CABINET	Paper No.
Meeting date: 28 November 2006	
From: Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Corporate Director – Children's Services	14

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 in the early part of 2007. The areas covered are:-***

- ***Secondary provision in Barrow and Dalton***
- ***Primary provision in Ulverston***
- ***Primary provision in the Belle Vue area of West Carlisle***

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.

<u>Budgetary Implications</u>

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 would be necessary in the case of any change to secondary education provision in the Barrow and Dalton areas.

2.4 As far as capital expenditure is concerned, the potential school organisation change identified in the report would require funding to secure its implementation.

<u>Links to the Council Plan</u>

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 Determine the options for future secondary education provision in the Barrow and Dalton area which will be the subject of public consultation early next year (see Appendix B).

3.3 Agree to undertake consultation in the New Year on the possible amalgamations of:

- ***Dale Street Infant and Sir John Barrow Junior Schools, Ulverston***
- ***Croftlands Infant and Junior Schools, Ulverston***
- ***Belle Vue Infant and Junior Schools, Carlisle***

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 18 July 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 progress made to date and the likely next steps. This is attached as Appendix A.

Options for School Organisation Change – Furness Local Partnership Group (LPG)

General

4.3 The Furness LPG identified the need to address secondary provision in Barrow and Dalton and primary provision in Ulverston as its initial priorities.

Secondary Education Provision in Barrow and Dalton

4.4 Details of the options produced by the Furness LPG and endorsed by the School Organisation Forum (SOF) on 9 November are provided in Appendix B. As well as a description of the five options, a brief analysis of implications and other comments accompany each one. There are also some explanatory notes which follow the information on the options themselves. The format of Appendix B is the one used in the process of taking soundings of partners/stakeholders and for meetings of the LPG and its Working Group.

4.5 There is a challenge in identifying funding for the implementation of the options. The timing of the consultation process will be governed by the achievement of more clarity on this issue. When it does occur it is anticipated that a consultative paper will be prepared and distributed. A series of consultation events will follow. The intention is that special combined meetings of the area's Neighbourhood Forums will be the focus for consultation with parents and the public. Separate meetings of the staff and governing bodies of each school/college involved will be held as part of the process. The aim will also be to engage with young people, local councils, voluntary groups and other organisations in a range of different ways.

4.6 Members are asked to consider whether the essence of the options, as they currently stand or with deletions / adjustments, proceeds to public consultation at the appropriate time.

4.7 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.

Primary Provision in Ulverston

4.8 Soundings were taken some time ago on a range of options for change to primary provision in Ulverston. After further discussion and consideration, the LPG suggested that the possibility of two infant and junior school amalgamations should go forward to public consultation. This was endorsed by SOF on 9 November despite the unhappiness with the LPG's decision expressed by one of the schools.

4.9 The pairs of schools involved are:-

- Dale Street Infant and Sir John Barrow Junior Schools
- Croftlands Infant and Junior Schools

4.10 The options are that there is either an amalgamation of each pair of schools or they continue to operate as separate entities. The consideration of such school organisation change has been supported by the Council for many years now.

4.11 The consultation process will be similar to that for the secondary provision in Barrow and Dalton outlined above. It is likely to occur early in the spring term of 2007.

Options for School Organisation Change – Carlise Local Partnership Group (LPG)

Primary provision in the Belle Vue area of West Carlisle

4.12 In the primary phase the Carlisle LPG has given priority to considering the option to amalgamate Belle Vue 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.

4.13 On 9 November, the SOF agreed to recommend to Cabinet that this possibility be the subject of public consultation. The timescale and processes will be similar to those relating to primary provision in the Ulverston area. In this case though, where provision is focussed on a small geographical area, the consultation meeting for parents and the public is likely to take place in one of the schools involved.

5.0 OPTIONS

5.1 Members can accept the recommendations of SOF on the options 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
13 November 2006

APPENDICES

Appendix A – The Strategic Approach To School Organisation – Progress with its Implementation: November 2006
Appendix B – Options for the Future of Secondary Education Provision in the Barrow and Dalton Area

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 Barrow Local Committee members; Low Furness; Ulverston East; Ulverston West; Belle Vue; Castle; Morton; Yewdale

Executive Decision	Yes
Key Decision	Yes
If a Key Decision, is the proposal published in the current Forward Plan?	Yes
Is the decision exempt from call-in on grounds of urgency?	No
If exempt from call-in, has the agreement of the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee been sought or obtained?	N/A

PREVIOUS RELEVANT COUNCIL OR EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

Cabinet, 7 September 2005.
Cabinet, 28 February 2006.
Cabinet, 2 May 2006.
Cabinet, 18 July 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. The Panel will be regularly up-dated on progress regarding its implementation.

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

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