

<b>CABINET</b>	Revised Paper No.  <b>15</b>
Meeting date: 30 January 2007	
From: Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Corporate Director – Children's Services	

## **SCHOOL ORGANISATION – A STRATEGIC APPROACH: AN UPDATE AND POTENTIAL FURTHER REVIEWS**

### **SECTION A: RECOMMENDATION OF CABINET MEMBER**

#### **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 *This report brings Members up-to-date concerning the implementation of the strategic approach to school organisation adopted by the Cabinet on 7 September 2005.*
- 1.2 *The primary purpose of this report, however, is to provide details of possible options for future school provision and to ask Members to decide whether all, or some of them, should be the subject of public consultation at an appropriate point in 2007. The areas covered are:-*
- *Primary provision in North Carlisle*
  - *'Strategically Resourced Schools' in the Carlisle area*
  - *Primary provision in Penrith*

#### **2.0 POLICY POSITION, BUDGETARY AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS AND LINKS TO CORPORATE STRATEGY**

##### **Policy Position**

- 2.1 *The policy position on school organisation matters was set out in the 7 September 2005 Cabinet paper 'School Organisation – A Strategic Approach'.*
- 2.2 *The document 'Enhancing Lives Through Learning – A Vision for Schools in Cumbria' which was approved by Cabinet on 28 February*

*2006 underpins and guides the Authority's school organisation processes.*

**Budgetary Implications**

- 2.3** *There are no significant implications for the levels of revenue budgets. School organisation change can, however, free-up existing resources to be put to alternative use in or for other schools. However, some initial outlay on transitional arrangements is likely to be necessary in the case of any change to primary education provision in North Carlisle.*
- 2.4** *As far as capital expenditure is concerned, some of the potential school organisation change identified in the report would require funding to secure its implementation.*

**Links to the Council Plan**

- 2.5** *The basic thrust of the strategic approach to school organisation is to safeguard and improve the education and other services to children and their families provided through schools in the County.*
- 2.6** *This is supportive of the Plan's themes, 'Improving Council Services' and 'Children and Young People'.*

**3.0** **RECOMMENDATIONS**

*Cabinet is invited to:-*

- 3.1** *Note the position statement on the implementation of the strategic approach to school organisation provided as Appendix A.*
- 3.2** *Agree to carry out public consultation later this term on the options for future primary education provision in North Carlisle set out in Appendix B.*
- 3.3** *Agree that consultation be undertaken at the appropriate time in 2007 on the following schools becoming 'strategically resourced' in order to establish strategic SENS facilities:*
- *Cumwhinton School*
  - *Caldew School, Dalston*
  - *William Howard School, Brampton*
- 3.4** *Agree to undertake consultation early this year on the possible amalgamation of Beaconside Infant and Junior Schools in Penrith.*

**Philip Chappelhow**  
**Cabinet Member for Children's Services**

## **SECTION B:** **ADVICE OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR – CHILDREN’S SERVICES**

### **4.0 BACKGROUND**

#### **Progress with Implementation**

- 4.1 At the Cabinet meetings on 28 February, 2 May and 28 November 2006, Members received reports updating them on the implementation of the strategic approach to school organisation in the County adopted by Cabinet in September last year.
- 4.2 This report provides a position statement on the further progress made to date and the likely next steps. This is attached as Appendix A.

#### **Options for School Organisation Change – Carlisle Local Partnership Group (LPG)**

##### **Primary Education in North Carlisle**

- 4.3 The Carlisle LPG identified the need to address primary provision in the North Carlisle area as a priority. The reason for this was that one of the four schools in the area, Belah School, was facing a range of significant difficulties and the LPG felt that urgent action was required.
- 4.4 None of the options on which the LPG eventually took soundings involved the retention of primary education on the Belah School site. Many of the responses to the soundings process indicated a good deal of concern about this and suggested that an option or options involving the Belah site should be included in those going forward to public consultation.
- 4.5 Following the soundings, this issue has been considered very carefully at meetings of the LPG’s primary working group, the LPG and the School Organisation Forum. Details of the options which the LPG and the Forum feel should progress to public consultation are set out (in the usual format) in Appendix B. The option schedule does not include a Belah-based option.
- 4.6 The bone of contention, therefore, remains whether or not to consult on an option involving the Belah School site. To help Members reach a conclusion on this, a summary of the main issues, key data and the option formulation process which focuses on Belah School and its site is provided in Appendix C.
- 4.7 It is anticipated that the consultation process will take place from the end of February to mid-April 2007. A series of consultation events will follow the issuing of a consultation document. The intention is that special meetings of the area’s Neighbourhood forums will be the focus for consultation with the public. A day of meetings for parents of children living in the area is also planned. There will be an opportunity for individual parents to raise any concerns they may have on a ‘one to one’ basis during that day.

Separate meetings of the staff and governing bodies of the four schools involved will be held as part of the process.

- 4.8 Members are asked to consider whether the essence of the options, as they are set out in Appendix B or with deletions / adjustments, proceeds to public consultation.
- 4.9 Whichever options are to be the subject of consultation, they will need to be developed further and set out in detail in the consultative paper.

**Potential Public Consultations – ‘Strategically Resourced Schools’ in the Carlisle Area**

- 4.11 It has been the County Council’s policy for many years to establish a network of strategic facilities at mainstream schools to meet various types of Special Educational Need. These facilities aid inclusivity and, in relation to some types of need, represent for parents / pupils, an alternative to a special school.
- 4.12 These mainstream schools with strategic facilities are now termed ‘strategically resourced schools’. The creation of such additional facilities is part of the ‘Inclusive Cumbria’ policy.
- 4.13 Whenever there is a wish to establish these kinds of facilities, there is a need to seek a prescribed alteration to the schools involved. This means a school organisation change requiring the publication of statutory proposals.
- 4.14 As for all prospective school organisation change, there must be a consultation exercise undertaken. In the case of ‘strategically resourced schools’, it is felt that the consultation process need only involve the production of a brief consultative paper and the invitation of written responses to it.
- 4.15 For some time now, the Authority has been holding discussions with three schools in the Carlisle area with a view to them becoming ‘strategically resourced schools’. These have now reached a stage where it is appropriate to seek the authority to move to consultation. The schools involved, in the order in which it is anticipated consultation will occur, are:

- Cumwhinton School
  - Caldew School
  - William Howard School
- } Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- Severe Learning Difficulties

- 4.16 On 11 January 2007, the School Organisation Forum agreed to recommend to the Cabinet that consultation should occur at the appropriate time on whether these establishments become ‘strategically resourced schools’.

## **Options for School Organisation Change – Eden Local Partnership Group (LPG)**

### **Primary Provision in the Beaconside Area of East Penrith**

- 4.17 In the primary phase, the Eden LPG has given priority to considering the option to amalgamate Beaconside Infant and Junior Schools. This is because the staff and governing bodies of both schools want the possibility to be seriously considered as soon as possible.
- 4.18 On 11 January, the SOF agreed to recommend to Cabinet that this possibility be the subject of public consultation. The consideration of such school organisation change has been supported by the Council for many years now. The timescale and processes will be similar to those relating to primary provision in the North Carlisle area. In this case though, where provision is focused on a smaller geographical area, the consultation meeting for parents and the public will take place in one of the schools involved.

## **5.0 OPTIONS**

- 5.1 Members can accept the recommendations of SOF on the possibilities for the future of education provision in the three areas considered in the report.
- 5.2 Alternatively, the Cabinet could make adjustments to the various options or decide not to proceed to public consultation on them.

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 Having established a strategic approach which involves the Council's key education/children's services' partners examining school and related provision and making suggestions for the future, the Cabinet will no doubt wish to seriously consider accepting the recommendations made by SOF.

**Jim Mitchell, Manager/Coordinator, School Organisation Project**  
*16 January 2007*

---

## APPENDICES

***Appendix A – The Strategic Approach To School Organisation – Progress with its Implementation: January 2007***

***Appendix B – Options for the Future of Primary Education Provision in North Carlisle***

***Appendix C – Primary Education in North Carlisle : Summary of the main issues, key data and the option formulation process focusing on Belah School and its site***

## IMPLICATIONS

Staffing: There are real/potential implications for staff working in schools which might be the subject of school organisation change.

Financial: Revenue The potential implications concern the use of existing resources rather than absolute fluctuations in budget levels overall. Moreover school organisation change can result in a more cost effective use of resources.

: Capital There are clearly capital expenditure implications involved when implementing some kinds of school organisation change including that covered in this report.

Electoral Division(s): All but particularly Carlisle Local Committee members, plus all Penrith (North, East, West and Rural)

Executive Decision

Key Decision

If a Key Decision, is the proposal published in the current Forward Plan?

Is the decision exempt from call-in on grounds of urgency?

If exempt from call-in, has the agreement of the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee been sought or obtained?

## PREVIOUS RELEVANT COUNCIL OR EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

Cabinet, 7 September 2005.

Cabinet, 28 February 2006.

Cabinet, 2 May 2006.

Cabinet, 18 July 2006.

Cabinet, 28 November 2006.

## **CONSIDERATION BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

The Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel considered reports on the strategic approach at its meetings on 5 October 2005, 1 February 2006 and 22 March 2006.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

School Organisation Plan 2003-2008

'Enhancing Lives Through Learning – A Vision for Schools in Cumbria'

'Strategic Framework for School Organisation Change – Guidance for Local Partnership Groups (LPGs)'

## **RESPONSIBLE CABINET MEMBER**

**Philip Chappelhow**

**Cabinet Member for Children's Services**

Contact: Jim Mitchell, Manager/Coordinator, School Organisation Project  
Tel No 01228 606030 Mobile No 07971 446 247  
Email address: jim.mitchell@cumbriacc.gov.uk