see if the school are in a position to take additional pupils in that year group.

Appendix 3

	<b>Arkengarthdale CE</b>	<b>Reeth CP</b>	<b>Gunnerside Methodist</b>	<b>Askrigg CE</b>	<b>Trinity Academy Richmond</b>	<b>Richmond Methodist</b>	<b>St Mary's RC, Richmond</b>	<b>Ravensworth CE</b>
	Collaborating with Richmond Methodist	Federated with Gunnerside Methodist	Federated with Reeth CP	Federated with Bainbridge CE and West Burton CE	Collaborating with Middleton Tyas and Eppleby Forcett	Collaborating with Arkengarthdale CE		Collaborating with Barton CE
Distance from Arkengarthdale CE School by road	NA	3.7 miles	5.8 miles	11.4 miles	15.0 miles	15.2 miles	15.3 miles	15.7 miles
Last Ofsted inspection	Good June 2018	Good December 2017	Good February 2018	Good December 2015	Predecessor school: Inadequate January 2015	Good March 2017	Good December 2017	Predecessor school: Good December 2012
Net Capacity (places available at the school)	56	56	51	52	315	315	202	84
Current pupil roll	8	43	19	39	176	307	173	54
Current capacity -/+	+48	+13	+32	+13	+139	+8	+29	+30
Pupil roll 2019/20	2	44	17	46	156	303	174	55
Pupil roll 2020/21	1	48	19	46	147	304	165	52
Pupil roll 2021/22	1	48	17	51	130	306	160	52
Pupil roll 2022/23	1	49	15	48	128	308	153	53
Pupil roll 2023/24	0	51	16	50	126	308	149	52
<b>Potential additional pupils from housing *</b>								
Pupils from outstanding permissions by 2022/23	0	3	1	2	14	12	0	7
Potential pupils from future housing – Local Plan (over 15 yrs)	0	0	0	0	20	20	0	5

\*Based on 1 primary-aged pupil from every 4 houses

Appendix 4

<b>School</b>	<b>Distance from Arkengarthdale</b>	<b>Ofsted Rating</b>
St Mary's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Barnard Castle	10.7 miles	Outstanding November 2012
Montalbo Nursery & Primary School	11.0 miles	Good May 2015
Green Lane Church of England Controlled Primary School	11.3 miles	Good December 2017
Bowes Hutchinson's CE (Aided) School	11.3 miles	Outstanding February 2009



# ***Draft Consultation Document***

**Proposal to close Arkengarthdale Church of England  
Voluntary Controlled Primary School  
from 31 August 2019**

# Arkengarthdale Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

25<sup>th</sup> January 2019

This paper sets out details of a proposal to close Arkengarthdale CE VC Primary School with effect from 31 August 2019. It gives the background to the proposal. There will be a public meeting on:

**Monday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2019 at 6.30 pm**

**at Arkengarthdale CE VC Primary School, Richmond DL11 6EN**

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## The Current Position

At a meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2018 the Governing Body of Arkengarthdale Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School unanimously voted to seek to consult on the school's closure, because pupil numbers have fallen to an unsustainable level. The governing body has written to request that the County Council begin consulting on a proposal to close the school at the end of the current academic year. The Local Authority agree that this is in the best interests of current and future pupils from Arkengarthdale because numbers have fallen to a level where it is difficult to provide a high quality of education for pupils in the long term. The County Council is therefore now consulting on the proposal to close the school with effect from 31 August 2019.

The LA and the Governing Body of Arkengarthdale CE VC Primary School have not reached this decision lightly and have already worked hard to support the school, such as introducing a shared headship and working collaboratively with Richmond Methodist School to make sure that good standards of teaching and learning are available for all pupils.

## Background

Arkengarthdale School, near Langthwaite, has collaborated with

Richmond Methodist Primary School in headship and teaching since 2013. Since the outset of the collaboration, the main aim has been to provide pupils with a broad educational experience within a small rural school context. The collaboration, where leadership is shared between both schools, has provided a range of enrichment opportunities for pupils, such as competitive sports, outdoor learning and opportunities to perform in musical events. The collaboration with Richmond Methodist School has also supported the professional development of staff, providing opportunities to teach every week in a larger school context and to share ideas with other teachers. However, Richmond Methodist School's governing body has taken the decision to focus leadership on their school and, as pupil numbers will fall to 2 in September 2019, Arkengarthdale's governors have now reached the conclusion that these measures will not offer a solution that will sustain the school in the long term. The critical concern is the fall in pupil numbers, which would inevitably result in an inability to provide the necessary breadth of curriculum experience and would also irrevocably undermine the schools future financial position.

## Pupil Numbers

The number of children at

Arkengarthdale CE VC Primary School has been falling over the past few years. There are 6 pupils on role at the beginning of this Spring Term 2019 and these are projected to fall to just 2 in September 2019. This is well below the capacity of the school – which is designed to accommodate 60 pupils if all spaces are in use. Forecasts indicate that these numbers will not recover significantly in the longer term and may reduce still further.

In these circumstances, it would be difficult to deliver and sustain quality education.

### **Breadth of Curriculum**

For demographic reasons, numbers at Arkengarthdale have fallen more quickly than anticipated. As numbers fall, it is increasingly difficult to provide the remaining pupils with access to the full range of experiences they need.

The most recent full Ofsted inspection was in February 2014. At this time there were 31 pupils on roll. OFSTED said that “The teaching is good overall”. A more recent “short” inspection in May 2018 confirmed this “good” judgement and commended the collaboration with Richmond Methodist School, particularly the ‘Enrichment Friday’ which enabled pupils to experience learning in a larger school context.

However, as numbers have fallen since then, the School’s Governing Body and the Local Authority have become increasingly concerned that pupils will not have access to the full range of experiences they need, particularly opportunities for working and playing with children their own age.

### **The Financial Position**

Pupil numbers determine the school budget. The school is projecting deficits

in year of £17.4k in 2019/20 and £35k in 2020/21, and cumulative deficit of £68k in 2021/22. These were based on pupil assumptions of 9 in 2019/20 and 5 in 2020/21, so the position will deteriorate further as pupil numbers have fallen and there appears to be no reasonable prospect of recovery.

### **The Proposal**

For the reasons above it is proposed that Arkengarthdale CE VC Primary School should close with effect from 31 August 2019.

The nearest local school, 3.7 miles from Arkengarthdale School, is Reeth Community Primary School. There is also Gunnerside Methodist Primary School, which is 5.8 miles from Arkengarthdale School.

The nearest Church of England School at 15.7 miles away is Ravensworth Church of England School.

Although the school has been collaborating with Richmond Methodist School, there are only limited places available at Richmond Methodist Primary School, which is 15.2 miles from the school.

It is proposed that the catchment area of Reeth Community Primary School is expanded to include the current Arkengarthdale catchment area. This school has the capacity to take the additional pupils and has indicated a willingness to do so. Reeth is currently federated with Gunnerside Methodist Primary School, with a single governing body and some shared staffing arrangements and resources.

The County Council would welcome consultees’ views on the proposed catchment area extension and other options.

For children currently at Arkengarthdale CE VC Primary School, North Yorkshire County Council will work with each family to try to meet their individual preferences for other schools regardless of the catchment area defined. Staff and governors at Arkengarthdale CE VC Primary School are also committed to supporting families in their choice of school and in making a smooth transition.

Some schools may be able to admit over their published admission numbers for some year groups.

Eligibility for home-to-school transport will be determined in line with the County Council's current home-to-school transport policy and procedures, based on travel distances from each child's home address and individual circumstances.

Parents have a right to express a preference for any school and, in the case of community and voluntary controlled schools, the Local Authority is the admissions authority and will meet that preference, provided there are vacant places or the school is happy to admit above the published admission number. In the case of Voluntary Aided schools or Academy schools, the governing body decides the conditions for admission to their particular school. Where a child attends a school, which is not their normal school or nearest school, parents are normally responsible for making transport arrangements.

North Yorkshire County Council's Admissions Team is always happy to give advice to parents – please contact Karen Crossland on 01609 534950 or Lisa Herdman on 01609 534953.

## **Staff**

A separate consultation process, including a staff meeting, is running in parallel with the consultation on the closure proposal.

## **The School Site**

The school building is not owned by the County Council. The detached playing field was gifted and there is a covenant for it to be used for community use. Decisions about the future use of the school buildings and detached playing field will be taken by the owners after the closure proposal has been determined.

## **What Happens Next?**

Your views about this proposal are welcomed. You can either complete and return the attached response sheet, or submit an online response

Paper responses should be returned to North Yorkshire County Council at the address below:

**FREEPOST RTKE-RKAY-CUJS**  
Arkengarthdale  
Strategic Planning  
North Yorkshire County Council  
County Hall  
NORTHALLERTON  
DL7 8AE

Online responses may be submitted by following this link:

<https://consult.northyorks.gov.uk/snapweb/host/s.asp?k=154529636208>

## **The closing date for responses is**

**Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

All responses to the consultation received by this date will be considered by the County Council's Executive on 16 April 2019.

If the County Council's Executive

decides to proceed with the closure proposal, then statutory notices would be published in the local press on Thursday 2 May 2019. These notices provide a further four weeks for

representations to be made. A final decision would then be made by North Yorkshire County Council's Executive in June 2019. If agreed the school would close on 31 August 2019.

### **Anticipated Key Dates**

All dates are subject to approvals at each stage.

Consultation opens	25 January 2019
Public meeting at the school	18 February 2019
Consultation closes	15 March 2019
County Council's Executive considers consultation response	16 April 2019
Statutory Notices published (4 weeks for representations to be made)	2 - 30 May 2019
Final decision by County Council's Executive	25 June 2019
Proposed school closure date	31 August 2019

**Arkengarthdale CE VC Primary School**  
**A consultation on whether the school should be closed**

Observations and/or suggestions:

Interest/Status .....

e.g. Parent/Governor/Teacher/Community

Name of School .....

Signed .....

Date: .....

Name (Block Capitals) .....

Address: .....

.....

.....

Postcode: .....

To help us assess whether we have provided clear information, please let us know whether you found this consultation easy to understand? YES/NO

Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

.....

**Under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, responses to the consultation may be published on the County Council's website where it may be accessed by members of the public. Your personal details will not be published.** Please send this response sheet to the following "FREEPOST" address. You do not need to use a postage stamp.

FREEPOST RTKE-RKAY-CUJS

Arkengarthdale

Strategic Planning

North Yorkshire County Council

County Hall

NORTHALLERTON

DL7 8AE

Or go to:

[https://consult.northyorks.gov.uk/snapwebhost/SURVEY\\_PREVIEW.asp?k=154529636208](https://consult.northyorks.gov.uk/snapwebhost/SURVEY_PREVIEW.asp?k=154529636208)

and submit your response there

**To be received by no later than 15<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

*We are collecting this information for the purpose of gathering views on the proposal. Your personal data will not be published or passed to any other organisation unless a legal obligation compels us to do so. We may contact you to discuss your views further. For more information about how your personal data is handled at North Yorkshire County Council please visit: [www.northyorks.gov.uk/privacy](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/privacy)*