



BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET

REVIEW OF SECONDARY EDUCATION Phase 3: Radstock & Midsomer Norton

A Review by the Education, Youth, Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Panel

16th October 2006

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A Review of Secondary Education in Bath & North East Somerset

1. INTRODUCTION

The Education, Youth, Culture and Leisure (EYCL) Overview and Scrutiny Panel is undertaking a review of secondary education across the whole of Bath and North East Somerset. It began in September 2005 and will be completed by December 2006.

It is intended that this review will inform decisions which will ensure the quality of education available to all young people across the Bath & North East Somerset area remains of a high standard in the future.

Education is changing rapidly. The publication of "Transforming Secondary Education", (DfES) in 2003, "The Five Year Strategy for Children & Learners" (DfES), in 2004 and the announcement of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme sets out the national agenda. The BSF programme will transform both the quality of secondary school buildings over the next fifteen years and the quality of Education provided.

BSF funding means that by 2011, each local education authority in England will have received money to renew or replace one school in greatest need of attention and by 2016 major renewal projects will have started on secondary schools in every local authority.

Bath & North East Somerset has already been invited to join the Pathfinder programme with money being available to renew one of our secondary schools. However, as a high performing local authority with low deprivation, we will not receive funding for the full BSF programme until Waves 10 to 15. These run from approximately 2012 to 2017. DfES has emphasised that as lessons are learned from the early Waves and public expenditure decisions are made, this provisional timescale may change.

It is important that the Authority takes the time now to understand what its requirements for secondary education will be in the future. It has to plan appropriately to meet the educational needs of the young people in Bath & North East Somerset, meet the requirements of central government, the developing agenda for children and to ensure that the BSF money can be spent effectively.

The review has four phases.

- The first phase looked at the **Keynsham and Chew Valley area** and was completed in December 2005.
- The second phase looked at the **Greater Bath Area** and was completed in May 2006.
- The third phase looking at schools in **Midsomer Norton and Radstock** was completed in October 2006 and is the subject of this report.

As each of these phases has been completed, an interim report containing its findings has been published.

- The fourth and final phase will be to consider the findings of all three phases together in the context of **Bath & North East Somerset** as a whole.

This document is the third phase interim report looking at schools in the Radstock & Midsomer Norton area. It does not set out the Panel's recommendations, but only their findings for this phase. The Panel will only begin it to formulate recommendations after publication of this report as it can then consider the findings from all three phases. It is important to remember that this process is a review of provision and not a review of schools

A final report will be produced containing the panel's recommendations for improvements to secondary education provision across the Authority. It is expected that this will be completed by the end of November 2005. The report will be presented at a public Panel meeting and passed to the Executive Member for Children's Services. Conclusions from the final review report will be incorporated into future strategic statements regarding the supply of school places in the Authority and contribute to the overall vision of secondary education in Bath and North East Somerset. This will complete the review and mark the end of the EYCL Overview & Scrutiny Panel's involvement.

A copy of the Terms of Reference setting out the purpose and objectives of the review can be found at Appendix 1.

2. THE REVIEW

2.1. Background

There are thirteen secondary schools in the Bath and North East Somerset area. Four of these are single sex schools, two boys and two girls. Of the nine co-educational schools, one is a Church of England school and one a Roman Catholic school. All the Denominational and single sex schools are in the Greater Bath Area.

Results at GCSE for Bath & North East Somerset as a whole are well above national averages; however there are significant differences between the performances of individual secondary schools. At post 16 results are in line with national averages.

In terms of pupil numbers, at September 2005 there were 12,686 students on the roll of Bath and North East Somerset secondary schools. This comprised 11,008 students in Years 7-11 and 1,678 post 16 students. Six of the thirteen schools had more students on roll than there were places available. Seven schools had some places unfilled although in all except three instances the number of unfilled places is very small.

2.2. Schools in the Radstock & Midsomer Norton Area

All three schools in Radstock & Midsomer Norton serve the respective towns and surrounding rural areas. This includes pupils from outside of Bath & North East Somerset, principally from the Somerset County Council area.

Writhlington

This school is a co-educational community comprehensive school for pupils aged 11-18. It is located approximately one mile from the centre of Radstock. At September 2005 it had 1154 students on roll, 130 of these in the sixth form.

Writhlington normally serves the areas of Camerton, Clandown, Coleford, Dunkerton, Faulkland, Haydon, Hemington, Holcombe, Kilmersdon, Peasedown St John, Radstock, Shoscombe, Timsbury, Tunley, Wellow and Writhlington. It should be noted that Writhlington is the designated¹ school for parts of Somerset. This was agreed between Somerset County Council and the predecessor Authority to Bath & North East Somerset.

Norton Hill

This school is a co-educational community comprehensive school for pupils aged 11-18. It is located in the centre of Midsomer Norton, close to Somervale. At September 2005 it had 1355 students on roll, 229 of these in the sixth form.

Norton Hill normally serves part of Midsomer Norton (to the south east of the old railway line), Clutton, Farmborough, Farrington Gurney, Hallatrow and High Littleton.

¹ Writhlington is the 'designated' secondary school for some primary schools in Somerset County Council area, this means that the Area of Primary Responsibility (ARP) for Writhlington includes these schools when applying the admissions criteria.

Somervale

This school is a co-educational community comprehensive school for pupils aged 11-18. It is located in the centre of Midsomer Norton, close to Norton Hill. At September 2005 it had 796 students on roll, 97 of these in the sixth form.

Somervale normally serves part of Midsomer Norton (to the north west of the old railway line, Paulton and Welton).

2.3. Methodology

This third phase of the Secondary Education Review has broadly followed the same methodology as the previous two (Keynsham and Chew Valley in Autumn 2005, Greater Bath in Spring 2006). The Panel carried out a number of research and evidence gathering activities in order to inform their findings.

Reports from the Service

The Panel has received several briefings and a discussion paper from Children's Services (See Appendix 2). The information provided included:

- Numbers of pupils on the school rolls
- Levels of academic achievement
- Site and building areas
- Outstanding maintenance issues
- Financial information, e.g. funding per pupil, standards funding, budget share per pupil etc.

The Panel was able to discuss these issues with the Children's Services and this has facilitated defining the scope and Terms of Reference for this review.

Engagement with Schools, Parents, and Governors

The Panel issued a four page information leaflet to Headteachers, Chairs of Governors and parents at the three secondary schools in the area.

The leaflet consisted of a letter from the Chair of the Panel, background on the reasons for the review, the timescales for this phase of the review, and an invitation to schools, parents and Governors to respond to the Panel with their views. A copy of the leaflet is available on the Council website and at Appendix 3.

The Panel received nine responses and these are available at Appendix 4.

The Panel also sought to engage with the public through a web page and press releases through which they encouraged the public to attend meetings, or write to or e-mail the Panel with their views.

Visits to Schools and engagement with School Councils

The Panel visited each of the three schools and spent time touring the sites and buildings. The Panel met with each School Council. This included a question and answer session. On all visits the Panel members were shown around the school by students and therefore had additional time to ask them questions and hear their opinions about the school.

The visits also included a meeting between the Panel and the Head teacher for whom this was an opportunity to give the Panel any background information about the school as it is currently and also the vision and plans they had for its future.

Contributor Sessions

The Panel held a public meeting (known as a Contributor Session) on 25th September. During this meeting the Panel heard from the Headteachers and Governors from each of the secondary schools in the Radstock & Midsomer Norton area. Full notes for the contributor session are attached at Appendix 5.

List of contributors

Writhlington School - Marie Getheridge, Headteacher, Keith Norton, Vice-Chair of Governors
Somervale School - Michael Gorman, Headteacher and Martin Venning, Chair of Governors
Norton Hill School - Peter Beaven, Headteacher and Terry Fussell, Chair of Governors

At its meeting on the 18th of September, the Panel invited submissions from the Learning & Skills Council (LSC), the City of Bath College, Norton Radstock College and the Dyson School of Design Innovation. They were asked to share their thoughts about what contribution their organisations and institutions make to the 14-19 agenda and post 16 education in the area now and in the future. Notes and submissions supplied for this session can be found at Appendix 6.

List of attendees

Dyson School of Design Innovation - Simon Jenkin, Project Manager
City of Bath College - Peter Moseley, Acting Principal, Chris Preston, John Morell
St Brendan's Sixth Form College - Derek Bodey, Principal
Norton Radstock College - Shirley Arayan, Principal
Learning & Skills Council - Pat McLoughlin

2.4. Statistical Information in this Report

All the statistical data (unless otherwise indicated) in this report is based on figures available at September 2005 (ie the beginning of the last academic year). The Panel has taken the decision to use this set of data across all three interim reports in order to ensure that consistency is maintained. When the final report is produced the data will be updated and taken at September 2006 for all three areas.

3. PHASE THREE FINDINGS

3.1. Pupil Numbers

Pupil numbers are falling nationally. In Bath & North East Somerset, there were 967 fewer pupils starting in reception classes in 2005 than in 1998. The effects of this decline in numbers are already beginning to show. Anecdotal evidence from some schools shows that applications from further afield are now being successful and schools which were previously heavily oversubscribed are now simply full or even undersubscribed.

In Bath & North East Somerset as a whole, there are already 607 unfilled secondary school places.

There was also a sharp decline in the birth rate in 2002. Below is a table showing the effect this will have on Bath & North East Somerset primary pupil numbers, notably a sharp decline in 2006/7. This in turn will lead to an exceptionally low secondary intake in 2013.

Year	The number of children reaching 4yrs old	93% start at B&NES LEA School
2005/6.	1705	1585
2006/7	1400	1302
2007/8	1600	1488
2008/9	1700	1581

Figures from the DfES indicate that nationally the primary population is expected to continue to fall sharply from 3.9 million in 2004 to a low of 3.65 million in 2009 and then increase to around 3.8 million by 2020. Population estimates for 2020 can only be regarded as “best estimate” as they are based solely on past patterns.

The Radstock & Midsomer Norton area has experienced an increase in pupils coming into its secondary schools over the last school generation (ie the five years of a secondary school from Year 7 – Year 11). In September 2005 there were approximately 200 more students on roll across all three schools than in 2001. However the evidence is that this has now reached its peak. The rate of increase has slowed and numbers in local primary schools are declining which will result in a subsequent decline in pupils moving in to secondary schools for the rest of this decade and into the next. In future years this overall reduction in pupil numbers is likely to mean that the total number of year seven pupils requiring places in these secondary schools will be just over 500. Currently the number of places available each year across these three schools is around 600.

3.2. Development in Bath & North East Somerset

The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) published in June 2006 proposes that across the South West region around 460,000 new dwellings should be built between 2006 and 2026. For B&NES itself this would mean providing 15,500 new dwellings, to be distributed across the area.

The guidance within the RSS indicates that around 2,000 of the overall number would be distributed between Norton Radstock and Keynsham. Assuming a 50/50 split this would equate to an additional 1,000 dwellings across Radstock & Midsomer Norton between 2006 and 2026.

However subsequent to the consultation on the Draft RSS, new population and household projections for the South West have now been prepared. These suggest that the region as a whole requires 560,000 new homes (compared to 460,000 in the Draft RSS) – a 22% increase. If this was applied on pro rata basis across the region this would mean the dwelling requirement in B&NES would rise to 18,900 (from 15,500). Whilst it is not clear precisely what effect any increase in the figures would have on the Midsomer Norton and Radstock area, it is reasonable to conclude that it there will be anything between 1,000 to 2,250 new dwellings over the next 20 years.

The Draft RSS will be publicly examined in April 2007 when many of the issues associated with its proposals will be discussed. Further work is required to determine the best way to accommodate the extra growth within B&NES if/when it becomes necessary to do so.

Over the next five years there are significant developments already planned, which should be completed during this period and these will result in an additional 936 dwellings in the area. They will also be supplemented by additional small scale developments during the same time period.

This level of development is such that the area is unlikely to require any new schools but careful monitoring of the impact of new housing development on pupil numbers, particularly in primary schools, will be required over the medium term.

3.3. The Net Effect

Although significant, these developments may not eliminate entirely the effect of the decline in pupil numbers in Radstock & Midsomer Norton. These 936 dwellings, assuming they are all homes of two bedrooms or more, using the Authority's normal method of calculating population change, will lead to approximately 225 primary aged children and 159 secondary aged children moving to the area. However, the developments are likely to be phased over such a period as to mitigate the impact of additional numbers. In summary, not all of the children will need a school place at a single point of admission but will enter the school system over a period of time.

3.4. Relationship with other Local Authorities

In Bath & North East Somerset area as a whole only 77.4% of secondary aged pupils on roll are from within the area, and a relatively high number of pupils cross the border from other local authorities to attend our secondary schools. In the Radstock & Midsomer Norton area, the bulk of children who are from a different local authority area are from Somerset County Council.

Writhlington is the designated school for some areas of Somerset. Most of the pupils they have on roll who come from Somerset County Council are from within

Writhlington's Area of Primary Responsibility² (APR). In 2005 this amounted to 55 Year seven pupils coming from Somerset only five of these were not from within the APR.

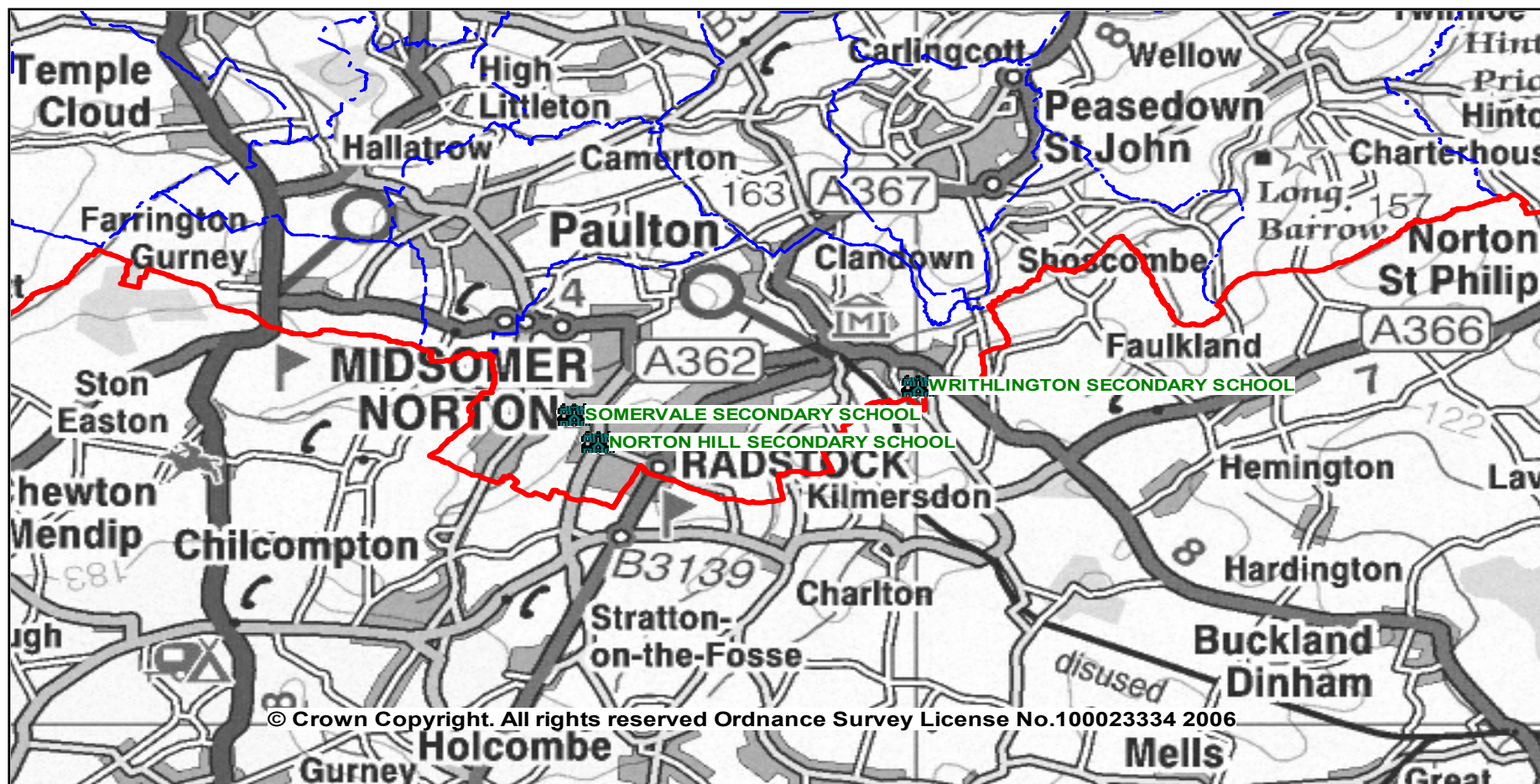
Somervale and Norton Hill are not designated schools for Somerset County Council, but do both have a small number of pupils attending from that area. In 2005 the figures for Year 7 pupils were 15 for Norton Hill and four for Somervale.

The net effect is that only a small proportion of the intake in any of the schools is outside of their APR. These schools generally attract pupils from within their natural catchment areas.

² Area of Primary Responsibility (APR) – these are geographical areas drawn around each school. Children living within a school's APR are more likely to be offered a place at that school.

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3.5. Geography



The Map below shows the locations of the Secondary Schools in the Radstock & Midsomer Norton area.

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3.6. Single Sex and Denominational Education

The Panel were unable to detect any evidence of significant numbers of students leaving the Radstock & Midsomer Norton area in order to attend single sex or denominational schools. It is accepted that there will be some students who make the journey to Bath to attend such schools but this does not appear to indicate an unmet demand for this type of provision within the local area.

3.7. Post 16 Education

3.7.1. Provision in Radstock & Midsomer Norton

All three schools in Radstock & Midsomer Norton have sixth forms. In September 2005 Norton Hill had 229 in its sixth form, Writhlington 130 and Somervale 97. There is a high degree of collaboration between these three schools and Norton Radstock College demonstrating a commitment to ensuring a full range of curriculum options is available to post 16 pupils.

Somervale has the smallest 6th form of the three schools. It has a history of successful collaboration with both Norton Hill School and Norton Radstock College. This ensures that despite the small numbers of pupils in the sixth form it is able to maintain a breadth of curriculum it would not otherwise be able to offer.

Norton Hill has the third largest 6th form of the secondary schools in B&NES. In addition it has worked in collaboration with Somervale and Norton Radstock College for the last six years. This combination of size and collaboration means that it is able to provide a wide choice of Level 3 courses.

Writhlington has a partnership arrangement with Downside School through which students attend the partner school for some of their school days depending on their curriculum choices, thus ensuring that resources are maximised across the two schools' sixth forms. Writhlington has a scheme of seven pathways for its 14-19 curriculum and is intending to extend the vocational aspects of this for students beyond the age of 16.

Opinion varies as to the minimum numbers required for a 6th form to be able to offer a broad range of courses and remain viable. However, the Panel was very impressed with the degree of co-operation and collaboration evident from all three schools and their determination to ensure that pupils maximise opportunities at this level of study.

3.7.2. Performance

In contrast with a strong performance at GCSE, the quality of post 16 outcomes in terms of attainment and value added, compares less favourably with national benchmarks. Both average points per pupil and average points per entry are around the national average and there are considerable variations between schools.

The Learning and Skills Council Strategic Area Review (West of England)³ published in early 2006 looked at the education provision for 14-19 year olds.

In terms of Vocational Provision in the West of England as a whole it says:

³ The Strategic Area Review is part of Success For All, the Government's national policy for educational reform. This has shared responsibility between the LSC and the Department for Education and Skills.

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- There are too few young people and adults in vocational training. Of those in training, there are too few achieving vocational qualifications. Too many employers have skills gaps and shortages.
- Learner and employer aspirations have to be raised through effective marketing, simplification of the matching process and a wider range of provision.

Its findings for Bath & North East Somerset area were:

- Generally, current collaborative working arrangements are not as effective as they could be.
- The volume and range for academic and vocational provision below level 3 needs to expand to meet the needs of 16-19 year olds, including those not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Specific to Radstock, Midsomer Norton (and Keynsham) it says:

- Despite some effective college-school collaboration, there is insufficient evidence that choice and performance were improving.

The panel asked Headteachers and other stakeholders for their views on the provision of a Sixth Form Centre in the Radstock & Midsomer Norton area. There was no support for this. Furthermore, stakeholders considered that it was important to retain parity of provision between schools and that all three schools should either be 11-18 or 11-16 and not a mix of the two.

4. THE SCHOOLS

4.1. Writhlington

Type - Writhlington is a mixed community comprehensive school for students aged 11 to 18. All the land and buildings are owned by the Council. The school is located in Radstock approximately one mile from the centre of Radstock. Writhlington is a specialist school in Business & Enterprise.

Capacity - Writhlington has places for 1165 students and has been oversubscribed for the last three years. At September 2005, there were 1154 students on roll. Pupils attend from the surrounding area and, at September 2005, this includes 253 pupils from the County of Somerset. It should be noted that Writhlington is the designated school for parts of Somerset. The admissions policy is determined by the Council. Pupils are admitted without reference to ability or aptitude.

Intake - The school serves students from widely different backgrounds. At January 2006 122 students (11%) were identified as having special educational needs. Of these, 45 students (4%) have a statement. The intake each year is of broadly average ability.

Buildings - During 2006 Gleeds undertook a survey of the condition and suitability of the school buildings. In summary, they found that:

- The school buildings date from the 1950s/60s and from the 1970s/80s. There have also been a series of temporary buildings, now demolished.
- There has been some rebuilding and remodelling, notably the new sports hall / fitness centre and the business and enterprise centre.
- Piecemeal development has contributed to some imbalances of provision as it has not been possible to carry out a strategic review of the long term needs of the school.
- There are still a number of suitability and condition issues to address.

Standards - Writhlington School performs in line with national averages obtaining an average of 58% 5A*-C grades over the last three years. In terms of value-added (i.e. when compared to pupils with similar prior attainment at KS2), the progress made by these pupils is well above national averages in 2004 and 2005. Taking account of prior attainment and also a wider range of socio-economic factors, their progress has been significantly above national averages in 2003 and 2004 and in line with national averages in 2005.

Post 16 Provision - The school has the seventh largest sixth Form in the Authority with 130 students on roll at September 2005. At post 16, over the last three years, average points score per student of 282.6 points has been above national averages and points per entry 77.8 has been above national averages.

Attendance - Authorised absence rates are above the national and local averages. Unauthorised absence rates are below national and local averages.

4.2. Norton Hill

Type - Norton Hill is a mixed community comprehensive school for students aged 11 to 18. All the land and buildings are owned by the Council. The school is located in the centre of Midsomer Norton. Norton Hill is a specialist school in Technology and has a second specialism in Languages. Norton Hill has been awarded “Training School” status by DfES and is also a “Leading Edge Partnership” school.

Capacity - Norton Hill has places for 1243 students and is usually oversubscribed. At September 2005 there were 1355 students on roll. Pupils from the surrounding area attend the school and approximately 100 students attend from outside Bath & North East Somerset, principally from the County of Somerset. The admissions policy is determined by the Council. Pupils are admitted without reference to ability or aptitude.

Intake - The school serves pupils from widely different backgrounds. At January 2006 151 students (11%) were recorded as having special educational needs. Of these, 30 students (2%) had a statement. The intake each year is of broadly average ability.

Buildings - During 2006 Gleeds undertook a survey of the condition and suitability of the school buildings. In summary, they found that:

- The school has a range of buildings dating from 1910 with other additions from the 1930s on wards, with a sports hall due for completion in 2006.
- The school has sufficient teaching spaces in numerical terms but many of these, both specialist and general teaching spaces are not up to modern suitability standards because of size and layout or quality of equipment and fittings.
- In some curriculum areas the school has been obliged to use inappropriate spaces eg in drama / dance, or facilities do not exist eg designated resource areas.
- The school has made significant efforts to address the shortcomings of the accommodation within available capital funds but the size and layout of the premises do not contribute to easy solutions with piecemeal funding.
- There are five mobile blocks and a Rollalong unit which houses the 6th form centre.

Standards - Norton Hill School performs well above national averages obtaining an average of 72% 5A*-C grades over the period 2003-2005. In terms of value-added (i.e. when compared to pupils with similar prior attainment at KS2), the progress made by these pupils is well above national averages in both 2004 and 2005. Taking account of prior attainment and also a wider range of socio-economic factors, their progress is significantly above national averages in each of the years between 2003 and 2005.

Post 16 Provision - The school has the third largest 6th form in the Authority with 229 students on roll at September 2005. At post 16, over the period 2003-2005, average points score per student of 257 points has been in line with national averages and points per entry 77.9 has been above national averages.

Attendance - Authorised and unauthorised absence rates are below the national and local averages.

4.3. Somervale

Type - Somervale is a mixed community comprehensive school for students aged 11 to 18. All the land and buildings are owned by the Council. The school is located in the centre of Midsomer Norton. Somervale is a specialist school in Media Arts.

Capacity - Somervale has places for 953 students (although this will reduce to 938 in September 2007) and has been undersubscribed in recent years. At September 2005, there were 796 students on roll. Pupils from the surrounding area attend the school and, at September 2005, this includes 44 pupils from the County of Somerset.

Intake - The school serves students from widely different backgrounds. At January 2006 128 students (16%) were identified as having special needs. Of these, 21 students (2.5%) have a statement. Although the attainment of pupils on entry to the school varies from one year group to another, it is broadly average overall.

Buildings - During 2006 Gleeds undertook a survey of the condition and suitability of the school buildings. In summary, they found that:

- The school appears to have sufficient general and specialist space for the current number on role, however the Asset Management Plan suitability survey does signal a shortfall on one laboratory space.
- Premises date from the 1960s/70s although an Elliott unit was provided for special needs in 1993 and a further one for drama in 2004.
- Improvements have been carried out in 2003 in music and media arts.
- There are however a number of suitability issues which remain to be addressed, including the provision of a sports hall and increasing the size of the library.

Standards - Somervale School performs below national averages obtaining an average of 40% 5A*-C grades over the last three years. In terms of value-added (i.e. when compared to pupils with similar prior attainment at KS2), the progress made by these pupils WAS well below national averages in 2004 and in line with national averages in 2005. Taking account of prior attainment and also a wider range of socio-economic factors, their progress has been significantly below national averages in 2003 and 2004. In 2005 progress was in line with national averages

Post 16 Provision - The school has the eighth largest sixth Form in the Authority with 97 students on roll at September 2005. At post 16, over the last three years, average points score per student of 237.7 points has been in line with national averages and points per entry 73.2 has been in line with national averages.

Attendance - Authorised absence rates are above the national and local averages. Unauthorised absence rates are below national and local averages.

5. FUTURE PROVISION IN THE RADSTOCK & MIDSOMER NORTON AREA

In considering the shape of future Secondary Education provision in the Radstock & Midsomer Norton Area the Panel have been aware of the overarching objectives of the Review of Secondary Education, as expressed in their Terms of Reference, attached at Appendix 1.

In addition to those areas already mentioned in the body of this report, the Panel is aware that the following are likely to emerge as key areas as they develop.

The Emerging Area Curriculum

Following the implementation of the 2006 Education Bill there will be changes made to the local curriculum. Nationally the proportion of pupils on vocational courses is expected to rise from 25% to 40% of the total, with implications for the way the curriculum is offered and delivered. There will be an area prospectus of the subject range on offer for all pupils aged from 14-19 years. This will be based on the needs of young people and marketed as one curriculum for each local education authority and published on one website.

The implications are that collaboration between the schools and colleges will need to be well organised to enable them to feature in the prospectus and ensure the widest possible provision for young people. The key to the emerging area curriculum is to avoid duplication of the non-core subjects, particularly more specialist vocational options.

The Dyson School of Design Innovation

Earlier this year, the James Dyson Foundation announced that it will be sponsoring a national centre of excellence located in Bath. The centre is to be known as the Dyson School of Design Innovation. Construction of the school will be funded through the Dyson Foundation, DfES and the Learning & Skills Council. The school plans to serve four distinct groups of students on courses in design engineering and enterprise:

- 14-16 year olds from Bath and North East Somerset, including those from Radstock and Midsomer Norton
- 16-19 year olds from across the South West
- Adult learners looking to update their skills
- Gifted and talented students who will join residential holiday courses and work alongside experts from industry and academia on genuine engineering challenges

The Dyson School of Design Innovation does not see itself as a competitor with schools but will supplement and improve existing provision in these specialised curriculum areas. It will also feature as part of the wider curriculum offered to 14-19 year olds through the Area Prospectus.

The Panel, whilst welcoming the additional opportunities the Dyson School of Design Innovation will provide for the young people of Bath & North East Somerset recognises that there are still many details to be worked through, for example; understanding the implications for existing schools and colleges in terms of funding, when students opt to attend courses at the Dyson School of Design Innovation.

5.1. Principles of the Panel's Vision for Secondary Education in Radstock & Midsomer Norton.

In their focus on the Radstock & Midsomer Norton area the Panel have also agreed on a range of principles specific to Secondary Education in this area. These along with the objectives outlined in the Terms of Reference should act as the framework for any decisions that are made in the future regarding reorganisation in the Radstock & Midsomer Norton area. No changes are anticipated for several years.

1. The panel has considered whether continuing to maintain three schools within this area was sustainable due to the decline of pupil numbers both nationally and in Bath & North East Somerset. This decline is likely to be offset to some extent by future housing development in the area although the level of this effect cannot be accurately predicted at this stage. Current predicted pupil numbers to 2012 indicate that continuation of all three schools will be viable; however the situation should be monitored closely. The Panel considers that a review of student numbers attending all three schools should be undertaken in 2-3 years.
2. At post 16 results in Bath & North East Somerset are in line with national averages. The fact that these results do not match the performance at GCSE (which are above national averages) may indicate a weakness in post 16 provision across Bath & North East Somerset. However, the Panel felt that all three schools in this area (together with Norton Radstock College) demonstrated a strong commitment to collaboration which will help to ensure that provision for the 14-19 curriculum will meet the requirements of their pupils now and in the future.

Consideration has been given to the possibility of reducing from three schools offering 11-18 provision in the area, to two schools with 11-18 provision and one school with 11-16 provision. However the current collaboration that exists between all three schools and the Norton Radstock College leads the Panel to believe that no overall benefit would be derived from this action at the present time.

3. The Panel note that the Council Executive is to consider a report on the 11th October 2006 which recommends that Writhlington School be renewed under the One School Pathfinder initiative, part of the Building Schools for the Future programme. The Panel recognises the integrity of the process that has led to this recommendation. However the Panel also understands that the renewal of one school in an area may be perceived as potentially having a negative effect on other schools in that same area. In the absence of the full BSF funding across the whole Authority this was an inevitable outcome, regardless of which school was chosen. The Panel are advised that the school will not be built with the capacity to take more than its current level and consider this acceptable.

6. APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Terms of Reference for the Review
Appendix 2	Discussion Paper
Appendix 3	Information leaflet issued to schools, parents and governors in the Greater Bath Area
Appendix 4	Correspondence received by the Panel during this phase of the review.
Appendix 5	Notes of the Contributor Session 25/09/06
Appendix 6	Notes of the Contributor Session 18/09/06

Appendices are available separately and copies can be obtained by contacting the Overview and Scrutiny Team, Democratic Services, Guildhall, High Street, Bath, BA1 5AW, or by e-mail to scrutiny@bathnes.gov.uk or by telephoning 01225 396410.

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