

Planning primary education for the North Carlisle area

A consultation document



June 2007

Introduction

As you probably know, during the second half of last year, the County Council and its key partners looked at the future of education provision for 11-19 year olds in and around the city. This was the start of a very comprehensive exercise to review all schools throughout Cumbria.

For a little while now, primary education in the Carlisle area has also been under the spotlight. Examining primary school provision in the area of the city north of the River Eden was seen as the first priority. There were a number of reasons for this. The main one was that the difficulties facing Belah School were felt to be so serious that there needed to be changes to primary education provision in the area. The question is, what kind of changes to make?

The issuing of this document is the start of a genuine and open consultation process. We would like as many people as possible with an involvement or interest in the four schools in the area or in primary education more generally, to contribute their thoughts on what should happen. There is a questionnaire in the middle of this document which we would like you to fill in and send back to us.

If you would like further information on our document and the things it covers, you can find out more by:

- **visiting our website:** www.cumbriacc.gov.uk/childrensservices/school-organisation
- **ringing the School Organisation Project Team:** 01228 606013

The outcomes of today's planning are not just for the benefit of our children and their future. They will potentially lead to improvements in the area's economy, and this will benefit the whole community. Your responses to this document will make a major contribution in helping to achieve these ambitions.



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The purpose and nature of the consultation document



The purpose of this document is to provide information and comment on the possible ways of changing the existing pattern of primary schools in North Carlisle.

Change in the area is being considered because:

- there is an urgent need to address the difficulties being faced by Belah School;
- there are more school places than are needed now and in the future;
- Kingmoor Infant and Junior Schools are in this area and the County Council has a preference for all-through primary schools.

We have tried to achieve the right balance in this document, covering the most important issues whilst keeping it to a reasonable length. The document has been written for parents, school staff, governors, young people and other members of the public, who will have different starting points in terms of knowledge and understanding. We have attempted to take this into account. We also wanted to be direct and relevant and keep things as clear as we could, recognising that some of the issues are quite technical and complex. We hope that we have managed to make the document as easy as possible to read and understand.

Your views will be a great help in reaching a decision on the future of the schools involved. We realise that you may want more information to help you form your opinions. Details of how you can access additional information or talk over any issues of concern with us are given on page 24.

The consideration of the future of primary education in this area sits within a countywide context and approach. We feel that we should say a little about this before focusing on the North Carlisle area.

A countywide approach to changing the school network

In Autumn 2005, Cumbria County Council launched a strategic review of schools to be carried out by the end of 2007. The review covers all nursery, primary, secondary and special schools in the county. Other services for children are also part of the review.

The aim is to bring about higher achievement and better educational standards. The County Council sees this as a great opportunity to improve young people's education and their life chances and choices.

The main reason that the countywide review is taking place is because the number of school aged children is going to fall considerably over the next 10-15 years. There are also some key educational issues which need to be addressed. With all of this in mind, it is important to plan for the future to ensure that we have the appropriate number and type of schools which are of the right size, in the right place with good quality facilities.

The review process is a new and ambitious approach. It involves all partners with an interest in education and other services for young people, and several groups are involved:

- **Local Partnership Groups (LPGs)** who:
 - look at their areas of the county and identify options for the future
- **School Organisation Forum** which:
 - oversees the whole review process
 - considers options from Local Partnership Groups and makes recommendations to the County Council
- **Cumbria County Council** which:
 - decides which options should go to public consultation and considers the results of the consultation
 - makes statutory proposals to achieve school organisation change
 - decides, in most situations, whether or not to approve statutory proposals, after considering any formal objections to them
- **School Organisation Project Team** which:
 - supports the entire review process



Focusing on the North Carlisle area



The current provision

School	Status	Age range	Published admission number ¹	Maximum net capacity ²	No of places ³	No of pupils Jan 07 ⁴
Belah School	Community	3-11	43	180	301	90
Kingmoor Infant School	Community	4-7	60	180	180	156
Kingmoor Junior School	Community	7-11	60	237	240	231
Stanwix Primary School	Community	4-11	60	414	420	418
1. for the reception year 2. using the Department for Education and Skills formula for assessing the capacity of schools 3. based on the greater of the maximum net capacity and the published admission number x number of year groups (excluding pre-reception pupils) 4. excluding pre-reception pupils					1141	895

Accommodation plans for the four schools appear as Appendices B-E (pages 28-31)

Pupil numbers

At the peak of their pupil rolls during the last ten years, the schools collectively had over 1,100 primary-aged pupils. At the moment (May 2007), the four schools together have 888 pupils of school age. This includes 108 children who live outside the North Carlisle area.

The projected number of primary aged pupils living in the combined catchment areas over the next few years is set out below. This will include pupils who are educated either privately or at other local authority (LA) maintained schools outside the area.

Sept 2007	Sept 2008	Sept 2009	Sept 2010
834	804	831	827

Currently (May 2007), there are 66 children who live in North Carlisle but attend other maintained schools outside the area. At any one time a further 20-30 children from the area are likely to attend independent schools.

Education in the North Carlisle Schools

This section provides information about educational provision at the four schools involved. It is based on the most recent Ofsted inspection reports and monitoring by the Council's School Improvement Team.

Belah School

Belah School was inspected by Ofsted in November 2005 and judged to be providing a satisfactory education for all children and giving satisfactory value for money. The determined leadership of the new headteacher, at that time, had led to rapidly rising standards and a growing sense of optimism. However, since then the position has changed and the head has been absent due to illness since early in the Autumn term. The school has now returned to the highest category of concern which the LA has. This is because of the low standards achieved by pupils, the poor behaviour of some pupils, the significant fall in pupil numbers and a significant and increasing deficit budget.

The provision in the nursery, however, was recently inspected by Ofsted and judged to be good.

Key Stage 1 results in 2006 in reading, writing and mathematics were well below the National and Cumbria averages. The results show a declining trend.

Key Stage 2 results in 2006 in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science were below the National and Cumbria averages. The results show a declining trend. The performance of boys is significantly below that of girls.

Because of the continuing decline in the pupil outcomes, the Authority has intervened again and secured the services of an acting headteacher with the aim of improving the provision for pupils. Recent LA monitoring reports indicate that the quality of provision has indeed improved. However, the Council's School Improvement Team judges that the school does not have the capacity to sustain these improvements and therefore improve educational standards to the level expected.

Kingmoor Infant School

Kingmoor Infant School was inspected by Ofsted in October 2006 and judged to be an outstanding school in all aspects of its provision for pupils. Inspectors said that the school had a wonderful atmosphere in which pupils are respected, valued and inspired to learn. As a result, pupils achieve extremely well and gain very high standards year after year in all subjects by Year 2. The systems for safeguarding pupils are very secure and are regularly updated. The individual care for pupils by all staff is especially strong. Parents were unanimously positive about what the school does for their children. Teaching was judged to be outstanding with teachers being enthusiastic and knowledgeable, and so motivate pupils very well. The outstanding leadership by the headteacher was seen as being decisive and enlightening, valuing the contributions made by all who work with the school. The school provides outstanding value for money and has an excellent capacity to improve further. The school was asked by Ofsted to develop the school grounds to maximise opportunities for pupils' learning.

Key Stage 1 results in 2006 in reading, writing and mathematics were well above the National and Cumbria averages. The school has maintained consistently high standards of pupil attainment for a number of years.

Kingmoor Junior School

Kingmoor Junior School was inspected by Ofsted in November 2005. It was judged to be providing a satisfactory education for all children and giving satisfactory value for money. Ofsted comment that pupils' previously good progress had slipped since the last inspection in 2000 but this decline has been checked. Teaching was judged to be good overall but some elements of planning needed improving to ensure that it contributed more productively to the effectiveness of teaching. Pupils' personal development was also judged to be good. Staff have pupils' wellbeing at heart and there are strengths in pastoral care. The school was asked to keep a closer eye on monitoring the pupils' work.



Key Stage 2 results in 2006 in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science were well above the National and Cumbria averages. There was no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. The school has maintained high standards over time but there is a relatively slight declining trend appearing in science.

Stanwix Primary School

Stanwix Primary School was last inspected in June 2005 and was judged to be a very good school. The excellent leadership of the headteacher ensures that the school maintains a happy and positive atmosphere in which teachers have high expectations and motivate pupils by setting challenging work. The provision for pupils' personal development was judged to be very good. The high standard of individual care and support ensures pupils feel happy, confident and secure. Parents have a high regard for the school, and the school gives very good value for money. The school needs to introduce more rigour into the school's monitoring procedures so that teaching is of an equally high standard in all classes and all subjects.

Key Stage 1 results in 2006 in reading, writing and mathematics were well above the National and Cumbria averages. The school has maintained consistently high standards of pupil attainment for a number of years.

Key Stage 2 results in 2006 in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science were well above the National and Cumbria averages. There was no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. The school has maintained consistently high standards of pupil attainment over time.

The buildings and sites

The accommodation at each of the four schools is generally suitable for its purpose. In terms of maintenance, the estimated costs over the next five years are:

School	LA responsibility £k	School budget responsibility £k	Total £k
Belah	304	140	444
Kingmoor Infant	18	13	31
Kingmoor Junior	142	36	178
Stanwix	27	50	77

The Kingmoor and Belah sites have ample hard play facilities, grassed areas and playing fields. By comparison the Stanwix site is restricted and without any grassed area or playing fields. The school does, though, have access to appropriate and nearby alternative facilities.

The case for change

Pupil numbers and school places

Over the next few years there will be around 830 children of primary school age living in the catchment areas of the four North Carlisle schools. Of these, it is estimated that around 80 are likely to attend schools outside the area. This leaves about 750 to cater for. Currently the schools offer 1141 places, almost 400 more than are needed.

School infrastructure is expensive to run and maintain. Cost-effectiveness would be improved if there were fewer school places. In addition, in small schools the range of staff skills that can be provided is potentially limited.

Belah School

General

The difficulties facing Belah School are very serious. These have been and are currently damaging the school and its pupils.

Educational Standards

Over the last 8-10 years Belah School has faced difficulties which have impacted on the standard of education provided for its pupils. During this period the school has received significant and intensive support from the LA. Apart from a brief spell, three years ago, when pupils' attainment and progress improved, this has not managed to arrest the overall decline.

Budgetary difficulties have worked against the securing of improvements. A rapidly falling roll, which has left the school with a rather higher than average proportion of pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties, has not helped either.

Standards of attainment and pupil progress are poor. They are at an unacceptable level which is well below average local and national levels.

As indicated on page 6, the LA has taken further steps recently to protect the pupils' education pending the outcome of this review. This involves the input of extra resources which cannot be sustained. It is our view that the point has been reached where it is not possible for the school to improve.

Budgetary Issues

Belah School's budget went into deficit by £60k in 2002/2003. The deficit rose year on year to £150k in 2006/2007. Working with the school, a budget plan has been compiled which seeks to avoid the education of Belah School's pupils being compromised. The plan predicts that the deficit could rise over the next four years to £343k, i.e. around 107% of the anticipated annual budget.

The cost of educating a pupil at Belah School is 34% - 48% greater than that at the other three schools in the area.



Reduction in pupil roll

In 1997 there were 322 pupils attending Belah School. Since then there has been a steady and significant fall in the primary pupil roll each year to the current figure of 84.

Given the pattern of parental preferences for admissions to reception in recent years, the number of parents who have withdrawn their children from the school over the last three or four years and the fact that a review of provision is occurring, it is quite difficult to predict pupil numbers for the next academic year and beyond. The best scenario would see the roll at somewhere between 60 and 70 in September 2007, though it could well be lower. The proposed budget plan assumes that the roll would fall to around 44 in three years time.

Currently only 29% of primary aged children in Belah School's catchment area attend the school. This compares to 81% in relation to the Kingmoor Schools and 87% for Stanwix.

Kingmoor Infant and Junior Schools

A potential amalgamation

For a considerable time the County Council has had a preference for all-through primary schools as opposed to separate infant and junior schools. The reasons for this are explained on page 25 and in Appendix A. There is a strong emphasis in the countywide review on the consideration of infant and junior school amalgamations.

Kingmoor Junior School is currently being led and managed by an executive headteacher, i.e. the head of Kingmoor Infant School. This forms part of a partnership agreement adopted by the governing bodies of the two schools. This arrangement will continue until such time as a clear direction for the future has emerged following the consultation process. The partnership obviously has the potential to facilitate a very smooth path to amalgamation, if that is seen as the way forward.

To summarise

There is a need to seriously consider taking swift and radical action to address the issues at Belah School and the overprovision of places in the area. At the same time, it would seem appropriate for thought to be given to moving to an all-through primary school in Kingmoor. Although there will be different ideas about outcomes, hopefully we can all agree to think seriously about changing things for the better.

Identifying options for change

The Carlisle Local Partnership Group (LPG) had the job of coming up with potential options for change to the network of schools in the area. It is made up of representatives of the County Council and its partners in providing education and linked services in and around Carlisle. See page 4 for more information.

A small Working Group of the LPG carried out the 'hands-on' work. To help the group to establish priorities, it was provided with a lot of information. This included data on pupil numbers, educational standards, the financial position of schools and so on. It quickly formed the view that it was a priority for there to be a review of primary education in the North Carlisle area. The Working Group, using the data provided, came up with an initial list of options for the LPG to consider. The LPG then asked schools and other key organisations for their views on the options. Taking account of the feedback received and other information, the County Council's Cabinet decided to consult on five options; those recommended by the LPG together with an additional one.

The Council recognises that there are potentially other options for change than the five identified. If you have other ideas, these will be welcomed.



The options in outline



Option 1		Further explanation / information
Belah School	School closes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belah School's catchment area would be split between the Kingmoor Schools and Stanwix School.
Kingmoor Infant School Number of places 180	School remains open	
Kingmoor Junior School Number of places 240	School remains open	
Stanwix School Number of places 420	School remains open	

Option 2		Further explanation / information
Belah School	School closes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment, following a competition, of a 3-11 primary school on the Kingmoor site, largely in the existing buildings. The catchment area would be the combined catchment area of the Kingmoor and Belah Schools.
Kingmoor Infant School Number of places 180	Becomes all-through Primary School Number of places 420	
Kingmoor Junior School Number of places 240		
Stanwix School Number of places 420	School remains open	

Option 3		Further explanation / information
Belah School	School closes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The closure of one of the Kingmoor Schools and Belah School and the extension of the age-range of the remaining Kingmoor School to 3-11. The catchment area would be the combined catchment area of the Kingmoor and Belah Schools.
Kingmoor Infant School Number of places 180	Becomes all-through Primary School Number of places 420	
Kingmoor Junior School Number of places 240		
Stanwix School Number of places 420	School remains open	

Option 4		Further explanation / information
Belah School	School closes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment, following a competition, of a 3-11 primary school on the Kingmoor site, largely in the existing buildings. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The closure of one of the Kingmoor Schools and Belah School and the extension of the age-range of the remaining Kingmoor School to 3-11. Belah School's catchment area would be split between the school on the Kingmoor site and Stanwix School.
Kingmoor Infant School Number of Places 180	Becomes all-through Primary School Number of places 420	
Kingmoor Junior School Number of Places 240		
Stanwix School Number of Places 420	School remains open	

Option 5		Further explanation / information
Belah School	School closes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment, following a competition, of a 3-11 primary school on the Kingmoor site, largely in the existing buildings. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The closure of one of the Kingmoor Schools and Belah School and the extension of the age-range of the remaining Kingmoor School to 3-11. The 'Transfer' of Stanwix School to the Belah site. Belah School's catchment area would be split between the school on the Kingmoor site and Stanwix School.
Kingmoor Infant School Number of Places 180	Becomes all-through Primary School Number of places 420	
Kingmoor Junior School Number of Places 240		
Stanwix School Number of Places 420	School remains open	

There are, of course, variations which could be made to these options. Please include any suggestions you have when you fill in the questionnaire.

We have provided details on competitions and the extension of the age range of schools in the section on 'Achieving amalgamation' on page 13.

Information relating to the options



Before focusing on the potential impact of the possible changes, we feel it would be helpful to provide some more information, both general and specific to North Carlisle.

Vision and principles

At an early stage in the school review process, we established some principles that would guide discussions and against which any options for change would be tested. First and foremost, the whole process would be driven by the needs of learners and not by those of schools. It should also raise standards in our schools. The principles include statements about everything from rural schools to inclusive education and, in a primary education context, can be summed up as follows:

We must provide:

- quality of provision – the best teaching and learning;
- equity – so that all children have access to a good school.

Our 'Vision Statement' is included in the additional information which is available. See page 24 for details about how this can be accessed.

Amalgamation of Infant and Junior Schools Preference for all-through primary schools

The County Council has a long-stated preference for all-through primary schools, as opposed to separate infant and junior schools. In summary, this is based on the belief that, all other things being equal, they offer:

- better continuity of education;
- greater organisational and educational flexibility;
- more financial efficiency.

This preference was also included in the education vision document referred to above. The thinking behind adopting and maintaining it is outlined in Appendix A.

Achieving amalgamation

This section covers the steps which would need to be taken if it is decided to pursue the amalgamation of the Kingmoor Schools.

Up to now, in previous similar cases in Cumbria, amalgamations have been achieved through the closure of both of the existing schools and the establishment of a new one, albeit in most cases in one or both of the existing schools' buildings.

Very recent legislation means that LAs must hold a 'competition' when proposals are to be made for a new school. This change reflects the Governments' wish to see a greater diversity of providers of schools to give parents more choice.

This new legislation even applies to situations like that at Kingmoor where the new school would simply replace existing schools on the same site. A competition could involve potential providers such as the churches, educational trusts, and maybe the County Council itself, competing to establish and run the new school. The legislation is so far untested and it is uncertain whether there would be any interest from possible providers other than the County Council.

Alternatively, it is possible, in order to effectively achieve an amalgamation, to close one of the two existing schools and to extend the age range of the other to enable it to take both infant and junior aged children. This route to amalgamation has been opted for in two other similar situations in Cumbria in the last couple of months. As technically this does not create a new school, there would be no requirement to hold a competition.

Secretary of State guidance

There is statutory guidance which LAs must take into account when considering proposals for school organisation change. This reflects the Government's view that where there is a school, like Belah School, which is causing concern, there should be a change in local provision to boost standards. The thinking is that weak schools should close with future provision for their pupils being made in schools which are successful and popular with parents. There are currently over 140 children from Belah School's catchment area who attend Stanwix School and the Kingmoor Schools.

Nursery provision

Currently Belah School provides for nursery age pupils aged three and four. At Kingmoor Infant School some nursery age pupils attend Oak Tree Nursery which meets in temporary accommodation situated in the school grounds. Stanwix Playgroup, which has strong links with Stanwix School, meets in a temporary classroom situated in Church Street opposite the school entrance. There are a number of other providers in the area.

Were Belah School to close the intention would be to replace its nursery in the school provision on the Kingmoor site. In those circumstances it is probable that an extension to the existing buildings would be provided to cater for nursery age pupils.

School transport

The general policy

Under the normal transport policy, free transport is given to a child's nearest or catchment school if the distance between their home and the school exceeds the 'statutory walking distance'. The 'statutory walking distance' is three miles for children aged eight and above, and two miles for children under eight. The distance is measured by the nearest available walking route.

The policy in a primary school reorganisation situation

Under the Authority's current school transport policy, pupils living in the catchment area who are attending a school at the time of its closure, and who transfer to the new catchment school, receive free transport until the time they would have left that school had it remained open, providing the distance between home and school is more than one mile in the case of pupils under eight, and over two miles for older pupils. This only applies if pupils have to go to a different site which is further from their home than the site they previously attended. If the distance from their home is more than the statutory walking distance of two/three miles, however, the general policy (above) would apply.



If Belah School was to close, a small number of its current pupils could become entitled to free transport under the policy relating to school organisation until they are eight.

Staffing issues

It is accepted that the process of school organisation change can create uncertainties, particularly for staff. As part of the countywide review, a handbook on staffing issues associated with school closures and amalgamations has been prepared. A draft of the handbook has recently been distributed to all schools.

The precise nature of the staffing issues may vary somewhat, depending on which of the options to achieve change is chosen.

Safeguarding pupils' education during change

The options contain some significant changes. Closing schools and opening new ones brings the risk of disruption. The County Council is committed to making sure that children's education is not affected negatively by the change process. For example, the Council will need to ensure that curriculum delivery is protected and that the accommodation and facilities needed are always available throughout the period of change.

For each area where changes arise from the countywide review covered on page 4, a local group to handle the transitional arrangements is set up. These groups are made up of County Council officers and representatives from the local schools. The groups can access additional resources to ensure educational standards are maintained during the period of change.

Locational issues

At the moment, given the housing developments served, the spread of the schools in the area seems a reasonable one. On the basis of falling pupil rolls, one of the three sites will arguably not be needed in future. In locational terms there are perhaps arguments for retaining a site on either side of Scotland and Kingstown Road and in the north and south of the area.

Catchment areas

Across the county, catchment areas are generally important because they are a significant factor in determining admissions to schools and entitlement to home to school transport. The current catchment areas of the North Carlisle schools are shown in Appendix F.

Some of the options include a division of the Belah School catchment area with a part of it being incorporated into the catchment area of the other schools. A possible dividing line is given in Appendix G. This would mean a broadly 25% : 75% split of pupils between the Stanwix and Kingmoor Schools' catchment areas respectively.

The dividing line could of course be drawn in a number of other ways. The suggested split does, though, appear to be a fairly natural one which makes sense in terms of distances from Stanwix and the Kingmoor Schools.

Freed-up school sites

The options could potentially lead to either the Belah site or the Stanwix site being freed-up for alternative use or disposal. Should this happen, the future of the sites would need to be carefully considered. The possibility of additional community use of the Belah School building has already been raised locally.

Indicative values of the two sites, bearing in mind the likely planning and other restrictions, are:

- Belah - £2.0m
- Stanwix - £1.2m

Like other LAs, the County Council uses resources from the sale of assets to support its capital building programme which is generally heavily focused on investment in schools. By far the most important factor in this review is, however, the future education of children.



Considering the options and their implications



Impact on the North Carlisle area as a whole

All of the options mean that in future there will be 840 places in the North Carlisle area for primary-aged children. As indicated earlier, we estimate that the demand for places from the area is likely to be around 750 once the existing Belah School pupils reach secondary school age. This leaves a 90 place cushion to allow for changes in the preferences of parents living in the area, demand from outside the catchment area and any growth from further housing development in North Carlisle. The significant numbers of new houses built in the area over the last decade or so appear to have had little impact on the size of the local pupil population.

Individual Schools

Belah School

None of the five options see Belah School remaining open. This is because those who developed the options felt that the school would not be viable in the future. They also took the view that very good alternative provision was available.

For a range of reasons, over 70% of parents living in the school's catchment area have preferred that their children are educated at other schools. Over recent years the school has become deeply unpopular. This trend reflects what the school has been perceived to offer its pupils.

The school's roll is set to fall once again by over 20 pupils in September 2007. This will, of course, mean a reduction in the school's budget. At present the school is being heavily supported by the Council. It is not possible to sustain this level of support. Further anticipated reductions in pupils will lead to an increased and very substantial budget deficit. Schools are required to operate within their means. Having to pay off the deficit whilst pupil numbers fall further would be certain to pose a virtually impossible challenge to the school in terms of maintaining and improving educational standards.

The overall reduction in the pupil population in the last decade or so has enabled parents from the Belah catchment area to obtain places at other schools in and around the North Carlisle area. Places at other schools will continue to be available. The social mix of pupils in unpopular schools exacerbates their difficulties.

Should Belah School close, a place for all of its existing pupils would be made available at the Kingmoor school or schools. This would enable them to remain with their peers for the rest of their primary education. Parents are, of course, entitled to seek places for their children at schools of their choice. Particularly for the older pupils, a small number of places are likely to be available at Stanwix School. The catchment area split shown in Appendix G would be relevant to the parents of pre-school children.

The Kingmoor Schools

In Option 1 the separate Infant and Junior Schools are retained. The other options would create a school catering for 3-11 year olds on the Kingmoor site. There are different ways that this could be brought about. These are outlined on pages 13-14.

There is currently ample accommodation at the two schools for an all-through primary school of the size required for the future (i.e. 420 places as indicated in the option outline on pages 11-12). Consequently, if the schools do amalgamate, significant capital investment will not be required. However, some work would be undertaken to improve the school's ability to operate effectively as a single all-through primary school. This work might well focus on staff/administration facilities and access arrangements. It is also likely that an extension for nursery-age pupils would be required. Funding to achieve such changes is likely to come from both the Council's Capital Programme and the schools' own capital resources.

Should Belah School close, subject to parental choice its pupils would transfer to the Kingmoor school or schools. Assuming that closure happens in 2008, a maximum of 50 or so children from Belah School would need to be accommodated. This would mean there would be around 440 pupils on the Kingmoor site. Temporary accommodation would be provided to supplement the current facilities. This is likely to be needed for 3 or 4 years at most.

Stanwix School

Under Options 1-4 Stanwix School would be relatively unaffected. The extension of the school's catchment area to include part of Belah's catchment area in Options 1 and 4 would be the only change.

Option 5 envisages the school transferring to the Belah site. Some of the arguments in favour of this are around the suggestion that the Belah site offers:

- spacious surroundings;
- easy access;
- excellent catering facilities.

For it to be possible for Stanwix School to be 'transferred', extra facilities would need to be provided on the Belah site. The majority of the school's accommodation would, however, be in the existing buildings which would need some remodelling. The overall cost involved has been estimated at £2.0m-£2.5m.

Stanwix School on its existing site is popular with parents and is successful. Its buildings have been recently modernised. The view held by some that the site is restricted appears not to affect its popularity negatively. On the other hand, there is no evidence to suggest that the openness and space available on the Belah site is a significant factor which positively affects parental preferences.

There would be an impact in terms of additional traffic if Stanwix School moved to the Belah site. It would be likely that fewer of its pupils would walk to school. Crossing Scotland Road would be a factor in this. The effect on these things would be greater with Option 5 than the other options.

The timing of the implementation of change

We do not know what the outcome of the review will be and the very detailed planning cannot take place until we do. Being absolutely precise about the timing of any changes is therefore not possible. We think that the closure of Belah School could happen by September 2008. The same goes for an amalgamation of the Kingmoor Schools, though the permanent building work would have to be completed later. If the route to amalgamation is via a competition (for details see page 13), the most likely implementation date would be September 2009. A transfer of Stanwix School to the Belah site could not be achieved until 2009 at the earliest. This is because of the scope of the remodelling and extension of the accommodation which would be necessary.

Drawing conclusions



It seems hard to conclude that it would be appropriate or responsible to leave things as they are. All those involved in working on the options believe that change needs to occur:

There are five options for change set out in this document. We would like to know which of them, or which parts of them, you support. If you have any alternative ideas, as was said earlier, please also tell us about them.

The main reason for the countywide review is a big fall in the pupil population in Cumbria. This is one of the factors here in the North Carlisle area as we have explained.

As pupil numbers fall there is less overall funding for education. Keeping all our existing schools, many with empty places, would mean less resource for pupils actually in school. This would threaten the quality of educational provision. The County Council wants to see standards improve rather than fall.

A main principle of school organisation change and one that is very relevant to the situation in North Carlisle, is that the needs of learners and children's futures are the most important priority. Perhaps this principle has been in danger of being lost in the lead-up to this review. Our key objectives are to improve the quality of provision and to make sure provision is equitable – meaning that, all pupils have access to a high quality education. In Belah School standards are low and behaviour is sometimes poor. The school is unpopular and the roll is falling. Those pupils remaining in Belah are disadvantaged by a different social mix. Yet two other schools where standards are high are nearby, accessible and popular.

Belah School's closure is included in all of the options. This does not mean that a decision to close it has been taken and it could stay open. One of the issues to consider is whether it can possibly be viable in the future in financial and educational terms. Another is whether, given all of the circumstances, the risk to the education of pupils if the school were to be retained is simply too great. Would enough parents be prepared to take that risk? Past experience suggests strongly that they would not.

As pointed out earlier, the County Council has, for a long time now, had a preference for all-through primary schools. In this document we provide a range of information and comment on the possibility of amalgamations to create such schools.

The Council feels that the case for amalgamating infant and junior schools to form all-through primary schools is generally very strong. It believes that this should normally be a way forward because it feels it enhances educational opportunities for children. This view is shared by the governors of a further three pairs of infant and junior schools in the county who are currently working enthusiastically with the Council to bring about amalgamation. We believe that this step should be seriously considered for the Kingmoor Schools. There is currently an executive head leading both schools and a strong partnership between the governing bodies is developing. Those circumstances seem to offer a positive context for an amalgamation.

The case for transferring Stanwix School to the Belah site may be felt to be much less strong. There are mixed views about the relative merits of the Stanwix and Belah sites. It is very much a matter of opinion. What is certain, though, is that the capital expenditure involved would need to be justified. This is difficult when there are already sufficient school places in the area, the Council's capital resources are quite limited and £1.5m was recently invested to upgrade the Stanwix buildings to modern day standards. Furthermore, is there sufficient justification for the disruption of 400 pupils and the knock on effects there would be on the local community and adjacent facilities such as the playgroup?

Now it's over to you. We would like to have your views on the possibility of change, and there is a questionnaire in the middle of this document to help. Hopefully, this consultation document, as well as consultation meetings taking place between 18 and 27 June 2007, the additional information available and individual discussions which are on offer (all outlined in the next section) will help you to form your opinions on the subject.

We look forward to receiving your completed questionnaire or online response as your views are important and will influence the decision which is eventually taken.



Next steps - the consultation and decision making process



The consultation period

The consultation is based on this document which was prepared by the County Council's School Organisation Team. The consultation period starts on Monday 4 June 2007. The final date for letting us have your thoughts and comments is **Friday 20 July 2007**.

How to express your views

This consultation document has been very widely distributed. It has gone to the parents, staff and governors of the four North Carlisle schools, all of the County Council's key partners in the provision of education, neighbouring schools, Carlisle City Council, voluntary organisations, staff associations and unions, the church diocesan authorities and many others. It is important that we know what you think about the options set out on pages 11-12. We should also be grateful for any suggestions you may have for new options or variations to those identified. We look forward to hearing from you.

Questionnaire

There is a questionnaire in the middle of this document. We would like you to complete it and return it to us using the Freepost address given on the form. Alternatively, you can complete the questionnaire online from Monday 4 June 2007, by following the consultation finder links on the County Council website:

www.cumbriacc.gov.uk/consultation

Meetings

A series of consultation meetings will be held in June 2007. They will give you the opportunity to express your views and to ask questions. Some are open to everyone, whilst other events are solely for groups such as staff, governors and parents.

Meeting For	Time	Date	Venue
Belah School Pupil Council Staff Governors Parents	3.00pm - 3.30pm 3.45pm - 4.45pm 5.00pm - 6.00pm 7.00pm - 8.30pm	Monday 18 June 2007	Belah School
Kingmoor Junior School Pupil Council Staff Governors Parents	3.00pm - 3.30pm 3.45pm - 4.45pm 5.00pm - 6.00pm 7.00pm - 8.30pm	Tuesday 19 June 2007	Kingmoor Junior School
Kingmoor Infant School Pupil Council Staff Governors Parents	3.00pm - 3.30pm 3.45pm - 4.45pm 5.00pm - 6.00pm 7.00pm - 8.30pm	Thursday 21 June 2007	Kingmoor Infant School
Stanwix School Pupil Council Staff Governors Parents	3.00pm - 3.30pm 3.45pm - 4.45pm 5.00pm - 6.00pm 7.00pm - 8.30pm	Monday 25 June 2007	Stanwix School

The Lead Member for Children's Services, Councillor Philip Chappelhow, will chair each meeting, which will start with a short introduction on how the session will be run. Then there will be a very brief presentation on the main points in the consultation document. During the rest of the meeting, you will be able to say what you feel about what is said in the document and ask questions of the panel of County Council officers who will be present.

Additional Parents' meetings

We have also arranged a series of meetings for parents of children currently attending the four schools who are unable to attend the meeting at their school. They are also intended for parents living in the area who have pre-school children. These meetings will take place at **St Augustine's Social Club Hall, Briar Bank on Tuesday 26 June 2007** at the following times:

10.30am - 11.30am	1.00pm - 2.00pm
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Drop-In Sessions

You may prefer to come to one of the drop-in sessions we have arranged on **Tuesday 26 June 2007**. Officers will be available for you to talk to after each of the additional parents' meetings referred to above. Here you will have an opportunity to talk the options over with us and find out more about what they mean for you and others. These will take place at **St Augustine's Social Club Hall, Briar Bank** at the following times:

11.30am - 12.45pm	2.00pm - 2.45pm
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Community meetings

We are going to use the Council's two Neighbourhood Forums which serve the area. These meetings will begin at 7.00pm, and we would very much like those of you who are not attending one of the other meetings to come along. Please choose the most convenient one for you.

Belah & Kingmoor Community Neighbourhood Forum	7.00pm - 9.00pm	Tuesday 26 June 2007	St Augustine's Social Club Hall
Stanwix Community Neighbourhood Forum	7.00pm - 9.00pm	Wednesday 27 June 2007	Cumbria Park Hotel

The meetings will be run in a similar way to those at the schools. It is expected that the meetings will last 1½ - 2 hours.

Notes of each meeting will be taken to summarise the points made. These will be made available to members of the Council's Cabinet when they are taking decisions regarding changes to the existing schools.

What happens after the consultation process?

Once the responses to the consultation process have been analysed, a report will be prepared for the County Council's Cabinet. The report will include notes of the consultation meetings, a summary of comments received from individuals and photocopies of written responses from recognised organisations. Any questionnaire responses will be treated in confidence and personal details will not be included in the final report. The report will be a public document, so will be available to the media and on the County Council website.

The Cabinet will consider the response to the consultation and form a view about what it believes to be the appropriate provision for the future. This is likely to occur on Tuesday 4 September 2007. Depending on what the Cabinet decides, the following paragraphs describe what changes would occur and the likely timeframe involved.

Option 1

The LA would publish a statutory proposal, probably in late September 2007, to discontinue (i.e. close) Belah School from 31 August 2008. The notice would explain how the existing catchment area of Belah School would be split between the catchment areas of Kingmoor Infant, Kingmoor Junior and Stanwix Schools. The recommended location for the dividing line is shown in Appendix G (page 33). A six week period is allowed for local people to make comments. The Cabinet would be likely to take a final decision in December 2007.

Option 2

The LA would publish a notice towards the end of September 2007 to announce that a new school is likely to be created to serve the catchment areas of Belah School and the Kingmoor Schools. The notice would invite prospective providers to express their interest within four months. The LA would then publish a second notice around March 2008, giving details of all the bids received, including the LA's proposal if it decided to make one. At the same time, statutory proposals to discontinue (i.e. close) all of the three schools involved would be published. Six weeks are allowed for comments. A final decision would be taken by the LA (or by an adjudicator, if the LA makes a proposal), during the summer term 2008. It is likely any change would happen in September 2009.

Option 3

The LA would publish a statutory proposal to discontinue (i.e. close) one of the Kingmoor Schools. At the same time, a linked notice to extend the age range of the remaining Kingmoor School would also be published. A further linked notice to discontinue Belah School from 31 August 2008, with its catchment area being absorbed into the remaining Kingmoor School, would also be published. This would allow nursery age pupils to be admitted to the remaining Kingmoor School. These notices would be published in late September 2007 and a period of six weeks is allowed for comments. The LA would make the decision on whether to implement the proposals, probably in December 2007. Implementation would be likely to happen in September 2008.

Option 4

The same process to be followed as for either option 2 or 3, depending on whether a school on the Kingmoor site is established by competition or extension of the age-range, except the notice to discontinue Belah School would provide details for splitting the catchment area between Stanwix School and the proposed new school that replaces the existing Kingmoor Schools.



Option 5

The same process to be followed as for 4. Any changes arising from this option would probably be implemented in September 2009. The aim would be to provide sufficient accommodation on the Belah School site to enable Stanwix School to move from its present site. This transfer of site does not need a statutory proposal to be published.

How can I find out more?

Members of the School Organisation Project Team will be more than happy to discuss with you any of the issues covered in this document or anything else related to the North Carlisle Schools. You might find this helpful before completing the questionnaire.

The number to ring is 01228 606013.

As we said earlier, we wanted to keep this document as short as possible. There is extra information available if you want to read the detailed background documents that we used when we wrote this paper. These include projected pupil numbers and the most recent Ofsted inspection reports.

All of these documents are available to view or download on our website:

www.cumbriacc.gov.uk/childrensservices/school-organisation

If you do not have access to the internet, we can provide you with a printed copy of any sections of the additional information. All you need to do is to call the School Organisation Project Team on 01228 606013. Alternatively, requests can be made by fax to 01228 606016, or by post to the following address:

Freepost RRBS – RLBG – GZGL
CUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL
School Organisation
18 Portland Square
CARLISLE
CA1 1PE



Appendix A - Preference for all-through primary schools. The thinking behind it



Some general educational issues

Where there are 'linked' infant and junior schools (i.e. where all or part of their catchment areas are shared), they are managed separately by their respective headteachers. Each has its own ethos, philosophy and approach to the curriculum. Usually, the staff of the schools work hard collaboratively to try to ensure a smooth transition between the infant and junior phases. It is likely, however, that one effectively managed primary school would more easily achieve a sense of progression and continuity for pupils. This is extremely important both in curricular and social terms and it is something on which the National Curriculum lays a good deal of emphasis.

It is very difficult to produce impartial evidence to prove that amalgamations improve educational performance. There are too many variable factors which might have an impact in any particular situation to do that. There are indications though that the educational outcome of schools formed by amalgamation are, in general, better than those at the junior schools which they replaced. That, together with the observed dip in children's performance in Year 3 commented on by inspectors nationally, tends to support the County Council's broad preference for all-through primaries.

Both the Government and the Council are attaching increasing importance to enhancing pupil attainment in literacy and numeracy. Schools are required to set targets for improvement and to develop action plans which will lead to their achievement. The intention is for these targets to be challenging. A primary school planning for this across both Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum (covered in infant schools) and Key Stage 2 (covered in junior schools) may be better equipped to meet the challenge.

Schools have limited resources with which to employ teachers. Headteachers are often faced with difficulties in finding an educationally effective pattern of class organisation which reflects curricular and individual pupil needs whilst balancing class sizes. Generally speaking, larger schools have more options in this respect.

In considering changes of this nature, concern is sometimes expressed at the loss of the degree of staff specialisation which comes from experience of teaching infant aged or junior aged pupils. On the other hand, within larger schools, there may well be a greater range of subject expertise. There are also likely to be increased opportunities for professional development in larger schools, where teachers are able to teach across the full primary phase and gain line management experience.

Curriculum management within a primary school is based on a system of coordinators who take responsibility for developing policy, practice and assessment in a curriculum area(s). There are 12 main curriculum areas. Clearly for smaller schools, this burden of responsibility has to be spread amongst fewer teachers so they have to devote their time to a number of areas. Where there is a larger teaching staff, curriculum coordination can be more effectively organised and time-managed. Moreover, in all-through primary schools, curriculum planning can be coordinated across the first two National Curriculum key stages.

Assessment of pupils' progress is easier when done across the two key stages. Similarly, the increased emphasis these days on 'personalised learning' for children is supported by the greater opportunities for differentiation in work programming which exists in all-through primaries.

The reduction in the overall number of schools means there will be a need for few headteachers, which eases the current difficulties being experienced with recruiting and retaining them.

Parents of infant aged pupils sometimes raise concerns about the welfare of their children in primary schools. These tend to focus on how well 'small' children cope with 'big' children, for example at playtime. However, examination of Ofsted inspection reports confirms that pupils' welfare is not threatened in amalgamated schools, any more that it is in other schools in Cumbria. More positively, younger children have the opportunity to learn from their older peers. Older pupils can also contribute to the teaching/learning process by mentoring younger pupils.

Although some parents do have concerns, many prefer all-through primaries. This is mainly because they avoid a change of school at the age of seven and the insecurity that this can bring about.

Cumbria has many examples of successful infant and junior schools and equally successful 3/4-11 primary schools. The number of separate infant and junior schools has, however, fallen very considerably following a series of mergers in recent years. This has resulted from the serious consideration of the kind of issues covered here.

Financial issues

School amalgamations

When schools are amalgamated, revenue resources are released for other purposes. Some of these benefits are received by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the remainder by the County Council and the schools involved.

In the case of the Council, the 'released' resources are available for distribution across all schools and thereby benefit all Cumbria's pupils. In addition to this, a significant proportion of 'freed up' resources become available to the schools for the direct educational benefit of pupils. This opportunity arises from more efficient and effective use of resources, e.g. reductions in school management and administration, more efficient use of staff and less duplication of materials and equipment.

Larger schools

There are also felt to be other financial advantages in relation to school amalgamations. For example:

- a larger single budget would offer greater flexibility in the use of resources;
- the ability to deal successfully with fluctuations in the level of the budget due to year on year changes in total numbers would be enhanced.

The cost-effective use of resources

The Government expects Local Authorities to use the funding available for education effectively. Cumbria County Council sees one of its key roles as seeking to ensure the cost-effective use of resources.

It is at least arguable that continuing to maintain linked but separate infant and junior schools, some of which may be shrinking in size and occupy the same site, would not represent the best use of resources. Having a single school in these situations may well mean that more of the available resources are spent directly on teaching and learning, thereby contributing to raising standards.

Parents and the community

The involvement of parents with schools and with their children's education is vital. Some families have children in two or three different schools and this can be quite demanding. Parents usually find it easier to develop and sustain relationships with the staff of one rather than two schools in the primary phase of education. Taking part in events and contributing to school activities does not have to be duplicated.

It may be that, for parents, having a single primary school would offer a clearer identity which they could relate to more easily. Schools are reliant on the efforts of the communities they serve, and parental support could possibly be channelled more effectively into one school rather than two. This is not a question of financial support; it involves the time and energy people in the community devote to their local schools.

Educational research shows that, where the school and home are engaged in a strong partnership, children generally achieve at a higher level. Parents may well benefit from having all-through primary schools so that there is continuity throughout their children's primary school careers which gives them a greater understanding of procedures, learning strategies and expectations.

School transport

The general policy

Under the normal transport policy, free transport is provided to a child's nearest or catchment school if the distance between their home and the school exceeds the 'statutory walking distance'. The 'statutory walking distance' is three miles for children aged eight and above, and two miles for children under eight. The distance is measured by the nearest available walking route.

The policy in a secondary school reorganisation situation

Under the Authority's current school transport policy, pupils living in the catchment area who are attending a school at the time of its closure, and who transfer to the new catchment school, receive free transport until the time they would have left that school had it remained open, providing the distance between home and school is more than one mile in the case of pupils under eight, and over two miles for older pupils. This only applies if pupils have to go to a different site which is further from their home than the site they previously attended. If the distance from their home is more than the statutory walking distance of two/three miles, the general policy (above) would apply.

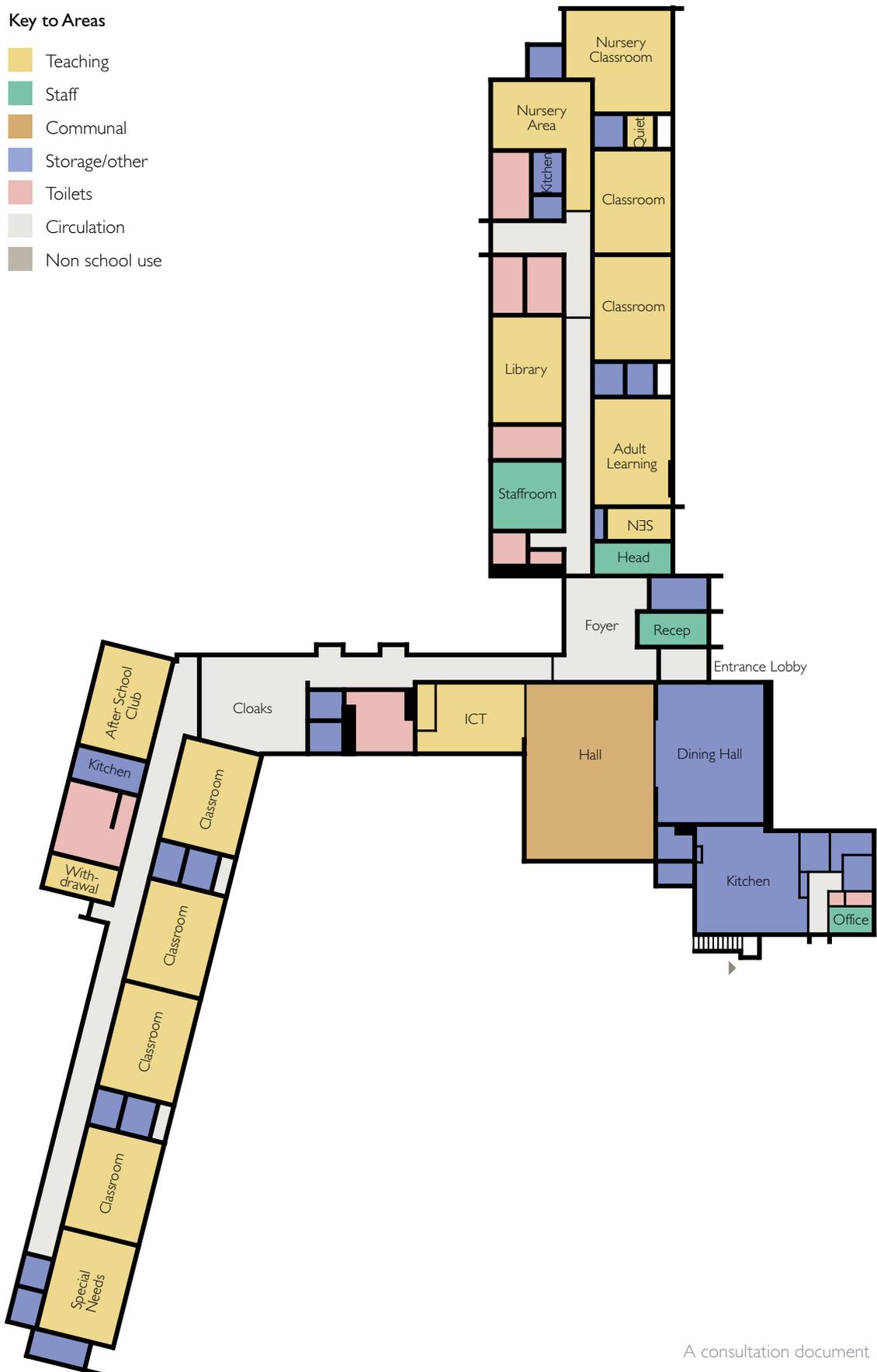
If Belah School was to close, a small number of its current pupils could become entitled to free transport under the policy relating to school organisation.



Appendix B - Accommodation Plan: Belah Primary School

Key to Areas

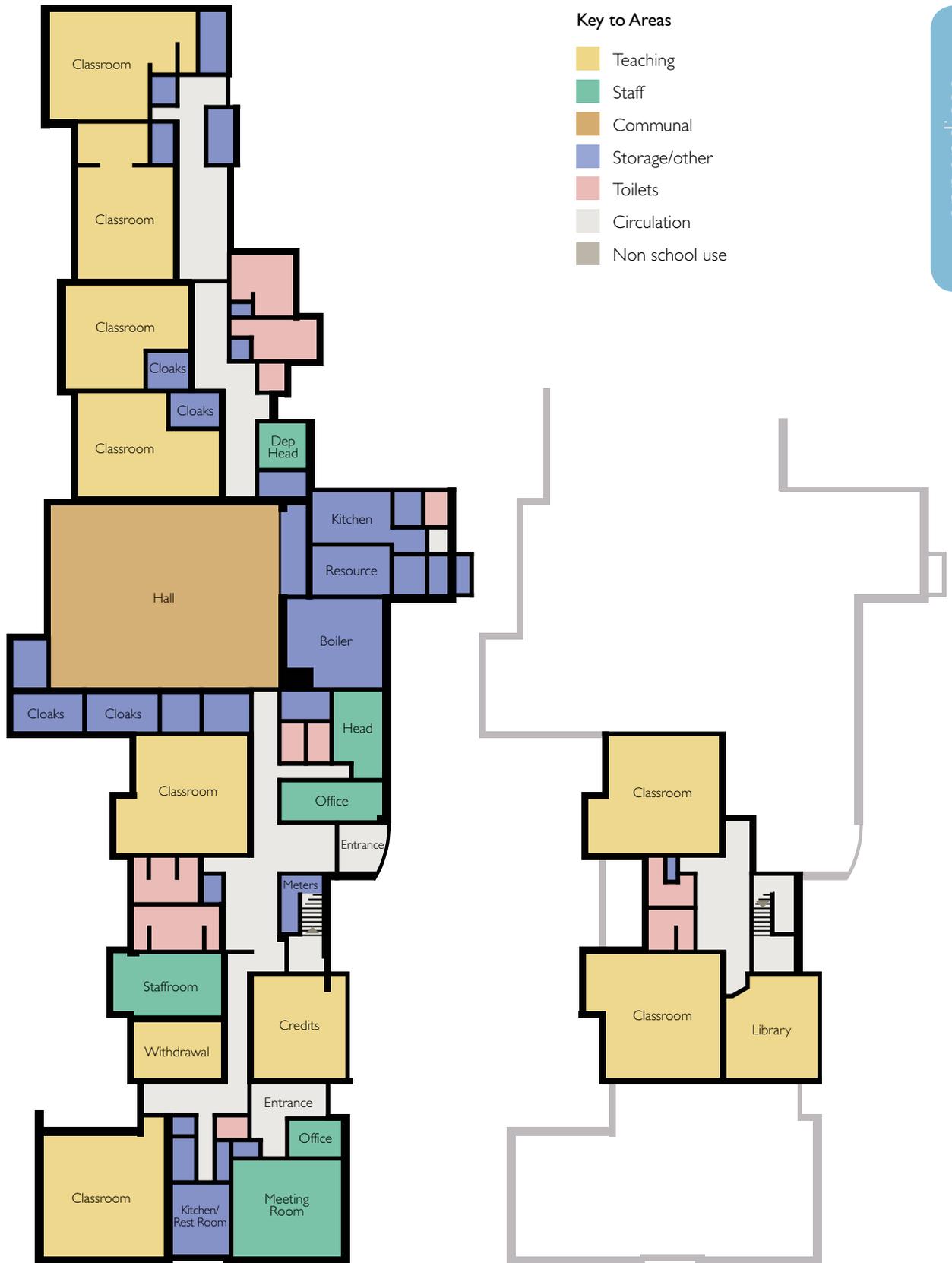
- Teaching
- Staff
- Communal
- Storage/other
- Toilets
- Circulation
- Non school use



Appendix C - Accommodation Plan: Kingmoor Infant School



Appendix D - Accommodation Plan: Kingmoor Junior School



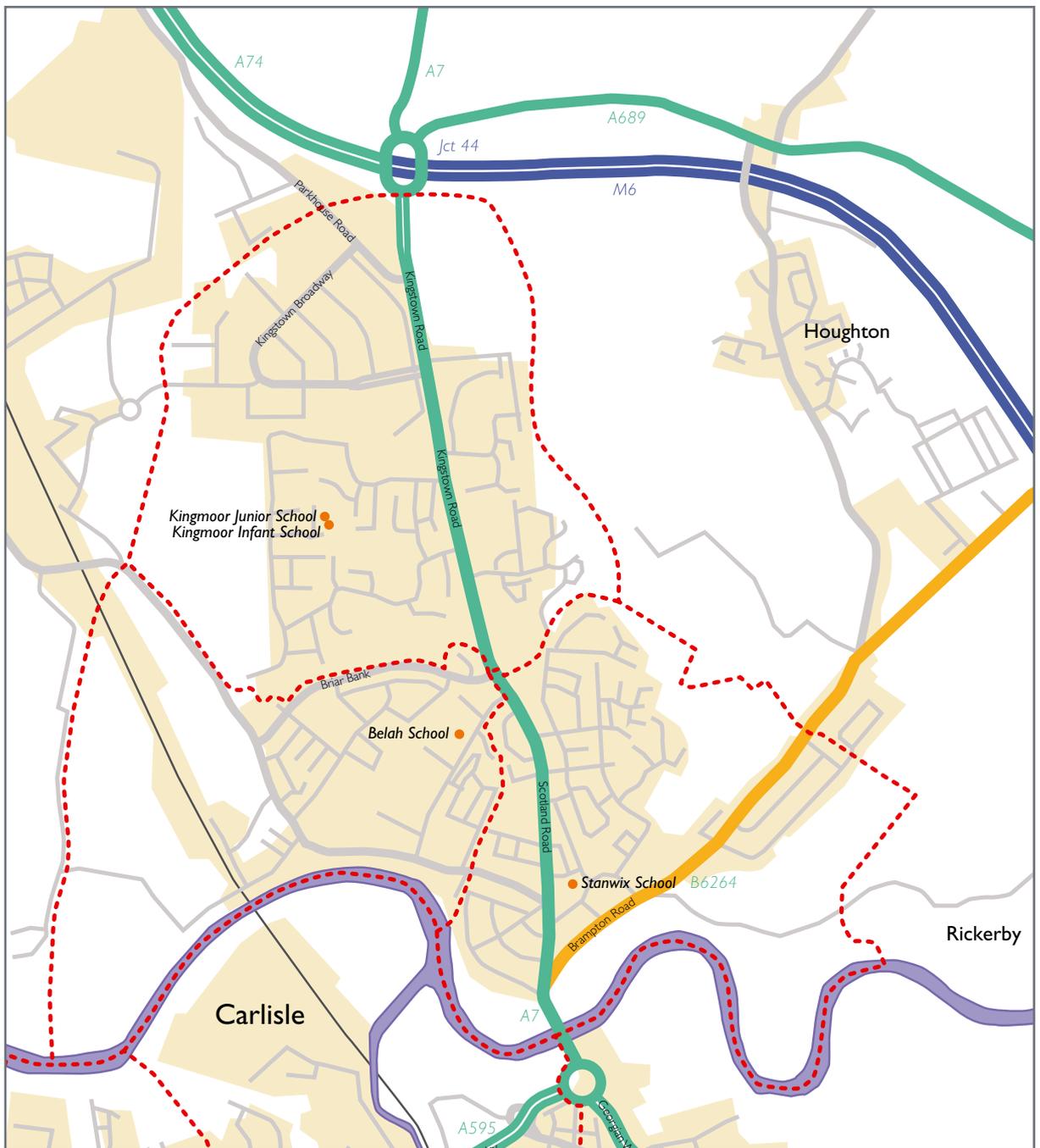
Appendix E - Accommodation Plan: Stanwix Primary School

Key to Areas

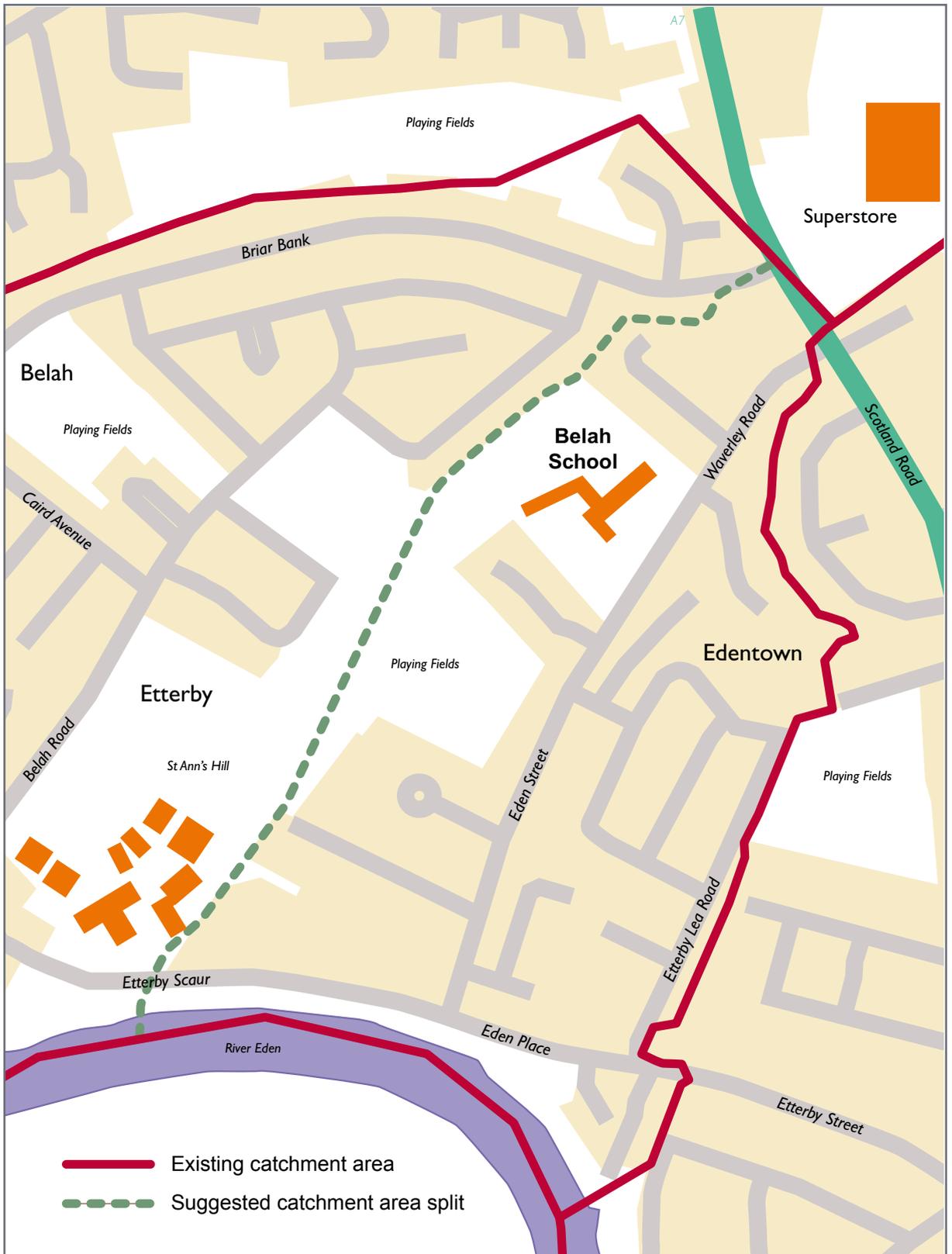
- Teaching
- Staff
- Communal
- Storage/other
- Toilets
- Circulation
- Non school use



Appendix F - Present catchment areas



Appendix G - Suggested future catchment areas



Translation services

English

You can get a copy of this document in different formats such as large print, braille, audio, or in a different language by calling 01229 894401.

Bengali

আপনি 01229 894401 -এই নম্বর ফোন করে, বিভিন্ন ফরম্যাট যেমন বড় প্রিন্ট, ব্রেইল, অডিও বা একটি ভিন্ন ভাষাতে এই নথিটির একটি কপি পেতে পারেন।

Portuguese

Pode obter uma cópia deste documento em vários formatos, como por exemplo em Braille, áudio, ou numa outra língua. Para tal ligue para o 01229 894401.

Cantonese

如果您想获取该文件的不同版本，如：大字体印刷、盲文、音频或不同语言版本，请致电：01229 894401。

Lithuanian

Paskambinę telefonu 01229 894401, galite užsisakyti šio dokumento kopiją įvairiais formatais, pavyzdžiui, atspausdintą dideliu šriftu, Brailio raštu, užsisakyti garso įrašą arba gauti dokumentą, išverstą į norimą kalbą.

Polish

Aby otrzymać kopię tego dokumentu w innych formatach, takich jak duży druk, druk Braille'm, audio, lub w innym języku proszę dzwonić pod numer 01229 894401.

Turkish

01229 894401'u arayarak, bu dokümanın bir kopyasını büyük puntolu, körler için kabartmalı, ses dosyası gibi değişik formatlarda veya farklı bir dilde edinebilirsiniz.



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