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**Chief Executive Officer:** Mr M Jones

30 September 2020

Dear Stakeholder

**Prosper Learning Trust - Consultation to increase pupil numbers for Harry Watts Academy at the former Harraton Primary School site in Washington**

**Background and rationale for Harry Watts Academy**

The Trustees of Prosper Learning Trust and the Local Governing Body of Harry Watts Academy are consulting on the creation of additional secondary places for Harry Watts Academy to meet Sunderland's longer term need for ASD pupils from September 2021/22. The Local Authority recommendation is to achieve this through establishing a satellite provision at the former Harraton Primary School site (which is currently the temporary site for Harry Watts Academy).

Prosper Learning Trust is committed to working with Sunderland City Council to ensure there are sufficient secondary special school places for pupils whose needs mean they require more targeted or intensive support or tailored educational provision. This consultation is focused on the need for secondary ASD places in a specialist provision. As Harry Watts has been in pre-opening for 2 years we recognise the need locally, the synergy our school provides in an already established school system, the opportunity to meet need and reduce costs whilst ensuring pupils have access to the very best education locally in Sunderland.

Prosper Learning Trust and its member schools are highly regarded for delivering high quality teaching and learning for ASD pupils. At Harry Watts Academy our leadership and staff team are well experienced to deliver the same high-quality education from day one. The intention is to build on this good reputation and strong leadership and provide this expertise to a growing number of pupils across Sunderland by creating additional specialist places for children with complex and profound needs associated with ASD.

**Background and rationale for the proposed use of the former site at Harraton Primary School**

Prosper Learning Trust and Harry Watts Academy are consulting on the need to provide up to 64 additional secondary places at the satellite site.



The Harraton site has recently been refurbished as part of the temporary solution to ensure Harry Watts Academy was able to open on time in September 2020 and so any future capital costs for expansion would be kept to a minimum. The site is ideally located for secondary aged pupils in the City and has the benefit of being a former school site and has the appropriate space requirements both inside and out.

We anticipate that the occupancy of the site by Harry Watts will enhance the school and local community. Although this provides a split site solution for the academy, we believe it embraces inclusion and provides young people with an opportunity to transition into different stages of their learning preparing them for adulthood, college and future employment.

Through our partnership with Sunderland College we are working together to improve pathways and opportunities for pupils supporting transition into post 16 education. The Harraton site has the capacity for joint projects which support the transition for learners. Collectively we will deliver an innovative and engaging curriculum that provides positive learning experiences for pupils and excellent training, development and career progression for staff that will ultimately benefit both organisations, staff and pupils.

#### **Why not extend the new building on Ramillies Road?**

The expansion strategy for the new build would accommodate no more than 32 pupils and equally would remove much needed play and outdoor space for pupils. Given the needs of our learners, outdoor space is essential, something we cannot afford to lose. Alongside these reasons is the cost. Costs to build the extension at Ramillies Road compared to further refurbishment of the Harraton site would mean a six figure saving.

If we move to a split site option, we can provide:

1. More ASD places for the city and neighbouring areas
2. Outdoor play space which is fit for purpose and meets the needs of all children
3. A cost effective solution meaning more money can be retained for teaching and learning

#### **ASD growth in Sunderland**

Published data on long-term historical trends shows there has been a continuous increase in the proportion of the pupil population with ASD in Sunderland schools since 2007. More recently (from 2017) the number and proportion of pupils with autism in Sunderland's primary schools has increased sharply compared with previous years.

The number of children in Sunderland schools who have ASD identified as their primary need has increased substantially over recent years. The number who require specialist provision to meet their needs has also increased significantly and is expected to continue to do so. ASD prevalence that requires a specialist place is approximately 1.6% across all age ranges.

We believe that both the increase in the diagnosis and incidence of autism means that current accommodation at Harry Watts will be insufficient to meet predicted future needs. Additional places will be needed for September 2021/22, particularly for secondary aged pupils.

The 5 year supply of new homes (from 2019 to 2023) is 4750 new developments (not including student dwellings). This development alone means Sunderland requires 19 additional primary places and 13 additional secondary places by 2024.

The 2024 – 2030 housing target is for 4000 more homes so assuming current prevalence stays the same, there would be a citywide ASD shortfall.

Housing is just one example and does not include the increased levels of demand which is there with the existing school aged cohort across the city. Demand for ASD places has gone up despite a falling birth-rate so as more children come into the city the prevalence may increase further. Harry Watts is also seen as a solution for neighbouring local authorities particularly South Tyneside and Durham.

### **ASD places in specialist provision required for September 2021/22**

In total, there is a need for 160 places in Harry Watts Academy from September 2021/22 (64 more than the current pupil admission number). 96 would be based at the new site on Ramilles Road and up to 64 at Firtree Avenue (the temporary site being occupied currently by the academy).

Secondary pupils would be based at both sites.

### **Rationale for use of the former Harraton Primary School site for Harry Watts Academy satellite provision**

- This school building was last occupied for the delivery of a secondary vocational curriculum (in 2017/2018) and until recently remained vacant. These are large premises with the capacity Harry Watts requires to expand.
- Learning spaces available would allow for up to a further 64 secondary aged pupils.
- There is potential for 2 further classrooms on the site by refurbishing additional buildings on the site.
- The hall would double up as a dining space.
- The building is in good condition with a recent refurbishment which includes updated classroom and staff spaces
- The required capital works can be carried out rapidly and Harry Watts will be able to occupy the space in time for new places to be available from September 2021.
- The proposed site is close to the main Harry Watts site, with good road links.
- Separate vehicular and pedestrian access into the building.
- The school has external grounds which would provide facility for external play, sport and curriculum delivery and learning.

### **Consultation Process**

This consultation will be shared with current and potential stakeholders:

- Parents/carers at Harry Watts Academy and Sunderland Special Schools
- Staff at Harry Watts Academy
- All Sunderland schools
- Trustees and governors at Prosper Learning Trust
- Trade Unions
- Sunderland City Council and neighbouring local authorities
- Partner agencies
- Colleges
- Local community/residents

The consultation will run from Wednesday 9 September 2020 to Thursday 22 October 2020. Any feedback or queries in relation to this consultation can be submitted on the form enclosed within this letter and should be emailed to [admin@prosperlearningtrust.co.uk](mailto:admin@prosperlearningtrust.co.uk) and should note "Harry Watts Academy Expansion Consultation" in the subject line or posted to:

Harry Watts Academy, Firtree Avenue, Washington, Sunderland, NE38 9BA. Please use the attached form on the next page.

Meetings to discuss are available on request and a time slot can be allocated if you would like to discuss anything face-to-face or virtually. Dates and times include:

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 4-6pm

Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September 4–5.30pm

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> October 4–5pm

To arrange a meeting and reserve a date and time please contact Victoria Hall on email at [admin@prosperlearningtrust.co.uk](mailto:admin@prosperlearningtrust.co.uk) or you can call 0191 229 6020 (press 1).

We look forward to receiving your feedback during the consultation period.

Yours sincerely



Mark Jones  
Chief Executive



Mikeala Morgans  
Chair of Governors



## Harry Watts Academy Expansion Consultation Survey

Prosper Learning Trust and the Governing Body of Harry Watts Academy welcome your views on the proposal to increase the number of places at Harry Watts Academy and to open a satellite provision for the school at the former Harraton Primary School site.

Please tick the box which best describes the type of stakeholder you are?

- Pupil (under 18)
- Partner Organisation
- Parent
- Prosper employee
- LA representative
- Community member
- School staff member
- Chair of Governors
- Other (please state):

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Do you agree or disagree with the proposal?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Any further comments or questions?

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If you would like to receive a copy of the final report and findings and/or would like a response to any question asked whilst completing this survey, please let us have your:

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Your details will only be used for this purpose and will not be passed onto any third party. We will store your information in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR.

Please return your completed form, no later than Thursday 22 October 2020, to [admin@prosperlearningtrust.co.uk](mailto:admin@prosperlearningtrust.co.uk) or by post to Harry Watts Academy, Firtree Avenue, Washington, Tyne and Wear, NE38 9BA