

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 for other schools. However, some initial outlay on transitional arrangements is likely to be necessary in the case of any change of 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 RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet is asked to agree to add to the options, which are to be the subject of forthcoming consultation on primary education in North Carlisle, the transfer of Stanwix School to the Belah School site.

Philip Chappelhow
Cabinet Member for Children's Services

SECTION B:

ADVICE OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR – CHILDREN’S SERVICES

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Early on in its deliberations on possible school organisation change in the primary phase, the Carlisle LPG identified the need to address 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.
- 4.2 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. Carlisle Local Committee was unanimous in taking such a view.
- 4.3 As in other areas of the county, the Carlisle LPG had formed a small working group to do the ‘hands-on’ option formulation work. The working group felt that given the response to the soundings process, it should ask the LPG to consider an additional option involving the Belah site. Considering the problems facing Belah School and the provision made at the other three schools, the group did not feel it appropriate for the potential extra option to see the retention of Belah School itself. The group opted instead for the transfer of Stanwix School to the Belah site which was one of the suggestions made during the soundings process. The suggestion was based on the view that the Belah site and buildings offered more than the site and accommodation at Stanwix School.
- 4.4 The possibility of including an extra option was considered first by the full Carlisle LPG and then by the School Organisation Forum. However, the Forum’s recommendation to Cabinet was that public consultation should occur on the original four options, none of which included the continuation of primary education provision on the Belah School site.
- 4.5 When Cabinet considered the School Organisation Forum’s recommendation at its meeting on 30 January, it was accepted by Members. A summary of the four options agreed for public consultation is set out below.

Option 1 Kingmoor Infant School Kingmoor Junior School Stanwix School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belah closes with the other three schools retained • Belah's catchment area split between Kingmoor and Stanwix
Option 2 'New School' Stanwix School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New all-through primary school (largely in the existing buildings on the Kingmoor site), to replace Belah School and Kingmoor Infant and Junior Schools • Stanwix is retained with no significant change • Some changes to the catchment areas may be required
Option 3 Kingmoor (Infant or Junior) School Stanwix School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the Kingmoor Schools extends its age range to become an all-through primary school, with the other Kingmoor School and Belah School closing • Stanwix is retained with no significant change • Some changes to the catchment areas may be required
Option 4 'New School' Stanwix School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All-through primary school on the Kingmoor site to 'replace' Kingmoor Infant and Junior Schools • Belah School closes with its catchment area split between the Kingmoor School and Stanwix School

- 4.6 There were a number of reasons why the LPG, Forum and Cabinet decided not to include a Belah-based option in those to be subject to public consultation. A major one was the view that it was very difficult to justify the £2.0m - £2.5m investment required on the Belah site to accommodate pupils from Stanwix School, when overall there are enough school places in the area for children living north of the River Eden without a building at Belah.
- 4.7 Since the Cabinet meeting, an independent valuation of the Stanwix School site has been undertaken. This indicates that the proceeds of sale could go a long way towards covering the capital expenditure which would be needed on the Belah School site. Members may feel that this information, together with the views voiced during the soundings process about having a Belah-based option, suggests that the potential additional option to transfer Stanwix School to the Belah School site should be added to the four options which it have already been agreed will be subject to public consultation.
- 4.8 It is currently envisaged that the consultation process will run from mid-April through to the beginning of June. The agreed options will be developed further and set out in detail in the consultation document. The document will also cover likely capital costs and receipts and include commentary on the factors likely to be involved in the delivery of the options.

- 4.9 Members may well be aware that ideas exist for further options as well as variations to those currently agreed. The Authority's option formulation process, as set out in the agreed strategic approach to school organisation, has of course been followed closely. This involved the Council and all its major partners in the provision of education and related services. That being the case, it would not seem appropriate at this stage to consider the inclusion of further options other than the one which is the subject of this paper. The consultation process will encourage the generation and consideration of other ideas.
- 4.10 The Cabinet decision on the options for North Carlisle was 'called-in'. The planned meeting of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel to consider the call-in scheduled for 27 February has been deferred pending the Cabinet's consideration of the possibility of going to public consultation on options, which include the retention of primary education on the Belah School site.

5.0 OPTIONS

5.1 The possible decisions open to Members include:-

- Sticking with the agreed set of four options for consultation
- Adding a fifth option which would involve transferring Stanwix School to the Belah School site
- Identifying different additional options

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Members will want to consider carefully the case for including as one of the options to go to public consultation, the transfer of Stanwix School to the Belah School site.
- 6.2 Of relevance to Members in considering the issue will, amongst other factors, be:-
- The contribution of the proceeds from the sale of the Stanwix School site could offset to the capital costs involved
 - The strength of views in favour of a Belah-based option which emerged from the soundings process, and
 - Recognition that both the Carlisle LPG and the School Organisation Forum took finely balanced decisions on the exclusion of an option involving the Belah site, predominantly for financial reasons based on the information then to hand

Jim Mitchell
Manager/Coordinator, School Organisation Project

27 February 2007

APPENDICES

There are no appendices

IMPLICATIONS

Staffing: There are real/potential implications for staff working in a school which is 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 kind of school organisation change, including that covered in this report.

Electoral Division(s): All Carlisle Local Committee Members

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?

Has this matter been considered by Overview and Scrutiny?
If so, give details below.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT COUNCIL OR EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

Cabinet 7 September 2005

Cabinet 30 January 2006

CONSIDERATION BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

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

BACKGROUND PAPERS

School Organisation Plan 2003-2008

'Enchancing 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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